Modern Folk Devils

Contemporary Constructions of Evil

Edited by
Martin Demant Frederiksen
& Ida Harboe Knudsen

HUP HELSINKI UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Contributors

Martin Demant Frederiksen is associate professor of anthropology at the Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University. He works in the interface of anthropology and contemporary archaeology, and his current research focuses on emptiness, temporality and coastal infrastructures in Croatia and Denmark, and on subcultures and urbanization in Georgia. He is author of the monographs *Young Men, Time, and Boredom in the Republic of Georgia* (2011), *Georgian Portraits: Essays on the Afterlives of a Revolution* (with Katrine B. Gotfredsen, 2017) and *An Anthropology of Nothing in Particular* (2018).
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8032-2899

Ida Harboe Knudsen is a social anthropologist who received her PhD from the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle (Saale) Germany. Her PhD focused on rural development in Lithuania after EU membership and in 2012 it was published as a book: *New Lithuania in Old Hands*. Following this, she has been involved in two postdoc projects, one financed by the Danish Research Council on informal working strategies in Lithuania and one financed by the Scandinavian Research Council for Criminology on Lithuanian inmates in Danish prison facilities.

Elias le Grand holds a PhD in sociology from Stockholm University and works as a senior lecturer in the Department of Child and Youth Studies at Stockholm University. His research interests lie in the areas of identity

formation, socio-spatial divisions, consumer culture, youth and generation. Current work explores the significance of social figures and public representations in classification struggles.

Tamta Khalvashi is professor of anthropology at the Ilia State University, Georgia. She received her doctorate from Copenhagen University and worked as Fulbright Scholar at New York University. Her research explores the issues of infrastructural breakdown and repair, and the intersection between film, fiction and ethnography. She is currently working on a multimedia research project entitled The Jarti (scrap metal) Hunters and she is co-editing the book *A Sea of Transience: Politics, Poetics and Aesthetics Along the Black Sea Coast*.

Paul Manning is a professor of anthropology at Trent University in Canada. He is the author of three books (*Strangers in a Strange Land*, 2012; *Semiotics of Drinks and Drinking*, 2012; and *Love Stories*, 2015). In addition to guest-editing or co-editing three volumes for *Language & Communication* and co-editing one for *Ethnos*, he is a former co-editor of the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* (2007–2010) and current editor of *Semiotic Review* (from 2012). His research interests involve the linguistic and semiotic anthropology of Wales and Georgia, and the historical anthropology of the 19th century in Wales, Georgia and elsewhere, as well as North American ghosts and spiritualism.

Tom Bratrud is a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo. He received his PhD from the same institution in 2018. Before rejoining the University of Oslo he was associate professor at the University of South-Eastern Norway. Bratrud has worked with Vanuatu in the South Pacific since 2010 and has recently started doing ethnographic research in rural Norway. His monograph *Fire on the Island: Fear, Hope and a Christian Revival in Vanuatu* will be published in 2022.

Susanne Højlund is associate professor at the Department of Anthropology, Aarhus University. She has done research centred around questions of welfare and wellbeing of children in Denmark with different projects: The Meaning of Home and Hominess at Children's Homes; Marginalised Youth and Future; and The Anthropology of Food and Taste (including fieldwork in Cuba – published in the book *Sugar and Modernity in Latin America*, 2014). Since 2014 she has been a partner in the national project Taste for Life (*Smag for Livet*), where she does research on children, youth and taste. She also has co-edited the volume *Making Taste Public* (with Carole Counihan, 2017).

Katharina F. Gallant (PhD) is a senior researcher at the Center for Development Research (ZEF) at the University of Bonn. Her doctoral dissertation in

historical ethnology from the University of Frankfurt focused on the roles of Barack Obama in the USA and Evo Morales in Bolivia as 'bridges of interculturality' and the broader meaning to the national narrative of their election as heads of state. In addition to her PhD, she holds an MSc and a BSc in psychology from the University of Hagen, and an MA in North American Regional Studies from the University of Bonn. Her research focuses on cultural identity, ethnicity and interculturality in various geographic contexts. Katharina is a member of the Transdisciplinary Research Area 'Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Futures' at the University of Bonn, as well as of Societas Ethica, The European Society for Research in Ethics, and a founding member of DiscourseNet – the International Association for Discourse Studies.
ORCID: http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0507-9398

Matt Clement lectures in criminology at the University of Winchester. He is a socialist and anti-racist activist and author of *A People's History of Riots, Protest and the Law: The Sound of the Crowd* (2016). He is currently editing a new collection, *No Justice, No Police? Protest and the Politics of Social Change*.

Ana Ivasiuc is a social anthropologist working on urban insecurity, social and racial inequalities (with a focus on Roma), policing, and the far right in Europe. In her postdoctoral research at the Collaborative Research Center, *Dynamics of Security: Forms of Securitization in Historical Perspective*, funded by the German Research Foundation, she carried out an ethnography of formal and informal policing of the Roma in the peripheries of Rome. She is currently working as a lecturer in the Anthropology of Crime and Security, Maynooth University, Ireland. She has published extensively in peer-reviewed international journals and has co-edited two volumes (*Roma Activism: Reimagining Power and Knowledge*, with Sam Beck, 2018, and *The Securitization of the Roma in Europe*, with Huub van Baar and Regina Kreide, 2019).
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6193-2248

Amadu Khan is an independent scholar and consultant in the fields of forced migration, citizenship, international development, and media, culture and arts. He received his doctorate degree from the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Edinburgh, where he researched the relationship between refugees' citizenship formations and the UK news media. He is currently the equality, diversity and inclusion officer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. As an international development consultant, Amadu provides strategic guidance on citizenship, human rights, equality, and environmental and social justice to governments, civil society, international development organizations and grass-roots communities.

Eva Svatoňová is a PhD candidate at the School of Culture and Society at University of Aarhus, Denmark. She received her master's degrees from Charles University in Prague and Aarhus University. In her doctoral research she investigates the discourses of anti-gender campaigns in Czechia and Slovakia. In her work she focuses on the articulation of discourses and their travelling, as well as conducting life-history interviews with activists involved in the campaigning against 'gender ideology'.

Ondřej Slačálek is assistant professor at the Department of Political Science, Charles University, Prague. He works on East European politics, nationalist discourses and social movements from various analytical perspectives. Besides articles in scholarly journals (*Patterns of Prejudice*, *Slavic Review*, *Intersections*), he is a regular collaborator on the Czech bi-weekly *A2* and webzine *A2larm.cz*. **ORCID:** https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9841-3767

Victor C. de Munck is a cultural and cognitive anthropologist. He is a professor at Vilnius University, in the Asian and Transcultural Studies Institute. He has recently published articles in *Current Anthropology* and *JRAI* on theories of culture and on Sufism and cognition, respectively. He has a book titled *Romantic Love in America* (Lexington, 2019). His current research (supported by the Lithuanian Research Council) is on new forms of intimacy as they affect conceptions of self and decisions regarding, marriage and having children. He has published 11 monographs (some co-authored) and over 50 refereed articles. Most of his field research has been conducted in Sri Lanka, but more recently he has been working in Eastern Europe, where he is fascinated by the Albanian–Macedonian socio-cultural interface, as well as how cultural models theory can describe and explain changes in love relations in Lithuania.

Paul Joosse is associate professor of sociology in the Department of Sociology at the University of Hong Kong. He works at the intersection of sociological and criminological theory. Recent articles of his include 'Countering Trump: Toward a Theory of Charismatic Counter-roles' (2018), which received the International Sociological Association's Junior Theorist Award; 'Max Weber's Disciples: Theorizing the Charismatic Aristocracy' (2017), which won the ASA Culture Section's Clifford Geertz Prize; and 'Expanding Moral Panic Theory to Include the Agency of Charismatic Entrepreneurs' (2018), which won the Society for the Study of Social Problems Outstanding Theory Article Award.

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Introduction

Folk Devils Past and Present

Martin Demant Frederiksen and Ida Harboe Knudsen
Aarhus University and Vytautas Magnus University

Introduction

In his 1972 book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, Stanley Cohen (2002) convincingly shows how negative media coverage can generate what he terms 'folk devils' – individuals whose mere presence or actions feed a population's fear of a general degradation of society. Folk devils are sometimes seen as penetrating society from the outside; at other times they have developed from within the very society they are now seen as posing a threat to. Sometimes they are a visible group; other times they become epitomized by a single individual or phenomenon, or they exist only as a potential threat. As such, the folk devil for Cohen was not necessarily a biblical phenomenon or a figure related to actual devils. Rather, the folk devil term was coined to signify a perceived disturbance of social order that manifests itself through accusations of wrongdoing or evil.

This volume examines current fears and perceived threats from an anthropological perspective as these unfold in different contexts around the world, and through this it investigates and analyses how contemporary folk devils emerge or develop. It shows how the devilish may take on many different forms – refugees,

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technocrats, Roma, hipsters, LGBT groups, right-wing politicians, sorcerers, economic migrants, tourists, mobile criminals and sugary foods – and contributions start with cases from across the globe: Germany, the Czech Republic, Sri Lanka, Denmark, the Republic of Georgia, the UK, Italy, Melanesia, France and the US.

Closely intertwined with the folk devil is the moral panic that subsequently arises with public fear. For Cohen, a moral panic typically takes its starting point in big newspaper headlines where the folk devil is pointed out, yet, as this volume demonstrates, today it may as well arise from a grass-root level, in social media, through political discourses or from already-existing local myths or social structures. In Cohen's original study, it was gangs of 'aimless youth' in the UK that caused a moral panic to erupt: the mods and rockers. Subjected to long and negative media coverage, the panic escalates, demanding political action and changes to the law. By labelling this spiral of actions a moral panic, Cohen does not indicate that the issue does not exist or that it is based on hysteria or illusion. Rather, he points out that the extent of the problem has been exaggerated, that facts are distorted and the problem acutely angled. Some moral panics rise and then subside quickly as the media turns to other issues, whereas other moral panics soon become permanent and institutionalized.

To illustrate this process, Cohen invites us to consider the difference between two scenarios, both of which take place in a quaint seaside resort town on the east coast of England during a Bank Holiday. In the first scenario, the holiday spirit is severely disturbed by the eruption of violent clashes between youth groups. Windows are broken, guns are fired, and beach huts and dance halls are wrecked. Newspapers report of gangs 'hell-bent for destruction', screaming mobs, attacks, siege, and innocent holiday makers desperately fleeing town. Later, articles report on the cost of damages, both in terms of vandalism during the event itself and in terms of lost revenues caused by tourists fearing to come back. In the second scenario, business in the seaside town is slow owing to the weather. Easter Sunday is the coldest it has been for 80 years; few tourists have arrived and local youth walk around in boredom. Some of them start small-scale fights and throw rocks at each other, and in the evening the only dancehall in town is damaged. Later, a calculation shows that during this particular season the number of hired deckchairs has dropped dramatically, but this is not because tourists stay away after the few days of minor street-fights among youth. The weather simply meant that they did not go to the beach. Instead, the number of people using the miniature railway and the putting green increased dramatically (Cohen 2002 [1972], 21ff.).

As is probably obvious, the two scenarios depicted by Cohen are one and the same event. Cohen uses what we today would term the 'fake news' reporting of the first event to show how the media exaggerated events taking place in 1964 in the seaside town of Clacton. While some reports were simply factually wrong, others had presented a distorted image of what had taken place. It was true, for

instance, that all dancehalls in town had been trashed, but less dramatic when it is also clarified that there was only one dancehall in Clacton. And it was true that people stopped going to the beach, but this was due to the weather and not due to the infighting youths. Yet, although the second scenario was much closer to the truth, the first scenario remained dominant. And, ironically, although there had not really been groups of mods and rockers in Clacton, they began to appear after their reported presence. Tourism even increased because people were curious to see them, and they remained a fixture in mainstream media and public debate for years to come. Despite curiosity among parts of the public surrounding the descriptions of the youth groups, it was largely fear and panic rather than fascination that remained centre stage, and, as perceived folk devils, the mods and rockers came to represent a moral threat to society regardless of their actual presence.

Cohen's book became a landmark in studies of deviance, subcultures and processes of othering, and provided a framework for examining how (mis) representations of particular groups may both generate heightened senses of fear among local populations and in fact take part in solidifying the groups represented. While originally it mainly impacted on the field of criminology in terms of highlighting the social construction of deviance, today it has become a widely used work within the social sciences at large. At the time of writing this introduction, Cohen's book has been quoted or referenced over 11,000 times in academic books and journal articles, and more than 7,000 of these mentions have appeared within the last decade, five decades after the book was first published.

Engaging critically with Cohen's work in order to both highlight its continued relevance and add new perspectives, this introduction falls into two main parts. In the first part, we go into detail with the central themes themselves, something Cohen was criticized for not doing. For instance, while Cohen succinctly depicts the folk devils of 1950s and 1960s UK, he spends relatively little time describing the notion of the 'folk devil' itself. In other words, aside from a few brief mentions of folklore, the folk-ness and the devilish-ness of the folk devil remain more or less untouched. As pointed out by Steven Hayle in relation to studies that have taken up Cohen's framework, 'the social processes leading to the creation of folk devils have largely been undertheorized compared to the social processes underlying moral panics' (2013, 1125; see also le Grand, Chapter 1). Hence, we will begin this introduction by following a simple procedure of deconstructing and reassembling Cohen's main terms: *folk*, *devil*, *moral* and *panic*.

In the second part, we engage with more recent anthropological studies of devilry and otherness, along with the chapters of the current volume, in order to examine how contemporary case studies of accusation and othering can be used to further some of Cohen's original insights. More specifically, we focus on the differences between what unfolds when perceived folk devilry and moral

panic either emerge a) from within a given society when already-existing groups or phenomena suddenly come to stand forth as problematic or b) when state- or media-related processes or events are the main generators of fear. And, added to this, we consider what transpires when attention is not focused only on politics or media but also on the perspectives of the perceived folk devils themselves. Zooming in on these three aspects, which are also the basis of how this volume as a whole is structured, we argue both that the existence or emergence of contemporary folk devils takes place in situations where an 'Other' is attempted exoricised in order to retain an imagined pre-existing order, as was the case in Cohen's original study, and that folk devils and moral panics also take part in creating new forms of order and societal divisions. What this points towards, we argue, is the importance of considering socio-economic and cultural aspects of particular contexts and their role in shaping particular kinds of devil figures.

But devilry itself is where we will start.

Roots of Evil: Dealing with the Devil

Although the Devil is a biblical figure, it is not, if taken as a *symbol* of evil, necessarily confined to Christian thought. As such, use of devil imagery does not necessarily entail a belief in God. And conversely, as noted by Charles Stewart (2008), belief in God does not necessarily correspond to belief in the Devil. This is reflected empirically in this volume in that, while some chapters relate directly to belief, in others the Devil stands forth as a colloquial term.

Even though the Devil is most often associated with Christianity, specific depictions of it is relatively limited, particular in the Old Testament. Rather than being a specific entity or figure, the Devil is a manifestation of evil that takes many forms: the serpent in the Garden of Eden (as a temptation), the fallen angel Lucifer, the Hebrew sea monster Leviathan, the accuser of Job, the dragon in the Book of Revelations, the author of lies, the promoter of evil. And, given that, as an image, the Devil is central as a counterpoint to God, it is noteworthy that the physical appearance of the Devil is not mentioned in the Bible or other biblical materials. The image of the horned Devil, often with the hindquarters of a goat and with a pitchfork, did not appear until the Middle Ages. And, rather than being features mentioned in scripture, these seem to have been lifted from various pagan gods and religions. But, even though the Devil became personified as a particular image, it took other forms as well. Some were figural, while others were metaphorical, such as the number zero, which at one point in time was seen as the Devil's magic in Western Europe (Frederiksen 2018; Seife 2000). Yet, as noted by Burton Russel, 'Whether one perceives the Devil as a supernatural being, or as an uncontrollable force arising in the unconscious, or as an absolute aspect of human nature is less important than the essence of the perception, which is that we are threatened by alien and hostile powers' (Russel 1987, 32).

The question of demonization was in the medieval period mainly a theological question related to the nature of evil, but it was also during this period that it became a political question in terms of the politics of witch-hunts. This entailed that the devilish was not merely an external threat (as, for instance, another religion), but just as much an internal threat (Pagels 1996). An obvious example of this is the witch-hunts in Europe, which, as pointed out by Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda (2010), can be seen as an early example of moral panic and mass hysteria. In 1487, the German clergyman Heinrich Kramer published *Malleus Maleficarum*, a treatise on witchcraft that endorsed their persecution and execution. Although witchcraft had already been condemned by the Church, *Malleus Maleficarum* is significant for several reasons. First of all, it differed from earlier conceptualizations of witches in that not only did it focus more explicitly on women; it also deemed witchcraft as distinctly evil and saw witches as puppets of the Devil. Until the 15th century, 'witches were classified as good or bad, depending on the objective of their magic' (Ben-Yehuda 1992, 233). With publications such as *Malleus Maleficarum*, this changed dramatically. Moreover, despite later popular belief, the Inquisition did not use it as a manual in their witch-hunts. Rather, it was primarily used in secular courts throughout Europe. And a central aspect that made possible the spread of *Malleus Maleficarum* was the historically concurrent invention of the printing press, which in this sense took part in a widespread 'witch hysteria' (Russel 1972, 234).

Even long after the actual witch-hunts had died out, they remained a figure in public imagination. Gabriele Schwab, in reading Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, which was based on the Salem witch-hunts, notes how:

> the phantasmatic space that organizes the cultural perceptions of women still relied on what I call a witchcraft pattern … despite the fact that the actual image of the witch has been replaced by other images such as that of the adulteress, the phantasm of the witch continues to exert its powerful grip on the public imagination of nineteenth-century Puritan New England. (Schwab 1996, xiii)

In this sense, even though belief in witches may have subsided, the principle of witch-hunts and the moral panics surrounding them has remained somewhat intact, which may be related to how perceptions of evil and the Devil have changed. In his exploration of demonology, Eugene Thacker traces the various phases that 'the demon' has historically passed through:

> there is the classical demon, which is elemental, and at once a help and a hindrance ('*the demon beside me*…'); there is the Medieval demon, a supernatural and intermediary being that is a tempter ('*demons surround me*…'); a modern demon, rendered both natural and scientific

> through psychoanalysis, and internalized within the machinations of the unconscious ('*I am a demon to myself…*'); and finally a contemporary demon, in which the social and political aspects of antagonism are variously attributed to the Other in relationships of enmity ('*demons are other people*'). (Thacker 2011, 25, emphasis in original)

In the present volume, as in Cohen's work, it is primarily the latter that is of interest to us. That is, the demonic or the devilish 'in its cultural function as a way of thinking about the various relationships between human individuals and groups' (Thacker 2011, 23).

The Evil and the Strange: Devils and Folklore

In his study of devils and demons in Greece, Charles Stewart (1991) shows how an array of both benevolent and malevolent beings known as *exotikà* have been around in both the past and present. These may be fairies, spirits, mermaids or demons. Some such creatures, he notes, tend to 'cluster around marginal areas of the physical environment – the mountains, springs, and caves that lie beyond the safe confines of the village' (Stewart 1991, xv). Yet, Stewart continues, 'this spatial exteriority comprises only one of their aspects'. *Exotikà* is also 'a set of figures that enables individuals to map and encompass the traumas and ambiguities of life (and) may be seen to offer a means of navigation within a morally structured cosmos' (ibid.). Moreover, *exotikà* may be seen as images 'that [enable] the expression and negotiation of sensitive issues … it is a medium for the community's dialogue with itself' (ibid., 108).

In approaching *exotikà*, Stewart departs from a conceptual division between demons and the devil. Whereas the former exists at the local level, the latter 'expresses a developed doctrinal Orthodox conception of Evil' (ibid., xvi). Yet, importantly, in ordinary speech the two were often conflated among his informants. *Exotikà* remains exterior creatures, which renders them different from the figure of the witch, another central image in the exploration of evil and otherness. Unlike the spatial exteriority of demons, witches tend to be 'both a member and an enemy of a given community' (ibid., 15), but equally tied to moral concepts.

What a principle such as *exotikà* reveals is a conflation of religious and colloquial evils, of morality and internal communal dialogue. It becomes a way society can talk to itself about itself, a principle also found in the classical folktales. In a study of the common roots of folktales, Sara Graca da Silva and Jamshid Tehrani (2016) found that one particular tale, 'The Smith and the Devil', had potentially been told in Indo-European societies for as long as 6,000 years. Although some have questioned the probability of this, what is commonly seen as the central outcome of this study is that the presence of a smith suggests that metallurgy may be older than expected (Pagel 2016). For our purpose here, however, it is the presence of the devil that is interesting. For, while the central structure of the

tale has remained relatively stable, and the smith always has been a smith, the devil has not always been a devil; it has also been a djinn and a general figure of death. It only became a devil in medieval times, as the then-prevalent figure of evil. Hence, what we are dealing with here is a form of malevolent otherness rather than a *specific* evil. And indeed, as Lancaster shows, 'imagination plays a prominent role panic mongering. The object of panic might be an imaginary threat (the devil, witches) or a real person or group portrayed in an imaginary manner' (Lancaster 2011, 24). As such, the real and the imagined often conflate when perceived folk devils emerge; they share a trait with both folklore and horror stories. The ghost stories of M. R. James serve as a case in point. His early stories were, in the words of Adam Scovell, 'essentially showcasing the relation between … enlightenment thinking and primitivism' (2017, 41–2). The demonic creatures or objects in these stories often haunted the 'definite sense of progress' within modernity in a 'violent rejoining with tradition' (ibid., 38). On the level of symbolism, the archaic rural landscapes of East Anglia played a vital role as a topography in these stories, along with protagonists that were often figures of science (such as an archaeologist or a psychologist). Some of James's later stories, however, were influenced by:

> the waves of large-scale tragedy that the writer bore witness to during the period of the First World War. … James' ghosts from this point no longer simply scare or warn off those foolish enough to meddle in pre-Enlightenment affairs but become totally unforgiving and murderous; after all, the post-Enlightenment thinking was coming full circle with the industrialized chaos of the twentieth century about to unleash its untold, real-life horrors. (ibid., 44)

Scovell finds a similar parallel with the contemporary situation in his own writing. As he reflects, while writing his book on folk horror, the UK opted to leave the European Union through the process that came to known as Brexit, a period in which national sentiments played a key role, and 'hours dreadful and things strange' is as apt a description of the post-Brexit climate as folk horror itself, with its normalization and spiked increase in xenophobic attacks, a gestalt mentality, any questioning of the result labelled as heresy by the pro-Brexit tabloids, and a widescale embracing of political fantasy and inwardness (ibid., 184). The irony of this, he continues, is that, while the far right embraced folklore and appropriated images of the past, folk horror actually works against these in that it 'blasts apart the romantic visions of an England gone by' and 'often portrays villains who harness similar techniques of indoctrination that contemporary far-right groups and figures use with a pathos that unveils how such power really functions' (ibid.).

Seen from this perspective, condensations of figures of fear and otherness via the imagination pertains as much to medieval folklore and early 19th-century ghost stories as it does to contemporary situations (see Khalvashi and Manning, Chapter 3). Jeffrey Tolbert (2013) illustrates this in his examination of the

internet phenomenon 'Slender Man', which combines the horror genre and traditional folklore to create a figure whose backstory is continuously built up online, and in a communal way in lieu of being created within an online forum. As such, 'Slender Man' is comparable to the *exotikà* described by Stewart in being a medium for the community's dialogue with itself, as well as a conflation between the real and the imagined in the sense that, although people within the online community are well aware that the figure is a creation, it is still a figure that causes real fear.

Morality and Panic

As argued by Rasmus Dyring, Cheryl Mattingly and Maria Louw, there has been 'a virtual explosion of anthropological literature arguing that ethics or morality … should be considered a central dimension of human practice' (Dyring, Mattingly and Louw 2017, 9; e.g. Heintz 2009; Howell 1997; Sykes 2009; Zigon 2008). A central aspect of many (but not all) recent anthropological engagements with the notion of morality has been to reorient it from a Durkheimian focus on rules and regulation to a focus on action and practical judgement (ibid., 21; see also Lambek 2010, 28). This has coincided with (or perhaps occurred because of) what Peter Hervik calls a recent 'omnipresence and dominance of discourses of morality and moralization of society', not least, he continues, as 'the issue of something being good or bad, acceptable or not, right or wrong, has become a dominant feature of modern news coverage and political communication' (Hervik 2018, 85). In a recent theme section of *Conflict and Society*, Mette-Louise Johansen, Therese Sandrup and Nerina Weiss also take up Cohen's notion of moral panic in relation to moral outrage. What risks go missing in Cohen's original conceptualization of moral panic, they argue, is that it is not always a question of linear causality. That is, 'the link between the outrageous act, the outrageous actor, the outraged, and the spectator is far from clear-cut' (2018, 8). As such, a moral outrage 'is not only a reaction but also an intensified dimension' of existing crises (ibid., 1).

The question of morality was one of the central aspects in Mary Douglas's (2002 [1966]) classical work *Purity and Danger*. Rules of pollution, Douglas writes, afford a means to support existing systems of morality, but they may also assist in determining right and wrong, good and bad, in situations where morality is ill-defined or where moral principles come in conflict. This is not unlike the boundary-making principles that Ben-Yehuda traces in the European witch-hunts (1992, 235). As such, accusations of wrongdoing appear not only in contexts where there is clarity around what is perceived as right and wrong but just as much in situations marked by ambiguity or what we in a previous volume have termed 'grey zones' (Harboe Knudsen and Frederiksen 2015).

Stories or news of folk devils may well be seen as forms of contemporary moral tales in that they can serve as forms of boundary-making, although not

in a geographical but rather a in a hierarchical sense. Cohen himself suggests seven 'familiar clusters of social identity' that often become the objects of moral panic (Cohen 2002 [1972], viii). These include violent, young, working-class males, school violence (bullying and shootouts), drugs (used by the wrong people at wrong places), child abusers, exposure to popular media, welfare cheats, and refugees and asylum seekers (ibid., viii–xxii). Young men in particular, notes Gary T. Barker, have been positioned within such moral hierarchies and 'in many parts of the world, it has become something of a national sport to demonize young men, particularly low-income young men' (Barker 2005, 4; see also Amit and Dyck 2012).

During Frederiksen's fieldwork among young unemployed men in the autonomous Republic of Ajara in Georgia, it was often noted that this was an area in which 'devils wandered'. Interestingly, while this was a commonly held belief, opinions varied in terms of who these devils actually were. While some held that they were the members of organized criminal networks, and materialized as either young men roaming the streets at night or old bosses directing the former's movements, others (particular those who were in fact members of criminal networks) held that these devils materialized as politicians or corrupt businessmen who lacked the moral codex that in fact existed within the mafia (Frederiksen 2013, 2015).

Zygmunt Bauman, in his classical work on consumerism and poverty, noted that 'what Americans hold against the underclass in their midst is that its dreams and the model of life it desires are so uncannily similar to their own' (Bauman 1998, 73). This has, he argues, entailed a reconfiguration of moral responsibility in that 'there is no more a moral question of defending the poor against the cruelty of their fate; instead, there is the ethical question of defending the right and proper lives of decent people against the assaults likely to be plotted in means streets, ghettos and no-go areas' (ibid., 77). Needless to say, this carries similarities with more recent events such as the European refugee crises, where antagonism against refugees and migrants in many European countries was exactly framed in a perspective where people in need, or people seeking out the same opportunities as residents of potential host countries, were framed as parasites and dangerous. Consequently, the moral obligation to help people in need was overruled by a perceived moral obligation to protect one's own from danger.

Socio-historical Backgrounds, or the Anthropology of Devilry

None of the terms depicted here – devil/folk/moral/panic – erupts or appears out of the blue. Whether individually or in combination, they are rooted in particular socio-economic and cultural histories. Examining the historical and cultural aspects that shape something such as the devilish allows us to grasp aspects of particular contexts through their form and content, as shown by a series of anthropologists.

Writing from a South American context, Mary Weismantel recounts the story of the *pishtaco*, 'a terrifying white stranger who attacks unsuspecting Indians with a knife, dragging them off to caves and hanging them upside down to carve up their bodies' (Weismantel 2005, 47). A significant aspect of the *pishtaco* figure is how, like devil figures mentioned earlier, it has continuously developed its appearance to mirror the contemporary context. Hence, while in the 1960s it rode on horseback, in a later version it drives a SUV. Second, its motivations are significant.

'The pishtaco sometimes has sex with his victims,' Weismantel writes, 'robs them of their money, or uses parts of their bodies for his own nefarious purposes, but his primary motivation is not a vampire's lust or a cannibal's hunger. What he wants most of all is to make a profit; he extracts fat in order to sell it' (ibid., 48).

Moreover, the *pishtaco* is white and shows 'the signs of physical inactivity, an indoor life, and a rich and abundant diet' (ibid., 57) and has become an image of a world economy run amok to a degree where starving Indians are robbed of what they have the least of: fat. Indeed, the horror here 'is not the scene of torture or lingering death; it is the moment of profit taking' (ibid., 62).

In Michael Taussig's (1980) work from Columbia, the devil is a symbol of the alienation of labour by capitalism and the estrangement produced by their immersion into a regime of repression and terror. The Columbian peasants use the devil as a means of representing capital, an unseen and hostile force that cannot be controlled at a local level. Gaston Gordillo, writing on Argentina, notes that in the context he studies 'The power of the diablos … was a historically and spatially specific type of power: one produced by capitalist conditions of exploitation' (Gordillo 2004, 34). Hence, although similarly related to capitalism, the terror experienced by Gordillo's informants differ from that describe by Taussig as it is 'not associated with systemic torture and mass murder. Rather, it is a fear of death embedded in appalling working conditions, high mortality rates linked to rampant disease, and political repression' (Taussig 2002, 34).

Accusations of devilry in relation to politics is of course not a one-way street aimed only at capitalism. One needs only to think of the events surrounding Joseph McCarthy's hunt for communists in the mid-20th century (Lancaster 2011, 23; Myers 2018, 65) or the devil accusations that went back and forth in the 2016 US presidential campaign. Right-wing blogs and news sites flourished with images and accusations of former US senator and Democratic presidential candidate in 2016 Hillary Clinton as either related to or directly being the devil, but, as shown by Katharina Gallant(Chapter 6), those same accusations have been levelled against the Republican candidate Donald Trump, who went on to win the election. And such accusations may be highly strategic and carry very real outcomes. As an illustration of this, Peter Hervik recounts the case of when, in 1990 during the Gulf War, a story broke out about Iraqi soldiers invading a Kuwait hospital taking newborn babies from incubators and leaving them to die on the floor. Subsequently, a young Arab girl testified to the

US Congress. This eventually took part in American support for an invasion of Iraq, yet:

> the incubator story was part of a campaign launched by a US-based public relations firm, Hill+Knowlton Strategies, which had been paid $10.8 million for improving Kuwait's nation branding, demonizing Hussein, and allegedly helping swing popular support for the US invasion. (Hervik 2018, 88)

Elizabeth Dunn recounts how the diabolic became a recurring motif in the refugee camps in Georgia, where she conducted fieldwork. The figure of the devil, she argues, became a 'framing device or a model that takes fragmentary information about half-sensed political forces and makes sense of them' (Dunn 2018, 142). 'The figure of the devil expresses terror, labels it as evil, and points the finger at *somebody* acting behind the scenes to cause it' (ibid., 146, emphasis in original). It is noteworthy that the IDPs did not suspect people around them of being actual demons or being literally demonically possessed. Rather than being a sign of sin, devilry was a pervasive suspicion (ibid., 146). This, for instance, made itself clear through competitions for bids or tenders afforded by Western humanitarian donor agencies. While the latter promoted these as being just and fair means of awarding something such as microcredit loans, the competitions were surrounded by suspicion and accusations of devilry as the winners of such grants were accused of unfairly having used private connections (ibid., 149). As such, the devil 'became a symbol of not only one's neighbors' strategies but also of the morally repugnant behavior that each of the IDPs was forced to engage in to survive' (ibid., 151).

What is clear in all these studies is that not only is the devil a potent symbol; it is also an extremely malleable figure in terms of what or who it connects to. Invoking the devil brings together perceptions of good and evil, right and wrong, self and other, and it reveals historically embedded or newly emerging antagonisms and stereotypes. Indeed, as Roger Lancaster has noted, the logics of moral panics relates to items 'from the anthropological curio cabinet' such as taboo and scapegoating, but the manner in which it operates relates to both 'archaic and postmodern forms' (Lancaster 2011, 23).

Writing on the recent surge in studies of morality within anthropology, Thomas Csordas has recently argued that what may not yet have been taken fully into account in such studies is the problem of evil, 'since if it were not for evil morality would be moot' (Csordas 2013, 525). And, while many contemporary scholars working on morality recognize the work of Emile Durkheim as a central vantage point for studying morality, Csordas argues that the existing anthropological literature on witchcraft may be just as fruitful a vantage point for taking evil into account. Classical studies such as Evans-Pritchard's study on Azande witchcraft (1937), Bruce Kapferer's study of Sinhalese demons (1983), Clyde Kluckhohn's on Navajo witches (1944), and Michael Taussigx's

aforementioned study on Columbian devils (1980) allow us, Csordas continues, to see how evil, and accusations of evil, operate in different societies as a human phenomenon.

What these previous studies have shown is, first, that evil may both operate as an internal and an external dimension, and second that looking into opposition between good and evil provides a framework for cross-cultural analysis that is not necessarily based on studies of religious evil (Csordas 2013, 536). Part of this position may be read as similar to Stanley Cohen's use of the notion of the folk devil. Although he, as already noted, did not himself look into previous studies of devilry, his turning of folk devilry into an analytical tool allows him to look into how evil and accusation operates in more secular contexts. Where Csordas, via studies of witchcraft, moves us further than Cohen is by adding the focus on the internal/external along with the possibility of a comparative angle on accusations of evil that go beyond the sphere of religion. Similar moves have been made by Michael Herzfeld in his study of buck-passing in Greek bureaucracy (1992) and by Steven Caton in his writing about the events surrounding the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq (2010), and it is also seen in this volume where some forms of fear and accusation are rooted in religion (Bratrud, Chapter 2) or superstition (Khalvashi and Manning, Chapter 3), whereas others have roots in political processes.

Grey, White, Black

In a previous volume we grabbled with the concept of 'grey zones' in anthropology, inspired by the writings of Primo Levi (Harboe Knudsen and Frederiksen 2015). Levi (1988) reflected on the murky zones that had emerged in concentration camps during the Second World War, as prisoners had supported SS officers in brutal ways to secure their own survival, obscuring concepts of 'we' and 'them'. In his writings, ambiguity and uncertainty became the key concepts in everyday life, as borders between right and wrong were merged, where 'we' became 'they' and good and evil only existed as obscure categories. At that time, we were preoccupied with the development in Eastern Europe following the Soviet breakdown, and how the various developments of the manifold societies soon appeared to be a far cry from the promised 'transition' to a brighter future with capitalism and democracy. Rather than being defined by clear concepts such as friend/enemy, socialism/capitalism, good/evil and then/now, things melted together and became a grey mixture in an everyday life, where many simply struggled to get by. The everyday was, as we emphasized, marked by ambiguities and often contradicting ambiguities.

There is an uncanny angle to the current project of analysing folk devils, compared with the last project of depicting grey zones. While we previously emphasized the murky, grey areas where good/bad and right/wrong categories had long ceased to exist, we have now moved along to an analysis of situations

where people are craving such simple categories, and where labels and 'us' vs 'them' and 'good' vs 'bad' are plentiful and in high demand. Without making too strict a comparison, as the previous volume was based on a different geographical area, it is still interesting to observe that many situations of confusion and obscurity and lack of clarity might transform into the very need of introducing black and white into the picture, of reinstalling categories of who is with us and who is against us. In other words, an ambivalent world of grey zones, which exist far beyond the borders of Eastern Europe, could itself be stipulating the need to reintroduce clean categories, clear operational lines between people contributing to maintaining society and people threatening to ruin it from within. The need to point out a *devil* who threatens to ruin the 'normal order' in society in turn helps to define that very same society. When it is pointed out what society is *not*, it correspondingly tells us what society should be. When the normal order is perceived as under threat, it defines and clarifies that very normality, by showing what is deviant and different. The idea of 'us' does not have the same strength if there is no 'them'. By maintaining and developing categories of 'the other' as a symbol of evil, ideas of the devil also serve the very purpose to create and maintain that very society, the boundaries of society and the perception of order.

In 1983, Benedict Anderson published his highly influential book *Imagined Communities*, where he theorizes the development and spread of the nation state. Anderson argues that the nation state is a social construct upheld by a belief in the existence of a nationwide community (1991 [1983]). In his work, Anderson outlines a number of preconditions that made it possible for the modern nation state to emerge: the dusk of religious faith as a dominating doctrine, the emergence of a competing secular view, the standardization of national languages and the emergence of print capitalism. As mass printing of books and newspapers became possible, the same information was made available to large numbers of people. Indeed, the moment when people became capable of reading the same stories in the same newspapers and refer to the same events and stories in the same standardized language, a language that developed on the basis of the decline of dialects, people were also able to imagine a communion with members of the same nation. And this even though they never had met most of them, let alone heard of them. Feelings and understandings of communion and belonging emerged with, and partly because of, print capitalism.

Today, this is even more the case as news travels with unpreceded speed via online newspapers, online forums and social media. We are today capable of communicating directly with members of the same nation through different threads, yet still without knowing them or meeting them. While these developments were key in defining the nation and fostering people to believe in it, they also efficiently defined the non-belonging and the very boundaries of this community. Moral panics are carried by the speed of media and further stipulate a feeling of belonging among the large majority, by pointing out a deviant and even dangerous minority. In our examples, the threatening devils come

in shape of LGBT persons, working migrants, refugees, criminals, Roma and adulteresses, to mention but a few. Matters of belonging are thus both the devil from outside and the devil within. When the media targets a particular group as being deviant and inflates concern or even fear in the population, it becomes a political project to catch the ball and make changes. And devils are excellent political projects that give rich opportunity to emphasize a particular political line that leads back to the normalization of society. By defining the threat to society, society in return is defined by this very threat. This may be seen as society having a conversation with itself, but also of society, or groups within society, being brought into existence through the process of othering. While this may result in new forms, it may also result in severe divisions. Hence, society is not necessarily (re)constituting itself but also broken apart.

The volume comes at a time where we see multiple examples of politicians and common people alike finding new devils in society, or reinforcing their energy in pointing to old and long-existing devils inside their societies. As one example, Brexit cast shockwaves in modern Europe with the British demand to leave the union. The UK vote on the European Union membership referendum was followed by an increase in conflicts within British society, where verbal and physical attacks on minorities were on the rise, just as after the Brexit vote it became more legitimate to voice racist opinions. Europe's refugee crisis serves as another example: Germany's initial strategy to open up for more refugees led to chancellor Angela Merkel's decrease in popularity. There has been an overall tendency of changing rhetoric towards refugees, as they are increasingly highlighted as dangerous others and a threat to society, while their reasons for fleeing in the first place are downplayed. These arguments are supported by Amadu Khan (Chapter 10), who argues that media and politicians alike tend to create a negative image of asylum seekers. Thereby we see how refugees are referred to as migrants, which in itself is a way of questioning the legality of them escaping war and poverty.

Another issue has been the Covid pandemic, which since the outbreak in early 2020 has generated fear and, along with fear, a search for scapegoats. An example from Denmark was when the prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, pointed out that the infection rate was higher among Somali communities in Denmark than among ethnic Danes (Karkov 2020). This did not differ much from the tendencies during the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918–1920, when poorer working families were blamed for spreading the virus and causing death. In this way, certain groups are pointed out as infectious and dirty and thus a danger for the rest. When the situation with the Somalis is examined closer, it turned out that the reason for the Somalis' comparatively higher infection rate was the fact that the majority worked jobs where they were more prone to getting infected, e.g. as bus drivers and caretakers. Thus, the explanation behind the numbers was not, as some assumed, that they were badly integrated but the nature of the jobs they held.

While finalizing this introduction, the hashtag 'Hang Mike Pence' spread rapidly on the social media platform Twitter during the insurrection in Washington on 6 January 2021, as the then US vice president had acknowledged

the election of President Joe Biden. This shows both how the current media landscape allows accusations to spread ever swifter and also how the direction of accusation can quickly change – from Mike Pence being in Trump's inner circle to his being perceived by Trump supporters as a threat. And, when speaking of the actuality of the current volume, it becomes incumbent to mention the presidency of Trump, as his way to power – and way during his power – was characterized by naming devils and listing threats to the US. In this way, we have seen how words like 'invasion', 'killer', 'predator' and 'animal' have been used many times when discussing migration and migrants. As analysts have argued, the words of a president do matter: it legitimizes a negative rhetoric towards migrants – or, even worse, it justifies violence against them.[1] While Trump, on the one hand, characterized his presidency by naming devils and threats, he has, on the other hand, himself become a personification of a devil for the left wing, as argued by Gallant (Chapter 6).

Another interesting angle to the persistence of devilry in the Trump presidency is that Trump himself has named investigations into 'Russia-gate' and the impeachment trial as witch-hunts.[2] Thus, there was no lack of naming devils or escalating panics during Trump's presidency, where he both pointed to existing 'devils' in society and became the personification of the devil for some, while using the rhetoric of witch-hunts when opponents investigated possible abuses of power. Thus, what and when something is developing signs of a moral panic is closely associated with one's political beliefs and one's sense of right and wrong. This was also evident when the social movement against racially motivated violence Black Lives Matter arranged protests in cities across the US following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. Soon after, right-wing media were quick to label these not as protests but as riots, and in doing so attempted to reverse accusation. That is, rather than seeing African American protesters as victims of police brutality, they themselves came to be portrayed as perpetrators.

If anything, we are currently witnessing a tendency where clear-cut boundaries are in high demand. As illustrated in this volume, the East/West debates in Europe today are as vivid as ever (see Svatoňová and Harboe Knudsen, Chapters 7 and 11), while the debate on refugees is at its height (see Khan, Chapter 10), just as the debate on Roma minorities is not seeming to lose relevance (Ivasiuc and Slačálek, Chapters 8 and 9). Thus, if we return to the spectrum of colours, it appears that fear, insecurity and blurred categories in any society may lead people to reclaim a sense of right and wrong, even if 'right' comes to exist in the overly large shadow of 'wrong', as the chapters in this volume demonstrate.

Overview of the Volume

The volume is divided into three sections, the first of which is entitled 'Devils Within'. Here the folk devil emerges as an internal figure. Focusing on questions

of gentrification, goblins in eerie cities, and accusations of sorcery and sugar as devilish, the chapters focus on communal aspects where the folk devil does not appear as an outsider but as a problematic insider.

Elias le Grand draws on a case study of contested societal reactions to the middle-class hipster figure and gentrification in contemporary London. He shows how public reactions involve forms of class politics and classificatory struggles over the moral meaning gentrification processes and the role of the hipster figure in the latter, and, through this, discusses how the folk devil can be conceptualized as a social type by drawing on Bourdieu's research on classification.

The chapter by Tom Bratrud ethnographically explores a Christian revival movement in Vanuatu led by children. Examining events surrounding the hanging of two adults accused of sorcery, Bratrud challenges the assumption that moral panics are only created with the assistance of mass media, showing instead that they also arise in contexts where gossip, dreams and visions play a similar role in both defining social problems and moral panic.

In their contribution, Tamta Khalvashi and Paul Manning focus on traditional folk devils in the form of goblins and spectres in cities of the Republic of Georgia. These are traditional figures of local folklore that have not disappeared with modernity but rather re-emerged through new anxieties and moral conditions. Moreover, while devilry is often perceived as humans taking on non-human (or devilish) characteristics, Khalvashi and Manning present a case where the opposite is actually at stake, namely where non-human entities such as goblins take on human characteristics. In describing this, Khalvashi and Manning add a fascination aspect to how folk devilry and panic or anxiety may intertwine.

Susanne Højlund's chapter focuses on how a food item, namely sugar, suddenly emerged as devilish in Danish children's institutions. How, she asks, has it become possible within a relative short number of years to change the perceptions of sugar and agree on it as a dangerous foodstuff to an extent that there are written rules for its use for nearly all children in Denmark? As with the previous chapters, the devil here is something, or someone, that has always been there but which suddenly (re)emerges as particularly evil.

While these four contributions align with Cohen's study in terms of focusing on the emergence of folk devilry from within, they also all move beyond Cohen by including new theoretical perspectives, from Bourdieusian notions of categorization (Gallant), Melanesian perspectives on personhood and relationality (Bratrud), hauntology (Khalvashi and Manning), and anthropological studies of the interrelation between food and morality (Højlund). Moreover, the chapters in this section broaden our understanding of what may actually constitute a folk devil in the first place.

The second section of the volume, 'Devilry from Above', explores the institutionalization of folk devils. Whether focusing on media campaigns, policymaking, or political discussions of borders, the chapters in this section highlight the increasing role of folk devils in political practices and media representations. Media representations were also central to Stanley Cohen's argument, but the

principle of sensational news that may serve as a catalyst for panic is undoubtedly more widespread today than 50 years ago. 'Today alarmist stories and sensational journalism play out in real time' writes Lancaster (2011, 26), and both media conglomerates and political factions 'provoke panic to sell newspapers, to forge "community", to curb dissent, or to foster various kinds of social discipline'. The combination of sensationalism, politics and fake news has proven fertile ground for moral panics.

Drawing mainly on examples from France and the UK, Matt Clement examines the actors and institutions that carry out particular forms of victimization through prejudice, and analyses the mechanism employed by state actors to create or even boost climates of fear. Through this, he shows how it is often those labelling others as folk devils that in the end constitute the greatest threats to society.

The presidency of Donald Trump is another core example of the role of sensationalism in politics. As mentioned earlier, he has accused political opponents of both devilry and moral degradation, but such accusations have gone both ways. In her examination of German media coverage of Trump, Katharina Gallant shows in her chapter how Trump has been portrayed as politically and morally inadequate. Bringing together Cohen's traditional framework with Paul Joosse's work on charismatic leadership, Gallant shows how Trump has emerged as a devil figure for the left wing in Europe, but one that they have few options for dealing with.

In the following chapter, Eva Svatoňová introduces us to how internet forums such as Facebook can be used in creating and spreading misleading stories and stimulating fear and panic. With the example of the Czech society, she analyses various web forums that are based on anti-LGBT rights and anti-feminist ideologies, promoting these as threats to nuclear families and traditional gender norms. Svatoňová shows the paradoxical portrayal of LGBT activists as, on the one hand, freaks living on the fringe of society, not much more than a laughing stock, and, on the other hand, as a threat with the potential power to destroy traditional values in Czech society.

In the chapter by Ana Ivasiuc, we follow the anti-Roma laws in Italy, where the government has moved away from inclusion policies for the Roma to downright ethnic repression, policing and surveillance. Despite the fact that the majority of Roma are no longer nomadic, the public still associate them with nomadism and use their non-nomadic lifestyle as a weapon against them, by monitoring the camps closely and creating special laws that secure the continuous repression of the Roma. Thus, while their status as outsiders and nomads previously made them devilish figures and imagined as travelling and stealing Gypsies, it is now their lack of nomadism that is seen as a threat, as the Roma have now settled in society.

What all chapters in this section show is that determining whether or not particular forms of sensationalism are based on falsity or truth matters little in processes of moral outcries. As with the classical folk tales and ghost

stories, they ignite fear regardless, and, whether ignited by political discourses, the media or internet phenomena, they may end up being perceived as actual realities despite their origins in rumours or false accusations.

Chapters in the third section of the volume, 'From the Devils' Point of View', engage with a perspective that is oddly absent from Cohen's work, namely the perspective of the perceived folk devils themselves. We never really hear in Cohen's book from the mods and rockers themselves, but, as the chapters in this section make clear, adding this angle to the study of folk devils and moral panics provides us with a better understanding of the consequences of accusations and demonization.

Based on a study of anti-Roma mobilizations in the Czech Republic, Ondřej Slačálek examines how the image of the Roma as a folk devil exhibits not only stigmatizing characteristics but also complicated relationships in terms of tension and expectations between the 'decent and productive majority' and the 'inadaptable minority'. Through this, Slačálek shows how 'given that decency means complying with norms defined by the behaviour of the majority, the minority is at the very least an object of suspicion from the start'.

Amadu Khan critically reviews policies and news reporting in the UK that create, circulate and sustain a labelling of asylum seekers as folk devils. Drawing on interviews with asylum seekers on their preferred forms of representation, Khan argues that, while the news media is mainly blamed for moral panics and representations of asylum seekers as folk devils, policymaking is equally complicit in the current demonization of asylum seekers in the UK.

The chapter by Ida Harboe Knudsen analyses an increased number of arrests made on young Lithuanian burglars in Denmark. Following the newspaper hype and political reactions to the burglaries, a distorted picture of the 'devils' is produced, letting the public believe that the Lithuanian lawbreakers are particularly inhumane, ruthless and violent. Despite the police reporting that they never have had any violent incidents with Lithuanians, the public image prevails. This negative image ends up affecting their treatment and their rights in Danish detention centres, as prison guards act in accordance with the image, rather than in accordance with their own experience. This makes Lithuanians a particularly vulnerable group of inmates in Denmark.

Victor de Munck presents an empirical case of a young Sri Lankan woman who is ostracized from her local community for being an adulteress, despite no one in the community having any real proof of this being the case. De Munck engages with the preceding chapters of this volume in order to find comparative connections to both understand this case and to situate it in the contexts of the symbolic roles folk devils may play in a society.

Following this is Paul Joosse's Afterword, which returns the focus specifically to Cohen and considers how questions of contextualization and historicity can be productively added to Cohen's original framework, as shown by the chapters of this volume.

Conclusion

Alan MacFarlane has argued that, in the European context, the notion of 'evil' disappeared as the witch-hunts stopped and the rationality of science took over (MacFarlane 1985). This Weberian view has been challenged in recent anthropological studies (e.g. Bubandt and van Beek 2014; Musharbash and Presterudstuen 2014; Steffen, Johncke and Raahauge 2015). And, as this volume illustrates, perceptions evil has not merely come to reside in fantasy or science fiction but remains an aspect of social and political life. On the final pages of his book, Stanley Cohen himself states that:

> it is not enough to say that witches should not have been burnt or that in some other society or in another century they might not have been called witches; one has to explain why and how certain people get to the stake now. (Cohen 2002 [1972], 233)

Cohen was pessimistic about the future of moral panic, stating that 'more moral panics will be generated and others, as yet nameless, folk devils will be created' (ibid.). If anything, this volume proves his prediction correct.

In his introduction to the third edition of the book, Cohen comments on the inherent dualities of folk devils:

> They are *new* (lying dormant perhaps, but hard to recognize; deceptively ordinary and routine, but invisibly creeping up the moral horizon) – but also *old* (camouflaged versions of traditional and well-known evils). They are damaging *in themselves* – but also merely *warning signs* of the real, much deeper and more prevalent condition. They are transparent (anyone can see what's happening) – but also opaque: accredited experts must explain the perils hidden behind the superficially harmless (decode a rock song's lyrics to see how they led to a school massacre). (Cohen 2002 [1972], viii, emphases in original).

Cohen suggest a series of theoretical extensions that were not available when he first started writing about folk devils, but which have proven fruitful additions to examine the theme. These include social constructionism, media studies and risk theory (Cohen 2002 [1972], xxvi). Added in this volume is an anthropological perspective, and, as Peter Myers notes, the ethnographic method may forcefully correct distortions seen in the popular or media depiction of particular groups and through this aid 'in the reduction of stigma for those mistakenly attributes of "folk devils"' (Myers 2018, 75). Our hope is that this volume will contribute to ongoing discussions of moral panics within anthropology, sociology, criminology and media studies, but just as much that it will reach some of those group that play a vital role in unravelling and containing these

situations, such as journalists and policymakers. What the chapters that follow collectively point to is that the figure of the folk devil, unfortunately, is alive and well and that the moral panics surrounding them continue to have negative consequences for those who find themselves in their midst.

Notes

[1] See 'Trump Used Words Like "Invasion" and "Killer" to Discuss Immigrants at Rallies 500 Times' (*USA Today*, 8 August 2019, https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2019/08/08/trump-immigrants-rhetoric-criticized-el-paso-dayton-shootings/1936742001, accessed 5 December 2019).

[2] See '"It's a Witch-Hunt": Donald Trump Lashes Out as Impeachment Calls Grow [Video]' (*The Guardian*, 25 September 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2019/sep/25/its-a-witch-hunt-donald-trump-lashes-out-as-impeachment-calls-grow-video, accessed 5 December 2019) and 'Trump Russia Affair: Key Questions Answered' (BBC, 24 July 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42493918, accessed 5 December 2019).

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PART I

Devils Within

CHAPTER 1

Folk Devils and the Hipster Figure

On Classification Struggles, Social Types and Figures in Moral Panic Research

Elias le Grand
Stockholm University

Introduction

Over the last four decades, moral panic research has undergone much fruitful critical interrogation and theoretical development, recently in dialogue with research on moral regulation (Critcher 2009; Hier 2011; Hunt 2011), (de)civilizing processes (Rohloff 2018) and risk (Ungar 2001). In these debates, the moral panic concept has been revised and critiqued from a number of angles. Yet, during this time, its twin concept, the folk devil, has been rather undertheorized and rarely subjected to reflexive analysis (Introduction and Afterword in this volume; Walsh 2019). Indeed, Stanley Cohen admits that *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, the book in which he first developed and applied the two concepts, 'was more a study of moral panics than of folk devils' (Cohen 2002 [1972], xlviii). One reason for this is that he departs from an interactionist perspective, which focuses on how dominant actors in society label certain other actors as deviant and delinquent, rather than on how the latter respond to such labelling. In Cohen's analysis, the folk devil is primarily conceived as a particular

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social type: 'In the gallery of types that society erects to show its members which roles should be avoided and which should be emulated', youth subcultures and other marginalized groups 'have occupied a constant position as folk devils: visible reminders of what we should not be' (Cohen 2002 [1972], 2). The folk devil type, then, is conceived as having a certain role position. During the outbreaks of moral panics, the folk devilling process entails that an individual, group or category is suddenly positioned by a significant section of people in a particular socio-historical context as a threat to widely shared fundamental values. Cohen argues that moral entrepreneurs and other actors can thereby project their fears, resentments and anxieties onto the folk devil, who becomes a scapegoat that is blamed for social problems and deployed to detract attention from the 'real' causes of those problems. As with many other moral panics over young people (Threadgold 2019), the mods and rockers in Cohen's study are represented by members of an older generation as undeserving youths (on the category of youth in Cohen's analysis, see Joosse, Afterword).

Moreover, like Cohen, subsequent research typically conceives of the relationship between moralizers and folk devil as highly asymmetrical (see, e.g., chapters 8, 10 and 11 in this volume). Indeed, some researchers argue that moral panics are always targeted against subordinated groups and instigated by elites to reinstate status quo (Critcher 2011; Hall et al. 2013 [1978]). Classic moral panic theory has been critiqued for underplaying the agency of folk devils and for conceiving of the societal reaction to them in overly unified, consensual terms (deYoung 2013). Rather, moral panics are contested phenomena in which folk devils frequently 'fight back' (Ajzenstadt 2009; McRobbie and Thornton 1995) and sometimes even act as 'provocateurs' who intentionally initiate social reactions (Walsh 2017, 2019). Relatedly, Mary deYoung (2013) critiques what she argues is a one-sided focus on marginalized folk devils in moral panic research. Instead, she calls for the analysis of 'feisty folk devils', such as middle-class actors, and of how they deploy social capital and other resources to affect their stigmatized position. Research on middle-class folk devils has explored the moralization of social workers and other social service professionals (Warner 2013). Another case is the moralizing social reactions that emerge over helicopter parents, who are often cast as coming from privileged social backgrounds (Nelson 2019). However, Michael Levi (2008) argues that the white-collar crimes of the economic elite, such as identity and investment fraud, are seldom subject to widespread hostile societal reactions. Illegal financial activities are often covert or represented as exceptions posing little threat to the moral social order. Economic elites also wield the power to influence media and political institutions to temper or mute possible public indignation. Similar factors may explain why excessive and ritualized drinking practices within this group are seldom folk devilled (Bailey and Griffin 2017, 38).

In this chapter I attempt to contribute to these debates by clarifying the folk devil concept and its role in moral panic research. To this end, I extend Cohen's

brief account and discuss how the folk devil can be conceptualized as a social type. I draw on Bourdieu's research on classification to conceive of the folk devil type as a particular social identity position formed through classification struggles over value and recognition between different social groups. Moreover, I make a distinction between the concept of social type and the related notion of figure, to examine how certain figures may or may not be folk devilled during moral panic processes. This is explored by drawing on a case study of the contested societal reaction to a particular 'figure of youth' (Threadgold 2019), namely the middle-class hipster and its role in gentrification processes. The next section discusses research on the concepts of social type and figure.

Conceptualizing Social Types and Figures

Conceptualizing the folk devil as a social type means discussing a concept around which numerous conceptions and perspectives have been formed in the history of sociology and related fields. The analysis of social types can be identified in early social research, such as the work of Marx and Engels, although the term itself was not used (le Grand 2019). Broadly speaking, social types are conceptualized as primarily emic or etic categories. As etic concepts, social types are analytical constructions made by the researcher to interpret a social phenomenon. Etic concepts of types can be traced to Georg Simmel (1971). While differing conceptions of social types can be identified in Simmel's work (see le Grand 2019, 413), in his most influential writings, such as his essay on the stranger, they are conceived as abstractions where focus lies on a typical set of characteristics that pertain to an actor by virtue of her position vis-à-vis other actors in a particular form of interaction (Simmel 1971, 143–9). Influenced by Simmel, similar conceptions of types have been deployed within the so-called Chicago School of sociology, not the least in Robert E. Park's (1928) and Everett V. Stonequist's (1965 [1937]) enduring research on the marginal man. The problem with these foundational studies, however, is that the role of cultural processes in the formation of types is underplayed and largely reduced to socio-spatial forces (see Alexander 2004).

The role of cultural processes is addressed in Alfred Schütz's phenomenological work on social types, such as the stranger (Schütz 1944) and the homecomer (Schütz 1945). Types are here analytical categories used to conceptualize character types that are linked to actors' cognitive schemas and social roles. Yet, his phenomenological analysis cannot account for the role of social processes in the formation of types that lie outside the domain of subjective meaning-making (le Grand 2019). Orrin E. Klapp (1958) similarly conceives of social types as informal social roles. They are emic categories widely used by individuals in society and typically take on heroic, villainous or foolish connotations (Klapp 1962). As etic categories, types are functional in so far as they aid individuals in how to orient themselves to one another in interaction. They are also tied to

social control and also show individuals what roles that are desirable and which are not. In this sense, social types can be interpreted as 'good' for society.

In his analysis of the folk devil of moral panics, Cohen similarly argues that folk devils as types are role models constructed by society in order to, as quoted earlier, 'show its members which roles should be avoided and which should be emulated' (Cohen 2002 [1972], 2). But, unlike Klapp, Cohen is critical of how marginalized groups are labelled as deviant folk devils and how such labelling, as we learned earlier, serves to reproduce the existing moral order. As he writes, 'The focus [of an interactionist approach] is on how society labels rule-breakers as belonging to certain deviant groups and how, once the person is thus type cast, his acts are interpreted in terms of the status to which he has been assigned' (Cohen 2002 [1972], 4). Relatedly, in recent work on the public reactions to whistle-blowers, Magnus Haglunds (2009) further develops interactionist research on social types. He conceives of types as dynamic social identities and status positions formed relationally through an actor's position in a particular group.

As an emic concept, social types and the related notion of figure have been conceived as classifications, often tied to nicknames, that are used by people in society. While Simmel's, Schütz's and other analyses of types as analytical categories can be criticized for being detached from their socio-historical context (Barker, Harms, and Lindquist 2013a), emic analyses of types are rooted in empirical research. In Walter Benjamin's (1969) enduring work, the flâneur is conceived as an urban middle-class male associated with a particular style of life, whose emergence and demise are linked to historical processes under modernity in 19th-century Paris. Unlike Benjamin's work, many uses of types as emic concepts lack theoretical grounding. One can mention the urban field studies in the Chicago School, which feature a plethora of social types such as the hobo (Anderson 1968 [1923]), the jack-roller (Shaw 1930) and the taxi-dancer (Cressey 1932).

Recently, at least two strands of research have deployed the concept of figure in productive ways. Anthropological scholars (Barker, Harms, and Lindquist 2013a, 2013b; Lindquist 2015) conceive of figures as individuals who symbolize wider sociocultural and historical processes including particular 'structures of feeling' (Lindquist 2015, 163). Like Benjamin, they argue that an analysis of figures may illuminate wider socio-historical processes. Figures are dialectically formed vis-à-vis the 'ground' of social life. As such, they are not simply products of a historical context but also actors who take part in shaping the latter. In cultural and feminist studies, Imogen Tyler's (2013) analyses of figures have many parallels with much research on moral panics and folk devils, although this is not acknowledged. Similar to the folk devil, figures are formed through affective processes of abjection and othering wherein they become the target for governance and coercive measures by dominant actors. Figures are therefore often marginalized actors, as Tyler's (2013) research on the illegal immigrant, the Gypsy and the benefits cheat shows. In line with moral panic

theory, the abject social reactions to figures emerge during periods of crisis and sociocultural change with high social anxiety.

Moreover, some recent studies of moral panics have identified folk devils as figures, although the term has seldom been theorized explicitly or deployed analytically. Thus, research on Islamophobia has explored the figures of the 'Muslim on-street groomer' (Britton 2019) and the 'Muslim-terrorist-refugee' (Martin 2015) as folk devils. And Steven Threadgold contends that youths in different social and historical contexts regularly become 'figures of moral panics' (Threadgold 2019, 6). The formation of these figures reflects generational oppositions as members of an older generation moralize young people as, for instance, dangerous, lazy or irresponsible (Threadgold 2019). Figures of youth are often class-related, racialized and gendered. Thus, figures such as the bogan in Australia (Threadgold 2018) and the chav in Britain (le Grand 2015) serve to folk devil certain young white working-class people. One can also mention the ladette, which is a working-class figure of excessive young femininity who is cast as a threat to the family as a social institution (Jackson and Tinkler 2007). Another example is the *pixadores* in Brazil, who are marginalized urban youths engaged in practices of public writing (called *pixacao* or *pixo*) and frequently constructed as undermining the moral and social order (Araya López 2020). This chapter will explore how the hipster figure, typically characterized as a young, creative middle-class person, is positioned in the moralization process. But first I will discuss how the concepts of social type and figure can be conceptualized and deployed in moral panic research by drawing on Bourdieu's work on classification.

Social Types and Figures in Classification Struggles

Following the dividing line between emic and etic conceptions discussed above, I will now make the case for making a distinction between social types and figures (see also Lindquist 2015) so as to clarify their meanings and how they can be utilized in studies of moral panics. Social types, such as the folk devil, is an analytical category or 'epistemic individual' (Bourdieu 1988 [1984]) that is 'constructed by the researcher to conceptualise a general set of characteristics of an actor (individual, category or group), which is derived from their social position and relationships with other actors' (le Grand 2019, 420). To this end, social types are dynamic social identities (Haglunds 2009).

As folk devils and other types are social identity positions constructed by the researcher, they may not be identified by lay individuals in the same terms. Social types are similar to Weber's ideal types in that a limited set of features are abstracted out (Almog 1998). As the study of folk devils has shown, this enables the comparison of types over different socio-historical contexts. A disadvantage is that, in applying such a general concept in empirical research, one may risk oversimplifying complex processes and identity categories (Barker, Harms,

and Lindquist 2013a; Lindquist 2015). Apart from the folk devil, the most commonly used social type in moral panic research is probably the moral entrepreneur (Cohen 2002 [1972]). One can also mention the provocateur, recently introduced by Walsh (2019) as a subtype of the folk devil. The provocateur seeks to create moral panics by inciting public reactions of moral indignation through activities such as terrorism (Walsh 2017, 2019). Another moral public position that can be interpreted as a social type is the victim-hero discussed by Sarah Wright (2016). This type 'is characterised by his/her suffering and by his/her actions of retribution in an effort to redeem the virtue of his/her loved one or of themselves' (Wright 2016, 331).

Unlike types, figures are empirically situated social identities, often identified through certain nicknames in lay discourse. Their formation and demise cannot be analysed separately from their particular sociocultural and historical context. Figures are constituted relationally through material and symbolic practices as well as through the circulation of affects (Threadgold 2018; Tyler 2013). Moreover, figures may be positioned as different social types depending on the context. Thus, Wright (2016) examines how the figure of the bereaved mother can be positioned as a victim-hero in media narratives about crime. In a similar fashion, the mods and rockers in Cohen's foundational study can be interpreted as particular figures who were positioned as folk devil types by the media.

In what follows, I will show how an analysis of the folk devil type in relation to particular figures can be deployed in moral panic research by drawing on Bourdieu's work on classification struggles. In simplified terms, Bourdieu (1984 [1979], 1985) argues that forms of classification are rooted in hierarchical relationships and socio-symbolic struggles between social groups who have differing access to economic, cultural and social capital. Such struggles are not simply for status, resources and symbolic domination but on a deeper level about recognition and worth. In a recent paper, Arnaud Dandoy (2015) contributes to moral panic research by drawing on a Bourdieusian field analysis. However, Bourdieu's framework of classification has been surprisingly neglected in this strand of research. Drawing on Bourdieu, I suggest that social types and figures are social identity categories that can be stakes and agents in socio-symbolic struggles between social groups. As identity positions, types and figures are constituted dialectically through the classification of self and other.

Moreover, a framework of classification also serves to underpin moralization processes, including the volatile outbreaks of moral panics. Such processes centre on the moral dimension of classification struggles and the symbolic domination over moral values. Moralization is dialectical as classification not only entails folk devilling certain actors as immoral; it also serves to cast the moralizers as morally righteous and good (Hier 2011; Hunt 2011). Moralization processes therefore have a 'hegemonic role' (Hunt 2011, 62). This is aptly articulated by Nachman Ben-Yehuda:

> As Stanley Cohen pointed out in 1972, moral panics are about representations, images and coercion: about which sector of a society has the power to represent and impose its images, world views and interests onto others as being both legitimate and valid. In other words, moral panics are about struggles for moral hegemony over interpretations of the legitimacy (or not) of prevailing social arrangements and material interests. (Ben-Yehuda 2009, 3)

I will interpret this quest for moral hegemony to involve classification struggles between unequally positioned groupings in society. Alan Hunt (2011) suggests that notions of middle-class respectability are a hegemonic project enacted through moral panics and other moralization projects. Research in a British context shows that middle-class respectability is a dominant moral value standard (Sayer 2005; Skeggs 2004) that goes back to at least Victorian times (Pearson 1983). Moreover, moral panic researchers contend that moral panics erupt when dominant groups' hegemonic projects undergo a crisis (Hall et al. 2013; Young 2009). In the framework presented in this paper, moral panics and other public conflicts similarly emerge when forms of symbolic domination are under threat and challenged. During such episodes, particular figures may or may not be positioned as folk devils, as will be explored more at length in the following section.

Public Contestations over the Hipster Figure and Gentrification

The Hipster Figure

I will now discuss how classification struggles, the folk devil as a social type and the notion of figure can be deployed in moral panic research, by focusing on a case study of the societal reactions to the hipster figure in a gentrified part of east London (for a more extensive analysis, see le Grand 2020a). The hipster figure is often imagined as a young, trendy, highly stylized, urban, middle-class person (le Grand 2020b; Michael 2015; Ravn and Demant 2017; Threadgold 2018) engaged in occupations or entrepreneurship in the creative industries (le Grand 2020b; Scott 2017). Public classifications of hipsters very much correspond to Bourdieu's (1984) description of the lifestyles and occupations among those who belong to the middle-class faction he calls the new cultural intermediaries.

The hipster holds an ambiguous status position as its aesthetics and lifestyles invoke both prestige and mockery from others (le Grand 2020b). The cultural practices associated with the hipster figure function as an 'emerging' form of cultural capital rooted in Anglo-American popular culture and notions of trendiness (Prieur and Savage 2013), which can be distinguished from

traditional forms of highbrow culture favoured by older generations of middle-class people (le Grand 2020b). Moreover, the hipster has increasingly become visible as a consumer, dweller and entrepreneur in studies on the gentrification of urban working-class districts (le Grand 2020b; Zukin 2010). As a gentrifier, the hipster is a controversial figure said to contribute to an area becoming fashionable and popular (Douglas 2012; le Grand 2020b; Zukin 2010). But the presence of hipsters allegedly also leads to rising rents and living costs, as well as to the exclusion of long-time dwellers (Brown-Saracino and Rumpf 2011; Langegger 2016; le Grand 2020b). I will now examine how controversies around the hipster figure and gentrification emerge in moralizing public reactions.

Social Reactions to Gentrification and the Hipster Figure in East London

I will argue that the ambiguous status conferred to the hipster can partly explain why this figure has become the object of moralizing social reactions and attempts at folk devilling. In London, there have in recent years been several outbursts of public indignation against the gentrification of the retail landscape, which have notably featured the hipster figure as a symbol and cause. In Hackney, The Advisory eatery opened in the premises of what used to be the Asian Women's Advisory Centre, and in Deptford the Job Centre pub opened on the site of the former job centre. These establishments were seen as visible symbols of the gentrification of their respective areas, both of which rank among the poorest boroughs in London. What caused controversy was how social institutions targeting groups with typically fewer resources in society were used by business owners to ironically brand their hipster establishments (Elliot 2014; Frizzell 2013).

Public contestations over the hipster and gentrification became particularly evident during two social reactions centring on the Cereal Killer Cafe on Brick Lane, an iconic street situated in a gentrified part of London's East End. The area in and around the street have undergone gentrification since the late 1990s, resulting in large increases in property prices and rents. Other indicators of gentrification in the neighbourhood include the establishment of an artist community and creative industries. Yet, the social inequalities in the area are steep. The borough of Tower Hamlets, where Brick Lane is located, is one of the poorest boroughs of London. At the same time, the wealth in the City of London is a mere walking distance from the street.

The Cereal Killer Cafe, a café primarily serving cereals, was opened in December 2014 by identical twins Alan and Gary Keery amid much media coverage. The twins, who were photographed sporting beards, tattoos and print shirts, were often identified in the media as hipsters, as was the café. Thus, to *The Guardian* the twins gave cereals a 'hipster makeover' and described the café as 'a shrine to the 1980s [with] Transvision Vamp on the stereo; paintings

of fictional serial killers made out of cereal alongside novelty cereal packets from the 1980s or early 90s' (Jeffreys 2014). The café, with its pop cultural aesthetic and niche products, is a prime example of the type of value-added micro-entrepreneurship associated with hipsters (Scott 2017).

During a Channel 4 interview, Gary Keery was asked if their cereals were 'affordable to the area'. He responded that 'I think it's cheap for the area, really'. When the reporter told him that Tower Hamlets is 'one of the poorest parts of London', he appeared surprised, saying, 'This isn't one of the poorest areas there is, is it?' When pressed if locals could afford to pay £3.20 a cereal bowl, Keery admitted, 'If they're poor, probably not then', and asked to stop the interview. The Channel 4 interview spread rapidly in news and social media. Keery's responses to the interviewer sparked reactions of moral indignation and ridicule towards the Keery twins and their establishment. Thus, *The Times* noted that, 'in a country witnessing a return to Victorian-era social division, the opening of a hipster café in east London selling nothing but cereals looks … provocative' (Moran 2014). *The Observer* concluded that: 'The tensions of gentrification … created an unlikely flashpoint in the hipster heartland of east London' (Cowburn 2014). Moreover, Keery was mocked in the *Daily Mail* (Linning 2014) as 'the out-of-touch hipster' who 'didn't know he was working in a poor area' and 'even claimed that the niche cafe … was cheap'. The interview 'sparked criticism from viewers', one of whom was quoted in the *Evening Standard* saying that, '[r]egardless of the area, £3.20 for a bowl of cereal is a rip off, it doesn't even get you drunk' (Blundy 2014).

Mainstream media also highlighted the poverty in Tower Hamlets, including the high rates of child poverty, unemployment and benefit claimants. Yet, one article also highlighted the vast social polarization in the borough in that also some of the richest people lived in Canary Wharf. But many newspaper readers also supported the twins' enterprise, pointing out that the markup for a bowl of cereals is comparable to those of other niche establishments and big chains like Starbucks (Linning 2014). And, among news media, the tide quickly turned. On social media, Gary Keery wrote an open letter to Channel 4 and the reporter, which was quickly picked up by news media, in which he wrote, 'I am from one of the most deprived areas in Belfast, so me and my family know all about poverty,' adding, 'I have been taught a great work ethic and have made it this far without blaming small business owners trying to better themselves and make a future for themselves.' He also stated that the café employs 12 people. Thus, Keery positioned himself as a hard-working person from a disadvantaged background making a living as a small entrepreneur, i.e. a morally respectable citizen who contributes to society.

Some of these aspects were repeated by other media commentators. Notably, then London mayor Boris Johnson defended the twins in the *Daily Telegraph*, describing them as 'a gentle pair of bearded hipsters' unfairly 'monstered' by the Channel 4 reporter for 'pretensions to gentrify the area' (Johnson 2014). He

also lauded the Keery twins as entrepreneurs and 'wealth creators', arguing that '[i]t is a great thing to want to open a place of work in one of the poorest boroughs in Britain' (Johnson 2014). *The Independent* (Friedman 2014) concurred, writing that 'we should be applauding the entrepreneurship of the Cereal Killer Cafe' and that hipsters moving into Brick Lane 'keeps this most eclectic of areas vibrant'. An article in the left-leaning *The Guardian* further claimed that the social reaction was 'overblown', that the hipster café was the wrong target and 'just a symptom of gentrification, not the cause. … People are priced out of an area by rising rents and invisible landlords who will not be interviewed on television' (Moore 2014). Following the episode, the café became highly popular. Media reported that queues to the café reached out onto the street. In 2015, the Keery twins opened a second branch in Camden (followed by other branches in the years to come) and published a cookbook.

I would argue that this social reaction is linked to social anxieties and resentments over urban social inequality in present-day Britain over the housing crisis and increasing social polarization in the wake of the 2008 credit crunch, as well as the intensification of neo-liberal housing and welfare policies (Hodkinson and Robbins 2013; Slater 2016). Neo-liberal policies include increased caps on housing benefits and the bedroom tax, the stock transfer of social housing stock (Watt 2009) and the recategorization of council estate land as 'brown-field land' that is then cleared for new private properties. The consequences of these policies and measures have been, among other things, a dramatic shortage of affordable housing and an increase in homelessness and temporary accommodation (Hodkinson and Robbins 2013; Slater 2016).

In this context of anxiety, the twins and their business venture became a symbol of the hipster figure, and, as such, of the increasing social polarization of gentrified areas. To this end, *they* became a trigger for the public display of moral indignation (Young 2009). The Keery twins and the hipster figure initially came to embody elements of a folk devil whose cynical and ironic business ventures were conceived to contribute to the inequality and polarization in urban space in the wake of gentrification. However, the twins and other commentators very much overturned such representations in mainstream media. They successfully cast the hipster entrepreneur in heroic terms as someone who is a 'wealth creator' in disadvantaged districts and thus framed gentrification as beneficial to such districts. Positive narratives of gentrification as leading to growth and well-being have become influential in policy and academic discourse through the notion of the 'creative city' (see Florida 2012 [2002]).

The respectability conferred on the twins as hard-working entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds, the relative cultural capital and prestige attributed to the middle-class hipster figure, and the contestations and vagueness regarding the causes of gentrification: these factors would all seem to contribute to why the folk devilling of the hipster failed. Lastly, the role of neo-liberal housing and welfare policies in contributing to gentrification, social polarization

and displacement was very much ignored in mainstream discussions. These latter issues were somewhat more at the foreground during a second societal reaction, to be discussed next.

Protesting Gentrification: The Moral Entrepreneur as Folk Devil

The anxiety over social inequality and exclusion following neo-liberal forms of urbanism and gentrification have led to increasing resistance and activism against gentrification, especially in London (Watt and Minton 2016). The Cereal Killer Cafe was at the heart of a second social reaction following an anti-gentrification rally on 26 September 2015 in which the café was targeted. The protest was organized by the group Class War. Announcing the protest on social media, the organizers wrote: 'Our communities are being ripped apart. … We don't want luxury flats that no one can afford, we want genuinely affordable housing. … Working class people are being forced out of our homes but we won't go out without a fight' (Rabble 2015).

Mainstream media, and particularly national newspapers with a right-leaning political orientation, reported on the incident using alarmist frames. The *Daily Mail* reported: 'Families hid in terror as the Cereal Killer Cafe was attacked by hundreds of masked marauders armed with flaming torches and pigs' heads' (Greenwood and Lamden 2015). The protesters were also called 'Alcohol-swilling Class War yobs' and 'left-wing thugs' (Wheeler and Fielding in the *Sunday Express* 2015) and 'thugs masquerading as political activists' (*The Sun* 2015). In right-leaning newspapers, the protesters were also portrayed as privileged middle-class people who were inauthentic and hypocritical in their claim to speak on behalf of the marginalized. One headline read: 'Class War "Poets" Show Their True Colours' (Walden in the *Daily Telegraph* 2015). Thus, this second episode involves an identifiable moral entrepreneur (Cohen 2002 [1972]). But, in their moral crusade (Gusfield 1986 [1963]) against gentrification, Class War themselves were moralized as folk devils by large parts of mainstream media. As folk devils, the protesters were depicted as elitist, dangerous, middle-class actors of the far left with no regard for respectable values.

Following the incident, the Keery twins received even more support by mainstream media than during the first episode and were interviewed by many media outlets. In an interview, Alan Keery pointed to the economic benefits of hipsters and his enterprise: 'hipsters – whatever that means – are driving the flat-white economy, which helps independent shops' (Scott-Moncrieff in *The Times* 2015). He also claimed that businesses like his, unlike high street chains, provide particular 'experiences' for consumers. Other commentators similarly argued for the important role of hipsters in the urban economy. For instance, the *Daily Telegraph* wrote: 'The Cereal Killer cafe is a perfect example of how "hipsters" improve an area for everyone' (Hartley-Brewer 2015).

But, like in the previous episode, news media expressed concern over social polarization and rising cost of housing in the area linked to gentrification. For instance, the *Daily Mail* wrote: 'The café has become a symbol of inequality because of its location in Brick Lane, a popular destination for affluent so-called hipsters. Although house prices in the area have soared it has some of the highest deprivation levels in the capital' (Greenwood and Lamden 2015). In other accounts, even the hipster was as a victim in such processes: 'The irony is that many of these folk [i.e. hipsters] were drawn to the East End for the same reasons that creative people everywhere are drawn to gritty neighbourhoods: because they can afford it. Over time their presence makes the place fashionable, and then none of us can afford it' (Wagner in the *Financial Times* 2015).

Participants in the protest, the moral entrepreneurs-cum-folk devils were interviewed by the media. A letter by one protester was also published in *The Guardian* (Harvey 2015). In reports, participants claimed that the café had never been targeted beforehand, but 'that protesters ended up outside by chance during confrontations with police' (Mance in the *Financial Times* 2015). The protesters mainly blamed developers and landlords for gentrification. However, one member of Class War argued that hipster enterprises like the Cereal Killer Cafe and middle-class consumers are drivers of gentrification processes, claiming: 'The cafe isn't just a cultural symbol of gentrification, it's an instrument of the economic colonisation of the area' (Malone and Greenhill in the *Daily Mail* 2015).

Discussion

We can see how the Keery twins and their café came to symbolize something greater, namely urban change in the form of the hipster figure and gentrification. Both episodes show the active involvement and voice, albeit framed by news media, of those who were folk devilled, i.e. the Keery twins and the anti-gentrification activists led by Class War. Gentrification involves processes where middle-class people replace working-class dwellers in an area (Lees, Slater and Wyly 2008). Deploying the framework of classification, the moralizing public reactions to gentrification and the hipster figure in the two episodes can be interpreted as forms of class politics involving socio-symbolic struggles to legitimate a particular narrative about which groups have the moral right to the city. The hipster is a middle-class figure whose socio-spatial practices and cultivation of emerging or popular forms of cultural capital is subject to both prestige and denigration (le Grand 2020b). I would argue that the contested position of the hipster made the Keery twins targets for attempts to scapegoat them for the negative consequences of gentrification. These attempts at folk devilling largely failed owing to the social standing and respectability bestowed

on the twins and the hipster figure. In the classification struggles over the meaning of the two episodes, dominant narratives cast the middle-class hipster as a creative entrepreneur whose tastes and practices are beneficial to the social and economic development of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In this sense, dominant moral representations of gentrification and hipsters were framed around growth and economic development. This was particularly the case in depictions of the hipster figure as a wealth creator and related to the influential notion that the so-called creative class, largely made up of middle-class people, is a driver of growth and vibrancy in urban districts, including gentrifying neighbourhoods (Florida 2012). But such a positive narrative is largely beneficial to the middle class and serves to exclude working-class and other 'non-creative' people (McRobbie 2016).

Although gentrification has been a long-standing process in Brick Lane, I have argued that neo-liberalism and the aftereffects of the 2008 financial crisis served as the conditions for social anxiety over gentrification and the hipster figure in the two episodes. Local councils, landlords and developers were blamed for the negative consequences of gentrification by some commentators. The wider context of neo-liberal urbanism was addressed by Class War but largely unacknowledged by mainstream media. Rather, folk devilling the protesters and largely disregarding their agenda contributed to even less attention being given to the processes contributing to social polarization and displacement in gentrified districts.

Deploying the notions of classification, social types and figures allows us to examine how moral panics and their concomitant social identities involve the socio-symbolic struggles for moral worth, recognition and prestige between social groupings with unequal access to valued resources (economic, cultural, social). I have argued that the classification struggles over gentrification and the hipster figure are tied to a moral politics of class, involving long-standing practices of moral distinction and social differentiation based on class relations. Moreover, the benefits of deploying Bourdieu's notion of classification points to how the outbreaks of moral panic reactions are bound up with socio-symbolic struggles between social groupings. Much research has explored single case studies of moral panics conceived as fleeting events and has been critiqued for failing to account for how episodes of moral panic are linked to socio-historical processes (Critcher 2009; Hier 2011). One advantage of the framework proposed here is that it can help account for how moralizing social reactions and the formation of social identities, such as folk devils, are rooted in more wide-ranging and longer-term socio-symbolic struggles in society. And a focus on the public imaginations of particular figures and how they might be positioned as folk devils and other social types can help illuminate wider discursive formations and structures of feeling of a particular socio-spatial and historical context (Barker, Harms, and Lindquist 2013b; le Grand 2019), in this case the moral politics of class surrounding gentrification.

Conclusion

I have argued that the folk devil conceptualized as a social type together with the notion of figure and Bourdieu's work on classification struggles can provide useful interpretive tools for moral panic research. Social types are conceived as analytical constructs made by the researcher to conceptualize a certain social identity position, while figures are publicly imagined social identities formed in particular socio-historical contexts and tied to certain lay conceptions. In moral panic processes, social types such as the folk devil and figures such as the hipster are bound up with classification struggles between social classes and other groups over the moral hegemony or symbolic domination over moral matters. As these socio-symbolic struggles extend beyond the short-lived outbreaks of isolated moral panics, the framework proposed in this chapter situates moralization in a wider socio-spatial and historical context.

Two episodes of social reaction centring on the Cereal Killer Cafe were explored to qualify the main arguments of the chapter. I suggest that the public controversies analysed involve forms of class politics and classification struggles over the moral meanings of gentrification processes and the role of the hipster figure in the latter. My analysis shows how middle-class figures with ambiguous social status positions, such as the hipster, can be the object of moral contestations and attempts at folk devilling. But attempts to position a middle-class figure as a folk devil can be overturned if representations of dominant modes of respectability can be successfully mobilized on to the figure. Lastly, I suggest that when moral entrepreneurs, such as Class War, attempt moral crusades that are classified as a threat to respectable values and public safety, they may become positioned as folk devils; this despite the fact that the concerns raised by the moral entrepreneur tap into wider social anxieties, such as increasing socio-spatial inequality.

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CHAPTER 2

The Sorcerer as Folk Devil in Contemporary Melanesia

Tom Bratrud
University of Oslo

Introduction

Sorcery or witchcraft is a main fear of people in Melanesia, a region in the South Pacific comprising Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji. If a person unexpectedly dies, falls sick or experiences misfortune, people often become suspicious and ask 'who is behind this?' (Onagi 2015, vii). That someone is suspected of maleficence reflects the significance placed on interpersonal relationships for health and well-being in Melanesia (Kolshus 2017; Rio 2019, 334). Indeed, the emphasis on bringing people into relationships and keeping them involved in them has been argued to be the very centre of life in the region (e.g. Strathern 1988; Wagner 1981). However, the focus on keeping healthy relationships is a delicate endeavour: it can give comfort and security if everyone is happy but be dangerous and destructive if they go wrong.

In Melanesia, the sorcerer is regarded a person who is overcome by envy, anger and greed. Sorcerers deliberately manipulate spirits and use poisonous plants and toxics to cause sickness, death and misfortune to those who frustrate them. While the good person typically observes one's relational duties towards

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kin and others, the sorcerer does the opposite: they devalue the social through often unprovoked attacks on others, even their closest kin.

In this chapter, I argue that the contemporary Melanesian sorcerer appears as what Stanley Cohen (2002 [1972]) calls a 'folk devil' – a deviant being that is blamed for all kinds of social problems. The sorcerer appears as an unscrupulous monster who can attack anyone, anywhere, and anytime – in the gardens, on the path to the village, at the toilet, and while the victim is sleeping. They even crave to eat their victim's heart, a diet that proves their morally depraved character (see also Højlund, Chapter 4). These qualities make the sorcerer the perfect deviant – the opposite of the love, care and transparency that commonly characterize the good person in Melanesia (Brison 2007; Hollan and Troop 2001; McDougall 2016).

In line with Cohen's theorizing of folk devils, the pursuit of sorcerers sometimes intensifies into moral panics where a person, group or episode emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests, and where collective action is taken to counter this threat. In Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu, moral panics over sorcerers have recently had horrific consequences where accused persons have been burned, raped and killed (see Bratrud 2021, 2022; Forsyth and Eves 2015; Jorgensen 2014; Rio 2010, 2014a; Urame 2015). At the end of the chapter, I will discuss one such case from my fieldwork in Vanuatu.

In his theorizing, Cohen was mainly interested in how folk devils are constructed as abstract, generalized threats to society by the mass media's reporting of certain 'facts' to the public. These facts are often of a shocking, sensational character that generates concern and anxiety over deviance (Cohen 2002 [1972], 7). In this chapter, I hold that Cohen's theory of the folk devil is useful for understanding the sorcerer's position in Melanesia. However, I argue that his approach relies on a certain understanding of society – that is, a (post-) industrial European type of 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006 [1983]) with a particular history of Christian demonology and a particular role of the mass media in conveying information to the public. In other contexts, the principles of social organization, the construction of enemies, and the means of distributing knowledge can be different, which further affects people's perceptions of what constitutes a social threat. In the chapter, I thus revisit Cohen's own point that one cannot take deviance for granted. Rather, one must ask 'deviant to whom?', 'deviant from what?' and 'why is it problematic?' (2002, 4).

In the following, I will clarify how I find European and Melanesian views of 'society' to be different. I go on to discuss how sorcery is commonly understood in Melanesia and the factors that have contributed to shaping these perceptions, particularly the recent growth of Pentecostal Christianity, which emphasizes the identification and healing of persons as sites of evil. I illustrate the latter dynamic with an ethnographic case from my own fieldwork on Ahamb Island in Vanuatu in 2014, when a Pentecostal-style revival emerged to clean the community of all its troubles, in which a fatal hunt for sorcerers ensued. In closing, I discuss the need to locate the specific sources of people's anxieties

as well as the sociocultural dynamics of particular panics in order to properly understand them.

Before I continue the chapter, it is important to clarify that sorcery- and witchcraft-related phenomena are diverse across Melanesia. As argued by John Himugu (2015), it is therefore important to have a clear understanding of the particular cultural context of the sorcery notion in question. While the chapter seeks to arrive at some general points about the sorcerer as a folk devil in Melanesia, my accounts and arguments derive mostly from Vanuatu and particularly Ahamb, a small island of about 650 people in South Malekula, where I conducted 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork over three periods between 2010 and 2017.

European and Melanesian 'Society'

In his seminal book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, Cohen speaks of the folk devil as a person or group whose behaviour is labelled 'by society or certain powerful groups in society' as deviant or problematic (Cohen 2002 [1972], 1). The type of society Cohen seems to take as his vantage point is the European nation state, which is an imagined community, in Anderson's sense – too big for people to know every other person and too big for people to know what is going on in all areas and domains. It is a society based on horizontal comradeship, which binds together all members, who are deemed 'citizens' regardless of their class, colour or race. To sustain the citizens' comradeship, there must be some level of common morals, which require a degree of social control. Because citizens are many and spread over a vast area, the mass media is the sole provider of information about what is going on. A lot of what the mass media defines as 'news', Cohen argues, are devoted to reports about deviant behaviour and its consequences for society (Cohen 2002 [1972], 7). This is not least because it sells, a relevant point as media-conveyed news is invariably structured by the commercial and political constraints in which they operate (ibid.). The news about deviance is often shocking and sensational, which can leave behind a diffuse feeling of anxiety in the public related to questions such as 'something should be done about it' and 'this thing can't go on for ever'. With the media establishing such feelings of anxiety, collective action is often taken to counter these perceived threats to society.

Jean La Fontaine (1998, 2016) argues that folk devilling bears a resemblance to the European witch-hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries. Here, deviant people who undermined the Christian Church's pastoral influence could be denounced as devil-worshippers. The aim of the Church, La Fontaine argues, was to extend its influence in the emerging nation states, including taking control over peripheral areas where people were still engaged in traditional beliefs and practices. Witch-hunts therefore represented ideas formulated by the elites of the new nation states, who aimed at disciplining deviant peasants

into their new moral, religious and political society (La Fontaine 1998, 28–30). If La Fontaine is right, we may say that European folk devilling, which Cohen takes as his vantage point, is tied to the particular religio-political history of the European continent.

Melanesian folk devilling appears in a quite different context. First, it is debatable whether we can speak of 'society' as a meaningful category at all in this region. With a basis in fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, Roy Wagner (1974) criticizes the urge of social scientists to organize people's social arrangements into a permanent 'thing' like a society. Rather, he emphasizes that people create themselves socially in multiple ways and that the 'groups' Western anthropologists have been preoccupied with finding may not correspond very well with the principles by which people themselves organize. Wagner's work has been important for Melanesian anthropology's turn to exchange instead of groups and descent as the main principles through which people constitute social relations and personhood. This trend became particularly influential with Marilyn Strathern's conceptualization of the Melanesian person as 'dividual' rather than 'individual' in her benchmark book *The Gender of the Gift* (Strathern 1988; see also Gregory 1982; Wagner 1981).

In Strathern's Melanesian ideal type, the internal composition of the person depends on one's relations with others. These relations that are condensed into physical substances or objects that circulate between people as gifts. By dealing with others through gift exchange, people give a part of themselves and receive a part of others. This makes the person multiply authored, as it were, because the Melanesian dividual person is a composite site of the substances and actions of others (Strathern 1988, 13). Persons, relationships and collectives are in this sense created through the concrete exchange of gifts rather than membership of an abstract 'imagined community', as in Cohen's model. To set up another ideal type, we may say that, if it is the undermining of the nation's morals that constitutes the social threat that produces folk devils in Cohen's Europe, it is the failure to participate sufficiently in a reciprocal engagement that constitutes the social threat that produces folk devils in Melanesia (see e.g. Martin 2013; Munn 1986). However, deviance in terms of selfishness is not enough for the Melanesian sorcerer to emerge. Similar to the witch-hunts in early modern Europe, he must also be suspected of having a secret pact with devil-like forces.

From Respected High Man to Inhuman Outsider

Much has been written about sorcery and witchcraft in Melanesia. Bronislaw Malinowski's accounts from the Trobriand Islands (1992 [1948], 2010 [1922]) have perhaps been particularly significant in highlighting the importance of magic, sorcery and witchcraft in all domains of social life in the region – from gardening, healing and weather magic to the exercise of social control. In pre- and early colonial times, sorcery was usually the domain of the high-ranking men

of the secret graded societies (Dalton 2007; Rio 2014b; Stephen 1987). Here, men acquired titles by paying off titleholders above them with sacrificed pigs, mats and food. The higher the rank, the higher the knowledge of the cosmological realm, and the higher the prestige (Eriksen 2008, 85). Although people were also ambivalent about sorcery in pre-colonial times, because it could be used for selfish, personal ends, it was generally a 'legitimate institution … which kept people in line in an otherwise somewhat anarchic society' (Tonkinson 1981, 79).

Throughout the 20th century, sorcery underwent a change of status with the increasing influence of colonialism, education and particularly Christianity, which condemned sorcery as devilish, evil and antithetical to a Christian lifestyle (Keesing 1992; Knauft 2002; Tonkinson 1981). In Vanuatu, the support of Christianity and declining legitimacy of sorcery was partly attributed to new diseases introduced by Europeans in the late 1800s and early 1900s (see Deacon 1934). Disease and deaths in massive numbers were blamed by locals on sorcery being out of control. Suspected sorcerers were killed in revenge, which contributed to even higher death tolls. In my own field site of Ahamb and other places in Vanuatu, Christianity won terrain during this time by practising zero tolerance of sorcery and violent attacks. The new religion thus became a positive antidote to the chaos and destruction people now associated with sorcery (Bratrud 2018; de Lannoy 2004; Rio 2003).

Today, 82 per cent of Vanuatu's population, 92 per cent of Solomon Islanders and 96 per cent of Papua New Guineans state that they are Christian.[1] If Christianity is an antidote to sorcery, these high numbers should indicate that sorcery and other practices related to traditional spirit worlds are marginalized. However, many Melanesians have the impression that sorcery is increasing rather than declining. The main reason for the new rise in sorcery is perceived to be envy, jealousy, disputes over land rights, and increasing poverty. The feeling of being left out of progress is believed to make people prone to do sorcery, either to hurt someone, to level out difference or to achieve wealth for oneself. As scholars of the region have been careful to point out, current sorcery accusations and violence are thus not so much grounded in the traditional culture of Melanesia. Rather, it is first and foremost the product of new forms of discontent with social changes that bring insecurity, uncertainty and declining solidarity (e.g. Cox and Phillips 2015; Eves 2000; Jorgensen 2014; Kolshus 2017; Rio 2011; Taylor 2015; see also Khalvashi and Manning, Chapter 3, on Georgian goblins).

Sorcery is an ambiguous phenomenon in Melanesia. Sharing, redistribution and interpersonal commitment are values that define social life in Melanesian collectives. A failure to live up to these expectations can breed resentment, envy, jealousy and anger, and make people prone to use sorcery to punish or hinder what they see as unwanted outcomes. However, even though sorcery brings destruction, it can also be understood as a protest and a reinforcement of 'the communal moral of giving and sharing as against the modern tendency to claim rights and keep to oneself' (Rio 2003, 132). Sorcery can thus be

interpreted as a double-edged blade: it clarifies the moral importance of collectivity and social bonds, but at the same time it demonstrates a harmful individualism when letting personal envy override relational compassion in bringing horror, death and pain to others. In Melanesia, where social worlds are to such an extent centred on the flow of objects, knowledge and people, we may say that the sorcerer is a symptom of tensions over the appropriate limits of reciprocal engagement in contexts of social uncertainty.

In order to illustrate how the sorcerer emerges as a threat in contexts of uncertainty, I will give the example of a senior man on Ahamb, whom I call Orwell. Orwell had been suspected of sorcery for two decades until he was eventually killed for such allegations in 2014, an event I discuss later in the chapter. Orwell was a deviant in several ways on Ahamb. He was a man with keen interest in traditional knowledge (*kastom*), he rarely went to church, and he lived alone in a house next to his clan's traditional cemetery. Most Ahamb people are uncomfortable around these cemeteries because they are believed to house active ancestral spirits. These spirits may be used for sorcery. Orwell's choice of placement for his house, combined with his interest in *kastom* over church, caused suspicion. Moreover, Orwell was an active land claimant involved in several land disputes against his own kin. Kin are generally expected to be generous and respectful to one another. When Orwell disputed his kin for land, a resource everyone depends on for subsistence, he represented for many islanders a different moral world altogether. Orwell was also known for asking local trade store owners, kava bar holders and boat operators for credit and not paying back. When he was confronted over his debt, or refused further service, he could get furious. As a result, islanders sometimes complained that Orwell did not understand that business owners too needed money to feed their families. He was gossiped about as *jalus* (envious or jealous) and lacking empathy (*no save luk save wori blong narafala man*) – characteristics typical of the sorcerer, who lets his negative personal emotions override his compassion for others.

I knew Orwell relatively well and would like to present his behaviour from another perspective. Although he rarely showed up in church, Orwell was keen to state that he was Christian. The few times he did go to church, he met the gazes of everyone who were suspicious of him. When I observed him after service, a time important for mingling, many were uncomfortable of having him around and tried to avoid him. As a result, Orwell was typically walking restlessly around, trying to get into conversations with others without much luck. When I met Orwell, our conversations often turned to traditional living, which he claimed was getting lost. He spoke enthusiastically about how to make *nwog*, outrigger canoes of local wood – knowledge that nobody seemed to care about these days as they preferred fibreglass boats with outboard motors, he spoke about crops that could survive hurricanes that others had forgotten about in their quest for tinned fish and rice from the store, and he talked about how people did not share fish as much as they used to but instead asked money for it or sold it to the markets in Vanuatu's capital, Port Vila. Orwell

thus represented, in several ways, a different way of being in Ahamb's current social world.

Many islanders were afraid of having direct contact with Orwell. As a result, stories about him were often passed on through gossip. In the South Pacific, it is generally regarded as difficult to know exactly what other people think and feel (Robbins and Rumsey 2008). This is related to the idea that there is a distinction between the social person that others observe and the more individual private self. In Vanuatu, this distinction is reflected in the concepts *man*, referring to the public person, and *hem wan*, referring to the more intimate private self. This distinction, I suggest, is an expression of the person being so strongly integrated in one's relationships with others that there are normally few possibilities for individual self-expression. Because of the 'opacity of other minds', as Joel Robbins and Alan Rumsey call it, people in Melanesia generally put little trust in the veracity of what people say about their thoughts and intensions. Speculation and gossip thus become main channels through which information is caught about one another and reality is constructed (Besnier 2009; Brison 1992). If it is the mass media that carries information about the unknown corners of the social in Cohen's society, gossip plays a similar role in Melanesian relationships and communities.

Pentecostalism and New Forms of Devilling

Before we move on, it is important to make one more point about the 'opacity of other minds'. If a person cannot expect that others express what they really feel and think at all times, it means that other versions of the world exist, apart from the one perceived (see also Rio 2019, 338). This idea of multiple coexisting worlds is common in Melanesia and is reflected in the proximity of life and death worlds, human, spirit and animal worlds, and the ever-present anxiety that persons and relations might be something other than they seem (Munn 1986; Rio 2019). The figure of the sorcerer is a boundless being that transgresses these worlds. They are supposedly normal persons but can transform into beings that overturn most physical and moral boundaries: they may kill their own kin, engage with spirits, fly in the air, take the shape of animals, and be in several places at the same time (Rio 2014a, 326). They are figures who emerge when it is difficult to grasp what is going on. They open the channel between hidden moral and spiritual worlds and cause unknown forces to flow and cause destruction.

For many Melanesians who fear this potential of the hidden, in both social and cosmological terms, Christianity's emphasis on the importance of sincerity and personal transparency seems to have played a therapeutic role (Robbins and Rumsey 2008, 411). In my own fieldsite of Ahamb, for instance, being Christian is seen as the closest one can get to a guarantee that a person is trustworthy and has good intentions (see Bratrud 2021). For Melanesia in general,

the emphasis on sincerity and transparency has been nowhere clearer than in Charismatic–Pentecostal forms of Christianity, which have gained an increasingly strong position in the region since the late 1970s (see Eriksen 2009b; Robbins 2004). As we will see in the following, Pentecostal tools for discerning the dangers of the hidden have been important for many Melanesians' quest for safety and security. However, it has also intensified the identification of sorcerers, which has brought new notions of fear and panic.

Pentecostalism is a Christian movement that emphasizes direct personal experience with God and the availability of spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit, including prophesy, healing and the ability to speak in tongues (Robbins 2004, 117). Moreover, many Pentecostal churches in Melanesia, Africa and elsewhere have become popular for offering therapeutic cleansing of persons and societies through investigating, examining and healing individuals, relations and places as sites for evil (see Rio, MacCarthy, and Blanes 2017, 8). The evil may be sorcery, ancestral spirits or demons – all manifestations of the devil in Pentecostal worldviews. Many Pentecostal churches in Melanesia offer relief from these threats by mapping the spiritual and moral deficiencies that are causing the invasion of such forces, and further provide the necessary cleansing and safeguarding from their powers.

Part of Pentecostalism's popularity, according to Knut Rio, Michelle MacCarthy and Ruy Blanes, is that the churches acknowledge the gap between official politics and grass-roots concerns – especially on issues of sorcery and witchcraft. This gap is acknowledged as both an existential problem and a governmental problem, and the churches offer a solution by engaging confrontational attacks on forces they deem responsible for people's problems, and who operate in the invisible realm as sorcerers, evil spirits or the devil (Rio, MacCarthy, and Blanes 2017, 3). Through spiritual warfare, spiritual mapping and healing, Pentecostal churches:

> open the invisible world and take control of it. They describe the different forms of life and creatures that exist in it; they offer techniques for taming them and making the invisible visible. They do not make the mistake that politicians, development agencies, or NGOs make by closing off the invisible or ignoring it; instead, they fully realise the potential for government that lies in the invisible realm itself. (Rio, MacCarthy, and Blanes 2017, 10–11)

In current Vanuatu, many people have a sense that life has become more insecure. There is a perceived increase in illness and killing, economic inequality is growing, there is prevailing distrust in politicians, fear of the police, and threats of climate change (Mitchell 2011; Rio 2011; Taylor 2015). There is a sense that something seriously destructive is going on but it is difficult to know exactly what it is. In this context of uncertainty, Pentecostal movements strike a chord. They identify the 'real' sources of evil in people's lives and put forward a person, group, or set of attitudes, behaviours or circumstances as the reason for

people's problems. By pointing to the hidden sources of people's misfortune, and offering tools to deal with them, Pentecostal churches offer therapeutic relief from the anxiety. However, placing blame on concrete sites of evil may also have the effect that people's anxiety is reinforced and new problems arise (see Bratrud 2019a). I will now provide a case from my fieldwork on Ahamb in 2014 that illustrates how Pentecostal tools may ignite hope for betterment but can also cause new anxieties when making previously diffuse threats terrifyingly concrete.

Identifying Sorcery through the Holy Spirit

Over the past few decades, Ahamb has suffered from several enduring disputes related to land rights and authority. At the beginning of my second fieldwork on the island, in 2014, many Ahamb people portrayed a society in steady moral decline. The enduring land disputes were dividing families and villages, community organizations and committees had disbanded, and there was a sense of increased sorcery activity in the area. In March 2014, a Christian Charismatic revival arrived on Ahamb after having spread around the district for a few months. A revival of this kind refers to spiritual (re)awakening – a prompting of the Holy Spirit that makes believers experience miracles, a convicting awareness of sin, and strong desire for repentance and humility (Robbins 2004). The revival drew large masses to church for nightly praise-and-worship services and prayer sessions. Around 30 children received spiritual gifts and conveyed revelations from the Holy Spirit to the community. The revelations concerned what was good, what was bad, and how we had to live to receive salvation as the Last Days of Judgement were approaching. The revival quickly gained influence in the community, and both chiefs and other leaders were active in revival programmes and followed the children's revelations (see Bratrud 2019b).

Two months after its inception, the revival increased in seriousness and significance. A group of visionary children found a stone outside the island's community hall that they claimed was placed there by ill-meaning sorcerers who wanted to divide and damage the community. Right after this event, I met Rasmus, the son of a chief, at the community hall. Rasmus saw clear connections between the sorcery stone and the current state of the community. Looking around us, he commented that none of the institutions in the area – the community hall, the school or the medical clinic – were functioning. They were like relics of the past. As Rasmus saw it, it was the power of the sorcery stone that had caused this misfortune to happen. The community's leaders were all kin but were disputing to the extent that they could not even uphold basic community institutions. It was illogical, difficult to comprehend. Something had to be causing it. Placing the explanation on sorcery made the incomprehensible comprehendible (see Siegel 2006). The sorcery finding spurred an intense search for more sorcery and other evil powers deemed at work in the community. Over the

following months, more and more sorcery and evil forces appeared before the visionary children through their 'spiritual X-ray', as it was sometimes called. The evil forces had to be removed to clean the community of its perils.

While the children detected and removed sorcery around the island, they were also, through their spiritual vision, identifying the persons behind the sorcery. They could also see that the sorcerers, who came from the whole district, were furious at them for removing their powers. As a result, the sorcerers were travelling to Ahamb by the magic of flying (*suu*) to kill anyone they could get hold of. According to the visionaries who conveyed the information, a leading figure of the sorcerers' crusade against the island was Ahamb's own Orwell. He appeared before the visionaries in many shapes – half horse, half calf and so on – confirming many islanders' impression of his transgressive character.

Four months after the initial sorcery findings, five men admitted that they had taken part in recent sorcery attacks and killings. During a three week-long village meeting, in which the men were to explain themselves, the men conveyed that Orwell was 'the king of sorcery' in the district and had lured them into his secret brotherhood of sorcerers. They also claimed that Orwell was responsible for more than 30 deaths and numerous instances of disease, bankrupt businesses and general misfortune in the district. The perceived threat from Orwell reinforced a festering moral panic over the attacking invisible sorcerers. A group of men started questioning how they could be safe with a sorcerer of this calibre being around their children and families. The idea of an invisible parallel society that was attacking innocent people, and that continued to attack whenever it suited them, encouraged this sense of crisis. Out of fear and anger, a small mob ended up organizing the murder of Orwell and another senior man I call Hantor, whom the five suspects claimed was his main associate.

If 'witching' and 'folk devilling' has to do with fear and anxiety concerning the uncontrollable agency of the other (Jackson 2011, 45), Orwell turned into the folk devil *par excellence* on Ahamb. He had become the bodily manifestation of many islanders' generalized fear of evil forces at work in the world (see Ashford 2005, 64). If he were eradicated, the source of many risks and problems were believed to be gone and one could start anew. Given the fear Ahamb people have of sorcery, it can be useful to see the killing in light of Stuart Hall et al.'s point that 'signification spirals' often accompany moral panics. As they argue,

> In the public signification of troubling events, there seem to be certain thresholds which mark out symbolically the limits of societal tolerance. The higher an event can be placed in the hierarchy of thresholds, the greater is its threat to the social order, and the tougher and more automatic is the coercive response. (Hall et al. 1978, 225–6)

The threat associated with Orwell in particular marked the limits of what Ahamb people could bear. After decades of fear over his deviance, largely shaped by speculation and gossip, the Pentecostal discernment tools available

in the revival confirmed that Orwell was the societal threat people feared him to be. In all its brutality, attacking this folk devil represented a hope of getting back relations in their ordinary and human state and regaining some sense of control (see also Rio 2019, 339). However, the killing also led to new anxieties, notions of guilt, and disputes that I unfortunately do not have the space to discuss here (see, however, Bratrud 2021, 2022).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have suggested that the contemporary Melanesian sorcerer appears as a folk devil in Cohen's sense – a deviant other that is to blame for society's problems. However, I have argued that Cohen's theory rests on a particular view of 'society' with a particular history of Christianity and where the mass media plays a crucial role in conveying information to society's members. If we are to identify and analyse folk devils in other social environments, we must examine what the 'social' is in that context, how it is perceived to threaten, and why it demands a critical response – factors that can vary significantly from Cohen's context.

Most studies of folk devils typically define their associated moral panics as exaggerated and misdirected (e.g. Cohen 2002 [1972]; Hall et al. 1978; La Fontaine 1998). Such characterizations might well be true, but they must not lead us to overlook the specific sources of people's anxieties and the sociocultural dynamics of particular panics. Dismissing people's thoughts and actions as unreasonable may risk concealing the real problems people experience in their lives, which are not easy for outside observers to grasp. As Harri Englund points out, mass hysteria or psychosis is not so much at issue in moral panics 'because the subjects of a moral panic are able to analyse the causes of their distress and are adamant about the values they seek to defend' (Englund 2006, 172). This is also the case on Ahamb, where sorcery is experienced as a real and complex threat grounded in anxiety of moral failure and the risks of the relations on which one depends.

This is not to say that folk devilling is not dangerous. Locating the source of one's problems and misfortune in deviant persons or groups, and then thinking that the problems will go away if one eradicates that person or group, is usually all too simple and has had too many fatal outcomes in the history of the world. In most cases, the source of one's anxiety and problems are complex and have their origin far beyond the agency of the imagined other (see also Ivasiuc, Chapter 8). In Melanesia, for instance, suspicion of sorcery is typically a symptom of rising inequalities, poverty, lack of health services, and politicians doing little for the grass roots. In such cases, postcolonial neo-liberal policies and failing services are probably more of an underlying cause of uncertainties than any village individual. A simple blaming of a person or group may thus easily conceal the underlying problems experienced in a collective rather than unveil

them. What we can do as social scientists is to keep a keen eye on the specificities of folk devilling in a given sociocultural and political-historical context. This can help us better understand what is at stake for different people in times of uncertainty, and what factors shape these uncertainties, and ultimately engage a critical perspective on the construction of crises, which the contributors to this book show is an ever-present topic globally.

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Notes

[1] Numbers for Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea are taken from their most recent censuses (2009 and 2000, respectively; National Statistics… 2000; Vanuatu National… 2009), while Solomon Islands numbers are from the Report on International Religious Freedom conducted by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (2008).

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CHAPTER 3

Human Devils

Affects and Spectres of Alterity in Eerie Cities of Georgia

Tamta Khalvashi and Paul Manning
Ilia State University and Trent University

Introduction

Ghosts and ghoulies were once prematurely pronounced dead with the arrival of electrical lights and modernity. Yet, in the wake of what Roger Luckhurst has called the 'spectral turn' (2002), inspired by Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* (1994), they have made quite a comeback in theoretical circles, and in urban studies in particular. Unlike traditional ghosts, however, these ghosts are usually treated as metaphoric spirits, with more kinship to the Hegelian spirit, an invisible force (similar to capitalism) advancing world history, than the spirits of folklore, implying the animating force of nature.[1] Their haunting thus is very abstract, acting very generally to destabilize all categories of dwelling, presence and totalized urban planning. In this way, the ghost, already a somewhat indeterminate kind of spirit, is reduced to an eerie figure of 'spectral modernity' (Luckhurst 2002, 528). Spectral modernity offers a period in which 'time is out of joint', incarnating the uncanny return of the repressed, where the figure of the ghost is both present and absent. Ghosts can thus be encountered at every turn in the city as a way of capturing the relationship between particular

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affects of haunting and particular kinds of places. Hence, unlike the 'folk devils' that are marked by political power or media as specific social groups threatening societal values and interests (Cohen 2011 [1972]), here devils and ghosts, instead, appear in their traditional and folkloric forms in the city. They surface in times of changing societal and physical structures while creating anxieties and doubts about the present. As such, these ghosts and spirits are both concrete and yet metaphysical.

This chapter is about spectral hauntings in Georgian cities. We argue that some Georgian goblins, just like the cities they dwell in, are experienced as eerie not solely metaphorically but literally. There are fascinating ethnographies of devils emerging metaphorically or symbolically in various Georgian cities and semi-urban contexts, such as devils of the refugee camps (Dunn 2018), the persistence of criminal devils in Batumi (Frederiksen 2013), or new elites as devils (Manning 2009, 2014). Yet, none of these ethnographies deal with devils from folklore that become figures of human alterity in the city, migrating from rural to urban environments to appear as real human beings. In doing so, we argue that human devils produce similar affects as Georgian cities, some of which appear empty, half-finished or broken (Khalvashi 2019). While ghosts are usually considered ex-people who have entered the ghostly estate, Georgian goblins were never originally people. They were originally goblins or devils, but in the process of urbanization and modernization terms for goblins became 'slangy' terms for kinds of strange people created by sudden urban changes (Manning 2014). The Georgian goblins, in this sense, are radically different from Western ghosts in that, as non-humans, they might at some point become humans. Western ghosts operate in the opposite manner: generally they are humans who attain a condition that is monstrously opposed to humanity. Georgian goblins hence are a fascinating point of departure. They demonstrate how Georgian cities are haunted by spectres of alterity that are felt by their residents to be eerie. As urban geographer Steve Pile puts it,

> It is easy enough, I think, to see how certain feelings – and their ghostly presences – might appear in cities. Of course, people feel things and if those people are in cities, then they are going to feel them there. And, just as surely, cities might make people feel things: all those strangers, all those dark alleyways, and all those stories of violence. But this hardly means that cities are ghostly – and it certainly doesn't mean that we have a sixth sense in our encounters with places, does it? (Pile 2005, 243)

At the core of spectral modernity then is the eerie sensations produced by specific urban spaces. The term *eerie* was introduced from the vocabulary of everyday hauntings into theory by the late Mark Fisher (2016), to replace the over-used *uncanny*, which demarcates among other things crossings of the familiar and strange. According to Fisher, terms like eerie or weird are different from the uncanny as the former is about the strange that does not belong to the

familiar, while the latter is about the strange within familiar, or the familiar as strange. To be sure, 'the weird brings to the familiar something which ordinarily lies beyond it, and which cannot be reconciled with the "homely"' (Fisher 2016, 11). Hence, while uncanny is centred on the self, weird and eerie work at this from the other direction: 'they allow us to see the inside from the perspective of the outside'. As Luckhurst (2017) glosses Fisher's explanations, 'the weird is a disturbing obtrusion of something from the outside in. It is the insidious intrusion, the confounding juxtaposition, the thing found in the wrong place.'

If the weird is 'the thing found in the wrong *place*', the eerie is the place itself; it is a feeling connected to certain places or landscapes: '*places* are eerie; empty landscapes are eerie; abandoned structures and ruins are eerie. Something moves in these apparently empty or vacated sites that exists independently of the human subject, an agency that is cloaked or obscure' (Luckhurst 2017). In moving from their rural haunts to haunt empty, unfinished or broken urban spaces, and in transitioning from non-human to human creatures, Georgian goblins and the cities they emerge in are in this way felt as eerie, obscure agencies, highlighting anxieties and moral conditions related to urban spaces that have changed, fallen into ruin, and become strange and unfamiliar. Hence, traditional folk spectres do not necessarily go out of fashion with modernity. Instead, they express quite novel, indeed modern, urban anxieties about crumbling or simply relentlessly changing modernity, demarcating a zone of the eerie.

Georgian goblins, like the vanishing hitch-hiker of North American folklore (see Beardsley and Hankey 1942), are in this way modern spectres of a modern urban alterity. They haunt the spaces in between, as they are reworkings of the folkloric spiritualism embedded in urban contexts. But Georgian goblins, unlike North American ghosts, become permanent human residents of such urban settings; they move from haunting roads in the woods to haunting the streets of the city, causing enduring anxieties of alterity and eeriness. Californian ghosts, like the vanishing hitch-hiker, in contrast, present themselves as wondering or migratory ghosts, who create temporary fears of alterity. In fact, the vanishing hitch-hikeris a stranger, almost always a young woman, who wants to go home. By the late 19th century, it seems, the Gothic ghost, which was a homebody haunting only houses, was replaced by a new ghost, the cosmopolitan wandering ghost that marked dislocations and anxieties caused by long-distance movement, a ghost that haunted the spaces *in between*. Georgian goblins do not have such homeless nomadic and liminal characteristics, as they become embedded permanently in urban or semi-urban settings. As human goblins, they haunt modern, yet crumbling infrastructural spaces, but their spectral presences become morally and affectively pressing in times of political and economic crisis.

In this chapter we discuss mainly three such goblins in Georgia: *kajis*, a kind of horned devil that once haunted the wild spaces and ruins surrounding rural villages that have now become haunting metaphors for eerie and unfamiliar aspects of cities changing rapidly after the end of socialism, and *dedjalis* and

uzhmuris, goblins more specific to just the Western region of Georgia, that are associated with Russian colonial and Soviet modernity projects. All these goblins have become modern, and in some cases, urban haunters. But we wish to show that 'uncanny' or 'spectral' modernity is not captured under the universal metaphoric sign of a universal haunter, the ghost-as-metaphor, but the anxieties of changing urban modernities are best explored *locally*, by attending to the ethnographic *specificity* of its imagined haunters (Luckhurst 2002, 536, 541–2) and their affects. Rather than capture all these anxieties under the ambiguous and ubiquitous term 'uncanny', the affects these haunters express are much more akin to what Fisher calls 'the eerie', absences of familiar others, and the destabilizing signs of unknown *forces* (like capitalism)that transform the familiar spaces of the city into unfamiliar, strange, empty ones.

Kajis in the Would-Be City

One year ago, the two of us went to Anaklia, a small village in western Georgia located on the Black Sea coast in Samegrelo, north along the coast near the breakaway region of Abkhazia. Having been occasionally a peripheral coastline of the Ottoman Empire with a small but strongly fortified seaport, Anaklia had previously served as a maritime outpost and trading zone. While the importance of Anaklia reduced significantly during Soviet and early post-Soviet times, recently the village has emerged at the centre of the Georgian state's ambitious plan to turn it into a deepwater port city of global significance, 'connecting Asia with Europe'. An intent to construct a large new settlement and a major economic hub under the name Lazika was unveiled by former president of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili in 2011. The name Lazika was a reference to the Greco-Roman designation for this region, symbolically highlighting Georgia's postcolonial search for the place in Europe (Maisuradze 2018). The aspirations to become more European meant the transformation of Anaklia at the border with Russian-controlled Abkhazia into a postmodern urban utopia. However, after the defeat of Saakashvili's party to the Georgian Dream coalition in 2012, the incoming prime minister and country's richest oligarch, Bidzina Ivanishvili, first suspended the project in the name of unfeasibility, and then the government revived the similar project under the name Anaklia. All these preceding infrastructural proposals laid a foundation for the latest rationale for this place that includes Anaklia in the Chinese-led 'One Belt, One Road' initiative, aimed at forming a transnational corridor and web of unprecedented logistics in Georgia to connect China with European markets (Aslanishvili and Gambino 2018). While the entire village settlement along the Black Sea coast was destroyed to free up the space for the deepwater port, the project has since been suspended due to new political struggles and overlapping geopolitical interests over the region. Hence, Anaklia today is an eerie place, as most buildings and port infrastructures are still empty or incomplete. Straddled between

rural and urban (dis)order, and between past and the future scenarios, Anaklia in this way emerges as a special place to study hauntings.

As we sat in one of the semi-urban cafes of Anaklia, a Megrelian woman in her sixties explained to us that there are human kajis coming to Anaklia from Adjara, a neighbouring region of Samegrelo, which has the largest Muslim population in the country. She raised her head in overt unease while portraying kajis as Muslim human beings with small horns and big beards. As she explained, human kajis conduct funerals among local Muslims living in the 'Turkish neighbourhood'. What struck us was that kajis were spoken of not as certain rural spirits or ghosts very well known in western Georgian folklore and myth but as powerfully real creatures, apparently as human monsters who were Muslims, or, rather, Muslims who were kajis. To be sure, Muslims who acquired goblin-like qualities in Anaklia gestured towards the lack of humanity, because humanity, in a way, meant a moral condition that excluded Muslims (see Frederiksen 2020). Muslims, therefore, could not appear except as in a self-reversed apparition, as an embodiment of the goblin or an inversion of humanity that is never fully human. In fact, the woman seemed distressed when portraying the Muslims as kajis, which reminded us that the eerie effect is often and most easily produced when something that people hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before them in reality. For the woman we talked to, the mythical kajis were always a part of village imaginary, but they now came in real human shapes. Muslims as kajis were thus haunting Anaklia, unsettling the very presence of the place. In fact, kajis terrified the woman, for she had no idea what they might portend for the work-in-progress city. Suspended between modernity and tradition or between urban and rural realms, Muslims as kajis inspired a sense of uneasiness about not quite being modern.

Legendary kajis are anthropomorphic beings, basically horned goblins, which keep company with a bestiary of other fantastic beings on the margins of the villages of Georgia, small creatures called *chinkas*, and nymph-like succubi called *alis*. What the kaji, the chinka and the ali have in common is that they are legendary creatures; that is, stories told of them can be told 'as true' (what folklorists call 'legends'). Encounters with such creatures can be narrated as having happened not far from here, down the road, to someone known to the narrator. These legendary creatures form a set of anthropomorphic others that taken together represent an inversion, an anti-model, of the age and gender categories of human society: the ali is a young maiden; the chinka is a child; the kajis comprise all the age and gender categories. For the most part, their physical monstrousness is minimal; largely they all differ from normal humans in that they lack human concerns for grooming (long hair and nails) and dress (they are nude or wear rags). In fact, the very act of grooming them can allow alis and chinkas to be domesticated or, in the case of kajis, make them go away. Their lack of physical attributes of civilized grooming and dress is matched by the alterity of their habitats, which are typically wild or deserted exterior places, typified by the woods. However, while the chinka and the ali are

basically homeless sprites (who can be domesticated), the eerie humanity of the kaji is displayed in the fact that they have their own homes, their own villages in erstwhile or primitive human-like habitations. Kajis, in this way, live in caves in cliffs and ruins, abandoned places of erstwhile human dwelling, and roads. Just as the kaji avoids domestic spaces and things, so, too, it cannot be domesticated even if it is caught.

The kaji, by contrast to the ali and the chinka, is therefore a complete stranger. While the kaji is the incarnation of a certain kind of alterity, the absolute *stranger*, it is also, in spite of its occasional monstrosity, very much imagined in an explicitly anthropomorphic fashion, having both sexual dimorphism and sexual reproduction. Moreover, kajis are the most *social* of all the goblins. The society of the kajis has all the attributes of a human society: 'The *Kaji* is tall in body, portly and has small arms, [but] like a man he has as customs: lamenting the dead. So consider the following, that *Kajis* even have a political order and life, too' (Korneli 1888, 2). Thus, the kaji, the most socially distant from humans and potentially the most physically monstrous and aggressive, is also paradoxically the most human and most social other. Unlike ghosts in North America, no one seems to derive pleasure from telling stories about kajis because these stories mark one as a backward and superstitious.

If the legendary kaji has fewer and fewer opportunities to star in narratives about encountering strangers on roads or in the woods and giving them a good thrashing, the other kaji, the 'slangy kaji', is no longer a fantastic anthropomorphic being but a real human, and has much clearer associations for city dwellers than its mythological counterpart. This kaji is no longer found near villages but only in cities. It no longer is found listed in a folkloric bestiary but in a dictionary of slang (Bregadze 2005). Here the kaji keeps company with another group of beings, called by names like *goimi* ('hick', meaning not a rural person in the village but one who is behaving like a villager in the wrong context), as well as a series of horned creatures: *jikhvi* ('ibex') and *rkiani* ('horned one'), often used together: *rkiani kaji* ('horned kaji'). A kaji, in this strongly derogatory sense, is defined largely by not knowing, or not caring, about general norms of urban civilized comportment; indeed, a general disregard for, or even aggression to, 'civilized' social norms is the defining feature of both the real and the metaphoric kaji. A kaji is a person out of place, a person who has crossed some major social boundary. As one of our friends put it succinctly, a human could become a kaji either by being a recent arrival from the village, in which case it was the enactment of village norms in the city that makes one a kaji, or by suddenly being elevated in rank or coming into a lot of money, in which case it was the way the person had moved in social hierarchy.

Drawing along these lines, there are really two kinds of such kajis in the city. The first kind are those who have crossed the spatial boundary between the village and the city without changing their behaviour appropriately. After a long period in which socialism restricted the movement of rural people through a system of urban residence permits, the lifting of these residence restrictions

meant that rural populations moved en masse into the city. This must have seemed like alarming numbers, changing the cultured environment of the city into 'a big village'. The second kind are the new elites, nouveau riche and other parvenus, whose movement in social space instead indexes the social mobility provided by the end of socialism. More recently, it appears, the term kaji can be used for the foreigners flocking to Tbilisi and investing in real estate. Like the kajis of Anaklia, foreigners from Turkey, Iran and the Gulf states are also seen as radical strangers. Their presence is registered both in the physical changes to the cityscape wrought by 'wild capitalism' and in the abrupt shifts in established orders of hierarchy and prestige created by these conditions. Strangers to the city are like the kajis of the village in that they cannot be domesticated simply by cutting their hair and nails, or washing their hair and giving them curls. The kaji is thus, paradoxically, very 'modern'. With each new crisis of sudden political and economic change in the city, a new variety of kaji is born.

Although kajis as outcasts mainly reside in narratives and daily conversation of urban Georgia, they do not 'stay there' but are accentuated by the media and politics. In fact, the current president of Georgia, Salome Zurabishvili, at an opposition rally in 2005 addressed her supporters by saying that 'the Kajis are not coming, they are going'. She referred to the then ruling United National Movement Party, now in opposition, which she identified as the kajis of Georgian politics. Her words were taken up by the media and kajis since then have become more frequently evoked in political struggles and urban protests in Georgia. Hence, kajis are not only coming; they also keep coming in larger numbers. The sense that they are not only aggressive but numerous is important, because it is their inexplicable presence distributed across the city that makes the city strange, unfamiliar, desolate and *eerie*.

Spectres of (Post)coloniality

Spectral tropes in Georgia have a longer history and it is crucial to draw points of connection between past and present hauntologies and interrogate the spectral imaginations of those who are figured as Muslim kajis. While kajis of Anaklia keep coming from Adjara, Adjara itself is haunted by multiple human demons. These demons gesture towards the materiality of colonial configurations in the region, which uncover the play of the past and its continued presence. Indeed, alterity in Adjara is deeply embedded within the spectral apparitions connected to Russian and Ottoman colonial histories. Invocation of Christians as demonic ghosts and Turks as devils, in this sense, reinscribe such colonial histories of the place even as it is characterized as 'post' colonial. Ghosts, thus, seem to have not only morality but also politics in Adjara, evoking a haunting sense of history and presence (Stoler 2006).

The rearrangement of Russian and Ottoman colonial boundaries in western Georgia strongly challenged the lives of Muslim inhabitants. The Russian

Empire enforced colonial settlements and urban infrastructures by expropriating agricultural land in Adjara and depriving people of direct control over their surroundings. The Muslim peasantry and nobility hence expressed resistance towards the Russian imperial spatial transformations and an unequal social division that strengthened the movements for greater autonomy (Turmanidze 2009). These histories have left imprints in the dedjali mythology and legend, in the forms of spectral thinking and imagination, prevalent in the 19th and 20th centuries. If kajis became figures for alterity of Muslims, then Muslims in turn referred to Christians as dedjalis, denoting Christian demons with the potential to endanger Muslim livelihoods. A dedjali is a giant monster with red curly hair and a wide forehead, which reads 'qaf', meaning qafir or faithless in Arabic (Shioshvili 2010). It resides in the east, while being chained at the rock at the bottom of the sea. If a dedjali is unchained, it can bring the end of the world (Mgeladze 2010/2011). According to one of the folk tales, 'He (Dedjali) is a Christian, and he converts people to his faith by convincing them or deceiving them; if he is not able to convince people, then he beheads them with a sword' (cited in Shioshvili 2010, 53). As a Christian devil, a dedjali is thus endowed with the ability to destroy normal life and transgress the very inner souls of people by changing their religion. The civilizing efforts of Russian Empire in Adjara was, in this way, experienced not only as a material but also as spiritual dispossession and loss.

Dedjali mythology spirits were not being imagined solely in 'traditional' spiritual terms, as the souls stemming from spiritual worlds. The spectral imaginings took an ostensibly more 'modern' form, as the spirits were associated with the concepts of empire, infrastructure, Christianity and war. Thus understood, dedjalis emerged as objectifications of demonic potential residing inside all imperial subjects. These spirits evoked fears and animated a perceived threat oriented not only towards Russians but also Georgian Christians, whom Muslims saw as the embodiments of Russian colonial rule. These kinds of fears marked the salient difficulties of Muslim Adjarans in recognizing the 'civilizing' efforts of Russian colonial work on their territory. From these spectral evocations of alterity and dispossession, we thus see clearly the horizon against which the Muslim Adjarans marked themselves off. Both the discourses of colonial civilization and the very materiality of colonial infrastructure produced spectral visions and divisions, along human and non-human lines.

The modern devils in Batumi, then, begin to intersect, in ways similar to the colonial dispossession, with forms of spectral imaginings of alterity. If Dedjali had been a monster that evoked the fears of dispossession inflicted by the Russian colonialism, Eshmaki ('Devil') evokes anxieties oriented towards contemporary Turkey's economic domination over the city. Indeed, colonialism endures in the form of extraction and dispossession in contemporary Adjara (Khalvashi 2018). In the days of post-socialist neo-liberal restructuring, dispossession became 'a political logic' that rests on the entanglement of colonial and postcolonial modes of extraction (Abourahme 2018). These resurface around a

set of economic and urban anxieties (like debts, eviction and speculative construction), ecology (like hydroelectric dams) or geopolitical configurations (like Turkey or Russia) in Adjara. Financialization in light of massive unemployment, in fact, has produced a set of evictions in the capital city, Batumi. A kind of material dispossession thus spurred the narratives of spiritual eviction from humanity itself. Those who borrowed money from Turkish moneylenders or micro financial organizations indeed started to refer to Turks as 'devils' (*eshmaki*) or non-humans (*araadamiani*). It is not only Turks who have appeared as devils but also their Georgian partners who started to work for them. The classic binary division between colonized and colonizer, or between victim and perpetrator, that underpins such colonial experiences, does then not hold for this case. The devils are both insiders and outsiders at the same time for they share the eviction from humanity. In other words, human devils no longer bear the traits of humanity.

Spectres of Bad Mood

Certain demons and ghosts have in this way been at the centre of not only colonial but also postcolonial modernity projects in Georgia for a long time. This is why ghosts and spirits are often the objects of total banishment in various modernity projects to guarantee the succession of history from religious to secular, nonrational to rational or traditional to modern continuum. Soviet and post-Soviet modernity projects in Georgia demonstrate these efforts by making ghostly imaginaries abject. Yet, as Avery Gordon (2008) reminds us, disappeared spirits do not remain hidden away but reappear both as eerie apparitions and real human beings, as well as negative moods, atmospheres and affects.

Some of the most restrictive policies oriented towards the banishment of spectral apparitions were crafted and implemented precisely in the name of Soviet modernity. Indeed, portrayal of village people as duped by superstitious beliefs in goblins, like uzhmuris, suggest that the spirits were important figures of abjection in Soviet modernity project, as they unsettled the linear history of Soviet modern life. In their ghostly shapes, uzhmuris are spectral reminders of absent presences that serve as a boundary between outer and inner space. In some versions, uzhmuris are found in swamps or industrial ruins, and they are evil spirits that mainly haunt children and pregnant women. Like jinn, uzhmuris occupy a realm of the unseen, escaping human perception. People haunted by uzhmuris are subject to folk prayers in order to get rid of these evil spirits. Although they are spirits of rural nature, they can be associated with humans and dwell in urban areas too. It can cause illness and grumpiness, hence people with ill temper are called uzhmuri. Uzhmuris thus can turn out to be real and corporeal.

The hauntings and healings of uzhmuris described by Georgian ethnographers during Soviet times (see Figure 3.1) convey the clash between

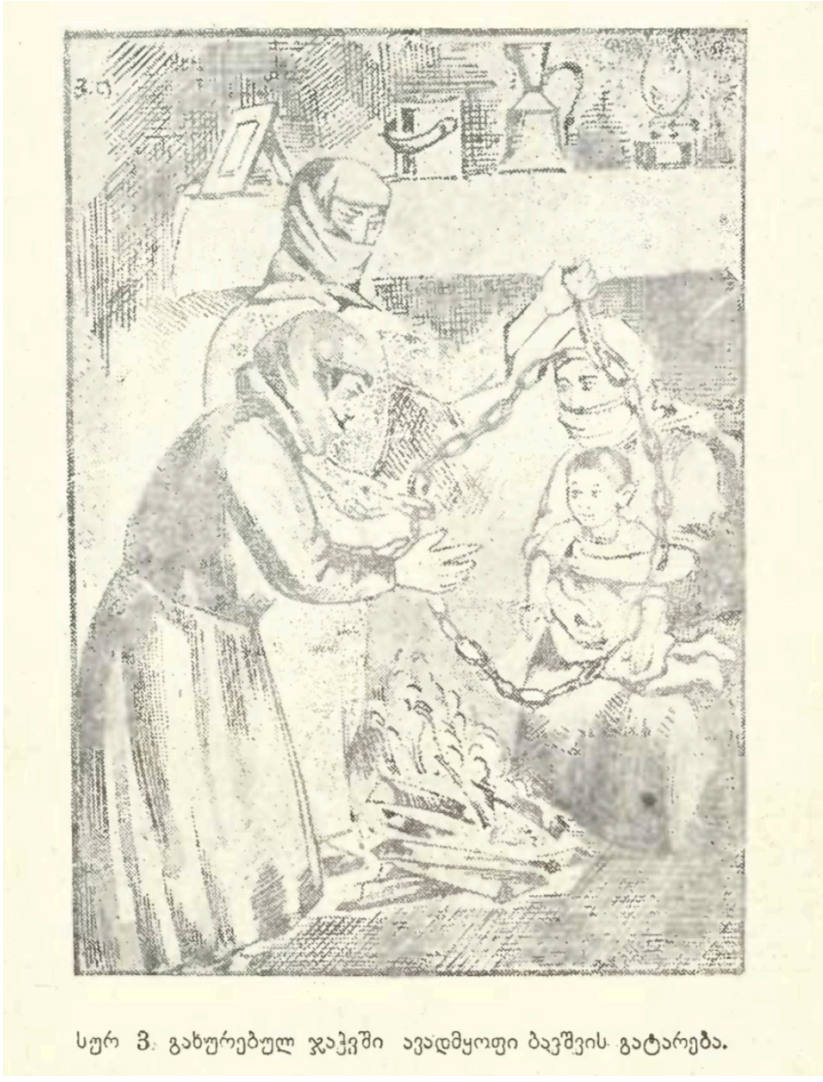

Figure 3.1: Healing a child haunted by uzhmuri through passing her through warmed chains in Adjara, 1935 (a drawing made by Vale Ilyushin for Jemal Noghaideli's book *Ethnographic Study of Adarians' Everyday Life*).
Source: Noghaideli (1935).

secular and spiritual worldviews at the time. Local Soviet ethnographers described these spirits as remnants of the past imbedded in outdated tradition and superstition that subverted the modern Soviet ways of life. The presence of such views in fact pushed spiritual beliefs and their occult

traditions behind, and became sources of shame embedded in the realization of one's own alterity. Small wonder, then, that one detects the deeply felt polarity about such traditions today, even though these spirits are still believed to continue haunting people and places.

Indeed, trying to portray spectral narratives about uzhmuris as indexing a backward superstitiousness is manifested in the film *Uzhmuri*, made by an early Georgian woman director, Nutsa Ghoghoberidze, in 1934. According to the plot, a large field of uzhmuri in Samegrelo is the residence of 'a green toad queen'. The Soviet government, in the name of industrialization, decides to build a canal along this field, but the villagers are against it, not least because of the belief in evil spirit of the field. Here Megrelian peasants are defined in opposition to communists. They epitomize the resistance to hand over the lands to the Soviet government. As such, peasants are portrayed as irrational figures and class enemies who resist the Marxist–Leninist project of modernization. Hence, the communist planners do not take seriously the villagers' worries about the field of uzhmuris, and they enter the field; they are nearly swallowed by the swamp but eventually rescued by their fellow communists. The film went through multiple censorships, and the director was later deported to a concentration camp in the Russian arctic, while the set designer, Petre Otskheli, was put to death during the Stalinist purges. The film producers, in this way, were made invisible by the Soviet state as the unseen and mysterious creature of the uzhmuri living in the fields of Samegrelo.

With the sudden and unexpected collapse of state socialism in the 1990s, uzhmuris as a sign of ill-temperedness became part of the everyday life. Individuals who had hitherto been mostly *haunted by* uzhmuris suddenly found themselves to *be* uzhmuris. In contemporary urban slang, similarly to the term kaji, the term uzhmuri thus moved from denoting an object of superstitious belief to denote a category of people who themselves are like uzhmuris, having a toxic character that can be contagious for relationships and surroundings. The kaji and the uzhmuris thus have in common that they are slang terms for people whose aggressive behaviour or toxic bad moods make them incompatible with ordinary ordered social and urban life; they are, so to speak, 'monsters from the Id' (to borrow a phrase from the science fiction film *Forbidden Planet*). This mysterious origin of uzhmuri could be easily accounted for socio-economic demise and the concomitant emergence of pervasive grumpiness. But uzhmuris were not simply understood by people in western Georgia as being caused by raising socio-economic inequality and the omnipresent unemployment or poverty. Instead, they were caused by unpredictable forces that took the same enigmatic, capricious and gloomy shapes that often characterize the post-socialist political world.

In this sense, uzhmuri, in urban slang, can be understood as an affect that can be transmitted from person to person (Brennan 2004) or that can create a toxic miasmic atmosphere, so you could say it is literally 'in the air'. According to

Teressa Brennan, 'the transmission of affect' is what influences us from without, either from other people, externally, or from the outside, the outer environment. Uzhmuri, in this way, emerges not solely out of the interiority of human subject but is generated from outside of human interiority. This is perhaps why most human uzhmuris are perceived with some sense of humour in Georgia because the grumpiness and ill-temperedness of a person is not conceived solely as her/his own property. Instead, uzhmuri people are perceived as manifestations of that which is beyond their direct control. As a person becomes a magnet for another's bad mood or inner tension, it does so because of the affective forces of the outside, which is the residence of uzhmuri.

It seems critical to understand that uzhmuris, like dedjalis, eshmakis or kajis, all manifest spectres of multiple alterities in Georgia. What they have in common, however, is that they are the kinds of goblins that refashion themselves from being monstrous, unseen creatures into being real human beings. In moving from their erstwhile haunts to haunt the spaces of modernity and/or the nation, and in transitioning from non-human to human creatures, they emanate and transmit eerie affects. By turning from goblins to corporeal human beings, they therefore highlight the specific, lived experiences of ghostliness, both internal and external and not a generalized, metaphoric condition of spectrality.

Orcs or Kajis?

'How can I not like this [festival] in Anaklia, am I Kaji, or what?' explained a woman in the would-be port city of Anaklia in an interview with a Georgian journalist. The journalist was investigating local perceptions about Anaklia becoming the place of an electronic music festival named Kazantip in 2014. It was one of the world's largest electronic music festivals, whose booming rhythms and bass beats spread across the Black Sea, and it sparked a sharp reaction from the powerful Georgian Orthodox Church as well as conservative civic activists. They marched to Anaklia from the capital, Tbilisi, and organized a series of protests against the festival for its perceived immorality. Yet, the residents of Anaklia, whose livelihoods depended mostly on agriculture, had looked forward to the festival, hoping to cash in on the influx of tourists who had been expected to attend the festival in large numbers. 'Nobody is against these festivals', emphasized 55-year-old Merab. 'The only people against it are outsiders.' Paradoxically, kajis, who normally came to the capital from the village or were imagined as Muslim goblins, now appeared as Christian conservatives flocking to the village from the capital of Georgia. A woman, who emphasized that she did not consider herself to be a kaji to oppose the rave-fest, highlighted that for her kajis are now conservative urbanites from Tbilisi.

Kajis have indeed moved from the margins to the conservative mainstream. For the liberal urbanites in Tbilisi, kajis in this way have become equated with

orcs from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.[2] The orc identity is simultaneously reclaimed as demonic and used as an epithet for anti-Western conservatives among Georgian liberal elites. The term 'orc' has been taken up by liberals and used for a wide range of things: the orc is someone who is nostalgic for Soviet times, pro-Russian and ultra-conservative. The orc thus remains a fighting character and it is a metaphor for the 'Russia versus the West' tension in Georgia's geopolitical imaginary. So, orcs, like kajis, stand for internal darkness, meaning that both kajis and orcs are negative projections in need of abjection from the national body. The savagery of kajis, however, is transformed into a primal strength for orcs, as they form politically driven neo-conservative groups and act as only real and true residents of the city.

Since the outbreak of recent protests under the name 'Shame Movement' in Georgia in June 2019, kajis and orcs have made quite a comeback, and have done so in contradiction with each other. The protests broke out after Sergei Gavrilov, a Communist Party member of the Russian Duma, visited Tbilisi through the Interparliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy and sat in the chair reserved by protocol for the head of the parliament. The opposition marches inevitably compared the Georgian government to traitors and the system as run by orcs. The connection between the orcs and the Georgian government epitomized the rejection of the West, rendering the ultra-conservative groups of Georgia into a weapon against the West. On the other hand, the urbanite conservatives or the supporters of the government referred to the opposition who blocked the central streets of Tbilisi as kajis in need of wiping out from public spaces.[3] They were worried not only about the threats to the government that these protests imposed but also about the modern urban order that had been disrupted by multiple tents and bonfires used by the opposition. These discussions have found their habitat not only on the streets of Tbilisi but also on the internet. The internet has become a new bestiary of creatures real and demonic. Both orcs and kajis were perceived to have their trolls on the internet, working either for the government or the opposition.[4] While streets were haunted by human devils, the internet was haunted by virtual ones.[5]

The changing forms of traditional characters show the ability of goblins to update themselves; they reveal something about the emotional and affective contents that social changes entail. Hence, a multitude of non-human beings in human appearances intervene and are on the rise in daily urban lives of Georgia. They become manifest in times of societal, political or urban crisis, which makes spectral geographies particularly important to explore anthropologically. Spectral apparition then 'is a visible indicator that something is very wrong … and the thing that is wrong is that it is not really finished yet' (Wagner 2012, 35). As Anthony Vidler argues elsewhere in *The Architectural Uncanny*, buildings and cities, like human bodies, may 'fall ill' and even die (1999). Vidler's sentiment echoes the Georgian cities, which experience the constant breakdown of infrastructures, buildings and streets, making the cities look sick. However, urban forms in Georgian cities are not only like sick human bodies

but also like evil spirits, while being intruded upon by unfinished construction sites and the ruins of never-materialized future cities. To be sure, incomplete urban forms, just like goblins, are not something that were once felt domestic and rendered strange in the process, as Vidler would have it. Instead, they, very much like kajis, intrude as total strangers, and this strangeness is the property of the space itself. So, the ruins of Anaklia are different from ruins of post-war cities or archaeological ruins as described by Vidler, because these ruins have never been rendered intimate or been made familiar to the community. This is why while Vidler stays close to the notion of the uncanny to underline the hidden terrors of the domestic environment evoked by modernity or post-war displacement: future cities, like Anaklia, evoke eeriness. As argued in the introduction to this chapter, eeriness is evoked by spaces and bodies that have never been domesticated or rendered familiar. In this sense, Mark Fisher's definition of the eerie as a property of place best captures our argument:

> A sense of the eerie seldom clings to enclosed and inhabited domestic spaces; we find the eerie more readily in landscapes partially emptied of the human. What happened to produce these ruins, this disappearance? What kind of entity was involved? What kind of thing was it that emitted such an eerie cry? (2016, 11)

Urban forms in Georgia are eerie because the assumed modernity itself is materially incomplete. Thus, the ruins of the future city haunting Anaklia are eerie, and the familiar agents, people, are missing, but we don't know what eerie agencies replaced them. And, as the Georgian proverb goes, devils take possession of abandoned churches.[6] Much like human devils, who are deemed to have bodily weight and flesh but are still devoid of humanity, unfinished cities form part of spectral modernity that are deemed to be devoid of modern urbanity. Empty and incomplete buildings or infrastructures are, thus, like demons themselves. What defines cities and humans as being eerie is then that they evoke similar affects related to alterity and estrangement. The Georgian cities and goblins do not simply designate alterity in terms of modernity; they gesture towards certain obscure vicinities between internal and external, modern and non-modern, and human and non-human entities. Much like in Amazonia, where there is a particular configuration of distinctions between humans and non-humans (Viveiros de Castro 1998), Georgian goblins are irreducible to Western distinctions between nature and culture. Goblins are perceived as humans and non-humans at the same time, as they adopt the human bodies, and this adoption is what differentiates them from Western ghosts. While devils and cities in Georgia reveal human or urban forms, they hide non-human and non-urban souls.

It is in this sense that there are forces larger than individual people, or even larger than groups, that affect people in Georgia, generating more goblins, which appear either from within people themselves, or from outside, or

both. In this sense, the unleashing of some kind of metaphysical being can be as much generated by dominant and powerful social forces as it could be by minority or marginalized groups. This is not the same kind of phenomenon as described by Stanley Cohen (2011 [1972]) in that the fears and anxieties expressed in this chapter do not appear to be threatening the wider social fabric; instead, the changes in the wider social and urban fabric appear to be threatening the people. This difference highlights the main point made by Cohen: that the moral panics and folk devils he studied were ones seen by people who felt themselves to be part of a dominant social group, whose values were somehow being threatened by some kind of intervening group, individual or phenomenon. This does not appear to describe what this chapter outlined. Instead, it demonstrated how wider political, economic and social changes in Georgia are experienced by people as disruptive, and thus unleashing some demons.

Notes

[1] According to Hegel, the *Weltgeist* ('world spirit') is not an actual object or a transcendental, Godlike thing but a means of philosophising about history. *Weltgeist* is realized in history through the mediation of various *Volkgeister* ('national spirits').

[2] See a newspaper article where one of the liberal politicians refers to the opposition as Orcs: 'Ugulava: me da gabašvils aeroportši, sapasporto kontrolis zonaši orkebi t'avs dagvesxnen' (*Tabula*, 9 December 2019, http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/161357-ugulava-me-da-gabashvils-aeroportshi-sapasporto-kontrolis-zonashi-orkebi-tavs).

[3] One outspoken government supporter insisted that the opposition protest had to be forcefully dispersed and the blocked streets cleaned from the protesters and their tents: '"Es sak'aǰet'i karvebian-kasrebianad xom ar gavabržanot' rust'avelidan? Amovidnen qelši ra…"' (*Resonance Daily*, 11 November 2019, http://resonancedaily.com/index.php?id_rub=1&id_artc=82878).

[4] One Facebook page is called Orcs in Georgian, aimed at caricaturing the conservative mainstream of the country, therefore presumably associated with the liberals: https://www.facebook.com/orkebi/

[5] In December 2019 Facebook shut down hundreds of fake Facebook pages and groups linked to the government in Georgia: 'Georgian Authorities Appear Linked to Hundreds of Fake Facebook Pages' (*JAMNews*, 21 December 2019, https://jam-news.net/georgian-authorities-appear-linked-to-hundreds-of-fake-facebook-pages/).

[6] As the Georgian proverb puts it, if devils (*eshmak'ebi*) take over (*ep'at'ronebian*: 'become a patron to') an abandoned (*up'at'rono*: 'having no patron') church, an abandoned (*upatrono*: 'without a patron') city becomes the property of *kajebi* (lit. 'horned devils', also 'hicks') (Abrahamishvili and Bolkvadze 2003, 29, cited in Manning 2009, 90).

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CHAPTER 4

The Sugar Devil

Demonizing the Taste of Sweetness in Denmark

Susanne Højlund
Aarhus University

Introduction: A Magic Tree

During my fieldwork on children's food perceptions[1] I was told a story by a parent in a kindergarten that the manager of the institution was going to retire, and another would take over. The former pedagogue had for many years had a tradition that the children loved. In the middle of the playground there was a tree. This tree could once a year turn magic and be filled with pancakes, soda or sweets, astonishing the children and setting the ground for a party in the kindergarten. But, when the new leader began her work in the kindergarten, she decided to cut down the tree as part of the new anti-sugar strategy she wanted to introduce. This was a symbolic act to signal that pancakes, soda and sweets were from that day not allowed in the institution.

Our knowledge about sugar, and other foodstuffs, has social consequences. This is not a big mystery: all over the world, knowledge about food and its nutritional value is distributed to citizens and used when planning meals, cooking and eating together (Mintz 1996). The interesting point regarding the case of sugar is the degree of attention it has caught in Danish society, especially

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in relation to children: nearly every school, kindergarten and nursery has a policy of sugar consumption.

Whether sugar is healthy or not is not the question here – rather, I am curious about how it has become possible within a relative short number of years to change the perceptions of sugar and agree on it as a dangerous foodstuff, to the extent that there are written rules for its use for nearly all children in Denmark. It seems as if these rules are not neutral nutritional guidelines solely for the benefit of the health of the individual; also, they have a moral meaning: it is not a free or private choice to eat sugar or not; the collective is perceived to be threatened if children's sugar intake is not controlled by parents and teachers.

But what creates this apparent agreement about sugar being a bad thing to be eaten? In this chapter I argue that Stanley Cohen's (2011 [1972]) concept of *moral panic* can be used as a lens to understand this development. As the British sociologist Alan Beardsworth notes, using moral panic as an analytical perspective on the meaning of food can 'map out the broader cultural and economic context within which food consumption as risk-taking behaviour takes place' (Beardsworth 1990, 11). Thus, this approach proposes that the public process of 'bedevilling' is not only about demonizing groups or categories of people; it can also be used to understand the emergence of public anxiety in general. Inspired by Beardsworth, I propose that the relation between science and digital media contributes to this production of anxiety.

The Devil: Sugar is Evil

> The Sugar *Devil*, that's me! I am sighing after you: Give me sugar the whole day, give me a shop of candy that will never close. If you serve cabbage and sausage for me, I can be really evil and angry, because I want sweets that are sticky, because I am my own health minister, I want to live in your stomach and I will torment you until it rains with sugar on me. Why should I have ryebread and apples, when my teeth have fallen off, and it is sugar I want?[2] (emphasis by the author)

To identify sugar with the Devil is not my own idea. This Danish children's song does it explicitly: it uses the metaphor of the Devil to express how craving for sugar can be out of your own control, beyond reason and can be imagined as if someone took over your body. The idea of interpreting the preference for sugar as a devil is part of public culture in Denmark: a simple search on Google confirms that people exchange experiences with an incontrollable desire for sugar as having a stranger, and uninvited creature, living in your body: the Sugar Devil. People often share and communicate their relation to sugar and the taste of sweetness through the metaphor of the Devil, many of them naming sugar as a devil in disguise, an inner voice that causes dilemmas between the attraction towards sugar and the moral voice telling you it is bad.

Cohen (2011 [1972]) uses the concept of 'folk devils' about stereotypes ascribed to people assumed to do harm in society, having evil intentions, acting against norms and with deviant behaviour, challenging the moral order. Typical objects for this thought model are young men, migrants, unemployed people and other marginalized categories (ibid.). Cohen explores how people enter this category of being a devil as a result of social and cultural processes. He shows how local and context-related events provoke a generalized reaction, based on myths and stigmas (ibid., 122), and explains how the event and the people involved get more and more detached from the original story and the concrete persons involved. The Sugar Devil is not a person within the meaning Cohen presents but an imagined figure that can be found both within the society and within individuals.

It seems as if people create a 'folk theory' (Kleinman, Eisenberg, and Good 1978) here assigning sugar agency, or giving it human characteristics. This knowledge about health and medical practices is exchanged in 'the popular health care sector' (ibid., 140), which is characterized by being a grey zone of lay and expert knowledge from where people define symptoms and illnesses, and diagnose and treat themselves and others through advice based on common-sense interpretations. Some examples from the ways the bedevilling of sugar is communicated show not one, but many different sides of its 'evilness'.

'Sugar makes children unrest'[3] is a typical example of the statement that sugar has the ability to make children restless. This is an argument often found in texts and language within the Danish school pedagogy. Another version is 'children get high by eating sugar', which is communicated as a truth in many texts, blogs, Facebook comments and so forth, and theories about ADHD and other behavioural problems are often linked to this idea. Allowing children to eat sugar will result in disturbance of the order in a school class by increasing excitement. It is, though, according to doctors, a myth that sugar has this impact on children (Hoover and Milich 1994; Vreemann 2008; Wolraich, Wilson, and White 1995).

Another argument against sugar is one that states that it threatens the feeling of equality in a group of children. Pedagogues have told me that the reason why they ask parents not to give their children sweet food in their lunchboxes is that the other children will envy them. And this will cause problems for the other children to eat their own food. In one kindergarten it is formulated like this in a leaflet for parents: 'Our wish is that the children don't bring sweet food with them in their lunch packet, as it creates jealousy in the group.' I know of kindergartens that even control the lunchboxes before lunch time, in order to identify and remove sweet stuff from them.

One of the most typical arguments against sugar is its assumed threat to health. Sugar is often called 'empty calories' that 'steal' the appetite from the child. In this way the child will risk not getting enough vitamins and other micro-nutrients. Avoiding sugar leaves space for other, healthier food items, it is reasoned.

In this specific case on sugar as a risky foodstuff, the message is thus related to different types of arguments, from sugar causing deviant behaviour to sugar threatening the social coherence, as well as its general health and nutritional status. Behind all these arguments lies the idea that children will prefer sugar for other food if their sugar intake is not restricted. Sugar has characteristics like a devil – it has a spirit, it takes over your brain and makes you powerless, and you must give in to your desire for the sweet taste – or learn to control it. In many ways it is seen as a toxic (Rozin 1997): it is not about degrees of intake, but about not touching it at all.

The ways in which sugar is described as having devilish qualities mean that the intake has consequences, not only for yourself but for the collective, which make the bedevilling a broader moral issue, a question of right and wrong.

Sugar and Morality

Before digging into sugar as a medium for *moral* panic, it is worth remembering that eating is in itself a moral practice. The existing corpus of work on the anthropology and sociology of food has clearly documented this (see e.g. Douglas 1984; Lupton 1996; Mintz 1997; Murcott 1992). Analysing how food, eating and morality are interwoven has – within anthropology as well as sociology – produced an enormous corpus of knowledge about the cultural and symbolic constructions of food, thereby providing insights into how issues such as the body, health, gender, sociality, identity, discourse, consumption and social policy are all related to morality. Mary Douglas's foundational study of purity and danger, which examined how people classify food items into pure/impure, edible/inedible and good/bad (Douglas 1966), has subsequently been supported by a range of both anthropological and sociological studies exploring the relation between food and morality (Bildtgaard 2010; Coveney 2006; Forrest and Najjaj 2007; Friedland 2008; Kimura 2011; Lupton 1996). This research shows that people adjust and negotiate their moral standpoints in relation to what they eat. For example, a British/Australian study from 2011 on the consumption of meat revealed that people's moral concern for cows decreased after consuming beef, indicating that people restrict their moral concern for animals when eating them. This finding suggests that people are motivated to avoid the conclusion that they are involved in the harm of a morally worthy animal. Hence, seeing an animal as food is sufficient to diminish its perceived capacity to suffer and this dampens our moral concern (Bratanova, Loughnan, and Bastian 2011). It seems, though, that eating meat today, in the year 2021 in the context of the climate debate, is an object for moral considerations in new and intense ways. Another recent quantitative study explored perceptions of ethical and unethical food among European students, revealing both how individuals make clear distinctions between good/bad, edible/inedible and moral/evil food, and that particular moral qualities are associated with particular

food items (Mäkiniemi, Pirttilä-Backman, and Pieri 2011; see also Ruby and Heine 2011).

Warren Belasco takes a historical sociological perspective when asking whether modern dining has become amoral (Belasco 2008, 186) as the consumer has lost the opportunity to see through the process of production and its impact on the environment. Carole Counihan shows through her study of students' records of their eating how cultural food rules expresses an ideology of life that focuses on how and what is eaten. She argues that eating is not a simple act of fuelling the body but a moral behaviour through which people construct themselves as good or bad human beings (Counihan 1992, 62). Another perspective has been that of eating in relation to time and place, shedding light on the different moralities at stake when people dine at home or at restaurants, or, similarly, when they eat at home or while on holiday (Caplan 1997).

When it comes to sugar, the moral connotations are not about animal welfare, production methods, climate worries or industrial power; although the history of sugar production contains many of these ethical questions, especially about slavery (Mintz 1985). These topics are not brought into current arguments against its use. The moral questions of sugar consumption point to a row of other reasons. Paul Rozin asks, in a paper from 1987, why sugar gives rise to such strong feelings, and mentions several possible reasons. First, it can be traced back to Puritan values that judge everything pleasurable as bad. In this regard, to crave sugar is a sin, not only at a personal level but in a religious meaning. The implicit reference is the story of the Fall, which begins with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and the snake tempting Eve to take a bite of an apple from the tree of knowledge. This story, according to Kenneth Burke (1969 [1950]), is a fundamental moral drama often retold in Western cultures (Mechling and Mechling 1983, 22). Regarding the desire and passion for sweetness, the story of Eve's temptation is, for example, often retold in advertisements that tend to represent women as having more of a 'sweet tooth' than men (Robertson 2009).

Another reason can be that the consumption of sugar is related to obesity, which for a long time has been seen as a moral failure, at least in Western societies (Rozin 1987; see also Lupton 1996). But it is not only the body *weight* that is threatened by our attraction to sugar. Sugar is also seen as a danger to many other bodily functions: sugar can destroy your teeth, it can give you a stomach ache, and it can disturb your blood sugar balance, just to mention some of the assumed negative impacts. Sugar consumption is related to lifestyle and lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, and as such understood as a risky and dangerous foodstuff.

Eating dangerous food makes you dangerous yourself, Rozin argues, referring to the saying 'you are what you eat' (Rozin 1987: 102). He traces this belief back to the work of James George Frazer (1959) and Marcel Mauss (1972), who both pointed to 'the law of contagion' – the idea in some societies that being in touch with a foodstuff can transfer its inherent values to the eater. For example,

when eating meat from a lion or another animal, you can get the strength from this creature. In the same way, the negative consequences of eating sugar can be transferred to the person eating it. Because of the danger of sugar, the logic seems to be that eating it makes you a dangerous person (Rozin 1987).

Furthermore, Rozin observes, the fact that you cannot see sugar in many food products makes it necessary to learn about its presence in other ways, and therefore to develop an ability to practise self-management. Parents teach their children this by reserving certain time spots for the use of sugar: you cannot eat it in the morning, but as a dessert in the evening. You are allowed to eat it during celebrations, or at special times of the year, such as Christmas. In Denmark this 'sugar timing' also exists in the 'Friday candy' tradition – a custom that has developed over the last 20–30 years, allowing children to eat sweets on Friday evenings, and often only this day in the week (leading to a very high sugar consumption once a week). Thus, the hidden presence of sugar does not prevent it to work at a social level: its invisible existence is both a medium for socialization, a way of learning about time and everyday rhythms, and a form of social glue.

In addition, and especially in relation to children, sugar has – because of its pleasurable characteristics – been used all over the world as a reward in the upbringing of children, when the child has done something good or difficult, or to comfort a child with a wound, or one having been brave at the doctor or at hospital. But, as Allison James has shown, for adults, sugar is also a symbol of love: a typical gift for Valentine's Day is chocolate, indicating an intimate relation between the giving person and the receiver (James 1982). This double meaning of sugar as both a reward and a threat makes it even more important to exercise control.

The anthropologist Sidney Mintz published the famous book *Sweetness and Power* in 1985, where he documents the development of sugar consumption in a historical context. He shows how sugar went from being a seldom spice, only accessible to the few, to now being a product to be found in nearly everything: cereals, desserts, bread, ketchup, ice cream, crackers, marmalade. The morality of sugar, he argues in a later article (Mintz 1997), is linked to a historical ideal of individualism. The question for the consumer today is not where to get it, or how to afford it, but how to avoid it (ibid., 181). Therefore, the moral issue is self-discipline or self-management. 'The use of consumption as a means to define oneself becomes commoner' (ibid.). The modern individual has to exercise choice to succeed in life: to reject not only sugar, but also 'tobacco, drugs, coffee, television, cholesterol, unfiltered water, synthetic fiber, unradiated fruit, red meat'. Mintz sees this as a morality detached from society itself, a sign of a new self, where self-discipline is the highest ideal. Deborah Lupton notes this virtue too, when explaining health as a moral performance (Lupton 1996). She mentions not only one, but two moral ethics: performing rationality by controlling food intake, but also the performing of emotions as an ideal. With these

two types of moralities, people should be able to assess when the right moment is for hedonistic pleasure, and when it is restrictions that are deciding people's moral attitude.

As shown, eating sugar touches upon different moralities, some of them contradictory. Through them all you can find an ideal of self-discipline in relation to both pleasure and health. Remaining healthy is seen as a sign of control, but knowing the time for pleasure is important. Enjoying sweetness together with others and giving sweet presents are seen as acts of social bonding, but at the same time these situations have to be controlled, for example through policies for consumption.

Behind these ambivalent approaches to sugar lies the assumption that all human beings prefer the taste of sweetness. This is typically explained in relation to babies' breastfeeding (Lupton 1996; Macbeth 1997) or as a specific point in the brain (Kringelbach 2010), common for all human beings. These explanations view liking for and pleasure of sweetness as a natural need with physiological locations. But sugar and sweetness are more than human biology. Sugar is related to culture and therefore bound to local moral perceptions of the good and responsible citizen. The cultural factors contributing to meanings of sweetness and sugar are complex, context bound and often contradictory. In relation hereto, it is worth noticing that one of these paradoxes is that Danes eat more than double the amount of sugar as the average European, and is the largest player in the sugar confectionery market (Ridder 2020). Thus, in spite of being a country with many explicit rules for sugar intake, Denmark still has one of the highest rates of sugar consumption of all the countries in the world. In addition, TV shows about baking are popular as never before, and cakes are often described not through the Devil but through the metaphor of angels (for example by describing a chocolate cake that 'tastes like angels singing').

At the same time, Denmark has a very strict sugar policy, not only at the political level but, as shown, also at an institutional, practical level. We still don't know much about how far this reaches into each family, but from my different times spent on fieldwork in schools I can hear the children referring to sugar as a dangerous foodstuff, an interpretation that I haven't met in other studies of children's perceptions of food. For instance, in a small-scale comparative study I conducted with two Cuban researchers (2014–2015) we asked 29 Cuban and 62 Danish children (10–14 years old) in a questionnaire about their perceptions of the nutritional value of different foodstuffs. Many of the answers were similar. For instance, both the Danish and the Cuban children defined vegetables and proteins as 'healthy' and fat as unhealthy. But the questions about sugar were answered very differently: the Danish children in general labelled sugar as very bad ('not good for anything'), whereas the Cuban children expressed a more nuanced view by answering: 'Sugar is necessary, but not too much.' By comparing the two regional attitudes towards sugar, this example indicates that Danish children perceive sugar in different ways from Cuban children. But it

also reminds us that, in order to understand specific moral understandings of sugar, you need to include an analysis of the wider context (Sanchez et al. 2019).

On the one hand, this shows how sugar – and food in general – is surrounded by often conflicting explicit ideologies or ethical regimes in the Foucauldian sense (Faubion 2012; Foucault 1990) that distinguish between good and bad, allowed and forbidden, healthy and unhealthy, and which actors may relate to in highly ambiguous and paradoxical ways. On the other hand, morality is also embodied in the most fundamental sense in the local practices of eating and the cultivation of virtue as embodied taste. Much of this logic is based on the general ambivalence of eating (Beardsworth 1990). But, when it comes to the specific food scare regarding sugar, there are more than the moral dilemmas of eating at stake. Nutrition has increasingly become a scientific topic, and at the same time both printed and digital media play a bigger and bigger role in the sharing of knowledge. The interplay between media and nutritional science amplifies the reactions to sugar (ibid.) and thereby helps demonize it.

Demonizing: Spreading the Panic

In 2007 a book called *Super Healthy Family* (*Kernesund Familie*) was published in Denmark (Mauritson 2007) and was from the beginning very popular. After one month it had been reprinted four times; nine years later it had been reprinted nine times and sold more than 180,000 copies. It is described as having started a movement against the authorities[4] – and it was itself used as an authority, often mentioned as a reference for the sugar policies described in Danish children's institutions. The author is a Danish journalist, Ninka-Bernadette Mauritson, who – with her own family as an example – claims in the book that autism and other diseases can be cured by changing eating habits, e.g. by avoiding sugar, gluten, milk, rice, spaghetti and other specific food items. The reaction to the book was dramatic – both regarding the eagerness of the audience to read the personal story and the nutritional advice, which many began to follow, and from the health authorities, who warned against self-diagnosis and easy-read messages with promises of change.[5]

The book and its impact demonstrated a huge scepticism towards doctors, health authorities and experts, and praised experience-based knowledge, shared in an easy language. Nevertheless, the knowledge about how nutrition works in your body has 100 years of scientific history behind itself, many disputes between experts, and no clear conclusions seen from a scientific point of view. A weighty contribution to these debates came from the English nutritional expert John Yudkin in 1972, who with his book *Pure, White, and Deadly* depicted sugar as decidedly poisonous. He argues that intake of sugar had a greater effect on developing heart diseases than fat. This thesis, however, was not taken seriously at the time because it went against the 'fat hypotheses' developed by the American nutritional expert Ancel Keys, which stated a

connection between fatty foods and heart diseases (Keys 1953). The latter theory has for many years been significant in efforts to understand the development of modern lifestyle diseases such as overweight, heart attacks and diabetes. And it forms the backdrop to years of diet recommendations to avoid cholesterol in food (Levenstein 2012). However, several researchers have begun to side with Yudkin, and presently the damaging effect of fat is toned down, while there is an increased focus on sugar/carbohydrates metabolism. One of the more famous examples, building upon this argument, is the so-called Atkins diet, aimed to diminish the intake of carbohydrates, and lately many other sugar-free diets have been presented, in Denmark as well as in the Western world in general. Books about how to avoid sugar have become very popular, and it seems that sugar has taken over the seat from fat as the new risk factor in food. On a daily basis Danish media is full of expert opinions on the harmful effects of sugar, which cover a wide spectrum of conditions mentioned in this chapter, ranging from restless children with ADHD, risks of addiction and even crime, to overweight, diabetes and cancer.

It is not solely sugar that is the concern; carbohydrates in general are under suspicion: 'White Bread Kills' reads one of the headlines, and many others pave the way for diets that recommend avoiding carbohydrates in food. Danes are educated about 'slow' and 'fast' carbohydrates and 'glycaemic index' has become part of everyday language and is found as a marker on more and more food items. For those more inaugurated, sugar warnings are not just about the white beet sugar or the brown cane sugar but about corn syrup, the unseen sugar, that hides in everything from bread to ketchup, soda and sweets. Corn syrup is cheaper than beet or cane sugar, and traded on the world market in liquid form. It has a different molecular composition than white sugar and therefore affects the body's physiology in different ways. It is chemically produced and contains more fructose than sucrose, a fact that is currently making it an object of attention for nutritional experts as fructose is assumed to harm the liver in the same way as alcohol (Jeppesen 2014). So, sugar is not just sugar – there is a range of different kinds of sugars, which all contain carbohydrates but are handled differently by the body and have different qualities in relation to food production. Moreover, they have different levels of sweetness, different abilities as flavour enhancers, as preservation, and in relation to fermentation processes. Milk, fruit and juice, as well as vegetables, oatmeal and bread, contain sugars. So, sugar is in some ways too wide a concept, which does not make it easier to navigate nutritional advice. Nowadays fear of food was back in time rooted in fat; now *sucrophobia* is also part of a general fear of food, including all forms of carbohydrates (Levenstein 2012).

The nutritional science behind sugar as a more or less dangerous agent in human metabolism is complex, prolonged and filled with industrial, political and scientific interests and disputes. But all these nuances are, so to say, 'lost in translation' when published on diverse media platforms. As Cohen writes, the Devil is a stereotype, a generalized version of a deviant agent

that has assumed destructive effects on the body (Cohen 2011 [1972], 122). When all the different negative characteristics are devoted to one imagined evil 'figure', there is no space for discrimination, critical or contextual reflections. In relation to sugar, one could ask: is it the preference for sweetness that the so-called Devil controls? If this is the case, every sweet foodstuff should be abandoned. But, as shown, all that is sweet is not made of or containing sugar. Sugar, in the form of sucrose, is one thing; artificial sweetener, for instance, is another. The sweetness of a banana does not derive from the same type of molecule as the sweetness to be found in milk. How different forms of sugar (white sugar, sugar from beet roots, artificial sugar, lactose, galactose, fructose, glucose and sucrose) work in your body is still an object for many scientific studies. You could also ask whether it is any amount of sugar intake that should be fought against. Or is the aim to be able to control your intake? Are there situations where sugar, or the taste of sweetness, is acceptable? In the example of the sugar tree in the Danish kindergarten, that was certainly not the case.

Media, news and Facebook do not communicate all these uncertainties – only parts of their conclusions. And, even if the many statements and positions in this landscape seem random, they are not. They form the ground for the media pattern that generates the moral panic. Science and media collaborate on this pattern, which Cohen – inspired by disaster research – named a 'sequential model' (Cohen 2011 [1972], 17), covering the idea that there is a systematic and predictable relation between a threatening event and a social system that produces a reaction to this based on risk perception. This reaction is amplified through media, and thereby amplifies the perception of risk, and, as time goes on, the perception and the actual risk become more distant from each other (ibid., 16). In the actual case of sugar as a risk, it is an extra factor that science contributes to the production of uncertainty (Beardsworth 1990) through a complexity of information that cannot be communicated in short news articles or Facebook posts. Science often asks questions that people can easily relate to ('Is this healthy or not?' 'Does this medicine have an impact?'), but producing stringent, valid answers to these questions is often a lifelong work process involving long education and many scientific disputes in different knowledge fields, all in a language that is not easy to translate to the public. This relation between scientific knowledge and its distribution through news media is described by Alvin M. Weinberg (1972), who named it *trans-science*. According to Beardsworth, Weinberg argued "that there exists a whole range of questions that can be asked of science, which i.e. are issues of 'fact' that can be framed in scientific terms, but which science itself in practice may find impossible to answer" (Beardsworth 1990, 13). As a consequesce of this Beardsworth notes: "Once these trans-scientific features are acknowledged, an important and fascinating paradox begins to emerge. In contemporary society, the sciences enjoy enormous prestige and authority, and this very authority leads the public at large to expect them to deliver clearcut answers to pressing questions" (ibid., 14).

On the questions of sugar there are no clear-cut answers. The many meanings of sugar are distributed to the children, and played out in their everyday lives, as seen in the following example. During a fieldwork in a Danish school, I experienced that the children in a fifth-grade class were very aware of the content of their own and their peers' lunchboxes. For instance, some girls explained to me that they never had 'white bread' but that there were some boys in the class who always brought that. These girls were surely aware of the negative connotations, not only of sugar but of carbohydrates in general. Seemingly, it was important for them to communicate this moral standpoint to me. But, when the same children entered the after-school institution there were no comments on sugar or carbohydrates. When asking them, 'Where does your food taste the best, in school or in the after-school institution?' they all agreed that it was best to eat in the after-school institution. This meal often consisted of white bread – but, unlike the school context, there were no worries among the children over eating this. Instead, the children here stressed the cosy situation the meal established in the after-school institution. In the school a lunch break is normally ten minutes where you eat your private lunch bag at each your table (and are seemingly being watched by the others). In the after-school institution, the meal is a common action where you share the bread and produce grilled sandwiches together and eat them around the same table. This observation could point to the school as an arena that contributes to the development of moral panic to a higher degree than the after-school institution. It corresponds with the idea that a Danish after-school institution is seen as a space for free expression and play, in opposition to the school, which has to civilize its pupils (Højlund 2004). And it shows again how complex and context-dependent the perceptions of sugar are.

But, even if there is no one-way line between scientific discourses, media disputes and practices in the individual Danish families, the moral attitude towards sugar certainly plays a role, which this last example will show. During an experimental fieldwork at the annual Aarhus Food Festival, our research group – together with some anthropology students – had invented a table with ten different foodstuffs on it. Five of these were food items that we assumed would provoke opinions about sugar – for example chocolate, white bread, sweets – while others were part of 'a healthy diet' discourse, such as vegetables, brown bread and fruit. Our informants were families with children, and they were asked to choose five items of the ten for a picnic bag. They had to discuss and negotiate on which to choose, and these conversations gave us a good understanding on how the different family members valued different food. One thing was very dominant: it was the mothers who decided in the end what should be part of the common lunch bag, such as in the family where a boy preferred the white bread, and took one piece in order to place it in the hypothetical lunch bag. But he was stopped by the force of his mother, who, with a hand on his arm, explained to her son, 'No, we don't want the white bread. In our family we prefer brown bread.'

The Sugar Drama

The arguments against sugar are rooted in both science and religion, not as oppositions but in an interesting and conflated continuum between the two, Elizabeth Walker Mechling and Jay Mechling argue (1983). According to them, this *moral rhetoric* follows a pattern: sugar is seen as *pollution*, bringing *guilt* to the consumer, either because of a weak self, an evil industry or a craving brain. This disorder asks for *purification* through parental or nutritionist intervention, or through symbolic rituals, as for example the fall of the sugar tree in the kindergarten. By going through these phases, one can return to *redemption*: freedom of sin (ibid., 22). To them, these ways to understand and tell stories about sugar represent more than knowledge about the material itself. It is stories that reflect societal structures, dilemmas grounded in a larger, dramatic history, where both the Bible and science play significant roles. The sugar drama is amplified by public texts, books, news, social media etc. The fundamental story of the Fall engages people because we are in need of public rituals to teach us how to cope with, control and include *temptation* in our lives (ibid.; see also Allen 2002).

During the last 50 years sugar has undergone a dramatic change of symbolic meaning in Danish society, from being a comforting treat for children to now being seen as a threatening foodstuff that needs to be regulated through sugar policy at the children's institutions. As shown, this development can be explained as generated in a media-driven space between science, religion and society. The reactions to scientific messages presented in simplified forms and formats become guidelines for nutritional fear and lifestyle ideologies that are again reproduced and amplified through media responses. The scientific messages get help from the basic religious metaphors, as the Devil, and the media retell the story of the Fall in a scientific language. The reason why the head of the kindergarten in the introductory example could make the drastic change of a tradition was due to this ideological climate paving the way for a new approach to practices of eating in the Danish children's institutions. This chapter has thus shown that moral panic can be related to something other than human beings, and has pointed to how the uncertainties of science in collaboration with different media platforms contribute to the process of producing moral panic. The threat is not 'the other' but 'the self' with a body that is a bio-political entity, in a society generated by science and statistics (Poovey 1995).

When analysing sugar consumption in everyday life, it is important to remember that discourses, science and media debates do not determine practice. As shown in the empirical examples in some situations, the fear of sugar and carbohydrates is dominating – whereas in other situations the health moralities are downplayed, and the pleasures of sweetness put in front, as when the families are striving for *hygge* (the special Danish concept for a cosy situation, often with others), or when children are sitting around a table in the after-school institution, or at home getting 'Friday candy'. So, when it comes to sugar,

it's not all about panic, and it is not in every situation that the Devil is present. Sometimes he is exchanged with angels. These dramas between the good and the bad are always played out in a specific sociological and historical context. The moral demand of controlling desires and temptations is part of a complex everyday sugar consumption, but this complexity is not reflected in the many public statements and advice aimed at children.

It still remains, though, to dig deeper into the potential reasons for why both sugar restrictions and high sugar consumption have become specific to Danish food culture, perhaps more than in other food cultures.

Notes

[1] The examples in this chapter are observations across different projects about food and children I was involved in during 2012–2016.

[2] Danish children's song by Elisabeth Gjerluff Nielsen and Barbara Gjerluff Nyholm 2008. Also see Henrik Boysen: 'Det lille tip: Undgå det hvide drys [blog entry]' (http://theangrybeautynerd.bloggersdelight.dk/2014/02/det-lille-tip-undga-det-hvide-drys-2/, accessed 27 January 2020).

[3] See Helle Lauritsen, 'Sukker gør børn urolige' (*Folkeskolen*, 6 March 2003, https://www.folkeskolen.dk/16732/sukker-goer-boern-urolige, accessed 20 January 2020).

[4] See Lasse Lavrsen, 'En krig, der kun havde ofre' (*Information*, 8 March 2014, https://www.information.dk/moti/2014/03/krig-kun-ofre, accessed 10 January 2021).

[5] See 'Slaget på spisebordet' (*Dagens medicin*, 9 September 2008, https://dagensmedicin.dk/slaget-pa-spisebordet/ [subscription required], accessed 10 January 2021).

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PART II

Devilry from Above

CHAPTER 5

A Fish Rots from the Head

How Powerful Moral Entrepreneurs Manufacture Folk Devils

Matt Clement
University of Winchester

Introduction

Prejudice, the act of characterizing people in a stereotypical and derogatory fashion to justify their persecution, is literally 'pre-judging'. Being prejudiced means refusing to allow a judgement based on the facts available to affect your attitudes and actions towards a group of people: insisting on the right to have an opinion based on mythmaking; listening to, believing and telling lies that often add up to conspiracy fantasies that turn reality on its head. Groups of people who are oppressed and less powerful than others are described as either threatening to dominate 'us', i.e. the rest of society, or as a risk, through their attitudes, which are alleged to undermine social norms and established cultures. Many sociologists have explored the way in which states categorize groups of people – human figurations – into 'established and outsiders' (Elias and Scotson 2008) or more commonly simply label the problem group as 'outsiders' (Becker 1963) or 'hooligans' (Pearson 1983). One overarching term applied to both 19th-century Paris and the 21st-century global economy that captures the implicit application

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of the politics of fear is that of the 'dangerous classes' (Chevalier 1973; Melossi 2008; Standing 2011).

For example, in the contemporary Czech Republic, 'Roma are referred to in mainstream discourse as the "inadaptable" – the term used by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler in 1942 when he gave the order to deport all remaining Roma and Sinti to Auschwitz because they were "inadaptable people"' (Fekete 2018, 18; see also Slačálek, Chapter 9). As this example proves, rather than being a threat, this 'outsider' group were themselves the victims of violent persecution. The other lesson, illustrated by the Nazis, is that often those labelling others as folk devils themselves constitute the greatest threat – both to the scapegoated and later to everyone else. This chapter will therefore discuss contemporary folk devils through looking at the perspective from society's summit – describing the role of the state and corporate media as the actors and institutions doing the victimizing, analysing the mechanisms they employ in an attempt to inflate the climate of moral panic that allows these bouts of emotion-driven reaction that cause so much damage and division in social relations.

The question of the state is clearly very important when considering the manufacture of folk devils. One of the most influential studies that describes this process is the groundbreaking *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (Hall et al. 1978). This emerged from Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies under the direction of the lead author, Stuart Hall. Hall was an innovator who was a major influence in the deconstruction of news media, beginning with his expert analysis of the demonization of anti-Vietnam war protesters in 1968. Through the course of the 1970s, Hall and his colleagues charted the growth of a moral panic around the fear of crime that stigmatized young black men as the 'mugger' folk devil. They explain how the state is central by referring to Antonio Gramsci and hegemony, 'the capitalist state involved the exercise of *both* types of power – coercion (domination) and consent (direction) [which] functioned best when it operated "normally" through leadership and consent, with coercion held, so to speak, as the "armour of consent"' (Hall et al. 1978, 203). The creation of these folk devils was, for Hall, evidence of a new crisis of hegemony as the post-war boom in the West came to a shuddering halt from 1973 onwards: 'The forms of state intervention have become more overt. … The masks of liberal consent and popular consensus slip to reveal the reserves of coercion and force on which the cohesion of the state and legal authority finally depends' (Hall et al. 1978, 217). Sidney Harring discusses the importance of policing in enforcing the state's monopoly of the use of violence in the day-to-day, a process that is integral to the successful demonization of black people through disciplinary measures escalating from stop and search to police use of 'deadly force': 'The ruling class institutes disorder when it imposes its power over others … to which the bourgeoisie respond by creating new social institutions. These institutions, in effect, help to legitimate the new social order by rendering a valued "service" to all classes in society' (Harring 2017, 15).

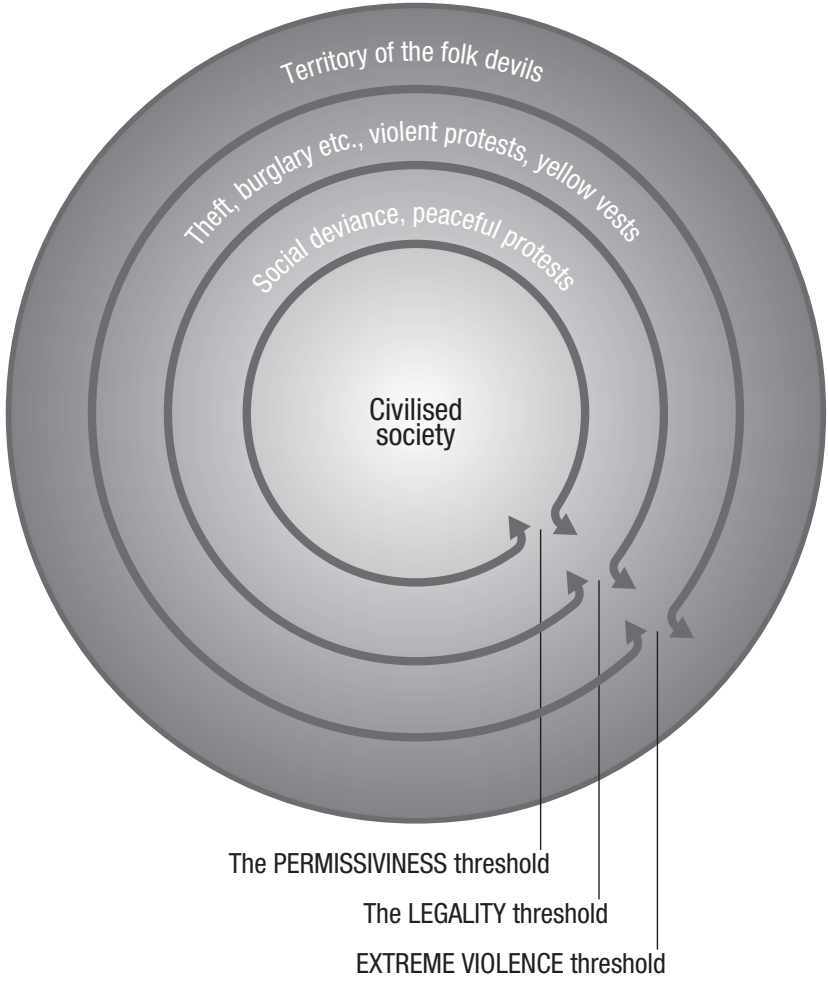

Figure 5.1: Thresholds of the 'signification spiral'.
Source: Author, adapted from Hall et al. (1978, 226).

The process is driven by the state machinery, principally defined here as governments and the institutions gathered around them for the purposes of keeping control of a society divided economically and politically along vectors of social class, gender, nationality and the artificial construct of 'race'. Besides the government, those directing the state include senior figures in control of the army, the police, the judiciary and the civil service. State theorists such as Bob Jessop and Nicos Poulantzas have analysed 'the *normal* form of the capitalist state, that is, the modern representative state, which offers a flexible framework to unify the long-term political interests of an otherwise fissiparous power bloc, disorganize the subaltern classes, and secure popular consent based on plausible

claims to represent the national-popular interest' (Jessop 2021, 286). The corporate media is controlled by key ideological allies of the state, and their propaganda dovetailed with police statistics to create the image of the 'mugger' folk devil. Hall's discussion of thresholds explains: 'In the public signification of troubling events, there seem to be certain thresholds which mark out symbolically the limits of societal tolerance. The higher … in the hierarchy of thresholds, the greater is the threat to the social order, and the tougher and more automatic is the coercive response' (Hall et al. 1978, 225).

They call the process by which thresholds are crossed in the public mind 'signification spirals' and represent them in Figure 5.1. This is reproduced here in adapted form to include some of the contemporary folk devils discussed in this chapter alongside Hall et al.'s earlier examples.

Related to social control is, of course, the question of *who* decides *whom* to control? We are referring here to the idea of deviance, as explained by Erich Goode in his classic study of deviant behaviour:

> All societies on Earth are comprised of social circles, groups of people, or scattered individuals, whose members judge and evaluate what they see and hear about. When they encounter or hear about behaviour, expressed beliefs, and even physical traits or characteristics that should be considered offensive, improper, unseemly, or inappropriate, there's a likelihood that they will punish, denounce, or humiliate the violator. (Goode 2016, 2)

State definitions of the deviant – the 'anti-social' or 'radicalized' person or organization – are, of course, in themselves the products of political ideology. These are not eternal concepts – rather, they tend to shift with the times according to rulers' threat perceptions. French president Macron has let this *deviant* or *outsider* trope guide his language, and the actions of the police force he commands as head of state, towards the Gilets Jaunes or 'Yellow Vests' social movement from the end of 2018 until the time of writing. Another 'dangerous class' of people to European governments are their own Muslim populations, and I will look at how folk devils are manufactured through an Islamophobic discourse and practice. Sometimes the folk devil can be represented by a single person who symbolizes all the marks of stigma that cast them out of the mainstream, and I will also comment on the demonization of the UK Labour Party's leader in the 2019 election, Jeremy Corbyn.

A Climate of Fear

It is also worthwhile analysing the origins of the word panic. It derives from *Pan*, 'a god native to Arcadia', according to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*: 'He can induce *panic* – terror (like that of a frightened and stampeding flock or

herd)' (1949, 640). Panic, then, is a condition associated with all living creatures – an irrational, rather than planned reaction. 'Collective fear stimulates herd instinct, and tends to produce ferocity toward those who are not regarded as members of the herd' (Russell 1995, 121). The reference to a flock or herd describes how the scale of mental disturbance becomes amplified – exaggerated by its collective context. In the case of humans, the individual's terror is magnified through the echo chamber of the crowd. Like the proverbial lemmings running over the cliff's edge, moral panics can sway masses of people into acting against their own interests as their fear creates these folk devils – mythical phantoms. There are many advantages to manufacturing states of fear for those in positions of power, as explained by the ancient Roman writer Livy, describing the benefits of replacing democratic governance with authoritarian rule:

> When they had named a dictator for the first time at Rome, and men saw the axes borne before them, a great fear came over the plebs and caused them to be more zealous in obeying orders. (Livy *II* 1919, 8)

So a climate of fear has benefits to those that give the orders. This goes beyond the state itself and includes their allies running corporations if they believe encouraging far-right scapegoating and violence will weaken resistance to austerity and tarnish the appeal of the left. Take the case of the Golden Dawn Party in the 2010s: this fascist grouping won seats in the Greek parliament and mass support across the country's police forces as it scapegoated migrants through organizing attacks in markets and local communities along the lines of the anti-Jewish pogroms of the early 20th century; 'it was in the interests of the Greek oligarchs (the shipping magnates, the bosses of the energy and construction groups, and football club owners) to encourage the rise of a far-right political party with a paramilitary wing. It was a kind of political safety net against the radical left' (Fekete 2018, 49). The political benefits of manufacturing fear have led to the election victories of right-wing populist presidents – Donald Trump in the US and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil – and also seen right populists or far-right parties elected in much of Europe.

This new threat moves the politics of many countries further away from the established pattern of governing through parliamentary democracy. Rising inequality and poverty under the existing system has given more extreme critiques greater traction. This raises the spectre of the rise of fascism in the 1930s. 'More than anything else, the Nazis were a nationalist protest against globalization' (Hett 2019, 106). Benito Mussolini's ambassador to London explained this to *The Times* journalist A. L. Kennedy in December 1933:

> We must get out of our heads all our old ideas about dictators. … The new dictator is the representative of the people. He is not against the people. He is against the oligarchy that had got the machinery of government into its hands. (Kennedy 2000, 115)

Strong leaders are better than democracy, runs this argument. Fear makes people more likely to believe they have little choice but to bow to the threats of the powerful – i.e. to become 'zealous in obeying orders' (Livy *II* 1919, 8). Thence rulers' domination or 'hegemony' becomes less contested. It may not quell the obdurate opposition from a principled minority, but has a proven history of limiting the horizons of broader groupings through the creation of a 'climate of fear'. Michael Welch spelled this out:

> As a social psychological defense mechanism against confronting the real source of frustration, scapegoating provides emotional relief for people racked with fear and anxiety. That solace is inevitably short term, prompting scapegoaters to step on the treadmill of endless bigotry and victimization. (Welch 2006, 4)

Thus, one step of 'othering' can lead to another, especially as the far right's political rivals 'shift the window' of acceptable prescriptions and solutions towards ever more radical hate speech and actions in order to demonstrate their political virility. Examples from the 1930s demonstrate a more extreme version of the manufacture of folk devils and an accompanying rationale that justifies the persecution of the dreaded outsider group. Journalist Aubrey Leo Kennedy's diary recounts conversations with Nazi foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop on a visit to Berlin in 1936:

> In regard to Jews, von Ribbentrop's main contention was that the Jews must not be allowed to dominate. I think that what the Germans want is to be unmistakeably top dogs in their own house. They are afraid of Jews getting into key positions. Once they have got them under they may leave them in peace. (Kennedy 2000, 194)

The last statement reflects the hopeless wishful thinking of those who wished to appease, rather than oppose, the dictators. It was as if they believed there was no alternative: 'I am afraid that the drive against the Jews is so strongly backed that nobody can stop it for the present' (Kennedy 2000, 199). History tells us how this group paid the ultimate price – leading, of course, to many other groups also being persecuted and invaded.

There were many voices of opposition that sought to expose and explain the rise of anti-Semitism. For example, the German Jewish sociologist Norbert Elias wrote in 1929: 'The Christian German middle class faces a struggle. … In the form of anti-semitism it is fighting against those of its competitors & bourgeois opponents of its own interests who seem easiest to strike against & render harmless' (Elias 2006, 82–3). Elias could clearly see the need to fight this poisonous nationalistic anti-Semitism, while the establishment view, reflected in Kennedy's diaries, was a mixture of mild concern combined with positive approval towards the 'sense of purpose' he saw in the Nazi regime:

> I understand now that the Germans regard Teutonism as something sacred and something that is vitiated by the inmixture of Jewish blood or Jewish influence. This Teutonism is quite terrific. I am more impressed by it the more I look into German life. (Kennedy 2000, 199)

French Lessons

A contemporary example of scapegoating and manufacturing folk devils comes not from the right but from the 'extreme centre' (Ali 2018) of neo-liberalism, the government of French president Emmanuel Macron. This admirer of Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher defeated Marine Le Pen of the far-right Front National in 2017. The spectre of Le Pen's racist party, one with clear fascist affiliations, winning the presidency corralled the bulk of French voters into supporting Macron, but an incident during the election campaign highlighted the risk Le Pen's message could undermine this former banker – unashamedly wedded to neo-liberalism and 'free market' policies (Tonneau 2017). Macron is from Amiens, northern France, and during the election campaign had agreed to meet union representatives at the Amiens chamber of commerce to discuss the proposed closure by the US corporation Whirlpool of their tumble dryer factory, threatening 300 jobs:

> Enter, stage left, Marine le Pen, the so-called people's candidate for president, in town to upstage Macron, speak out for workers and join the picket line. To whistles and calls of 'Marine for president!', she turned to the microphones, attacking Macron as being 'with the oligarchs, with the employers'. (Fekete 2018, 95)

This was a warning that Macron would face becoming a target for populist rhetoric if he stuck to the neo-liberal script of austerity and the imposition of labour market restructuring. Indeed, the very fact that he formed his own new party – En Marche – to contest the election, and abandoned his position as finance minister in the previous government of Francois Hollande, shows the degree to which all the established parties in France have been tarnished by their ties to the existing state of society. After becoming president, Macron continued the path he had taken as a minister, of arguing for extensive 'labour market reform' – which means in short more flexibility and an anti-welfare discourse that seeks to blame the poor for their fate. Novelist Édouard Louis describes an example:

> 27 May 2017 In a town in France, two union members – both in T-shirts – are complaining to President Emmanuel Macron in the middle of a crowded street. They are angry, that much is clear from how they talk. They also seem to be suffering. Emmanuel Macron dismisses them in a

> voice full of contempt: 'You're not going to scare me with your T-shirts. The best way to afford a suit is to get a job.' Anyone who hasn't got the money to buy a suit he dismisses as worthless, useless, lazy. He shows you a line – the violent line – between those who wear suits and those who wear T-shirts, between the rulers and the ruled, between those who have money and those who don't, those who have everything and those who have nothing. This kind of humiliation by the ruling class brings you even lower than before. (Louis 2019, 74–5)

By 2018, Macron was considering his next step on 'the treadmill of endless bigotry' (Welch 2006, 4). In order to win support from the growing climate of French patriotism that had benefited Le Pen, he risked the rehabilitation of Marshal Pétain, saying during the First World War armistice centenary celebrations 'I consider it entirely legitimate that we pay homage to the marshals who led our army to victory. … Marshal Pétain was a great soldier in world war one' (Reuters 2018). This attracted much criticism, as the 'patriot' Pétain went on to betray his people in the Second World War by heading the pro-Nazi collaborationist Vichy government in occupied France, but it may also signal Macron's desire to ride the wave of the far-right surge by claiming he shares their values.

That was in November 2018, and Macron has since followed up this rightward shift by authorizing the police's merciless attitude towards the new protest movement of the Gilets Jaunes or Yellow Vests. One recent report had:

> as of the 30th of January counted 144 verifiable cases of gilets jaunes and journalists severely injured by the riot police. At least 14 victims have lost an eye and 92 of the 144 have been shot by flashballs. Flashballs are rubber bullets fired from a tube like weapon with the stopping power of a .38 calibre handgun. (Haynes 2019)

Just in case the reader believes the president cannot be held responsible for police violence, Macron recently went out of his way to assure the public that he backs them, even in the controversial case of a 73-year-old pensioner who sustained a fractured skull after riot police charged demonstrators in an off-limits area of Nice. When asked for his reaction, Macron replied:

> When one is fragile and risks being shoved, one does not go to places that are declared off-limits and one does not put oneself in that kind of situation. This lady was not in contact with the forces of law and order. She put herself in a situation where she went, quite deliberately, to an area that was off-limits and was caught up in a movement of panic. I regret this deeply, but we must respect public order everywhere. I wish her a speedy recovery … and perhaps a kind of wisdom. (Willsher 2019a)

The 'panic', if that is what it was, was the action of the police themselves as they rampaged through the streets, injuring citizens regardless of age or intention. The fact that this new and powerful social movement continues to attract hundreds of thousands to its Saturday demonstrations across France week after week is clearly infuriating Macron and his government colleagues. As well as sanctioning violence, they have also resolved to change the law to brand these folk devils as an outrage to respectable citizens. In January 2019, the French PM, Edouard Philippe, attempted to separate off the 'legitimate' protesters on the streets from those folk devils – the Gilets Jaunes. This was reported by foreign correspondent Kim Willsher:

> Speaking after the weekend's violence at *gilets jaunes* (yellow vests) demonstrations, Edouard Philippe said tough new public order measures were necessary to protect those wishing to exercise their fundamental right to protest from the 'scandalous' behaviour of thugs and vandals. … He would set up a register of rioters, similar to that used to deter football hooligans, to force them to report to police and prevent them from joining demonstrations. (Willsher 2019b; emphasis in original)

This demonizing measure is, of course, completely impractical to implement. Who would decide who were the legitimate and illegitimate protesters and how would they be forced into registering? Such realities are hardly the point, which appears to be to justify state repression through a process of stigmatization.

The fact that politicians perennially seek approval from the public makes them all potentially 'populist'. This causes the situation to be doubly confusing when the term itself is understood as an insult, an undesirable and manipulative form of politics. Thus some scholars have suggested that the term should not be used:

> Indeed, we would suggest that the term 'populism' is a misnomer precisely because it fails to capture the empirical complexities that exist when new belief systems emerge (or old belief systems re-emerge in new ways). If we recognize the pluralistic nature of political dissent/assent, then the term populism becomes a tool through which legitimate, democratic expressions (of concrete, local problems) become 'boxed-off' as illegitimate forms of political utterance, for example as populist attitudes which must not be platformed. In effect, such a rhetorical strategy only reifies the contradiction – of people's concerns versus the hegemonic political centre – without resolving its necessary conditions for existence. (Pollock, Brock and Ellison 2015, 161)

In truth, the Yellow Vests are 'populist' in that they are a social movement 'of the people' – the representatives of the poorest part of French society who

have taken to the streets as the only way to make their voices heard. As a result, there is a mixture of political views within the movement, from the anarchist and far left youth who graffiti-tagged the Arc de Triomphe and smashed up-market shop windows in Paris in December 2018, through to right-wing elements who have called for 'Frexit' and attempted to blame migrants for their plight. But these 'fake yellow vests' have been challenged and marginalized within the popular mobilizations, which often make common cause with migrants and certainly target the rich. Some trade union groups have gone on strike alongside the movement on occasion and the attacks on welfare and working conditions have been the fuel that brought the whole movement to the fore in the first place. It is precisely because the government and the media have been unable to break this movement through denouncing them as undesirable and outside the law that they have turned to more blanket forms of police violence and incarceration in order to break the spirit of today's *les miserables*. Throughout December 2019 and early January 2020, these 'dangerous outsiders' fought alongside their trade union allies in a series of mass strikes and huge demonstrations against Macron's proposed reforms to pensions, which would raise the retirement age. With so many workers striking, much of the country was severely affected by these stoppages; the government's popularity sunk so far that they announced a government climbdown (Mallet 2020). The outcome is still uncertain, but the lesson from France is that action in a united fight for social justice can weaken the divisive discourse of demonization.

Britain's 'Suitable Enemies'

The world's most powerful states continually manufacture their enemies through their economic domination, often facilitated by wars of conquest and occupation. In the UK, those labelled as ethnic folk devils have often been those minorities: the Irish, from Britain's oldest colony; the Jews; those of Caribbean origin; and Muslims. Despite centuries of mixing together and the diversity of today's UK cities, which are often the most multicultural in Europe, elements of racism still stain our everyday language and customs, such that even those communities that feel the most 'integrated' can experience the reality of Jewish graves being desecrated, black footballers being subject to 'monkey chants' or even the residual racist resentment of sections of the press at British paratroopers facing criminal charges for shooting an unarmed Irish teenager on a civil rights protest nearly half a century ago.

But the group most blatantly stigmatized as folk devils in recent years is undoubtedly the Muslims. This is far less about 'them', i.e. the Muslim religion, culture or attitude of Muslims themselves; rather, it reflects the mindset of all those who do not share that label. These social divisions describe how hierarchical attitudes shape societies:

> All over the world groups of people, great and small, huddle together as it were, with a gleam in their eye and a nod of intimate understanding, assure each other how much greater, better, stronger they themselves are, than some particular other groups. (Elias 2007, 7–8)

The UK has made a substantial contribution to the manufacture of such a Muslim moral panic with the infamous diatribe of Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The title of his August 2018 article in the *Daily Telegraph* looked progressive: 'Denmark Has Got It Wrong. Yes the Burka Is Oppressive and Ridiculous – but That's Still No Reason to Ban It'. Johnson initially appeared to be claiming to explain why he would not ban the burka, but his real intent was revealed when he included two or three phrases he knew would be amplified and repeated ad nauseam across the media. These were: 'it is absolutely ridiculous that people should choose to go around looking like letter boxes' and 'If a female student turned up at school or at a university lecture looking like a bank robber' (Johnson 2018). This was a classic piece of 'dog-whistle' politics: a senior statesman describing Muslim women wearing the burka as looking like letterboxes and bank robbers. This racist and provocative language is designed to encourage others to express their disapproval and prejudice, and feel legitimized by his description of the item of clothing as 'oppressive and ridiculous'. There have since been incidents where someone tried to 'post' a letter into a woman's headgear in Leicester. This hate crime of assault would never have happened in that form had it not been for Johnson's irresponsible scapegoating of an economically marginalized group of women by a white man from Britain's most privileged enclave.

These feelings of superiority are validated by the superior position society accords to the 'established' group over the 'outsider' other. The price the former pay for this privilege is their conformity:

> The self-enhancing quality of a high power ratio flatters the collective self-love which is also the reward for submission to group-specific norms, to patterns of affect restraint characteristic of that group and believed to be lacking in less powerful 'inferior' groups, outsiders and outcasts. (Elias 2008, 30)

Of course, if this superiority played out simply as a form of 'self-love' in the established group, it would not necessarily be so damaging in its impact upon the group they excluded. But it tends to lead to what Ruth Wodak calls 'victim-perpetrator reversal' (Wodak 2015, 67; Clement and Mennell 2020). The more powerful group, or figuration, claim that they are the victim of the malicious intent of those they are in fact marginalizing. A good example of this is the actions of the established UK Conservative government towards one Muslim teenage mother, Shamima Begum, who went to Syria, aged 15, to join the Islamic State group. In early 2019, she expressed her wish to return to Britain

and her willingness to face justice for her membership of a banned organization. The response of Home Secretary Sajid Javid was to refuse her entry and revoke her UK citizenship. This was an illegal action as it made her stateless and denied her fundamental human rights, but it serves the purpose of gratifying the emotional needs of the 'established' group by exaggerating the threat of allowing Shamima to retain her citizenship and sanctioning casting out the Islamic folk devil. Media coverage of the affair has tended to amplify the venting of hate speech directed towards her. Unattributable secret service sources claimed to have interrogated terror suspects who maintain Shamima stitched on bombers' suicide vests and patrolled ISIS camps with a rifle, although the article admitted 'However, there are concerns that such evidence may not meet the legal threshold for trial in Britain due to complications over whether it would be permissible in court' (Cole 2019). Evidence that does not 'meet the legal threshold' is, of course, not evidence at all.

Besides the predictable rush to judgement on social media that overwhelmingly condemns Begum and endorses her punishment, another concerning trend is illustrated by a recent news headline in *The Independent:*

> Shamima Begum: Isis Bride's Face Used as Target at Merseyside Shooting Range

A spokesperson for the company who produced the targets, the Ultimate Airsoft Range, explained, 'after watching Ms Begum being interviewed, there was a lack of empathy that she had shown and we decided to listen to our customers and use them as targets' (Dearden 2019).

Making targets of folk devils to gratify those wishing to punish them with a symbolic outlet for their aggression has gone on throughout history. Muslims may be the chief 'scapegoats of 9/11' (Welch 2006) but the 21st century has seen the revival of another perennial hate figure. The communist/radical leftist/bearded demagogue folk devil, conjured up by the voices of the establishment as a dangerous threat to the status quo, has been with us since the moral panic over the first populists in ancient Rome, which climaxed with the death of Julius Caesar (Clement 2021; Parenti 2003). In the UK today it has taken the form of the ex-leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn. The election of this left-wing leader in 2015 was followed by a tirade of scaremongering and accusations in the mainstream press. One of the incidents mirrored the persecution of Shamima Begum: in April 2019, the army announced an '[i]nquiry after soldiers use Corbyn as target practice'. Not literally, the reader will be relieved to hear, but 'footage shared on social media shows guardsmen attached to the Parachute Regiment … firing their weapons [at] an image of Mr Corbyn' (Stubbs 2019).

As soon as Corbyn was elected, a serving British Army general claimed that in the event of his becoming prime minister, there would be 'the very real prospect' of 'a mutiny'.

> Feelings are running very high within the armed forces. You would see a major break in convention with senior generals directly and publicly challenging Corbyn over vital important policy decisions such as Trident, pulling out of Nato and any plans to emasculate and shrink the size of the armed forces. The Army just wouldn't stand for it. The general staff would not allow a prime minister to jeopardise the security of this country and I think people would use whatever means possible, fair or foul to prevent that. You can't put a maverick in charge of a country's security. (Shipman et al. 2015)

The military are not alone in their determination to make a scapegoat out of Corbyn. The media ran articles ad nauseam portraying the prospect of a Corbyn government in apocalyptic terms. Moreover, the fact that the most economically powerful are also dominant in terms of the circulation of ideas meant that Corbyn's relatively mild reform programme with some limited nationalization and a promise of a degree of tax redistribution towards the poorer mass of the population led to apoplectic outbursts like the *Mail on Sunday*'s '8-page wealth pull-out' on 'How to protect your cash from Corbyn' (Prestridge 2019). The problem here, however, is that on occasion the public's opinion of those doing the scapegoating, or their view of the issue in question, can run counter to the 'common-sense' view of the government and the media. Thus, in the 2017 general election, Corbyn actually defied the experts and won a lot for support for his socialist views, summed up by Labour's manifesto slogan, 'For the Many, Not the Few'. The establishment realized that in any future election they would do well to manufacture other negative labels and slanders about Corbyn personally in order to toxify Labour's message. One of the most effective methods employed was to campaign aggressively to assert that Corbyn – probably one of Labour's most anti-racist and principled leaders ever – was himself anti-Semitic. This began as soon as Corbyn became Labour leader in 2015, as proven in a devastating critique by media analysts published in summer 2019:

> A search of eight national newspapers shows that from 12 June 2015 to 31 March 2019, there have been 5497 stories on the subject of Corbyn, antisemitism and the Labour Party. (Philo et al. 2019, 1)

The authors of this study, 'Bad News for Labour', carried out focus groups showing voters believed the coverage had been so substantial that the scale of anti-Semitism within Labour – clearly, a very good reason for anyone being reluctant to support such a political party – was high: 'the answers ranged from 25–40 per cent of members. The interviewees also gave clear reasons for their judgements which mostly focus on the very high level of media coverage, which they assumed meant that many people were involved' (Philo et al. 2019, 2) The reality is that, at the most, 0.3 per cent of members have been identified as

needing to answer such charges. The mismatch is far too great to be anything other than a product of a media 'moral panic' (Philo et al. 2019, 50).

Judging by the reactions of the focus groups, this tactic worked, not least because so many Labour MPs who were to the right of Corbyn politically, such as deputy leader Tom Watson, were more than willing to buy into the moral panic and ceaselessly endorse claims about its scale and seriousness. The actors involved included the Conservative government, many Labour MPs, the UK media and indeed the Israeli government and media, who also believed their interests benefited from the demonization of any leader advocating sanctions against Israel's military occupation of Palestinian territories. These powerful groups constituted what Howard Becker (1963, 19) calls the 'moral entrepreneurs' who promote the creation of 'folk devils and moral panics … to control the means of cultural reproduction' (Cohen 2011 [1972], 8). The spirals of amplification surrounding Corbyn, branded a deviant and an anti-Semite by his former cabinet colleague and new Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer, led to his suspension from the party he led. Many of his supporters – some of them Jewish – have followed (Harpin 2020).

Conclusion

Folk devils are manufactured, but they are more than mythical. Those who create them want them to appear real to the mass of the population. Since Stanley Cohen's groundbreaking study of how and why they come into being, any number of groups have been made visible by the processes of stigmatization and demonization he observed, as he himself recognized in his introduction:

> To a greater or lesser degree, these cultures have been associated with violence. … There have been parallel reactions to the drug problem, student militancy, political demonstrations, football hooliganism, vandalism of various kinds and crime and violence in general. (Cohen 2011 [1972], 2)

The examples cited here – French welfare claimants and the social movement clad in yellow vests, British Muslim women and the leader of the UK Labour Party – have all been associated with threatening violent disruption to the social fabric and thus fit Cohen's typology:

> In the gallery of types that society erects to show its members which roles should be avoided and which should be emulated, these groups have occupied a constant position as folk devils: visible reminders of what we should not be. (Cohen 2011 [1972], 2)

The purpose of this chapter is to extend Cohen's original examination of folk devils by looking at stigmatization processes initiated by those running the

state and the corporate media that acts in their interests. The irony here is that it is these representatives of the ruling institutions – prime ministers, presidents and generals – who themselves uphold a violent system of exploitation that constantly divides one section of society against another. The victor in the UK 2019 election, Boris Johnson, used his position as both prime minister and journalist to remind his readers that:

> the modern Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn … detest the profit motive so viscerally – and would raise taxes so wantonly – that they would destroy the very basis of the country's prosperity … they point their fingers at individuals with a relish and a vindicativeness not seen since Stalin persecuted the Kulaks. (Johnson 2019)

On 6 November 2019 – the day the Conservative government launched its election campaign – on the front page of the *Daily Telegraph*, a large photo of Johnson pointing his finger accompanies this quotation in very large typeface. For the establishment, for now, their mission has been accomplished and the folk devil is cast out into the wilderness.

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CHAPTER 6

Trump Plays the Devil – the Devil Plays Trump

Katharina F. Gallant
University of Bonn

Introduction

The concept of a devil as a sort of ultimate antipode has a long-standing tradition not only in various religions but also in the arts. 'Ich bin der Geist der stets verneint' – 'I am the spirit of perpetual negation' – states Goethe's (2007 [1808], l. 1338) Mephistopheles as he introduces himself when he first appears in front of Faust to accompany him through all realms of life. A similarly negative attitude has recently appeared on the stage of politics in the form of Donald Trump's presidency in the US.[1] 'Everything he's doing goes against the book', stated the vehemently conservative Rush Limbaugh in his radio show as early as January 2016 and explained why Trump's presidential campaign and electoral victory shocked the political establishment in the US: 'Trump is so far outside the formula that has been established for American politics that people who are inside the formula can't comprehend it.'

As president of the US, pursuing a rhetoric style and policy agenda that were strongly divergent from the traditional norm, Trump not only shook the

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foundations of the US political establishment but he also impacted (Western) Europe and Germany in particular, as these states have been close allies of the US ever since the end of the Second World War (Heideking 2003). This led to him being constantly displayed in German media, thus framing him as highly inadequate on both the political and the moral level (Haller, Michael, and Seeber 2017).

Analysing Trump's presidential campaign, Paul Joosse (2018) proposed a synthetic model combining Stanley Cohen's (2002 [1972]) contribution on folk devils with Max Weber's (1922) insights on charismatic entrepreneurs, thus proposing a first theoretical evaluation of Trump's discourse. This general framework is applied to media coverage on Trump's significance for Germany around the midterm elections as a potential turning point in his presidency in order to assess whether he indeed is continuously portrayed as a modern Mephistopheles, a modern folk devil in the traditions of Cohen (1972), and Joosse (2018) tests the traditional political order and values by negating both. To the best of this author's knowledge, this is the first study applying a folk devil framework to the media reporting on Trump's presidency.

This contribution briefly outlines the theoretical basis of the assumed analysis, thus applying Cohen's insight into the cultural creation of folk devils to Trump as a modern and perhaps twisted manifestation thereof. Subsequent comments concern the chosen methodology and the associated corpus. The characterization of the phenomenon 'Trump' becomes apparent through the presentation of the analysis results. The final section discusses and critically assesses the significance of the phenomenon 'Trump' for media reporting.

A Charismatic Folk Devil Recalibrates the Moral Compass

In 1972, that is, in the context of social movements being omnipresent in both the streets and the reporting media, Cohen published the first edition of his seminal book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (2002). In line with paradigm-shifting sociological approaches such as Peter L. Berger's and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1968), Cohen drew attention to the importance of interpretation in assessing our environment. Whereas the latter pointed to knowledge and conceptions becoming institutionalized through reciprocal interactions and thus mankind actively constructing reality (Berger and Luckmann 1968), the first chose a more empirical approach as he explained how the media response to two conflicting British youth subcultures, the mods and the rockers, constructed these subcultures as truly violent gangs (Cohen 2002 [1972]). Cohen thereby highlighted that these media-constructed folk devils, as he called them, were treated as posing a threat to the societal reality by virtue of deviating from the supposed societal norm. To confine the threat and reintegrate the deviant into the endorsed reality, the youth groups were given the role of the devil, who, by being the antipode to normality, was compatible with the established norms and procedures in the role of the outsider (ibid.).

This reconstruction of societal consensus can be viewed as a powerful coping mechanism in that the societal order is re-established and the moral panic is confined. A prerequisite for such a victorious coping is, however, that the ambivalence of interpretations, which '[a]t times of moral panic, [make] societies … more open than usual to appeals to this consensus' (Cohen 2002 [1972], 78), is minimized. This goal can be achieved through a rather one-dimensional reporting style that clearly denunciates the source of the moral disturbance as an unscrupulous individual and his or her primitive victims, while the historical context in which the moral question is embedded, as well as any criticism of the societal norm itself, is ignored (ibid.). Cohen (2002 [1972], 11) points to the crucial role of the media as an educational tool that in informing its audience about what is right and what is wrong re-enacts and thus attempts to maintain the desired societal reality.

Cohen's considerations regarding folk devils and moral panics were further developed by Joosse (2018). For this purpose, Joosse complemented Cohen's body of thought with Weber's (1922) contributions on charismatic leaders and illustrated his theoretical model by referring to Donald Trump's (re)presentation in the 2015/16 US presidential primaries. Joosse (2018) explained that, by virtue of the ability of charismatic leaders to also surpass traditional leaders regarding the traditional moral compass and their ability to turn this moral compass upside down altogether, charismatic individuals can impact societal moralities by simultaneously ridiculing conventional folk devils and dilapidating traditional power structures.

Media Coverage on Trump and Associated Corpus

In the following, Joosse's (2018) model is applied to the media coverage of the 2018 midterm elections in the US, once again focusing on the media portrayal of Donald Trump. In the context of Europe's modern folk devils, however, it is the German media coverage that is of interest, especially as Germany showed a high affinity to Trump's predecessor in office, with Barack Obama reaching confidence ratings among Germans of up to 93 per cent, while the country was sceptical of the populist nature of Trump's campaign and presidency from the start, such that only 10 per cent of Germany expressed their confidence in Trump in 2018 (Pew Research Center 2018).

Media of interest to the present analysis are three progressive left-wing and fact-oriented outlets (FAZIT Communication 2012, 2013) as their political positioning is expected to show the starkest contrast to that of President Trump: *Die Zeit online* (online newspaper edition, hereafter *ZEIT*), *Die Tageszeitung* (print media, hereafter *TAZ*), and *Deutschlandfunk* (radio channel, hereafter *DLF*). The assessed time frame comprises the week prior to and the week after the midterm elections of 6 November 2018, thus resulting in the period from 30 October to 13 November 2018. These media contributions were assessed regarding their portrayal of Donald Trump in the German and/or European

context, with the latter being equated with the political and economic entity of the European Union.

A keyword search for 'Trump' in the given time period identified 59 articles on *ZEIT* and 75 articles from *TAZ*. For the same period, *DLF* listed 76 audio files.[2] Contributions on Trump were included in the analysis if they referred to Europe and/or Germany, respectively. The resulting corpus comprised 22 articles from *ZEIT*, 43 articles from *TAZ*, and 33 contributions from *DLF*. In the tradition of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Strauss and Corbin 1996), the identified media contributions were subjected to open and theoretical coding, which led to the development of different categories to describe the representation of Trump in German media.

The presented study thus relies on the analysis of all contributions of stated media outlets, which fall into the relevant period and fulfil the inclusion criteria of reporting on both Trump and Europe or Germany. The combination of different outlets and media types allows obtaining a comprehensive overview of contributions on the topic. A potential challenge to the representativity of the results despite them resembling full census data is the short time period of interest. However, the selected media outlets, especially the online newspaper, publish on up-to-the-minute issues. Therefore, even a short time frame is expected to allow for valuable insight into the time of the midterm elections of 2018.[3]

Looking at the 'demographics' of the media contributions, that is, at the distribution of publications per medium and date, the individual outlets differ in their frequency of publishing on Trump and Germany and/or Europe: while in *ZEIT* the publication of articles is almost evenly distributed with nine posts prior to and 11 after the election day of 6 November, *TAZ* shows a focus on the time leading up to the election, with 24 and 17 articles, respectively, and *DLF* lays its emphasis on post-electoral publications, with 13 and 18 contributions, respectively. If all articles are taken into consideration independently of their reference to Germany/Europe, however, the distribution of pre- and post-electoral reporting on Trump is almost even across all three outlets. Nevertheless, the descriptive figures of the media contributions published by the individual outlets (Table 6.1) hint at general differences between *ZEIT*, *TAZ* and *DLF*: while the average article length on *ZEIT* exceeds that of *TAZ*, *DLF* ranks between the other two outlets, though the number of words expressed per minute differs between the different types of contributions and individual speakers.[4] Of particular interest for this chapter on Trump is the ratio of included contributions which indicates that *TAZ* shows the strongest focus on Trump with regard to Germany/Europe, while articles on *ZEIT* suggest a more remote geographical focus and *DLF*, while again ranking between the other two, also emphasizes the non-German/non-European significance of Trump over his importance for the German/European context.

Table 6.1: Descriptive figures of media contributions.

	***ZEIT* word count**	***TAZ* word count**	***DLF* duration (min)**
Min	205	22	00:43
Max	2,560	2,956	14:56
M	1,249	765	7:02
Ratio of contributions	37.29%	57.33%	43.42%

Source: Author.

The Phenomenon 'Trump' in German Media

Whereas there are slight differences in the figures describing the media contributions included in analysis and their focus on a national or regional level at a given point in time, all three outlets reported similarly on current events of public interest and thereby were rather consistent in the connotation of their reporting on Trump. Identified categories of analysis were the three actors 'Trump', 'Germany' and 'Europe' (Figure 6.1). Trump's representation in the media distinguished between the values embodied by him and his tactical approach, including mediums associated with him, and the identification of his supporters as the reason for his presidency. Together, these components led to an assessment of the role he was ascribed by the analysed contributions, that is, to a socially shared representation of the phenomenon 'Trump'. Similarly, data on Germany with regard to Trump focused on German values as the general national lens through which Germany's role in the light of both longer-term influences (general context) and more recent events (intervening conditions) was assessed, as well as Germany's attitude towards the US, specifically towards the phenomenon 'Trump'. Media contributions thereby suggested an extra category dedicated to the role of German chancellor Angela Merkel in particular. Media contributions on Europe also addressed values as regional definers, through which both the general context and more recent intervening conditions were appraised, as well as Europe's current role in the Trump era and the attitude of the region towards the US under Trump. Moreover, Europe was described in terms of its political and social potential and the challenges it is confronted with. To integrate the results of analysis, Figure 6.1 displays the phenomenal structure of the media representation of 'Trump', with the individual concepts being further explained in the following.

The phenomenon 'Trump' is described not just by the power vested by Trump's position as US president but rather by the charisma attributed to his self-presentation (Denison 2018). The analysed media contributions portray Trump as a show-oriented businessman who is egoistically focused on his self-presentation, thus following only his own (situational) likes and dislikes

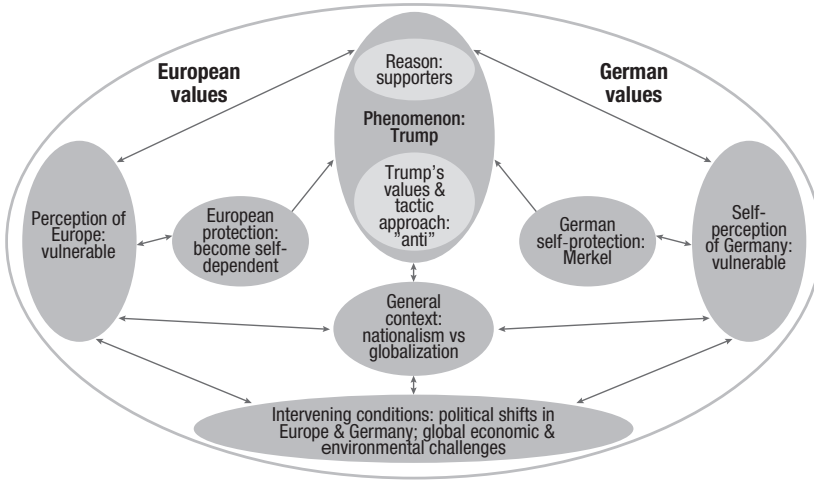

Figure 6.1: Phenomenal structure of the media representation of 'Trump'.
Source: Author.

(Cichosch 2018; Maier 2018). This self-centredness is reflected on the international level as Trump promoted his 'America First' mantra, seemingly regardless of the consequences (Balmer 2018), and thus was strongly in favour of nationalist, isolationist and protectionist policies (Thumann 2018). Media contributions describe him as the symbol of various 'anti' attitudes: anti-multilateralist, anti-development, anti-poverty reduction, and anti-climate protection as he backed out of international agreements and boycotted multilateral meetings (Annen 2018; Balmer 2018); anti-migration and anti-refugees as he opposed the UN migration pact (*Die Tageszeitung* 2018a); anti-socialist as he hardly regarded vulnerable groups such as youth, women and minorities (Aydemir 2018) and showed little interest in establishing any 'common good' but instead fought civil society engagement (Assheuer 2018a). Martin Kaul (2018) summarizes the general disillusionment:

> Legs apart, wide stance, making proclamations: Everywhere in the world this is successful. Just recently in Brazil: Bolsonaro. In Italy: Salvini. In the USA: Trump. In Austria: Kurz. In Hungary: Orbán. Turkey, Russia, Saudi Arabia. What all these gentlemen have in common is their arrogant masculinity, which dismisses in a completely unimpressed style the achievements of civilization, perspectives of equality and the protection of minorities.[5]

Trump's values are complemented by his tactical approach: he is described as confrontational, conflict-seeking and breaking existing agreements (Pfaff

2018), marking him as an unreliable partner in the present time as well as for all future policy-building (Pötter 2018). This lack of reliability is paired with frequent changes in staff and the appointing of staff of questionable qualifications, thus making his mode of governance seem chaotic and incomprehensible when its claims are inconsistent with information from other sources (Peitz 2018) or incorporate presidential changes of opinion ranging, for instance from the claim that climate change was not happening to the acknowledgement of this phenomenon paired with the mindset that international policies combating it are ineffective and thus not worth pursuing (Haberkorn 2018). A perhaps even more illustrative example of Trump's fickle nature of government mentioned by a *ZEIT* article on North Korea recalled how Trump had first expressed ultimate threats up to the total annihilation of the country and then, after the meeting with Marshal Kim Jong-un, had claimed to have fallen in love with his North Korean counterpart (Sommer 2018a).

Despite these seeming inconsistencies in style, Trump was known to follow through on his campaign promises (Assheuer 2018b) regardless of any casualties his behaviour might bring about. Here, casualties range from groundless accusations, for example blaming Germany for national problems in the US (Naß 2018), to manipulative smear campaigns sowing hatred and reinforcing divisions in society and the general focus on enemy images and scapegoats that may actually have contributed to massacres like the shooting in the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh on 27 October 2018 (Pfeiffer-Poensgen 2018). This killed 11 congregation members and was registered as the most severe anti-Semitic crime in the US, as a *DLF* contribution explains, referencing Holocaust researcher Deborah Lipstadt (2018): 'Even though Trump himself is probably not an anti-Semite … he has given anti-Semites, racists and white nationalists a kind of presidential license to hate.'[6]

As pointed out by another *ZEIT* article on the commemoration of the end of the First World War, Trump had not learned from history (Sommer 2018b). Instead, Trump used historic achievements for his own purposes, as a *DLF* contribution on the threatening failure of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed by the US and the Soviet Union back in 1987, points out (Küstner 2018). What once was the achievement of years of arduous negotiations (Schulze 2018) may be annulled by little more than a post on Twitter, which was Trump's favoured social media outlet (Peitz 2018), with this medium matching his often abrupt and explanation-lacking mode of governance. His decisions and statements were not evidence-based but they themselves gave credence to his lack of interest in facts or even to his preference for simply stating what was most convenient to his interests, as the following two quotes illustrate: 'Yes, this tweet of Mr. Trump is as far off as many of his tweets, which he sends out into the world'[7] (Goldammer 2018). 'First claim something and then, when the lie is discovered, explain that it was all a misunderstanding: this tactical relationship to the truth is reminiscent of US President Donald Trump'[8] (Kreutzfeldt 2018).

While this characterization of the US president and his tactical approach hardly counts as favourable, Trump continues to be supported by hundreds of millions. The immediate reason for the phenomenon 'Trump' is the votes his supporters cast in his favour, not only in the primaries and the presidential election of 2016 but cast once again in support of his party, allies, rhetoric and policies in the 2018 midterm election (as well as most recently in the presidential election of 2020). Media contributions identify two main groups as Trump's supporters on the national level. The first is value-driven and is made up of different conservative groups (Goldammer 2018), among others evangelical Christians, who hope for an implementation of their values, for instance on the topic of abortion (Lipstadt 2018). The second group is disillusioned by previous presidents and includes, for instance, blue-collar workers in the Midwest who feel overlooked by the Democratic Party (Klingst 2018) but also anti-establishment voters who during the primaries had been in favour of Democrat Bernie Sanders but who then favoured Trump as the newcomer to politics over long-term Democrat and establishment politician Hillary Clinton as his opposing candidate in the presidential elections (Gabriel 2018). Taken together, the legitimacy of his presidency within the traditional framework of US politics is acclaimed by stating that almost half of the population voted for Trump without these voters necessarily being right-wing extremists (Aydemir 2018).

After the midterm elections, this assessment is further specified by statements such as: 'The Republicans now belong to Trump. Trump is the Republicans. This is also a form of normalization and enforcement of Trump in the US that is remarkable and must be recorded'[9] (Röttgen 2018). Trump, in this way, remains an expression of the regular political system in the US. His extraordinary nature is stabilized by the system within its regular modes of operations.

Glancing back to the media characterization of Trump on the basis of his values, further explanation of the support he is receiving from his followers is required. Jan Pfaff (2018) sheds light on this seeming contradiction by explaining the phenomenon Trump as a symptom of the abyss between globalist and nationalist mindsets. Indeed, a closer look at the situation in Europe in general and Germany in particular agrees with this assessment. On both the European and the German level, political changes are emerging: the unity of Europe is weakened through nationalist right-wing populists taking over in Hungary, Italy and Poland – and others like Marine Le Pen waiting to do the same in France (Assheuer 2018b). Germany itself is experiencing a similar division on the national level, manifesting in the rise of right-wing extremism in the form of the political party Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany, AfD) and the like-minded social movement Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident, PEGIDA). These expressions of right-wing extremist mindsets come upon established political parties like the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party, SPD), which is preoccupied with

identifying its future route (Reinecke 2018), and the Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union, CDU), which, around the time of the US midterms, found itself in the middle of finding a successor for Merkel as their most prominent leader figure (Asmuth 2018). On both the general European and the German levels, the mindsets of these identifiable actors are complemented by a rise of anti-Semitism and nationalism (Aydemir 2018; Eder 2018). Moreover, the press identifies Trump's influence on the European and German context in that his international moves, like the one-sided termination of the nuclear agreement with Iran or the trade war with China but also the discussion over increased import tariffs for goods from Germany, contributed to the general perceived economic insecurity through other political happenings such as the impending Brexit (Veit 2018; Vogel 2018). This insecurity is further enhanced by Trump's boycotting of multilateral climate agreements and his confrontational tone with Russia, which reignited the fear of a new nuclear arms race, leaving Europe and Germany exposed to both the threat linked to climate change and the threat of nuclear annihilation (Annen 2018; Küstner 2018).

Given this context, the media portrays Europe and Germany as vulnerable entities that have a hard time grasping the change in US politics under Trump and filling in the void that the US left as Trump was reluctant to continue with the US in the role of an engaged and benevolent (that is, human-rights-oriented and mostly international-law-respecting) world leader (Pfaff 2018). Europe is described as a potential protective factor against Trump's policies; however, this protection seems to unfold only if the European states manage to speak with one voice, a situation that does not reflect the status quo of a union torn between nationalism and globalism (Assheuer 2018b). Moreover, in referring to the US sanctions against Iran, Michael Gahler (2018) points out that Europe is afraid of an open conflict with the US and is thus hesitant to back its own interests by self-confident policies. In Germany, the protective factor is embodied by Angela Merkel (Küppersbusch 2018). In stark contrast to Trump's values and tactical approach, Merkel is portrayed as a well-educated, responsible and pragmatic leader driven by highest ethics in big moments (Löwisch 2018; Maier 2018). These traits materialize in fine-tuned political actions and give her the air of being internationally competent and well respected (Hörisch 2018). She abides by the German values of multilateralism, liberalism and anti-nationalism (Naß 2018) and acknowledges the German responsibility of commemorative culture and working through the past in light of Germany's role in history (Balmer 2018; Sommer 2018b). However, as Merkel, who has always been an advocate for a strong and unified anti-nationalist Europe, has announced the end of her leadership role, Germany and Europe are once more exposed to Trump seemingly without any means of shelter (Küppersbusch 2018).

The juxtaposition of Trump's and Merkel's values and tactical approaches, as well as the portrayal of Europe and Germany as vulnerable, explains the

fascination and preoccupation with Trump. A few media contributions focus on Trump's inadequacy, resembling the bored 'odd man out' (Sommer 2018b) who is absent-minded at international occasions and whose staff is not well informed, for example on changes of the Iranian leadership since 1989 (Gehlen 2018). This inadequacy partially depicts Trump as a clown-like figure wearing a red tie and a baseball hat, as a maniac in the White House whose ideas, for instance regarding tax policies, are ridiculous (Kreutzfeld 2018; Wurm 2018).

However, Trump's power as president seems too enormous to portray him simply as a court jester. Through his attitude towards Iran, the INF Treaty and climate change, he endangered the future of the world and placed stress on the European economies. Furthermore, Trump's engagement (or lack thereof) in Afghanistan is interpreted as weakening national governments and jeopardizing security (*Die Tageszeitung* 2018b). Parallels with the rise of the National Socialists during US isolationism in the 1930s are drawn when discussing Trump's own isolationist mindset (Thumann 2018) and careful comparisons to the beginning of the Second World War are made regarding Trump's outspoken support of nationalism (Sommer 2018b). Moreover, Trump is viewed as contagious (Leonhard 2018) or, at least, as backed by other politicians like him on a global scale:

> Those who appreciate the old world of permanent conflict once again feel themselves on the winning side of history: Putin and Trump, Xi and Erdogan, Assad and Kim, Bolsonaro and Duterte, Maduro and Bashir, Orbán and Salvini, to name but a few. Their mindset led to the catastrophe 100 years ago.[10]

Combined with Trump's disregard of facts and disinterest in the truth, his presidency announced the realization of a postfactual era (Haberkorn 2018), in which traditional certainties are no longer distinguishable from blatant lies: 'This president is blurring the lines between truth and lies, reality and fiction'[11] (Peitz 2018). Trump, in this way, posed a challenge not only to the world order as it was known before him but also to the art of journalism, that is, of fact-oriented reporting (ibid.).

A Folk Devil Is Born

It is not uncommon that a state relies on enemy images in order to define its national identity, as the latter is only complete through the differentiation between self and other (Kelman 2010, 5). Moreover, insights from sociology and sociopsychology explain that enemy images are often used to distract from national challenges, thus making them an integral and, in fact, cherished part of a state's identity (Beck 1997, 78; Simon and Klandermans 2001). However, the media portrayal of Trump exceeds this level of mere othering: it goes beyond

the concept of collective or abstract enemies, which, according to Ulrich Beck (1997, 70), have since the end of the Cold War replaced individual enemies. This results from the various 'anti' ideologies listed above that Trump has become a symbol of, thus giving the enemy image both an abstract and a personal facet.

Furthermore, the results presented indicate that Trump became an institutionalized – that is to say, democratically elected and legitimate within the US political system – external folk devil who threatened Europe through his isolationist policies but also through his rhetoric and moral challenges to the European perspective (mainly embodied by Germany, at the time of analysis). Comparing the analysed articles to Cohen's five aspects of moral panic – *concern* about the imposed threat; *hostility* and moral outrage towards the source of preoccupation; *consensus*, especially among the media, on the necessity to address the threat; *disproportionality* of concern in comparison to objective threat; and *volatility* of the expressed panic (Cohen 2002 [1972], xxvi–xxvii) – the phenomenon 'Trump' complies perfectly with the first three aspects, but is less in line with the aspects of disproportionality and volatility. The actions of the US president were definitely met by concerned reporting and a dismissive characterization of his values and tactical approach, which is reminiscent of Trump being framed during the primaries as the epitome of evil (Haller, Michael, and Seeber 2017) and which, moreover, successfully reintegrates Trump into the endorsed moral reality. Furthermore, all contributions included in this analysis – that is, all three media outlets – homogenously agreed on the phenomenon 'Trump' posing a threat to Europe and/or Germany.

However, it is hard to detect an exaggeration of the impending risk if the source of the moral panic is the head of the largest economy and military in the world. On the contrary, Trump's unpredictability marked a true change in US–European and US–German relations as it broke with the role of the US as the region's close ally and protector against all outside threats (Heideking 2003). Thus, Trump not only took away the shield but through his political moves figuratively turned the shield into a sword pointed towards the rest of the world, potentially even against Europe and Germany. Similarly, it is not the media reaction to Trump that is volatile but Trump himself in his rhetoric and policies. In this way, it is Trump who is bedevilled by the media but who in this role as a modern folk devil limits the means of the moral outcry on the part of the media and thus leads ad absurdum to parts of Cohen's concept of moral panic.

Referring to Joosse's (2018) expansion of Cohen's consideration by adding the component of charismatic leadership, Trump's charisma may provide an explanation for the discrepancy between the traditional framework of folk devils and moral panic proposed by Cohen (2002 [1972]) and the phenomenon 'Trump' as portrayed in the analysed media: Joosse (2018) has found Trump to stage himself as a charismatic hero who attempts to outflank the moral panic by making any soft power and traditional leadership seem weak. Moreover, elements of exaggeration and volatility are highlighted as Trump himself relies

on fake news, thus playing with the dialectics of bedevilling (Joosse 2018). In so doing, Trump's rhetoric relies heavily on enemy images, often promoted in short statements on Twitter. Neither the chosen medium nor the wording of these messages allows for a thoughtful development of a convincing argumentative structure, less still for references to evidence-based data. Instead, Trump draws on the medieval tradition of pillorying, publicly accusing and denouncing any person or organization that might question his own presidential qualification or the suitability of his policies.

More recently, this became obvious in Trump's approach to the Covid-19 pandemic:[12] he questioned the existence of and danger associated with the virus; he bedevilled the WHO, leading to the renunciation of the US membership and funding for this leading international health organization; he promoted the usage of an untested drug that later turned out not to help against Covid-19 but to potentially increase the risks of a severe course of the disease; and he praised himself as a model patient and survivor upon becoming infected and being treated for Covid-19 – all while failing to take effective measures against the spread of the disease, the collapsing social and health systems, and the thousands of lives Covid-19 claims every day. This led to this appraisal of Trump's actions through *DLF*: 'The President downplays, obscures and conceals the pandemic disaster' (Kößler and Ridderbusch 2020).[13]

Most recently, Trump's reaction to the presidential elections of 2020 stressed his reliance on the tactics of bedevilling once more as he bluntly refused to acknowledge the election results, calling out President-Elect Joe Biden for electoral fraud and filing highly questionable if not downright absurd lawsuits with the highest courts of law (Roth 2020). If media outlets do not follow Trump's mode of media engagement but instead hold on to traditional values of media discourse and their function as information channels (KEK 2018), they have to continue operating within the behavioural code of the pre-Trump era, thus avoiding exaggerations and volatile discontinuities in their reporting. In this manner, part of the bedevilling undertaken by the analysed media outlets is to distance themselves from any over-estimation or escalation assumed by Cohen (2002 [1972], 160–61).

In fact, it seems like distancing themselves from Trump's rhetoric is the only means of defence with which German left-wing media discourse is presented. Even the possibility of an impeachment, which is mentioned mainly within reporting on the national US context, does not occur in the analysed articles as a realistic perspective (Kornblum 2018). Trump is not a regular folk devil who can be defeated by a moral outcry followed by legal steps being undertaken against him. In that Trump acted outside the range of German or European law and in that he by no means accepts international law, he is outside of Germany's and Europe's actual reach apart from rhetorical condemnation.

This did not make him less dangerous – or less charismatic. On the contrary: as traditional power structures are being questioned, Trump broke core taboos of the German moral compass for Europe and hence spurred on various national and European populist right-wing 'anti' movements (anti-immigration,

anti-Semitism, anti-environmentalism, anti-humanitarianism etc.). Europe and Germany, again, were ill-equipped to meet the challenges posed by Trump's presidency and reacted in panicked self-victimization. Even Merkel, who has all the necessary credentials to make her a valid antipode to Trump, could hardly counter his moral or manifest attacks, to say nothing of defeating him. Thus, while left-wing German media may be gripping on tight to their traditional moral guideline to save Europe's and Germany's soul, it seems to be the folk devil embodied by the US president who is playing the Trump card.

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Notes

[1] Donald Trump won the US presidential election in November 2016 for the Republican Party, thus enabling him to assume office as the 45th president in January 2017. His term of office lasted until 2021, when Democrat Joe Biden, who had served as vice president to Barack Obama (2009–2017), Trump's predecessor in the White House, was inaugurated as the 46th president. While Obama was known as a symbol of constructive dialogue, for instance receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in his first year in office, Trump's presidency was infamous for its confrontational, often directly offensive style and numerous scandals, which resulted in him being the only US president to date who was impeached twice (Gallant 2014).

[2] For reason of replicability, this number refers to results directly accessible via www.deutschlandfunk.de, for which there was a transcription available.

[3] This contribution was first conceptualized in the immediate aftermath of the midterm elections. Recently, the presidential elections of 2020 evoked extensive media coverage and gave new credence to the dialectical nature of Trump's bedevilment and bedevilling, calling for a sequential analysis of these elections and the time until Biden's inauguration.

[4] The speaking speed of different German radio stations has been assessed by Sven Scherz-Schade (2004), thus highlighting the heterogeneity in speed depending on the type of contribution (i.e. interview vs news) and individual speaker. Among the included *DLF* contributions, the speaking speed ranged roughly between 120 and 160 words per minute.

[5] Original: 'Beine auseinander, breiter Stand, Ansagen machen: Überall auf der Welt ist das erfolgreich. Gerade erst in Brasilien: Bolsonaro. In Italien: Salvini. In den USA: Trump. In Österreich: Kurz. In Ungarn: Orbán. Türkei, Russland, Saudi-Arabien. Was all diese Herren verbindet, ist ihre überhebliche Männlichkeit, die im gänzlich unbeeindruckten Stil auf zivilisatorische Errungenschaften, Gleichstellungsperspektiven und Minderheitenschutz pfeift.' (All translations in this chapter by the author).

[6] Original: 'Auch wenn Trump selbst wohl kein Antisemit sei … so habe er doch Antisemiten, Rassisten und weißen Nationalisten eine Art präsidialen Freibrief zum Hassen gegeben.'

[7] Original: 'Ja, dieser Tweet von Herrn Trump, der liegt so weit daneben wie häufig bei seinen Tweets, die er in die Welt hinaus sendet.'

[8] Original: 'Erst mal irgendwas behaupten und dann, wenn die Lüge auffliegt, erklären, es sei alles ein Missverständnis gewesen: dieses taktische Verhältnis zur Wahrheit erinnert stark an den US-Präsidenten Donald Trump.'

[9] Original: 'Die Republikaner gehören nun Trump. Trump sind die Republikaner. Auch das ist eine Form der Normalisierung und Durchsetzung Trumps in den USA, die bemerkenswert ist und die man festhalten muss.'

[10] Original: 'Diejenigen, die die alte Welt des Dauerkonflikts schätzen, wähnen sich wieder einmal auf der Siegerseite der Geschichte: Putin und Trump, Xi und Erdogan, Assad und Kim, Bolsonaro und Duterte, Maduro und Bashir, Orbán und Salvini, um nur einige zu nennen. Ihre Geisteshaltung führte vor 100 Jahren in die Katastrophe.'

[11] Original: 'Dieser Präsident verwischt die Grenzen zwischen Wahrheit und Lüge, Realität und Fiktion.'

[12] In December 2019, a previously undescribed severe acute respiratory syndrome was diagnosed in China. Quickly thereafter, the highly contagious virus responsible for severe pneumonia, among other symptoms, had spread worldwide such that by March 2020 Covid-19 was officially labelled a pandemic. At the time this chapter was finalized in April 2021, the pandemic remained uncontrolled despite national and local governments' various and diverse attempts to counter it, having caused more than 3 million deaths globally, with nearly a full fifth of these global deaths occurring in the United States.

[13] Original: 'Der Präsident verharmlost, vertuscht und verschweigt das Pandemie-Desaster.'

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CHAPTER 7

‘Gender Activists Will Kidnap Your Kids’

The Construction of Feminist and LGBT+ Rights Activists as Modern Folk Devils in Czech Anti-Gender Campaigns

Eva Svatoňová
University of Aarhus

> There were neither witches nor bewitched until they were talked about and written about. (Salazar Frias, the Spanish Inquisitor who stopped the witch-hunt among the Spanish Basques, quoted in La Fontaine 1998, 33)

The Roots of the Anti-Gender Moral Panic

In 2011, Eva Michaláková, a Czech immigrant to Norway, accused the Norwegian child protection service Barnevernet of unjustly taking her two sons away due to a suspicion of abuse. Michaláková, who desperately tried to get her children back, contacted Czech media and mediatized the case. The case attracted significant public attention, people organized protests in the streets, and a massive campaign against Barnevernet was launched, turning the case into an issue for the entire Czech nation – Czech children were being stolen by Norwegian

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social services. Not only were ordinary citizens protesting but Czech celebrities and politicians got involved in the campaign as well. One of them was the Czech president, Miloš Zeman, who addressed the Norwegian king with a letter asking him to return the children to their biological family.[1] While I am by no means trying to downplay the pain and the trauma Michaláková had to experience after losing her two sons, and while I am not claiming that the case was not controversial, the narratives about Barnevernet started taking various directions and were blown up to an extent that was surreal. Stories emerged about the Norwegian child protection service stealing children from immigrants and using them as organ donors, giving them to homosexual couples, or allowing employees of Barnevernet to sexually abuse them. Barnevernet was portrayed as a totalitarian Norwegian apparatus that citizens of Norway were afraid to criticize because they thought they might lose their own children or jobs.[2]

Seven years later, on 28 September 2018, a Czech Catholic priest and former minister of education, Petr Piťha, made a speech during a church service on the occasion of the state holiday commemorating the death of St Wenceslas, the patron saint of Bohemia. Wenceslas, a martyr who was killed by his own brother in around 930, is often depicted as a witness of Christ's truth in the Czech national consciousness. According to a legend, St Wenceslas is one of the Czech knights who lie sleeping beneath Blaník Mountain in central Bohemia, awaiting the moment when they will rise and return to save the nation from its enemies (Holy 1996, 35). During his speech, Father Piťha did not focus in particular on the importance of Wenceslas's personality for Czech history. Instead, he dealt with the topic of the Istanbul Convention, the Council of Europe Convention on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. This mundane piece of legislative work, the aim of which is to ensure that all states have a legislative framework tackling gender-based violence, fuelled an unexpected number of emotionally coloured responses – the convention was accused of smuggling a dangerous ideology into Czech territory. It is no coincidence that Piťha chose the national day of Wenceslas's death for his prophecy, as the claim of his speech was to warn his followers that the Czech nation was in danger.

In his passionate speech, Father Piťha claimed that the politically indifferent society of Czechia had no clue about the threats that lay ahead, and uttered following prognosis:

> Freedom either exists, and then all other types of freedom naturally evolve from it, or it does not exist and then there is no freedom at all. Due to the Istanbul Convention and pressure groups such as 'gender lobbyists' and 'homo lobbyists', there will be no freedom. … Your families will be torn apart and dispersed. … They will kidnap your kids and they will never tell you where they have hidden them, to whom they have sold them and where they have imprisoned them. And all that just due to a false accusation.[3]

He further elaborated that the ratification of the convention would lead to the introduction of what he referred to as 'other pervert laws' that had already been introduced in other Western countries that had already ratified the document, 'whose only aim was to ruin the concept of the traditional family'. Exploiting the narratives of kidnapping Czech children, which were already well rooted in the Czech collective consciousness owing to the Michaláková case, he constructed a threat that could easily resonate. He also stated that the protagonists of the proposed undemocratic and dictatorial laws derived from both Marxism and Nazism, predicting that parents who call their son a boy and their daughter a girl will be sent to concentration camps. In his speech, such narratives were used as a powerful metaphor in a country that had experienced occupation at the hands of both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. He finished with a threatening statement portraying a Czech, heterosexual majority as the oppressed group: 'In this hierarchical order, you will end up under all kinds of animals, because for cats, frogs and insects these laws do not apply.'

It seems unlikely that Father Piťha actually believed that ratifying the Istanbul Convention could eventually lead to such catastrophic outcomes. What he was doing was using rather a well-designed strategy to draw people's attention to a political cause. This kind of strategy is not uncommon among religious leaders, who often believe that politics requires strong, even provocative language that will arouse people's enthusiasm for change (Irvine 2005, 6). To achieve his goal, Father Pit'ha based his tactics on spreading fears by the creation of persuasive images of folk devils (he called them gender lobbyists and homo lobbyists) that can serve as the heart of moral fears. Stanley Cohen, who coined the term 'moral panic', described it as a condition, episode, person or group of persons that become viewed as a threat to societal values and interests (Cohen 2011 [1972], 1). This moral panic is often based on a little piece of evidence whose extent and significance were amplified (ibid., vii).

Although Father Piťha's speech was extreme and quite novel in a Czech context, it was in fact not new within the transnational context. Quite the opposite. His words were derived from more than two decades of struggle by the Catholic Church to regain power in the context of secularism and gender and LGBT rights – progressive tendencies that gave rise to new forms of transnational anti-feminist projects underpinned by nationalist ideology all around the world. We are currently witnessing the same kind of reactions in most of the Central and Eastern European states. For instance, Hungary banned gender studies programmes at universities in 2018, arguing that gender studies was an ideology not a science.[4] Two years later, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Hungary passed a law that made it impossible for transgender and intersex people to legally change their gender.[5] Meanwhile, the Polish right-wing populist governing Law and Justice Party (PiS) began the process of withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, which was ratified by Poland in 2015.[6] In 2020, Poland's right-wing government attempted to ban abortion, granting exceptions only in cases of rape and incest.[7] In addition to a backlash against women's rights, there

is strong evidence of rising homophobia in the country as well. For example, in July 2020, the re-elected Polish president Andrzej Duda based his presidential campaign on anti-LGBT rhetoric, claiming that 'LGBT ideology' is more destructive than communism.[8] Slovakia has repeatedly refused to ratify the Istanbul Convention[9] after massive campaigns based on misinformation against the document, and in 2015 the country held a referendum on banning same-sex marriage, although the result was not valid due to insufficient turnout.[10]

Despite the fact that the four Central European states known as the Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) are perceived as rebels against the democratic norms of the European Union (EU),[11] such mobilizations against gender ideology are not only a regional phenomenon typical of Central Europe. In fact, such mobilizations have occurred worldwide, including Western European states such as Italy (Garbagnoli 2016), France (Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Tricou 2017) and Germany (Blum 2015), but also Latin America (Corredor 2019) or Russia (Moss 2017). They are represented by different actors and oppose different laws and reforms in different local contexts, but they are strikingly similar in their discursive strategies and repertoires of action (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017, 253). The individual national mobilizations influence each other, and their actors cooperate, meet in international gatherings and borrow themes and argumentative strategies from each other.

What all these campaigns have in common is that they are no longer in opposition to women's liberation alone. Some representatives of the Catholic Church, conservative politicians, journalists and intellectuals have joined forces with nationalist and far-right politicians and activists to produce discourses that intersect nationalism, racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, misogyny, opposition to abortion, opposition to leftist projects in general, and globalization and transnational bodies such as the EU and the UN: discourses known under the notion anti-gender campaigns (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017).

In this chapter, I start by touching upon the genealogy of the anti-gender panic in Czechia. Then I analyse the attempts to stir moral panic made by Czech anti-feminist organization operating on social media, and describe how feminists and LGBT rights activists (as well as members of the LGBT minority) are constructed as the embodiment of modern folk devils. Finally, I discuss the multiple semantic of the anti-gender discourse in Czechia and how the empirical case analysed in this chapter can contribute to the debate regarding the theoretical framework of moral panic.

How to Do Anti-Feminism without Feminism? Invent and Stir a Moral Panic

As was the case with witches (see the quotation with which this chapter started), the concept of 'gender ideology' did not exist until it was invented and written about in the 1990s.[12] While the discourse has some aspects that can be found

in the American discourses opposing sexual education in schools emerging as early as the 1970s, such as the emphasis on endangered children (Herdt 2009), the notion of 'gender ideology' only emerged in the 1990s as a result of the initial reactions of the Vatican to the 1994 UN Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017). It is a catch-all term that covers anything relating to gender and sexuality. The anti-gender campaigners ignore the origins of the term gender and describe it as a new form of cultural Marxism whose aim is to abolish all biological differences between men and women. Finally, they mix together all the aspects and scholars of feminist theory and portray Judith Butler as the mother of the ideology (ibid.). To achieve their goals, they use inflammatory language and create persuasive scenarios in order to trigger a collective hysteria known as moral panic (Cohen 2011 [1972]).

Unlike in other countries, where opposition to 'gender ideology' has been ongoing for a while, in Czechia it is a very recent phenomenon that did not arise until about 2018. The first obstacle that Czech moral entrepreneurs who were willing to lead a war against 'gender ideology' faced was the fact that there was no real enemy they could point at. Czechia had not experienced much progress regarding gender equality,[13] so it was difficult for the guardians of patriarchal order to claim that feminism was 'pushing too far'. In fact, most of the Czech population, including both men and women, hold conservative views on gender roles (Jusová 2016), and a majority of Czech women take pride in managing to work, care for their children and do the housework as well. Until very recently, feminism was still used as a swear word (Ferber and Raabe 2003). Owing to the fact that most of the women's rights for which women had to fight in the West, such as voting rights for women, the right to work and the right to abortion and maternity leave, were introduced top down either in the First Czechoslovak Republic or under the socialist Czechoslovakia, Czechia has not witnessed any mass mobilization of women, and most of the feminist campaigns have been conducted through NGOs and lobbyists (Korolczuk and Saxonberg 2015). LGBT minorities have been able to become registered partners since 2006, but they do not enjoy the same number of rights as they do in other democracies.[14]

So, in order to create mass hysteria and mobilize people, these campaigners needed to create a new, persuasive narrative to convince the population that there was a serious threat. The Istanbul Convention was handy in this connection, because it gave them a pretext for starting the campaign. Furthermore, owing to the convention's transnational nature, it could easily be framed as a foreign, unwelcome influence – as proved by the usage of the foreign word 'gender', which does not have any equivalent in the Czech language. It also opened the opportunity to blame the European elites and transnational bodies for being detached from the needs of real people. The convention was described as a document that would open the door for the atrocities that were according to the anti-gender campaigners already happening elsewhere, just around the

corner (i.e. in the West). Czech Traditional Family is one of the most active activist groups opposing the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, and they described the possible consequences of its ratification in a newspaper interview as follows:

> In the Netherlands, people already have ID cards with the possibility of choosing between three genders, in Germany they have 'hanky panky' corners in kindergartens, and in the UK they have injections preventing children from developing so they can decide what gender they want to be themselves.[15]

As in other Central and Eastern European countries, the Czech campaigners used the discursive manoeuvre of talking about the unwelcome colonialism of ideas and Western imperialism (Graff and Korolczuk 2018) and warning against the atrocities that were happening in the West, especially in EU countries.

From Pro-Russian Propaganda to Mainstream Media

The EU plays a significant role in the discourse. Anti-European sentiment is the core of the campaigns and the EU is portrayed as a neo-Marxist, totalitarian project that funds feminist and LGBT NGOs in the region in order to make them EU agents.

This is evident from the fact that ultra-conservative Czech priests from a sect called Byzantine Catholic Patriarchate were among the first people who started campaigning against 'gender ideology' in the Czech context. This sect was founded by former Catholic priests who, after they were excommunicated by the Vatican in 2008, found refuge in Ukraine. The sect was particularly active before Euromaidan, the wave of public demonstrations and civil unrest after the Ukrainian government's decision to suspend the association agreement with the EU. The sect's main goal was to convince their followers to support Russia. To do so, they based their preaching on misinformation and conspiracy theories. During their services, they warned against the EU, such as in the following statement:

> The ideology of global reduction of mankind seeks the spiritual, moral and physical genocide. Its main actors are: the United Nations, world bankers and Masonic lodges which, through the mediation of international structures, govern world politics. A world war unleashed with the aim of reducing humanity is guided by an antichristian system of professional lie which is being established worldwide. The basic principle applied in this war is 'voluntary' self-destruction. The main object of attack is no military bases but small defenceless children. The most

> effective way to achieve their spiritual, moral and eventually physical destruction is to prevent their happy childhood, to tear them away from their loving parents, to rob them of a warm family home, and to make them homeless misfits exposed to violence, lawlessness, demoralization and satanization. Eventually these children become **programmed biorobots** who after several felonies end by suicide. The strategy used in this war is psychological manipulation and systematic deception on the part of the official authorities. … The Byzantine Catholic Patriarchate calls upon the Ukrainian and Russian Governments and all MPs to cancel the ratification of fraudulent conventions, recommendations and resolutions of the UN, EU and PACE. We appeal to Russia and Ukraine to send away all foreign so-called charitable organizations and funds with their destructive projects. (Byzantine Catholic Patriarchate 2012, emphasis in original)

While the sect seems to be a fringe group of people whose rhetoric got out of hand, there are speculations about the sect being funded by Russia[16] as it has its own website, where it publishes articles and public letters addressed to different authorities in eight different languages (Ukrainian, Russian, Italian, Spanish, English, French, Polish and Czech).[17] It also sends mass emails containing misinformation.[18]

While the pro-Russian Czech sect based in Ukraine was among the first Czech campaigners against 'gender ideology', it is also connected with campaigns in Czechia's neighbouring country Slovakia, where anti-gender campaigns appeared as long ago as 2013, when the Slovak parliament was negotiating juvenile justice, against which the Byzantine Catholic Patriarchate also campaigned intensely. During the debates about juvenile justice, the anti-gender discourse was established in the Slovak public space. It became even more salient around the year 2015, during the campaigns against the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Around this time, the concept of 'gender ideology' made its way into pastoral letters published by the Slovak Bishops' Conference. Among the most prominent Slovak anti-gender campaigners was a charismatic Catholic priest called Marian Kuffa, famous for his work with people on the fringes of Slovak society, who was at the launch of the campaign Stop Evil from Istanbul.[19]

In the year 2018, when the Istanbul Convention was about to be ratified in Czechia, Czech archbishop Jan Graubner visited the Slovak Bishops' Conference in Bratislava. After he returned, the Czech Catholic Church published a first pastoral letter warning against 'gender ideology' in May 2018, and Czech Catholic priests, including Father Piťha, started campaigning against the ratification of the convention during their services. In September 2018, Father Kuffa was also invited to hold a special service in the Czech town of Bystřice pod Hostýnem against the ratification of the convention.[20]

While the sect and Catholic priests undoubtedly helped to spread the discourse, it is relatively clear that they would have been unsuccessful if the Catholic Church had been the only organization involved. After all, Czechia is a country in which the majority of the population identify themselves as atheists or unaffiliated with any religion (Froese 2005). It was only possible to establish the discourse in the Czech public space using the help of other moral entrepreneurs.

The first mention of 'gender ideology' in Czech media occurred around 2010, when the Union for Defence of Parental Rights[21] protested against sexual education in schools. In that year they used the concept of 'gender ideology' in a petition signed by 7,000 people and a letter addressed to the minister of education. In addition, this petition was supported by 150 Czech Catholic priests. In the same year, Matyáš Zrno, a journalist and an employee of a conservative NGO called the Civic Institute,[22] organized a lecture entitled 'The End of Men in Europe. Alias Gender Ideology in Practice'. The members of the Civic Institute and the Union for Defence of Parental Rights were therefore pioneers and providers of intellectual content in the anti-gender campaigns in the Czech public space.[23]

At that point, the concept of 'gender ideology' was still rather new in Czechia. Very few articles mentioning 'gender ideology' were published between 2010 and 2015, and those that were published appeared on right-wing platforms such as parlamentnilisty.cz, euportal.cz and neviditelnypes.cz, and in right-wing-oriented magazines such as *Reflex* and *Literární Noviny*.

As Table 7.1 shows, the concept became used more frequently by Czech mainstream media only in the year 2018, after Father Piťha delivered his speech. His strategy of constructing moral panic in order to attract public attention to the issue had tangible outcomes, with the use of the concept spreading enormously after his speech.[24]

However, the success of the anti-gender campaigns can be demonstrated not only by the spread and normalization of the anti-gender discourse. The campaigns also succeeded in postponing the ratification of the convention. The populist Czech prime minister Andrej Babiš promised that it would be ratified by the end of the year 2018, but the discussion about its ratification is still ongoing in 2021.[25]

Anti-Gender Moral Panic Goes Online

While this top-down stirring of moral panic helped to embed anti-gender discourses in the Czech public space, these campaigns would have been less successful without the efforts of grass-roots activists running pro-family and far-right organizations. These activists did not only collect signatures for petitions against the ratification of the convention and organize protests and public seminars

Table 7.1: The number of appearances of the notion 'gender ideology' in Czech media database each year.

Year	No. of appearances
2010	2
2011	3
2012	0
2013	3
2014	14
2015	17
2016	11
2017	33
2018	108
2019	176

Source: Author (see endnote 24).

about 'gender ideology'; they also helped enormously by creating and spreading moral panic through the use of social media. This media allowed them to blur the borders between mainstream and alternative media, real and fake news, and serious and jokey modes of communication (Shifman 2014). Despite the humorous and parodical alt-right aesthetics typical of Facebook public pages, social media also allowed the activists to practise serious political participation and the negotiation of political opinions and identities (Shifman 2014).

To analyse the reactions of ordinary citizens to such discourses, I scraped one of the most popular Facebook pages that engaged in the anti-gender campaigning: Anti-feminist Strike. This page was run by a far-right organization called Angry Mothers,[26] which joined other organizations in campaigning against the spread of feminist ideas and LGBT rights after making a significant appearance on the Czech anti-Islam scene. In particular, I studied the way in which this organization constructed folk devils and what strategies they used to provoke emotional reactions from their followers. The Facebook page Anti-feminist Strike was founded in October 2018, a month after Father Piťha's speech, and was shut down in March 2019 for spreading hate speech. During this time, they posted 379 posts, which I analysed for this chapter.[27]

First, to understand how modern folk devils were constructed in the online communication of the group, I focused on the images of folk devils and the attributes that were ascribed to them. To find out I used Sketch Engine, which helped me to identify the most common colocations.

According to Cohen, we can distinguish between two types of folk devil (Cohen 2011 [1972], xxvi). The first type are the actors who embody the problem, in this case LGBT minority and masculine women, meaning feminists. The second type are the folk devils that are ultimately responsible for societal change: politicians, NGOs, feminist and LGBT rights activists, and employees of European institutions.

To construct the first type of folk devil, the activists running the page purposely used material that exaggerated the reality and made both LGBT minorities and feminists look much more radical and extreme than they are in reality. The word feminist appeared 58 times and activist 28 times. The Sketch Engine showed that the adjectives in colocation with such nouns were *crazy*, *insane*, *sensitive*, *irrational*, *pervert*, *hysterical*. They were depicted as brainsick perverts on the fringes of society. Rather than being portrayed as evil people, they were portrayed as the confused victims of the 'gender ideology'.

On the other hand, the activists and NGO workers were the real immoral devils who run their perverted projects to suck money from the state. This is already well illustrated in Father Piťha's speech, in which he emphasized: 'we are supposed to legalise unfreedom in the name of gender lobbyists and homo lobbyists – I am stressing homo lobbyist not homosexuals, who very often disagree with the aggressive opinions of those homo lobbyists' (Piťha, 2018). Such folk devils were described using adjectives such as *smart*, *cunning*, *immoral*, *oppressive*, *totalitarian*, *cruel* and *emotionless*. However, by contrast, they were also portrayed as silly people with good intentions that lead to bad consequences, and were often labelled ironically as *naive*, *sensitive*, *elfs* and *dogooders*.

The Emotions Underpinning Anti-Gender Moral Panic

Logically, to make people react to its posts, Angry Mothers could not describe the folk devils in emotionally neutral language. Instead, they used diverse strategies in order to generate different type of emotions – mostly powerful visual material combined with comments that consisted of irony and ridicule, but also expressions of anger, indignation, and the 'silent majority's' feeling of injustice. As shown in Figure 7.1, the most frequent emotions performed by followers were 'laughter' and 'anger'.[28]

To demonstrate the strategies used by the organization to arouse reactions from its followers, I describe the posts that received the most reactions and comments that received the highest numbers of likes by other followers. The posts presented in this chapter do not stick out from the style of other posts and represent general tendencies in the depiction of folk devils on the Facebook page. Most of the posts had a negative tone, and when admins tried to evoke a positive reaction, such as a laugh, they did so by posting politically incorrect jokes to ridicule and humiliate LGBT minorities and feminists. Most

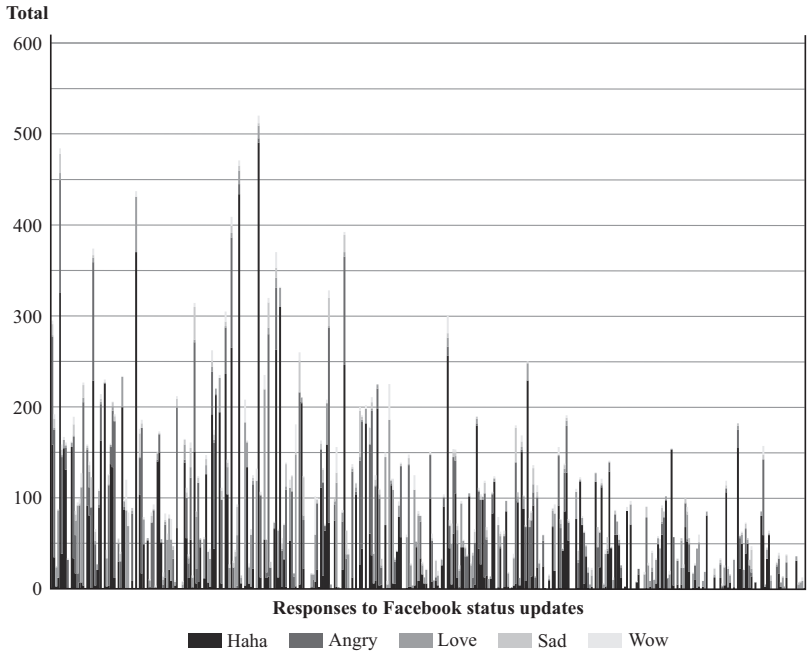

Figure 7.1: The number of different types of FB reactions the posts posted on the Anti-feminist Strike Facebook page during its existence.
Source: Author.

of the posts were coded as political commentary, in which the admins presented themselves as a true alternative to mainstream, corrupted media. However, they also posted messages that had only entertainment purposes or served as self-promotion.

The status that received the highest number of laughing reactions (490) was posted on 24 January 2019. The post showed an image of Lynn Yaeger, an editor of a fashion magazine and a columnist. The picture depicts a full-figured woman approximately in her sixties wearing a playful outfit that can be read as a confident and creative endeavour of self-expression. Her hair has been dyed a shiny ginger colour and cut into a mushroom shape. The facial features are enhanced by a bright pink circle painted on each cheek and she has used a dark purple lipstick to highlight her cupid's bow by shaping it into two sharp triangles. She is wearing an A-shaped, purple-and-green cloak with a pattern of roses that are covered in glitter. Over the cloak, she has put a black, fluffy feather boa. The admins accompanied the image with a comment: 'Lynn Yaeger – editor of fashion magazine Vogue, who often criticises Melania Trump for her clothes.:-) Ehm…Shouldn't it be the other way round?' suggesting that her nonconventional style was a representation of the perverse fashion sense, dictated by elites, and lost feminine beauty in modern times.

This post received 123 additional comments from the followers. They mostly despised the figure in the image, calling her a 'monster' and a 'freak'. But some of the followers also developed the theory in which she symbolized everything that had gone wrong with modern society: 'Normal people are silent. … Whereas perverts scream wherever they can and they want more and more' (FB User, Anti-feminist Strike, 24 January 2019). 'Exactly, it should be other way round, but governments support freaks nowadays, they are allowed to scream and dare to do whatever they want. :-(' (FB User, Anti-feminist Strike, 24 January 2019). 'I have been saying this for a long time, everything is upside down … what is normal and ok, is wrong and unacceptable. … And what is weird and perverse, that is right. … Dear Lord in heaven!!! Why don't people go away with all this nonsense' (FB User, Anti-feminist Strike, 24 January 2019).

On the other hand, the post with the second highest number of laughing reactions (434) was the image posted on 27 January 2019 presenting a fictive, Photoshopped soldier from the future army of the EU. The meme (which can also be found on the internet in the US Army version) depicts a male figure in a pink uniform with a little logo of the EU on his chest and a pink army hat that is decorated with a heart on the front. The man standing in front of the EU's flag has a perfectly groomed beard and the authors of the meme have further photoshopped his face with bright pink lipstick, rosy cheekbones, eyelashes highlighted with a significant amount of mascara, bright pink eyeshadow that covers the entire area under his eyebrows and drop earrings made of pink diamonds. The admins of the page simply wrote a comment: 'The design for the uniforms for the new EU army.'

The aim of the image was to use this fictive soldier deemed as being feminine and emasculated, and to reinforce the right's narrative portraying the entire European Union as weak. This post also received 106 comments, consisting mainly of homophobic jokes, despising and humiliating the person in the image, despite the fact that it is obviously a photoshopped picture. This response may serve as evidence that even humorous and fictional posts can create emotional, negative reactions in the receiver.

Drawing on this conspiracy theory was one of the most frequent strategies of the organization. It was often posting 'funny' pictures of 'emasculated' men similar to the one described above in an attempt to support the right's conspiracy theory that modern society is dealing with a serious crisis of masculinity as a consequence of feminism and the action of folk devils: 'The public space is contaminated by opinions of sensitive boys and naive girls who know very little about relationships between two partners running a family. Unfortunately, they are f*cking up with brains of young men and women who are not able to start a high-quality relationship' (Anti-feminist Strike, 13 November 2018). According to the page's admins, the consequences of such brainwashing are useless, powerless men: 'Men failed. … Nowadays, men are no longer breadwinners and are not the only ones who work hard and thus are not respected automatically' (Anti-feminist Strike, 26 November 2018).

However, this Facebook page did not only serve as an entertainment site. The admins further managed to evoke anger by posting inflammatory messages. The post that received the highest number of angry reactions (266) was a post showing the title page of a magazine called *Parents*, posted on 22 January 2019 with a comment: 'They will impose it on us, no matter what.'

The title page, with a big headline 'Parents' and subheading 'Feel the Love', depicts an extremely happy-looking and handsome family. It is a same-sex couple with two children. One of the men is a black, sits on a chair and holds the hands of a cute, chubby, white toddler who seems to be about to start to walk. The man wears a bright yellow T-shirt under a green shirt, pale purple trousers and white trainers. The toddler is dressed all in blue. Next to them stands a tall white man. He wears a pink hoodie under a turquoise jacket, khaki trousers and white trainers. He holds a laughing one-year-old boy of colour who seems to enjoy being 'in the air' very much. The two adult men on the picture lean towards each other while showing their perfectly white and straight teeth to the camera.

In addition, the post received 239 comments. As the comment made by the organizations indicates, the post serves to convince the followers that 'gender ideology' and multiculturalism are new, totalitarian ideologies ignoring the law of nature. The post is not only homophobic but has obvious racist aspects as well.

The reactions to these posts provide evidence of the way conspiracy theories find their way into public opinion and are re-produced. As the comment section showed, the post inspired some of the followers to re-produce the 'white race/European population genocide' conspiracy theory: 'White people are supposed to die out. Even the children on the picture are dark. Reverse racism. They want white people to stop reproducing and the world to become black' (FB User, Anti-feminist Strike, 22 January 2019). 'American barons want Europe to get poor' (FB User; Anti-feminist Strike, 22 January 2019). 'Plans for human kind are much more terrifying than any fiction or horror – and this all was done thanks to world environmentalists that enslaved the world by all the orders and prohibitions in the name of saving the planet' (FB User, Anti-feminist Strike, 22 January 2019).

The post with the second highest number of angry reactions (214) was posted on 10 January 2019 and consisted of an image of a rainbow family with an ironic comment: 'And here we have the wonderful family of the future. … Happy and beautiful people, who are stable, and create safe and calm haven for their child that will have the opportunity to fully develop. Much better than a stupid, ordinary family … soon in our country!'

The image depicts another same-sex couple with a child. This time, we are talking about two women. One of them has a short hair coloured black in the back and bright red in the front. She has one piercing on the very top of her nose, and two more piercings in her chin. She wears an all-black outfit. Her supposed partner has shorter hair dyed blonde, wears glasses and has one

piercing in her nasal septum and two more piercings in her chin. She wears a vest over a black, sleeveless top and her strong arm is decorated with a tattoo – two wings. In between them sits a little child around the age of five. The child has long blond hair tied in a ponytail and their smile shows a few gaps from the loss of some baby teeth.

As the comments of the followers suggest, this image is deemed to represent something much bigger: a degenerate world in which children in particular are in danger: 'Where are the children's rights? Children have the right to have a mother and a father, but perhaps not in this degenerated and deviant world as we can see' (FB User, Anti-feminist Strike, 10 January 2019). 'I believe that a small group can create a huge crowd of insect, that will deform the society' (FB User, Anti-feminist Strike, 10 January 2019).

This narrative is also linked to the narrative developed in the post, which generated the third-highest number of angry reactions (211). It was posted on 14 January 2019 and included a link to an article (published on an American far-right Facebook page) about the case of James/Luna Younger and his mother, who was accused of forcing her six-year-old son, James, to change his gender against his own will. Such posts inform the Facebook page's followers that the threat to children is not only a potential threat in future: the atrocities and crimes against children are already happening, as suggested by the comment:

> Protect your children from people who will try to convince them that they can go against the nature and change their gender by using chemicals. … Times when natural things will be prohibited are coming. (Anti-feminist Strike, 14 January 2019).

In reality, a three-year-old James started asking to wear dresses; around age five she declared she was a girl, persistently identified as such and was diagnosed with gender dysphoria by three medical experts, which angered her father, who insisted his child was a boy. Since Luna's mother let Luna wear whatever she chose, her father launched an online campaign based on misinformation. The case ended up in court, where physicians, school staff and family members all testified that Luna consistently, persistently identified as a girl. The case eventually mobilized various conservatives and Christian fundamentalists from Texas into action and they helped to spread the moral panic.[29]

In contrast to the discourse of the Catholic priests and conservative intellectuals that portrayed 'gender and LGBT activists' as servants of a totalitarian neo-Marxist apparatus, the online campaigns used a more tabloid style, focusing mostly on the sexuality and performance of gender by their enemies, a strategy that has been previously described as sex panic (Fejes 2000; Herdt 2009; Irvine 2005; Rubin 1984).

Here, we are not dealing only with an opposition to Istanbul Convention itself. The LGBT rights activists and feminists perceived as folk devils are seen not as a random event but as part of a bigger problem that the whole society

is facing: 'What is typical for modern times in respect of relationships? – Concentrated egoism … the lack of respect to others' (Anti-feminist Strike, 21 December 2018). 'We live in times of freaks' (Anti-gender Strike, 20 December 2018). 'What is happening in the Western world is perversity and it is harming young people that solve their insecurity and lack of confidence by changing their gender' (Anti-feminist Strike, 10 December 2018). 'The world is changing in front of our eyes. We have so many new laws that it is confusing and there is nobody who would know them all very well. … Modesty is gone with the wind, because we only appreciate pride and self-esteem. Demonstration of decency is gone, because you no longer need it to achieve your goals' (Anti-feminist Strike, 3 November 2018).

The Multiple Semantics of the Czech Anti-Gender Panic

The speeches made by the priests and political elites mentioned in the first section of this chapter, and the discourses used in the online activism, can be regarded as textbook examples of attempts to stir moral indignation. They illustrate the way in which even one of the most ordinary pieces of legislation can be depicted as a devil's pact that could corrode the very bonds that hold society together and can be used to mobilize society, or rather create hysteria. Content analysis showed that the discourse of highlights children as the most vulnerable victims of the ideology:

> Children are being sacrificed in the name of human rights. Nobody is questioning what they feel and what they need for their healthy development. The most important is that any sort of minority will have its rights guaranteed … why should we care about the children, right? (Anti-gender Strike, 10 February 2019)

The campaigners try to make their narratives look real by building them on some real-world evidence. On the one hand, it plays with the narrative of kidnapping children based on the well-remembered story of Eva Michaláková, mixed together with traumas and misused imagery from the darkest places of the national collective memory. Furthermore, when the anti-gender campaigners talk about 'kidnapping' they are referring not only to a physical action but also to a symbolic one. According to them, children will be allowed to change their gender identity regardless of their parents' opinion, and will be brainwashed by sexual education in school on which their parents will have no influence – as well as being killed during abortions.

Folk devils, on the other hand, symbolize the moral degradation of the entire society. They represent the loss of traditional masculinity and femininity, and consequently the loss of traditional family and heterosexual relationships. The women are portrayed as not wanting to have children, which should be their

natural desire, but they also look masculine and are no longer desirable. On the other hand, men are portrayed as emasculated, weak and feminine, unable to take care of and protect their women. The fault of these folk devils is that they do not even look like real men and women anymore – they have become detached from the law of nature, they no longer resemble humans who are naturally either a man or a woman, they perform in-betweenness, and both their behaviour and their appearance are stuck between masculinity and femininity. Therefore, they are presented as sick, irrational and deviant people. As one of the posts on the Facebook page posted on 11 February 2019 said:

> The certainties on which one could have relied are disappearing. Today even a person with a penis can be a woman and a person without a penis can be a man.

Culture Anger and Moral Panics

This chapter has sought to introduce the reader to the development of attempts to create moral panic by the anti-gender campaigners in Czechia, and to unpack the multiple semantics that underpin it in this local context. I have argued that some Catholic priests, representing the more conservative circles of the Czech Catholic Church, stood at the very beginning of spreading the moral panic. Conservative think tanks, journalists and politicians made a significant contribution towards establishing these discourses in the public sphere in Czechia, but the panic started spreading faster thanks to grass-roots activists who ran social media pages in which they used tabloid style accompanied by powerful visuals. Such online activism helped to reach more people and allowed them to actively participate in negotiating what the contemporary world should look like. But social media was also used as a site of entertainment – a place where people could go to laugh at folk devils, who are presented as a freak show with identities that are regarded as public property.

Finally, as Ondřej Slačálek, using the critique by McRobbie and Thorton (1995), points out in Chapter 9, societies are not only made of people who are against the folk devils. Quite the contrary: modern folk devils are also supported by a camp of the defenders of their rights and interests. Those can and indeed do find back. As a result, they portray such anti-gender campaigners as contemporary folk devils who are evil and dangerous. Feminist and LGBT rights activists also run their campaigns in which they mock both Catholic priests and pro-family activists. As a result of such discursive wars based on moral panics, we are witnessing a more polarized society and a democratic debate about sensitive and complex issues is becoming more difficult as actors involved in such exchanges radicalize their discourses.

Lastly, to contribute to discussions regarding the theory of moral panics, it is important to note that these anti-gender campaigners did not emerge in a vacuum. Some of them were the very same people who engaged in creating moral

panics even before they started fighting 'gender ideology'. Before 'gender ideology' and its proponents became a clearly defined enemy, they were active in opposing multiculturalism, immigration, communists or the so-called Islamisation of Europe. This supports the argument presented by Angela McRobbie and Sarah Thorton (1995), which claimed that moral panic is not an isolated phenomenon but a connective strategy for moral campaigns. We live in times in which moral panic has become a daily strategy of the media, and one panic gives way to another. Gilbert Herdt calls this process cultural anger, which he describes as a process marshalling intense emotion across diffuse domains and arenas of action to unite disparate individuals and groups in political pursuit of a common enemy or sexual scapegoat (Herdt 2009, 5). While Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons (2000) have shown that such demonization, conspiracies and scapegoating were always at the core of the rhetoric of both the old right and the new right, Rosalind Petchesky (1984) has demonstrated that feminists and homosexuals have displaced communists as the scapegoats of the new right. The anti-communist sentiment specific to the post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe helped to equate those two as the ultimate scapegoats: 'neo-Marxist gender activists'.

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Notes

[1] See 'Czech Pres Asks Norway King to Get Kids Back' (*The Local*, 12 June 2015, https://www.thelocal.no/20150612/czech-pres-asks-norway-king-to-get-kids-back).

[2] See 'Zdechovský (KDU-ČSL): Mlácení a znásilňování dětí v ústavech přechází Barnevernet mlčením' (*Parlamentní Listy*, 14 June 2016, https://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/politika/politici-volicum/Zdechovsky-KDU-CSL-Mlaceni-a-znasilnovani-deti-v-ustavech-prechazi-Barnevernet-mlcenim-440346).

[3] See 'Mons. Petr Piťha – katedrála sv.Víta 28. září 2018 [video],' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBiyz38PSdQ. (All translations in this chapter by the author).

[4] See Maya Oppenheim, 'Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban Bans Gender Studies Programmes' (*The Independent*, 25 October 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/hungary-bans-gender-studies-programmes-viktor-orban-central-european-university-budapest-a8599796.html).

[5] See Kyle Knight and Lydia Gall, 'Hungary Ends Legal Recognition for Transgender and Intersex People' (Human Rights Watch, 21 May 2020, https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/21/hungary-ends-legal-recognition-transgender-and-intersex-people).

[6] See 'Istanbul Convention: Poland to Leave European Treaty on Violence against Women' (BBC, 25 July 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53538205).

[7] See Shaun Walker, 'Poland Delays Abortion Ban as Nationwide Protests Continue' (*The Guardian*, 3 November 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/03/poland-stalls-abortion-ban-amid-nationwide-protests).

[8] See 'Polish Election: Andrzej Duda Says LGBT "Ideology" Worse than Communism' (BBC, 14 June 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53039864).

[9] See the Council of Europe website, 'Istanbul Convention – Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence', https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/home.

[10] See 'Slovak Conservatives Fail to Cement Gay Marriage Ban in Referendum' (*The Guardian*, 8 February 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/08/slovak-conservatives-fail-gay-marriage-ban).

[11] See Matthew Karnitschnig, 'Brussels' Battle to Tame Visegrad Rebels' (*Politico*, 24 May 2018, https://www.politico.eu/article/visegrad-poland-hungary-czech-republic-slovakia-brussels-battle-to-tame-visegrad-rebels).

[12] The notion of gender ideology was originally used in feminist theories to describe the unequal status of women and sexual minorities within the heteronormative order of society.

[13] See European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2017: Czech Republic*, https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2017-czech-republic.

[14] See Pamela Duncan, 'A History of Same-Sex Unions in Europe' (*The Guardian*, 24 January 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2016/jan/24/a-history-of-same-sex-unions-in-europe).

[15] See Radek Bartoníček, 'Členka SPD i šiřitelka fake news. Kdo je žena, která varuje zákonodárce před úmluvou' (*Aktuálně*, 12 November 2018, https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/tradicni-rodinu-haji-fanynka-spd-ktera-povazuje-spornou-umlu/r~0c8ff1e4e28e11e8b7c1ac1f6b220ee8).

[16] See Andrew Higgins, 'Ukrainian Church Faces Obscure Pro-Russia Revolt in Its Own Ranks' (*New York Times*, 22 June 2014, https://www.nytimes

.com/2014/06/22/world/europe/ukrainian-church-faces-obscure-pro-russia-revolt-in-its-own-ranks.html).

[17] See the website of the Byzantský Katolický Patriarchát (Byzantine Catholic Patriarchate) at http://vkpatriarhat.org/cz.

[18] In fact, the chairperson of the organization Czech Traditional Family quoted above admitted in an interview I conducted with her in July 2019 that she first learned about gender ideology and the Istanbul Convention from an email she received from this sect.

[19] See 'Zastavme zlo z Istanbulu' (Slovenský dohovor za rodinu, 26 October 2017, https://slovenskydohovorzarodinu.sk/zastavme-zlo-z-istambulu).

[20] See the poster for the event 'Noční modlitební procesí proti ratifikaci istanbulské úmluvy a na podporu tradiční rodiny' at http://www.veceradlo.cz/plakatky/plakatek%2004.pdf.

[21] See the organization's brochure *Odpovědnost nebo promiskuita?* at http://www.spov.org/data/files/letak-vorp.pdf.

[22] See the organization's website at http://www.obcinst.cz.

[23] Jana Jochová, one of the founders of the Union for Defence of Parental Rights, is a wife of Roman Joch, the chairperson of Civic Institute.

[24] I worked with the media database Newtonmedia, which contains an archive of all Czech media since 1996, both in published newspapers and magazines and on the internet, and looked up all articles containing the key words 'gender ideology'. The total number of articles between 2010 and 2019 was 367. Some of the articles were published on up to three internet platforms.

[25] See Jan Wirnitzer, 'Březen: Ratifikujeme "Istanbul". Prosinec: Je k ničemu. Babišova otočka zklamala zastánce úmluvy' (*Deník N*, 17 December 2018, https://denikn.cz/39556/brezen-ratifikujeme-istanbul-prosinec-je-k-nicemu-babisova-otocka-zklamala-zastance-umluvy).

[26] In general, the Facebook pages run by Angry Mothers were among the most popular on the far-right scene in Czechia. Before the Anti-feminist Strike, followed by 10,000 people, the organization had run another Facebook page followed by more than 45,000 followers, which was shut down by Facebook authorities in August 2018.

[27] I used Netvizz to gather all posts from the Facebook page. In total, I worked with 277 posts including the reactions of the page's followers. I conducted a qualitative content analysis in which I focused on the adjectives used in the posts by the admins, as well as the interplay of the visual material with the comments. Through the application Netvizz I also gathered all the comments and reactions of the followers, which helped me to understand what kind of posts received the highest numbers of reactions and what type of reactions emerged the most. Finally, I went through all the posts several times and coded all the posts based on their type (political commentary, entertainment, self-promotion), rhetorical style (serious, ironic, frightening) and emotional tone (positive, negative, neutral).

[28] After I scraped all the FB statuses with reactions and comments by followers, I used Excel to analyse the numbers of each type of reaction available on FB.

[29] See Dawn Ennis, 'Texas Is Afraid of a 7-Year-Old Transgender Girl' (*Forbes*, 26 October 2019, https://www.forbes.com/sites/dawnstaceyennis/2019/10/26/texas-is-afraid-of-a-7-year-old-transgender-girl/).

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CHAPTER 8

From Folk Devils to Modern State Devils

The Securitization and Racial Policing of the Roma in Italy

Ana Ivasiuc
Maynooth University

Introduction

The Roma have long been constructed as folk devils across various European contexts. Their othering has pendulated between exoticization/romanticization, on the one hand, and their construction as criminal, deviant, abject outsiders to European societies and moralities, on the other hand. Their criminalization was buttressed by the nation state project of containing and controlling populations under one national government, but also by the development of capitalism, requiring a moored and disciplined labour force. The durable stigma of the Roma has been connected to the attempts of the state to control the labour force (Lucassen, Cottaar, and Willems 1998; Okely 1983). Roma constructed group identities other than national ones and practised forms of nomadism that ran counter to the two modern projects of the nation state and of capitalism: no wonder, then, in light of the social organization sustaining the development of capitalism in Europe, that their representation has long been, in moralistic terms, as a people in perpetual clash with the law and hence

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outside the realm of morality (Ivasiuc 2020a). Initially tied to their economic practices, nomadism became culturalized, both by some of the groups themselves and by the societies in which they live. However, with some exceptions, nowadays very few groups still practise nomadism.

Notwithstanding evidence that the overwhelming majority of Roma became sedentary, Italian popular culture continues to uphold the stereotypical figure of the nomad. This label is applied to people categorized, with a racial slur, as *zingari*. Some of them migrated from Eastern Europe to Italy starting in the 1960s, in search for better living circumstances, or, later, to flee the Balkan wars. Some others are Italian Roma or Sinti. From the 1980s onwards, the label 'nomad' percolated through state policies, leading to the establishment of *campi nomadi* as unique housing policy for precarious Roma.

This chapter deals with the productivity of the trope of nomadism in the Italian imaginary and traces the construction of the Roma from folk devils to modern state devils subjected to securitization and institutionalized racial policing. I borrow the term 'securitization' from critical security studies (Balzacq 2011; Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015; Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998); however, I depart from the divergent emphasis of various 'schools' on either discourse or practice, and use it loosely to denote the way in which the Roma are socially constructed as a security threat and governed through security measures, apparatuses and practices (van Baar, Ivasiuc, and Kreide 2019). However, my chapter does not deal with Roma *people* but rather with the construction of a *figure*: the 'nomad', a figure crystallized from this group but whose social representation does not overlap, or only partially overlaps, with the real people who call themselves Roma, or any of the denominations usually included under this umbrella term, such as Khorakhané, Dassikhané, Khanjarija, Romà and others.

I understand Stanley Cohen's (2011 [1972]) theoretical contribution on folk devils and moral panics to be precisely about the construction of *figures* rather than about real people. By emphasizing the constructedness of the figure of the 'nomad' as folk devil rather than its overlap with the Roma peoples, I wish to avoid inadvertently reinforcing the centrality of the 'devilish' or deviant attribute to Roma identity. Indeed, many Roma do not recognize themselves in the figure of the 'nomad' in Italy, and they often mock the non-Roma for their ignorance on the matter. However, such narratives undeniably do have a stigmatizing impact on Roma as a whole, and, as I show in the chapter, the racial[1] policing of camp inhabitants certainly impacts their lives and livelihoods. So, the chapter both *is* and *is not* entirely about the Roma; it should be seen as a dialogic move between the figure of the nomad, on the one hand, and, on the other, the impact of moral panics, through institutionalized racial policing, on the real people who inhabit the camps in Italy.

Grounding my argument in ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Rome between 2014 and 2017, I will discuss how the representation of the Roma as essentially nomadic is intertwined with their perception as folk devils, and how

the technology of the camp turned the Roma from folk devils into modern state devils to be subjected to permanent and ever-increasing policing.[2] Drawing upon Mary Douglas's work on 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1991), I will show how the ambiguous imaginary of the 'nomad' was projected on a heterogeneous group of people that Italians did not know or understand, and then, by means of very material things like the *campo nomadi*, how camp inhabitants were produced as modern folk devils subjected to state policies that espoused the ambiguous imaginary of the deviant nomad.

Fixating Nomadism: The Genealogy of *Campi Nomadi*

First, a note on terminology. Although *campi nomadi* has been translated as 'nomad camps', I choose to keep the expression in Italian; an abbreviated form from 'campi (per i) nomadi', camps (for) nomads, the term *campi nomadi* holds in its very name the ambiguity of the object it signifies. If one takes *nomadi* to be an adjective instead of a noun – as the apposition of the two terms would indicate – the exact translation in English would be 'nomadic camps', thus at once permanent because of their fixed structures, and transient because 'nomadic'. In its singular form, *campo nomadi* sometimes erroneously appears as '*campo nomade*', 'nomad*ic* camp', confirming the linguistic ambiguity of the term in which *nomadi*/*nomade* is an adjective instead of a noun.[3] But a camp, as a stable and fixed structure, cannot be nomadic, and that ambiguity is often instrumentalized in far-right rhetoric. Consider, for instance, the right-wing soon-to-be mayor Gianni Alemanno, who in his electoral campaign in 2008 played with the ambiguity of the expression and his electorate's wishes: 'Are these nomads or not? If they are nomads, they should take [their things] and leave!' (Stasolla 2012). Similarly, a slogan sometimes surfaces in protests demanding the dismantlement of *campi nomadi*: '*Se sei nomade, devi nomadare*': if you are a nomad, you must 'nomadize'. Likewise, it emerges in the widespread opinion that the camp inhabitants should only be allowed to remain in the same camp for a short period of time, as was once stipulated in the law on *campi sosta* (transit camps), whose history I briefly trace in this section.

The first camps emerged in the mid-1960s as a result of apparently well-intended efforts of non-Roma lobbyists, particularly the Catholic charity Opera Nomadi (Nomad Works). Sensitive to culturalist policy frames, the charity wished to import the French and British models of the equipped transit camps for nomads, on recommendations of the Council of Europe regarding measures to protect the 'nomadic culture'. The latter was essentialized as the particularity of all Roma (Brazzoduro 2015; Colacicchi 2008; Sigona 2002, 2003, 2005; Tosi Cambini 2015; for other European contexts than Italy, see also Fraser 2001; Mayall 2004; van Baar 2011; Willems 1997). However, (semi-)nomadism among certain groups of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers was an economic strategy more than a cultural trait. Livelihoods such as selling self-made goods like

bricks, pots and pans, baskets, and wooden items for the household, providing services of maintenance to household objects, or collecting iron scrap and reusable items, were intimately linked to (mostly rural) economies of scarcity. The demise of those, with industrialization and the economic boom of the 1970s in the West and forced collectivization and enrolment in wage labour in the East also brought with it a reconfiguration of the economies of these once semi-nomadic groups. In Eastern Europe, moreover, assimilationist policies of sedentarization had already drastically reduced nomadism in the 1960s and 1970s.[4]

The centuries-long Orientalist imaginary of nomadism exoticized Roma, constructing them in opposition and inferiority to the non-Roma culture, marked as sedentary (Mayall 2004). This imaginary had deep consequences for the politics and policies aiming at managing Roma groups; even though there is little overlap between the figure of the nomad and the camp inhabitants, it is not because the 'nomad' does not exist as such that the policies targeting camps have not impacted their inhabitants. In this sense, the camps have been understood as instruments through which the cross-fertilization of labelling, policies, and perduring essentialist imaginaries 'nomadized' the Roma, imposing a collective oppressive, stereotyped identity (Maestri 2017; Picker 2008; Simhandl 2006; van Baar 2011). For Italians, the camp came to embody Roma identity and culture to such an extent that those living in houses – estimated at three quarters of all Roma and Sinti in Italy – were no longer considered Roma (Clough Marinaro 2003).[5] This conception, subsequently, overwhelmingly informed Italian policies for those perceived as 'nomads', as well as public attitudes towards them. On the one hand, it suggested the superfluousness of investing in the inclusion of camp inhabitants, if they were to be transient (Pusca 2010). On the other hand, it led to stigma that hindered the resettlement of camp residents in houses: landlords would rarely rent to 'nomads' and banks would never approve credit to those whose address was set in a camp. Consider Mladen, one of the Roma I interviewed. He migrated from Serbia in the 1970s, settled in one of Rome's tolerated camps, and for the previous 20 years had been lawfully employed by one of the non-governmental organizations intervening in camps in Rome. Even though his salary was paid monthly into his account, his bank never approved his repeated credit requests to buy a house, on grounds of his residence in a *campo nomadi*.[6]

The camp encapsulates ambivalently the logic of protection and that of confinement: set up to protect 'nomadic culture', camps gathered together groups whose presence was undesirable in the urban space. Yet, at the same time, the supposed nomadism of the Roma was also subjected to domesticating interventions within the space of the camp: the projects implemented in camps since the 1960s were increasingly seeking to facilitate, then to impose, stable links with the territory through interventions aiming at promoting and facilitating employment and education (Bontempelli 2009; Daniele 2011; Picker, Greenfields, and Smith 2015). The camps became spaces in which social

engineering interventions combated the very nomadism they purported to protect, in a logic in which the Roma were seen ambiguously as dangerous but also as in need of help, both 'at risk' and 'risky' (Maestri 2016; van Baar, Ivasiuc, and Kreide 2019). This emphasis on fixating the supposed nomadism of camp inhabitants – but also on containing them – can also be gleaned from the gradual replacement of caravans in authorized camps by what Italians call 'containers': prefabricated metal or plastic huts designed to host families (Clough Marinaro 2015; Piasere 2006).

The putative hypermobility of the Roma produces perceptions of inferiority, abjection and danger (Coccia 2012; Hepworth 2012; Ivasiuc 2018; Piasere 2009 [2004]; Sigona 2002, 2003; van Baar, Ivasiuc, and Kreide 2019). They are othered as 'matter' ambiguously, yet perpetually out of place, hence dangerous (Douglas 1991): labelled as nomads, but confined in fixed spaces, they live amid European cultures in which spatial belonging and rootedness is a central norm structuring identity, politics and social relations. They are in the 'grey zone' of ambiguity where morality and the dominant norms and forms of social organization become dangerously negotiable (see also Harboe Knudsen and Frederiksen 2015 and the Introduction to this volume; Ivasiuc 2020a). Perpetually dislocated, potentially ubiquitous, and always in excess, they embody the epitome of danger to everything that is or should be rooted, fixed and orderly. The 'hazy and incoherent category of "nomads"' (Picker 2012) produces camp inhabitants not only as dangerous but also as impostors: the ones who, according to a neo-fascist supporter I interviewed during a protest against *campi nomadi* in Rome, 'call themselves nomads, but aren't that nomadic' (*si chiamano nomadi, ma tanto nomadi non sono*)[7] become immoral tricksters – another recurrent figure in the repertoire of how Italians think of the *zingaro* (Piasere 2011). In this figure of the trickster, the 'nomads' acquire devilish attributes precisely through their capacity to question existing norms and seemingly refuse to subject themselves to the majority's rules, or to any kind of authority, thereby threatening the established order (Ivasiuc 2020a). The inconsistencies and ambiguities that they are seen to embody in the oxymoronic figure of stable 'nomads', and their ability to thereby confound and contradict categories, produce an imaginary of wilful deceit.

Initially, the camps came as a response to this ambiguous securitization of the mobility of those perceived as nomads, translated in the idiom of humanitarian emergency (Sigona 2005). As long as – and, more importantly, because – social and humanitarian interventions were focused and embedded in the camp, their positive outcomes for their inhabitants could only ever be meagre and insignificant: ambivalent at best, if not outright detrimental; it is the camp itself that perpetuates the very root cause of its inhabitants' othering, and often in the security key (Sarcinelli 2011). The depoliticizing effects of the culturalizing narrative of nomadism are the complete obfuscation of structural inequalities and the politics of 'exclusive inclusion' (Picker 2012), or, like Monica Rossi

(2014, 123) aptly puts it, 'the oxymoron of proclaiming inclusion while practicing segregation'.

Roughly between 1985 and 1995, a series of regional laws and regulations regarding camps were adopted in Italy. In Latium, for instance, law 82 of 25 May 1985 aimed to 'protect the identity of the Roma and to avoid impediments to the right of nomadism'. The first camps were established in the centre and north of Italy (Piasere 2006), at the margins of towns, in dubious industrial zones generally isolated from residential neighbourhoods, sometimes close to landfills and polluted areas, in an 'urbanism of contempt' (Brunello 1996). Their first inhabitants were Italian Roma and Sinti families, who, due to the chronic lack of housing, were constrained to share the camp space with rival families. Tensions on the spatial economy and political control of the camps amounted to conflicts, sometimes violent, and often mediatized, which further nourished Italians' perception of the camp residents as violent, uncivilized Other. These conflicts constrained the Italian Roma and Sinti groups to seek other forms of housing. Gradually, they left the camps to the groups of Khorakhané Roma from Yugoslavia, incoming from the 1960s onwards. These groups were engaged in a migration project misconstrued by Italians as nomadism, but most of them had most probably been sedentary since well before Communist rule, because of harsh sedentarization policies. In 1973, for instance, only 5 per cent of the Roma population in Yugoslavia still maintained a nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life (Barany 2002, 129), and this lifestyle, as elsewhere, was structured more by the economic activities of certain Roma groups practising forms of ambulant trade and service provision than by cultural underpinnings. A research conducted in Rome in the Casilino 900 camp found in 1998 that over 85 per cent of the Roma from Bosnia had previously lived in houses that had been destroyed during the war (Rossi 2006). Previously sedentary Roma became 'nomads' by residing in camps because other housing solutions were unavailable to them, and it is in this light that the crucial distinction between the *figure* of the nomad and the Roma must be understood.

Although the policy initially designed camps as *campi sosta* (transit camps, following the French and British models for *Gens du Voyage* and Gypsies and Travellers), they soon became permanent fixtures, 'durable socio-spatial formations that displace and confine undesirable populations, suspending them in a distinct spatial, legal, and temporal condition' (Picker and Pasquetti 2015, 681). Spaces of exception, therefore (Agamben 2005), the camps are transformative technologies of citizenship, producing the particular figure of the 'campizen'.[8] Camp inhabitants, denationalized and hyperculturalized through the perduring trope of nomadism, are not citizens but also not non-citizens (Piasere 2006): they are seen as 'imperfect citizens' (Sigona and Monasta 2006), a figure betwixt and between whose belonging to the territory is problematized and constructed as foreign. In the Roman peripheries, but also in other Italian cities, *campi nomadi* became, throughout the 1980s, a matter of concern

(Ivasiuc 2019), one of the main points of contention, and one of the most highlighted topics on the political agenda and in the media.

From Moral Panics to the *Emergenza Nomadi*

On 21 May 2008, soon after its election, the fourth Berlusconi government declared a state of emergency in the regions of the three largest cities in Italy: Latium, Lombardy and Campania (Consiglio dei Ministri 2008),[9] this time in complete disregard of the legal stipulations that a state of emergency could only be declared in the event of natural catastrophes; no flood, earthquake or other disaster was at the origin of the decree. What was posed as an existential threat demanding extraordinary and urgent measures was the presence of informal 'nomad' settlements. The precarity of their condition pushed many of them to improvise shacks in the urban interstices and peripheries of Rome, Milan, Naples and many other urban centres in the country. The declaration of the *emergenza nomadi* posed that these settlements were inherently dangerous: 'in reason of their extreme precariousness, [they] have caused a situation of serious social alarm, with possibly serious repercussions in terms of public order and security for the local populations' (Consiglio dei Ministri 2008).[10] Invoking a vague but menacing 'concrete risk that [the situation] degenerates subsequently', the minister of the interior requested the adoption of extraordinary measures and the granting of exceptional powers to the prefects of the concerned regions. The issue of *nomadi*, a social problem of precarity, was thereby moved from deliberative politics into the realm of an exceptionalism legitimated by notions of diffuse insecurity 'for the local populations' and a sense of impending public disorder.

Tellingly, although these are not the terms consciously underlined in the decree, the state of emergency was formulated as a consequence of the 'extreme precariousness' (*precarietà*) of the settlements, and on the grounds of concern for the fact that the 'nomads' had '*durably* settled in urban areas' (*nomadi che si sono* stabilmente *insediati nelle aree urbane*, my emphasis). The terms used in the decree betray the very contradictions encapsulated in the construction of the nomadic subject as exposed in the previous section: because nomads cannot *durably* settle, state action is required to remedy the transgression of categorical boundaries. With reference to the 'particular urban structure of the city of Milan', cited as the primary locus of concern leading to the *emergenza nomadi* – and, coincidentally, Berlusconi's fief – the decree also states that 'the boundaries of neighbouring municipalities reach an area very close to the urban perimeter of the region's capital', which makes it impossible to 'adopt solutions aiming at a sustainable distribution of nomadic communities without the involvement of all local entities concerned' (ibid.). So, in short, if one is to persist in the use of the euphemistic terms with which the decree is replete, a state of emergency was declared because nomadic groups in extreme

poverty – amounting in Milan to about 0.4 per cent of the city's population – had suddenly turned stable, settling in urban areas and provoking social alarm, which, in turn, was dangerous for the security of local populations. For someone unfamiliar with the ways in which those perceived as 'nomads' have been constructed and governed throughout the last 40 years in Italy, the decree would undoubtedly make little sense.

The emergency, granting more powers to the prefects of Rome, Milan and Naples, and a specific budget to undertake security measures for the containment of the 'nomads', was constructed in relation to their perceived excessive multitude and ungovernability. The measures undertaken were aimed at informal camps as places of insecurity and material embodiment of blight. The term *campi abusivi*, which designated informal settlements, already contained the notion of an abuse, a moral and legal transgression, and the measures produced through the *emergenza nomadi* decree aimed first and foremost at their dismantlement. However, without viable housing alternatives, the groups set on the move established informal camps elsewhere, only to be evicted again after a while. These circular eviction dynamics strengthened the perception of great numbers roaming the city. In the introduction to the third edition of his *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, Stanley Cohen (2011 [1972]) notes how metaphors of 'flood' and 'invasion' populate the British media in relation to refugees. Colin Clark and Elaine Campbell (2000) note the same vocabularies applied to Slovak and Czech Roma in the United Kingdom (see also Chapters 9 and 10). In the Italian press, too, reports of an 'invasion' of 'nomads' surface regularly. In 2007, for instance, the press reported a politician's claims that Roma migration from Romania to Italy would amount to a 'veritable exodus' (Ronchey 2007). In Rome, some of the groups evicted from informal camps in 2008 were crammed in already-overpopulated authorized camps beyond the city's ring road, increasing conflicts and spurring many families to leave again; predictably, these created other informal settlements, which were, again, evicted. Through this politics of eviction, then, the Roma from informal settlements were largely 'nomadized' and kept on the move by the state itself (van Baar 2011).

Despite the impression of a rupture in the Roma-related Italian policies, the *emergenza nomadi* episode served to institutionalize and legalize a series of practices pre-existing this legislative act (Trucco 2008). In September 2006, the prefect and the mayor of Milan and the president of the Lombardy region signed a protocol of agreement in view of the implementation of a strategic plan for the presence of 'nomad' settlements, which was already seen as an emergency. The following year, the prefects of Milan and Rome signed the 'Pact for a Safe Rome' and 'Pact for a Safe Milan', stipulating the allocation of a substantial budget in view of combating economic and urban insecurity. The authorities had already undertaken measures against the perceived insecurity caused by 'nomads' and other immigrants prior to the declaration of the *emergenza nomadi*. In fact, in 1994, Francesco Rutelli, the mayor of Rome, already

spoke of an *emergenza nomadi*, and the trope of an emergency related to the presence of 'nomads' resurfaces regularly in the Italian media, in particular after episodes of moral panic.

Two episodes of moral panic around 'nomads' in Italy have been linked to the declaration of the state of emergency (Kaneva and Popescu 2014; Maestri 2019). The first episode, known as the 'Reggiani murder' in Italy, or as the 'Mailat affair' in Romania, concerned the murder of the wife of a military officer by a camp inhabitant from Romania. The story only acquired moral panic proportions once it became known that the victim of the murder was an Italian, instead of a 'nomad' woman, as was suspected previously (Naletto 2009). Initially a short notice in the local news, the event then made it onto the first page of national newspapers, leading to a clamorous debate on 'Romanian criminality' in Italy that elicited reactions from Romanian officials (Wagner 2009). Consequently, Gianni Alemanno, the mayor of Rome, called for an extraordinary meeting of the government, which discussed the possibility of applying to Romanian Roma en masse a decree aimed at facilitating the expulsion of EU citizens on the grounds of security and public order. This contradicted EU regulations on free movement that insist on the individual examination of cases to avoid the collective criminalization of certain citizens. The public debate focused on a zero-tolerance approach to crime, and linked security and public order to collective criminalization, enhancing the stigmatization of Romanians, and of the figure of the 'Gypsy' in particular, as criminal Others. In the days following the murder, the illicit camp in which the alleged perpetrator resided was evicted and destroyed in a performance of cleansing transmitted on television. In Rome, several episodes of violence against Romanians were recorded in the following days (Naletto 2009).

The second episode of moral panic happened in May 2008 in the Ponticelli neighbourhood of Naples, hosting a *campo nomadi*. A teenager girl from the camp was accused of the attempted abduction of an Italian baby. A mob subsequently attacked the camp with Molotov cocktails, following a failed attempt to lynch the girl. Notwithstanding the implausibility of the accusations, as well as the shady links of the affair to economic interests of the *camorra* – the Neapolitan mafia – around the land occupied by the camp, the girl was convicted and given a prison sentence disproportionate to the accusations, but also inappropriate owing to her legal status as minor (Rivera 2009).

The latter episode uncovers an old anti-Gypsy script that periodically surfaces in Italian media. In her remarkable research, Sabrina Tosi Cambini (2008 and 2011) studied 40 alleged cases of attempted child abduction that appeared in the media over a period of 20 years, and found that none was substantiated, and that all the ones in which a 'nomad' girl or woman had been accused led nevertheless to their conviction, solely on the grounds of their group belonging. The 'dangerousness' of the person is inherent to her 'condition of being a nomad', as a verdict would clearly spell out in 2008. This is part of a repertoire

of 'truths' upheld by common sense about the 'nomads' that goes unquestioned in courts. Yet, when the stories prove to be untrue, the media remains silent.

But the first episode of moral panic is linked to a new fear that builds on the repertoire of danger that surrounds the 'nomads' or 'Gypsies': the presumed increase of criminality in Italy due to Romania's accession to the EU and the ensuing westward migration of many of its citizens, including Roma. Both episodes solidified the narrative of 'Gypsy' criminality. Yet, moral panic episodes such as the above, manifested through media representations, have outcomes well beyond the discursive dimension. The *emergenza nomadi* has material and institutional repercussions still acting today on the lives of camp inhabitants.

From Folk Devils to Modern State Devils: Racial Policing in Rome

In this section, drawing on the material collected in Rome, I outline the institutional effects of moral panic around the 'nomads' and of the construction of camp inhabitants as criminal deviants in policies surrounding *campi nomadi*. By doing so, I show how the folk devil figure of the nomad is converted into a modern state devil, to be assiduously and ever increasingly policed and repressed.

In Rome, the measures undertaken by the administration of Alemanno with public monies within the frame of the *emergenza nomadi* regarded first and foremost the eviction of informal settlements in the city and the displacement of their inhabitants towards larger camps in the peripheries. Although Alemanno largely followed and intensified the policies outlined by the previous left-wing administration of Veltroni, one of the innovations of his administration was the setting up, in 2010, of a special police unit. Initially under the name Coordinamento Operativo Insediamenti Nomadi (Operative Coordinating Unit for Nomads Settlements), the unit was tasked with all actions of monitoring and controlling *campi nomadi* and carrying out evictions of informal settlements, as well as facilitating their transfer from the camps the administration intended to close towards authorized camps. Later, the unit changed its name to Unità Organizzativa Gruppo Sicurezza Pubblica ed Emergenziale (SPE) (Unit for Public and Emergency Security), which obfuscated the fact that the unit was conceived as a racial police unit, that is, a unit targeting a highly racialized group. That this form of racial policing went unobserved and uncontested testifies to the normalization of the 'nomads' as a population to be policed.

Later, the unit took on other tasks as well, such as issues related to unaccompanied migrant minors, or the informal economies of street vendors. Most of the latter are migrants, some of whom reside in Italy without documents and sell often counterfeit merchandise. Following investigations around the issue of illegal waste disposal and processing around *campi nomadi*, the unit also took on the task of inspecting scrap yards, focusing in particular on those which buy

metal scrap from Roma (both those who live in *campi nomadi* and those who do not), and closing down those found faulty in terms of fiscal and administrative regulations. The objective of the unit, as stated by one of the officers I interviewed several times, is to push the 'nomads' beyond the metropolitan territory of Rome while disincentivizing the scrap metal trade, an important livelihood on which many inhabitants of *campi nomadi* depend.[11] Finally, on the orders of the municipality, the unit deals with evictions of squatters, who may or may not be migrant. Under the direct command of the local authorities as part of the municipal police of Rome, the SPE is thus the police unit that carries out the eviction orders of informal settlements inhabited mainly by Roma, and monitors the official camps by carrying out regular patrols, but also targets forms of criminality that they associate with camp inhabitants, like pickpocketing in the metro or the scrap metal trade.[12] At any rate, the tasks of this police unit revolve primarily around Roma, migrants and squatters, and their informal economies and illicit settlement.

The unit is composed of 60 police, and some of them have long-standing experience of dealing with the evictions of informal camps (Ivasiuc 2020b). The commander of this unit at the time of my research, for instance, had been dealing with the 'nomads' for 25 years.[13] The discourse of the commander is hardly nuanced on the Roma camp inhabitants: 'we have the problem of burglaries around here. We must presume it's them [the "nomads"]. … It's useless to speak of integration, it's useless to try and make them live like us Westerners, they live however they want.' Despite his long-standing experience with the 'nomads', the commander confessed that he does not have solutions to solve 'the problem', insisting that 'nomads' cannot be governed, and that they are by nature and culture delinquent. Many of the policemen and women of the SPE share this opinion and support the claim that the 'nomads' are genetically deviant. The ultimate proof of their criminality is nomadism itself, taken, again, as the reified essential trait of the Roma: the police narrative insists that, if they did not have anything to hide, they would not constantly run away from the state's gaze as they presumably do: 'why would they want to be nomadic if they didn't want to run away from the state?'[14]

From 2011 to 2014 most of the official *campi nomadi* in Rome were also subjected to surveillance by means of video cameras installed along the camp fences. The service was provided by a private company contracted by the local authorities to ensure security services during public events. During the same period, the local administration instituted in these camps what was euphemistically called a 'concierge service' (*servizio di portierato*): security guards paid by the municipality were placed around the clock in a separate 'container' at the entrance of the camp, with the task of monitoring the entrance and exit of camp inhabitants and documenting the movement of visitors. The security guards were also entrusted with maintaining order in the camp, and were expected to signal to the competent authorities any potential issues, establishing a link between some of the public services and *campi nomadi*: they called

the ambulance or the firemen when needed and, first and foremost, the police, with whom they were liaising extensively. The institution responsible with the organization and execution of the 'concierge service' was Risorse per Roma, a government business enterprise linked to the municipal administration of Rome, which established the headquarters of its security guards in an office of the SPE unit.

The guards signalled any 'irregularities' with regard to the camp. When families tried to swap containers following conflicts between families or shifting social relations in the camp, they were impeded from doing so, and the security guards would report on such movements. Also, any attempts to add improvised structures to the containers such as terraces or covered spaces to stock scrap metal or install summer kitchens would be promptly reported. The security guards would also report on acts of vandalism following which various equipment – the main entrance gate, fences, the 'containers', the structures in which took place social activities such as the kindergarten, etc. – needed repair, as well as thefts and the breakdown of amenities. In the event of violent conflict in the camp, some of the security guards resorted to various pacification tactics while waiting for the intervention of the police or Carabinieri, such as cutting off the electricity in the entire camp, which, according to one of the former guards, 'always worked wonders' in stopping altercations between families.[15] The cooperation between the security guards and the SPE was very close, and greatly facilitated by the fact that they shared office space. To the dismay of the SPE police, in 2014, the service was halted owing to lack of further funding after the *emergenza nomadi* decree was declared unconstitutional. Since then, the perception of camps as ungovernable spaces became, for the SPE police, but also for Romans at large, axiomatic, leading to ever more demands for repressive action. Noting that the police are ineffective in stopping the phenomenon of burning waste near camps (*roghi tossici*), several neighbourhood committees in the eastern periphery regularly demanded military intervention in camps (Ivasiuc 2019). In February 2019, such demands were granted, and military personnel were posted around the clock in the camp of Via Salviati, the oldest 'tolerated' camp in Rome.

By Way of Conclusion: Moral Panics and Crises

From folk devils and moral outcasts, precarious Roma inhabiting *campi nomadi* progressively became the subject of securitization discourses and practices tackled through repressive state policies, and of outright racial policing in Rome. While conserving some of the old anxieties such as the urban legend of the baby-stealing Gypsy woman (*zingara rapitrice*), the image of the nomad as folk devil mutated into a new figure of deviance, illegality, and criminality to be policed. The institutional treatment of Roma groups followed suit with the decline of social inclusion interventions and the establishment of the racial police unit of the SPE in Rome, which continues the policing of camp inhabitants

unabated, even though the declaration of the state of emergency that made possible its establishment was found unconstitutional. The recent militaristic approach taken by the Roman administration following popular demand is one more move towards the stigmatization of camp inhabitants as permanently ungovernable deviants, proving, in the eyes of the public, that the treatment they deserve is one of repression and exclusion.

I now want to turn to Cohen's work, exploring the places where the story of the 'nomads' in Italy overlaps with the various figures of the folk devil and the social dynamics of moral panics that he describes. In the introduction to the third edition of his book (2011 [1972], vii–viii, emphasis in the original), Cohen writes:

> The objects of normal moral panics are rather predictable; so too are the discursive formulae used to represent them. For example:
>
> They are *new* (lying dormant perhaps, but hard to recognize; deceptively ordinary and routine, but invisibly creeping up the moral horizon) – but also *old* (camouflaged versions of traditional and well-known evils). They are damaging *in themselves* – but also merely *warning signs* of the real, much deeper and more prevalent condition.

Indeed, the figure of the nomadic Gypsy is a predictable candidate for moral panics. The omission of this important figure in Cohen's work seems then surprising, even more so because the stigmatization of Gypsies in Britain as antisocial and deviant goes a long way back into the Victorian era and continues unabashed in contemporary British media (Clark and Taylor 2014).[16] The old discursive formula of the *zingara rapitrice* coexists with the more recent figure of the criminal Romanian Roma. As Romanian post-2007 migrant, of course, the figure of the criminal Roma merges with the figure of the migrant that cannot be expelled so easily because of EU regulations. This imaginary feeds into the populist discourse claiming that the EU is an oppressive structure imposing criminal migrants on Western Europe. No wonder, then, that the *emergenza nomadi* irrupted as a legislative initiative in the spring of 2008, after Romania joined the EU: it agglutinated all the fears of loss of sovereignty that the progressive expansion, and, with it, influence of the EU on the national landscape triggered in the West. As an old frame for moral panics, the *zingara rapitrice* trope prefigures fears about the family as traditional social unit of organization, but also about diffuse existential anxieties related to the survival of the nation as a distinct identity holder: if a markedly Other steals Italian children, this endangers the reproduction of the nation itself, and of the 'culture of civility' that it supposedly embodies in anti-immigrationist tropes.

But the view of a marked Other as external to a supposedly homogeneous 'Italian' society is both empirically and conceptually misleading. Camp inhabitants have been part and parcel of the Roman scene for over half a century; many of them have Italian citizenship, and those born in Italy can hardly be

sent anywhere 'back to where they came from', like the far right demands: they *are* Italians. This explains the apparent, hilarious and confounding paradox that the far-right nativist Matteo Salvini, whose well-known political slogan, '*Prima gli Italiani*', demands investment for 'Italians first', was greeted with enthusiasm in the *campo nomadi* of Via Salviati upon his visit in February 2016: its inhabitants are also Italians in need of investment. The camps are places of exclusion, certainly, but also places that unambiguously *belong* to the urban space of Rome, and that serve the purposes of reproducing the social order, of generating political capital, and of serving economic interests related to dynamics of gentrification (Clough Marinaro 2015). Focusing on camps as devices of exclusion and segregation *only* obfuscates their generative capacities in terms of the reproduction of social hierarchies, and strengthens the image of a putatively uniform space from which camps are surgically removed. Likewise, focusing on the dynamics through which a putatively uniform and personified 'society', as in Cohen's conceptualization, excludes those whom moral panics construct as dangerous and non-belonging misses the point that such processes reproduce a striated social order and its inherent subalternities.[17] The reification of society in Cohen's conceptualization as an entity that excludes inadvertently reinforces the idea that camp inhabitants, like other figures of folk devils, do not belong to the 'public'.

The case of *campi nomadi* in Italy and the episodes of moral panic around them also point to another shortcoming in Cohen's analysis. Focusing on narratives and mental representations loses from sight the material dimension of securitization: the video cameras, the fences around *campi nomadi*, or the continuous presence of police cars at the entrance of camps solidify the image of deviance of camp inhabitants in ways that are just as – if not more – efficacious than media discourses. This points to the productiveness of a theoretical framework that includes non-representational analyses and a focus on the agency of objects as mediators of meaning (Ivasiuc 2019). It also points to the necessity of looking at episodes of moral panic as mere iceberg tips in wider and longer processes through which certain groups are maintained in a subaltern position: the video cameras and the fenced camps did not appear overnight following a moral panic, and the legislative act of the *emergenza nomadi* was passed in a context where 'emergency' is a recurrent device of Italian politics rather than an exceptional feature (Thomassen and Vereni 2014).

Lastly, I want to focus on the ways in which moral panic narratives are 'merely warning signs of the real, much deeper and more prevalent condition' (Cohen 2011 [1972], viii). It is, for sure, the 'cultural politics of difference' (Tremlett 2014) that is played out when Italians construe the figure of the nomad and the authorities subject the camp residents to racial policing. But it is much more than that. To return to the wording of the *emergenza nomadi* decree: precariousness (*precarietà*) can be cause for 'social alarm' and may put at danger the 'security' of the local populations. Unwittingly, such a formulation exposes the current processes of precarization in late capitalism. Yet these remain largely

obfuscated by the fact that the problem described is effectively transposed into the realm of public order and security. Fear of crime in Latium, it has been shown (Batistelli et al. 2009), correlates with levels of education, gender, economic status and overall involvement in politics. But the most significant factor influencing the perception of insecurity is not the occurrence of real crime, nor any other socio-economic variable, but the recent experience of economic hardship and exposure to precarization. Everywhere in the five urban centres of Latium, while 26 per cent of those who are *not* undergoing economic difficulties at the time of the research find the city rather unsafe or not safe at all, this rises to 41 per cent in the case of those who state that they face economic hardship (ibid.). The deeper condition, of which the moral panic around the 'nomads' is perhaps merely a warning sign, is one of growing precarization, paired with a crisis of sovereignty and national identity construction in a Europe that is reconfiguring its boundaries precisely around such issues.

In the last paragraph of his book, Cohen (2011 [1972], 233, my emphasis) intimates:

> Ultimately, I am pessimistic about the chances of changing social policy in regard to such phenomena as the Mods and Rockers. More moral panics will be generated and other, as yet nameless, folk devils will be created. This is not because such developments have an inexorable inner logic, but because our society *as presently structured* will continue to generate problems for some of its members—like working-class adolescents—and then condemn whatever solution these groups find.

In the introduction to this chapter, I mentioned how many Roma groups forged for themselves ways of being in the world in contradiction and opposition to the nation state project, but also to the development of wage labour-based capitalism. In light of the racialized representations of the Roma as deviant Others – compounded by the stigmatized figure of the nomad that is imposed on them – and of the effect that policing them has on thinning their livelihoods (Ivasiuc 2020a, 2020b), it appears that we need to connect the dots between the institutionalization of the moral panics produced around the nomads and the emergence of what has been called racial capitalism (Bhattacharyya 2018; Robinson 1983): a process of (re)production of racially grounded social hierarchies accompanied by expropriations to the profit of the society's dominant groups. That is, for me, the deeper condition that the securitization and racial policing of the modern folk devils of camp inhabitants both reflect and signal.

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Notes

[1] Following Angéla Kóczé (2018), I consciously use the terms 'racial', 'racialized' and 'racialization' instead of 'ethnic', 'ethnicized' or 'ethnicization' to point out to the constructions of the Roma as deviant others using racial stereotypes of inferiority and deviance, and in so doing to emphasize the racism – often biological – in which such constructions are grounded.

[2] I have conducted six months of ethnographic fieldwork with a far-right neighbourhood patrol and a police unit. The data collected through participant observation was complemented by digital ethnography, archive research, police documents analysis, and interviews with Roma, mainly women.

[3] I have sometimes encountered this expression in police reports, and in popular use.

[4] I do not wish to generalize: in Britain, for instance, or in France, the Gypsy and Travellers, as well as the *Gens du Voyage*, still maintain nomadism as distinctive cultural and social trait. See also note 16.

[5] In Rome, for instance, many Roma received social housing under the administration of Petroselli in 1981, following the dismantlement of the slums of Mandrione and Villaggio Prenestino, in which a share of the population were Roma (Salsano 2012).

[6] Interview, 20 April 2015. The name is fictional.

[7] Interview, 24 May 2015.

[8] A calque of Piasere's '*campodini*', as opposed to '*citadini*' (citizens) as inhabitants of the city.

[9] The state of emergency was later extended to the regions of Piedmont (around Turin) and Veneto (Venice). The decree was renewed every year until 2013, when, following litigation by the European Roma Rights Centre, it was abolished for its unconstitutional character.

[10] Unless otherwise specified, all the translations from Italian are mine.

[11] Interviews held on 25 August and 8 October 2015.

[12] Informal camps emerge when groups of economically precarious people, unemployed in their countries and without other accommodation opportunities or the means to access them, settle under bridges and in other urban interstices and aim at acquiring temporary livelihoods, only to return to their countries for the winter. Some of them may be Roma, but others clearly

not; for instance, the Casilino 900 camp also hosted a Moroccan community. This serves to strengthen the point of the lack of overlap between the inhabitants of the camp and Roma background.

[13] Interview held on 17 August 2015. In the meantime, under the current administration of Virginia Raggi of the populist Five Star Movement, the commander was promoted to chief of the municipal police in Rome.

[14] Interview, 20 April 2016.

[15] Interview, 27 October 2015.

[16] It has to be noted, however, that the status of nomadism in the UK is a completely different, in fact almost opposite, story than the invented nomadism that I explored in the Italian case. In Britain, Gypsy and Traveller communities have revendicated the right to nomadism and often base their identity construction on this trait (among many others, see Acton 1997; Kabachnik and Ryder 2013; Okely 1983).

[17] I owe this theoretical point to one of the anonymous reviewers of my chapter.

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PART III

From the Devils' Point of View

CHAPTER 9

‘Inadaptable Gypsies’ and ‘Dangerous Antiziganists’

Struggling and Mirroring Folk Devils

Ondřej Slačálek
Charles University

Introduction

The riots in London in August 2011 had broad coverage in the Czech media. At the same time, in the Šluknov region, an area near the northern Bohemian border with one of the highest unemployment rates in the Czech Republic, events started that were described by some actors as a ‘Czech London’. On 7 August in Nový Bor in the Pivní Pomoc (Beer Aid) Bar, an argument broke out between a waitress and some young Roma who had been driven out by bar guests. There followed an attack by a group of Roma with sticks and a machete. Several further violent incidents followed. The cases led to wide media coverage and protest events. While some media tried to discuss it in a colour-blind way, after a declaration by some local Roma activists who tried to trivialize the machete incident, and after a long-time pro-Roma activist became the attackers’ lawyers, the framing of the issue as a ‘Roma issue’ definitely prevailed. The protests followed, organized by locals themselves. Gatherings of mothers

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or a meeting of local Social Democrats gradually developed into anti-Roma marches in which participants attempted to reach Roma accommodation. The violent and hateful character of these events caused police intervention. The neo-Nazis joined in, and they soon began to organize their own events.

Roma are among the traditional folk devils. Although as such they have some stable attributes, they are evoked in changing contexts, and as a result the content and significance of these attributes also change. On the basis of an analysis of moral panic at violence connected with Roma in a poor region of north Bohemia, this text shows not only what characteristics were ascribed to Roma but how the moral panic was extended to some of their opponents and how these, in some cases, were ascribed characteristics analogous to those that they themselves ascribed to the 'inadaptable' Roma. This chapter attempts to describe this situation in detail, explain its discursive logic and also discuss what these mean for the concept of moral panic.

Europe, according to Michael Stewart, has since the mid-2000s been swept by a new wave of anti-Roma mobilizations in both the west and east of the continent, affecting Hungary and Romania, Italy and France (Stewart 2012). The new anti-Roma populism combined with the economic crisis in 2008, and Roma became for Eastern, and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe one of the key folk devils. This follows on from older stereotypes concerning their depiction, conflictual relationships and problems of coexistence.

In the Czech context, the new anti-Roma mobilizations came only a few months after the crisis broke out. The crisis coincided with neo-liberal austerity governments that accented a discourse of hard work on the one hand and misuse of social benefits on the other hand. Greece 'abusing' European solidarity and unemployed people abusing social benefits became two important images of who was to blame for the problems of the crisis. However, significant parts of the left also participated in the stigmatization of the 'voluntarily' unemployed.

Their emblematic start of the anti-Roma mobilizations was the street battles on the Janov estate in Litvínov, where on 17 November 2008 neo-Nazis from the Workers' Party and the National Resistance, with the active support of a number of local inhabitants, set off street clashes with police in an attempt to get to local Roma. Similar anti-Roma mobilizations were then repeated several times in 2008–2013. The largest of these took place in north Bohemia in August and September 2011 in reaction to several widely publicized stories of violent crimes.

The region was characterized by a high rate of unemployment, one of the highest in the Czech Republic: 14.97 per cent in August 2011, with the average for the country at that time being 8.2 per cent (Böhmová 2013).[1] The region is perceived by its inhabitants as not only poor (and unattractive to the necessary middle-class professionals such as medical doctors) but also as suffering social problems such as crime and drugs (ibid.; author's interviews with local inhabitants). The strong presence of Roma in the region is considered by local people

to be partly the result of migration and transfers of Roma from richer regions by developers (ibid.), but this claim is widely disputed (Kafková, Sokačová, and Szénássy 2012; see also below).

The subject of Roma violence and anti-Roma protests gained considerable media coverage and gradually became one of the main events covered by the media during that time. A number of public authorities expressed their concern – politicians, leading newspaper commentators and experts. A key role was played by fears of further violence and public protest, and of racism. This gave further significance to voices from the area. These can be divided into voices of unspecified locals that legitimize the criticism of Roma, and concretized opponents who also undergo stigmatism.

It is this symmetry of analysis and the focus not only on Roma but also on antiziganists that is the main intent of the text. Its aim is to show that the narrative of a stigmatized minority is insufficient. As a number of critics of the concept of moral panic have shown, most recently since the 1990s (McRobbie and Thornton 1995), in a diversified society we see a whole range of mutual demonizations. Even at a time when a major social mobilization is taking place, conflict and *mutual* demonizations are present. It is the dynamics of this mutual demonization that forms the basis of my analytical perspective in this chapter. I call for the development of a relational perspective in the study of folk devils, and for the symmetric development of their images to be traced.

Symmetry does not mean equality, however. The existence of stigmatizing images or even their similarity does not mean they have the same position of power in society. A relational approach to the study of folk devils has the potential to reveal several power disbalances and inequalities: if the image of a racially delimited minority and that of a politically delimited group within the majority are set against each other, it means at the same time even greater stigmatization of the minority as compared to the majority.

The following chapter analyses the image of Roma and the related image of antiziganists. In the analysis of the image of Roma, it thus builds on two analyses of news reports from the period in question (Kluknavská and Zagibová 2013; Křížková 2013) and my own dissertation thesis, which analyses the discourse of both news reports and commentators, focusing on the ways in which opinions and the preferred reading of news is created, and above all on the heavily symbolic aspects and their interpretation.[2] The discourse that I shall attempt to reconstruct is not the only one that was present in the debate over these events. Neither do I have the quantitative instruments to show whether it was dominant. The discourse often framed itself as suppressed, as the expression of a forbidden truth, and above all in its fringe parts it could certainly be based on the justified idea that it was facing pressure from the anti-racist discourse, which on another level dominates. In reality, however, this stigmatizing discourse came not just from marginal bloggers or statements by regional actors but also from the major media and from statements by government and

opposition politicians. It was as if certain figures and metaphors travelled between news reporting, marginal blogs and journalists' questions and commentaries right up to statements by politicians at the centre. Together they created a definition of a situation to which even those who did not agree had to react and to a certain degree conform to.

This chapter will be based on a presentation of the analysis of a composite image of 'inadaptable' Roma and its key aspects: migration, violence and social benefits. Finally, the analysis focuses on an overall description of the situation and at the image of local Czechs and above all antiziganists. In conclusion, it will compare this analysis to other cases of symmetric 'folk devils' and formulate more general conclusions for further research.[3]

Composite Image of 'Inadaptable Roma'

Convincing descriptions of the Romany 'folk devil' can be identified in the characteristics that form his 'composite image' (which according to Cohen is a key element of the 'folk devil'; Cohen 2011 [1972], 30). The elements of this 'composite image' have three roles: a) they *characterize* the given folk devil through a reduction to a few stable and highly stereotyped elements; b) they *explain* his supposed pathological nature and subordinate position in the moral economy of society by means of schematic, simplifying explanations that are meant to be applicable to the whole of the given group; c) they *symbolize*: they compress both preceding elements into transferable symbolic expressions with a high degree of expressiveness and intensity.

The basic schema of this moral panic can be found in the joint letter from mayor of the town of Rumburk and Senator Jaroslav Sykáček (independent for the Social Democrats) and parliamentary deputy Jaroslav Foldyna (Social Democrats) addressed to the interior minister. The authors warn that 'inadaptable citizens have started to attack our fellow citizens' (Sykáček and Foldyna 2011). They go on to give examples of these attacks, clearly identifying the perpetrators as *Roma*. The word 'inadaptable' and 'Roma' are used to a considerable degree synonymously, for all that the authors construct a casual discursive alibi by occasionally dividing 'Roma' and 'inadaptable' and talking about 'the issues of the Roma community and the inadaptable community', while elsewhere stating that 'those Roma who want to live together with the majority in peace and quiet' are paying for the situation. A degree of explanation as to who is meant by 'our fellow citizens' can be read in the statement that 'decent and hard-working citizens of the Šluknov region' now have to be afraid of violence (ibid.). While 'our fellow citizens' are defined by work, decency and belonging to the region, the word 'citizen' in the term 'inadaptable citizens' sounds like a reproach: these people, too, are citizens, although they do not work, do not play by the rules and have no ties to the region in which they live.

The composite picture of inadaptable Roma has three basic features: migration, crime and the violence associated with it, and social welfare benefits.

Migration

Migration is evoked using the phrases *wave of incomers*, *flood* and *tide of inadaptables*, plus other metaphors evoking a natural catastrophe (see e.g. Angermannová 2011; Jakubec 2011; Zprávy 12, 17 August 2011). It functions as an accessible explanation for otherwise inexplicable behaviour, and as a discursive alibi for all those involved, while at the same time it allows them to point to previously good relationships and to defend themselves against accusations of racism. The image of migration allows the debate to be transferred to social problems, usury and the accommodation racket, and to talk about problems without portraying the Roma themselves as a problem but instead playing off newcomers versus long-time residents. This enables Roma themselves to participate in the stigmatization – it gives them the ability to define themselves in opposition to other Roma.

The discourse on Roma migration is thus highly ambivalent – it allows racism to be articulated (it enables Roma to be labelled a problem and even to be described using the language of natural catastrophe) and yet also to be criticized (Roma are not the problem; we live in harmony with 'our' Roma who have lived in the area for a long time; the problem is with the newcomers). It allows social and spatial inequalities to be brought into play – and at the same time it allows them to be worked with rhetorically as a functional replacement for racist discourse. It makes it possible to talk about 'problems with Roma' while at the same time having a replacement bogeyman to hand in the form of 'wily developers' (Schulz 2011).

Migration changes the nature of the space on which it has an impact. This is symbolically seen in the alteration (presumably in protest) of the sign at the entrance to the town of Rumburk to Romburk, and in material terms manifests itself in a sharp fall in property prices (Martinek 2011a; Štětka 2011). The place becomes another place: it functions according to different norms. In the words of Czech radio commentator Lída Rakušanová, 'local people rightly have the feeling that the newcomers are squeezing them out. This is because the rules are changing along with the newcomers. And the majority society is evidently not capable of defending its own rules' (Rakušanová 2011).

Although migration functions as an important explanation, there are also those who cast doubt on it. From the start, the Agency for Social Integration, in particular, has pointed out that the image of major waves of migration into the Šluknov region does not correspond to reality: rather than thousands of people pouring into Šluknov from all over northern Bohemia, and maybe also from other regions, it was a case of a few hundred people migrating mostly from one part of the Šluknov region to another (Kafková, Sokačová, and Szénássy 2012).

The mayor of Šluknov, Eva Džumanová, says, for example, that in her town '80 percent of criminal activity, above all property crime, is carried out by citizens of Šluknov, not the newcomers' (Policejní posily… 2011).

However, the inadequacy of the migration explanation rarely causes preference to be given to other social explanations of crime, such as poverty and debt (and, even more, drugs). Sometimes, such an explanation is even considered amoral. The journalist Petr Holec, who found himself having to admit non-government organizations were partly right on the issue of migration, rejects arguments relating to the social problems of poor Roma. He symmetrizes the situation of the poor with that of others (everyone is worse off in a crisis) and thus casts it in a moral light that is all the fiercer: they have chosen crime. 'NGOs ascribe the wretched and tense situation to hard economic times and social cuts; they are right in part, we are all worse off. But we don't all steal as a result' (Holec 2011).

Crime

Crime is evoked above all through images of violence. This violence is frequently connected with deceitfulness, predominance and brutality (Křížková 2013, 33). In two key cases, the violence concerned was characterized by brutality – in the first case by the use of an unusual weapon (a machete) and in the second also using weapons (telescopic truncheons) and massive predominance. The descriptions of the crimes take away from the perpetrators their human characteristics – in the words of one regional journalist, they become more of a 'pack of hounds in human bodies' (Sedlák 2011).

In addition to the deceitful use of force in the event of predominance, the Roma are intensively portrayed as making deceitful use of weakness – using children, who are not criminally responsible, to steal. According to some authors, the children are trained by their parents, while other descriptions evoke autonomous behaviour by wild children – *MF Dnes* thus describes the 'gang of a ten-year old Roma' who 'among his peers had earned the nickname of "terrorist"' (Janoušek 2011a). Society's powerlessness is recognized and played up to by the juvenile criminals: 'During interrogation the children openly talked about the other things they had got up to. It almost looked as if they were boasting about them' (ibid.). A few weeks later it is stated with satisfaction that the 'terrorist' had ended up in a diagnostic institute (Stínil and Vančura 2011).

Some of the more sober voices in the debate, such as that of the director of the Agency for Social Integration, Martin Šimáček, have pointed out that, in spite of the sharp growth in crime, there has not been a growth in violent crime; indeed, the number of violent crimes has been falling in the region. The two brutal attacks, continually pointed to, were a visible and symbolic proxy above all for theft and other types of minor crime. However, the very word 'minor' offended some local people, who saw it as detracting from their problems: 'It

may be referred to in police jargon as "minor crime", but if any of our ruling politicians were to suffer repeated minor thefts, they too would be likely to find themselves experiencing a marked increase in hatred towards the thieves' (Schulz 2011).

Social Welfare Benefits

Welfare benefits are a defining feature of the 'inadaptable Roma'. Although they have no direct connection with crime and problems of coexistence, they very rapidly find themselves at the centre of the debate as a key part of the definition of 'problematic' or 'inadaptable' Roma. In the words of Czech radio commentator and mayor of the village of Doubice Martin Schulz,

> the social welfare system … allowed a new type of fellow-citizen to be created. We call them 'socially inadaptable', which is inaccurate. As far as I can judge, some of them have adapted all too well to a 'social system' that allows them to draw tens of thousands of crowns in benefits for the simple act of spawning children, without even having to a) find some sort of work and b) take care of their offspring like the rest of the population does. And this has been going on for several generations (Schulz 2011).

'New type of fellow-citizen' has connotations of a major, even biological division: although we are 'fellow citizens' with Roma (the use of the term is, both here and elsewhere, ironic in its semantics), at the same time they are a foreign species that has been created through adaptation to specific circumstances – it has sprung up, almost like some sort of vegetation, in reaction to favourable living conditions (the way the social system is structured). The problem has a generational dimension: in the words of the mayor of Nový Bor Jaroslav Dvořák, 'a significant proportion of young Roma see work as a punishment, because they are used to living off benefits and petty theft' (Dvořák 2011). If for generations society was brought up to believe that 'work ennobles', then benefits deform – and doubly so in the case of people who have grown up in an environment deformed by benefits since childhood.

Benefits also bring a relationship to the majority, who are defined as working and productive, as those who pay the taxes from which the benefits are paid, and thus ensure Roma their livelihood. Even authors who portray themselves as opposed to racism consider this argument a highly cogent one: '"Why should we support them?" – this is the muffled question, a question that seems in some way to be justified,' says Petr Příhoda in an article that closes with a call to positive discrimination and for the Czech majority to examine its attitudes (Příhoda 2011). In this context, it is then the participants in anti-Roma demonstrations who ask the question, not in a muffled way but out loud, for example

in the words of a demonstrator on the private TV Nova news: 'We have to work to support those blacks. If we stopped going to work, the blacks would drop dead in two weeks' (Televizní noviny, 27 August 2011)

The central and often-quoted slogan of the anti-Roma demonstrations is not related to the violence and crime that is given as the main reason why the demonstrations were called. Instead, what is shouted is 'Send the gypsies to work!' (Rozhlasové noviny, 26 August 2011; Reportéři Deníku 2011 and many others). In this context, work is seen as punishment for their previous undeserved, work-free existence.[4] In the language of some politicians, too, such as Radek John (Věci veřejné), work is also a punishment, or at the very least compensation for previous unfair advantages: 'Those who are on benefits will just have to work, do community service, and not be the winners in the whole system' (Události, 11 September 2011). The attempt to make benefits conditional on work aims to make sure that the unemployed 'don't win' over the rest of society, which is defined by the fact that it has to work. In this concept, forced labour is needed to lower the apparent success of those on benefits and to defeat them. When Prime Minister Nečas announces, in a newspaper title in *Hospodářské noviny*, that 'we'll send two thousand benefit claimants to work', in this context it has the significance of a report announcing victory in a match (Honzejk and Šídlo 2011). Nečas can use the confident plural – he is talking not only in the name of the government but for all of society, defined as a society of working people. It is they who will be the victors, not 'benefit claimants'.

At other times, but also frequently, the 'claimants' are not described as victors but as losers and victims. Work seen in this way is no longer a punishment but a civilizing value, something of which the unemployed are deprived. Only once work has an effect on them can they be 'someone' in society. Nečas himself, in reaction to accusations that forced community service is undignified, says that he cannot imagine anything more dignified than to earn one's living through work. He thus points to the value of work for the person carrying it out (Události, 17 September 2011). The loss of work habits and related self-discipline are described as harming the Roma themselves, as a trap into which society has cast them. This is considered the real crime committed against the Roma, unlike the discrimination and racism that are at other times stressed: '[The current system of social care] makes only one demand of the benefit claimant: to claim benefits. This is something that would do serious damage to even the hardest-working of citizens' (Steigerwald 2011). Right-wing commentators have a comparison available for the ineffectiveness and indignity of benefits – development aid:

> Just as poor countries are not helped at all by the billions of dollars that the Western world sends to them, so problematic Roma are not helped by fine words and arms full of support. Because it is lords who

> condescendingly give charity to the poor. People will never feel dignified if all they ever do is receive, but have no responsibilities and find themselves outside any sort of society. (Hamšík 2011)

The comparison with the poor countries of the global South makes the Roma exotic. They now stand not only outside the nation but outside the whole of Western civilisation. At the same time, this comparison articulates the problem of dignity and power. Even unpleasant 'responsibilities' towards society become, in this concept, acts of benevolence, because they represent a tie to that society, something binding. Those who get out of these ties are definitely not 'victors over the whole system' but more like victims of its apparent generosity.

Combinations of Attributes

Of key importance are the points at which the characteristics are joined. Sometimes, as in the letter from Foldyna and Sykáček, all three are joined: migration, crime and benefits. The authors write of the Roma who are moving to the region:

> Few of these people are looking for work. In fact, the reason why they move here is often precisely because there is no work here and neither will there be in the foreseeable future. This means they have no choice but to live off benefits and support themselves by theft and burglary, in which there has been an extreme rise this year. (Otevřený dopis… 2011)

Migration is 'portrayed in this case as a flight from work and the upright existence connected with work. It becomes in itself a moral choice, one that leads to parasitical and criminal means of earning a living. Benefits are in this picture a motif of migration, and crime is their complement.

In most cases, the themes of benefits and crime are, of course, joined. Crime committed by Roma is made even more reprehensible by the dependency of non-working Roma on benefits, the source of which is, in this picture, heavily racialized (as if the benefits were not paid for by the taxes of working Roma as well but were provided exclusively by the white majority to the Roma minority). Leading economic journalist Pavel Páral shows it clearly with a metaphor in the subtitle of his commentary on the events: people in the Šluknov region are, in his words, angry that 'the person they are feeding bites their hand quite shamelessly' (Páral 2011). The metaphor not only underlines the double amorality and thus irrationality of Roma violence (Roma do not 'bite' just any person but specifically the person who is offering the means to survive) but is also a vivid image borrowed from the relationship between people and animals (most often dogs). It is a metaphor that is not only heavily hierarchizing but can also be read as dehumanizing.

At the same time, the moral tone prevents other connections from being made between benefits and crime – that they can be defended as prevention against crime caused by social deprivation. When the former Social Democrat prime minister Jiří Paroubek tried it and pointed out that welfare benefits are a public good, thanks to which society does not need to fear crime caused by immediate want, a number of politicians deemed what he said to be unacceptable. He was accused of defending them as a form of 'extortion' (Wirnitzer 2011).

Local Czechs on the Battle Line: The Other Actors

The antithesis of the demonized 'inadaptable' Roma are the individual actors of anti-Gypsy protest. These are described in a similarly schematic way, and at the same time they fall into several categories. On the one hand are the local people, for whose problems sympathy is expressed and who are most frequently described in terms of these problems. Local mayors, as their representatives, gain greater actorship. Their voice becomes markedly authoritative even when it is openly anti-Gypsy, partly because it is possible to refer to the anonymous local public. The actual threats connected with the protest are largely separated from their actors, and are described in impersonal fashion. This changes at the point when it is possible to identify the actors as 'radicals' or 'extremists'; these are depicted as a clear threat (Kňapová 2015).[5] Protest leader Lukáš Kohout found himself in a position like this after having been revealed as a political adventurer and fraudster. His image gained a number of characteristics that brought him closer to the Roma 'folk devils'.

Some characteristics of the threat are impersonal. A key word used to describe the situation in Šluknov becomes 'tension'. In my sample, a total of 605 uses of the word can be found, of which 35 are in headlines. Towns are described as 'ticking ghettos', the conflict 'smoulders' and the authors ask whether the excluded locations will 'explode'.[6] 'Things may get much worse in the north than they are today. What sparks may cause a major fire is hard to predict,' a leading journalist in a national daily (Karel Steigerwald in *MF Dnes*) warns in an article entitled 'Is the North on Fire Yet?' (Steigerwald 2011). Local actors, such as the mayor of Rumburk and senator Jaroslav Sykáček, give this terrifying unpredictability more concrete contours: 'The region is threatened by a security and social collapse. People really are getting fed up with this. And I am afraid they might pull out sticks and there will be lynching' (Zprávy 12, 17 August 2011).

Images in which 'tension' grows into uncontrollable escalation of violence create a classic spiral of amplification (Cohen 2011 [1972]) in which actors react not only, not even for the most part, to the development of the situation thus far but to the expected development that threatens, its urgency transmitted by expressive reports and structuring metaphors. In the newspaper headlines, Šluknov

is 'threatened by a wave of violence' (Chlebná 2011). The final point of this escalation is war, which for some commentators becomes a source of key metaphors, the aim of which is also to draw attention to the seriousness of the situation and the inadequacy of current approaches: 'There is no time or place for stories about patient and gradual integration of "social inadaptables". A number of places … are gradually becoming battle lines' (Schulz 2011).

Empathy towards local people sometimes even manages to cross the threshold of condoning violence, especially in cases where police make a violent intervention in order to prevent violence. When the police defend Roma, the media note the indignation of local people: 'I have two small children, and those people that you're protecting steal their pocket money on the way back from school.' 'You're beating Czechs? Well, you are heroes, aren't you?' 'It's worse than under the communists! We had all sorts of experiences with them here, but they wouldn't have allowed this,' the daily *Lidové noviny* quoted demonstrators as saying (Martinek 2011b, 2011c). Some media also saw the situation as absurd. Journalist Barbora Tachecí, for example, said on TV Prima's programme *Fakta*:

> We have a paradoxical situation here whereby the ones who were at the start of it all, the inadaptables, are laughing to themselves and enjoying the situation, and not getting angry, because they're protected, while the other ones are almost beside themselves with anger and basically feel like doing terrible things. (Fakta, 16 September 2011)

The definition of a situation in which the guilty party are the 'inadaptables' even allows a journalist on national television to describe it as a 'paradoxical situation' that the police are protecting Roma who are under threat of physical attack from the crowd.

In addition to the angry local people, the second group of people to express opposition to the Roma are the 'extremists' and Lukáš Kohout as the eccentric leader of the local protests. The situation understandably ratchets up a notch when the feared 'extremists' (local radicals and later also the neo-Nazis from the Workers' Party for Social Justice) really do appear on the scene and the demonstrations become violent. 'Half the people are so angry that they would most like to lynch the local Roma. And the other half is afraid not only of aggressive Roma, but of the extremists as well. They are afraid there will be a war here,' *MF Dnes* quotes Michal Němeček, a demonstrator and one of those attacked in Rumburk, as saying, putting his final sentence into the headline (vik, art 2011). The threat of 'race war in the north' finds its way into the headlines.

A clear distinction of legitimate and illegitimate targets of repression is also provided by the governor of the Ústí region Jana Vaňhová (Social Democrats, ČSSD), who recognizes the need to suppress the 'extremi sts' with police force but refuses to suppress the 'legitimate demands of the decent and productive majority' and to 'accept state violence against citizens who are damaged

long-term by the behaviour of the non-productive and inadaptable minority' (ape, vor 2011). The image of the 'extremists' is stable – they are disgusting in part because they can be joined to the legacy of Nazism, and in part because they do not hesitate to use violence. Another reason why they are rejected is shown in Kňapová's analysis of the protests: protest is perceived in Czech political culture as something abnormal that can be understood only under the pressure of circumstances. If a political opinion is connected with considerable participation in street demonstrations, that is enough to make it considered strange or 'extreme' (Kňapová 2015).

At the same time, it seems that the image of the 'locals' is even more homogenized than that of the Roma. The demand for conflict is usually saturated by the tension between the locals and the Roma or the conflict between the demonstrators and the police. In the category of locals, not much emphasis is placed on tension and differences, and, where there is, it is on the friction between the mayors on one side and, on the other, the locals, who accuse them of insufficiently assertive positions. It is as if the towns were united in opposition to the inadaptable Roma on the one hand and Prague's ignoring of the situation on the other. If an internal opposition exists within them, it is not very visible in the coverage of the situation. The name Pavel Danys, for example, an opposition member in Nový Bor, a critic of the anti-Roma atmosphere and repressions and the author of alternative solutions based on understanding between Czechs and Roma, appears minimally in my sample, only four times (and in the same media). In the first case, his name appears after he is referred to by Roma leader Stefan Gorol, who himself refuses an interview (Pluhař 2011; see also Danys 2011; hs 2011; Šebelka 2011).

On the other hand, a huge amount of attention and the status of an emblematic figure is gained by the organizer of the Varnsdorf protests, the provocateur and convicted fraudster Lukáš Kohout. Some ten years earlier, Kohout had become famous for his travels to exotic destinations at parliamentary expense in his role as fake assistant to parliamentary deputy Jan Kavan. In media coverage of the protests, he became an attractive figure, despite being repeatedly described as a convicted fraudster surrounded by controversy (see for example art, ves 2011; Konrád 2011; oce 2011; Veselý 2011b). Journalists warn against him, and at the same time they emphasize his similarity to the 'inadaptables' against whom he is protesting:

> As a clown and also an extremist he enjoys the attention of the cameras, feeding off the attention between the Roma and the majority in the Šluknov region. I think that in terms of stealing from the state he did a lot better than those who 'merely' abuse welfare benefits and do not work, those against whom he intends to lead the stressed-out inhabitants. Has Kohout paid off all the debts he racked up? How does a leader of the mob earn a living, anyway? (Veselý 2011a)

A full stop on this interesting narrative comes not only with the finding that Kohout is still being prosecuted for fraud but that his wife has run off with a Roma man. 'It's Lukáš who's inadaptable,' a tabloid quotes his ex-wife as saying (Anonymous 2011), and the serious media quote the story. Pointing to the similarities between the fraudster and the 'inadaptables' whom he denounces allows easy discreditation of the protests and racist attitudes.

His role in the protests is also an indicator of the extreme nature of the situation. A journalist from a leading daily who filmed an interview with Kohout (Tachecí 2011) writes:

> As far as I can tell, the only people who would choose him as a leader are totally desperate people whom no one has helped for years. I listened to Lukáš Kohout … and more and more I cursed all those who let things go so far in Varnsdorf that this guy could become a straw for drowning people to clutch at.

A similar indicator of despair are the otherwise widely condemned neo-Nazis and the 'extremists'.

Both violence and the abuse of public funds are features that connect Roma and antiziganist folk devils. The motif of migration takes something of a back seat, although to a certain extent it divides the 'legitimate' antiziganists in the media discourse from the illegitimate ones: the first are 'local' people, whose antiziganism allegedly reflects their local experience. Neo-Nazis and other 'radicals' then come to the place, importing their violence and ideology into it. Similarly, Kohout came to the region only relatively recently. Nevertheless, the image of migration does not in this case have such significance and force. This corresponds to the analyses of van Baar (see for example van Baar, Ivasiuc, and Kreide 2019), according to whom the migration of Roma is also construed as problematic in contexts where migration is otherwise viewed neutrally or even positively, as for example in the EU with its 'free movement of people'.

At the same time, it is true that, while the inadaptable Roma is widespread as a group characteristic, the antiziganist folk devil is differentiated from the majority and either individualized (in the case of Kohout) or politicized (in the case of neo-Nazis and other 'extremists'). The 'inadaptable Roma' is a characteristic that is transferred by culture or race. The threshold for being an inadaptable antiziganist is much higher: an individual from the majority becomes one. In order to become one, it is not enough to have aggressively antiziganist opinions (these are in the case of 'local people' automatically legitimized); one has to engage in further political activity (the organization of rallies, the threat of violence). A Roma in effect becomes 'extreme' and a 'folk devil' by birth, while a white member of the dominant ethnic group becomes 'extreme' and a 'folk devil' by choice.

Conclusion

After being called on to do so a number of times, the neo-liberal prime minister Petr Nečas visited the Šluknov region on 20 September 2011. During the visit, announced on the morning of the same day, Nečas met mayors and visited, for a few minutes, a hostel in Masaryk Street in Varnsdorf. Some children sang a song for him, but after a few minutes he left by a back entrance because Lukáš Kohout and other demonstrators were waiting for him by the front entrance with buckets of manure. 'I say very openly that I would not like to live like that, and that is why I have worked all my life, so that I don't have to live like that,' Nečas said, summing up his impressions of what he had seen at the hostel (Události, 19 September 2011). It was a declaration of personal loyalty to the civilization of work and the expression of distance from the problem based on declared merit.

During September and October the demonstrations petered out, as did the moral panic to a certain extent, having earlier been partly transferred elsewhere. The moral panic had concrete results: the machete attack was found to be attempted murder, and its adult perpetrators were given prison sentences of 17.5 years for the alleged leader of the attack and 15 years for the other two participants. Some towns declared that they would be introducing public policy in the spirit of 'zero tolerance' (which often meant various degrees of bullying of Roma by municipal authorities – for broader context, see Walach 2014 and Pospíšil 2019) and a law was passed allowing local councils to institute residence bans for repeated offences.

In the image of the Roma as folk devil we have seen not only stigmatizing characteristics but also complicated relationships in terms of tension and expectations between the 'decent and productive majority' and the 'inadaptable minority'. Given that decency means complying with norms defined by the behaviour of the majority, the minority is at the very least an object of suspicion from the start. Given the interchangeable nature of the words Roma and inadaptable, it is not only expected in advance that each 'inadaptable' will be a Roma (and sometimes this expectation is overturned) but that it is also up to each Roma person to make it clear that he himself is not an 'inadaptable'. The image of the folk devil thus means an intensive and racialized burden.

The antiziganists themselves gradually appeared as a further folk devil in my sample. At the same time, there was a difference here: local people were perceived as articulating justified dissatisfaction and frustration, even when they displayed racism or talked about violence. The real folk devils were the extremists and neo-Nazis, on the one hand, and on the other the fraudulent leader of the crowd Lukáš Kohout. He could be ascribed some of the characteristics connected with the 'inadaptables', as well as an objectionable and laughable motivation. The antiziganist protests thus became the area for a battle between two folk devils.

This stigmatization of antiziganists may look like a counterbalance to the stigmatization of Roma, and often it is motivated by an anti-racist approach, or by the desire to calm down the conflict. Nevertheless, the analysis shows that this kind of stigmatization has often reinforced the stigmatization of Roma (by underlining the unacceptability of the characteristics attributed to them, as well as because the Roma were stigmatized as an ethnic or social group, while the antiziganists were stigmatized as individuals or a political group). The moral asymmetry between the minority and the majority may have been stressed as a result of being condemned by part of the majority, but it was not challenged.

Doubt has frequently been cast on the concept of moral panic and folk devils, partly because it narrates the melodramatic story of the stigmatization of one group by the majority. The stigmatized group, however, often has supporters who 'can and do fight back' and sometimes even in various ways capitalize on their position as 'folk devils' (McRobbie and Thornton 1995). In reaction to the contemporary stigmatization of 'inadaptable Roma' and 'violent' or 'fraudulent antiziganists' we can propose another, *relational folk devil schema*: stigmatization becomes to a certain extent symmetric, with both sides of the putative dispute being stigmatized as 'folk devils'. This then merely strengthens the position of the 'healthy centre', which in this case is a middle-class subject sharing the values of a civilisation of work, whether that be the prime minister in Prague or a local man disgusted by the behaviour of his Roma neighbours in the Šluknov region.

I have had analogical results from research into moral panics around rave in the Czech Republic and the refugee crisis. In the case of rave, we saw a cyclical moral panic at the annual Czechtek technoparty and calls for police intervention. When it came in 2005, we saw a sharp reaction on the part of the liberal media. Two folk devils clashed in the public space: ravers, connected with wildness, noise, drugs and the violation of norms, and prime minister Paroubek, connected with repression and conservative values (Slačálek 2018; Kolářová 2008). Similarly, during the refugee crisis we saw on the one hand fear and stigmatizing images of a 'wave' of refugees connected with violence (including sexual violence), foreign culture and militant religion, and on the other hand images of 'fascists', opponents of migration connected with nationalist bigotry, racism and violence or the threat of violence, and brutalization (Slačálek and Svobodová 2017, 2018).

In all three cases we see a slide. Moral panic in response to a clear 'folk devil', where it is possible to talk about a certain level of social consensus, at least on the level of the mainstream, has become a rivalry between moral panics, with two different and opposite folk devils.

These folk devils in a number of cases take on characteristics from each other. It even seems that, in the creation of these folk devils, it is a key triumph to attribute to them the characteristics of which they accuse the rival folk devil:

to describe an antiziganist as 'inadaptable', to describe an opponent of Islam as violent, bigoted and fanatical. The new moral panics are thus a rivalry of moral panics and folk devils, which includes in itself a mirroring and mutual taking on of characteristics from each other. The criterion of consensus, which was important for classic theories of moral panics, becomes lost.

The absence of consensus and the frequent crumbling of the mainstream make it tempting to imagine that these new moral panics are essentially symmetrical. However, as we have seen in our analysis of the moral panic relating to 'inadaptable Roma', mutuality definitely does not have to mean symmetry. If what we have is an ethnic (or cultural religious) folk devil, against which there stands a folk devil defined as a political position or even as its extreme, then the false symmetrization of these others represents merely a further disadvantaging of an ascriptively identified minority.

This relational schema thus is evidence not so much of the plurality of Western liberal societies, as it may still have seemed to Angela McRobbie and Sarah Thorton (1995), but rather of their polarized nature and of the fact that their xenophobic or conservative pole has considerable force, even if it is necessary to consider it only one of the poles. In these various conflicts, it may be true to say that folk devils 'can and do fight back' or rather find allies to back them, but this changes nothing with regard to their low social power and possibilities of broad stigmatization. That one of the few effective answers to racial stigmatization seems to be the invocation of moral panic in the opposite direction is rather evidence of the closed nature of the situation.

The invocation of local moral panic on the part of local actors can be interpreted as one of the few effective ways of drawing the attention of nationwide elites to their social problems (including the problems of coexistence with those Czech Roma who face multiple exclusion). If in this case antiziganism is a tool of those who feel they are left with no other possibilities (although local elites belong to them), then we could say something similar about responding to this panic by demonizing antiziganist 'folk devils'.

The antiracists are unable to confront the deeper social problems that lie behind antiziganism, or the confrontation of these deeper problems does not provide an answer to the acute situation. The discrediting of antiziganists with a partial mirroring of their image of the Roma is then one of the few accessible strategies with which to 'fight back', although it escalates the conflict rather than calming it.

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Notes

[1] Statistics of unemployment are not very reliable; in particular, the number of long-term unemployed persons is often not completely covered as they are not always in official evidence.

[2] The text of this chapter is loosely based on the text of my unpublished dissertation thesis (Slačálek 2014).

[3] The material for my analysis consists of media production. I used the Anopress database, which provides extensive monitoring of the national periodic press, television and radio news and commentary, and the regional press. In particular, the presence of the regional press was a welcome corrective – it is frequently here that variants on opinions from the national media are formulated in a more direct and less sophisticated form.

For the period 7 August–22 September 2011, I found a total of 3,140 articles in which the word Roma appeared (again, in various forms). For complexity of analysis it would, of course, be possible to combine this sample with others, where the word in question is replaced by another and the object of panic evoked indirectly. Although I considered this variant, in the end I did not consider it suitable for the type of analysis chosen. The analysis does not aim to present an exhaustive catalogue of the various possible evocations, but the main ways in which the theme is reflected, the basic discourses and structuring metaphors of which it might be expected that, in the event of their significance, they will sooner or later find their way into my sample. I filtered out texts that were clearly irrelevant, and the remainder I coded into various thematic categories with the use of the program Atlas.ti. In keeping with the character of the discursive analysis, I then combined an attempt to find the more common characteristics in a larger group of texts with detailed analysis on the level of individual formulations in a limited number of texts, which appeared either characteristic or significant for the discourse in question.

My analysis was based on the tradition of discursive analysis, above all on critical discursive analysis and Foucauldian discursive analysis (cf. namely Hansen 2006; Meyer and Wodak 2001). I have combined the individual concepts of these methodological traditions in a markedly pragmatic way. My analysis may have looked at ways in which language was used, but this was only a means for it. Its main aim was to reconstruct key argumentational topoi, not, however, in an attempt to make them subordinate to general argumentational categories but on the contrary in an attempt to reconstruct them in their concrete dynamic, with concrete references and structural metaphors and in their symbolic quality.

[4] For the insight regarding work as punishment I am grateful to a discussion with Martin Škabraha.

[5] The author writes explicitly about a 'double standard' caused by the media taking on an antiziganist view of the protests. This legitimises the racist attitudes of ordinary people but not ideologically motivated extremism.

[6] 'Ticking Ghettos?' was the title of a debate on the Czech Television news programme *Události, komentáře* on 23 August 2011, while on 22 August 2011 presenter Jan Bumba asked on Radiožurnál's Radiofórum programme whether 'a serious social or indeed ethnic conflict is simmering in the Šluknov region' and on 24 August 2011 tabloid *Blesk* announced that 'race war smoulders' (oce, ČTK 2011). The governor of the Ústí region, Jana Vaňhová, works with the metaphor of explosion when talking about the deployment of police forces: 'In the Ústí region there are 63 problematic localities. They are spread all over the region. If you weaken an area, it can explode,' quoted in Janoušek 2011b. 'When will it explode?' is asked, for example, in Holec 2011.

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CHAPTER 10

Who's to Blame for Asylum 'Moral Panics'?

Asylum Seekers' Perspectives on UK Policymaking, News Reporting, and Preferences of Identity Construction

Amadu Khan
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Introduction

The debate about who is to blame for the labelling of asylum seekers as folk devils in the West continues to animate scholars in forced migration (for instance, Leudar et al. 2008; Sales 2007; Zetter 2007). This chapter is intended to engage in this debate. It does so by critically reviewing policies and news reporting in the UK that circulate and sustain the labelling of asylum seekers as folk devils, and the moral panics around asylum in the past quarter century. The chapter further draws from qualitative interviews to consider asylum seekers' views about who is to blame for the moral panics, and asylum seekers' preferred forms of representation. It considers that both news media and policymaking is to blame for the representation and explores how refugees' preferences of identity construction are at odds with the mediatized and politicized asylum seeker folk devil representation.

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To date, very little exists in the literature about UK-based asylum seekers' perspectives on who is to blame for moral panics and how they would like to be represented, even though asylum seekers are the subject and victims of moral panics and the pejorative folk devil labelling. In addition, much needs to be explored about the way in which anti-asylum policies and news reporting are both complicit in this pejorative identity construction. As highlighted in the Introduction of this volume (see also Myers 2018), much of the analysis of moral panics and folk devils, including Cohen's (1987; 2002) seminal work, have mainly focused on the bedevillers' othering of groups in society while overlooking the views of the folk devils in this process. My analysis fills this gap by focusing on the views of folk devils to engage with the cultural and political processes of othering through (mis)representation of vulnerable groups in society. As others have argued, prioritizing the voices of the folk devils in the sociological theorizing of moral panics is crucial to correct the distortions that stigmatize, demean and scapegoat them (Myers 2018; see Harboe Knudsen, Chapter 11). The chapter, therefore, calls for asylum seekers' preferences of representation to be heeded in the modus operandi of the UK legislative and policymaking process and news reporting of the asylum issue, if the moral panics and folk devil constructions are to be alleviated or avoided.

The chapter starts by providing a brief conceptual reference point about the relationship between moral panics and the discursive construction of asylum seeker folk devils. This is followed by a review of UK government legislation and conjoining policies, and UK newspaper reporting of asylum seekers between the last and first decades of the 20th and 21st centuries (covering a 25-year period from 1990 to 2015). This section mainly explores the linkages and continuities in policies and news stories that render both politics and news media to become powerful sites of hostile asylum representations. I then go on to the empirical data and asylum seekers' views on who is to blame for the asylum moral panics and the demonized asylum seeker identity constructions in the UK. Following from this section is a discussion of the findings in relations to the debate about who, as powerful institutions in Western democracies (news media and policymaking), is to blame for sustaining both the 'moral panics' and the folk devil label around asylum. I also argue for policymakers and news media practitioners to accord prominence to asylum seekers' preferences of identity representations to help counter the banal asylum seeker folk devil image and moral panics.

Hegemonic Representation, 'Moral Panic' and 'Folk Devil' Labelling

By hegemonic representation, I, mean the power to control and shape the communication of a message or view that has, dominance over audiences, and which is informed by powerful institutions of society (Devereaux 1998; Haynes

et al. 2004; van Dijk 1997). Hegemonic representations are realized through various discursive processes including stereotyping, which is the repetitive production of social identities and characteristics that are imbued with subjective evaluations. The stereotypical representations are likely to influence the audiences' perception of those who are stereotyped, rendering stereotyping a key vehicle of 'othering' and identity ascription (Zargar 2004).

In the context of UK asylum-seeking migration, media and politicians that are hostile to asylum-seeking have stereotypically constructed asylum seekers as the cultural 'other' and a threat to an 'imagined' Britishness (Ibroscheva and Ramaprasad 2008; Shoemaker and Reese 1996). The stereotyping is sustained by transmission of new hostile asylum stories, and by constantly and reiteratively evoking previous negative labels and representations (Kirmayer 2003, 171). This capacity to circulate and sustain hostile discourses and images of asylum seekers in policy and media spaces is arguably the driver of hegemonic representation of the asylum seeker 'outsider'.

To say that hostile asylum policymaking and news reporting is hegemonic does not imply that there are no opposing views or counter-hegemonic representations within politics and news media spaces. By counter-hegemonic representation, I mean narratives and views that question, contest or resist the status quo or dominant constructions. However, the existence of rival discourses, which challenge and seek to undermine hegemonic practices and discourses, can be managed tactfully or coercively into a dominant or 'common-sense' discourse (Gramsci 1971; Laclau and Mouffe 1985). For example, both proponents and opponents of asylum-seeking migration in the UK may disagree on the reasons for asylum-seeking migration: that of safety and economic reasons, respectively. Yet, both implicitly have conveyed a message that the UK is being 'flooded' by asylum seekers (Clark and Campbell 2000; Kaye 2001; Khan 2012, 2018; Smart et al. 2007), while also representing asylum seekers as objects of pity, as sentimental human interest and as either victims of political persecution (in non-hostile news reporting and political spaces) or daredevil economic adventurers (in hostile ones). The 'common-sense' discourse, therefore, is that the culturally impoverished 'other' from the developing world is exploiting the magnanimous asylum system to migrate into the politically powerful and affluent developed world to benefit from its economic prosperity, security and social welfare.

As Cohen observed, this generates moral panics because 'a condition, episode, person or group of person emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values or interests' (Cohen 1987 [1972], 9). The agents of such moral panic are not only the news media but also other institutions in the state, such as rule enforcers, politicians, action groups and the public (Ejarvec 2003; Rothe and Muzzatti 2004). The moral panic culminates in creating folk devils, who are the individuals that are stereotyped as a threat and held responsible for the criminal behaviour and social deviance (Cohen 1987 [1972], 2002 [1972]; Hall 1997; Rothe and Muzzatti 2004, 329). In the context of asylum seekers as a minority

immigrant group, the moral panic and folk devils labelling is a single, virtually consistent message of hostility, which generate reactions that are more overtly political than any others. Additionally, the asylum moral panics compel urgent action and provide cover for political legitimation and agenda-setting towards formulating hostile policies to deter asylum-seeking migration, and to pacify an anxious public (Ferguson and Walters 2005; Statham and Geddes 2006).

The next two sections review this kind of policy and news hostility, which circulated between the end of the 20th and the early 21st century. This constitutes a 25-year period, from 1990 to 2015, that sustained the moral panic and folk devil labelling of asylum seekers in the UK.

Policymaking the Asylum Seeker Folk Devil

The Cantle Report on Community Cohesion (Cantle 2001), later followed by the UK Home Office consultation document *Strength in Diversity*, were the first major policy documents to link asylum-seeking migration with a crisis of good community relations in the UK (Fortier 2010; Nagel and Staeheli 2008). The report and consultation documents came after the racial riots in the north of England in 2001 and 'Islamic terrorism' in London, which have been partly blamed on the asylum 'influx'. Commentators considered the social cohesion enterprise to be aimed at strengthening the link between the integration of asylum seekers and other immigrants, and British national identity (Fortier 2010; Nagel and Staeheli 2008). The policies therefore framed an asylum 'influx', and the attendant ethnic and cultural diversity, as posing a threat to social cohesion (Phillips and Berman 2003).

Other policies followed, such as: *Fairer, Firmer and Faster*, *Secure Borders, Safe Haven*, and *Controlling Our Borders: Making Migration Work for Britain* (Home Office 2005a, 2005b). These policies represented government posturing to curb so-called 'illegal' asylum-seeking migration (Home Office 2005b). The *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* White Paper, which informed the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, contained proposals for limiting asylum seekers' access to citizenship rights (Home Office 2001a). For example, the Act removed asylum seekers' concession to a right to work after six months, subjected some to detention, and restricted welfare support to those who 'do not make a claim as soon as applicable', except for families with children (Sales 2007).

The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 also put in place the 'citizenship, classes, tests and oaths' policy. This policy required aspiring UK citizens to participate in citizenship and language classes; citizenship and language test; and the taking of a citizenship oath at a citizenship ceremony (Khan 2018). The policy is an example of government intervention to instil 'British patriotism' and promote identity-building of an 'imagined' Britishness among immigrant populations (Cheong et al. 2007, 30; Khan 2018). Other policies and Acts followed, namely the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004 and the

Controlling Our Borders: Making Migration Work for Britain White Paper and its adjoining Asylum and Immigration Act 2006 (Home Office 2005b). It is worth pointing out that there is no such thing as an 'illegal' asylum seeker under British and international humanitarian law (Khan 2018, 2012). Yet, these policies allowed, for the first time, criminal prosecutions of asylum seekers arriving without valid documents or good explanation and those failing to cooperate with redocumentation (Cheong et al. 2007); the tagging and detention of unsuccessful asylum claimants; and the exclusion from benefits to those refused asylum, except claimants with children. The Asylum and Immigration Act 2006 also limited access to legal aid and the High Court for appeals against deportation. It strengthened controls on immigrants via integrated pre-entry and in-country security – 'E-borders' and Border Management Programmes (Cheong et al. 2007). The Act set up the New Asylum Model (NAM), which paved the way for the UK Border Guards to arrest, detain and deport unsuccessful asylum claimants.

The 'good character' requirement was strengthened in the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009. The Act entrenched into law 'probationary citizenship', which would take into account would-be UK citizens' ability to integrate into Britishness; failing to do this could deny them UK citizenship (McGhee 2009, 45).

Some conclusions can be drawn from the above legislative context relating to constructions of refugees as 'folk devils'. The policies construct an asylum 'influx' and that it poses a threat to public safety and security, the UK's territorial borders, and an 'imagined' Britishness. By prescribing anti-terrorism security technology to police entry into the UK and to curtail free movement of asylum seekers, policies are a tool of securitization (Bloch and Schuster 2005; Statham and Geddes 2006). 'Dispersal', 'tagging', 'detention' and 'deportation' construct asylum-seeking as 'illegal' and a façade for terrorism, which reinforces asylum seekers as a threat to public safety.

Policies have also created categories of asylum-seeking migrants, namely refugees, asylum seekers, humanitarian protection, and exceptional leave to remain, which restricts some categories of asylum seekers from access to social welfare, legal aid and other citizenship rights. The categorization conveys a message that asylum-seeking is a façade for economic migration and that asylum seekers are here to scrounge from the welfare state (Heller 2008). Arguably, therefore, policies have been created and repeatedly amended to regulate 'otherness' and differentiate among categories of asylum seekers: the 'deserving', 'legal' and 'genuine' asylum seeker from the folk devil asylum seeker that is an 'undeserving', 'illegal' and 'economic' migrant. Hostile policies are also an attempt by politicians to convey a message that they are taking action to curb immigration, and to protect British cultural identity (Cheong et al. 2007; Clarke 2005; Dwyer 2008; Hall et al. 1978; Khan 2018).

This kind of policymaking, which sustained the demonization and the construction of the asylum seeker folk devil identity, was also evident in

newspapers' reporting of the asylum issue within the same period (1990–2015), as is now discussed.

Asylum Reporting from the 1990s to the 2000s

Ronald Kaye (1998, 2001) conducted one of the first systematic analyses of the UK press treatment of asylum in the 1990s. They include the right-wing press (normally hostile to refugees and allied to the Conservatives) of *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail* and *The Sun*, and the liberal press (or what others referred to as the left, normally seen as less hostile to asylum seekers) of *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and the *Daily Mirror* (Kaye 1998, 2001). Kaye found that there was frequent use by these newspapers of the terms or labels 'bogus', 'phoney' and 'economic', in relation to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, in the reporting of the asylum issue between 1990 and 1996. The *Daily Mail* was the worst culprit because these labels were not only used 90 per cent of the time but also occurred more often in its editorials than in any other newspaper. Kaye observed that *The Sun* deployed other 'stronger' and more 'insulting' language against asylum seekers (Kaye 2001, 59).

Another analysis by Kaye of the same newspapers' coverage of the so-called Roma 'invasion' in two weeks in October 1997 found that, except for *The Guardian*, all newspapers had similar themes: the economic and social welfare motivation for seeking asylum, 'illegitimate' asylum and the huge cost of welfare provision for refugees (Kaye 2001, 61). Other studies by Colin Clark (1998) and Clark and Elaine Campbell (2000) found that the coverage of the same event (the Roma 'invasion') over a two-week period in *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Observer*, *The Mail*, *The Sun*, *The Mirror* and *The Express* was 'vitriolic, distorted and exaggerated' (Clark and Campbell 2000, 30).

Kaye (2001), Clark (1998) and Clark and Campbell (2000) found certain discursive strategies to be commonplace in the asylum stories, affirming other studies of the decade (see Law 1997, cited in Clarke 2000; Coleman 1996 and Tomasi 1992, cited in Kaye 2001; McGloughlin 1999). These include labels such as 'invasion', 'deluge', 'hand-outs', 'bogus', 'economic migrant', 'exodus', 'flood', 'gold diggers', welfare 'fraud', 'scam' and 'spongers' (Clark and Campbell 2000, 30; Kaye 2001, 61). Kaye (2001, 64) and Clark and Campbell (2000, 41) concluded that the vitriolic language directed at asylum seekers displayed overt and covert racism and xenophobia by journalists, prompting concern to be raised by refugee-supporting agencies (also Coleman 1996, cited in Kaye 2001; Statham 1999). Unlike Kaye (1998, 2001), others (Clark and Campbell 2000; Koser and Lutz 1998; Philo and Beatie 1999; Statham 1999) recognized that such racism and xenophobia was realized through the discursive strategy of the 'us and them' binary. This binary was used to differentiate not only between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' among the Roma asylum seekers but also between the group of Roma as 'scroungers' and 'gold diggers' from the

magnanimous British citizens. The binary labelling was key to these newspapers' ascribing an inferior cultural identity to the Roma people, in contrast to the British 'other' with superior cultural values of magnanimity that were under threat by the 'invasion' (Clark and Campbell 2000, 33).

Just as in the 1990s, research conducted between 2000 and 2005 found similar themes as well as racist and xenophobic comments, and the inaccurate and provocative use of language (Buchanan et al. 2003, 19; Barclay et al. 2003; Statham 2002). For instance, three Home Office-commissioned research projects undertaken by ICAR in 2003/04 in two London boroughs found that refugees and local residents perceived the media coverage to be negative and inflammatory (ICAR 2004). The anti-poverty organization Oxfam UK's 2001/02 research also found that some 'Scottish' press reporting of the asylum issue was negative even though less hostile than the 'English' press (Mollard 2001; Wilson 2004).

A subsequent study by Kate Smart et al. (2007) in 2005/06 systematically monitored UK newspaper reporting of asylum seekers with reference to the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) Guidance Notes on Reporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers. It found that some coverage contained hostile and inflammatory language, and asylum seekers were depicted as increasing or uncontrollable, illegitimate, criminals, motivated by economic benefits, a drain on taxpayers and scapegoats for the failings in housing and welfare provision (Smart et al. 2007).

Amadu Khan's (2012) work, which was a content and discourse analysis of 106 articles of UK newspapers, found that the depiction of asylum seekers through pejorative language to be consistent with previous studies of the 1990s and 2000s. However, in contrast to the 1990s, Khan (2012) supports other studies in the 2000s in which, for the first time, asylum is conflated with 'Islamic terrorism' (Buchanan et al. 2003; ICAR 2004; Smart et al. 2007). This might be attributable to the 11 September New York and 7 July London terrorist attacks of the 2000s, even though none of the terrorists were asylum seekers.

As others have observed in this volume (see Chapters 5 and 11), it could be concluded that much of the press mirrored the hostile policies and representations to generate moral panics: they abused the term 'asylum seeker', portrayed asylum-seeking migration as 'illegitimate' and motivated by welfare and economic considerations, and criticized government failure to control the asylum 'influx'. Furthermore, asylum seekers were depicted as a threat not only to the welfare system but also to national security and an 'imagined' Britishness or British cultural values (Clark and Campbell 2000, 42; Kaye 2001; Pickering 2001). As demonstrated in this volume, it is important to highlight that negative identity ascriptions to social groups such as young people, rockers and hipsters have been the mechanism and the source of the moral panic in the West. However, in the context of asylum seekers, the folk devilling and moral panics is not only focused on negative identity ascriptions but also on numerical quantification. In this sense, the anti-immigration rhetoric of an asylum 'influx', 'flooding' and 'invasion' rather than merely attributions of negative identities is both a concern and the mechanism for creating moral panic.

What are asylum seekers' perspectives on this debate about who is to blame for generating the folk devil depiction and moral panics around asylum in the UK? The next section draws from a qualitative study to explore this issue. The study explores the ways asylum seekers would like their identities to be constructed in public spaces, particularly in news stories and policies.

The Study: Refugees' Views on 'Folk Devil' Representation

The data for this analysis was generated from a study on asylum seekers' citizenship formations and the perceived role of the UK news media in this process. It conducted qualitative interviews with 23 asylum-seeking migrants residing in Scotland: 12 males and 11 females between the ages of 26 and 65. Participants were selected through non-random snowballing and convenience techniques, and the ability to speak English. By non-random, I mean opportunistic recruitment of participants through accidental or off-chance encounters. Snowballing implies asking those who participated in interviews to recommend others to participate in the study. Snowballing and non-random techniques enable the recruitment of participants to be ongoing throughout the research. Participants were given anonymity to encourage participation and protect their confidentiality and safety.

The interviews explored with participants their views about the hostile depictions of asylum seekers in the UK press, and preferred forms of representation. However, during the interviews, it became obvious that participants were keen to express a view on the role of policies and politicians in the UK Parliament in the hostile depictions of asylum seekers. Consistent with the study's inductive approach, the data was therefore analysed to include participants' opinions on the ways they are represented in policymaking, and how they preferred the UK news media and policymakers to construct asylum seekers. Each interview is, therefore, analysed to explore perceptions of the policies and news reporting, and who they blamed or commended for the depictions.

For this chapter, I focus on participants' perceptions of whom to blame for the hostile representations, how they preferred to be represented, and the reasoning and contexts for their views. This is with a view to centre the voices of folk devils in the sociological theorizing of moral panics, which others have noted have been absent, including in the seminal work of Cohen (Myers 2018; see Harboe Knudsen, Chapter 11).

Who Is to Blame: Media or Political Elites?

> I cannot find the words to describe how I feel about media's coverage of us. Asylum seekers are bogus, where do they get these words? From the government. Yeah, who called us bogus asylum seekers? It's the Home Office! How can people or the media respect us? (Meri, in Glasgow)

The above comments by Meri, a female refugee from Algeria living in Glasgow, UK, is an example of how difficult it is to apportion blame for the labelling of asylum seekers in pejorative identity. While Meri expressed concern over the pejorative coverage of asylum seekers, she blamed policymakers like the Home Office for attributing the 'bogus' label to asylum seekers. Meri also suggested that the folk devil labelling by policymakers is the source of public and media hostility against asylum seekers.

Shek, an Iraqi male refugee, expressed a similar opinion of the role played by policymakers in the pejorative labelling of asylum seekers:

> So in addition to the political point of view of the (UK) Government, they put certain Legislation to restrict the number of people who come to this country. And so they started with the media to talk about asylum seekers, they invented this failed asylum seeker. …They are preparing the public to have a negative view of these people and the Government put on restriction to prepare the public. (Shek, in Glasgow)

In Shek's opinion, policymakers colluded with the news media and 'invented this failed asylum seeker' label as a façade to pursue restrictive immigration policies that are ideologically driven. He also thought that politicians deliberately construct the 'failed' asylum label to generate a 'negative view' of asylum seekers among the public in order to galvanize public support for hostile asylum policies. This can be unpacked to suggest agenda-setting by policymakers in two respects. First, the negative attributions to asylum seekers are aimed at constructing asylum seekers as folk devils and generating moral panics. Second, the moral panics generated are a strategy to pave the way for the political legitimization for the state's hostile immigration policies.

While Meri and Shek seemingly believed that it is policymakers who are the creators of the folk devil labelling, other research participants like Mick highlighted the influential role played by the press in its dissemination:

> What? The media has published these things: these people [asylum seekers] are bad. These people [asylum seekers] are vampires, these people [asylum seekers] are like evil people, and these people [asylum seekers] are like you know junkies. So if you hear what is going to happen is like what is called Chinese whispers – and make them [UK public] hate us [asylum seekers]. (Mick, in Edinburgh)

Mick, a Zimbabwean male refugee residing in Glasgow, UK, used the 'Chinese whispers' metaphor to suggest that the news stories are not only pejorative and inaccurate representations of asylum seekers but are widely circulated through news publications. In his view, the press repetitively producing asylum seekers in reprehensible identities in news stories generated public hostility against asylum seekers.

Participants' perceptions suggest agreement that news reporting and policymaking offer sites for moral panic and folk devil representations of asylum seekers. Participants also agreed that the reproduction of negative representations have a social consequence for asylum seekers: they generate public hostility or, in the words of Mick, 'hate' against asylum seekers. Additionally, participants believed that the moral panic compels urgent action and provides political legitimacy for formulating hostile policies to deter asylum-seeking. The moral panic also generates support for the policies and at the same time pacify public anxiety over a perceived asylum 'influx'. However, while participants' beliefs highlight media and political elites' complicity in sustaining the folk devil image and moral panics around asylum, they also suggest the difficulty in ascribing blame solely to any one of the two institutions.

An analytical observation is worth highlighting here: participants also claimed that there were non-hostile asylum stories and labels particularly in the press reporting (for instance, see Khan 2012). I have only focused on the negative asylum labelling in so far as to bring an asylum seeker perspective to the debate about who is to blame for the moral panic and folk devil identity constructions. Moreover, participants expressed that the hostile labels far exceed the non-hostile ones, and this is mainly responsible for fuelling the moral panic and public construction of asylum seekers as folk devils (Khan 2012). The next section explores with participants the kind of representation they would prefer in order to avoid or counter the demonized labelling of asylum seekers.

What Are Asylum Seekers' Preferences of Representation?

Three main areas of identity constructions featured prominently in the interviews that participants said they would like to inform policymaking and news reporting. Participants believed their preferred forms of representations would be crucial in countering the demonized asylum seeker representation.

A Nuanced 'Victimhood'

All participants would have liked to see the news media and policymaking represent asylum seekers as 'victims' of repression in the homelands from which they fled. Participants recounted many emotional stories of persecution, trauma and suffering they were subjected to. Participants would have liked these experiences to frame the debates, reporting and policies on asylum-seeking in the UK.

> I came after the bloody coup of 11 Sept 1973. I came from Lima, where the UN set up a programme for refugees, to bring out Chilean refugees to different areas of Europe. So the UK decided to take up 3,000 to here, about 500 of us ended up in Scotland. (Carl, in Edinburgh)

> I was farming with my mother in a village in Nigeria – my boyfriend and father wanted to use my child and myself as a sacrifice, and that's why I fled. … I fled when I was pregnant because they said they are going to open my stomach and take the baby out. … And the man took me from there to the UK. (Prom, in Glasgow)

These harrowing accounts suggest that asylum seekers' experiences of persecution are diverse, and that the causes of their victimhood are complex. For some, like Carl, a Chilean refugee, they sought asylum in the UK through the UN refugee programme. Prom, a Nigerian female asylum seeker, fled because she had no confidence in the state authorities in Nigeria to protect her from harm and potential death. Prom, and many other participants like Tah, a male Eritrean asylum seeker, had to be 'smuggled' (Tah, in Glasgow), without passports or proper identification documents.

Participants' comments can be unpacked to imply that financial considerations that portrayed asylum seekers as 'scroungers', 'gold diggers' and 'economic migrants' in much of the hostile policies and press are not a key determining factor in seeking asylum and choice of destination. Participants felt that the inability to produce identity documents, particularly passports, and using 'human traffickers' and 'smugglers' (Joy, female Malawian, in Edinburgh), to escape to the UK is further evidence that asylum seekers are desperate to escape political persecution (Khan 2018). In this sense, the failure to reflect these perilous contexts of flight to safety in policies and news stories may emasculates the public's construction of asylum seekers as victims of political repression.

While most participants blamed political persecution in their homelands for seeking asylum and 'the worse, which can kill you', they also claimed that UK hostile policies and press coverage are equally detrimental to their well-being. Participants described policies and news reporting on asylum as 'heartless', 'inhuman' and 'wicked', and treated them as 'second class or even third class citizens' (Mick, male Zimbabwean in Edinburgh). Dorcas, a female asylum seeker from the DRC, explained:

> Here [in the UK] you are safe, but you are not safe mentally, and they treat you so bad that, I think, why did I flee from those people [homeland], when the [UK] Government is making me worse mentally. (Dorcas, in Glasgow)

Stories of suffering, destitution, detentions, social exclusion and psycho-social trauma abounded during fieldwork. Participants said that these impacts of the policies on their everyday lives made them feel victimized again for fleeing repression, and that they would have liked these mistreatments to feature prominently in the news coverage. This suggests that participants preferred a nuanced representation of asylum seekers' victimhood that reflected the

adverse impact of hostile policies on their everyday lives and well-being in the UK as the host country.

One Label, Diverse 'Voices'

Participants also said that there is a tendency to frame individual indiscretions of asylum seekers in a collective way in news reporting and policies:

> You are just put in one blanket. It is prejudice because all what they say about asylum seekers is not correct. Every individual is a unique individual. We've all got the right minds, whether in our own conscience to do good from bad. But not everyone is bad or not all asylum seekers are scrounging. For instance I am not getting any benefit, I am not a burden to society. (Leon, in Edinburgh)

This person, like other participants, acknowledged that there were 'bad asylum seekers and refugees' and not 'everyone is good' (Leon, in Edinburgh). However, Leon, a male Rwandan asylum seeker, among other participants, like Ama, a female Somali asylum seeker, would have preferred the news reporting to stop 'lumping together' (Ama, in Edinburgh) or 'put[ting] in one blanket'(Leon, in Edinburgh) the indiscretions of a few and ascribing these to the wider asylum-seeking community. Participants said doing so would minimize demonizing asylum seekers as 'scroungers', 'spongers', 'junkies', 'evil' (Mick, in Edinburgh), 'bogus asylum seekers', 'economic migrants and here to take their [British citizens'] jobs' (Carl, in Edinburgh), and 'worthless or useless individuals' (Ama, in Edinburgh).

To counter the stereotyping, Ama proposed that journalists provide them with a platform to tell their stories: 'to provide them a voice', 'to stand up for people like them and take their plight seriously' (Ama, in Edinburgh). Another refugee participant from Malawi, Joy, called for journalists 'to look at all sides' before reporting (Joy, in Edinburgh), while Carl would have preferred that journalists 'speak their language' (Carl, in Edinburgh), meaning asylum news stories should reflect or are aligned to asylum seekers' aspirations, motivations and preferences. Others, like Ann, a female Angolan refugee, believed that doing so would help 'the media change their [inflammatory] language, make people feel safe to contribute' and 'avoid misrepresentation and stereotyping' (Ann, in Glasgow).

Participants' comments can be interpreted to imply that the failure to reflect the diversity of backgrounds, experiences and actions of asylum seekers in policymaking and news reporting contributes to the pejorative stereotypical representation and moral panics. Participants also implied that the lack of diverse 'voices' and experiences in news reporting deprived asylum seekers of the opportunity to contest hegemonic representations in demeaning social practices and identities.

The 'Agentive' Asylum Seeker

The majority of participants would have preferred policymakers and the UK news media to treat asylum seekers as capable of agency. Agency is used here to refer to the individual capacity to make and carry out decisions and actions (Gordon 2006). For example, many, like Siso, a female Zimbabwean asylum seeker, expressed the view that the press should report on the 'hard work', 'positive things' and 'contribution' to 'national development' and to their neighbourhoods (Siso, in Glasgow). Many spoke about various types of voluntary work they participated in their neighbourhoods, including serving as interpreters for local services and other asylum seekers, and providing care support to asylum seekers and their neighbours and friends (Khan 2018).

Participants would also have liked to be portrayed as doing a 'lot of work that citizens would not do' (Leonard, in Edinburgh). Leonard, a male Burundian asylum seeker, felt this would contrast with dominant depictions of asylum seekers as 'scroungers' and 'taking [British citizens'] jobs' (Leonard, in Edinburgh). Participants said they worked as home help, cleaners, nurses, doctors, teachers and engineers. They also would have preferred policymakers to formulate policies that tap into the resourcefulness, skills and knowledge that asylum seekers bring. As one participant, Halma, a female Somalian refugee, put it, 'We could have done so much if only the government accepted our qualifications from back home' (Halma, female Somalian in Edinburgh). This person is suggesting that refugees' so-called 'dependency' on social welfare is caused by hostile government policies that precluded some asylum seekers from paid employment. More importantly, participants would have preferred the news reporting to focus on reporting the government's failure to tap into refugees' agency, skills and resources.

Participants' views can be unpacked to imply that asylum seekers have been compelled to 'scrounge' on the welfare state by hostile government policies. In addition, representing asylum seekers' agency and resourcefulness will counter the dominant construction of asylum seekers as 'scroungers', 'welfare cheats' and a threat to public safety, security and the welfare system.

Discussion of Findings

The foregoing accounts (policy, news and participants) begs the question: who is to blame for the hostile labelling that ascribes pejorative identities to asylum seekers and the attendant moral panics around asylum in the past decades? The debate has always centred on which of the two powerful institutions of state, namely the news media or politics-cum-policymakers, is the culprit (see, for instance, Ibroscheva and Ramaprasad 2008; Leudar et al. 2008; Sales 2007; Zetter 2007). It is expedient to note that the heightened visibility in news

reporting and policymaking might have fuelled public anxiety that uncontrollable asylum-seeking migration is a threat to public safety, security, the welfare system and an 'imagined' Britishness. The public trepidation is widely believed to have generated political intervention through hostile policies that are intended to curb the asylum 'influx' and promote British cultural and national identity (Kaye 2001; Khan 2018). Politicians also aimed to win legitimacy and support for hostile political interventions among the public. However, by restricting access to social, welfare and citizenship rights to some asylum seekers, policies create the structural inequalities that stigmatize asylum seekers (Hall et al. 1978). Policies also construct a pejorative binary between the asylum seeker cultural 'other' who are 'illegal', 'undeserving' and 'criminal' migrants, and the 'deserving' and good UK citizen. The combination of structural inequalities and the negative identity ascriptions to asylum seekers in policymaking constitute a form of legal regulation of 'otherness'.

It could, therefore, be argued that policies to some extent provide the material for the media's negative discursive representations of asylum seekers (Leudar et al. 2008; Sales 2007). The media analyses also suggest a discursive convergence with policies on the social categorization of asylum seekers in demeaning identities and an uncontrollable asylum 'influx' or 'invasion'. The overarching relationship between policies and news stories in the repetitive production of these pejorative asylum seeker identities is constitutive of stereotyping and hegemonic representation of the asylum folk devil and moral panic. As I argue elsewhere, this discursive predominance of the folk devil identity ascriptions also subvert the refugee label under international humanitarian law (Khan 2012). The media and political (mis)representations also suggest that, in the case of asylum seekers and in contrast to other social groups that have been traditional victims of moral panics in the West, numerical (mis)representations along with ascriptions of demeaning qualities or identities are central to their folk devilling.

The interview data suggests a similar difficult in apportioning blame solely to either the policy process or news reporting. Yet, participants' observations provide a useful insight into understanding the role of powerful institutions in the social construction of 'disadvantaged' groups like asylum seekers in the UK. Participants' accounts suggest that folk devil representations and moral panics around asylum might have their origins in public policy, even though parts of the UK news media are instrumental in its dissemination. Participants' beliefs are a reminder that moral panics are caused by not only the news media but also other institutions in the state (Cohen 2002 [1972]; Ejarvec 2003; Rothe and Muzzatti 2004). It is arguable that news reporting is driven by a desire to inform and disseminate news, and not a deliberate collusion by news media and politicians towards a social agenda, as some participants claim. This is not to say that accusations of agenda-setting by media and political elites should be dismissed. It shows that agenda-setting to create folk devils and moral panic might not be advertent but an exigency of political communication in news reporting (as argued in Khan 2012).

The interview data also demonstrates that asylum seekers have their own preferences for constructing their self-identities. Asylum seekers would prefer to be portrayed as victims of UK hostile asylum policies and news reporting, as well as agentive and bringing assets to the UK. They would also like to see their diverse and individual voices and actions to be reflected in the news coverage. These identity preferences are, therefore, at odds with the dominant folk devil representations in news reporting and policymaking. Asylum seekers' preferences of identity construction constitute a process of 'dis-identification', meaning the contesting of a prescribed form of identity that is often sustained by elites (Byrne 2007; Fortier 2010). They are also counter-hegemonic representation because they question, contest or resist the dominant pejorative constructions.

Conclusion

This analysis is not intended to claim that there were an absence of non-hostile asylum news stories and policies. It is intended to draw attention to how mediatized and politicized representations have created a discursive predominance of asylum seekers as folk devils and a problem to society. More importantly, it highlights that, in contrast to other social groups that have been traditional victims of moral panics emanating from demeaning character ascriptions, the repetitive (mis)representations of the numbers or massive inflow of asylum seeker folk devils into the West is central to the moral panic around asylum-seeking migration.

As the qualitative data demonstrates, asylum seekers' preferences of identity constructions are at odds with the mediatized and politicized asylum seeker folk devil representation. Policymakers and media elites should, therefore, heed asylum seekers' opinions because they are not only the subject but also the 'victims' of the hostile constructions. The preferred representations can be deployed to inform strategies on positive messages of the asylum issue. This is crucial to mitigate public conceptions of asylum seekers in negative identities, and to enable public knowledge of asylum as a humanitarian issue (see Khan 2018). Additionally, policymakers and media elites should incorporate these preferred forms of representations to counter or preclude the moral panics, and the demonization of asylum seekers, which research participants say adversely impacted on their well-being. Doing so would redress the historical structural processes and hostile discursive continuities that have generated and sustained the 'moral panic' around asylum for the past quarter century.

Asylum seekers' experiences and preferences of self-identity constructions demonstrate the agency of folk devils to fight back against pejorative mainstream cultural practices and discourses that negatively impact on them. There is, therefore, an urgent need for prioritizing the voices of folk devils in moral panics research beyond the mundane analytical obsession with cultural and political processes of othering through (mis)representation of vulnerable

groups in society. Adopting a victim-focused paradigm in moral panics sociological research that prioritizes the views and experiences of folk devils will enable a remediation of the distorted representations that stigmatize, demean and scapegoat them in society (Myers 2018; see Harboe Knudsen, Chapter 11).

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CHAPTER 11

‘Eastern Criminals’ and Moral Panic

On Lithuanian Offenders in Danish Prison Facilities

Ida Harboe Knudsen
Vytautas Magnus University

Introduction

As a result of the end of the Cold War and the rise of the EU, internal European borders have to a large extent been dissolved, and the free mobility of EU citizens has been promoted. As we now know, the various alterations of borders have resulted in unanticipated dynamics and outcomes (O’Dowd 2002; Wilson and Donnan 1999). One of the consequences has been an increase in the number of foreign offenders being encountered by national criminal justice systems.

In Denmark, public awareness has been focused on a new group of foreign offenders who have popularly become known as ‘eastern criminals’ (Danish: *østkriminelle*). This media-coined term refers to offenders from Europe’s previously socialist countries who engage in mobile crime in Western Europe – mostly acquisitive crime and trick theft committed by men in their twenties, primarily from Lithuania and Romania. Following the Soviet collapse and the EU’s eastern enlargement, this phenomenon has been the subject of political

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concern and media attention, leading to constructions of the Eastern European offender as a new folk devil – here understood as an unambiguously unfavourable symbol (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 2009 [1994], 27) and a personification of a general and concerning condition in society (Cohen 2002 [1972]).

In this chapter, I will focus on the case of Lithuanian detainees and follow the development of how Eastern European offenders became a new folk devil in Danish society. As pointed out by Ana Ivasiuc (Chapter 8), who writes about perceptions of Roma in Italy, we deal with both a *figure* who is constructed in public discourse and the people behind, who do not resemble the created figure. I will argue not only that the emphasis on the threat from Eastern Europe singles out a particular group of young men as deviant but also that this demonization and moral panic in turns helps shape not only the Danish political scene but also the ways in which inmates are perceived in prisons.

Two terms will be used when analysing the case of Lithuanians detained on the suspicion of criminal activities: *folk devil* and *eastern criminal*. Folk devil is a scholarly term introduced by Stanley Cohen in 1972. According to Cohen (2002 [1972]), folk devils are persons who are perceived as a threat and whom the general public, led by the media, agrees to dislike or even fear. As Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda (2009 [1994]) elaborate, Folk Devils are agents that threaten the normal order and cycle of society. Certain groups of people make better folk devils than others. Usual suspects are drug dealers, child molesters, terrorists and murderers, but also muggers, robbers and thieves. These are referred to as *suitable enemies*. Thus, Lithuanian offenders, known for breaking and entering, are one among many groups fitting this definition. The term 'folk devil' is used here owing to the interrelation with the moral panic surrounding this group: many people can be engaged in terrible actions, but when they form a group in the public eye, and when their actions cause the rise of a moral panic, this is when we can speak about actual folk devils.

The other term used in this chapter is 'eastern criminal'. This is a standard reference used in newspapers when writing about offenders from Eastern Europe. This term is far from neutral but is connected by two separate words that together reinforce the negative picture: an origin from Eastern Europe and criminal behaviour.

By providing an analysis of both society's concern with the 'eastern criminal' and an exploration of Lithuanian inmates' detention regimes in Denmark, my objective is to investigate the interrelations between public and political discourse and the direct and indirect effects it has on local-level administrations in Danish prison facilities. I then build on the assumption that prison life offers a unique vantage point from which to analyse current transformations in society, as perceptions of different groups of inmates are embedded in what James Scott (2015) calls 'the everyday construction of borders' through media representations, political discourses and institutional practices. Thereby I wish to point out the very real consequences a consistent devilish media image has for the group of people being portrayed in this manner. In my example, the stereotyping

of Lithuanian inmates as particularly brutal and hardened has direct effects on how prison staff per se perceive them, despite the fact that their day-to-day interaction with the inmates contrasts this picture.

On Prison Research

In an article from 2014, Keramet Reiter describes prison facilities as 'black sites' in our society of which we have but a limited knowledge. According to Reiter, there are two reasons for this: a physical barrier and an emotional barrier. The physical barrier implies that it is difficult to gain access for the public and researchers alike, as prisons are restricted places located outside our communities. This has led researchers to list the difficulties of entering correctional facilities at large and to bemoan the scarcity of prison research in a time of mass incarceration (Rhodes 2001, 2004; Wacquant 2002; Waldram 2009, 2012). Second, Reiter (2014) argues, when researchers overcome the practical difficulties of entering correctional facilities, they remain emotionally estranged from their informants, as the researchers' primary goal is to secure 'hard' data. Reiter's second point links up to a debate among criminologists started by Yvonne Jewkes (2011, 2014), who argued that the positivist tradition of criminology tends to prevent an engagement with the self in the field, with the result that the interaction between researcher and inmates remains distanced and obscure to the reader. This results in the research process in itself being crucial for the analysis and understanding of the inner dynamics in prisons (Jewkes 2011, 2014; see also Rowe 2014). According to Reiter (2014), the combination of difficult access and emotional disengagement thus creates a double obfuscation for prison research, rendering correctional facilities to be largely unexplored sites in society.

While Reiter is concerned with the inner life of the prison, anthropologist Lorna A. Rhodes (2004) argues for the value of prison research as a mirror to the surrounding society, as the people incarcerated bear clear witness to developments in society as such. As in my example, the growing number of Eastern Europeans in Danish prison facilities resembles the changes in the surrounding society. More than that, as I will later discuss, they also symbolize current political discourse, and their being incarcerated in Denmark feeds into a heated political discourse, where certain political parties use them to further their own agenda such as harder punishments for crime and closed borders. Thus, *when* we manage to enter prison facilities and engage in research that values 'soft' ethnographic data, we are not only provided with information about prison's inner life but likewise with a reflection of the surrounding society, as public approaches to certain forms of crimes and criminals are mirrored inside the correctional facilities. How the crime is processed and the perpetrators dealt with matters to us all, as it provides a link to society's stand on 'abnormal behaviour' (see also Rhodes 2004; Waldram 2012).

Anthropologist James Waldram (2012), in his detailed ethnographic account of sexual offender rehabilitation in American prisons, writes that he is often asked why he has chosen this particular research subject. His foremost ready answer is that these people one day will be released and return to society. Thus, knowledge about what happens to them in prison and the accompanying attempts to rehabilitate them is crucial to public safety (Waldram 2012, xv). With my case on Lithuanian inmates in Denmark, a significantly different group of inmates is targeted: people who do not belong to the society that keeps them imprisoned, people who ideally never return after their release and, thus, people who need no resocialization since they from the beginning to the end remain an unwanted and foreign element. This, however, makes the research no less important. I will argue that the extensive media portraits of the offenders as particularly hardened criminals both directly and indirectly influences the way they are treated by the prison guards, whose main knowledge about the Lithuanian offenders derives from public discourses. Thereby, the evolving portraits of them as hardened *folk devils* obscure the fact that they are among the weakest group of offenders when incarcerated, both due to language barriers and little knowledge of the Danish legal system and because their label colours their treatment on the inside. My case raises the question of whether legal rights for this particular group of foreign offenders, rather than being based on law and order, are in fact a product of 'law and border', and one that is markedly affected by moral panic.

This chapter is based on two fieldworks conducted in Danish detention houses, one lasting from May to July 2013 and one lasting from May to September 2015. Thirteen detention houses and 30 inmates participated in the research. My focus was on Lithuanian inmates, partly because they represent the largest ethnic group among Eastern European inmates and partly because of my previous research in Lithuania (Harboe Knudsen 2010, 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2017) and knowledge of the language. The research has been based on qualitative research methods: detailed interviews with the inmates and semi-structured interviews with guards and the heads of the detention houses. I aimed at making my visits to the detention houses participatory by spending additional time looking around the facilities and engaging in small talk, just as the prison staff used me as a Danish–Lithuanian translator. I have likewise analysed political debates and media coverage of Eastern European offenders. Permission to conduct the research was granted by the Danish Data expectorate, the Danish Prison and Probations Service, the individual detention houses and, importantly, the inmates themselves.

Eastern Crime and Imprisonment

'Eastern crime' executed by Lithuanians has largely been centred on Denmark's mainland Jutland, with burglaries as the main offence. The perpetrators are primarily younger men, who act because of precarious and insecure situations,

such as unemployment and debt on the home front, that stimulate them to take risks. According to criminal investigator Christian Jørgensen, who specializes in mobile crime, the predominance of Lithuanian offenders in Jutland is a result of the high number of Lithuanians working in the agricultural sector in the area. Some of these individuals facilitate access to and provide information about the area to criminal networks in their home country. While Lithuanians are known for burglaries, Romanians are better known for theft and trick theft, and operate in higher numbers in the capital, Copenhagen.

When a Lithuanian is caught and sentenced, a regular case goes as follows. He[1] will get a sentence for one year for burglary. If he behaves properly, he will be released after six months. A police investigation normally takes four to five months. During this period, inmates are held under control of letters and visits. Control of letters and visits is obligatory while the police investigate a case, in order to avoid people influencing the inmate or providing them with information on the investigation. During this period, all visits require special permission and are monitored, and all letters are passed to the police. The police read them and decide whether they can be sent to the addressee. The inmates receive a new prolongation of the control every second week for as long as the police are investigating their case. Several inmates I encountered had experienced being prolonged so many times due to the length of their investigation that they were expecting release immediately after having received their judgement.

Based on interviews with police and inmates, I divided the Lithuanian offenders into two groups, a) those who were part of an organized criminal network in which they operated as 'foot soldiers'; and b) those who had come to Denmark alone or with a friend, merely to try their luck.

The inmates from the first group, who engaged in organized crime, were below 30, unemployed, with short to middle/long education paths, and had, with one exception, no family of their own yet – all characteristics that made them easier to recruit. For these inmates, unemployment, debt and promises of 'easy money' had been stimulating factors in driving them towards crime. The recruiters are solely looking for young men, which in turn also provides an answer to why there were no women among them. The inmates in the second group were, as a rule, over 30. Here the diversity was greater, with inmates ranging from having short educations to university degrees. Several had children. Unemployment, low salaries, debts or insecure job situations were often stimulating factors behind their criminal activities, especially when they had family responsibilities in their home country. Some also had debt or were experiencing a family crisis that required them to 'pool' economic resources.

The Moral Panic Unfolds

On 18 June 2015, the four-yearly parliamentary elections were held in Denmark. The results were unusual; while Denmark hitherto had been divided into red and blue zones, respectively indicating the specific regions' preference for

a red left-wing government or a blue conservative government, a new colour appeared on the election map: yellow. Yellow was the colour of the furthest right-wing party Dansk Folkeparti (DF).[2] DF had made a successful transition from being a party for extreme nationalists to becoming a party with a broad appeal to the Danish population. A reason for their popularity was their focus on welfare policy (for Danes only), combined with a strict policy towards foreigners, which became attractive to voters who had traditionally voted for the Social Democrats.

One of the new supportive yellow regions was the southern Danish borderland. Here an important contributing factor to the popularity had been DF's ambition to do away with the internally open borders in Europe and reinstall border control. The aim was thus to secure the Danish–German border against smuggling and mobile criminals. Although against the Schengen Agreement of free mobility, the suggestion had been highly valued among people who lived in the borderlands. The mobile criminals in question were popularly known as 'eastern criminals' owing to their origin from Europe's former socialist countries. The definition comprised a broad group including both people engaged in organized crime with connections to mafia groups in the home countries, and what the police referred to as *soldiers of fortune*, people who on their own account engaged in theft for personal gain.

The 'eastern criminals' were portrayed not only as a threat to society; they were also a burden after being detained, as they would take up space in Danish prisons at the cost of approximately 2000 Danish kroner (268 euros) a day. Eastern Europeans had in Danish media discourse quickly become associated with crime and cheap labour, and this was a frequent topic for DF when arguing for the case of border control. On this account, a young politician from DF, Peter Kofoed, had created an internet page with the title www.meldenøsteuropæer.dk (report-an-eastern-european.dk). The intention was to give ordinary people an opportunity to report on negative experiences with people from Eastern Europe and to further stimulate the debates on border control. The idea was not his own but had been borrowed from the controversial Dutch politician Geert Wilders, who had created a similar page.[3]

A further concern expressed in the Danish debate was that the Eastern Europeans were not scared of getting caught, as a Danish prison in their eyes equalized a five-star hotel: meals served three times a day, offering the inmates sporting and educational facilities and to work inside prison and thereby make enough money to support their families at home. The tale of the five-star hotel had its origin in the story of 28-year-old Romanian Dumitru Pacuta, who was serving three years in a Danish prison after having been convicted of 24 burglaries. In an interview with the news channel TV2 in 2014, he had stated that a Danish prison was 'like a 5-star resort', that he found it 'a pleasure' to do his time here, and added that he felt 'no remorse' for what he had done. The TV station further made the journey to Romania to interview his ageing

mother in a remote village. The mother praised her son, as he frequently sent her money from prison, where he was able to work.[4] Pacuta came to serve as the prime model of the Eastern European prisoner: ruthless, indifferent, unable to feel guilt and a parasite abusing the benefits of the Danish welfare system. The interview fed into the already heated debate, where politicians on both the left and the right wings emphasized the need to send Eastern European inmates back to prisons in their home countries. As a consequence, the liberal right-wing party Det Konservative Folkeparti (The Conservative People's Party) articulated their 'tough-on-crime' policy, as Eastern Europeans were not frightened by the thought of getting caught, since a stay in a Danish prison was nothing but a hotel stay.[5]

The Conservative People's Party followed the proposed policy by posting a song on Facebook to fuel their campaigns. The song, entitled *'Stop de Østkriminelle'* ('Stop the Eastern Criminals'), was based on the tune of a children's song about a naughty kangaroo. The lyrics went as follows:

> Three Lithuanians went on a robbery
> They hid behind a hedge
> They beat up old Mrs Jensen[6]
> Took the money and were gone.
> *Chorus:*
> Then we yelled:
> Stop the Eastern criminals
> Before they rob again
> Stop the Eastern criminals
> And throw 'em in prison at home
> What rhymes on 'entry ban'?
> We hope that's what they got
> More respect for the victims
> This is the politics of the K.[7]
> *Chorus:*
> That's why we say:
> Stop the Eastern criminals … etc.[8]

The song was met with much critique, not least from law-abiding Lithuanians living in Denmark, and it was subsequently removed from Facebook. The issue was likewise raised in the Lithuanian media, where angry Lithuanians counter-argued the portrayal of their people.[9] The Lithuanian member of parliament Jurgis Razma wanted the subject raised in the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and he wanted the Lithuanian embassy in Denmark to take action. The Conservatives went on to explain that it was meant as a humorous addition to the campaign, but that they realized that their sense of humour was not shared by all. The song and its later removal stimulated eager discussions on

social media in Denmark. Some people found that the song was straight to the point and its removal was yet another sign of Danish weakness towards eastern criminals, while other people argued that it was below decent standards. While the song was thus disputed from several points, it had still quite accurately described the popular picture of the 'eastern criminal' in the media and the political debates related to the problem. If we start with the description of the 'eastern criminals': they were typically Lithuanians, they were hardened and violent criminals (beating up old Mrs Jensen) and they were known for acquisitive crime. The political responses appeared as the need to enforce stricter laws and the demand that eastern criminals should not serve their time in Danish prisons but should be sent back to prisons in their respective home countries after having received their sentence. The song thus reproduced popular opinion and political responses.

In 2015 the Danish minister of justice, Mette Frederiksen,[10] from the party Socialdemokratiet (the Social Democrats), voiced the opinion that not only were the eastern criminals a threat to security in Denmark but they also undermined the normal interaction between citizens – based on trust. She added that the key to solving the problem was modern police work and cooperation with the police forces from Eastern Europe, while the proposal to close the border was but a political stunt by the Danish People's Party. She finally added that, although 'several' had pointed to that Danish prisons were nothing but a beach vacation for 'eastern criminals', she did not believe that removing 'the human aspect' of the prison stay would solve the problem. She did, however, work hard on making an agreement that would make it possible for Eastern European offenders to serve their sentences in prisons in their home countries. This excerpt was quoted in a newspaper article that highlighted that the number of Eastern Europeans in Danish prison facilities had quadrupled since 2006, and underlined the gruesome tales of robberies committed by Eastern Europeans.[11] The comments from the Danish minister of justice show that, although there were internal differences between left- and right-wing parties on how to stop the Eastern European offenders (regarding border control/police cooperation), there was actually consensus on the issue of sending them back to their home countries to serve their sentences. In addition, the assumption of Danish prisons being 'beach vacations' or 'hotel stays' appeared again and again, although there was no real evidence to back this claim up – apart from the remarks made by Pacuta.

The debate about eastern criminals was not new as such, but was being brought back to the limelight owing to the upcoming elections. Concerns over 'eastern crime' and not least the burden it caused the Danish taxpayers, had been returning in the media, often brought up by yellow press newspapers advertising new crimes and criminals from the east. While the above-mentioned examples derive from 2014–2015, the topic resurfaces again from time to time. In December 2018 the news reported on the possible establishment of a Danish prison in Lithuania's capital, Vilnius, as a way to 'send them to prison at

home', as it was formulated in the song made by the Conservative Party. While news reports confirm political action from Denmark's side, Lithuania, however, will not confirm the existence of these political discussions.[12]

Eastern Criminals and Moral Panics

The above example from the Danish elections is a classic example of a 'moral panic'. As Cohen (2002 [1972]) explains, calling something a moral panic does not mean that the thing in itself does not exist. Rather, it points to that the issue is highly angled to fit a certain political discourse (here tough on crime, closed borders) and that atypical examples are used as 'typical' for the situation as such. In our example, we can point to Pacuta, who received much attention from the media and from politicians, even though he was by no means representative of the vast majority of Eastern European offenders.

Moral panics also follow a certain pattern, from an event – or repeating events – that lead to general concern. This vibe is caught by the media, which then publishes extensively on the subject and thereby creates a picture of the immanent and current threat to society. In Denmark, the panic has been carried by newspaper articles with 'shocking' headlines that focused attention on the imminent danger. A few examples of headlines are: 'Close the Borders!' 'This Is How the Eastern Criminals Swindle the Danes', 'Eastern Criminals behind Bars Cost Us 100 Million a Year', 'The Police about Eastern Criminals: Warn the Elderly' and 'Jailors Demand "Discount Cells" for Eastern Criminals',[13] to mention but a few. According to Cohen (2002 [1972]), the media panic is continued by political action: exposed to the growing societal threat, politicians are called on to do something. In Denmark, the first and foremost political response has been to close the border or attempt to send them to prison facilities in their home countries. The latter, however, has not been working in practice, as an inmate needs to have at least six months of his sentence left in order to be able to serve the remaining time at home (after receiving his sentence). As we know, most Lithuanians are out in six months, and do not even get to a Danish prison, let alone a Lithuanian one. They serve all their time in detention. Thus, this response merely has the function of showing political will.

The case of the Danish People's Party likewise shows us how the emergence of new folk devils efficiently is used to shape and create society, as pointed out in the Introduction to this volume. In Benedict Anderson's (1991 [1983]) work about *imagined communities*, he explains how nations are powerful constructions due to people's ability to imagine them being real, and the unity felt with fellow citizens. In the current example we likewise see how the perception of Denmark inevitably grows stronger, as mobile criminals become instruments to support ideas of closed borders (which are very concrete instruments to define the nation) as well as ideas of what the Danish nation is – a society based on trust between people, as explained by the minister of justice – as a contrast

to the current threat. Thereby, the threat from outside is a strong tool in both defining the physical borders of the nation as well as a helping us defining and not least imagining that very society.

If we dwell further on Cohen's moral panic, I would like to bring language into attention. The Danish philosopher Peter Kemp (1991) has explained how the words used to describe certain people influence our assumptions of them and attitude towards them. When we label people in a certain manner and actively use this vocabulary to describe them, this is also how we end up treating them. In this manner, words pollute our understanding of other human beings, as the spoken word is powerful. As has been further argued by communication consultant Knud Lindholm Lau (2018) in his analysis of the Danish rhetoric towards foreigners, there is a tendency to dehumanize and stigmatize various groups of foreigners in Danish society, by defining them as less human. Thus, when a general rhetoric towards Eastern Europeans is dominated by negative and devaluating statements, both by politicians and by the press, people tend to adapt their vocabulary – and their behaviour – to the words spoken.[14]

The word *østkriminel* was officially added to the Danish language in 1999, certified by the Danish Language Council. It was defined as 'a person committing eastern crime' – while 'eastern crime' was defined as 'criminal actions committed by eastern Europeans'.[15] Although the word is seemingly a neutral connection between the offenders' origin (Eastern Europe) and their doings in Denmark (crime), it still turns into a label where 'eastern' per se is negative. Paired with the word 'criminal', the negative circle is complete, as, when used as persistently as it is in Denmark, it ends up linking Eastern Europe with crime and offences. When further combined with attributes that promote their inhumanity (such as violence, roughness), the term 'eastern criminal' suddenly embeds further negative assumptions. In this way, the mere media circle already serves the function to stigmatize Lithuanians in general, but also Lithuanian offenders within the prison system.

Cohen (2002 [1972]) further elaborates the formulae for moral panics as bearing the following three characteristics. The first is that they are new phenomena emerging – yet old in so far that the evil in itself already is well known. In this case, we can point to the threat from the east that has also previously made Danes uneasy, albeit in a different form. Whereas earlier it was marked by the nearby presence of the Soviet Union, and ranged from fears of a competing ideology, Soviet spies and ideas of a roughened culture to fears of nuclear war, or nuclear disasters that materialized itself with Chernobyl, the threat has, after the fall of the Soviet Union, changed its form considerably. Thus, the eastern threat is old, but is now marked by political alterations and attempts to unite Europe.[16] The result is that what before was behind a wall now easily fluctuates through open borders.

The second feature Cohen points to is that the events leading to moral panics are damaging in themselves, but likewise warning signs of deeper and more fundamental problems. Here we can pay attention to the obvious and immediate

damage of burglary, but likewise the widespread local fear of open-border politics. Third, the events providing the basis for moral panics are transparent in so far that everyone can see what is going on, yet they are also opaque, as experts are called to explain the more cryptic issues of the panic. Linking this to my research, I – as an anthropologist working with Lithuania – ironically became the expert in question, as in a period around 2014 and 2015 I received multiple calls from both journalists and the police, seeking an 'expert opinion'. Taking these three aspects together, the Lithuanian offenders in Denmark came to embody a threatening 'other' and a manifestation of what is wrong in society. Thus, they end up as symbols of deeper societal trouble and concerns.

What we also need to keep in mind when dealing with panics, media and rhetoric is that prison facilities are only seemingly closed facilities. In reality, a large number of people, goods and information travel in and out every day (Reiter 2014). Importantly, people working in prisons and detention houses are also walking in and out and are being subjected to the same information as every other citizen in the country.

Behind Bars

'You know, they are having a good time here. It is like a five-star hotel for them.' The jailor smiled at me while nodding to his colleague, who instantly confirmed: 'They stay for free and get food every day. They also have TV.' As this was one of my first visits at a Danish detention centres, I was perplexed about the statement. First of all, it felt as if they needed to tell me this before I had even had the chance to start my interview with the two Lithuanian inmates in their custody. Second of all, the words quite accurately resembled the previously mentioned statement by the Romanian Pacuta, who had claimed Danish prisons to be five-star resorts. As it turned out, this would be the first but not the last time I heard the jailors compare the detention house to a five-star hotel. When visiting the detention centres, I often overheard statements of the inmates' 'summer holiday', 'hotel stay' or 'family retreat' (when people from the same family had been detained).

Some jailors issued concern that serving time in Denmark would not 'scare them away from crime' because, as a female jailor expressed it, the conditions were simply too good. 'They are used to a rougher treatment at home; they are not used to having it this good.' Another jailor expressed his surprise as I, on behalf of an inmate, asked if he could get the one phone call he technically was allowed to after being arrested. The jailor responded: 'They all want this phone call, but I do not understand why. Who can they call? Does everyone have a phone in Lithuania?'

The above statements, combined with what I had learned by holding a range of seminars on Eastern Europe for employees in the detention houses, had given me the understanding that the employees' background knowledge on the

previous socialist countries was very limited. When further combined with my interviews with Lithuanian inmates and the stories they told me about their stay behind bars, I could conclude that none of them could confirm that prison facilities in Denmark were like a five-star hotel.

The issue was combined with a general poor communication inside the detention houses. Many of the inmates spoke only little English; some spoke none at all and had to rely on their fellow countrymen to act as translators on the inside. It became a common practice for jailors to use a fellow Lithuanian to translate details about the sentence to an offender, despite the fact that this information was confidential.

Much understanding between the two parts was based on assumptions of 'the other', that is, an understanding of each other as inherently different. A concern expressed by several jailors during one seminar I held was that they found the Lithuanians' body language scary, as they appeared to be rough and masculine. This again made them uncertain of what their actual intentions were. Or, as one jailor expressed with anxiety, 'When they communicate internally in Lithuanian it really stresses me out. Because, I do not know if they are saying: "Can I borrow a cigarette?" or "Come on! Now we both jump on the guard!"' A further frustration was expressed among the guards, as they felt that some of the Lithuanians were 'playing games' with them. This was with regard to language. As one guard expressed it, he often ran into difficulties when he had to report duties to them regarding the rules of the detention, cleaning up the cells, drug inspections and other regulations. In these situations, they appeared not to be able to understand English, which made the conversations tiring. However, when a football match was to be arranged, or when they could get an hour in the gym or it was time to order their weekly groceries,[17] they were all with a sudden very good at English. Another common way to navigate the system was to select a 'favourite guard'. Among the guards there were always some who were more helpful than others, some who were easier to agree with or who did a little more to help the Lithuanian inmates. The Lithuanians were thus saving their requests for the day their 'favourite guard' came to work, whereafter he or she was subjected to multiple questions and requests. This not only gave these guards disproportional more work but could also affect their relations with their colleagues, who were less inclined to work in this manner.

The very understandable concerns of the guards thus derived from several sources: little to no background knowledge on the offenders, masculine body language and poor communication and a feeling that the Lithuanians tried to 'play them' when they suddenly did not speak English, and/or they felt they were manipulating working relations by selecting 'favourites'. From the perspective of the Lithuanians, who felt vulnerable in the Danish system of justice, these were their 'weapons of the weak', as described by James Scott (1985). A struggle plays out between a group with clear advantages and a group with clear disadvantages. Yet, the latter are still capable of opposing the superior part by

using the options available in an everyday resistance. For the Lithuanians, these were limited to body language and spoken language where they were able to create some discomfort for the guards in certain situations. A further factor contributing to the interaction between guards and inmates was that, when the guards actually heard reports on Eastern Europeans, it was the very same reports as the rest of the population, which painted a poor portrait on violent and rough 'folk devils'.

However, these often-inaccurate pieces of puzzles on the Lithuanian inmates led some guards to draw conclusions on how to interact with them. As one expressed it, 'We need to be a bit rougher with them than with the others. It is the only thing that they understand, that is what they are used to at home.' Or another guard commented, after I had finished an interview, 'I know they probably told you we are tough on them. But you know, they should not complain. After all, then they should not have committed the crime in the first place. They kind of ask for it.' Another bluntly stated his wish to put them on water and bread and isolate them from the other inmates, his only problem being that it was not allowed. What further puzzled me during these informal conversations with the prison guards was that their daily interaction with the Lithuanians did not seem to alter their assumption of them. While I overheard many assumptions of their roughness and masculinity, I only heard one story of an unfortunate incident with a Lithuanian, who had acted inappropriately and broken a window.

I addressed my concerns about the negative perceptions of Lithuanians behind bars to criminal investigator Christian Jørgensen, who had worked with 'mobile crime' for years. But he was not able to confirm the picture painted by the guards. He said:

> If there is one thing that clearly characterise the Lithuanians, then it is that they are not violent. When we get to their camp to arrest them, then yes, they will try to run. But they are never violent. If they are caught, then they know that it is 'game over'. I only once had an incident with Lithuanians, where a police officer was hurt. We had surrounded them and moved in on them. One of the Lithuanians was in a car, and he decided it would be better to escape by foot into the nearby forest. He quickly opened the door to run, but when doing so, the door hit a police officer that was approaching. The poor fellow got so distressed, that he did not even try to run after that. That's the only time someone was hurt – and that was an accident. (interview, May 2015)

As my ethnographic material bears witness to, there is an experience of the Eastern Europeans being a possible threat for the guards, and this affected the guards' attitude towards them. This was further stimulated by the everyday struggles of resistance where Lithuanians made use of a masculine appearance

just as those who speak English are furthermore capable of 'choosing' when they do and when they do not understand what the guards tell them. While some guards cultivated good relations with the Lithuanians, the idea still remained among some of the guards that this group stood out as particularly hardened, and as a group that needed a certain and rougher treatment than the rest, which again was understood as a provocation among the Lithuanian inmates, who in turn felt agitated to further cultivate the weapons of resistance they possessed. A vicious circle was closing. Yet, despite their daily contact with Lithuanians, and the absence of any actual violent episodes, the guards who held this opinion about the Lithuanian inmates did not change their attitude or ideas about them. A possible conclusion is that, when the Folk Devil image is this persistent, even evidence to the contrary is not able to affect the general picture.

Meeting the Devils

'You know, there are three kinds of answers you get in this place. Let me tell you!' The words came from a male at 30, with half-long blond hair and visibly muscular arms, which he displayed through a tight shirt. One of his arms was in a white bandage, as the police had used dogs on the arrest. Following this event, he had been escorted to the hospital to have the dog bites treated and to get a tetanus vaccine. As I had approached the detention centre, he had been more than eager to talk with me, as the mere boredom drew him to his limits, as he expressed it. A far cry from the violent devil portrayed in the newspapers, he was on his best behaviour, holding the door for me, taking out a chair for me, pouring me coffee, and only addressing me with *Jūs* – the Lithuanian equivalent to the German *Sie*.

'So,' he continued, 'you ask the jailors for something, let it be an extra cup of coffee, a toilet visit out of hours, a clean towel or whatever. So, they will either answer "no", – that means no. The second answer you can expect is "later". That also means "no". The third option is "I will think about it". It means… no.' He laughed a bit, although his general frustration revealed that he did not find it funny. He was, like the vast majority of inmates I talked to, uneasy about what he found to be an uneven treatment of him compared to the Danish inmates. While several of the inmates whom I already had talked to at the time were struggling with their English, the man in front of me had a university degree and did not express that this miscommunication was due to language barriers. It was other barriers.

He continued:

> You know, I have never been this low in my life. I really just want to call my family, but I am only allowed to when I get my sentence. And I do not know when that will be. I have been here for four months already, and every two weeks I show up in court, only for the police to ask for an extension. What gets to you the most is not even the loneliness or

> the actual sentence, what gets to you is that you never really know when this will stop. You just sit and wait, count the hours, count the minutes. I do not get this system, do not know what to expect. You just have this constant feeling that they look down on you, the jailors I mean, that you are a bother to them.

His narrative about the conditions in detention did not vary much from what I had heard from others. The main difference was that he was better formulated, and thus able to express himself more concisely.

A common frustration was the language, as they only had the right to a translator in court, just as all court papers were given to them in Danish, which they made little sense of. Others expressed being deprived of basic things that they saw were given to others: an hour in the gym, a bath, or some even narrated having been deprived of their daily walk in the yard for extended periods of time. One told of an aching tooth pain and a denial to see the dentist. In one detention I entered, I noticed a big blackboard in the hall with different names and cell numbers written on it. I asked the guard what the purpose was, and he said that these were the names of inmates who were exempted from work. In this detention the work consisted of folding paper stars for traditional Danish Christmas decorations. According to the guard, the doctor found this work ridiculous, and, when inmates complained of aching eyes, headache or an aching back due to the many hours of folding stars, he readily gave them a paper that certified their need for a period without work. During the interview I held with the Lithuanian in the same detention centre, he likewise said that he was displeased with the work, as the many hours of paper folding was hard on his back. I went on to explain him what the guard had told me about the helpful doctor. 'Well, I already talked with the doctor,' the inmate replied. 'But as he entered the cell, his first question was: "Are you from Poland?" I answered – "No – from Lithuania." 'There is nothing wrong with you,' he replied, and left the cell without even examining me. So, I still have to do the work.' Stories like this added to the Lithuanian inmates' perception of unequal treatment.

If we dwell with the perception of the five-star hotel, we can see that the perception of what a 'good stay' behind bars is varies significantly between the guards and the inmates. The guards base the assumptions on perceptions of a roof over their head, three meals a day, shower and sporting facilities, access to TV and sometimes the option to work as factors that promote a good and safe stay for the inmates, especially when they pair it with their own assumptions of the rough society the inmates come from. For the inmates, however, the story differs significantly. The mentioned conditions do not generate a positive stay, as their main concerns are not solely their physical needs but the constant insecurity they suffer from. This often starts with not being able to call home after being detained, as most detention houses operate with the rule that phone calls are only allowed when conducted in a language the guards can understand. Communication is only allowed by mail, but, as the police reported to me, they

often hold their letters back longer than necessary in order to put the Lithuanians under more pressure. The more psychological pressure they are under, the more willing they are to confess their crimes. Thus, separation from family and lack of options to communicate with them, paired with a general problem of understanding the Danish prison system, court documents given in Danish while receiving prolongment after prolongment without knowing when it would end, put them under a substantial psychological pressure. Combined with the concern about what awaited them at home – conflicts with their family, continued unemployment and financial difficulties – this puts them into a constant feeling of insecurity, which, as stated by Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann (2007), is as much a counterpoint to social order as open conflicts and disruption. One story of an inmate illustrates this.

Once I arrived at a detention centre in order to conduct an interview with an inmate. One of the guards told me that they had never had any problems with him but recently he had behaved differently, culminating in an event where he during his working hours had broken a window with a chair. After that he had been expelled from work. The guard found it strange, as the inmate previously had always been well behaved. Furthermore, all inmates valued the opportunity they got to make some extra money by working in the detention. As I went to talk with the inmate, a 17-year-old, he explained that the insecurity and the waiting time had driven him to his limits. It was almost time for summer exams, and he risked having to redo his entire school year if he was not released soon. As he was also a professional rower in Lithuania's junior rowing team, he was afraid that he would lose his place before the summer competitions. His parents were also worried sick, but he could not get to call them. He had been in detention for more than five months, and had already received his sentence. He was only waiting for the guards to inform him about his exact date of release. But for weeks they had not said anything. Every time they entered the cell, he had jumped up, as he thought that now it was time to go home. Eventually he had lost it, and smashed the window with a chair. He said, 'We have a saying in Lithuanian. A piece of glass brings luck [*šukės neša laimę*] and I am really in need of luck.'

Soon after he had told me his story, the guard arrived with a stack of papers. She said she could just as well could use the opportunity of me being there to explain when he would get released and go home. They had had the papers for a while, but she just had not got around to talking with him, she explained. As she arrived, the young inmate instantly switched to English, and the guard explained the plan for his return to Lithuania without any communication problems. As she left again, he was clearly relieved as he had finally got the information he had been waiting for.

As this instance illustrates, the lack of communication is a core point. It was the sheer pressure of not knowing anything, despite that fact that the guards had known it for weeks, that escalated with the incident with the window. And it was not due to language barriers that the information had been withheld, as he was very capable in English.

Concluding Remarks

Lithuanian offenders in Danish detention centres in many cases reflect a classic moral panic. They encompass the entire circle, from incident, over media attention, to political action, while we witness an escalating panic in the Danish society, as a certain group of people is stigmatized as a threat to society. The Lithuanian folk devil is not based on illusions or hysteria; he is real and tangible, and posing a threat to people's private property and their feelings of security in their home. He is a criminal offender. However, the story of how dangerous, inhuman and violent he is has taken its own life in public discourse and media, and is not representative of the vast majority of Lithuanian offenders. This addresses the question: when a panic escalates, what consequences does it have for the perceived folk devils? This again overlaps with the call from criminologist Yvonne Jewkes (2011, 2014) to go beyond numbers and statistics when conducting prison research and develop a more comprehensive picture of 'soft data' from behind bars in order to get an insight into the perceptions and reflections of 'the devil' himself.

Following the idea of James Scott (2015) that borders are created and developed in everyday discourse, we see how processes of 'bordering' are developed on an everyday basis, and grounded in perceived images of the Lithuanian offender, and that these images actually outdo the jailors personal experiences with the Lithuanians. Despite the fact that Lithuanian offenders are a weak group in Danish prisons, having difficulties in understanding and navigating the system, the idea of them living in hotel-like surroundings prevail. This is again based on the jailors' poor knowledge of their home country, which they perceive as highly undeveloped, dangerous and rough. What this case study points to is that a more comprehensive understanding of the devil himself provides us with another story of the panic, and which consequences the panic has for the people who are called out as devils.

As the narrative surrounding the panic appears to have a stronger influence on the jailors' daily interaction with the Lithuanian inmates than do the direct experiences with the inmates themselves, it tells a clear story about how powerful the panic is. While the borders between EU countries thus have become open, the social borders continue to exist, with profound consequences for vulnerable groups of people, who risk becoming further stigmatized – which in the end is no solution to the problem of mobile crime.

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Notes

[1] As I never encountered a female Lithuanian inmate, I will refer to them as 'he'. Talking with the prison guards, no one had had a female Lithuanian in their detention. Romanian women, however, were not uncommon. That only Lithuanian males were incarcerated led the prison guards to joke about there probably being no women in Lithuania.

[2] Danish People's Party.

[3] See Jens-Kristian Lütken, 'Meld en østeuropæer [blog entry]' (*Jyllands-Posten*, 12 September 2014, https://jyllands-posten.dk/debat/blogs/jenslutken/ECE7020943/Meld-en-østeuropæer/, accessed 25 January 2020) and 'Ny hjemmeside: Anmeld en østeuropæer' (*DR*, 10 February 2012, https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/udland/ny-hjemmeside-anmeld-en-oesteuropaeer, accessed 25 January 2020).

[4] See Julie Bjørn Teglgård: 'Rumæner: Dansk fængsel er som femstjernet hotel' (*TV2*, 13 March 2014, http://nyhederne.tv2.dk/samfund/2014-03-13-rumæner-dansk-fængsel-er-som-femstjernet-hotel, accessed 25 January 2020).

[5] See 'Konservativ retspolitik giver mere tryghed' (Det Konservative Folkeparti, https://konservative.dk/tryghed/, accessed 25 January 2020); Bendt Bendtsen, 'Pas på Danmark [blog entry]' (Bendt Bendtsen, 21 March 2014, https://www.bendt.dk/pas-paa-danmark, accessed 25 January 2020); Tove Videbæk: 'Nu skal der gøres noget ved de øst-kriminelle i Danmark [letter to editor]' (*Herning Folkeblad*, 13 May 2014, https://www.herningfolkeblad.dk/artikel/84931d19-480c-4720-92ba-8160938e3624, accessed 25 January 2020).

[6] Jensen is a very common Danish surname and is often used as a reference to the average citizen.

[7] K: Konservative (the Conservative People's Party).

[8] My translation from Danish. The original lyrics can be found on http://www.information.dk/535122 (accessed 25 January 2020).

[9] See for example Rūta Pukenė, 'Danai išsityčiojo iš lietuvių: plinta pašiepianti daina' (*Delfi*, 1 June 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/danai-issityciojo-is-lietuviu-plinta-pasiepianti-daina.d?id=68119044). In the newspaper *15min* the issue is also raised, albeit it here is claimed that the song is about three *drunken* Lithuanians. However, this is actually not the case. See 'Danijos konservatoriai rinkėjus vilioja su daina apie girtus lietuvius, kurie apvogė ir primušė moterį' (*15min*, 1 June 2015, http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/emigrantai/danijos-konservatoriai-rinkejus-vilioja-su-daina-apie-girtus-lietuvius-kurie-apvoge-ir-primuse-moteri-592-506693). All websites accessed 25 January 2020.

[10] Mette Frederiksen became prime minister of Denmark in 2019.

[11] See Ingelise Skrydstrup: 'Fylder i fængsler som aldrig før: Sådan skal øst-kriminelle stoppes' (*BT*, 8 April 2015, https://www.bt.dk/nyheder/fylder-i

-faengsler-som-aldrig-foer-saadan-skal-oestkriminelle-stoppes, accessed 28 December 2020).

[12] See 'Danmark forhandler om splinternyt fængsel i Litauen til udvisningsdømte kriminelle' (*DR*, 3 December 2018, https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/danmark-forhandler-om-splinternyt-faengsel-i-litauen-til-udvisningsdoemte-kriminelle, accessed 25 January 2020) and 'Litauen afviser dansk ønske om splinternyt fængsel til udvisningsdømte kriminelle' (*DR*, 4 December 2018, https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/litauen-afviser-dansk-oenske-om-splinternyt-faengsel-til-udvisningsdoemte-kriminelle, accessed 25 January 2020).

[13] See 'Læserne raser: Luk grænserne' (*Ekstrabladet*, 26 April 2015, https://ekstrabladet.dk/nationen/laeserne-raser-luk-graenserne/5539321); 'Østkriminelle bag tremmer koster 100 mio. kr.' (*Avisen*, 5 March 2012, https://www.avisen.dk/oestkriminelle-bag-tremmer-koster-100-mio-kr_161683.aspx); 'Politi om østkriminelle: Advar de ældre' (*TV2 Øst*, 18 July 2015, https://www.tv2east.dk/sjaelland-og-oerne/politi-om-ostkriminelle-advar-de-aeldre); and 'Fængselsbetjente kræver discount-afdelinger til østkriminelle plattenslagere' (*Politiken*, 20 February 2014, https://politiken.dk/indland/art5503042/Fængselsbetjente-kræver-discount-afdelinger-til-østkriminelle-plattenslagere). All pages accessed 25 January 2020.

[14] From the side of the Prison and Probation Service, there was awareness about the general language used about inmates (Danish and foreign inmates alike). There had formally been inserted a rule in Danish detention houses that inmates should be referred to as 'clients'. The idea was to change the guards' attitude towards them by changing the spoken language. However, in everyday practice the rule did not apply. As the guards said to me, they still referred to them as 'prisoners' (Danish: *fanger*), as this, after all was what they were.

[15] See entry on the Danish Language Council website https://dsn.dk/nyt/noid/?q=østkriminel, accessed 28 December 2020. Translations from Danish by the author.

[16] See also Chapters 2 and 3 with regard to how previous devils appear in new forms.

[17] In all Danish detention houses the inmates get the option of ordering groceries once a week.

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CHAPTER 12

When Cryptotype Meets the Imaginary

'Adultery' in a Sri Lankan Village

Victor C. de Munck
Vilnius University

> All observers are not led by the same evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated. (Whorf 1974, 214)

The subject of this extended case study is a Sri Lankan Muslim woman who married into the village of Kutali, where I lived and worked, and who was ostracized by the entire village during the three years I lived there (1979–1982).[1] She wasn't just ostracized; on the day of the birth of her fourth child (she was 24 years old at the time), no village midwife, not even her mother-in-law, who lived a few houses away, came to help. Only her husband attended the delivery of their child. When I found out about this, I was bewildered and curious. Why had no one helped? I inquired with many villagers and, while they differed in their stories (see the ethnographic section), they all mentioned that it was mainly due to Sakhina being an adulteress. Some explanations bordered on the phantasmagorical, detailing how she would have one or more men visit her nightly and she would quietly leave her husband in bed to enjoy sex with them. Some noted that, before she met her husband, she had been in love with a Buddhist man, who she still loved and met (though he lived some 50 kilometres away).

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Yet, despite village consensus that Sakhina was a wanton adulteress, there was no villager who claimed to have bedded her or volunteered the name of someone who had. One villager claimed he had witnessed someone leaving her home at night, but subsequently admitted, in private, that he had made this up to add some spice to the rumour mill (see the ethnographic section). Sakhina and her husband denied that there was any truth to these stories and viewed them as malicious gossip by jealous villagers. Yet, even if they were true, there were many other women who were known adulteresses. Most prominently, there was Miriam Beebee, who was married and called 'training grounds' (in English) as she was visited by young single men for obvious reasons. Yet, she ran one of the two most successful grocery stores (called *kadee*s) in the village. No one ostracized her; males and sometimes women joked and congregated at her *kadee*.

According to the *Sharia* (Islamic law), adultery (*zina* in Arabic) is punishable by death. Yet, in Kutali, few people were punished for adultery or premarital sex and mostly these were men. The central part of the punishment was being publicly beaten 101 times with a stick. However, the person administering the punishment did so with his elbow on the ground so that the blows were mostly symbolic and not painful. Second, after the punishment, the woman or man took a ritual bath, put on a new sari or sarong and was considered cleansed of sin. Everyone thereafter congratulated the person, who usually acted sheepishly, followed by a short celebration. Sakhina's case had never been brought to the Mosque trustee board, though probably everyone believed the rumours regarding her frequent affairs. Clearly, Sakhina was a special case.

In this chapter my aim is to uncover and explain the unarticulated and subconscious reasons for villagers' viewing Sakhina as a 'folk devil' and not any of the other women in the village who, villagers said, had committed the same sinful (*haramkootie*) act of adultery. According to Cohen, there are three main perceptual attributions to the construction of a folk devil. First, a group will exaggerate grossly the seriousness of the events and the amount and effects of any damage or violence; second, there are reports about the inevitable recurrence of the events linked to a folk devil; and, third, a form of 'symbolization' occurs that, on sight, activates perceiving the person or group as a folk devil (Cohen 2002 [1972], 26). For Cohen, the media and moral gatekeepers in a community (such as politicians) spread and promote this image of a folk devil, which leads to 'moral panic'.

Some of the above features fit villagers' responses to Sakhina as a kind of folk devil, as evident in their collective ostracism of her. But there are some features that don't fit so easily. This is partially due to Cohen's theory having been developed in England, where there is a mass media and a subcultural group to target as folk devils. There is no mass media or subcultural group in Kutali. There are no villagers who offer an explanation for why Sakhina is singled out for ostracism and not other alleged adulteresses. I found theoretical sources

to help answer this conundrum in the back alleys of my own field, cognitive anthropology, where there is a sparse and mostly outdated (1940–1970) literature on 'covert categories' (Berlin, Breedlove and Raven 1968; Black 1977; Hallowell 1955). During my search for additional theoretical material for the third revision of this chapter, I happened upon Benjamin Lee Whorf (1945, 1974), a collected volume of his writings by John B. Carroll (1956), and numerous writings on Whorf (Ellos 1982; Halliday and Webster 2005; Lee 1996; Taylor 1984). In these writings my focus was on Whorf's concept of the 'cryptotype', which he considered to be a deeper kind of covert category. It seemed to me a much better theoretical concept for apprehending villagers' aversion to Sakhina than covert categories – which remains in the realm of a linguistic structure. In this chapter I rely on this concept for much of my analysis.

I also searched for insight in an area I have studiously avoided owing to my positivist bent: the 'imaginary'. Tine M. Gammeltoft (2014), Byron J. Good (2012) and Claudia Strauss (2006) provided the main summations of this concept. The idea of the imaginary, sometimes used like the concept of ethos (Strauss 2006, 323), ought to contain, I expected, some theoretical insights that could help explain why villagers treated one presumed adulteress different from other adulteresses. Both Gammeltoft and Good view the imaginary in relationship to the state, politics and suffering. Both take a phenomenological approach in using the imaginary to explore how relations with others and their perceptions of self and the world change due to emotional distress, suffering, historical traumas and self-perceptions of the '"natural gaze" of the political order' (Good 2012, 26). As a phenomenological tool, the imaginary acts as a means to understand how real people who are marginalized or in distress view the world and are viewed by others. In terms of Sakhina, the imaginary points to identifying the collective imagination of the villagers who seem to view her through the same lens; it also helps 'make sense' (Good 2012, 25) of the obverse gaze of Sakhina as she views the villagers. The collective imagination of the villagers attributed Sakhina with a hypersexuality she did not possess and a status she did not deserve. Sakhina, on the other hand, reduces the villagers to the American equivalent of 'backwood rednecks'.

I begin by finding connections to other chapters in this edited volume. These connections create a sort of comparative web of significances that help situate this chapter into the larger comparative context of the symbolic roles folk devils play in society. According to Paul Joosse, in his afterword to this volume, Cohen was at best uncomfortable with comparative and macro-historical analysis, and sought to 'drill inward … to discern the social logics, endogenous to the panics'. Cohen explicitly rejected macro-historical approaches to folk devils, considering himself 'too close to the sixties' (Cohen 1972, 2) and too focused on the subcultures of unruly youths, which he listed as follows: 'the Mod, the Rocker, the Greaser, the student militant, the drug fiend, the vandal, the soccer hooligan, the hippy, the skinhead' (ibid., 3; see also Joosse, Afterword).

Further, he strongly identified with the symbolic interactionists, arguing that '[i]t is to this body of theory that we must turn for our major orientation to the study of both moral panics and social types' (ibid.). His drilling inwards lends to making it difficult to apply his theory beyond the European setting in which it is grounded. In drilling outward, we paradoxically also dig deeper inward by adding the concepts of cryptotype and imaginaries to our repertoire of conceptual tools for explaining the psycho-cultural processes by which folk devils are conceived. Second, this study extends the notion of folk devils to cultures outside the penumbra of Western Europe.

Making Inter-Chapter Connections

While the case of Sakhina is unusual, it links up with other studies that help shed light on how and why Sakhina was ostracized by villagers. Unlike the other studies in this edited volume, there are no political forces, no mass or social media portrayals, no fellow rebels, no examples of collective expressions of vilification, nor any indicators that villagers sense that Sakhina is but a harbinger of things to come. There are no overt, organized protestations that signal moral panic. There is only Sakhina, walking the streets of Kutali alone, riding buses to nearby towns without an escort, singing or humming pop tunes rather than religious songs as she is walking or playing with her children. How, then, does this chapter qualify in a volume on folk devils and moral panic?

A key concept by many of the contributors to this volume is the process (verb) and label (noun) of the 'other' being 'othered' because they are perceived as 'inadaptable' and 'dangerous' outsiders who reject insider culture (see Slačálek, Chapter 9). In the chapter by Svatoňová, the folk devil is identified with Judith Butler and feminists. Roma constitute the folk devils in chapters by Slačálek and Ivasiuc. The ensuing moral panic is captured with references to various social actions and expressions that articulate the negative attributes and culturally harmful actions of Roma as folk devils. These othered outsiders are perceived to threaten the physical and moral well-being of society. Khan notes how asylum seekers are perceived to threaten the cultural fabric of the UK. Harboe writes about how Lithuanian men in Denmark are perceived by Danes to be thugs and thieves. Danes profile Lithuanians as thugs who pose a physical threat to the good citizens of Denmark. Harboe also makes it clear that the sentencing of Lithuanians is biased due to a public perception of them as 'hardened folk devils', transforming 'law and order' legal representation into one based on 'law and border'.

I find linkages in other chapters that connect Sakhina to the idea of 'devilling' and moral panic. In Chapter 7, Svatoňová writes about the Czech anti-gender campaigners' that have produced an anti-feminist and LGBT+ moral panic. She notes that there had been no such thing as 'gender ideology' until it was created in the 1990s. Sakhina may represent a stage prior to the development

of a gender ideology, when the borders were hard and fast and everyone knew them so they did not need to be stipulated. But when they are crossed there is a collective feeling of discomfort, if not threat.

The point of this chapter is to provide a reasonable cultural-psychological explanation for why villagers bedevilled Sakhina and (more tentatively) why she expressed herself in ways that were by any stretch of the imagination *haram* (that is, sinful) from a village (if not more general) Muslim perspective. To engage in this task, I followed Cohen's injunction to 'drill inwards' (via Joosse). Drilling inward led me (oddly and unintentionally) first to Whorf, who first coined the terms 'covert categories' and 'cryptotypes', and then to the imaginary, a concept I had always rejected as an unnecessary addition to the jargon heap.

Theories: Cryptotypes and the Imaginary

In this section I will trace the development of Whorf's idea of cryptotype and then link it to the concept of the imaginary. The concept of cryptotype is a useful tool for examining and explaining the underlying subconscious mechanisms that allow people to believe and justify their beliefs in folk devils and then respond with a moral panic that is, from rational, ethical and empirical perspectives, not justified. While the twin concept of moral panic and folk devils have become 'key concepts' in sociology and criminology (Cohen 2002 [1972], i; Thompson 2005), they did not reach the shores of social psychology until the early 2000s (Pearce and Charman 2011, 293–4). Social psychologists were quick to criticize the theory as a sociological phenomenon that labels groups of people, which is then ratified and amplified by the mass media. The psychological mechanisms by which people (or the public) construct and accept the belief that some other(s) are folk devils threatening their way of life are missing. The two concepts promoted here are not the only means to explain how people come to belief in folk devils but they do offer a psycho-*cultural* explanation for how the folk devil–moral panic complex acquires a subconscious – that is, an out-of-awareness collective unity and currency.

Whorf coined the term 'cryptotype' to refer to what he called a 'second order' (i.e. deeper) covert category. The latter term refers to a collectively felt sense of meaning regarding some cultural practice for which there is no phenotypical sound concept to anchor that meaning. The meaning is consciously inferred or felt but not articulated. There are three different forms of covert linguistic categories. I describe them from the simplest to the most complex. The first example is the sentence 'The baby was named Helen', in which we know that she is also a girl, but knowledge of her gender is not phenotypically available to us. We need cultural knowledge about gendered names to know this. The second example refers to covert category labels, especially in taxonomies. One instance is that both a domestic cat and a lion can be called 'cats' but we cannot combine

dogs and wolves under the label 'dogs'. The former is an overt category because there is a superordinate label (or word) to subsume both, while the latter is a covert category because we can infer it but we have no word for this category. A more complicated version of this is found in Mary Black's (1977) discussion of Hallowell's (1955) presentation of Ojibwa categories of living and non-living things. It turns out that, since humans can shape shift to be rocks or anything else in the world, one something can belong to both categories – living thing and non-living thing – but there is no word to reflect this dual and, from a Western perspective, illogical dual membership.

The third kind of covert category is the most interesting. Whorf was a fundamental Christian Methodist, but he was also a mystic. He saw language as possessing a mantra-like quality or 'soul'. The phenotype – the sound of language – is exceptionally important because thought could not develop without language and the development of language requires speech that conveys meanings. Meaning is at some deeper non-verbal level. Meaning is pulled up (out of the subconscious) and transubstantiated into phenotypical strings that allow for human communication. Meaning is formulated via cryptotypes that, through their connection with the phenotype, form word-meanings placed in 'overt categories'. The hidden meanings in words come from the pool of cryptotype that can be dragged into words or that insufflate phenotypes with more meaning than intended or that can be articulated. Whorf referred to this deeper pool of 'second degree' meanings as cryptotypes (Whorf 1945, 1974; Lee 1996, 165). At this level of semiotics, meaning is generated in the interweaving of sound and 'soul', phenotype and cryptotype (Whorf 1956, 266). According to Whorf, this relationship of sound and soul is analogous to the wind and string instruments of an orchestra with the score. In fact, according to Ellos (1982, 147), Whorf saw music in mathematics and both as deeper types of language that expressed 'ultimate reality'.

In short, the phenotypes are mere sounds until they are connected to the cryptotype, which is really a semiotic primal deep structure. Language is where conscious meaning resides because it combines the source of meaning with a sound system for communicating meaning. Cryptotypical meaning is not overtly communicable and this insight allows us a means to theorize how villagers pack extra meaning into their use of the term 'adultery', otherwise their behaviour does not make sense.

We now turn to the more contemporary term, the imaginary, and what it can add to the idea of cryptotype. In her section on 'theorizing the imaginary', Gammeltoft (2014) navigates through a variety of different perspectives on the imaginary, moving from Sartre to Lacan, Althusser and finally Žižek. My takeaway is that the imaginary is a semantically redolent un-coded space because Saussurean constraints on linguistic referents are absent; more sociologically, it is the means by which we can imagine society, institutions and ourselves to be coherent wholes, and third that the imaginary is always 'politically inflected' – it is spurred by the inherent relational dialectics of power. Power, as we all know

by now, always exists in relationships that are at a tug of war, each seeking to increase power at the expense of others (Gammeltoft 2014, 157–60). Strauss (2006) points out that many have substituted culture – a loaded term – with the imaginary to lessen the load, but really this just conceals its equivalence. Strauss seems to me to agree with Lila Abu-Lughod's (1991) anti-cultural stance stating that anthropologists should, instead, show 'the actual circumstances and detailed histories of individuals and their relationships [which] are also always crucial to the constitution of experience' (Abu-Lughod 1991, 476).

Strauss posits a similar particularistic view of the imaginary by asking, 'Whose imaginaries?' She writes that 'Answering this question requires a person-centered approach … so that we are talking about the imaginaries of real people, not the imaginaries of imagined people' (2006, 339). She argues that imaginaries are constructed between 'indisputable facts' and 'a complete lack of knowledge' (ibid.) and consists of 'explicit knowledge of imagined facts, and implicit cultural beliefs, and dissociated, repressed, and fantasized knowledge' (ibid.). The takeaway point is that the imaginary seems to presume the existence of a subconscious field where particular cryptotypes are spawned through the reimagination of knowledge about 'perceptible facts' (Strauss 2006). The imaginary is always about power because it implies a relationship between real people in which the imaginary can alter that relationship in purposeful but disassociated or displaced ways.

Ethnographic Material

The dominant collective criticism of Sakhina was that she committed and continues to commit adultery. As noted previously, many other women were said to have committed adultery; one, Miriam Beebee, was even referred to as 'training grounds'. Why wasn't she reviled? Or why were no other alleged adulteresses ostracized? I often went to Miriam Beebee's store (*kadee*), 'owned' by her husband and father-in-law. Usually, Miriam was at the counter, bantering with customers. Tea, dried crusty bread and a banana were often ordered by adult male villagers, who sat on two benches in the *kadee* veranda or leaned against the wall, enjoying each other's company. Miriam would be the only woman present. No one saw her presence as unusual, nor did villagers mock her. I spent much of my time during the day 'hanging out' at various *kadee*s in Kutali. Almost all the men, when they weren't working in the fields, at the mosque, or conducting various business such as selling bananas, coconuts, mangos, *bidi* leaves (a tendu leaf in which tobacco is wrapped for local cigarettes called *bidi*s) and so forth to local merchants and some who came from as far away as Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The *kadee* was where plans were made; long discussions on any topic under the sun from sex to politics to local thievery and conflicts were ongoing on a daily basis. From my perspective, it seemed that for villagers and myself

(especially) the diurnal cycle and time in general was not oppressive. It was an immensely liberating feeling for me. Most importantly, my integration into the community depended on being able to become an accepted and relatively 'normal' member of these fluid *kadee* groups. It is here where I obtained most of my information about villagers' perceptions of Sakhina.

One of the things that was distinctive for me about life in Sri Lanka and, most notably, in Kutali that social life was regulated by norms of etiquette that constituted a covert category. They were not a set of explicit instructions, nor was I taught any of them; rather, over time, I simply internalized them. For instance, when an older man came to the *kadee*, a younger man would automatically stand and give him his seat. If one's father or any elder relative came, the younger man would also shift the subject of conversation if it were risqué or controversial to something more prosaic. If a younger man were smoking and his mother, father, sister or elder brother came by, the cigarette would immediately disappear. Also, when women came by the *kadee*, men would change the subject of conversation if it were about sex (which it often was). Men did not pay attention to women as they walked by the *kadee*, unless the woman happened to be Sakhina. Then the pitch of the conversation dropped; the men often lapsed into a momentary silence or sit as if in deep thought. Only after she had passed a certain distance would they start up as if nothing had happened. It was as if Sakhina had this 'magical power' to halt conversations by her very proximity. But, again, why?

One day at the *kadee* with many people present a villager claimed to have seen a Buddhist man enter her house at night. The villager said that he was walking past Hassan's house at night and heard a ruckus. He went over to investigate and saw a strange person in bed with Sakhina. When the man saw him, he ran, but not before the villager had boxed him on the ears. He said, with obvious scorn, that Hassan stayed, like a mouse, in the other room. I visited Hassan to confirm this story. He and Sakhina scoffed and noted that it was impossible to run out of their house from the bedroom without being noticed and the person who told the story would have recognized and identified the stranger but did not do so, because it never happened. I also had a conversation with the man who told the story; he admitted that he had embellished the story and had only heard a sound coming from the house at night; the rest he had made up for entertainment. The *kadee*s are places to make deals, gossip and meet friends. This story is probably narrative flotsam that served its immediate purpose as entertainment but not as tinder for a fire.

Surely, we would expect to find a villager who spoke one good word about Sakhina, but I never heard one. The villagers' avoidance and dislike of her appeared unanimous. In passing, I cannot help but compare the responses of villagers to Sakhina to the many news reports around the globe describing 'honour' killings of daughters and wives, or the gang rape of young women who go to the cinema or ride a bus alone. The typical explanation for these horrible crimes is that these women were perceived to reject normative, modest female

repertoires for behaviour. To my knowledge, Sakhina and her husband were never physically or verbally abused, nor had any villager even suggested doing them harm.

In what follows, I will explore Sakhina's life before and after she came to Kutali and the key moment when she assertively stopped me in order to vent about her life in Kutali. I will also discuss villagers' behaviours as they pertain to her or to people who shared some (but not all) of her qualities. My goal is to eliminate all other possible explanations for ostracizing Sakhina, except one: that of the cryptotype. A cryptotype that pulls together all the fragments of her masculine forms of behaviour, which, when taken as a gestalt, symbolize a revolutionary threat to the present patriarchal structure of gender roles and statuses. The notion of cryptotype is important to the theme of this volume, because a folk devil is more than a gang of men or women who appear threatening. The devil possesses the supernatural power to destroy life and capture your soul. The concept of cryptotype provides a means to apprehend that imagined, even awesome power, condensed in the cryptotype of the masculine female that I believe Sakhina symbolizes.

As a cryptotype, Sakhina is a metaphorical devil in that she represents a revolutionary model of gender for the Muslims in Kutali (and perhaps many globally) because she rejects the bundle of essentialized, ascriptive traits and status distinctions that come with patriarchy. I need add that I refer to Muslim cultural norms, rather than Islamic precepts regarding gender, because ethnography is a person-centred activity and my analysis (whether right or wrong) is informed by what villagers do and say, and not what is deduced from the Koran, Hadiths (Sayings of the Prophet) or Islamic traditions.

Sakhina's Family History and Background

Sakhina was in her mid-twenties when I met her. She already had three children and was pregnant. I hadn't paid her much attention and did not have any extended conversations with her until after the delivery of her fourth child. Most marriages in Kutali are uxorilocal, that is, the groom moves into the house of his wife, which was usually built by her parents and adjacent to their house. However, Sakhina was an outsider and moved to Kutali from Vyragama (a pseudonym), an upcountry town, where her family owned a large merchant store as well as a gem store.

Sakhina was the second youngest of five children; she had three elder brothers and a younger sister. She grew up in a large house attached to the family store. Vyragama seemed a 'successful' town: the residents appeared well off, the land was lush, there were two rice seasons (as opposed to Kutali, where there was only one season), there was much gemming in the area and the town was on a main highway connecting Colombo, on the west coast, to Kalmunai and Batticaloa, on the east coast. I visited Vyragama a number of times and

visited Sakhina's family. Her father and brothers ran the family businesses, and her mother the household. Her mother was a strong-willed woman who was comfortable talking with me about Sakhina. She told me that, when Sakhina was growing up, she always wanted to be in the shop helping her father and brothers.

Sakhina's father and brothers were more reticent in discussing Sakhina. They volunteered that she had had a Buddhist lover in Vyragama and this had caused great embarrassment to the family for two reasons: first, women are expected to be virgins at the time they marry and this rule is especially strong for rich or newly rich families who seek to establish a good reputation for themselves; and, second, while premarital sex happens, that a Muslim woman has sexual relations with a Buddhist makes the situation much worse. It sends a message to the community that Sakhina's family could not control her, and had not taught her the proper, modest and obedient modes of behaviour that befit a good Muslim woman.

Sakhina's family offered a bribe to the Buddhist man to stay away from her, which he accepted. Sakhina, however, became distraught when she was prohibited from seeing him and, though under the guard of her brothers and mother, would manage to slip away now and then to look for him. Her father and brothers described her as 'mad' (*pissu*) about this man. In order to minimize the shame and town gossip, Sakhina's family decided to find a marriageable man for her who lived far away. One of her brothers was friends with a bus mechanic who happened to be from Kutali. The bus mechanic's brother was single, and his family was looking for a bride for him. The bus mechanic's father had been the 'headman' of the village (*arachi mahatteya*) and the mechanic's brother, Hassan, was the village secretary, so he was educated and came from a reputable family. Hassan also needed to stay in Kutali to take care of his parents. Sakhina's family provided an excessively large dowry by Kutali standards and also offered Hassan's brother, the mechanic, a home and place of work in Vyragama. Primarily because of the value of the dowry, a marriage was arranged and Sakhina moved to Kutali. Hassan and his parents also received a substantial sum of money as part of the dowry. The only problem was love.

Sakhina did not want to leave Vyragama and she vocalized her love for the Buddhist man. Vyragama is a picturesque town in the hills with a year-round temperate climate. Her parents were well-to-do, and the large, newly cemented family home had electricity, running water and a private driveway. In contrast, Kutali was in the lowlands, carved out of a tropical forest that also served as one of the largest animal sanctuaries in Sri Lanka. Wild boar, rogue elephants and monkeys were among the many animals that made farming difficult. I witnessed a rogue elephant destroy a large section of paddy lands in a few hours. Snakes, leeches and mosquitoes are endemic to the area. Kutali is hot and humid most of the year; it lacked electricity, plumbing and even paved roads. The houses were mostly composed of dried, clay hand-made bricks, cow-dung floors, palm-leafed roofs, and wooden planks for doors, with bars for windows.

From Sakhina's vantage (as she described it), the uneducated and peasant world view of the villages was the most unbearable feature of the village. The first few years she frequently boarded the bus to return to Vyragama for visits. Her family discouraged these visits and told her not to come so often. As a compromise they would send Sakhina's younger sister to visit her in Kutali. Sakhina made her dislike for the village and its residents obvious at every opportunity. Perhaps that is a reason why villagers disliked her, but it is unlikely to be a reason for ostracism.

Just before my interview with Sakhina, she had a baby boy. She had the boy at her Kutali home; only her husband helped her through the birth pangs and delivery. There were a number of midwives in the village; none came to her aid. Not even her mother-in-law attended until the very end, just before the baby was born. In a conversation with her, the mother-in-law referred to Sakhina as '*haramkootie*' (meaning sinful, like a Muslim who eats pork).

Interviews with Sakhina and Villagers

Sakhina's husband, Hassan, invited me to the naming ceremony of their fourth child. It is the custom for Muslims to wait 40 days after the birth before naming the baby. It is always a grand occasion. They had repainted (or in this case re-limed) the mud walls of the house, the inside of the house was gaily decorated with colourful banners and balloons, and a makeshift canopy of bright-coloured saris was strung up, under which guests were intended to sit and be led in prayer by the village *lebbai* (a sort of Muslim caste recognized as part astrologer, part folk priest). Guests were to present gifts to the proud parents (usually cash in an envelope). The proud hosts are expected to provide food and cigarettes for the men.

On the day of the ceremony, I had put some money into an envelope and, with my assistant, 'Singer' Muthulingam (his nickname refers to the fact that he fixed Singer sewing machines), we made our way to the party. We were a bit late. As always on such occasions, I had with me a notebook and small tape recorder. Red and green paper streamers were strung between trees; the house had been decorated and there were trays of single cigarettes, *bidi*s and finger foods. No one else was there, not a single soul! I was not prepared for this; after all, why had they gone to such expense and trouble? Where were the *lebbai* and the mosque trustees?

Hassan and Sakhina were clad in new clothes. They sat, visibly disconsolate, under the canopy of their house, where it was cool. We waited for other guests to arrive and made some small talk, nibbled at the food and had a cigarette. No one came; an Anglo Jew from America and a Tamil Hindu were the sole attendees. After an awkward half hour (or less), we said our goodbyes. As we began to walk away, Sakhina shouted for us to stop. She asked me to turn on my tape recorder and she was going to give me her version of why no one, not even

Hassan's parents, had come to this celebration. She was direct and adamant. She ordered Hassan to pull up two more chairs and Singer and I sat facing the couple. She began to talk and went virtually non-stop for roughly two hours. Hassan sat next to her the whole time; he barely moved.

She told us of her life in Vyragama and how she had an affair with a Buddhist man who she still loved. She hadn't wanted to marry Hassan, but as an obedient daughter she felt obligated to do so. She acknowledged that she was deeply unhappy living in Kutali, but was resigned to stay because there was nowhere for her to go to. She continued:

> The women of this village are all jealous of me because I am rich and doing well … the lot of women in this world is hell; we are totally dependent on men, even I am dependent on this sickly man [nodding to Hassan]. What can I do? I go everywhere by myself, why not? Should I sit here by myself? I do that so many days, no one comes to visit. I sit here and sing songs. Here, listen [she sings a song]. For this I am criticized because women are not supposed to sing; so I should stay in the house silent?
>
> My husband is weak; I can't enjoy sex with him. Look at him, how could that satisfy any woman? [He did not respond] … I still love a man in Vyragama, he is Sinhalese, but what can I do? If only I had married him none of this would have happened. But he is also married now …
>
> So many women in this village are unfaithful; their husbands don't care for them and spend their money on useless things then come home and beat them up because there is not enough food to eat. Only then do women go and find another man. … They make eyes or go like this [gestures with her hand, palm down, hand slightly stretched out and finger opening and closing on palm]. But I will have nothing to do with these fools; they are all ignorant.

I expected that at any minute Hassan would tell her to shut up, but he sat impassively in his chair next to her. Shortly thereafter, I had an opportunity to talk with him. He told me that he was aware of village rumours and that he didn't socialize with villagers and professed not to be concerned about their comments. 'My wife,' he said, 'is unhappy but she is loyal to me; she works hard and she is a good mother to my children. What can I do?' Later he said that he did not believe she had committed adultery in the village and mentioned the story that I had previously discussed with him. He reiterated that it was untrue but that he could not convince villagers of this fact and had stopped trying.

Hassan's parents were in their sixties and they lived in one of the nicest houses in the village. The father was frail and sickly but the mother was strong and talkative. Hassan had pleaded with her to midwife the birth of his son, but she had refused. She acknowledged this and said, in effect, that Sakhina

'ate up' her son and she did not consider Sakhina a member of her family. Only reluctantly did she come for the very end of the delivery. Neither she nor her husband would talk or have anything to do with Sakhina, though initially they liked her and treated her well. I am not sure why they scorned her; they could not really cite the turning point.

Before I analyse the above materials, there are three brief case studies of outsiders I would like to present. The reason for including them is that one could argue that villagers ostracized Sakhina because she was an outsider and an adulteress; Miriam Beebee was an insider whom villagers are likely related to through multiple kinship links. A man in his sixties who had lived in the village, married and had grown children and grandchildren was still known as 'Columbo' because he had been born in the city of Columbo. He remained marginal in village political and power structures largely because he was recognized as an outsider and lacked the kinship ties that served as a basis for local power and prestige.

The next two cases are not about outsiders who moved into the village, but they do illustrate how villagers frame their understanding and orientation to outsiders. This is important because the main alternative explanation for why villagers treated Sakhina differently from other adulterous village women is that her adultery was compounded by the lack of kin to counter villagers' negative comments about her. The first case is one of a funeral that took place in the village just at the time a group of orthodox Muslims were visiting the village to eradicate folk Buddhist corruptions and instruct villagers on Sunni orthodoxy. The second story is of an elderly couple from a southern village who had come to buy gems in the village.

The Tablighi Jama'at is an Islamic organization that sends well-to-do, usually retired Muslim men, to remote Muslim villages in order to reinvigorate villagers' faith and to eliminate polytheistic practices that have crept into local religious beliefs and practices. Usually a group of five (or so) men arrive by van, sleep in the mosque, give speeches and sermons, go door to door discussing their mission (*jama'at*) and leave after a few days. On one such occasion, a poor villager had died and, as is the custom, was to be buried the following day. Some village leaders pointed out that the village, in particular this family, was so poor that they could not hold a proper funeral and the family and village would be humiliated in the eyes of the Tablighi members. Others argued that for this very reason they should invite the Tablighi members, who might offer a donation. Eventually, it was decided to hold the funeral in secret at an abandoned mosque and funeral rites were performed without the knowledge of the Tablighi members. This case illustrates the villagers' sense of a collective identity and their capacity to feel collective shame. More importantly, it shows how the villagers can individually, and without the urging of leaders or mass media, act as a single collectivity in the face of outsiders.

The next case study illustrates the amoral and exploitative principles that organized a hidden text constructed expressly as a response to an outside couple who came to Kutali for economic gain. One hot, muggy day in July, an elderly Muslim couple arrived in the afternoon by bus. The man had been a government employee in the southern coastal town of Dikwela and had recently retired. The couple had decided to take a good portion of their life savings to Kutali to buy gems. Gems, particularly blue sapphires, had been found in the region. The couple obviously hoped that villagers did not realize the value of these gems and they could make a tidy profit. About a week after their arrival, a friend told me about the villagers' response to the request for gems. At the time, no gems of any worth had ever been found in proximity of the village, and only occasionally did villagers try their luck at gemming. Nonetheless, the villagers, collectively, had bought cheap blue ballpoint pens, melted down the ink, smoothed it over glass shards and polished it up. It was an amazingly good simulacrum of a cornflower-blue sapphire, to my untrained eyes. The couple, who were obviously novices at the gem trade, were busy buying these 'blue sapphires' and, no doubt, thrilled by their good fortune. My friend told me that some villagers had decided that the game had gone far enough and they should cease and desist, returning some of the money. I came to the meeting when a group of villagers informed the couple that they were being swindled. Immediately, as if a switch had been turned, the couple slumped in sorrow; the woman wept uncontrollably, while the man bent to his knees and sobbed. The villagers managed to collect about 50 US dollars and put them on a bus back to Dikwela.

These examples illustrate how capable villagers were of uniting collectively in order to deceive outsiders. However, both collective acts were against outsiders with *no* ties to the village and were only there temporarily. If we consider the naming ceremony events as a case study, we can see how the villagers' response to Sakhina is analogous to that exhibited in the above two case studies. By denying Sakhina access to village life and also by refusing to accept her invitation to the naming ceremony, not only did the village exclude Sakhina from participation in the hidden texts that signify in-membership but they also excluded her from participating in the public texts that mediate public life with outsiders and insiders. Beyond the need to conceal their 'true' identity or agenda with Sakhina, the villagers also rejected the minimal requirements for social interaction. Sakhina was symbolically elided from both public and hidden social texts and made invisible. The difference, however, is that Sakhina is there permanently and does have kinship ties via marriage to the village. Further, the villagers did show respect to the members of the Jamaat Tablighi and some made some amends to the couple from Dikwela. No such empathy was shown to Sakhina and her status is not so much as an outsider, because the villagers interacted with the other outsiders, but as excluded from village society as if she were a kind of alien.

Imagining a New Cryptotype of Gender and Agency: Protecting Patriarchy

Joosse (2018) uses Donald Trump as a case study to explain the dynamic between charismatic leaders and traditionalists. He combines Cohen and Weber's theory of charisma to show that the folk devil, charismatic hero and traditional authority figures are in a complex dialectical and antonymic relationship. Using Donald Trump as his case study, Joosse notes that Trump is both a folk devil and a folk hero. Trump asserts his singular positionality as the only moral virtuoso and keeper of traditional values in the political world and thus only he can 'Make America Great Again'. All other politicians, Republicans and Democrats, are either 'lyin", 'crooked' or merely political (i.e. instrumental) in their claims. He is both Weber's charismatic hero and Cohen's folk devil. This suggests that people buy into one or the other political party not so much based on their own beliefs but based on their belief of what others believe (see also Paluck and Shepherd 2012). Both moral panic due to folk devils and the belief in a charismatic hero are based not in what one believes but in what one believes others believe. Thus, many Republicans believe that Democrats do not support workers, families, Christianity or democracy and Democrats believe Republicans love guns, are racists and are motivated by an animus of greed. For both groups, Trump is a transcendent figure: hero and devil.

My evaluation of Sakhina is analogous to Trump: for the villagers, she is a folk devil, pure and simple, but for readers of this chapter she is, most likely, a kind of hero, invoking gender equality and expressing her fundamental human rights. Both assessments tap into a cryptotype of how things should be. Sakhina and the villagers tap the well of some cryptotype that is more than two levels down. Perhaps, as Whorf (1974, 35–6) suggests, people draw phenotypical (that is sound/articulable) meaning from archetypes but the archetype encompasses more meaning than any phenotype or 'word'. When the villagers refer to Sakhina as an adulteress, they imagine more; they dig into a particular cryptotypical formation that can be identified through excavating those outcroppings of gendered behaviours that constitute a radically imagined 'bad' (and 'dangerous') woman. That radical imaginary is constructed as a cryptotype formed from a range of 'perceptual facts' that villagers collectively observe (e.g. Sakhina taking the bus alone, singing secular songs and the like) and from which a cryptotype is formed. The cryptotype is formed from these behaviours by creating a holistic image of a woman radically different from the range of bad and good women that constitutes the overt categories of women. In short, the cryptotype is comprised of a flow of imagined and culturally deviant behaviours that reflect symbolic opposition to the normative image of a Muslim woman (at least by the villagers). The cryptotype forms a gestalt of this woman, who cannot be consciously imagined because there is not a cultural representation of

such women; there is only one, Sakhina. In this sense, we can see that Sakhina is a devil and creates a suppressed pool of moral panic.

The three comparative differences between Democratic and Republican perceptions of Trump and how villagers view Sakhina are: Sakhina and the villagers are not overtly political antagonists; second, Sakhina stands alone: she is not a member of a group of feminists; and, third, hatred for members of the opposition party has a long history; social media also provides discourses for expressing anger, articulating arguments, and injecting fears with fictive scenarios of chaos and doom. No such fears could be articulated about one woman in a village.

If there were more women in the village to follow her lead, moral panic would probably ensue because a collective behaviour signalling a new gender ideology would be expressed. Thus, the moral panic is not due to one's own (direct) belief but rather in one's belief about what a group of others believe. Perhaps the fears would be further flamed in that Sakhina's 'masculine' signifying behaviours symbolically reject the religious ratification upon which gender discrimination is legitimized as a sacred deontic duty. The cryptotype in this case references an imaginary world in which patriarchy no longer exists and this is enough to 'endorse and enforce' (Elder Vass 2012) a collective ostracism of Sakhina.

In the case of Sakhina, the perceptible fact is that she is a 'bad woman', but her badness conceals the fact that her actions imply that women have equal rights as men; they too can walk and travel on their own and behave as autonomous, agented beings. In her perceived actions, she is covertly signalling that she deserves the same status as males in public arenas. That symbolism is bundled up and concentrated in the overt category of adulteress. As a cryptotype, adultery resonates across these cultural beliefs about gender roles and relationships, rejecting the hard sanctioned boundaries that define these roles. If the internal linguistic structure would meld with the external structure, then the cryptotype would become overt and at least recognized. Hence the imaginary allows for villagers to deflect the symbolic meaning of Sakhina's perceived behaviour and make it manageable. In that sense, Sakhina is both a folk devil and not a folk devil. She is a folk devil because she acts in ways that they reject and which subliminally express that women like her represent a threat to the patriarchal establishment. She is not a folk devil because villagers have reformulated her behaviour to fit with their normative scheme of the bad woman as adulteress. It is for the latter reason that she does not activate moral panic in the village, but it should be noted it is probably also for this reason that she is not harmed by villagers.

Notes

[1] All names of places and people are pseudonyms.

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AFTERWORD

Folk Devils

From Youthful Innocence to Conceptual Maturity

Paul Joosse
University of Hong Kong

An old saying often surfaces whenever we ruminate on the nature of evil, namely that 'the greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was to convince us he doesn't exist'. The exact provenance of the phrase is uncertain, but it seems reasonable to give credit to Charles Baudelaire (1975; Culler 1998, 87) who, writing from 19th-century Paris, was sceptical about the enthusiasm with which 'we moderns' sought to do away with old superstitions. In the postsecular moment, there are fewer places to hide (Berger 1996; Habermas 2008; Hadden 1987) and, if it is true that the Devil desires to remain inconspicuous, then this volume has certainly done the Lord's work. With a richness that only ethnographic and anthropological description can deliver, the various contributions contained here reveal a remarkably efflorescent range of 'devilish' manifestations in the contemporary world.

Much of the work contained in this volume takes inspiration from Stanley Cohen's (1972) seminal book, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, seeking to both a) redress an asymmetry frequently expressed in the literature with respect to Cohen's central terms (where 'panics' often receive more attention than 'devils') and b) bring Cohen's work *forward* – sketching a much more expansive empirical terrain within which the 'folk devil' concept can find salience.

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Rather than attempting to reiterate or extend this valuable contribution, I will instead endeavour to complement it, using these pages that have been generously offered to me to work *backward* – accounting for why the 'folk devil' concept was relatively constrained, in terms of its range of application, within Cohen's original vision. Of course, the various limitations of Cohen's first book have been discussed at length elsewhere, not least by Cohen himself (2002), but most of these relate to *panic* rather than devils. In the following, then, I will zero in on a coupling inherent in Cohen's original conception of the 'folk devil' – its association with 'youth' – as a means of accounting for why the concept never acquired the same level of uptake enjoyed by its more celebrated counterpart ('panic').

It is a strange disjuncture: even though 'scapegoating' is thought to be a universal principle of human conflict (Girard 1986), and even though scapegoating is perhaps most famously associated with the burning of elderly women ('witches') in medieval Europe, its modern social-theoretical descriptor – Cohen's folk devil – is most closely associated with fears about youth – and young men in particular. After performing a close reading of Stanley Cohen's seminal statements in *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, I assert that Cohen unwittingly ensured that there would be a close coupling between 'folk devils' and 'youth.' This resulted from, a) his epistemic preference for micro-foundational analyses, and his concomitant b) lack of interest in the macro-historical contingencies that placed young men at the forefront of moral concern at the particular time when he wrote. Despite his intentions otherwise, this approach has paradoxically led to the naturalization of youth deviance (Lesko 1996) and an obfuscation of its fundamental *moral* dimensions (Garland 2008; Joosse 2018a; Reed 2015).

Stanley Cohen and Young Devils

Why are youth so closely associated in moral panic theory? The origins of the relationship can be clarified, I submit, if we give heed to the historical and cultural context surrounding the 1960s, when Cohen was developing the ideas that would find their way into his first book.

This contextualization is something that Cohen himself pointedly avoided. At the time of his writing, Cohen largely refrained, for example, from exploring the larger historical context of the mods and rockers, since he felt himself to be 'too close to the sixties for such explicit understandings [of what he had earlier called the "*kulturgeist*"] to emerge' (1972, 2–3). Indeed, he derisively referred to contemporaries who were making grand epochal pronouncements as 'our instant cultural historians' (ibid., 3). Thus, while he leads off *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* with the oft-quoted observation that 'societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic', this gesture to the

comparative-historical dimension is fleeting and somewhat anodyne, and he quickly scales down the particulars of his empirical case (see, for example, the first chapter, as well as the section entitled 'Contexts and Backgrounds: Youth in the Sixties', 201–17). To be sure, Cohen did make note of the odd historical discrepancy (the centrifugal tightening of the panics during the 1960s, as compared with the 1950s, for example[1]) but these discrepancies are simply stated rather than explored or theorized. In his introduction to the third edition, written 30 years later, he acknowledged the degree to which his original statement was stamped by idiosyncrasies of the moment: his original formulation 'very much belong[ed] to the distinctive voice of the late Sixties' (Cohen 2002, vi).

By holding macro-historical questions in abeyance, it is clear that Cohen was also availing himself of an opportunity to play to his strengths. Cohen had never been interested in the contrivances of grand history, such that, even if a full historical account *were* to have been possible at the time of his writing, such explorations would have been a dalliance from his main (and explicitly stated) commitments to analysis at the level of interactionism (he cites Herbert Blumer and Ralph H. Turner as major inspirations for the work (1972, 252)). His compulsion to take his case and drill *inward* towards the micro-dimensions of day-to-day headlines was valuable precisely because it allowed him to discern the social logics, endogenous to the panics themselves, that accounted for how rules come into being, how they are applied, and how they shore up the social authority of some while depreciating (and ultimately bedevilling) the social status of others. A passing familiarity with Cohen's work is all that is needed, therefore, to sense a certain hollowness in his protestations about being 'too close' to his case – the great strength of his analyses stemmed from the fact that, for him, 'being close' was *the point*.

Be that as it may, when theoretical constructs are extruded through narrow empirics they are vulnerable to malformation. That is, to the extent that the 1960s became widely recognized as a 'creature of the youth', and to the extent that the social processes of moral panic were in those times almost exclusively associated with youthful perturbances of the social order, the 'folk devil' as a theoretical device stood in danger of being needlessly particularized – constituted in a way that would obfuscate the family resemblances that could comprise a larger, viable set of causally coherent social phenomena. The phantasmagoric procession of 'folk devils' that rush past the reader in Cohen's original description is indeed populated almost exclusively by 'depraved youth' (1972, 45), be they 'the Mod, the Rocker, the Greaser, the student militant, the drug fiend, the vandal, the soccer hooligan, the hippy, the skinhead' (ibid., 3; see p. 45 for a similar list), and it was inevitable that legions of others would offer up more recent cases to file strictly in this line (say, with punks, Goths, gang members, ravers, bullies, young Muslims etc.). But what the history of moral panic research has actually shown is that this list, which is overwhelmingly young and male, represents only a narrow band in the concept's wider spectrum of

applicability (Cohen 2002, 2011; Critcher 2008; Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994; Hall et al., 1978 [2013]; Hier 2002, 2011; Joosse 2012; McDermott, 2015; McRobbie and Thornton 1995).

A macro-historical contextualization – of the youth-obsessed 1960s and more broadly of the century in which 'youth' itself emerged – thus is precisely what would allow for a deconstruction of needless conceptual boundaries that threaten to limit the availability of the 'folk devil' as a tool that would be well-placed for explicating a wide array of empirical phenomena. Such a deconstruction would also, in turn, help to clarify the *principally* moral (as opposed to the gendered, generational or youthful) basis for the panics that devils inspire, thereby availing the concept to new dimensions of complementarity with other theoretical models, as the present volume demonstrates.

Historicizing and Denaturalizing 'Youth'

Even by Cohen's time, such a contextualization was becoming possible – and in fairness it must be said that some of those who were undertaking these efforts were far more serious than the unnamed 'instant cultural historians' that he dismissed (Cohen 1972, 3). One leg upon which this project stood was a growing awareness about the social construction of 'youth' itself. Whereas G. Stanley Hall had been celebrated in the early part of the century for 'discovering' adolescence (1904/1907), towards the mid-century social scientists were becoming increasingly critical of the biological reductionism that underpinned that work, particularly Hall's support for Ernst Haeckel's notion that 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny'.[2] In 1967, anthropologist Victor Turner had given a much more convincing culturalist account of 'liminality' that did not rely on such biological underpinnings. In 1960, Philippe Ariès had published *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime* (English translation *Centuries of Childhood;* Ariès 1962), which leveraged a broad historical perspective to service the stunning conclusion that 'the child' – so familiar, and so *natural* to us – is a fairly recent invention.

From here, it was only a short distance to the recognition that, as mutable cultural objects, the child and the adolescent exist 'at the pleasure' of a variety of interests that align with social power. Three years prior to Cohen's book, Anthony Platt's *Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (1969) described late 19th- and early 20th-century social movement actors as being every bit as much motivated by the desire to establish and advance their own their own positions in American society as they were seeking to improve the lives of New York's tenement children. A full historiography of childhood and adolescence is well beyond the scope of what can be provided here, but these few examples should suffice to illustrate that, within the intellectual climate of the social sciences at the time when Cohen wrote, the tide was turning in a way that was giving new-found confidence to culturalist, historicist and constructionist

approaches to youth and youth deviance. Cohen's *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* was undoubtedly a leading example of this trend in the sociology of youth.

The upshot of this historicization is that it helps to clarify the fact that the moral panics Cohen described hewed to youth subcultures not because of some inherent turpitude in the 'youthful spirit' (indeed, this would be the opposite of his argument), nor solely because of the interactions among media, politicians, and other social authorities (which Cohen described so well), but also because, in the *cultural moment* in which Cohen was operating, 'youth' had, largely as a result of macro-historical contingences, become the main troubler of the traditional social order. Put in another way, 'youth' had risen to equal if not displace other categories of distinction (such as class and religious affiliation) that had traditionally served as the locus of struggle for leading moral controversies. If moral panics were 'youthful' phenomena for Cohen and his immediate followers, this was because when he was writing youth were a particularly salient (but by no means solitary) cipher for decoding the moral economy itself.

As the present volume attests, we can now stretch for a much more expansive vision; an effort that dovetails with my own research into the ways that charismatic populism draws heavily on xenophobic, racist and gendered notions of what threatens society (Joosse 2018a, 2018b; Joosse and Willey 2020). In this afterword, I have sought to provide some historical context for the rather limited empirical course that 'folk devils' would take in social theory after Cohen's seminal work. But, since social reality is both deep and wide, history is only one dimension within which we may broaden our theoretical scope. Just as the past is a foreign country, heretofore underexplored social contexts – so many of which are brought to light in this volume – do much to open our eyes to the many ways through which 'the devil' can become known in the world.

Notes

[1] '[U]nlike the previous decade which had only produced the Teddy Boys, these years [the 1960s] witnessed rapid oscillation from one such devil to another' (Cohen 1972, 3).

[2] Haeckels's influential theory posited that individual biological/developmental processes are a microcosm of the evolutionary development of the species as a whole. Hall maintained that the "Sturm und Drang" of puberty was particularly prone to involve the expression of atavistic, 'beastly' natures.

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The devilish has long been integral to myths, legends, and folklore, firmly located in the relationships between good and evil, and selves and others. But how are ideas of evil constructed in current times and framed by contemporary social discourses? *Modern Folk Devils* builds on and works with Stanley Cohen's theory on folk devils and moral panics to discuss the constructions of evil. The authors present an array of case-studies that illustrate how the notion of folk devils nowadays comes into play and animates ideas of otherness and evil throughout the world.

Examining current fears and perceived threats, this volume investigates and analyzes how and why these devils are constructed. The chapters discuss how the devilish may take on many different forms: sometimes they exist only as a potential threat, other times they are a single individual or phenomenon or a visible group, such as refugees, technocrats, Roma, hipsters, LGBT groups, and rightwing politicians. Folk devils themselves are also given a voice to offer an essential complementary perspective on how panics become exaggerated, facts distorted, and problems acutely angled.

Bringing together researchers from anthropology, sociology, political studies, ethnology, and criminology, the contributions examine cases from across the world spanning from Europe to Asia and Oceania.

Martin Demant Frederiksen is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University. He works in the interface of anthropology and contemporary archaeology.

Ida Harboe Knudsen is a social anthropologist, whose research is focused on rural development in Lithuania and Lithuanian inmates in Danish prison facilities.

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