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Articles

The Driving Lesson as a Socio-Technical Situation. A Case Study on the Interaction between Learner Driver, Driving Instructor, and the Motor Car

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Abstract: A micro-sociological examination of the driving lesson raises the following question: How is the interaction between learner driver and driving instructor structured in this technical setting, and what meaning can be ascribed in this threefold constellation to the vehicle with its various technical elements? This case study examines the orientation patterns which exist between the learner driver, the driving instructor, and the car, which together constitute a socio-technical triangle, and what actions the learner driver needs to learn to enable them to drive the car safely. The theoretical background to the study is provided by interactionist theories, which have been broadened to include a greater sensitivity for the body and technology, and a sociological reading of postphenomenology. Using a method based on this theoretical background and informed by workplace studies, this study observed and made audiovisual recordings of driving lessons. This approach made it possible to undertake a detailed analysis of the situations, reveal how the human body interacts with technology, and how a person's attention responds to technical information. In these situations, the driving instructor takes on the role of the translator by mediating between various situational definitions—one's own, that of the inexperienced learner driver, other motorists, and the driver assistance systems in the car. The driving instructor represents the driving school as an institution that is responsible for creating an intersubjectively arranged understanding of how to deal with technology and socio-technical situations.

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motor car embodies several aspects of modernity: mobility, individuality, freedom, and social prestige. It is a key aspect of people's everyday lives, especially for certain social groups such as young adults, the employed, or people living in the countryside. Obtaining a driving license, therefore, constitutes an important moment in people's socialization. It is the starting point for people's independent spatial mobility and opens the door to greater opportunities for social participation. In establishing a social order for road traffic and ensuring the safety of all road users, there is a public interest in making sure that learner drivers clearly and demonstrably learn how to operate a vehicle correctly. Since the beginning of driver training in the early 20th century, motoring has become significantly more complex with regard to both automotive technology and the Highway Code. Learning to drive now takes several weeks, consists of a theoretical, as well as a practical examination, and costs the equivalent of a month's wages for people early on in their working lives. The driving school as a whole is of micro-sociological interest because of the multiplicity of situations that arise that make it necessary to reconcile the needs of people with different roles and expectations in a limited time and limited space. One of the most significant configurations in this context is the driving lesson. Whilst driving simulators are now available, the main focus of driver training is on gaining driving experience under realistic conditions. This brings together experienced driving instructors and inexperienced learner drivers. The car, thanks to various new technologies and driver assistance systems, is no longer simply a machine that needs to be operated. It gathers information that is intended to help the driver in their decision-making. Learner drivers and driving instructors must therefore not only be attuned to each other, but each must also be attuned to the car and its technical information. This triangular relation is the main focus of interest in this study. More specifically, this study examines the relationship between learner driver, driving instructor, and the car during a driving lesson, or phrased differently, it deals with interactive processes during a driving lesson. It is necessary to examine the relations between the three actors, as well as how these processes unfold because the situation in which they exist is never static. Instead, it is in a state of constant flux thanks to the movement of the car and the other road users. This study, therefore, seeks to document these processes and to show how a learner driver draws on them to develop the driving skills they need.

There have been several sociological studies about driving, but, first and foremost, with a focus on social norms in traffic and safety issues (e.g., Lupton 2002, Nazif-Munoz 2013). In contrast, this study's viewpoint is more in the tradition of researching movement and interaction in public spaces (like outlined by Conley 2012), faced with similar challenges in collecting data like Laurier (2008) and De Stefani and Gazin (2014).

This article is structured as follows: First, it draws on theories of social interaction and postphenomenology to establish the theoretical frame within which the analyses of the actors' interactions take place with each other and with technology. The second step builds on the first, setting out the research methodology and providing a description of the approach used here. The empirical basis for the study consists of video recordings of driving lessons. The material, lasting several hours, makes it possible to reconstruct individual processes in detail. Third, the

results section then clearly shows how the relations between the participants change depending on the situation on the road and what the role of driver assistance systems is. The conclusion discusses how driving competence is acquired and how to understand the role of the driving school as an institution.

Theoretical Frame

Of particular importance of all interactionist theories are the theoretical approaches put forward by Garfinkel (2002) and Goffman (1986) because they focus on the social situation and interactions themselves. The driving lesson is a classic face-to-face situation in which the interaction partners are facing—or rather sitting next to—each other. Initially, they do not know each other, but they must quickly become attuned to each other and coordinate their actions. This is aided by them adopting the ready-made roles of teacher and student, but these, too, are in a state of constant change depending on the situation. In this context, Goffman's (1983) interaction order serves as the sensitizing concept with respect to their interaction. Goffman's frame analysis and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology serve as the basis for analyzing the situation. The focus here is on how the interactional partners arrive at a common definition of a situation, or how they meaningfully interpret the events going on in the road traffic around them and agree on what to do. These theories are broadened here to give greater consideration to the body. This is because coming to a consensus with each other and acting in consideration of the other road users is not just about speech acts but also physical gestures and eye movements, so there is a high level of physical communication. Viewed phenomenologically, each consciousness experiences its situation which it relates to physically (Hitzler 1999:294). The socio-phenomenological question is then how it is still possible to bring these perspectives together as a common view of the world.

The question of physicality and the issue of finding a common perspective also play a significant role for the *third actor* in this constellation, namely, the car. Don Ihde (1990; 2009; 2012), in his postphenomenology, developed an approach for analyzing the relation between the physical subject and the machine.[1] Drawing on a phenomenological and pragmatistical foundation, he examines the role of technology in the relation between human beings and the world and posits a theory that can be used to categorize and understand the various types of technology based on how they are used. Technology can be used to enhance the human body ("embodiment relation") or to increase the transparency of a world which is inaccessible to human experience ("hermeneutic relation"). Using technology can also consume a person's attention to the degree that the world behind it disappears ("alterity relation"), or the technology continues to function indiscernibly in the background ("background relation") (Ihde 1990). Dividing up the technology in this way is also helpful for this study as it reminds us that we cannot speak of a car as though it were a single piece of technology, when in reality it is a combination of various piloting and assistance systems. In addition, this theory also includes the concept of the "multistability" of technologies (Ihde 1990:70; 2012), an instrument that not only analyzes the variety of

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[1] This approach tries to overcome a number of the limitations in phenomenology, which explains the use of the prefix *post*. It primarily seeks to give greater consideration to technology in relation to how people make sense of the world and position themselves in it. One of the best-known examples is Ihde's dispute with Husserl, who had described Galileo Galilei as a brilliant mind. Ihde (1990; 2011) countered by saying that it was primarily Galileo's ability to make lenses and place them correctly into telescopes that had allowed him to make his discoveries about the cosmos.

technologies but also analyzes the significance ascribed to them based on their use in socio-technical situations.

The theoretical framework upon which this article rests, therefore, consists of interactionist theories and a theoretical approach rooted in the philosophy of technology. But, if this article seeks to analyze the relations between learner drivers, driving instructors, and the various technologies installed in cars, it must also address the problem of how to combine these theoretical approaches. It, therefore, adapts the interactionist theories to allow for greater sensitivity towards the body and technology, and it gives the philosophy of technology a sociological twist by broadening its focus from the individual person to the social situation. This study modifies interaction theory into an approach that posits an empirical question, namely, how the technology intervenes in situations and how it is used by the actors involved. This means that the study is not limited to the effects and the interaction between the three actors, but the meaningful interpretation of action and the consolidation of interaction patterns in the driving culture as a whole.

Research Methodology

Interactionist theories and postphenomenology share an interest in concrete situations in people's life-worlds and how these run their course. Interaction theories have succeeded in demonstrating that there is no such thing as action in itself, but only action that takes place to achieve something definitive. In line with phenomenology, where is argued that there is no consciousness per se, but only a consciousness *of* something, not an experience in itself, but only *of* something, postphenomenology stresses that there is no such thing as "technolo-

gy-in-itself," but only a "technology-in-order-to" (Verbeek 2005:117). Of critical importance here are the situational conditions and how technology is actually used. As mentioned above, the defining characteristic of the driving lesson is that the situation is in a state of constant change as the people and vehicle move about. The methodological challenge here is, therefore, to give due consideration to all of these dynamic aspects. Workplace studies, which have their roots in ethnomethodology, have devoted considerable attention to both the technology and the processual nature of the action. Their basic premise is that complex environments contain an inestimable number of events and problems that require a spontaneous reaction (Knoblauch 2000:163). Situations of such complexity are mostly found in high-tech workplaces, hence the name of this branch of research, for which Lucy Suchman (see her renowned study *Plans and Situated Actions* [1985]) and Charles Goodwin (i.a., Goodwin and Goodwin 1996) are largely responsible. Garfinkel (1986), towards the end of his research, devoted himself to work-related processes, focusing on the physicality of actions. His work follows on from that of Merleau-Ponty and speaks of *embodied experience*, *embodied practices*, and *embodied actions* (Garfinkel 2002). What is decisive here is that these actions as understood by ethnomethodology are *accountable*, in contrast to consciousness processes formulated by Schütz, which otherwise play a central role in social phenomenology. Kissmann (2014:7; 2019:31f), drawing on Merleau-Ponty's concept of intercorporeity, states that movements and gestures are also meaningful and can, therefore, also be construed and understood both in the everyday world and in the world of sociological interpretation.

To document the interactions taking place in these highly technical contexts, workplace studies use

video cameras to record the events and subject them to detailed analysis. The methodology underlying the use of video cameras was most recently advanced and improved by Knoblauch und Tuma (e.g., 2020), who used technology in ethnographic settings and not only in workplace contexts. Video material permits the evaluation of language-based and physical interactions in detail, repeatedly, and without time pressure or a sense of urgency. However, it should be borne in mind that these data only depict a snapshot of reality. But, the recorded section can be precisely fixed in time and subjected to hermeneutic analysis. Against this ethnomethodological background and with a hermeneutic intensity, the principle concept here is that of sequentiality. This means that the data are analyzed in the order in which they happen, second by second, enabling the gradual examination of the composition of action and the actors' reactions to it. In contrast to interview transcripts, in which the text represents the only available data and that can be reproduced in a linear form, audio-visual material must be analyzed on several levels due to its density. This gives rise to something akin to the different levels in musical scores wherefore roughly the differentiation between language and visible actions is made, and which can be subdivided further depending on the field of inquiry.

The Study

This study is a piece of ethnographic research conducted in two driving schools in German cities between September 2016 and March 2019. The data consist of participant observation of driving lessons, video recordings of these lessons, analyses of the technology in the vehicles, the underlying legal and economic frameworks, and interviews with a range of actors in situ.

The first three observations were useful to get an acute sense of the relevant processes. However, it became clear that the complexity of these situations demanded some adaptation in the methical approach to getting a closer look at the interaction on the micro-level. Hence, driving lessons were recorded using a camera that was positioned in the middle of the back seat and had a view of the learner driver, the driving instructor, the dashboard, and the traffic situation in front of the car.[2]

Figure 1. Still Image from the Video Recording (defamiliarized)

Source: Self-elaboration.

For this inquiry, the data are provisionally restricted to these observed, as well as recorded driving lessons and which are mandatory for people learning to drive motor vehicles weighing up to 3.5 tons.

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[2] Data collection required several criteria to be balanced against each other. First, the degree of intervention in the situation had to be considered; second, the driving instructor's periodic safety warnings had to be taken into consideration; and third, the quality of the data had to be ensured. Ultimately, the back seat transpired to be the best recording position, although the camera had to be tipped to the side by the researcher whenever the driving instructor considered the view to the rear to be a relevant safety issue.

Whilst initial contact was with the owners of the driving schools, the key figures in the studies were the driving instructors with whom the surveys were arranged and who were responsible for establishing a connection with the learner drivers. Regarding the sampling, the aim was to observe typical situations during the driving lessons. Aware of this, the driving instructors proposed to join lessons like driving in city traffic, on a country road and highway, exercising parking, or filtering in a flow of traffic. After the first analyses and in the further course, the attention has been centered on the driver assistance systems. Similar to the idea of theoretical sampling in grounded theory, driving lessons in which these devices were of significance were chosen deliberately. A secondary sampling criterion was the observation of learner drivers with different levels of experience, whereas other criteria like gender or age could not have been considered in the sampling but have been taken into account in the analyses. After eight lessons, four of them with focus on parking assistance systems, and 17 recorded parking maneuvers, a saturation has been achieved and the data collection has been concluded.

Table 1. Overview of the Observed and Recorded Driving Lessons

Lesson	Date	Subject	Learner	Instructor	Method
1	09/2016	City Traffic	AA (semi-experienced, male, 18-25 years)	B (male, 30-40 years)	Participant Observation
2	09/2016	Country Road	BB (inexperienced, female, 18-25 years)	B (male, 30-40 years)	Participant Observation
3	10/2016	Motorcycle Driving Lesson	CC (semi-experienced, female, 18-25)	B (male, 30-40 years)	Participant Observation
4	10/2018	Reverse Parking	AR (semi-experienced, female, 17 years)	S (male, 20-30 years)	Participant Observation and Video Recording (37:14, 11:08, 21:34 min.)
5		Reverse Parking			
6	11/2018	Highway	AR (semi-experienced, female, 17 years)	S (male, 20-30 years)	Participant Observation and Video Recording (37:14, 25:18 min., interrupted due to technical problems during the second lesson)
7		Night-Time Driving Lesson			
8	02/2019	City Traffic	MS (inexperienced, female, 18-25 years)	S (male, 20-30 years)	Participant Observation and Video Recording (37:14, 19:59, 37:14, 11:39 min.)
9		Reverse Parking			
10	03/2019	Reverse Parking	RS (experienced, female, 18-25 years, deaf)	F (male, 50-60 years)	Participant Observation and Video Recording (37:14, 10:29, 28:51 min.)
11		Exam Preparation			

Source: Self-elaboration.

The main research interest is the interaction between the learner driver, the driving instructor, and the motor car. During the circular process of data collection and data evaluation, it becomes apparent that situations where assistance systems were used (or intervene automatically) are of vital importance. For the analyses, typical trouble free-situations and, in contrast, some key events were chosen. The latter are especially complicated situations that took place beyond practiced routines and required several acts of mutual consultation before they could be understood and mastered.

To reduce the density of the data, the transcription of the material was categorized as follows:

Table 2. Tracks in the Multilayered Transcript

	Visual Events	*Acoustic Events*
1st track	Eye movement learner driver	Speech learner driver
2nd track	Body movement learner driver	Speech driving instructor
3rd track	Eye movement driving instructor	Driver assistance system
4th track	Body movement driving instructor	Engine noise
5th track	Steering wheel position	
6th track	Position of the vehicle	
7th track	Readings on instruments of the central console	

Source: Self-elaboration.

The analysis is based on hermeneutic video analysis as formulated by Kissmann (2014). By dividing up the various acoustic and visual events, this study is constructed in line with what Kissmann (2014:8)—in

her critical examination of Goffman's approach—demands, namely, a separate examination of visual behavior, as well as speech. This explains why each track is subjected to independent sequential second-by-second analysis. After this has taken place, these separate parts must be recombined using a systematic approach to connect the different levels (Kissmann 2014:128f). This reflects the key characteristic of Kissmann's hermeneutic video analysis stating that the situational events are subdivided into their constituent parts before gradually being reconstructed to identify connections between them over time.

The Triangular Relationship between Learner Driver, Driving Instructor, and the Car

Learner Driver – Driving Instructor

Most learner drivers have already watched someone else driving a car as passengers. This gives them some general knowledge *about* driving, but not about *how* the driver is required to use their body and attention to actually drive the car. Indeed, just getting a car rolling in their first driving lesson is a considerable challenge for most learner drivers. In contrast, the driving instructors have many years of experience driving cars, have developed numerous physical routines that make driving second nature to them, and have completed a year-long course as driving instructors. This knowledge is not only subconscious, the driving instructors are also able to make this knowledge explicit and communicate it to others. In addition, they are also occupying a role that enables them to define a situation and to intervene at critical moments, since it is they who are responsible for safety during the driving lesson. From a social perspective, there is an additional asymmetry between the learner drivers and the driving instructors because the latter are al-

most always older than them and mostly men. Driving instructors communicate their directions and instructions mainly through speech. Sometimes they use more metaphorical language, such as when they describe the clutch pedal as a kind of sponge that the learner driver should squeeze out gently. And, at times, they give instructions incidentally through subtle gestures. The communicative contribution of the learner driver is, in contrast, relatively minimal, or they express their answers by physically implementing the driving instructor's instructions by accelerating, braking, or steering, which the driving instructor then reacts to in turn.

After the learner drivers have internalized the knowledge they need to drive a car, the routines they have adopted permit a second communicative level to be opened in parallel to the driving itself. The learner and the instructor then exchange thoughts about the music on the radio, the surroundings, school, and free-time activities. Their social relationship gradually becomes increasingly friendly. But, this can revert at any time, as shown by the driving instructor's ability to suspend friendly relations in complex road traffic situations, to reimpose their definitional authority, and demand that the learner driver take the necessary actions to ensure safety on the road. In particularly harmonious pairings, these two behavioral contexts can overlap. Situations then arise during the lesson in which the driving instructor uses their hand to indicate whether the learner driver should go faster or slow down, without interrupting conversations unrelated to driving. However, this does not constitute deep layering with multiple keyings (Goffman 1986:156f),[3] but the overlapping of several

frames (Schmidl 2017) in which the participants are in a position to sustain several situations and roles simultaneously.

Learner Driver – Car

In established theories, such as philosophical anthropology, the car in the driver-car relation can be viewed as an extension of the body which it uses to increase its operational range.[4] Individual components in the car can also be seen as extending or strengthening the body. For example, the body uses the brake pedal to transfer its muscle power through a network of rods to bring the car to a halt. This effect is enhanced still further by the car's servo-assisted braking system.

But, technology does not only assist the driver in the practical business of operating the car. Technology also helps the driver register what is going on around them. Parking maneuvers are assisted by rearview cameras, optical warnings on a screen, and distance sensors. One of the scenes I recorded reveals how the driver's sense of position is enhanced, but also made much more challenging.

> When reversing into a parking space, the learner driver first looks around and checks the road traffic situation. During the parking maneuver, she looks back and forth between the near side wing mirror and the rearview camera screen 16 times. In addition, the signal emitted by the distance sensor is beeping constantly and changing in frequency as she approaches the object behind the car. [Memo 21b]

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[3] Goffman (1986) describes several cases in which an event is subject to keying, when this transformative event is, in turn, transformed itself, and when even the rekeying can be transformed once again.

[4] Philosophical anthropology describes human beings primarily as beings of shortcomings and deficiencies (*Mängelwesen*) who must compensate for their deficient abilities through the use of technology (Gehlen 1957). The concept of "extension" was applied later by McLuhan (1994) for media as "Extensions of Man."

The learner driver does not look directly through the rear windscreen. Instead, she views the situation indirectly through the wing mirror and the image provided by the camera and uses the beeping signal emitted by the distance sensor to get a sense of her position. To be able to unify all of this sensory input, she must first interpret an abstract signal such as the beeping signal from the distance sensor. Here, we are dealing with a *hermeneutic relation* as described by Ihde (1990:80-97) because whilst the technology enhances the driver's view of the traffic situation, the driver must first interpret this information. This means, in this case, that the driver has to translate an audible sound frequency into a spatial distance in their mind.

More recent technical systems are even capable of using the data about vehicle speed and distances to other objects autonomously. In an emergency, the vehicle can activate an emergency brake assistant to prevent an accident. This kind of autonomy means that the vehicle becomes a "quasi other," a participant in the situation that must also be taken seriously, as described by Ihde (1990:108).

Overall, it is clear that the technical systems in a car are not just tools. They intrude into the driver's operation of the vehicle, and might well intervene autonomously to a greater degree in the future. But, this trend towards autonomous vehicles brings with it a number of ethical questions, depending on the degree to which the responsibility for decision-making is transferred to technical systems.[5]

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[5] The automotive industry differentiates between five different types of autonomous driving. The driver assistance systems mentioned here are level 1 systems. Subsequently, further systems such as automatic parking assistants were introduced (2), along with autonomous driving for long periods of a journey (3), fully autonomous driving (4), and complete automation of traffic (5).

Driving Instructor – Car

Interaction between the driving instructor and the car is minimal. Besides a few aspects of comfort and convenience such as adjusting the temperature, air conditioning, and radio, all of which are accessible to the passenger, the car is constructed so that technology is primarily accessible to the driver. The driving instructor's main focus is on the actions of the learner driver whom they are observing along with the road traffic situation. In an emergency, they are also able to apply the brake and prevent dangerous situations because the cars have been customized for driving instructors to give them a second set of pedals. Otherwise, the driving instructor's role is to mediate between the car and the learner driver.

Learner Driver – Driving Instructor – Car

At the beginning of their training, it is in the best interests of the learner driver if the complexity of the situation is kept to a minimum. Practicing parking maneuvers in convenient parking spots or quiet side streets means they are not required to devote much attention to other traffic, but can concentrate on operating the vehicle and listening to the instructions issued by the driving instructor. Managing to cope with a simple situation also reduces the learner's fear of damaging the expensive car (which is, nevertheless, sufficiently well-insured). In real road traffic, however, the complexity of driving the car increases; learner drivers try to cope with this situation by driving slowly and dealing with changes in their situation, and making decisions about their actions one at a time.

It is the job of the driving instructor not to further intensify the situation, but to notice when the learner is unsure of themselves and to provide the necessary

guidance and tips to solve the learner's subjective or situational problems. To do this, they must—to reference Goffman here—identify the different frames and place them in relation to each other. The driving instructors themselves have their definition of the situation and can, based on their experience, say with some certainty what course of action to take. But, they are initially unable to say how the learner driver is defining a situation because the learner is not in a position to explain what they are seeing and feeling. The driving instructor must, therefore, interpret the learner's eye and body movements to discover how the learner has defined the situation. If there is a difference between the driving instructor's definition of the situation and the learner's definition as interpreted by the instructor, then the instructor will issue instructions to the learner.

The car itself is a part of the situation to be defined. Learner and instructor alike both observe the position of the car and how it reacts during the drive. But, the car itself, equipped with modern assistance systems as it is, also contributes to defining the situation in some way (Schmidl 2017). Whilst it is not possible—at least not in a strict sense—to say that the technical systems contribute to defining the situation, they are capable of registering the road traffic situation and the actions of the learner driver. For instance, when changing lanes on the motorway, the driver assistance systems draw the driver's attention to other vehicles in the car's blind spot. They tell the driver when their vehicle is too close to another during parking maneuvers, or when a driver needs to perform an emergency braking procedure to avoid rear-ending the car in front. This kind of information, coupled with warning signals, helps a driver to operate their vehicle safely. But, they are also additional events that demand the attention of an already challenged learner driver. In a *hermeneutic relation*,

the information is not self-evident and requires interpretation, meaning the driving instructor must act as a translator between the driver assistance systems and the learner driver. The complexity of a situation of this kind and the instructor's role is demonstrated by the following example.

In the first step, every single track is viewed individually.

1   As can be seen in the first row, for example, the learner driver looks at the display of the rear-view camera two times, but then directs her full attention to the right-wing mirror.

2   She even moves her upper body and head to variegate the view in the mirror.

5, 6   As recorded in rows five and six, she neither changes the steering angle nor slows down.

6   This time, the car moves back and approaches an object behind it.

10   The reverse sensor detects this, and the assistance system starts to beep increasing the frequency of the beeping up to a continuous tone.

7   The red warning line appears on the display of the central console for the same reason.

3   The driving instructor looks at the right-wing mirror, as well, but then turns his view to the driver learner and monitors her orientation.

9   He starts to explain what the assistance system is showing,

4   and points to the display.

Table 3.1. Simplified Representation of the Transcript of a Reverse Parking Maneuver

	00.01.12	00.01.13	00.01.14	00.01.15	00.01.16	00.01.17	00.01.18	00.01.19	00.01.20	00.01.21
Eye movement learner driver	right-wing mirror	display	right-wing mirror				display	right-wing mirror	forward	
Body movement learner driver						straightens up				
Eye movement driving instructor				right-wing mirror					to the learner	
Body movement driving instructor						bends forward				
Steering wheel position	hard left									
Position of the vehicle	beginning of the parking space			moves back						
Readings on instruments of the central console	a rearview camera with augmented reference lines						a rearview camera with red warning lines			
Speech learner driver										
Speech driving instructor										
Driver assistance system		slow beeping				fast beeping				
Engine noise	gentle at a low rotation speed									

Source: Self-elaboration.

Table 3.2. Simplified Representation of the Transcript of a Reverse Parking Maneuver

	00.01.22	00.01.23	00.01.24	00.01.25	00.01.26	00.01.27	00.01.28	00.01.29	00.01.30
Eye movement learner driver	right-wing mirror								
Body movement learner driver	straightens up and bends forward					points with the forefinger to the right-wing mirror			
Eye movement driving instructor	to the learner								
Body movement driving instructor			points to the display						
Steering wheel position	hard left								
Position of the vehicle	moves back								
Readings on instruments of the central console	a rearview camera with red warning lines								
Speech learner driver				yes				yes	
Speech driving instructor		*Well, it is quite sensitive.*			*But, yes.*		*The back of the car*	*- can you see it? -*	*has touched the curb.*
Driver assistance system	continuous tone								
Engine noise	gentle at a low rotation speed								

Source: Self-elaboration.

In the second step, the different tracks of the event can be put in relation to each other. The first important point in time is the moment when the beeping of the assistance system picks up the pace (00.01.17), and the learner driver looks at the screen, which shows her the view provided by the rearview camera (00.01.18). After that, she relies on the right side wing mirror to establish her position. Even when the signal becomes a continuous tone (00.01.22), she still reverses a few more centimeters, but the driving instructor does not intervene. Instead, he provides an insight into his interpretation of the warning signal ("Well, it is quite sensitive. But, yes. The back of the car—can you see it?—has touched the curb."). He sees that the learner is directing her attention to the screen because of the beeping, and is forced into the role of translator for the technical system. He then confirms that there is, indeed, very little space behind the car, but that it is just the curb, and that there is no real danger despite the continuous warning signal. Whilst he tries to verify the situation by using the rearview camera (00.01.24), the learner driver is looking at the wing mirror.

To emphasize the crucial role of the driving instructor, another sequence can be used where he acts as a *translator* but in another sense.

Table 4. Simplified Representation of the Transcript of a Second Reverse Parking Maneuver in this Sequence

	00.34.00	00.34.01	00.34.02	00.34.03	00.34.04	00.34.05	00.34.06	00.34.07
Eye movement learner driver	rear window			display				
Body movement learner driver	head turns backwards		head turns forward					
Eye movement driving instructor	(not visible)							
Body movement driving instructor								
Steering wheel position	hard right							
Position of the vehicle	moves back	moves fast back				slows down		stopped
Readings on instruments of the central console	rearview camera							
Speech learner driver							*Was it too much?*	
Speech driving instructor					*Sh - - - sh - - sh - shsh*			*uh-huh!*
Driver assistance system								
Engine noise			revving					

Source: Self-elaboration.

Without writing out the single tracks and relating them, it can be outlined that the instructor's "Sh - - - sh - - sh - shsh" is the crucial point here. The driver learner moves fast backward in a sharp right steering angle and the car faces an unsafe turn. The assistance system remains quiet because, at the moment, there is no object nearby and it is not able to recognize such kind of danger. The driving instruc-

tor is forced to intervene and there are multiple alternatives to do so, for example, by saying "slowly" or "stop!" or maybe even applying the brakes himself. Instead, he chooses to play the role of the assistance system and imitates its beeping, starting with a slow "Sh - - - sh - - sh" and speeds up as the car picks up the pace, "sh - shsh." In this case, he does not try to explain the assistance system that seemed to be too sensitive in the other situation, he rather takes its place as a warning agent.

Both scenarios show how the driving instructor teaches the learner driver how to coordinate one's attention, incorporate the assistance systems in doing so, or anticipate events of sudden danger. Subsequently, however, at the end of the driving lessons, they manage to coordinate the technical information and their eye movements sufficiently well for them both to arrive at a shared definition of the situation and agree on a course of action.

Conclusions

What the learner driver does as a matter of routine in their everyday driving career after they have earned their driving license must be learned through hard work at the start of their driver training. They must learn to operate their vehicle following the Highway Code, to employ their body correctly, and to focus their attention. The key to doing this is in the practice they get during their driving lessons and in the interaction between learner driver and driving instructor. Practical driver training mostly takes place on the road, something which gives rise to unforeseen situations. Despite this, driver training is highly formalized because it teaches the learner driver a series of typical actions for typical traffic situations based on planning and rules. Because traffic situations are so complex, it is also the case that the

driver's attention might be divided between several different factors and that these can be interpreted in a number of different ways. The driving instructor plays a key role here because they have to weigh up the different stimuli and instruct the learner to concentrate on one particular event and react to it in a particular way. It is also becoming increasingly important for the learner to interpret the driver assistance systems correctly. This is because the car is no longer merely an object and an instrument, it actually provides additional information about the traffic situation and can sometimes even intervene in a situation itself. The driving instructors, therefore, occupy the role of translators because it is up to them to point out what information the learner should take into account and when (and when it might even be incorrect), and how the learner should integrate this information into their actions.

A learner driver's training can be considered a success when the driving instructor has succeeded in making their knowledge explicit and communicating it to the learner, who, in turn, incorporates it, internalizes it, and turns it into habitual knowledge. It is, therefore, important in this process for the learner and instructor to come to a common understanding of the skills and abilities—including technical ability—which are required to comprehend and interpret situations as they arise. Road safety is then little more than a consensus about what is happening and what to do about it. Consequently, the driving school is a social institution, the purpose of which is to ensure, in a multifaceted social and technical context such as road traffic, that this consensus exists based on shared knowledge and that it is clear to all road users what they can expect and what is expected of them.

In addition to these topics, it is also of theoretical and methodological interest for sociology how tech-

nology can be conceptually incorporated into these processes. Because we are dealing with a number of different technologies that have to adapt to various situations, it is not necessary to view technology as an actor from the outset. So long as we are not only dealing with functionality—for which the concept of *action* can be broadened and the differences between human and non-human actors can be set aside—but also sense-making, other approaches besides actor-network theory lend themselves well to describing the interplay between the various actors. This study proposes using postphenomenology and its granular view of human-machine relations.[6] Between the human body and the car braking mechanism that enhances the strength of the body, there is an *embodiment relation*. Whilst it is not possible for a third party to feel this relation and react to it, the warning signal emitted by the distance warning device, which results in a *hermeneutic relation*, is, however, audible to all and must frequently be interpreted in collaboration. Increasing automation in transport and communications is leading to an increase in autonomous technologies, which, as quasi-others, are creating *alterity relations*. In the future, what these advanced technolo-

gies are capable of registering and doing will present a challenge to the way human actors interact, as they might well find themselves having to cope with these "third parties" interacting with each other.

Henkel (2016:82f) identifies two polar opposite viewpoints in the discussion about what can be included in the social: only people belong to the social, or everything belongs to the social. However, this study calls for an approach that examines everyday activity and practice to identify the significance of individual technologies and what role can be ascribed to them depending on the situation. This proposal is based on the work of Lindemann (1999; 2009), who advocates undertaking empirical tests to establish how the social comes into being, what it is exactly that it includes, and where the boundaries of the social should, therefore, be drawn.

To render this empirical question of use to interaction theories, too, it is necessary to identify the exact points at which technology can be integrated and how. In addition, empirical social research can also for its part use technology, namely, by recording interactions with video cameras. Whilst this use of technology must be subject to further methodological thought, the recordings certainly make it possible to reconstruct the dynamic and situationally dependent relationship between actors and technology.

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[6] Other new approaches might also be included here, including posthumanism (Braidotti 2013) or, from the field of sociology, the theory developed by Knorr Cetina (1997) about a "sociality with objects" in a "postsocial" era.

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Fighting for Their Future: An Exploratory Study of Online Community Building in the Youth Climate Change Movement

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Abstract: While offline iterations of the climate activism movement have spanned decades, today online involvement of youth through social media platforms has transformed the landscape of this social movement. Our research considers how youth climate activists utilize social media platforms to create and direct social movement communities towards greater collective action. Our project analyzes narrative framing and linguistic conventions to better understand how youth climate activists utilized Twitter to build community and mobilize followers around their movement. Our project identifies three emergent strategies, used by youth climate activists, that appear effective in engaging activist communities on Twitter. These strategies demonstrate the power of digital culture, and youth culture, in creating a collective identity within a diverse generation. This fusion of digital and physical resistance is an essential component of the youth climate activist strategy and may play a role in the future of emerging social movements.

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The rise of social media platforms in recent decades has led to the more visible and active engagement of youth climate activists in critical issues facing the global environment and has fundamentally transformed environmental conversations. While youth activists were engaged in the fight for climate justice in the past (Blakemore 2018), the inception of the digital age, where technological advances in society have become inextricably embedded into the fabric of people's lives, has allowed social media to change the landscape of social movement mobilization. In 2018, Greta Thunberg pioneered the youth "Strikes for Climate" by protesting outside the Swedish Parliament. Within a year of her solo strikes, Thunberg became a prominent leader in youth climate change activism by documenting her journey on Twitter, where she built a network to promote her cause and generate a community of followers online. Thunberg is not an outlier, though. With the power of online media at their fingertips, current youth activists, many in high school or younger, are calling adults to action to right the wrongs otherwise left for future generations (Astor 2018).

Our research considers how youth climate activists utilize social media platforms to create and direct social movement communities towards greater collective action. This exploratory project examines narrative framing and linguistic conventions to better understand how youth climate activists utilize Twitter to build community and mobilize followers around their movement. Specifically, this project advances broader understandings of how social movements emerging on digital platforms could generate salient narratives that can build communities across global networks. In the following article, we will address some of the strategies used by youth activists to communicate and build a collective identity within their online communities. We utilize theories by Goffman (1959), McLuhan (1967; 1994), and Castells (2000; 2002), to understand the creation of digital networks and communities and to assess the changing nature of public figures within climate change movements.

This project uses digital ethnographic techniques to assess the development of the online youth climate change movement on Twitter. The main research questions are: 1) *How do youth climate change activists use Twitter to create community and shared identity among followers?* and 2) *How is Twitter used strategically to create narratives that mobilize community action among this group of followers?* Specifically, we examine what strategies youth activists use to build narratives around climate change as a way to mobilize support, with a focus on the linguistic conventions shared by the group, the creation of shared norms, and how they evoke emotional responses in followers.

Using digital ethnographic techniques, we assess the thematic content embedded in the Twitter feeds of seven prominent youth climate activists to examine how leaders of the movement build community in an online environment. Our analysis reveals three primary strategies employed by the activists that prove effective in building this change-oriented coalition around global climate action: (1) projecting an activist identity through the content generated in their tweets; (2) using both on- and offline tools to create multiple narratives that seek to attract and engage a global community of youth climate activists; and (3) engaging in broad political conversations using evocative emotional narratives to build connections that resonate with followers. While each activist develops and implements these strategies uniquely, they serve as a common thread throughout the activist Twitter accounts and may construct a roadmap for future activists attempting to establish an online social movement.

Digital Technologies, Youth Activism, and Emerging Social Movements

Online digital technologies have transformed contemporary social interactions in complex ways. Platforms, such as Twitter, serve multiple purposes, such as information sharing, user-generated content, and real-time interactions amongst individuals (Murthy 2012; Gil de Zúñiga, Copeland, and Bimber 2013; McFarland and Ployhart 2015), and expanding opportunities for public engagement (Effing, van Hillegersberg, and Huibers 2011; Kim and Adam 2011; Finlayson 2019). Social media sites offer a set of functions that transform information sharing and content generation. Hashtags, retweets, and graphics are common rhetorical strategies and linguistic functions employed online to build narratives via social media platforms (Shapp 2014; Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Yang 2016). These functions offer different methods of sharing content to weave a narrative between connected or disparate Twitter users around a given issue (Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Yang 2016). Some research suggests that the strategic functions and tools available on Twitter have proven effective in other social movements (Bonilla and Rosa 2015) and continue to play an important role in contemporary social movement organizing.

Some scholars argue that with the creation of more advanced digital technologies, the Internet has paved the way to connect publics online from anywhere, sparking a desire for individual or collective action and transforming social movement development (Park, Lim, and Park 2015). Social media has allowed individuals to share their concerns, facilitate discussions, and motivate publics by creating large online networks and expanding the reach of their activism (Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Yang 2016). This structure of creating emerging social movements reduces the hierarchical nature (Castells 2002) and allows all users

to share their ideas, contributing to global communities for social change (Chon and Park 2019). Murthy (2012), however, argues that social media is a tool for "ordinary" people to create content and share information rather than just individuals with significant power. It also allows ordinary people to connect with larger social networks using social media as a mediator, which suggests that online interactions can build equally meaningful social networks as offline interactions (Kim and Adam 2011; Willems 2019).

However, other work focuses on the harmful implications of data collection and management on issues of privacy and control (Pasquale 2016). This kind of surveillance may have implications for social movement organizations as their members are targeted by corporate and governmental interests. Further, the use of algorithms by social media companies boosts some messages and devalues others, which can have implications on how data spread (Pariser 2011; Pasquale 2016). Scholars who focus on online movements have identified issues related to "slacktivism" or "clicktivism," which allow for low stake and symbolic engagement in social movements, can be a side effect of online organizing (Christensen 2011; Cabrera, Matias, and Montoya 2017), as well as the fragility of larger-scale social movements that seek to translate into offline action (Tüfekçi 2017). This can increase overall participation, but leads to low investment (Christensen 2011).

Other scholars argue that analyses of technological impact become a form of technological determinism, presuming that technological change drives social progress (Wyatt 2008). The debate around theories of technological determinism is complex, and we do not embrace this model. Instead, we situate our work within the broader debate by arguing that technology can play a role in changing social norms, which can be at times progressive, and at other points re-

gressive. Further, we argue that social change and technology are reflexive rather than linear in structure. Specifically, evidence suggests that changes in communication and information technologies have been linked to changes in communication behavior and information spread (Haythornthwaite and Wellman 2002; Park et al. 2015; Velasquez and LaRose 2015). Our work examines these changes and patterns within youth climate change activism.

Although the long-term implications of online social movements are still unfolding, some research suggests that social media allows activists to create alternatives to traditional gatekeeping tactics exemplified in former social movements pre-social media (Park et al. 2015; Cox 2017). Similar to information control tactics evidenced in corporate institutions (Pasquale 2016), activists use social media to manipulate public opinion and mobilize communities. Emerging social movements that appear to benefit from the strategic use of information distributed via social media sites include #OccupyWallStreet, #ArabSpring, #BlackLivesMatter, and #metoo, attesting to the breadth and depth of online social movements in sparking global activism rather than simply reaching more localized communities or publics (Frangonikolopoulos and Chapsos 2012; Park et al. 2015; Cox 2017).

As digital technologies continue to expand, an increase in their use to connect users and spread information on global issues allows for a shift in how activist communities—or communities for social change—form (Chon and Park 2019). Activism, as expressed by Chon and Park (2019), focuses on the need to build collective understandings of what social transformations need to occur to create environments for transformational social change. By using the new digital platforms, as well as more traditional means of media engagement, activists share information that serves as the

foundation for action, uniting the group into a single collective, reconceptualizing the action-oriented nature historically necessary for the emergence of social movements, and leading to new understandings of commitment to the cause (Seo et al. 2014; Velasquez and LaRose 2015; Chon and Park 2019).

Further, social media provides an outlet for youth to share their concerns, generate knowledge, and be more politically active since they are not yet able to vote and face logistical limitations in face-to-face participation (Seo et al. 2014; Velasquez and LaRose 2015). The implications for understanding youth collective action through social media sites have yielded insights into the future of global activism and the social capital that can be generated online to mobilize public support for social change within underrepresented populations (Seo et al. 2014). Contemporary social movement literature demonstrates that the impact of digital activism is still unfolding. This project on the youth-led climate change movement contributes to this ongoing discussion by bringing together two fascinating aspects of social movement development. We examine the role that youth are playing in the climate change movement globally and how they use digital tools of communication as a mechanism to promote their message, mobilize publics, and form community through online networks.

Theoretically, we situate this project at the nexus of scholarship between McLuhan (1967; 1994), Goffman (1959), and Castells (2000; 2002) who develop theoretical perspectives that together explore the relations between the self, collective identity, and online communication. McLuhan (1967; 1994) emphasizes the importance of assessing the medium when analyzing online interactions. These online mediums disseminate messages uniquely, transforming how group communication occurs. Goffman's (1959) regions of

performance—the front stage and backstage—demonstrate how identity and the self are accentuated or suppressed during interactions. Online performances are shaped by the role of the media in mediating performance for the audience, navigating its features to curate front (online) and back (offline) stage performances. Castells (2000) integrates these concepts to understand the interactions between the Internet and collective identity through emerging digital platforms. Further, the Internet expands global connectivity, which produces a new language and medium through which individuals can negotiate meanings and identities (Castells 2002). This provides an important framework to assess changes in the ways that social protests can take hold online and in the streets.

Research Design and Methods

This project uses digital ethnography within an online field site, Twitter. Digital ethnography utilizes traditional ethnographic approaches, specifically observation and fieldnotes within a digital environment (Murthy 2012; Hampton 2017). Digital observation techniques require nuanced data collection that in-

cludes elements of content analysis to effectively capture the nature of digital communication (Hampton 2017). We began by developing research questions regarding the strategies employed by youth activists to build narratives around climate change. We were particularly interested in the way such narratives mobilized support, the creation of shared norms and vocabularies, and evoked emotional responses of followers.

The Twitter field site serves to replicate a traditional ethnographic field site by framing a community to be studied within the broader youth climate change movement. Seven activists serve as the informants to the norms and practices of the broader youth climate change community. We selected a purposive sample of online climate activists based on news coverage throughout 2019 to determine which faces and voices were the most prominent in the movement. Each Twitter account represents an individual that belongs to the online community, and their interactions are tracked through Twitter's functions—tweets, retweets, mentions, and hashtags—to identify interactions among users. Data were collected by extracting one month of tweets from these seven youth leaders in the movement.

Social Media Activist Statistics

Table 1. Overview of Twitter Data for Each Youth Climate Activist

Activist	Activist Username	Age	Country of Origin	Tweets during Time Frame	% Original Tweets	Followers
Lilly Platt	@lillyspickup	11	Netherlands	124	98%	11.5K
Haven Coleman	@havenruthie	13	USA	53	96%	11.4K
Isra Hirsi	@israhirsi	16	USA	134	77%	34K
Alexandria Villaseñor	@AlexandriaV2005	14	USA	156	65%	38.3K
Holly Gillibrand	@HollyWildChild	13	Scotland	186	45%	14.3K
Greta Thunberg	@GretaThunberg	16	Sweden	119	40%	3M
Jamie Margolin	@Jamie_Margolin	17	USA	2203	2%	25.9K

Source: Self-elaboration.

Data collection occurred over a 30-day period using NCapture linked to NVivo to capture tweet data and compile a dataset of tweets for each identified activist in the study. Digital ethnographic observation techniques provide a new lens to observe and be in conversation with the community to assess emerging themes and patterns through computer-mediated social interactions (Pink et al. 2015). Given the exploratory nature of the research, we used coding, memoing, and thematic development strategies from Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) to analyze the curated tweet content (tweets, retweets, and media). Hashtags were analyzed as a recurring pattern rather than exploring their algorithmic nature to develop unique tweet threads. Based on the most frequent patterns identified during the coding process that had strategic implications (Emerson et al. 2011), we identified the three strategies discussed in this article.

This project raises some ethical concerns in accessing the Twitter data of minors via their social media accounts. Since the accounts of these individuals were public and accessible through a public domain (Twitter), there was no expectation of privacy from observation and analysis of the content being generated—participants were engaged in public conversations in a public way. Since we acknowledge the voices of the original activists, the specific tweet language is easily traced back to the individual activists through a simple search, so the identities of the activists are not kept confidential and their names are used in the discussion of the data. This model of data collection was approved by a federally recognized Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Interpretive Analysis

Our analysis begins with a series of claims that frame our work. First, we argue that the examination of the activist narratives and strategies from multiple theoretical perspectives allows for rich insight into the construction of identity and community on online platforms. We believe that careful discursive analysis of social media, specifically tweets, reveals key insights that allow us to identify patterns of behavior that build community, which is central to the creation of activist movements. We also argue that the evolution of new digital technologies to disseminate a particular discourse to large publics has an important role to play in the future of social movements. In this work, we identify several salient strategies and activist narratives that are used to effectively build and mobilize communities for change.

We identified three major discursive narratives that demonstrate the use of Twitter to develop community and create motivations for mobilization around global climate issues. First, our findings suggest that the strategic presentation of self by the online activists exists along a rhetorical spectrum that ranges from "full-time activist" to "teenager with an activist orientation." Secondly, activists employ a narrative that creates community in both digital and offline spaces, utilizing the specific characteristics of Twitter, such as hashtags, retweet functions, character limits, and embedded multimedia. Finally, we identified patterns of communication that focused on the deployment of emotional language and evoked emotional connections as a call to action. Taken together, these patterns underscore the degree to which technology, discursive narratives, and strategic communications create a sense of global community.

Constructing Activist Identities Online

Through the strategic creation of identity and thoughtful presentations of the self, the activists

in our study created a sense of connection to other young people and other climate change activists. Furthermore, activists employed a range of presentations, which varied from activist to activist. Activists situated themselves within this spectrum, and in doing so created a relatable identity that allows for a sense of comradery and connection with their followers. Using the framework provided by Goffman's (1959) theory on the presentation of self, Twitter allows for the analysis of the front stage performance created by each activist in approximately 280 characters or less, to gain a following and build a community around the global climate crisis. Further, social media acts as a mediator for its users (Murthy 2012), allowing them to craft messages that create an image for followers to see as the core of their online identities, and is often presumed by the public to be their offline identity as well. By analyzing the tweets from each activists' accounts, we examine the ways in which they choose to present themselves via an online platform. This allows us to identify where each individual falls within a spectrum of different modes of activism, from "full-time climate activist" to "teenager with an activist or political orientation." We use this spectrum to evaluate how closely the activists' accounts meet the standards of their self-described identities as "activists." Some express very specific activist identities in their Twitter bios (e.g., @GretaThunberg self-described as "16-year-old climate and environmental activist with Asperger's #climatestrike #fridaysforfuture").

Thunberg, and other activists such as Villaseñor and Gillibrand, are examples of those who present themselves as "full climate activists." They frame their positions within the school strikes for climate, but rarely in other instances draw attention to schoolwork or other conversations typically had by teenagers. Rather, they present themselves (and

self-identify in their Twitter bios as "environmental" or "climate" activists) as full-blown climate activists on social media with an orientation towards inspiring younger generations to act. Thunberg's tweet captures this sentiment:

> School strike week 68. They say more than 500 000 people showed up tonight in Madrid! #fridaysforfuture #climatestrike #schoolstrike4climate #cop25 [@GretaThunberg, https://t.co/YAxPZt3fOU[1]]

While their "backstage" performances are not available via social media accounts, the actions they have taken in offline protests, the messages they craft via social media, and their self-described identity as an activist demonstrate how they strategically craft a front stage identity as serious activists. The content they generate online, in particular, is a selection of curated messages to build credibility and community amongst followers, by presenting themselves as knowledgeable and acceptable youth representatives of the climate change movement.

Other activists present a strong activist orientation online, but also situate this commitment to activism within an explicitly teenage identity. Margolin is particularly effective at presenting in this manner while still ensuring that her tweets focus primarily on climate injustice. She focuses on balancing being a "normal teenager" who has to do schoolwork and miss class to speak up about the climate crisis:

> Check this @TheEnergyTalk episode out!
> "We discuss how Jamie manages to balance her work as an activist while being in her final year of high school

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[1] All tweets presented in this work will include links to the original source material and are subject to Twitter Terms of Service, which specify reuse of content on Twitter Services is allowed with appropriate acknowledgments.

and dealing with the pressures that come with always being in the public eye in the era of social media." [@Jamie_Margolin, https://twitter.com/Jamie_Margolin/status/1198384129470951424]

This approach draws attention to the strain that the climate crisis places on younger generations, outside of the already stressful aspects of being a teenager. By specifically presenting herself as a teenager with a powerful voice, she seeks to inspire others to do the same in their communities. She also effectively reminds followers that she is not an adult, but is willing to step up and speak out about issues that matter to her on a global, public stage online, and increasingly offline. In this way, Margolin constructs her presentation of self as a struggle between her backstage performance as a "normal teenager" merged with her front stage, mediated performance, balancing teenage life and activism. Strategically, this has the potential to highlight both the importance of climate change activism to youth culture and to motivate adults to engage in the movement by evoking a sense of responsibility in older followers.

At the other end of the spectrum, identified as "teenagers with an activist orientation," activists show their continued support and willingness to raise awareness around climate injustice, but do not present the identity of "climate activist" as a pervasive part of their identity, at least as it is portrayed online. Activist Isra Hirsi effectively demonstrates this as her tweets heavily focus on diverse aspects of political activism, with a central focus on climate activism. She also is not shy to highlight the "real" her, as seen through videos or "TikToks"[2] with her mom:

_____
[2] A new social media platform to share "short-form mobile videos."

today on making my mom tiktok famous, we learned a tiktok dance. can you tell it's going well? @IlhanMN [@israhirsi, https://t.co/Ixeal0CtGb]

Hirsi, unlike the other activists analyzed, is uniquely situated as the daughter of a United States Congresswoman, and this may have implications in her self-presentation. Hirsi more so than the others shows glimpses of her personal life behind her activist identity—presumptively a glimpse into Goffman's (1959) backstage—but only via a limited social media lens which primarily showcases dance videos or "TikToks." So, similar to what is seen on Margolin's account, the "backstage" performance is still mediated via social media and may be better understood as a strategic front stage performance to garner favor among followers.

Further, the personas created online by each of the activists are often centered around "events" as Twitter has created a platform based on an "event-society" and the shared human experience as a way to interact and communicate with one another (Therborn 2000; Murthy 2012). Thus, no matter where the activists fall on the spectrum, they are using their social media presence as a platform to connect with others in a shared manner, whether it be frustration over the current climate crisis, frustrations over growing up too fast, or frustrations over the broader political environment. They are focused on engaging a variety of followers at home and across the globe to join in the youth climate movement.

Engaging in Protest: Digitally and Physically

A second major theme that we identified is the persistence of the youth climate change movement's use of a combination of very specific and unique online (digital) tools to inspire offline (physical)

and digital protests, within a global context. These activists present multiple narratives through their tweets that attract and engage a global community of youth climate activists. Each account shows a blend of two strategies, hashtags and retweets, to share their message, promote major events, and garner an increased following to help organize a movement that moves the public to act. The structure of Twitter allows for the creation of a community that exists within a liminal space and blends online and offline experiences. This is effective for activists because it allows for a more complex and experiential sense of connection among participants. This experience of both engaging online narratives and sharing their collective action offline encourages connection and a sense of community among youth climate activists.

Using the framework put forth by McLuhan (1967; 1994), the structure and framework of Twitter have emerged as an important medium for this particular analysis. McLuhan's statements on the importance of analyzing the medium of communication in understanding a message are highly relevant. McLuhan claims that communication between individuals and groups occurs not only through language, but also via the symbolic nature of communication mediums. McLuhan applies the concept of media broadly and argues that technologies shape how humans understand their world, and the information that they receive within it (McLuhan 1994). Examining the specific nature of the Twitter medium allows us to advance our understandings of how the message and mobilization within the youth climate movement occur, offering key insights for the future of online social movements. Twitter, as the communication medium, must be understood within the context of emerging information communication technologies (ICTs) (Carty 2011), where the cultural shifts to online communication across broader, more disparate networks globally serve to advantage the youth climate movement. Second, given that offline organizing (i.e., "Strikes for Climate") is a marquee aspect of the youth climate movement in addition to the online presence, Twitter as the medium through which this community organizing and activist mobilization occur presents as an extension of the physical suggested by McLuhan (1967). Twitter's popular tools and functions serve as their own unique medium to transfer ideas within the movement to global audiences.

Activists employ several Twitter tools—hashtags and retweets—to create this global online network and advance the conversation using a variety of narrative forms over the month-long timeframe of our data collection. Hashtags specifically prove to be a popular organizing tool that allows users, whether activists themselves or followers, to make connections between events and actions, to maintain a conversational thread around the same topic, and span geographic locations all using the same online "tag." The use of particular "contentious" hashtags directly drawing together stories from major events, be they political, natural, or cultural, relating to the purpose of the movement is more influential than employing hashtags that relate to more "routine" topics such as "climate" generically (Yang 2016). An advantage of online organizing around hashtags is that the spread of information can occur more rapidly than more traditional methods of communication used in social movements, as well as can reduce the hierarchical and limited nature of participation in the conversation. While not all hashtags generate popularity (Yang 2016), the ones in our sample that did work to advance the narrative around an event were able

to connect users from across the world and instill plans for future action and engagement amongst those followers. Key events during the analyzed timeframe are the global climate strikes and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP25):

Week 45 of my #schoolstrike4climate and #schoolstrike4nature in Fort William. Yesterday we went on strike for four hours in solidarity with youth around the world. My message to all the adults now is to VOTE for our FUTURES in the #GE2019 . #FridaysForFuture

[@HollyWildChild, https://twitter.com/HollyWild-Child/status/1200822077189697539?s=20]

This use of hashtags (#schoolstrike4climate and #FridaysForFuture, in particular) as a common thread amongst activists globally makes it easier to document much of their offline protests and actions using individual social media handles. Additionally, as the literature (Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Yang 2016) suggests, the use of images or pictures adds to the narrative by documenting offline action and inspiring other followers to join the offline movement as well. If the story or event portrayed in the tweet is supposed to evoke a sense of urgency for future action within the community, hashtags usually include a verb expressing this strong sense of force or urgency (Yang 2016), here seen in the use of the word "strike." Gillibrand's tweet demonstrates how

the use of rhetorical devices to engage audiences, particularly given the limited text afforded on Twitter, serves a greater purpose and imbues increased meaning in the emerging narratives of these activists and the youth climate change community. This can best be understood within the work of McLuhan (1994) who argues that the medium in which communication occurs sends a message to the receiver that is separate from the actual ideas communicated verbally or visually, but is still important. He argues that media create an extension of human senses that continually transform and reshape social processes and individual perceptions of the world. The extension itself, or the ability to see/hear and experience distant images or voices via technology reshapes human perceptions in ways that are independent of the actual content of the images or voice (McLuhan 1994).

Hashtags or tweets do not have to evoke a physical action as a response, but are also used to connect events and spread awareness or information within the movement. Hashtags as a medium of communication create a sense of connection and experience of linking distant things that exist independently of the message contents. For example, the use of #COP25 garnered a lot of attention in early December, creating an emotionally-charged narrative (Frangonikolopoulos and Chapsos 2012; Park et al.; Yang 2016; Cox 2017) where youth activists note the injustices they faced while attending the UN Climate Change Conference:

Happening now: Youth activists from all around the world storm the stage at #COP25 to demand real climate action! Dear leaders, your empty words will not solve this crisis. #YourVoteOurFuture [Retweet from @FridayforFuture by @AlexandriaV2005, https://twitter.com/FridayForFuture/status/1204693889392754690]

An utter failure.

#COP25 & conferences like it are intended to be actual negotiations to urgently drawdown global carbon emissions - not cocktail parties to make politicians feel better about themselves as they squash dissent & sell off our futures to fossil fuel interests. [Retweet from @AOC by @israhirsi, https://twitter.com/AOC/status/1205904994685345802]

Such tweets target the inadequacies of climate change policies globally and call out specific political leaders either by name or their Twitter handle to open a conversation about the lack of action taken to date. As both these tweets show, youth activists are frustrated with the continued verbal assurance that change will come, but that no firm action to reverse policies or problems that are currently fueling climate change has been taken. In pointing to such inadequacies, the activists may build the same sense of distrust and frustration amongst their followers and inspire them to join the offline protests. The use of the hashtag #COP25 connects individual stories over the multi-day conference through which the activist community, as well as the general public, could reorient itself from a community/collective to understanding the individual experiences as expressed through this online medium (Bonilla and Rosa 2015).

While hashtags prove an effective method of creating a vast conversation around these events, retweets are also a popular method of connection, most notably shown by Jamie Margolin (@Jamie_Margolin), as well as Greta Thunberg (@GretaThunberg) and Holly Gillibrand (@HollyWildChild). Their accounts show that less than half the content they generate is originally created by them. Instead, they focus on promoting and redistributing content produced by other users within and even outside the youth cli-

mate movement to build their narratives. Margolin's numbers are especially intriguing, as she generates only 3% (50 tweets) of unique content disseminated in her 2,203 tweets during the timeframe. This shows the power afforded to activists online to connect and share the messaging of other activists or users instantaneously when there is an agreed-upon message being portrayed. Additionally, retweets aid in coalition-building around major and minor activists in the movement as a whole.

As Carty (2011) introduces in her research, the emergence of ICTs has impacted the future of emerging social movements in a way unseen in prior movements. The overlap between digital and physical activism presented by these activists through their social media accounts suggests a shift in the way social movements will be sustained by activists. This analysis focuses on the way that these activists have used their social media accounts to bridge the why and the how by using the unique tools offered on Twitter—retweets, hashtags, replies, mentions, and more—to bring users together from across the globe and continue to showcase the worthiness of the cause, particularly from the youth perspective.

Emotional Narratives as a Call to Action

In addition to depicting an implicit focus on the political nature of the climate movement across the globe via large events and protests, activists are not shy in weaving into their narratives the major concerns happening to our environment in real-time and utilizing images and emotional appeal to create a connection. Framing this strategy within McLuhan's (1994) conception of a communicative medium, the message conveyed in these tweets serves a purpose. Given the limited character count afforded to those who utilize Twitter (280), graphics, links

to news media, or videos present a powerful message to audiences, again proving to be the extension of the physical deterioration of the Earth via online visualizations. This use of medium allows for significant control and deployment of narratives that evoke strong emotions, which emerge as a powerful tool for community building. The use of emotions, including fear, guilt, and even anger, creates a powerful discourse around climate activism that results in a moral imperative. This use of emotions is effective in creating a connection among young activists, but even more importantly calls to action older activists by utilizing the desire to protect the future for young people. This turns the "youth" of the climate change leaders into a powerful asset, narratively speaking, in implementing their goals.

In part, this is done by illustrating the severe consequences of global warming and the impending climate crisis. Each activist uses this strategy sparingly from November to December 2019, with Thunberg the most likely to return to the realities of what is happening to our climate, whether using original tweets or retweets:

> The air quality in Rozelle (inner Sydney) this afternoon was 2552! Hazardous is 200+!!! Where are you @ScottMorrisonMP? #ThisIsNotNormal #ThisIsClimateChange [Retweet from @StrikeClimate by @GretaThunberg, https://twitter.com/Travis4Climate/status/1204291757510479873]

Thunberg's tweets point mainly to the devastating wildfires that burned through Australia, but also broader issues of CO2 emissions and rising sea levels. By linking to a news article that explored the devastation unfolding in Sydney, Thunberg effectively advances a major concern of the movement—the future of our environment as a viable place to live—to millions in an instant and uses the inter-

active features of the medium, Twitter, to her advantage. Other activists follow a similar approach to Thunberg by presenting a panicked or angered response to global climate issues:

> Oxygen in the oceans is being lost at an unprecedented rate, with "dead zones" proliferating and hundreds more areas showing oxygen dangerously depleted, as a result of the #ClimateEmergency and intensive farming, experts have warned.
> #ActNow [Retweet from @ScotlandXr by @HollyWildChild, https://twitter.com/ScotlandXr/status/1203362108404043776]

Appealing to anger and frustration is a common approach taken by activists (Yang 2016), showcasing the severity and urgency of their claims online. However, in some instances, humor is also a way to engage social media audiences in conversations about tangible actions that could be taken against the negative effects of climate change:

> @medicsforfuture @zaynecowie Yes please! I am English we moved from London a few years ago! It will be great we could even go on the canal and do some plastic fishing! [@lillyspickup, https://twitter.com/lillyspickup/status/1200038436943458304?s=20]

This proves an effective approach to weaving a narrative around Lilly's choice of activism: a more individualistic approach where she often cites individual strategies and actions that can be taken to ensure that the public is aware and engaging in the change that needs to occur in local communities and across the globe. Additionally, in encouraging specific ways that the public could get involved to help reverse the impacts of climate change, Lilly creates a powerful sense of community around a particular cause or action that people could tangibly partake in.

However, fear and concern, rather than jest or encouragement, emerge as the most consistent and effective tool for community building in our data. Specifically, a growing fear of the future for youth, and the determination of youth to reclaim the power to reverse course. This fear manifests as a rallying cry among younger generations, an emotional appeal that attests to the uncertainty of their future and the actions that need to be taken right away. In general, these activists point to the insufficiency of policies regarding the climate that are created and implemented by older generations through traditional political processes that often favor business interests over the climate. Calls for action are demonstrated in many tweets by the seven activists in the study, similar to these:

> Every election is a climate election. Vote for your children. Vote for the planet. Vote for future generations. Vote for humanity. #GE2019 #UKElection [@GretaThunberg, https://twitter.com/GretaThunberg/status/1205068776787582976?s=20]

> My shopping list for #BlackFriday AKA #BuyNothingDay Join the climate justice movement in resisting consumerism today.
> Constantly buying things we don't need is destroying our planet.
> Skip the fads, and put the planet and life on earth first. #BuyNothing [@Jamie_Margolin, https://t.co/40kgGqWWwM]

These calls to action, rooted in a fear of the future, are strategically used to engage with political activism. Specifically, they demand that adults of voting age consider their responsibility towards young people and their futures. This creates a narrative of protectionism, in which voting adults are reminded of their social responsibility to young people. This highlights how social media has proven to be a particularly important avenue for *youth* activists to express political dissent and urge others to vote since they do not have a direct voice in current political processes worldwide. While embracing their identity as young people may result in stigma from some areas, the emotional appeals that are tied to youth identity are effective in creating a sense of community and urgency within their social environment.

Conclusion

This project contributes to ongoing discussions on emerging forms of social activism by examining the role of youth culture and digital technologies. The recent increase in social movements turning to digital platforms to expand their mobilization and community-building efforts has raised many questions regarding the practicality of online activism sparking offline action. While traditional theoretical understandings of social movements offer an important analytic framework for online social movements, Carty's (2011) conception of advancing social movement theory by fusing the various theoretical perspectives to analyze ICTs functions as the best starting point to assess digital activism.

While climate activism has spanned decades in offline iterations of the movement, online youth involvement through social media platforms has transformed the landscape of emerging social movements. Our project identifies three emergent strategies used by youth climate activists that appear effective in engaging activist communities on Twitter: (1) projecting an activist identity through the content generated in their tweets; (2) disseminating information and documenting offline protests in an online forum that inspires followers and ignites action for change; and (3) engaging in broad political conversations and utilizing emotional narratives to build a connection that resonates with the base of followers the movement wants to attract.

These strategies have several implications. First, they build a common narrative about the fear that young people have about their future on Earth, given that climate change may render it unlivable in their lifetime. This narrative of fear, rather than instilling hopelessness and apathy, has given rise to belief in the power of youth, and the idea that they will collectively rise up, which resonates with younger generations and older allies across the globe. This is evidenced by localized offline protests springing up in countries across Europe, Africa, Australia, and beyond. Further, the message and dissemination of information, images, and videos prove to be an important means to engage followers in an online forum and increasingly in participation in offline events. While this does not include all youth, it demonstrates the power of digital culture, and youth culture, in creating a collective identity within a diverse generation. This fusion of digital and physical protest is an essential component of the youth climate activist strategy and may serve as the foundation for the future of emerging social movements.

Despite the importance of these implications, some significant limitations to this exploratory project exist. First, due to the small sample size, and the specific nature of this community ethnography, the results have limited generalizability. Additionally, due to the emerging and evolving nature of social movements and technology, the long-term implications of this study are yet to be identified. This research naturally lends itself to a longitudinal study regarding the success of the youth climate change movement to further analyze the effectiveness of the community-building and narrative strategies employed.

A common critique of predominantly online activism is the concept of "slacktivism[3]" (Christensen

2011; Cabrera et al. 2017), which suggests that the use of online hashtags, or other mechanisms of interacting with a social media post—likes, retweets, replies, et cetera—is not a sustainable form of activism. Some argue that such techniques provide a guise of action or make the individual "feel good" about participating as opposed to mobilizing on the ground. With this critique in mind, the fusion of an online presence to share information and stories related to global climate activism and offline action, whether it is taking to the streets every Friday, attending legislative conferences, or organizing locally, has the potential to be an effective combination to enact real change in the future without falling victim to the issues embedded in slacktivism. Bonilla and Rosa (2015:7) point out in reference to #BlackLivesMatter: "[Social media] allowed a message to get out, called global attention to a smaller corner of the world, and attempted to bring visibility and accountability to repressive forces," a strategy that is also employed via these activists' tweets calling out global leaders at major events or through more pointed Twitter exchanges.

Additionally, further quelling fears of online activist critics, these activists identify the offline actions happening frequently across the globe, despite such events not gaining attention from more traditional news media. However, unlike other digital social movements that are impacted by online interaction, but are devoid of a continued offline presence (e.g., #metoo), the youth climate movement has wielded social media as an organizing tool similar to that of #OccupyWallStreet, #ArabSpring, and #BlackLivesMatter in its ability to disseminate information (Frangonikolopoulos and Chapsos 2012; Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Park et al. 2015; Cox 2017). Specific to the climate movement is the global nature of the issue, and thus its ability to reach a global population in its efforts, further supporting a need for the fusion

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[3] Also referred to as clicktivism or hashtag activism.

of the two strategies. Prominent figures within the youth climate change movement utilize communication methods within the Twitter platform that contribute to the visibility and growth of the movement. Activist identity, the dissemination of information, and connecting with broader political and emotional narratives all play a role in the emergence of this group as a visible voice within the broader climate change movement.

In past movements, the need for a central social movement organization to guide and organize the development of the messaging was an essential component of social movements, but youth climate activists have challenged this idea through their current movement-building tactics. While the need for offline organizing cannot be overlooked, trends—as seen through this project—present a compelling case for a significant online presence in future organizing efforts. As McLuhan (1967) and Castells (2000; 2002) point out, the Internet, the self, and society have become so interconnected it would be ill-advised to ignore the importance of social media as key storytelling and community-building environments for emerging social movements in the future.

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Citation

Between Political Myths, Dormant Resentments, and Redefinition of the Recent History: A Case Study of Serbian National Identity

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Abstract: The subject of the article concerns the issue of constructing and reconstructing national identity. The object of interest here is a sociological case study of Serbian national identity. It includes reconstruction and interpretation of in-depth interviews conducted in Serbia with the representatives of Serbian symbolic elites. The concept of symbolic elites is approached in the discussed research from Teun van Dijk's perspective. Thus, they are individuals and groups directly involved in the production of public opinion, who have an impact on the content of publicly available knowledge, and the creation and legitimization of public discourse. The work is embedded in the methodological framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and is based on the assumptions of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). In this optics, the most important thing is the historical and social context of the studied process of the discursive construction of national identity. Therefore, the conclusions also touch upon the historical, political, and social perspective of the formation of Serbian national identity. The reflection also aims at presenting the analysis from the contemporary perspective (mainly in 2008-2020). Thus, paying attention to the political divisions in Serbia and the country's road to democratization and European integration, the discussed research study shows the comprehensive specifics of the studied national identity.

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This

article attempts to grasp the specificity of the discourse on Serbian national identity based on the conclusions from the analysis of the interviews with representatives of the Serbian symbolic elites[1] and study of this identity changes in the last few decades. The aim of the text is thus, on the one hand, to present and reflect on the research study of Serbian national identity, which I conducted in Serbia a few years ago, and to focus on the contemporary perspective of this subject.[2] On the other hand, in my reflections, I also try to show how the studied thread, which is inscribed in the analytical optics of concepts such as national identity, collective memory, national and political myths, or resentment,[3] is also

visible in the narrative of the urban space in Serbia and Kosovo. Thus, the research reflection presented here is complemented by a brief reference to the political and apolitical narrative on Serbian collective memory and Serbian national identity, which is told in Serbian public space—because some of the murals, graffiti, and inscriptions on the walls that have been created in Serbia and Kosovo refer to the analyzed issues. In the case of some of them, the space of remembrance is an inspiration, thanks to which the resulting visual constructs fit into the notions of Serbian national identity shaped by apolitical and anti-war rhetoric. In the case of others, the memory becomes a tool of political struggle. In this case, the topics raised in the form of visual representations in Serbian public space are, for example, the memory about the NATO conducting a bombing in 1999[4] and the opposition to the independence of Kosovo. In addition, the theme of NATO's bombing of Belgrade at the end of the 1990s is also present in Belgrade's public space in the form of buildings destroyed at the time, integrated into the developing urban fabric.[5] In this way, they last gloomily, to remind of what happened in Serbia at the end of the last century. I would, therefore, like to show in this text a few examples of those images and threads related to the specificity of the discourse on Serbian national identity to briefly

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[1] I conducted my research between 2012 and 2018. The interviews were gathered in Serbia in 2012—thanks to a special-purpose grant from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education for activities related to scientific research or development work and related tasks for the development of young scientists. Still, the conclusions presented in the text also touch upon the perspectives of the present day. Between 2012 and 2018, I was in touch with some of the interlocutors and followed the political and social situation in Serbia, so the research study described in this text covers the perspective of the phenomenon under scrutiny over the past few years. In a much broader and much more in-depth study, the results of my research on this topic are presented in a scientific monograph (Wygnańska 2020), in which I juxtapose the statements of representatives of the Serbian symbolic elites with the selected statements of Serbian politicians from 1992-2018. In its socio-historical context and conclusions, the monograph also includes the perspective of years 2019-2020, important due to the recent parliamentary elections in Serbia (June 2020) and the social anti-government protests.

[2] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was not able to complete the research revisit in Serbia in 2020 to conduct interviews with the representatives of Serbian symbolic elites, which could have brought a deeper perspective to this text, and, importantly, a comparative analytical thread. The revisit is being postponed for the second half of 2021.

[3] I understand the concept of resentment as approached by Ewa Thompson (2006:11 [trans. JW]): "to accept suffering, to feel humiliated by fate and people, to take chronic pity on oneself, to accept the attitude of a victim." I am aware that Thompson focuses on her reflections on the Polish context and reconstructs resentment by attributing it to the Polish

nation features of postcolonial nations. However, taking into account this contrast between the analyses undertaken in my research and Ewa Thompson's conclusions, it can be assumed that resentment understood in this way is in line with the rhetoric of martyrdom present in the discourse on Serbian national identity.

[4] In the case of Serbia, the problem relates to the attacks by NATO forces, in which the US armed forces played a major role, and, in addition to the 1999 bombings in Serbia and Kosovo province, it also includes attacks on Serbs in Croatia and Bosnian Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the first half of the 1990s.

[5] I mean here the twin buildings of the Yugoslav Ministry of Defense and the General Staff and the Serbian Radio and TV building.

outline in what form those meanings function in the urban space.

It should be stressed that, for me as a researcher, Serbia seemed interesting to explore the context of the construction of Serbian national identity for two reasons. Firstly, it is a country of opposites that are looking for common ground. It means that since the end of the 1980s, in Serbia, every idea taken in connection with the political or social vision of the country almost immediately gives rise to its denial. But, at the same time, despite this tendency to deconstruct and disintegrate, the Serbs desperately want to live together as a nation. And, in a sense, it is fascinating how they combine the separating visions of meanings about their national identity. Secondly, in the discourse about the disintegration and war conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, of all former Yugoslav republics, Serbia is the most blamed one for the collapse of the Federation. For a long time, Serbia was also burdened with the accusation of being the cause of the destabilization of the situation in the Balkan region and impeded the process of settlement of all former socialist Balkan countries with the wartime past. I was interested in such a distribution of guilt, especially when compared to Serbia's rhetoric based on the assumption of victimization of the nation and anti-Serbian plots. Furthermore, in Serbia, an interesting phenomenon is the relationship between the ruling and the intellectual elite. As it turned out (also partly in my study), the intellectual elite took much more sophisticated resources of symbolic power than the political one. This article, therefore, attempts to capture what lies on the borderline of the constructed social vision of Serbia and its everyday social reality. In this understanding, the text is partly a kind of report on the conducted case study of Serbian national identity, but also

a reflection on its results, immersed in the historical perspective of the studied phenomenon and, at the same time, inscribed in the optics of the contemporary times.

The Socio-Historical Context of Studied Phenomenon

The discussed deliberations are based on the assumption of the discursive construction of Serbian national identity. In the case of such an expression, I mean both Serbian national identity in the sense of placing it within the socio-historical framework of the former Yugoslavia, as well as referring to the post-Yugoslavian Serbian national identity. Additionally, the discursive construction of national identity cannot be inferred without portraying the historical and social processes influencing the formation of the discourse on the particular identity. Therefore, when analyzing the case of Serbian national identity, it is extremely important to point out, among other things, the course of Serbia's path from the 19th-century idea of Yugoslavism and national visions referring to medieval tradition, through communist ideology acting in the spirit of unification of the six Yugoslav republics, to the times of radical, militant, and "resentment" nationalism[6] of Slobodan Milošević's regime, and the first years after its fall. Thus, it is important to analyze the 19th-century beginnings of Serbian nationalism and the description of the Serbian myths (such as

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[6] The term "resentment nationalism" is used in the understanding of Nenad Dimitrijević (1999:112), who refers to this term when describing Serbian nationalism in the late 80s and in the 90s of the XX century. This nationalism was based largely on an extensive concept of Serbian martyrdom, a totalitarian policy, centered around the myth of national unity, aimed at constantly evoking the enemies of Serbian identity and culture with which the Serbs were to fight or against which they should unite. Dimitrijević, in writing about "resentment nationalism," refers to the text by Vesna Pešić (1995) devoted to the analysis of the break-up of Yugoslavia.

"Kosovo Field's myth"[7] and "Myth of the Serbian Nation"[8]) and visions of "Great Serbia"[9] that are

portrayed in modern times in the discourse of politics in Serbia. The description of the so-called "third Yugoslavia" (1992-2003) existing within the framework of the mentioned "Great Serbia" recalled by Slobodan Milošević's regime is, therefore, crucial to understand the unique social creation combining communism with nationalism. Next, the perspective of Serbia since 2003, when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was dissolved in favor of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, should be taken into account. Finally, since 2006, after the breakup of the Union, it is important to recognize the issue of Serbia's contemporary situation both in the local and international context—and the understanding of the contemporary debates on the shape of the post-Yugoslavian Serbian national identity becomes significant. The case of Kosovo is also crucial here. I mean both the role that Kosovo plays in the Serbian national narrative and the consequences of Serbian-Albanian conflict and Kosovo independence[10] as a source of the dispute in the process of building a dialogue between Serbian and Albanian politicians in Kosovo (and also the dialogue in the international sense). I am considering the matter of Koso-

[7] The Kosovar myth, referring to the battle that took place in 1389 between Serbian troops, fed by allies from southeastern Europe, and the Turks, contributed to the sacralization of the Serbian nation. According to the Julian calendar, the battle took place on June 15, 1389, but due to the change to the Gregorian calendar, the date is June 28. Every year on this day the anniversary of the battle and St. Vitus' Day are held. In the Serbian tradition, the Battle of Kosovo Field symbolizes the Serbian sacrifice that this nation made on the altar of Christian Europe. In 1982, the Serbian Orthodox Church established the day of commemoration of the battle as a church holiday. The Kosovar myth returned with great force in the nationalist thought, awakened during the collapse of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. And in this "returning" the main idea of Serbian national identity was realized by popularizing the messianic idea of building Serbian historical consciousness based on the cult of "beloved" heroes and blurring the boundaries between religion and politics. As Zieliński (2001:33) emphasizes, this sacralization of Serbian history gives a mythical dimension to secular heroes and stories about their deeds.

[8] I refer to the "Myth of the Serbian Nation" presented by the Serbian essayist Ivan Čolović (2001:18-19). According to this intellectual, when analyzing the discourse on politics and the nation of Serbia, it should be remembered that Serbia is one of the most involved in the national mythical narratives of states. The author reconstructed the "Myth of the Serbian Nation" by analyzing Serbian myths and Serbian populist tales, containing the most important motifs of the national legends and the components of the Serbian spiritual space.

[9] The concept of "Great Serbia" was written in 1844 by Ilija Garašanin, holding the office of Minister of the Interior of the Serbian Principality, in his text *Načertanije. Program spoljašne i nacionalne politike Srbije na koncu 1844 godine* [*The Draft. The Program of Foreign and National Policy of Serbia at the End of 1844*]. The idea of "Great Serbia" outlined, envisioned the creation of a Yugoslav state comprising Serbia, Kosovo, Northern Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and part of Macedonia. The future map of a single state thus envisioned was a representation of the concept of Yugoslavism. A slightly different vision of the idea of "Great Serbia" was presented by the representatives of the Radical Party (Radikalna stranka, RS) formed in 1881. The group's founders were inspired mainly by Russian nationalists. Their vision of "Great Serbia" was to unite all Orthodox believers in one state. In their idea of a common state, they, therefore, moved away from the "freedom of religion" proclaimed by Garašanin and from Vuk Karadžić's "linguistic" vision of a common nation. They advocated the unification of the Yugoslav state based on ethnicity. Another voice in the understanding of the idea of "Great Serbia" were the foundations of the Serbian underground organization "Unity or Death" (Ujedinjenje ili smrt), also known as the "Black Hand Organization" (from 1911). In its program, just as in the aforementioned ones, it referred to the idea of unifying all Serbian lands into one state, standing closer to radical solutions than the inclusive and tolerant form of nationalism represented by the Garašanin vision. In a slightly more contemporary

perspective, the radical nationalism of Slobodan Milošević's regime used the vision of "Great Serbia" as a tool to unify the Serbian nation, excluding the assumption of ethnic and religious differentiation, and assuming the existence of an "ethnically pure" Serbian nation in the Yugoslav state.

[10] Kosovo's independence was declared on February 17, 2008. The process of establishing this state has led to increased tensions not only in the region but also in the wider international arena. As a result, Kosovo remains a state dependent on the European Union and NATO's support, unrecognized by many countries around the world (which, among other things, prevents its accession to the United Nations), and struggling with numerous internal problems, ranging from economic, ethnic, political, to those related to international organized crime in the area (including, among others, drug gangs and smugglers' actions). Thus, it seems legitimate to analyze the situation of Kosovo, the emergence and functioning of this state, which, due to the limitation of the volume of this article, I cannot fully make. For this reason, to explore the topic of Kosovo statehood in a very extensive and multithreaded study, see, for example, Pawłowski (2019).

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vo further in this article following the results of my study and the present perspective of this analytical thread. It should also be emphasized that, in the last few years, the dialogue on the political scene in Serbia is fading, including the voice of the opposition groups, towards the ruling power (SNS)[11] accused of violating democratic principles, and is not a common voice. In such an atmosphere, part of Serbian society (between November 2018 and March 2020) took part in anti-government demonstrations under the name *Jedan od pet milliona* (opposing the system of the current power of Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić and proclaiming the need to normalize political life in the country). Thus, importantly, the conflict on the political scene also results in the polarization among the Serbian people themselves.[12]

Due to the limited size of this article, I will not discuss here in detail the above-mentioned intricacies of Serbian past and recent history, but I wish to point out that the characteristics of the historical, political, and social contexts of the formation of Serbian national identity are crucial to elaborate on the changes of this identity. Not only does it allow for an in-depth analysis of the relationship between past and present constructions of the Serbian national space, but it also allows us to see the

importance of the role of the political and intellectual elites in constructing the content of the two main discursive formations[13] functioning in Serbia since the end of 1980s. I mean here the discourses of the "First Serbia" (Prva Srbija) and the "Other Serbia" (Druga Srbija). In the contemporary perspective, we can also talk about the phenomenon of the "Third Serbia" (Treća Srbija).[14]

At this point, it can be underlined that the discourse of the "First Serbia" is strongly saturated with nationalist ideology—it is conservative, Eurosceptic, and rooted in Serbian history and spiritual tradition (Russell-Omaljev 2016:20). On the other hand, the discourse of the "Other Serbia" was, in the beginning, formed around slogans opposing the militaristic, populist, and xenophobic nature of the political doctrine of Slobodan Milošević. Next, it was based on anti-nationalist and anti-war rhetoric, which brought to the forefront a fight for the rights of minorities (national, ethnic, sexual, and denominational) present in the contemporary political vision presented by the "Other Serbia." The phenomenon of the "Third Serbia" is visible in Serbian public discourse for a few years. The discourse of the "Third Serbia" is the most diverse and "seeking" of its identification. In a political sense, this discursive formation seeks to abolish the main division into the "First Serbia" and the "Other Serbia" and to introduce a kind of reconciliation that heals an allegedly unnatural split (Spasić and Pertrović 2012:221).

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[11] Srpska napredna stranka (SNS)—Serbian Progressive Party. The Party won (again) in the last parliamentary elections on June 21, 2020. The holding of elections at a time of pandemic and the high prevalence of the winning party in the results led to protests of the political opposition and non-governmental organizations, as well as journalists not associated with the public media (presenting the voice of the main political option). Serbian President, Aleksandar Vučić, and his Party were accused of limiting the voice of the opposition in the election campaign, corruption, nepotism, and displaying authoritarian tendencies.

[12] The year 2020 additionally brought the social protests provoked by the actions of the authorities towards the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. The demonstrations lacked a clear political objective. They were primarily protests against the "Vučić regime" and constituted another stage of the protracted internal political crisis.

[13] I understand the concept of discursive formation as Michel Foucault, referring to the concept of discourse as a set of statements belonging to one formation system (Foucault 1977:150).

[14] Throughout the text, I leave the words "First," "Other," and "Third Serbia" in quotation marks. This decision results from the specificity of the discussed discursive phenomena. The statements produced within their framework are dependent on the historical, political, and social context.

About the Research—Methodological Assumptions and Ethnographic Considerations

The study of the process of the discursive construction of Serbian national identity was based on the analysis of 31 in-depth interviews with representatives of the Serbian symbolic elites[15] considered in recent socio-historical context and several statements by Serbian politicians from 1992-2018. In this text, however, I would like to focus mostly on the conclusions of the analysis of the interviews concerning the discourse of politics in Serbia. After gathering the interviews, I kept in touch with some of the interviewees, and while constructing my study, I asked them about the changes that I should take into account regarding the time that has passed since I visited Serbia in 2012.

The criterion for selecting the interviewees was my understanding of the symbolic elites as embraced by Teun van Dijk (1993:46)—individuals and groups directly involved in the production of public opinion that influence the content of publicly available knowledge and the creation and legitimization of public discourse. In such optics, symbolic elites do not fulfill the role of power over discourse in the traditional (political) sense and are assigned to symbolic power and some kind of control in the cultural and normative sense. Referring to the considerations of Marek Czyżewski, Sergiusz Kowalski, and Andrzej Piotrowski (1997:10-26), I also assume that the discourse of symbolic elites includes statements on political topics, which I call, after the authors, political discourse, and thus distinguish it

from the political statements, which, after the authors, I recognize as the discourse of politics. Following van Dijk's approach, I assumed that I would interview Serbian journalists, the members of Serbian academia, people involved in social and political activities within non-governmental organizations (including pro-European organizations in the sense of their efforts to integrate Serbia into the EU), and people who belong to the intellectual elite and, at the same time, are active political activists.[16] I started the interview process by contacting the academic community in Belgrade. The track was very good because the researchers were open to help me find the first interlocutors. I managed to reach the next interviewees by using the snowball sampling method. This method proved to be a good solution because reaching out to a few referrals at the beginning enabled me to conduct interviews and gain their trust. Furthermore, with their help and recommendations, I was able to reach out to more interviewees or places where I was looking for more people to interview. The saturation of the sample was determined, on the one hand, by the time limitations of my stay in Serbia under the research grant. On the other hand, after transcribing the collected interviews and then analyzing the collected research material for the first time, I had the feeling that I was dealing with a polyphonic and multithreaded collection of statements, concerning many issues, in which the process of the discursive construction of Serbian national identity is embedded.

The interviews were based on a list of information sought, thematic threads related to the historical and social contexts of the changes that have occurred in

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[15] The collection of 31 interviews contains recordings ranging from 1 to 3 hours, consisting of attempts by the interviewees to reconstruct the discourse at the level of collective and individual experience.

[16] As a result of this approach, I gathered eight interviews with Serbian journalists, twelve interviews with Serbian Academia people, five interviews with Serbian NGOs' activists, three interviews with pro-European organizations activists, and three with political and social activists.

Serbia since the fall of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. I was interested in questions of the dimensions of the phenomenon of Serbian nationalism, the rhetoric of the Serbian national narrative, including the narrative towards Kosovo, the perspective of stories about "Others" in the discourse on Serbian national identity, the transformation of Serbian collective memory, the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbian spiritual tradition in the construction of the discourse on Serbian national identity, and the relation between Serbian identity and Yugoslavian identity.

In analyzing Serbian national identity, I followed the assumptions of the (Viennese) Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I have been inspired by the network of notions proposed for the deliberations on discursive national identity by Ruth Wodak, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl, and Karin Liebhart (2009)[17] with their extensive study of Austrian identity. DHA stresses that entering into a conclusion about a certain discursive fragment of social reality is a form of co-creating this discourse. This approach proposes that national identity is created through discourse and influences this discourse (Wodak et al. 2009:8).

Moreover, DHA assumes that national identity is subject to discursive macro-strategies (Wodak and Weiss 2004; Krzyżanowski 2008; Wodak et al. 2009). However, when analyzing the dimensions of these strategies of constructing and reconstructing national identity, it is necessary to pay attention both to the linguistic means of implementing the discourse strategy and to focus on the topos that accompany

these strategies—the argumentation schemas/structures. In this perspective, the identification of thematic areas of content, as well as the recognition of their social and historical contexts by the researcher is complemented by the analysis of strategies and means and forms of their implementation. The whole analytical process makes it possible to derive a multi-faceted analysis of the discursively constructed national identity.

It is important to clarify that my research was based on the application of the concept grid proposed by the Viennese school. In this way, the research categories—the general framework of my conclusions—were embedded in an etic perspective.[18] But, by reconstructing the discourse on Serbian national identity in relation to the content of the interviewees' statements, I delved into an emic way of interpreting the meanings (Pike 1967; Hymes 1978). The research study conducted in this way was an attempt to integrate the general analytical framework (the adopted conceptual grid and the ways of proceeding in the DHA framework) with the categories derived from the research material. In other words, in this research study, my aim was, on the one hand, to reflect the specificity of the discourse on Serbian national identity. On the other hand, I wanted to allow the voices of the interviewees to resonate in the research study I conducted.

Due to the direct participation of the representatives of the symbolic elites that I studied in the process of the discursive construction of Serbian national identity, the interviews with them should

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[17] The first publication of the research conclusions was released in 1999.

[18] I refer here to the relations between the "etic" categories (introduced from the outside by the researcher and used to build theoretical models) and the "emic" categories (referring to the description of the studied culture and social reality by showing the ways of its interpretation used by members of the studied communities).

be also accompanied by a double commentary. First of all, the in-depth interviews (with a list of sought information) allowed the interlocutors to intertwine their expert narrative related to the discourse on Serbian national identity with their personal reflections. The question of this polyphony of the interviewees is an important research problem that I faced in my analysis of the material. The interviews I have conducted[19] contain many narrative fragments rooted in the biographical experience of representatives of the Serbian symbolic elites. Thus, different levels of expression interweave in them, both those rooted in collective imagery and those rooted in individual experience, detached from objective meanings, which poses a difficult task for the researcher to ensure that the relation between the examined fragments of interviews and research conclusions does not create the impression of certain nonobviousness or even a detachment of conclusions from data.

In addition, it is important to stress that my empirical material consists of three types of statements of the representatives of the Serbian symbolic elites, and thus leads to three different approaches of how to infer them. First of all, the representatives of the symbolic elites performed in an interview as experts in the field of the discursive construction of the Serbian national identity. In such a situation, the interlocutors' statements remain here in a class/lecture tone. There is also no evidence of the inclusion of personal references in the described and evaluated contents. It must be emphasized that such cases among the interviews were the least present.

Secondly, the representatives of Serbian symbolic elites constructed and reconstructed their views confronting them with other discourse / other discourses, and thus presented their thoughts (including personal ones) regarding the discourse on Serbian national identity and the discursive process of its construction. In such statements, the tone was more emotional, and the built-in patterns of argumentation were derived from personal experiences.

Thirdly, through their biographical experiences, the representatives of the Serbian symbolic elites were so much involved in the process of the discursive construction of Serbian national identity that they mainly focused in the interviews on their personal feelings. Such statements appeared in the gathered collection in many cases. These narrations were difficult to analyze in the methodological framework of the DHA, but they were also a very valuable image for the investigated phenomenon. These statements often balanced between entering a further biographical story and focusing on the subject of a single research question. In the analysis of these cases, we can see an aberration of the level of individual references to the discourse of Serbian national identity with attempts to reconstruct other discourses that have an impact on this discourse and their reconstruction in the personal reflection of the interlocutors.

Research Outcomes

Part I. The Narrative of the Serbian Political Past

In 2008, Dušan Kovačević[20] published a book entitled *Dvadeset srpskih podela (Srba na Srbe)* [*20 Serbian*

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[19] I mean here both the interviews collected in Serbia and the statements of some of the interlocutors that I gathered during the analysis process.

[20] Dušan Kovačević (born 1948)—Serbian playwright, prose writer, screenwriter, theater, and film director.

Divisions (Serbs to Serbs)]. It consists of stories that are a collection of voices, both individual and collective, that carry an almost age-old narrative about a nation that, in its desire for unity, persistently strives for the division. In Kovačević's text, the Serbs are the constructors of the mechanism of self-involvement in the search for what is Serbian, multiplying the repertoire of meanings of what is non-Serbian. The problem lies, according to the writer, in the fact that they were always like this—pro- and anti- something in the same time frame. And so the stories of Kovačević are amusing and disturbing at the same time. The quoted literary reflection is an important metaphor for the conclusions presented in this text. My deliberations are a kind of attempt to find out what is common—Serbian, national—in what is divided—anti-Serbian and above-national. Therefore, I intended to reconstruct this identity, capture threads and contents defining it, and search for ways to describe it.

I will present the results of the analysis concerning the narrative of the Serbian political past in relation to the fragments of two interviews with the representatives of Serbian symbolic elites. The themes explored in this section will focus mainly on the identity transition from Yugoslavian identity to Serbian identity (due to the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992). The understanding of the dimensions of the relationship between these identity identifications is based on the voices of the interviewees. To begin with, I will refer to an excerpt from an interview with Ana, a journalist. Her involvement in public opinion in Serbia is not only about internal issues and problems. Ana is also professionally involved in writing about Serbia "outside," providing information about Serbian social and political reality to the Western media. When asked about her perception of what happened in

Serbia in the 1980s and 1990s, Ana's statement includes the following story:

> When I worked in the 1990s in the newspaper [name of the local newspaper] of the opposition to the Milošević regime, we often had police checks and were suspected of acting against Serbia. Especially since we also dealt with international policy issues. And it was felt that, in those days, it was immediately perceived as anti-Serbian, and none of us had any intention of not being Serbs. We simply did not feel the little bit of extreme nationalism that Milošević used for his purposes. I remember I used to do a completely non-political article in primary school, and the headmaster refused to be interviewed by me because he decided that since I am a journalist from an opposition newspaper, I am working for the West and the Serbs should not collaborate with the West. And I did not understand it at the time. And I also have the impression that many such ordinary people did not know at that time what was happening next to them. They had their daily problems, and the official media did not give much important information, so many Serbs even then did not know that the crime in Srebrenica, for example, had happened. There were no statements of Serbian crimes at the time, mainly silence about Bosnia.
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> And that was the time when people tried to find this "new" [quotation marks added] Serbian identity. Until 1992 we were Yugoslavs, of course, you could also call yourself a Serb, but many, many Serbs called themselves Yugoslavs. Many people were looking for what it means that "now they can be Serbs" [quotation marks added].
>
> My story here is perhaps worth mentioning because my father is a Serb from Montenegro and my mother is a Serb from Belgrade, and they always felt they were Serbs. They simply had Yugoslavian documents. So they didn't really understand what it meant either

that "now they can be Serbs" [quotation marks added]. It was difficult for us to understand these sudden changes of identity, pointing out our enemies. So that's why before we started the interview, I asked why you are interested in the Serbs. And it's good that you don't write about us without talking to us, because it's a very difficult subject to understand what was and what is happening with Serbian identity. What was going on in Serbia. But, for me and my family, it was the identity we had like since forever and we didn't understand why it should suddenly be reborn in us after the collapse of Yugoslavia.

In her statement, Ana refers to many important issues for the analysis of the discourse on Serbian national identity. An excerpt from her experience of working in a newspaper in the 1990s revealed an interesting clue surfacing from the phrase said by the journalist: It is not right for Serbs to collaborate with the West. Following Zala Volčič, it can be explained here that, in Serbia, the construct of the imaginary West occupies one of the more important places in the national narrative about the enemies of Serbia and Serbianness. This perception is partly, as I have also been able to establish in my study, based on historical encounters of both perspectives, and is largely based on myths and stereotypes. In addition, it should be emphasized that the exploration of Serbia's multithreaded relationship with the West is necessary when studying the Serbian contemporary social reality. In this way, it is easier not to make the mistake of oversimplifying the explanations for Serbia's negative attitude towards the West in this regard (Volčič 2005:157).

It can be briefly mentioned here that the main reasons for the negative attitude expressed in Serbian public discourse about the West at the time mentioned by Ana in her interview were, on the

one hand, resentments originating in Balkanism[21] (Todorova 2008). On the other hand, it was a response to the discourse on the Balkans spread in the 1990s and created by the Western media reporting on the course of armed conflicts in the Balkans at that time. It is noteworthy that Western institutions and media stressed the fact that the former Yugoslav republics belong to the changing, in that time, Europe (I mean here 1990s), separating the Serbian nation from this "privilege." Mark Thompson's (1999) research report on the rhetoric of media coverage of events in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia shows that the media quite systematically emphasized Croatia's belonging to European culture and the world, and marked a deep regret for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the hostile, non-European, aggressive nature of Serbia. The anti-Western narrative of that time was most fully reflected in the discourse about Serbia and Serbian national identity represented by the Milošević regime, in which the politician very often stressed Serbia's regret for its "rejection" by Western countries.

Another noteworthy passage from Ana's statement is that she draws attention to the political and media "silence" in Serbia on the Bosnian war and the avoidance of a narrative on Serbian crimes committed in the 1990s. Tarik Jusić notes that Serbian media discourse in the early 1990s was both an indicator and a factor in the crisis of Serbian society, but also helped to promote and perpetuate the divisions inherent in the political narrative. Very often, the media either did not publicize inconve-

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[21] Balkanism is a discourse related to the vision of the Balkan countries seen "outside of Europe" produced by the Western narrative. On the other hand, Balkanism also takes on a form of the phenomenon of Occidentalism, which in this case manifests itself in the narrative towards Europe produced by "non-Western" (in a sense of "not" European West) Balkan countries reaching also for the "hostile" rhetoric.

nient issues or exaggerated the "wrongdoings" of other parties to the conflict (Jusić 2009:21). Jusić (2009:27) also refers to the conclusions of Dušan Reljić (1998:43), who calls the activities of the Serbian media in the 1990s the absolute domination of the reports written in the pro-regression and the production of a growing number of stories without sources. The information provided was, therefore, composed here in the name of eliminating alternative ways of interpreting it.

The issues outlined above show not the whole, but, to a large extent, the historical context in which Ana intertwines her statement and the social and political atmosphere of that time. Based on this and other collected statements of the representatives of the Serbian symbolic elites, I can point to two dimensions of the process of the discursive construction of Serbian national identity before[22] and after 1992.[23] The first one includes Yugoslavian identity, whose symbolic universe,[24] in my opinion, could and still can continue after the fall of Yugoslavia. The second describes the Serbian identity "re-created" in the 1990s after the break-up of the Federation of six republics. In Ana's statement, we also come across expressions with negative connotations, "anti-Serbian" or "extreme nationalism," which also appeared in the statements of other interlocutors when they

[22] Since the establishment of firstly the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (formed in 1946), later changed (in 1963) to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

[23] Since the establishment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992-2000).

[24] I understand this analytical resource according to Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966). I am also aware that, in this way, I introduce into the undertaken inference an element of symbolic interactionism, which thus belongs to a different theoretical order than the conducted discourse analysis. However, as a researcher, I concluded that the description of the phenomenon of Yugoslavian identity should be analyzed in relation to the phenomenon of intersubjectivity of meanings and everyday experience of a given social reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Schütz and Luckmann 1973; Schütz 2012).

reconstructed the discourse about Serbia's recent past.

Like Ana, in their statements on Serbian national identity, many of the other interviewees juxtaposed their personal identification with Serbian national identity with the discourse on the "new" Serbian national identity prevailing in the 1990s. In this way, by evoking the discourse about the "new" Serbian national identity, they tried to legitimize and justify the "reality" of the Serbian (ethnic) identity they had always experienced. Within the framework of a politically-created discourse on the "new" Serbian identity, they also sought a space for the functioning of the discourse on Serbian (ethnic) identity, which they represented and constructed in their statements. This situation also had the opposite effect, that is, by pointing to "their" discourse on Serbian identity, the interviewees tried to find in it an interpretation that would justify the "sensibility" or "necessity" of changing this discourse through the "new" discourse on this identity proposed in the 1990s.

In this perspective, it can be said that Ana's statement, and the statements of many other representatives of the Serbian symbolic elites that I have gathered, are particularly influenced by discursive preservative or justificatory strategies. They operate on the level of discourse about Serbian national identity inscribed in the perspective of the time before the fall of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There can also be identified as the transformative discursive strategies visible at the level of the discourse on the "new" Serbian identity, related to the specificity of the discourse on politics during the Milošević era. The line of contention in the discourse on Serbian national identity visible in the statements of Ana (and other interviewees) is, therefore,

a clash of beliefs about a certain essence of an identity related to the term origin (ethnic) and the level of political-citizen declarations giving this identity specific "national" connotations. Thus, at the level of discourse about the "new" Serbian national identity, the reconstructed transformative strategies aim at the autonomy of new meanings through the use of a rhetorical figure in the form of a metaphor and a reference to the pronoun "we" (we, Serbs). These strategies also serve a certain negation, one might say, of the appropriate shape of the previously existing Serbian national identity. Ana, in her statement, tries to separate the "we," with which she identifies herself (Serbian ethnic identity), from the "we" inscribed in the "new" Serbian identity created in the discourse of politics in Serbia in the 1990s. Ana sees the latter as a construct and, although she is unable to understand why it is only since the fall of socialist Yugoslavia that she can fully define herself as Serbian and what it means to be Serbian anew, she also reconstructs this aspect, which is important for the narrative on the past of Serbia.

As further deliberations on the narrative of the Serbian political past, I would like to recall a statement made by Jovana, a representative of the academic community. As a whole, her statement contains many narrative fragments in which the interviewee, answering general questions, recalls parts of her life story. In this way, the interview is also a record of certain key moments in the interviewee's identity development. Let us look at a fragment of the interview with Jovana:

> In the 1980s, strong national feelings began to be awakened. And I lived in Belgrade at that time, and I was already politically aware enough to see how the dogma of "brotherhood and unity" was slowly being challenged by the elites against the ruling system.

And their ideology had a very strong nationalistic element. One could feel that it was very radical and I, for example, did not sympathize with it. I was a Yugoslavian patriot and I did not want the break-up of Yugoslavia. Of course, I was also critical of the communist regime and I wanted to change this ruling option. Many people wanted it.

But, like a large group of Serbs, I did not feel the need to separate Serbia or other republics from the country. I very much liked the idea of a community of several nations living together in Yugoslavia. This multiplicity made it possible for us to get to know what made us different, even though we seemed to have a lot in common as Balkan countries, the differences were important and often just interesting. I didn't feel that they increased people's sense of hostility.

I traveled a lot in Yugoslavia at the time, and neither I nor my parents ever thought that, for example, since we are in Croatia, this is a land hostile to our Serbianness. Although I was also aware that there is something in the air somewhere that is the result of some history, some myths, some kind of tension between ethnic identities. But, despite my critical view of the communist rule in Yugoslavia, I don't agree with the nationalist messages that declared that Serbs have to fight for their identity, that Yugoslavia threatens Serbianness. To this day, I don't buy this argument because I lived in Yugoslavia, I lived in Serbia at the time, and I didn't feel threatened.

Based on the analysis of this fragment of Jovana's statement and other similar statements of the representatives of Serbian symbolic elites, I reconstructed discursive preservative or justificatory strategies. In this case, they are related to maintaining the Yugoslavian identity and the narrative about it. These strategies are important in building a narrative that focuses on placing the discourse on a given national identity within a specific historical framework

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to justify its social status quo. In other words, to defend the existence of an identity with which an individual or group identifies and which has been somehow "contaminated" or the new order questions its legitimacy (Wodak et al. 2009:33). Thus, the topos of danger (in terms of losing the recognized world of meanings by the impact of the discourse about the fiction and creation of Yugoslavia) and the topos of belonging (in terms of recognizing the discourse about the Yugoslavian identity in telling about Serbian national identity) can be seen here.

When focusing on the events of the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia, Jovana also reconstructs the official discourse on abandoning Yugoslavian identification in favor of Serbian national identity. She also points to the collective nature of the problem she presented. Her personal references meet here a collective conviction that makes Jovana's voice socially empowered. Reconstructing the discourse on the political past, Jovana refers to historically established concepts such as Tito's "dogma of brotherhood and unity," "nationalistic element," "break-up of Yugoslavia," "communist regime." Additionally, those with which she does not identify are assigned negative connotations or personal and possessive pronouns, "it was very radical," "their ideology." At the same time, she also evokes the discourse about Serbian national identity in the 1990s to reconstruct the threat to the existing Yugoslavian and Serbian identity. Here, however, the Serbian national identity is still contained within the framework of the universe of Yugoslavia. She also raises a certain absurdity in the discourse on Serbian national identity in the 1990s.

In this short fragment, we can see, therefore, many discursive tracks. Firstly, a reconstruction of the discourse on Serbian national identity in the narra-

tive of the political past. Here the context emerges—the nationalist messages that produced the idea of a struggle for a "new" Serbian identity. On the other hand, a reconstruction of the argumentation prevailing at the time that, "Yugoslavia threatens Serbianness." Furthermore, there is a lead that identifies the polarization of the discourse on Serbian identity (from the 1990s)—Serbianness is no longer part of the Yugoslavian narrative as it was in Yugoslavian discourse. In the "new" optics, Yugoslavian narrative and Serbianness are separate concepts and are assigned to two different orders of meanings.

In addition, Jovana's statement and several other similar statements I have collected are difficult to explain only by the phenomenon of nostalgia. Stuart Tannock (1995:454), referring to Raymond Willams (1973), comments that nostalgia as a structure of individual feelings evokes a positive assessment of the past and the related everyday world of life in response to the shortcomings and imperfections of the present reality. Nostalgia causes the individual to seek in the past the sources and the foundations of one's identity. In the present, one feels emptiness, danger, and a lack of important sets of recognized meanings. In the context of the former Yugoslavia, therefore, one can speak of yugonostalgia, which should be understood in three ways. First of all, it touches upon the evocation of memories and identification with (socialist) Yugoslavia in the form of opposition to nationalism that was gaining in importance in the 1990s. Secondly, it functions as a concept assigned to cultural, historical, and political space. Thirdly, it takes root in pop culture, for example, it is nostalgia for Yugoslavian music, Yugoslavian cinema, but also, as in the case of titonostalgia, it can be associated with selling the image of former "heroes" in pop culture (Jagiełło-Szostak 2012:241). Jovana, on the other hand, expresses her

opposition to the break-up of Yugoslavia and the "radical nationalism" that was awakened at the time, but also defines herself as a Yugoslavian within the framework of contemporary times. It seems too simplistic to attribute to such statements, gathered in my study, only traces of yugonostalgia. The fragment of the interview with Jovana presented as an example of the discussed phenomenon of the duration of Yugoslavian identity can be recognized rather as a discursive formation showing the clash of two discourses within the reconstructed process of the discursive construction of Serbian national identity. The first concerns Yugoslavian identity and does not exclude the existence of Serbian identity. Jovana makes it clear that (in the late 1980s and early 1990s) she lived in Yugoslavia and lived in Serbia, she does not overlook the Serbian context. The second discourse on Serbian identity, functioning in the 1990s, sought, as can be seen in the interviewee's statement, to differentiate between Serbian and Yugoslavian meanings. Importantly, the "permanence" of this identity is maintained only by means of references to the narrative of the past, with a simultaneous indication of the present. For there is no longer a Yugoslav state and nation, there is no and never has been a Yugoslavian language. And yet, returning to the already mentioned concept of the symbolic universe, this identity is maintained in an individual biographical experience. That is why it is so important to go beyond the discursive analysis to describe the phenomenon of this identity's permanence in a contemporary perspective and to undertake a study of Yugoslavian identity at the level of the biographical experience of individuals, which because of the character of my interviews I could not fully do.

To make the historical and social context in which Ana, Jovana, and other unquoted representatives

of the Serbian symbolic elites functioned more transparent, a few more points should be stressed. In an attempt to explain the phenomenon and the paradox of Milošević's rule, one can say, after Eric D. Gordy (1999:3), that there are two spheres here. The first one concerns inciting ethnic hatred among the Serbs, which in some circles has been perceived rather as a fight for a "threatened" nation. The second is to ensure that the leader has no alternative political options to him. This is also what the interlocutors said—that Milošević "effectively eliminated or silenced" the opposition's opinions against his rule. Gordy (2005:184) also believes that for any integration of nations divided in the early 1990s, the accumulated legacy of the conflict and the memory of war is a serious obstacle.

One can also say that in the discourse on Serbian national identity, Orthodox traditionalism meets ethnonationalist ideology. In this optics, the mythical and messianic concept of the Serbian past, extended in time to the present and even the future, seeks its anchorage in the universalist values of equality and solidarity, combining a real discussion of the rights of the Serbian people (especially in the sense of the Serbian population living in Bosnia and Kosovo) with the "eternal" characteristics of Serbian national identity (Malešević 2002:154).

In the discussed perspective of producing a discourse on Serbian national identity after the collapse of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, it is, therefore, noteworthy that Slobodan Milošević is also one of the creators and destroyers of the "new" Serbian national identity (discursively produced in the 1990s). Considering rhetorical styles, Thomas Lessl mentions the "bard's voice" or "bardic discourse." In such statements, the "bard" is an integral part of the group with which they communicate by adapting

their rhetoric to the "voice" of the audience. Lessl (1989:184) notes that when the bards speak, their voice is like our voice that we hear, the one we associate with the collective consciousness that lives in folk poetry, legends, and myths. Lessl (1989:188) adds that bards remind people who they are, while priestly rhetoric reminds them whom they can become. On the other hand, analyzing the history of Yugoslavia, Serbia, and Croatia, Siniša Malešević (2002:303) sees that all three cases are characterized by the legitimacy of the regime through the figure of a charismatic and "folk" leader. Communism in Yugoslavia during Tito's reign sought the unity of many nations in one country. The Milošević regime manifested itself in the idea of uniting all Serbs. The leader became a symbol of Serbian nationalism, or more precisely—of ethnonationalism, taking unification measures only towards the Serbs. The Croatian President, Franjo Tuđman, who in the 1990s was writing the "new" visions of the recent and "old" history of Croatia, also influenced the crowds. In the case of Milošević, it can also be stated that he not only used bardic discourse but also combined it with priestly rhetoric. He reminded the Serbs of who they are and, at the same time, offered them a vision of who they can be. That is why the representatives of the Serbian symbolic elites whom I interviewed devoted so much space to him in their interviews.

In addition, this part of the discussion should point out the current phenomenon of relations between national myths and Serbian history and politics. In this perspective, "myth transforms the relations established historically into ahistorical and a priori relations. Myth neutralizes history in such a way that the consumer of myth treats signifying as a system of facts" (Wasilewski 2006:478 [trans. JW]). In the myth as a form of social communication, there are two main spheres. The first one is gnosis, "pro-

viding stability and seeming rationalization. It manifests itself in the form of a description, a narrative referring entirely to past facts, and thus directly related to collective memory" (Lewandowski 2015:73 [trans. JW]). The second is "faith in the form of a priori assumptions," which serves to maintain the "truthfulness" of the gnosis and allows us to combine "incoherent, doubtful, and even antagonistic elements of myth" into a whole story, which its "preachers" reach for in a specific socio-cultural context (Lewandowski 2015:73 [trans. JW]). In this way, the Serbian national myths used in the discourse of politics can be considered within the framework of cultural axiology and social doctrine, and thus as an element mediating the construction of the Serbian collective memory. Examples of references to the fatalistic atmosphere of the Serbian national myths can, therefore, be found not only in the 19th-century "Great Serbian" narratives, but also in the actual contemporary attempts at new readings of history. Although in Serbia, there is a discourse of the symbolic and political elites visible that tries to redefine Serbian collective memory, which is in the chaos of meanings, by seeking liberation from the messianic narrative, the myth still plays a significant role in the process of shaping Serbian national identity.

The narrative on the Serbian recent past thus contains historical references, manifested in the memory of former Yugoslavia, the rule of Milošević, the awakening of Serbian nationalism, but also those evoking the times of the captivity of Serbia under the Ottoman Empire, as well as mythical and symbolic references to the memory of the Battle of Kosovo Field and Serbian messianism.

Referring to the presence of the threads I have investigated in the narrative of Serbian urban space, out-

lined in the introduction to the article, I would like to draw attention to a mural in Belgrade, which is not titled, but can be recognized as "People without faces." It depicts the phenomenon of the collapse of structures and, therefore, can be interpreted as the picture of Serbs after the fall of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia—as seekers of their identity. It was created in 2014. The author MISHA MOST enters this work into the series "Situation." The artist's website states that the series consists of "situations filled with humans from today's world."[25] The artist has entangled in "Situations" both those whose biography is marked by the traits of symbolic bullets and those who "kill each other with the idea of mythical 'freedom' in their head." The author mentions those who are often hostage to certain systems and become liberated from them in time. The artist also touches on the changes that people face and the emotions that accompany them.

I spoke with the interlocutors about this project of MISHA MOST and some of them captured it as a moment of the collapse of Yugoslavia, and thus the transformation of the national identity in Serbia. In this interpretation, Yugoslavia and the "new" Serbianness are illustrated here by the blue belt of the (Serbian) flag inscribed in the mural. It is filled with a multitude of documents, once Yugoslavian, now Serbian, identity cards. In those documents persist the faces of the Serbian inhabitants, who, like in the stories of the interlocutors, have been kind of suspended between two narratives about their national identity, and which are blurred on the mural. In this interpretation, this mural can exist as a story about a state of transition from one identity to another or an attempt to find a common space for once shared and

now often treated as separate meanings. Two photos of the mural are shown below.

Photo I

Source: https://peekingduck.co/a-street-art-guide-to-belgrade/. Retrieved May 12, 2020.

Photo II

Source: https://streetartbelgrade.com/galerija/misha-most-narod-sa-vamala/. Photo: Aleksandar Đalek Đorđević. Retrieved May 12, 2020.

Part II. Serbian Narrative about the Present and the Future

In terms of the narrative on the present and the future of Serbia, my study reconstructed three

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[25] See: http://www.mishamost.com/situation. Retrieved May 16, 2020.

discursive leads. First of all, the discourse about Serbia's membership in the structures of the European Union (EU): anti-European and pro-European. Secondly, the discourse about the Serbian tradition, which in many of the gathered statements of Serbian symbolic elites was reconstructed through linking the Orthodox tradition of Serbia and Russia. Thirdly, the discourse about the still divided, due to the clashing discourses of the "First Serbia" and the "Other Serbia," vision of Serbian national identity.

Referring to the first issue, it can be emphasized that the political voices prevailing in Serbia after the departure of Milošević deemed the military solutions taken by the regime in the 1990s as bad and working against the unity of the Serbian people (Judah 2002:160). The Great Serbian aspirations of the former leader also harmed the Serbian population outside the country (in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo). And the permanent refusal of the then authorities to admit having committed war crimes by Serbia also contributed to the falsification and gaps in the collective memory. Jelena Subotić (2011:319) comments that the case of Serbia's accession to the EU was then regarded as an official preference at the national level and was within the scope of civil society aspirations. However, at that time, the European ideal itself did not find a chance to develop within Serbia into a coherent narrative. The anti-Western, anti-European policy of the time of Slobodan Milošević, which certainly contributed in some way to the demarcation line between Serbia and Europe at that time, can be viewed as having contributed to this. Since 2014, Serbia has been an official candidate for the EU. When considering Serbia's chances of joining the EU, Marko Babić (2012:116) points out the need to carry out a critical reflection on nationalism and the war, and to control the dichotomy of Serbian identity torn between

the national self and a pro-European attitude. He also refers to the reflections of former Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Đinđić, who in the 1990s called Serbia "an unfinished state with a belated nation" (Babić 2012:115 as cited in Đinđić 1996 [trans. JW]).

It is also important to recall the issue of Kosovo's independence, which, in 2008 when Serbia was approaching Europe, aroused dormant resentment. Thus, the country once again needed time to return to the path of integration with Europe. It is worth referring here, after Yelena Subotić (2011:325), to the words of Serbian President, Boris Tadić, who, in 2007 said: "Kosovo is where my nation's identity lies, where the roots of our culture are. Kosovo is the foundation of Serbia's history and this is why we cannot give it up."[26]

Another thread mentioned above touches on the symbolic and, to some extent, the political bond between Serbia and Russia. These relations are marked in Serbian public discourse by a community of faith (Orthodoxy), language (Cyrillic), and, as the interlocutors have mentioned, support for the Serbian protest against the independence of Kosovo is also at stake here. Russia was one of the countries that criticized the West for its "unilateral" decision to establish the Kosovo state.[27]

In this part of the text, however, I would like to focus on the Kosovo theme[28] and quote an excerpt

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[26] Extract from an interview with Tadić on a Serbian radio station B92 on May 25, 2007.

[27] To read more on Serbian-Russian relations, see, for example, Patalakh (2018).

[28] To understand more the causes of the Serbian-Albanian conflict it should be noted that Albanians are pointing to the hostile actions of the Serbs since the 1960s and "ethnic cleansing," which they consider to be the main means of radical actions by the Serbs in the course of the dispute. Nor do they accept Serbian claims against Kosovo, believing that Kosovo

from the statement by Ivo, an academic professor who is also involved in social activities in democratic associations and in commenting on religious and ethnic disputes in the Serbia and Balkan region for the Serbian and Western media. When talking on the issues that affect the discourse on Serbian national identity, he comments:

> The divisions in talking about the Kosovo problem are probably the best illustration of what has been happening in Serbia since, say, 2006 and certainly since 2008. As you know, Kosovo hasn't been within Serbia for a long time, and there is no chance of its inclusion within Serbia without another war. It exists as a separate state and we have no influence on the withdrawal of its independence. But, our political discourse is still rooted in talking about regaining Kosovo.
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> There are, of course, more rational politicians who understand the situation, but, in public discourse, such voices are still lost in the face of speeches about the symbolism of Kosovo and about the threats towards Kosovo Serbs of the Albanian government in Kosovo...In addition, between 2000 and 2003, after Milošević's departure from power, Kosovo was not a particularly frequent political subject. It was not until 2004 that this issue came up again. And, in Serbia,

> we are dealing with a completely abnormal situation that has two faces.
>
> The first one normalizes this abnormality and, as the voice of a certain part of society says loudly, Kosovo has been lost, Serbia should let go and deal with domestic and international politics in the country. And this is a private level of discourse about Kosovo. There is no end in the public message, mainly political, of the narratives about Kosovo's belonging to Serbia and the need to fight for this sacred land. And this is the creation of Serbian political elites, but also symbolic, because some intellectuals, writers, Orthodox bishops, and scientists represent such a position based on myths immersed in medieval history that Kosovo and Serbia are one.
>
> Unfortunately, there is still no willingness and consent in Serbia to promote the content of the loss of Kosovo and leave this matter behind. So we have a difficult situation in Serbia because you cannot expect the whole nation to base its faith on the possibility of regaining Kosovo on a medieval myth. But, unfortunately, some people also strongly believe in this story of power and build their sense of belonging to Kosovo on it, and this drives politicians.

In Ivo's statement, the topos of losing Kosovo and the topos of belonging to Kosovo are recalled. The first one is an argumentation scheme specific to the discursive transformative strategies reconstructed in many gathered statements of the representatives of the Serbian symbolic elites. When talking about the Kosovo issue, the majority of the interlocutors pointed out the need to transform the discourse on Serbian national identity concerning the rhetoric about this matter. They also stressed the need to weaken in this discourse the power of identification with Kosovo in the sense of the Serbian territory (Serbian land), and to leave it only in the dimension of symbolic identification. This new identification on a symbolic level

has always been only a "colony" or a small province of Serbia—in terms of the size of the land inhabited by the Kosovo Serbs. The opposing side of the dispute, the Serbs, are pointing out the hostile actions of the Albanians, referring to the issue of forced migration of Serbs from Kosovo in the 1960s and 1980s. As an argument to justify the armed struggle, they stress the need to protect the Kosovo Serbs and the heritage of Serbian spiritual culture in the region. The intensification of the conflict in the 1990s was also supported by the Western media, which, as in the case of the war in Bosnia, made the Kosovo dispute a space for the process of exposing victims and criminals, which was not always consistent with the historical relation. In the more contemporary perspective, the Serbian-Albanian relations are still in some way turbulent since the proclamation of the independence of Kosovo in 2008. To read more, see, for example, Živković (2011), Zdravković (2006), Nikolić (2003), Judah (2000), Blagojević (2003), Bieber (2002), Pawłowski (2016; 2019).

should also locate Kosovo's experience in the sphere of its historical past, without relying on the faith in Kosovo's return to Serbian borders. The second strategy belongs to the discourse of politics and, in his statement, Ivo reconstructs it on the level of experience of Serbian society. The discursive constructive strategies can be recognized here in the area of the discourse of the politics in Serbia, in which the topos of belonging to Kosovo leads to the construction of the unity of Serbian thought on the independence of Kosovo. Serbian politicians, not all but a large part of them, when speaking on the issue of Kosovo, identify their voice with those of Serbian people, establishing a vision of one common Serbian thought on the independence of Kosovo. "Failure to work" on the issue of Kosovo's independence at the level of discourse of the politics in Serbia may still influence the discourse on Serbian national identity for a long time. In Kosovo, one could say, the whole paradox of Serbian history is beginning and ending at the same time because to dissociate themselves from the political past associated with the Milošević regime, more contemporary political leaders and national speakers are using the symbolism of Kosovo in the same exaggerated way as Milošević did. Moreover, the rhetoric of the discourse of politics in Serbia towards the issue of Kosovo has been and continues to take the form of conspiracies to find traitors or opponents to the Serbian nation. In other words, the accentuation of various forms of "they" who conspire against "us" is visible here, and so these discursive incidents are part of the populist rhetoric. It sees "those" unfavorable as a threat to "our" national cause. And when the morality of such rhetoric is woven into this statement, such rhetoric very quickly takes up the form of "good" and "bad," outlining a dichotomous vision of the world supported by the topos of history and the topos of the savior of nations (Wodak 2015:67-68). These kinds of statements are, therefore, present mostly in the discourse

of the "First Serbia," emphasizing the importance of Kosovo in the spirituality of every Serb.

In addition, the issue of Kosovo's independence is also present in the urban space narrative in Serbia and Kosovo. Thus, it is worth pointing out two of the many murals present in this context, which are part of the local and international discussion on the independence of Kosovo. The first one is located in Belgrade (New Belgrade, to be precise) and is seen as a message for Russian President Vladimir Putin and (former) US President Donald Trump. This message, however, has a double dimension—on the one hand, reminding Russia of the need to continue its support for Kosovo's non-independence. On the other hand, it is directed at the (former) President of the US, with a reminder of Serbia's position towards losing Kosovo, due to the US purpose of controlling the conflict between the Serbian and Albanian governments over Kosovo and the insistence on concluding an agreement between Belgrade and Pristina. Thus, the mural, presented below includes an outline of the Kosovo state and the notation written in three languages: Serbian, Russian, and English, which says: "Kosovo is Serbia."

Photo III

Source: https://thesrpskatimes.com/mural-shows-putin-trump-and-message-kosovo-is-serbia/. Retrieved February 26, 2021.

The second mural is capturing the narration of the Serbian past and presence in relation to the Kosovo thread and is located in Kosovo in the northern part of Mitrovica.

Photo IV

Source: https://balkaninsight.com/2019/01/16/bombs-and-bullets-fear-and-loathing-in-north-kosovo-01-14-20191/. Photo: Stefan Milivojevic. Retrieved May 13, 2020.

The mural glorifies Serbian soldiers who fought under the colors of the Yugoslav flag during the conflict in Kosovo in 1999. The Cyrillic text next to the soldiers says: "It is worth dying for this country." This inscription, therefore, has a double meaning since it refers, on the one hand, to the Serbian struggle for Kosovo soil and, according to the rhetoric of Serbian messianism, to the renewed sacrifice made by the Serbs in the fight for Kosovo. On the other hand, it sees Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia. The term "country" refers here to Serbia together with Kosovo. Serbia, which was then part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, did not accept the independence of the Kosovo province. This mural is thus also part of the rhetoric of victimization that was and still is present in Serbia. At this point,

a short excerpt from a statement made by one of the interlocutors, Mirjana, a historian and essayist, can be brought up. When referring to the narrative on the Serbian past contained in historical and political narratives, she says that:

> Victimization is the most constitutive feature of Serbian identity. This means that we have been victims of actions by our neighbors, great Western forces, traitors of our identity. Serbs have always been fighting. And talking about the fact that we are victims or that we are heroes is very much present in Serbia. And being a victim and a hero at the same time is rather controversial, but this is the specificity of the Serbs that they must also feel heroic. Our whole story is written in such a way that even if we were victims, we were still heroes and winners. So, all the victories of the Serbs are huge in the books. Victories aren't explained, but lost fights usually have an explanation on several pages.

This kind of simultaneous mix of heroism and victimization, presented as well on the mural shown above, is also an integral part of the Serbian narrative about Kosovo.

When talking about the contemporary perspective of the Kosovo issue present in Serbian discourse of politics, we can say that the strategies of Serbian politicians towards Kosovo continue to be strongly involved in the discussion about Kosovo's historically rooted belonging to Serbia. Unfortunately, things are no better on the Albanian side, which has been trying new ways to limit any role for Serbia (mostly in terms of the Serbian government) in the new state since independence. In Kosovo, tensions continue to be felt between the Serbian community (which is a minority) and the Albanian community (which is the majority of the country's population).

The problem of the Kosovo Serbs is their political position suspended in the disputes between Belgrade and Pristina, but also economic issues (unemployment, illegal seizures of their land), as well as the deepening division and resentment over the years provoking ethnic incidents (between the Serbian and Albanian communities).[29] Organized crime is also a big problem in the country.[30] On the territory of Kosovo, two visions of its statehood, which are separate and mutually exclusive, also collide—the perspective of the Kosovo Serbs, related to the authority of bodies and institutions subordinate to the authorities in Belgrade, and the perspective of the Kosovo authorities. In this optics, the issue of autonomy for "Serbian" northern Kosovo is problematic in the context of the territorial integrality of the whole country (Pawłowski 2019). In 2018, the Serbian-Albanian conflict was significantly piled up due to the doubling of customs duties on Serbian goods by Kosovo. In this situation, in December 2018, the Serbian government even considered military intervention. In May 2019, after the action of Kosovo organized police in the north of Kosovo to break up criminal groups and smuggling gangs, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić warned that he would react by force if the Serbs living there were attacked. There are many such flashpoints between the two countries in the calendar of recent history.

Today, the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia is an important issue in the field of international politics. The negotiations are taking place under the auspices of the EU and the US, whose positions are also sometimes polarized. The EU and the US are pressuring Belgrade and Pristina to reach an agreement. Serbian and Kosovo elites are, to some extent, following this path. Therefore, the authorities of both countries are interested in stalling and prolonging the talks. This is done by periodically escalating tensions and presenting solutions that are unacceptable to the other side or the international community. An example of such actions were the border adjustment proposals presented in July 2018 by the Presidents of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić and Kosovo—Hashim Thaçi,[31] which caused numerous controversies in local and international debates. Lately, on September 04, 2020, in Washington, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić and Kosovo Prime Minister—Avdullah Hoti signed separate declarations with (former) US President Donald Trump on the normalization of mutual economic relations. The parties pledged to implement agreements reached earlier on the implementation of infrastructure and economic projects linking the two countries.[32] The agreement states

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[29] On the Serbian minority in Kosovo and the policy of the Republic of Serbia towards Serbs in Kosovo, see, for example, Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska (2017). The mentioned text is a multithreaded and comprehensive case study of Serbs as a minority in the post-Yugoslavian states. The researcher explains her decision to include in her analysis also the thread of the Kosovo Serbs due to "the actual state of Kosovo's functioning" between the states that do not recognize its independence (Serbia, Russia, China) and the international cooperation developed, however, within the state. Additionally, as the author points out: "The position of Serbs in the Kosovo area is the most difficult and complex of all analyzed cases due to the instability of the Kosovo state and the long-standing social boycott of Kosovo authorities by Serbs, which de facto prevents Serbian existence in that area" (Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska 2017:17 [trans. JW]).

[30] In the Western media, Kosovo was (and sometimes still is) described as a "gangster's paradise," as an area where organized crime, mainly drug trafficking, thrives. In this rhetoric, the Kosovo mafia clans are closely linked to criminal organizations from other European countries, especially Turkey, Albania, and Bulgaria. About Northern Kosovo analysis in terms of case study on the impact of organized crime, see, for example, Kemp, Shaw, and Boutellis (2013).

[31] On November 05, 2020, Kosovo President Hashim Thaçi announced that he was stepping down due to the confirmation of an indictment for crimes against humanity and war crimes. On the same day, Thaçi traveled to The Hague to participate as a defendant in court proceedings before the Kosovo Specialist Chambers. Thus, he was the President of Kosovo from April 07, 2016 till November 05, 2020.

[32] In addition, the agreement means—the opening of a joint border post at Merdare, the joining of Kosovo to the Balkan so-

also that Serbia is to suspend efforts to withdraw recognition of Kosovo's independence for a year, and Pristina will not seek membership in international organizations during that time. Because my research investigation is immersed in both the perspective of 2012 and the social and political threads that have shaped Serbian history and Serbian identity over the past few years, the briefly approximated theme of Kosovo was a very important issue tying together my research conclusions. Concerning the historical and social context of today's Serbia and the question of the formation of Serbian national identity, it is extremely important to return to the place where it all began for the Serbs—Kosovo—and to read its symbolism even today. This is what the interviewees did as well.

In the summary of this part of deliberations on Serbian narrative on present and the future, it should be added that the study that I conducted analyzing the interviews with Serbian elites representatives has established here several simultaneously functioning discourses that have an impact on the construction of Serbian national identity. These include: (1) pro-European discourse; (2) anti-European discourse; (3) Balkanism (in the sense of Serbian resentment based on a narrative about the domination of Europe and the discredit of the Balkan nations); (4) discourse about the Serbian identity entangled in the symbolism of Kosovo; (5) discourse of Serbian religion and tradition as the crucial domains of constructing Serbian national identity.

When talking about the latter, it should be emphasized that the relationship between the Serbian tra-

dition and the formation of Serbian national identity, and the vision of Serbia represented by the Serbian Orthodox Church, is a significant aspect in creating the image of the Serbian state also in the present day. *Encyclopedia of the Serbian People* (*Enciklopedija srpskog naroda* [Ljušić 2008]) states that, in Serbia, apart from the state tradition (related to the historical awareness of the Serbian state, its forms, and political conditions) and the "mythical-epic tradition shaped within the framework of oral tradition," two other traditions considered to be fundamental can also be distinguished: the *svetosavlje* Orthodox and the folk tradition (Gil 2016:176 as cited in Ljušić 2008:1139-1140 [trans. JW]). As Dorota Gil (2016:176 [trans. JW]) notes, "The term *svetosavlje* is sometimes used as a synonym for Serbian Orthodoxy in the shape given to it by Saint Sava,[33] but more often it defines ideologized Orthodoxy as an ethnic rather than religious category and is treated as a Serbian national idea." Moreover, in the process of redefining and reinterpreting Serbian cultural tradition since the 1990s, the return to medieval state-forming and spiritual traditions, which determine the elements of Serbian identity, plays a major role.[34]

As for the ways of interpreting Serbian national identity that I reconstructed in the statements of the interlocutors, due to the limitations of the text, I will only briefly mention them. Based on my analysis, I distinguished Serbian ethnic identity, Serbian linguistic identity, Serbian religious national identity, Serbian national identity understood as "ongoing

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called mini-Schengen, mutual recognition of university diplomas, intensification of the search for persons missing during the 1998-1999 conflict, and respect for religious freedom were declared.

[33] Saint Sava (born 1175 or 1176, died 1235) is the first Archbishop of Serbia. He was counted among the most important saints of the Serbian Orthodox Church. He served in the Orthodox Church from 1219 to 1233 and was in favor of uniting the Orthodox Church with the state.

[34] To read more about Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbian spiritual tradition, see, for example, Gil (2005); Vukomanović (2008; 2011); Radić and Vukomanović (2014).

identity" or "unfinished identity," and Yugoslavian identity. In addition, I also reconstructed two types of identity narratives that play a role in the construction of Serbian national identity—the narrative of the fusion of Serbian national identity with Kosovo and the narrative of anti-nationalism.

Part III. Constructs of the "Other" and the "Alien" in the Discourse on Serbian National Identity

The reconstruction of the images of "otherness" and "strangeness" present in the discourse on Serbian national identity has been underpinned by the theoretical context of "self-stranger" and the phenomenon of the "Other" in the understanding of Bernhard Waldenfels (2011). According to the author, the "Other" remains meaningfully different, while the "Alien"—threatening what is "own"—appears as hostile. In the studied discourse on Serbian national identity, I recognized a differentiation between the two rhetorical figures of the "Other" and the "Alien." Their coexistence is the result of the historical past of the Serbian nation and the very discursive process of constructing Serbian national identity. Thus, I agree with Waldenfels that the "Alien" is not simply something else. The encounter with what the "Alien" is involves the negation of belonging to what the "Alien" contains within itself and the need to protect its individuality. In this part of the article, I will not quote the interviews' fragments, but attempt to present the comprehensive collection of voices of the interlocutors, pointing out the main themes and conclusions of the analysis.

In my case study of Serbian national identity, I found that it is Europe (in the sense of Western Europe) and Albanians (as a nation living in Kosovo) that are two main rhetorical figures in the discourse about the "Alien" in relation to Serbian national identity. According to Waldenfels' concept, the "Alien" is associated here as hostile. However, in the case of the vision of Europe, the situation is more complex because two discourses on Europe as the "Other" and about Europe as the "Alien" are overlapping here. In a contemporary perspective marked by Serbia's claim to be a member of the EU, the opponents of accession reach for both discursive constructs, but the one about Europe as the "Other" is present much more often. And, the pro-European positions are looking for positive aspects of Serbia's accession to the European Community, seeing the membership as an opportunity for further democratization of the country and deepening of the international dialogue between Serbia and other European countries.

I also agree with Ana Russell-Omaljev (2016:116) that the Serbs, as part of the discourse of politics divided between the "First" and the "Other" Serbia, seek "others" among "their own," and that the categories of heroes and traitors celebrated or condemned for their national deeds are inextricably linked to the specificity of both political formations. The ideology that most inclines the discourse of politics in Serbia to recognize the "good" and the "bad" is nationalism, which, associated with the break-up of Yugoslavia (in the sense of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) and the Milošević regime, is supposed to illustrate the path to which Serbia should not return. The conducted study also reassured me that the post-Yugoslavian Serbian national identity cannot be analyzed in isolation from the discourse of Serbian nationalism of the 1990s. Today, many years after the fall of Milošević's rule, the legacy he has built up is still strongly present in the discourses of the "First" and the "Other" Serbia political narratives. The "Other Serbia" discourse

focuses on blaming the Serbs as collectively responsible for Milošević's policies. The discourse of "First Serbia" continues to feel the nationalistic rush and justifies the Serbs as victims of the process of the break-up of Yugoslavia. There is also a recurrence of a certain hostility towards the neighboring republics, which usually resounds in themes related to the crimes of World War II, the Balkan armed conflicts of the 1990s, and the discussion about the status of Kosovo.

In the discourse of the "First Serbia," the still "living" nationalism was not so negatively connoted as that of the 1990s. Rather, the distinction between "good" in the patriotic sense of nationalism and its "bad" radical version was taken up here. Liberal and moderate nationalists, therefore, appeared in the political environment of the "First Serbia." The divisions on the political scene were also manifested by the two optics of the historical legacy of the last more than twenty years. Some politicians have persistently proclaimed a radical break with the ideological burden of Milošević's time in the discourse on national history. The second group of political actors, like Boris Tadić, sought a policy of working together to rework the difficult past and prepare Serbia for international dialogue.

On the subject of perceiving Europe, it can be added that, in the discourse of the "Other Serbia," there is a belief that Europe is not an idea external to Serbia (Russell-Omaljev 2016:174). In this perspective, the perception of Europe as the "Other" is also transformed into an understanding of Europe as an element or part of the Serbianness. However, it is difficult to characterize in Serbian discourse of politics the mechanism behind the transformation of the perception of Europe as the "Alien" into a conscious pro-European political identity. Thus, considering

the topics used since the 1990s, to define the framework of the official Serbian narrative on the past, present, and future nationalism, war crimes, and auto-chauvinism (Russell-Omaljev 2016:206) should be mentioned. Based on the analyzed statements of the representatives of symbolic elites, I was able to verify that the redefinition of the notions such as Serbian nationalism (in terms of its version from the late 80s and 90s of the XX century), Serbian war crimes (in the optics of the armed conflicts in the 90s), and Serbian messianism (in terms of Serbian discourse of politics rooted in national myths which are being transformed into the political ones and Serbian spiritual tradition, both entangled in dormant resentments of the suffering nation) are necessary to define in the official discussion of Serbia's historical past the community of past experiences instead of following divided readings of the recent history.

When talking about "Others" and "Aliens" in the discourse on Serbian national identity, the interlocutors are focused on the already mentioned pro- and anti-European discourses. It is important to point out that the latter is constructed most often in relation to the Serbian political past. The first, pro-European one, uses discursive constructive strategies and operates with the topos of being part of Europe and the topos of the periphery of Europe, constructs a desire for collective pro-European identification. In the anti-European discourse, on the other hand, in the statements of the interlocutors, it is the sense of "not being part of Europe" that is most resounding in the reconstruction of the anti-European approach. This discourse is strongly influenced by the already mentioned Balkanism. However, much more important seems the anti-European discourse created in the discourse of Serbian national identity concerning recent history. Public discourse in Ser-

bia—as the interlocutors mentioned—refers here to the marginalization or worse treatment of their nation by Europe in comparison with other former Yugoslavian republics. There is also the "disappointment" in Europe's stance, first of all, on the question of its unwillingness to take responsibility for the conflicts in the Balkans that took place in the 1990s, and then—Europe's role in the process of granting independence to Kosovo, and the omission of Serbia's views on this matter. The latter issue was particularly important for a return in the discourse on Serbian national identity to seeing Europe as a hostile "Alien." The anti-European discourse present in Serbia may thus seek, through discursive deconstructive strategies, to destroy the manifestations of European identity in situations where Serbian society is seeking it and tries to reconstruct it within its national identity.

Based on the research conclusions, it should be noted that, in the linguistic construction of the "Other" and the "Alien," the tensions in the discourse on Serbian national identity are marked by the conflicts between what is "Serbian" and what is "non-Serbian," inscribed in the dichotomous "self-other" relation. The images of "Aliens" in the period of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s reconstructed in my study include (a) anti-European discourse; (b) anti-Western discourse (West understood here as the US); (c) anti-Croatian discourse; (d) anti-Albanian discourse; (e) anti-Bosnian discourse.

Since 1999, after the NATO bombings in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in Serbian public discourse, the discourse of politics and symbolic elites, the anti-Western narrative is appearing. Since 2000, after the collapse of Milošević's regime, the anti-European discourse was still present, but throughout the next few years it focused more on a vision of Europe

as the "Other" rather than the "Alien." In 2008, the intensification of the anti-European discourse after the declaration of Kosovo's independence brought again to the public and political discourses in Serbia the perception of Europe as the "Alien." Then, in 2012, in Serbian public discourse and on the Serbian political scene occurred an intensification of the anti-Croatian and anti-European discourse after the Hague Tribunal released the Croatian generals (Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač) who participated in the armed conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s. Thus, in recent years, in the discourse of politics in Serbia, what is visible is the separation between the intensification of the anti-European discourse, resulting, among other things, from the growing conflict over the functioning of an independent Kosovo, and the still strong pro-European attitude. The discourse on Serbian national identity is also still entangled in the visions on Serbianness produced by the "First Serbia" and the "Other Serbia." In this way, a discourse of the identity based on tradition, conservative, nurturing national symbols meets the pro-European discourse—liberal and critical towards nationalism.

In addition, a still difficult and polarizing discourse of the politics and related social perceptions in Serbia of the issue is the topic of the NATO bombing in 1999. An example of the topicality of this subject can be seen in the situation when, during the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the commemoration of these events (on March 24, 2019) in the atmosphere of Serbia turning towards the future and moving away from attitudes hostile to the West, the leader of the Serbian Radical Party, Vojislav Šešelj, and his supporters set the EU and NATO flags on fire. Since 1999, in the discourse on post-Yugoslavian Serbian national identity, the NATO forces, in which the Americans played a major role, have been

seen as the enemy of the Serbian nation. Also, in his statements and interviews, Aleksandar Vučić, the President of Serbia, stressed that Serbia will not join NATO or any other military structure in the near future. In Belgrade (to this day), the words *Neću NATO* (I don't want NATO), which carries another Serbian resentment, can be found on the buildings.

Photo V

Source: Self-elaboration.

Closing Remarks

The study of the discourse on Serbian national identity enabled us to discuss its specificity within the framework of the three main analytical themes listed in this article. In the reconstruction of the Serbian political past, the most noteworthy is the narrative on Yugoslavian identity. As I verified in my research, the Yugoslavian identity as a phenomenon escapes the discursive order of inference and historical frames of analysis. Thus, I embrace the Yugoslavian identity as part of the discourse on Serbian national identity and as the dimension of the sense of identity. According to the interlocutors, the Yugoslavian identity, apart from its political understand-

ing as to the national identity of the inhabitants of Yugoslavia, inscribed in the idea of Titoism, is the identity with which many Serbs identified, and still identify. The memory of Yugoslavia, recognized also as a part of the Serbian collective memory, should also be understood in terms of the communicative memory (Assmann 2008; Assmann 2013; Kaźmierska 2012). The generation of "carriers" of this memory is, therefore, the main condition for its existence. As I indicated in the article, my research allowed me to conclude that the phenomenon of the Yugoslavian identity also eludes the classical accounts of nostalgia for past realities. It is attributed, among other things, to nostalgia for the communist reality in post-socialist countries. Yugonostalgia can wrongly deprive the Yugoslavian identity of its meaning, inscribed in the perspective of individual identifications. It is only a certain part of the experiences that the Yugoslavian reality has rooted in the biographical memory of the individuals who still identify themselves as Yugoslavs.

Thus, the sociological view of Yugoslavian identity can fit into two ways of interpreting this phenomenon. The first is related to the perception of this identity as an element of political illusion and social creation. Its development would involve the reconstruction of the mechanisms of control and power in the discourse about the community of Yugoslav states both within and outside the discourse. In this perspective, the notion of yugonostalgia would also need to be analyzed more broadly to see to what extent it is part of contemporary mechanisms that sustain the functioning of the phenomenon of nostalgia among post-socialist countries in Europe. And to what extent is this a creation of a discourse of power in the post-Yugoslav republics produced to obscure other important themes related to the Yugoslav past. The second way of interpreting the phenomenon of

Yugoslavian identity is related to the optics presented in this text. The Yugoslavian identity appears here as part of the intersubjective cultural reality. As a community of identifying meanings. Thus, an important research question arises here about the mechanisms of sustaining and destroying this still existing identity, which, despite the collapse of Yugoslavia, has survived on the level of individual and collective identification. The answer to this question would require studying the phenomenon of Yugoslavian identity much more broadly than the perspective I focused on in my research. It would be valuable to reach out to interlocutors from other post-Yugoslav republics and compare their ways of talking about Yugoslavian identity with the presented Serbian context.[35]

On the other hand, the discourse on the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the historical and social level is associated with the memory of Titoism, communism, civil religion, and nationalism awakened in the 1980s. It is also a time of suppressing the memory of World War II, and thus separating this area of official memory (in Serbia and other Yugoslav republics) through the emergence of the silent SEP[36] (Czyżewski, Dunin, and Piotrowski 1991). This is about "blurring" in memory. A kind of experience in which the memory is obliterated, pushed into the background, and the resources of categorization are obscured. Thus, both in Serbia and in other post-Yugoslav republics, not only the memory of World War II, but also the memory of the Federation of the Yugoslav states and its disintegration, associated with the time of difficult experiences of

war, conflict, and crisis, is subject to the processes of separation. Referring to the assumption that, in a CDA, it is important not only to expose the hidden procedures and discursive strategies used to reproduce a legitimate image of the reality, but also to identify those threads that have been excluded from the analyzed discourse—such threads include in the discourse on Serbian collective memory the listed moments of memory about post-war Yugoslavia and the period of the 1990s.

As I mentioned in the text, many of the statements contained references to the biographical experiences of the representatives of the symbolic elites, as a result of their direct involvement in the operation of the process I was analyzing. What was interesting to me, although I expected that the interviews might be dominated by the discourse on the armed conflicts of the 1990s,[37] the interviewees, except for a few brief mentions, did not turn to the war story. This may have been due to the time lapse between the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Serbo-Croat conflict, and the fighting over Kosovo until the time of my research. I assume that Serbia was not a country where the specter of war was felt deeply. Certainly, in the early 1990s, the country was in an economic crisis, and hyperinflation was also coming to a head as a result of sanctions introduced by the international community, which made the population feel the deteriorating living conditions very strongly. In addition, Slobodan Milošević was consolidating his rule on the political scene. However, it was not in Serbia that mass atrocities occurred. For many years, the story of war, through the manipulative actions of the me-

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[35] In the context of the duration of this identity, the use of the biographical research method is also worth considering.

[36] The term "SEP" means somebody's else problem, in other words, it means a silenced matter, considered to be someone else's issue.

[37] It is important to note in the concluding section that warfare in the 1990s in the Balkans took place in 1991 in Slovenia, 1991-1995 in Croatia, 1992-1995 in Bosnia, and 1998-1999 in Kosovo and Serbia (the 1999 NATO bombing).

dia and the ruling elites in Serbia, was removed from the list of topics worth talking about. In such a created reality, one could even believe the narrative that there was no war at all.

In conclusion, it can be added as well that the internal conflicts between the "First Serbia" and the "Other Serbia" also play an important role in the construction of the discourse on Serbian national identity. The two discursive formations not only differ from each other in terms of identity, but they also present different visions of Serbianness. In the case of the "First Serbia," the discourse on Serbian national identity is still strongly linked to the symbolic dimension of Kosovo and national tradition. In the case of the "Other Serbia," this discourse is pro-European, anti-nationalist, democratic. In such an approach, the two Serbia's identities do not find common solutions, but rather strive for a constant differentiation. It is also difficult to say whether the "Third Serbia" emerging in the public discourse, which is a structure that has not yet been described more precisely, will have a chance to reconstruct or break down the ongoing division in the near future.

In closing the discussion, I would like to address as well the phenomenon of Serbian nationalism in its contemporary dimension and its understanding in Michael Billig's (2008) concept of banal nationalism. Based on the socio-historical context of the formation of Serbian nationalism, and referring to its contemporary optics, I conclude that the statement about the existence of everyday, banal nationalism in Serbia, which might seem an obvious conclusion in relation to this concept, still requires a comment based on the conclusions of my research. Like Ivana Spasić (2017), I think that Serbian banal nationalism is a little bit out of line with Billig's approach.

This means that although it can undoubtedly be considered that the social practices proper to banal nationalism, in which it is reproduced in the form of national semantics and rhetoric, are also an integral part of the Serbian context. It is, however, in the case of Serbia, that banal nationalism is seldom cold and unconscious. Spasić emphasizes that there are many "positive," "non-developing" forms of Serbian manifestations, but "underneath the thin crust of banality there usually lurks a kind of nationalism which, if it not outright hot, at any rate, is impassioned, resentful or oversensitive" (Spasić 2017:41). The justification for such an understanding of Serbian banal nationalism can be found in the functioning of Serbian national rhetoric. Within its framework, questions about the Serbian nation, the Serbian identity are still too strongly marked by the need to value the difference between "us" and "them." In addition, in the case of Serbia, in national rhetoric so entangled in national myths, the boundary between the undervalued evocation of stories about the Serbian nation or its symbolism and conscious and manipulated use is still very thin.

Statements gathered from the representatives of Serbian elites and constant conversations with some of the interlocutors when I was back in Poland, analyzed political statements, and long-term study of the discourse on Serbian national identity made me familiar with the enormity of the "bad" memory that this discourse has to face to release itself from Balkan demons of the past and dormant resentments. The issues I examined, however, related to the "resentment" of Serbian nationalism are not just a particular feature of this case. The contemporary political and social transformations taking place in Europe show that the rise of extreme national visions is a sign of the times, an image of the universalization of the processes that have so far been considered in rather

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particularistic categories. The following words seem to be the proper metaphor for understanding the Serbian case: "The repressed has returned, and its name is nationalism" (Ignatieff 1993:11). Thus, to try to understand and reconstruct the Serbian past and present, it is necessary to remember that in this social and political reality it is not only important how "the past influences the present," but also "how the present manipulates the past, which is decisive in the Balkans" (Ignatieff 1993:29).

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Citation

Reframing Patient's Autonomy in End-of-Life Care Decision-Making: Constructions of Agency in Interviews with Physicians

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Abstract: In the research literature, critical viewpoints question the idea of patient autonomy as a robust basis for approaching end-of-life treatments. Yet physicians express distinctly positive attitudes towards patient autonomy and advance directives in questionnaire studies. In this article, we unravel taken-for-granted assumptions about the agency that physicians use when evaluating patient autonomy in end-of-life care. We use Goffmanian frame analysis to analyze semi-structured interviews with eight Finnish physicians. Instead of measuring standardized responses, we explore in detail how distinct evaluations of patient autonomy are made through approving or reserved stand-taking. The results show that the interviewees reframed patient autonomy with the help of biological, medical, ethical, and interaction frames. Through such reframing, the patient's agency was constructed as vulnerable and weak in contrast to the medical expert with the legitimated capacity to act as an agent for the patient. Further, end-of-life treatment decisions by the patient, as well as the patient's interests appeared as relationally defined in interactions and negotiations managed by the physician, instead of attesting the sovereign agency of an autonomous actor.

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Proponents of the right-to-die movement argue that in certain scenarios, providing dying patients with more treatment would increase their suffering (Andorno, Biller-Andorno, and Brauer 2009). Given the difficulties in objectively determining when providing more treatment becomes harmful, the principle of patient autonomy gained a central role in end-of-life care discussions. It follows the assumption that one's best interests for medical treatment are the product of personal values instead of medically determined concepts (Lidz and Arnold 1993). This notion also extends to individuals who had their decision-making capacities circumscribed by illness or injury. The use of advance healthcare directives (or living wills) allows healthy individuals to express their preferences for different medical treatments, providing future instructions in case they become unable to communicate and make decisions for themselves (Dresser 2003).

A literature review of 15 empirical studies crossing 10 countries (from Europe, Asia, North America, and the Middle East) found that physicians, in general, hold positive attitudes towards advance directives, praising their use in promoting patient autonomy. Diverse factors, however, had negative impacts on their attitudes, including religious and cultural background, potential legal problems, family opposition, and fear of increased euthanasia (Coleman 2013). In Finland, a survey found that 92% of physicians had a positive attitude towards advance directives (Hildén, Louhiala, and Palo 2004). The most common advantages include: *promotes patient autonomy* and *acts as an ice breaker for discussing the end of life treatment*.

Despite the overwhelming support from physicians, the prevalence of advance directives varies significantly across countries. In the US, where these documents were originally introduced, very few individuals have actually signed an advance directive, which suggests a gap between the autonomy-centered model of advance care planning and the patient's desires for end-of-life communication (Hawkins et al. 2005). The legal aspects of advance directives favor the convergence of specific medical treatment preferences in written format; however, it can be daunting for patients to gather all the necessary information to make accurate predictions (Fagerlin and Schneider 2004). Consequently, a substantial minority of patients change their treatment preferences over time (Auriemma et al. 2014), often without realizing they did so (Sharman et al. 2008). Moreover, ethnographic studies (Shapiro 2015; Shapiro 2018) have shown that instead of relying on written guidance, surrogates often refer to one's personality, values, and previously expressed preferences to construct the patient's best interests for end-of-life treatment (Shapiro 2018), thus undermining the importance of advance directives for the decision-making process. In European countries, on the other hand, Andreasen and colleagues (2019) found that the prevalence of advance directives ranges from 0.1% (Italy) to 76.9% (UK)—in Finland, the same study found that 40.1% of the individuals in long-term care facilities have signed an advance directive. Despite these differences, Finnish physicians have expressed similar concerns, such as the possibility of patients making a will for the wrong reasons (e.g., depression) or changing their mind after signing the document (Hildén et al. 2004).

Ditto, Hawkins, and Pizarro (2006) reviewed the key psychological assumptions supporting the legal and ethical arguments for the use of advance directives. The authors concluded that people will often fail to predict future treatment preferences because they:

(a) have inaccurate beliefs about life-sustaining medical treatments, (b) fail to appreciate how their current

physical and emotional state affects their predictions about future states, (c) under-appreciate how well they will cope with serious illness, and (d) weigh certain aspects of information differently when making decisions about immediate and more distant futures. [Ditto et al. 2006:493-494]

All these critical viewpoints question the idea of patient autonomy as a robust basis for approaching end-of-life treatments. They cast doubt on patients' agency in taking advantage of the autonomy offered to them, as well as their ability to assess and decide on the treatments in an adequate and proper way. Such views may account for physicians' reservations about the use of advance directives that have been reported in the literature. Perhaps the generally positive attitudes stem from abstract values underlying the creation of these documents, whereas reservations are associated with practical concerns surrounding their use. Physicians could also share these critical views due to their institutionally legitimated position in doctor-patient relationships.

According to Laine and Davidoff (1996), different facets of patient-centered decision-making models have developed at different paces. More specifically, whereas medical law and bioethics have advanced the notion of informed consent, their universalistic and disembodied way of dealing with ethical problems fails to address in situ issues surrounding doctor-patient relationships (Lopéz 2004). For instance, physicians are responsible for evaluating which interactional strategies best fit each patient's preferences in terms of information disclosure and decision-making participation (Kiesler and Auerbach 2006). As such, despite the advance of bioethics, certain levels of medical paternalism seem to persist (see, e.g., Légaré et al. 2010; Pollard et al. 2014). If, on the one hand, the emergence of informed consent

ideology has imposed limits to medical authority; on the other, *medicalization* (i.e., the process whereby non-medical problems become defined in terms of illnesses**)** has increased the role of medicine as a mechanism of social control (Conrad 1992). According to Conrad (1979), physicians remain the sole gatekeepers of medical technologies through which they can secure their role of "experts" during medical decision-making (Freidson 1970). Furthermore, the current biomedicalization process has intensified this tension. On the one hand, innovation in medical technologies has the potential to advance physicians' authority (Clarke et al. 2003); on the other, patients are increasingly regarded as autonomous consumer-citizens (Rose 2013).

Contrary to these speculations, however, physicians express distinctly positive attitudes towards patient autonomy and advance directives in questionnaire studies (Hildén et al. 2004; Coleman 2013). How should we interpret these results in the face of critical views questioning the patient's agency? How do physicians actually construct patient autonomy when they present evaluating comments about it?

In this article, we aim to unravel unspoken assumptions about agency underlying physicians' talk about patient autonomy. According to Kuczewski (1996:30), the notion of informed consent presupposes that individuals possess a "sphere of protected activity or privacy, free from unwanted interference"; patient's autonomy is only possible to the extent this sphere of privacy is respected. Such a notion resonates with what Emirbayer (1997:284) identifies as a substantialist approach to agency, which regards the individual as a "rational, calculating actor" or "rule-follower" driven by "vital inner forces." Drawing from a relational approach (Emirbayer 1997; Emirbayer and Mische 1998), we propose in-

stead that agency is indissoluble from the spatio-temporal contexts of action. Actions are not guided by internalized goals abstracted from concrete situations, instead, ends and means are developed within different ever-changing contexts subjected to constant revaluation as events unfold.

We utilize Goffman's (1986) frame analytical perspective to discuss how patient autonomy can be constructed not only with an emphasis on agency understood as a property of individual actors, but also on agency seen to be embedded and defined in social relations and interactions at the level of everyday medical practice. We also draw from Meyer and Jepperson's (2000) theory on the cultural construction of agency to distinguish two modalities of agency: *agency over* and *agency for*.

Empirically, we analyze interview talk in which physicians comment on patient autonomy. Instead of measuring standardized responses, we explore in detail the physicians' arguments and show how the expression of positive and negative evaluations of patient autonomy is done through approving or reserved stand-taking. Adding a frame analytical reading, we unpack the contextual assumptions of agency the physicians use when evaluating patient autonomy in end-of-life care.

Agency and Framing

In social sciences, the agency has often been approached as agency towards or over something; for example, an ability to influence one's actions and life circumstances (Bandura 2006). Meyer and Jepperson (2000) argue that in modern society, the efficient agency is highly valued and modern actors are expected to enact and cultivate it. "Helplessness, ignorance, and passivity may be very natural hu-

man properties, but they are not the properties of the proper effective agent. Modern agentic actors involve themselves in all sorts of efforts elaborating their agentic capabilities, efforts that often have only the most distant relation to their raw interests" (Meyer and Jepperson 2000:107). Instead of (more and more standardized) forms of efficient agency, however, they draw attention to the contextual and structural embedding of agency by highlighting that modern agents enact agency for something or somebody ("a principal"). According to Meyer and Jepperson (2000), a unique aspect of modern actorhood is the construction of actors as authorized agents for various types of principals, including themselves, but as well other social actors, society, or abstract ideas and values such as equity, truth, or economic growth.

Actors can enact agency for their self-interests insofar as they are also agents for and under the modern cultural system. Meyer and Jepperson (2000) reject the notion that one's interests stem solely from biological or psychological variables; instead, actors adopt interests legitimated by the cultural system and institutional practices (i.e., the Hippocratic Oath aims to ensure that physicians address a patient's best interests over possible competing interests). Additionally, modern agents can take and shift the principles they serve. "A striking feature of the modern system is the extreme readiness with which its actor participants can act as agents for other actors. They can do this, with rapidity and facility, as employees and consultants, as friends and advisors, as voters and citizen" (Meyer and Jepperson 2000:107).

Physicians, too, can act as agents for different types of principals including patients, the hospital as an organization, society, ethical and legal principles

guiding their professional conduct, and, obviously, the physician's personal interests. In what concerns end-of-life care discussions, physicians act as "death brokers." They rely on different interactional strategies to render the dying process culturally appropriate (Timmermans 2005), which presupposes a scope of action embedded in complex agent-principal relationships that transcend the doctor-patient relationship on its own.

Meyer and Jepperson's paper represents one way to elaborate on a relational view to agency and analyze how the agency is embedded in a social context. A special feature in their relational theorizing is the central role given to the agency in the meaning of agency for somebody. This aspect of agency concerns agents enacting their agency on behalf, or for, somebody or something. It is conceptually different yet intimately connected with the other side of the agency, *agency over* or *towards something*, which concerns the agent's ability to self-regulate and make things happen (see also: Niska 2015).

The very concept of autonomy can be understood from the perspective of these two aspects of agency: first, autonomy as agency towards or over, as the ability to execute acts, and second, autonomy as the agency for, the ability to act as an (authorized) agent for oneself, and thus to define one's wishes, values, and interests. However, whereas the notion of *agency over* provides us with limited analytical tools to discuss how interests are developed and maintained by different actors during an interaction, the very process of interest construction is central to discussions about how an actor may enact *agency for* different principals. Interest construction is one way to define a principal for oneself, and consequently, attempt to authorize oneself as an agent for that principal.

Meyer and Jepperson, however, focus on the cultural macro level, whereas we, in this paper, will target micro-level processes with the help of Goffmanian theorizing. When people face a new situation, Goffman (1986) explains, they routinely ask themselves: "What is going on here?" Through primary frameworks, individuals organize a social experience by extracting meaning from aspects of the scene that otherwise would be regarded as meaningless. Goffman then distinguishes two types of primary frames: natural frames and social frames. Natural frames concern "purely physical" acts (Goffman 1986:22) to which no intentionality is attributed, and no human actors steering them are presupposed. Social frames, on the other hand, presume the existence of an agent whose intentions, motives, and effort for control direct the event.

The use of frame analysis, however, is not an unproblematic one. According to Scheff (2005), it remains one of Goffman's most elusive concepts, often misunderstood, paraphrased without enough theoretical consideration, or harshly criticized. Among its criticisms, it has been suggested that frame analysis concerns a structural approach, and not an interactional one. Sharron (1981:505), for example, argues that

> By proposing frame as "definable principles that govern events," he [Goffman] implies that the nature of interaction can be arbitrarily decided in advance. These frames do not slide into one another; they stand separate and unrelated. Furthermore, they can be classified, rather than constructed in an innovative and unique process of interaction.

Scheff (2005), nevertheless, refers to the notion of *keying* to highlight the interactional features of frame analysis. Important to the development of

Goffman's theory is the notion that the meaning of primary frameworks can be transformed. Through the process of keying, the original meaning of a framework can be changed, resulting in a different interpretation of what is going on. An insult, for example, may be keyed into a play by asserting that "I was only joking." Social reality is often constituted by mixed class events, perceived as primary frames and transformed events (i.e., games, rituals, practices, etc.). According to Scheff (2005:371), the notion of keying is "unavoidably social," it presupposes not only a common focus of attention, but also mutual awareness between the participants and their key signs, which are essential to understand the discourse.

An example of how framings associate with the two sides of agency, discussed earlier, is what Goffman calls "regrounding." This refers to activities performed outside their normal range of participation for motives different from those that govern ordinary actors (Goffman 1986). For instance, Goffman mentions the practice of shilling adopted in casinos, in which a gambler bets using the casino money. Instead of betting for personal gain (a motive governing the actions of ordinary gamblers), the shill is actually trying to engage other players, who otherwise would not want to play "head-on" against the dealer, to join the table. On the one hand, regrounding means to reframe an act in terms of "agency for." It changes the interpretation about whom the act is meant to serve. On the other hand, the ability to impose such a reframing attests to the enactment of "agency over"; agency over how other participants interpret and perceive the act.

Keying is reframing. An event once framed may be framed again in a different way (reframing); a given meaning of an act or event is constructed through multiple layers of frames, each building upon previous ones (Goffman 1986). Given this complexity, different errors are likely to occur during the framing process. In a vague situation, individuals might find it difficult to distinguish which of two interpretations is the correct one; this is what Goffman (1986) calls *ambiguity*. Obviously, because framing errors are possible, individuals can disagree about what is going on in the situation, accounting for different versions of what is happening (*frame dispute*).

Our empirical setting consists of interviews in which physicians comment on an excerpt from the Act of the Status and Rights of Patients of 1992. This excerpt expresses and represents what we here approach as "the patient autonomy frame," used to interpret and make sense of events associated with end-of-life processes and treatments. Therefore, our immediate analytical target will be how the interviewed physicians respond to the patient autonomy frame in this kind of interview situation. On one level, we will focus on the interviewees' talk as argumentation and rhetoric in which they take a stance towards the patient autonomy frame and present justifications and accounts for their stances. On the other level, we analyze their argumentation as a framing activity in which they maintain or reframe patient autonomy.

Methodology and Methods

Analysis of Interview Talk as a Way to Study Frames and Framing Processes

Goffman himself analyzed framing as something that people do when they speak (Goffman 1981; 1986; Manning 1992), and this is commonplace in anthropological and socio-linguistic applications of frame analysis (Tannen 1993). These authors of-

ten focus the attention on how the participants in a conversation or interaction frame the ongoing activities when personally involved in them. Tannen and Wallat (1987), for example, analyze "medical examination" and "medical consulting" as interactive framings observable through video recordings of actual doctor-patient discourse. Similarly, an interview situation can be studied by analyzing how the participants frame the ongoing interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer (Ensink 2003).

Following Goffman (1986), however, we contend that events may also be framed by bystanders and other actors who are not directly involved in the events being framed. In our case, the interview as such was not a doctor-patient verbal interaction, but the interviewed physicians were talking about events occurring within such interaction. Despite sharing the research interview frame, however, they did not simply inform the interviewer about issues associated with patient autonomy, but actively engaged in framing and reframing these issues. What makes their action particularly interesting, of course, is that besides being occasional bystanders as in the interview situation, the interviewees are also regular and experienced participants in doctor-patient interactions through their profession.

Analyzing argumentation as framing combines ideas from rhetorical social psychology (Billig 1996) with frame analysis (Pesonen and Vesala 2007). As Goffman (1986) points out, framings can be contested and frames disputed, which implies that argumentation about frames is a relevant window for framings. Furthermore, one commonplace for supporting a critical stance towards a given framing is an alternative frame (Pesonen and Vesala 2007). According to Manning (1992), one of Goffman's aims was to identify the lamination of frames, that is,

how meanings are often constructed through the superimposition of frames. Careful analysis of argumentation may help to uncover such laminations.

Interviewees, Interviews, and Context

Finland has an established tradition in accepting and promoting end-of-life care discussions. In 1971, it became the first country in the world to use a brain death diagnostic to determine the death of a person (Hildén et al. 2004). In 1992, the Act on the Status and Rights of Patients laid down patients' constitutional rights, including the right to refuse treatment. "She/he may deny treatment or an operation even if it would be necessary to remove a danger to his/her health or life" (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland 1992).

The interviews were conducted in Finland with eight physicians from six specialization areas: anesthesiological pharmacology, nephrology, internal medicine, infectology, geriatrics, and pediatrics (Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of the participants (n=8)

Specialization	Position	Gender
Anesthesiological pharmacology	Medical director	M
Pediatrics	Pediatrician/Bioethics lecturer	M
Nephrology	Head of nephrology unit	M
Nephrology	Head of nephrology unit	M
Internal medicine	Chief physician	F
Internal medicine/ Geriatrics	Physician	M
Internal Medicine/ Infectology	Physician	M
Geriatrics	Physician	F

Source: Self-elaboration.

The main criterion to select the participants was that they had experience with the care of dying patients, having previously encountered advance directives on their daily practices. We identified potential interviewees through our academic network, and after first contacts, a snowball technique was used to recruit more participants. Before each interview, physicians received an informed consent document ensuring their identities would remain anonymous, and that the interviewer would safely store all the audio recordings. Also, at any time they could contact the researchers and decline their participation in the research; in that case, all stored material would be destroyed.

The interviews, conducted between October 2016 and January 2017, started with an initial query about the participants' professional and academic careers. A prompt (see: Pyysiäinen 2010), consisting of an excerpt from the Act of the Status and Rights of Patients, was used to invite the interviewees to comment on and discuss the patient's autonomy principle. The interviewer presented the text on a single sheet of paper. The interviewees were asked to read the text carefully and then were asked to comment on it freely. The interviewer played the role of active listener and made requests for more comments. The discussions over the prompts lasted between 40 and 60 minutes.[1]

Following the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (2016) guidelines on data integrity, we used a verbatim mode to transcribe the material, including a word-to-word replication of the verbal data, word accentuations, non-verbal expressions such as laughing, and lengthy pauses.[2, 3]

The Nature of Analysis

The analysis started with a careful reading of transcripts. We then identified and organized all the evaluative stands the interviewees took towards the prompt, as well as the justifications and accounts that they presented to support these stances. After that, we interpreted all these comments in terms of Goffman's frame analytical concepts and organized them with regard to frames involved in the excerpt that the interviewees commented on. Finally, we scrutinized what kind of assumptions or versions of agency the interviewees used and constructed in their comments and framings.

The prompt that was presented to the interviewees consisted of two articles taken from the Act of the Status and Rights of Patients of 1992. The key point in the articles is the patient's right to refuse given treatments. In a more general view, the Act states the patient's right to self-determination and autonomy. Interpreted through frame-analytical lenses, the text is constituted by four layers of frames. First, at the "bottom" there is a "biological frame" in which disease and death are conceived as occurring without any intentional agent producing or steering them. The biological frame represents natural frames, a subcategory of primary frames. Second, on top of this, there is a "medical frame" that introduces the human agent, a professional who intervenes with the natural course of events,

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[1] Altogether three prompts were used, but in this article, we analyze only the discussions for the first one.

[2] The first author conducted and transcribed semi-structured interviews. The analysis was done jointly by both authors.

[3] In the excerpts presented in the analysis, "R" stands for the interviewer, while "I" stands for the interviewee (followed by a number to differentiate each one).

for example, through diagnostic and treatment skills. The inclusion of an intentional agent indicates that this frame represents the subcategory of social frames among primary frames. Thirdly, another social frame is involved: "the patient autonomy frame" suggests that the patient can interfere with the agency of a medical professional regarding the patient's treatment. Finally, the Act itself designates a "legal frame" within which all the previous frames are nested. This is also a social frame as it implies an institutional collective social actor responsible for the Act. In the prompt, this frame creates a topmost level with a communicative function of legitimating and highlighting the patient autonomy frame.

In the following section, we display the analysis to show how our theoretical interpretations connect to the data.

Analysis: Reframing Patient Autonomy

In their immediate comments, all of the interviewees presented two-sided stands evaluating the Act and patient autonomy positively, but, in the same breath, making reservations regarding these. The interviewees said that the text is familiar to them, well prepared, and addresses important issues. Some said it corresponds well with everyday practices in the field. To these positive evaluations, however, the interviewees always attached "but" or "on the other hand." Here is one example:

> **R:** Ok, so what do you have to say about that?
> **I2:** Well… (sigh), it's, eh… It's quite easy to agree with these texts, and I think, er, they have been very well prepared, so, hmm. Basically, if an <u>adult</u>, and a sane person, refuses any treatment, so we should obey or we should honor the will of the patient. But, of course,

life is not simple and, and there are, there are grey areas. For example, if a person… is diagnosed with a cancer of something, some other serious disease, he or she may be depressed in the beginning and express that he or she doesn't want any care, any treatment, but when the time goes, a few days or a few weeks pass, so, it's possible that the person changes his or her mind.

Most of the interviewees' further comments focused on accounting for the reservations. There was variation and overlap between single interviewees. As a whole, however, several categories of arguments could be identified. In the following, we aim to show how these different arguments relate to framings involved in the prompt.

First, while expressing acceptance of patient autonomy promoted by the Act, the interviewees emphasized that the highest authority for physicians, however, is ethics:

> **I2:** Law is the minimum, and ethics goes beyond that …. ((The Act)) is a good starting point, but… in real life, there are many shades of gray.

The interviewees referred to the Hippocratic Oath and stressed that the ethical imperative to safeguard a patient's life overrules other values and interests. Thus, the ethical frame, not explicit in the prompt, was introduced. Although the legal frame was not questioned as such, it was placed within this ethical frame. The point was that the ethical, not the legal, frame actually legitimates medical actors. Interestingly, interviewees did not discuss patient autonomy as an ethical principle, although this would be quite an evident possibility in some other contexts. Furthermore, via the Hippocratic Oath, the ethical frame authorizes the medical expert as an agent to

serve the interests of the patient, and in a way defines these interests.

Second, regarding the patient autonomy frame, the interviewees brought out constraints and weaknesses in the patient's agency. One interviewee (I3) made a general claim that the growing emphasis on patient autonomy in recent decades has occasionally gone too far at the expense of other values. Otherwise, the comments focused on concerns that are more specific. It was argued that many patients do not want to engage in decisions over treatment:

> **I3:** Of course, I have nothing against autonomy as such, but when I think of patients… the first question… the patients have, is not, "Can I make decisions about my life?" [**R:** Uhm]. The first question, probably, usually is, "Can you help me?" The more serious the condition is, the less I think the patient usually is interested in, whether he or she can make decisions about life.

Here, the interviewee leans on the biological frame to highlight the relevance of the medical frame, suggesting that the more serious the patients' condition is, the more prone they are to prefer physician's interference instead of insisting upon their autonomy. This is an example of a medical expert actually defining what the patient's interests are.

Further, the decision-making capacity was said to decrease in the course of progressing diseases for numerous reasons. Patients may not have enough or proper information about their condition and the available treatments. This may be caused by the patients' tendency to deny their situation or it may be because of the stressed patient's difficulty in focusing and making a mental note of what the physician is saying. There were also comments pointing out

that the patients may be severely depressed or in a psychotic state of mind so that they are not able to make choices about treatment.

In all, the comments that directly targeted the patient autonomy frame presented the patient's agency as constrained, vulnerable, unstable, and weak. In this way, the biological frame and the medical frame were brought to the fore, and the patient autonomy frame was pushed into the background. The comments downplaying the patient autonomy frame appear to challenge the patient's agency both in the sense of the ability to act as an agent making judgments over medical treatments and in the sense of patients acting as a principal defining their interests on which such judgments may be based. This line of reasoning suggests that physicians are more credible agents who can evaluate the patients' best interests, and act on their behalf.

Thirdly, and closely connected with comments highlighting limitations and weaknesses in the patient's agency, the interviewees also presented comments emphasizing that respecting a patient's self-determination does not exclude responsibilities and the physician's agency. Conforming to the ethical frame, mentioned earlier, these responsibilities include not abandoning the patient, or not causing harm:

> **I1:** We want to respect the patients' right to self-determination. On other hand, the respectation of self-determination does not exclude the responsibility of the doctors, of the doctor when it comes to treatment, and the implication is that of the patients' or physician's [extreme] experience. Example, if the patient would like to have, hmm, a medicine which, which is known to be harmful to the patient, it is the doctor's responsibility not to deliver this medication to the patient,

no matter that would be according to the [patient's] self-determination.

The excerpt again demonstrates an overarching pattern in the data: patient autonomy is accepted, but the extent to which a patient may exercise this autonomy is seen as restricted by both biological factors and ethical imperatives. The interviewees also maintained that in the medical faculty, the physician is ultimately in command:

> **I1:** It is yet imperative that it is the physician who decides. Hmm. Which treatment will be given in the, in the medical facility, and, hmm. Of cour… --- In that facility, the doctor is in charge. Suddenly, the individual patients are able to make, make their own choices, for example, alternative treatments—whatever we mean with alternative treatments. Also, in these, in these cases, we would like to have such an environment in communication that the patients could, and should tell about their own choices to the doctors, too.

Thus far, we have seen how the presented comments stress deficiencies in the patient's agency and the profound role of the medical actor's agency. We may interpret this as turning the mutual positions of the medical frame and the patient autonomy frame upside down compared to how these were originally present in the prompt, pushing the latter into the background and lifting the former to the front. However, it must be stated that, in their comments, the interviewees did not only evaluate these frames against each other. They also combined and reconciled the two frames so that instead of two separate frames a broader social frame appears, which focuses on the interaction and fit between the patient and the medical actor. Given the importance of interest construction, it becomes imperative that the actors

involved in the decision-making process come to an agreement on their roles in the agent-principal relationship. Next, we will explore this fourth sub-category of comments accounting for the reserved stands to the prompt.

The interviewees pointed out that physicians should provide patients with information and understanding regarding their condition and available treatments. This was said to be realized through conversation:

> **I1:** The number one is always discuss, and discuss, and discuss. And provide, er, knowledge which is needed for the decision-making. If the doctor—if I know as a doctor, if there is a conflict in this issue, from my point of view, it is always very important to document that in the records, in the medical files of the patient, that there's a disagreement on a certain matter.

Most of the interviewees presented descriptions of discussions with patients to illustrate how treatment decisions are embedded in an ongoing interaction. In some cases, they highlighted how discussions enable physicians to enact their agency to steer the patient's decisions. In the course of the discussion, the patient may become convinced of viewpoints based on the physician's expertise, and get a feeling of being heard and receiving due attention, so that the situation will be favorable for the physician "to sell their ideas," as the phrasing in the next example shows:

> **I5:** So you really let them tell their story, their views, their points, you make some questions, they have many questions about what has been done, or from the past year even. You might even have to start from twenty years ago, when someone died in the family

and it really was a bad experience, you have to hear that first. But, then, you understand what's the problem, what's the fear in the family; they are afraid of the same thing happening again, so you get the basics. Then, after that discussion, you get the idea of how the situation seems, how they feel. Then I always say examine your patients, so, listen to the heart, try to <u>touch</u> the patient, so you really concentrate. And then, after that, you can sit down and sell whatever ideas you have, because people they feel that they have been heard, they have been, er, really taken seriously, they have their time with the doctor, and then you, then you get this mutual understanding. Then the doctor originally tells what he or she thinks, it's good or it's bad. Usually people, they, listen.

Besides a way to influence the patient, the interviewees also depicted discussions as manifestations of collaboration in which the physician supports the patient's agency, and they produce the decisions jointly. The interviewees stressed that the choice of treatment is not always a simple issue. Concerning dialysis, for example, not all patients benefit from it, and it may even add to the patient's suffering. Thus, it is not only so that the physician would be trying to persuade the patient to accept the treatment. Rather, the physician may aim to shed light on the pros and cons of different alternatives and, in this way, assist the patient in making realistic and clinically informed judgments of treatments.

The social interaction frame was not evident in the prompt, although one sentence of the Act states that the patient has to be cared for "in mutual understanding with him/her [the patient]." Indeed, one of the interviewees did pay attention to this sentence in a way that illustrates our analytical conclusion about the social interaction frame emerging in the data:

I5: ((reading the prompt)) Ok, yeah. "Patient's right to self-termination," yes, I know this, yeah… It's very nice this mutual understanding, what it really means and how you'll get it. That's the key issue here. So that's the key of the communication, people have the right to refuse, but we have the responsibility to talk so that they understand what they are doing and what are the consequences, and things that happen. And sometimes it's not so easy. But, they can't demand treatment that the doctor thinks it's more harmful than good. That can be sometimes, that's more difficult with the relatives actually than with the patients themselves in palliative care …. But, it's the relatives who really… sometimes pushing, that something, this or that, should be done. Then it is a lot of talks and [reinsurance], why we can do that, or why it might be harmful, 'cause… their belief in medicine and their trust in medicine sometimes is… is amazing how people think that we must have something to do still in our back pocket, and, well, we haven't beaten death yet. That's difficult. But, it's, yeah, that's the key issue, mutual understating that's what we try to do.

The interviewees often stressed that there are gray areas and difficult issues involved in the notion of patient autonomy. Our interpretation is that these emphases capture well not only the notion of the deficiency of the patient's agency, but also the ambiguousness of the interaction between the physician and the patient. Within the frame of social interaction, the idea of patient autonomy appears somewhat blurred because the patient's agency is embedded in the interaction where the events are not necessarily attributable to any single actor alone. Hence, the interviewees' reserved stands are very understandable even though they evaluated patient autonomy positively as such. To this perhaps it should be added that the ambiguous nature of interaction may, at least in part, result from the fact that it is often

difficult to say when the negotiation concerns defining and deciding the proper medical treatments and when it concerns defining the patient's interests and therefore the nature of the patient as principal.

In addition to physician and patient, the social interaction frame may involve actors close to the patient, for example, family members, relatives, or friends ("loved ones"). Several of the interviewees mentioned these actors in passing; in particular in conjunction with the fourth category of comments mentioned previously. Patients' loved ones may present demands, questions, and criticism about treatments and medications. They can try to speak for the patient, and they have their worries over the well-being of the patient. Thus, the involvement of loved ones adds complexity to the social interaction frame. It means that additional agents, acting for the patient, appear on the stage trying to define the patient's interests.

Discussion

In this paper, we applied a relational view to agency and assumed agency to be something constructed and defined in relations and processes rather than a fixed disposition of separate actors (Emirbayer 1997). We analyzed physicians' talk as a process in which they construct versions of the patient's agency and the physician's agency through the active reframing of the notion of patient autonomy. The relational approach made it possible for us to show how physicians can maneuver a constellation of frames (Goffman 1986) and thereby define the patient's agency as weak and vulnerable in relation to the biological condition, and ethically legitimated agency of the medical expert, but as well concerning the ongoing interaction and negotiations between the patient and other actors. We further highlighted the

contextual embedding of agency construction by showing that physicians construct agency not only in terms of agency over something, but also agency for something or somebody (Meyer and Jepperson 2000; Niska 2015; Shapiro 2018).

Although the interviewed physicians considered the notion of patient autonomy a valuable guideline for end-of-life care discussions, they concentrated in presenting reservations and elaborating on these. In this regard, our results are in line with the previous literature about physicians' attitudes, which report critical remarks alongside a generally positive attitude (Hildén et al. 2004; Coleman 2013). Through analyzing qualitative interview data we showed how approving and reserved stands may coexist in a talk in such a way that the reserved arguments actually occupy the main role. Indeed, the variety of reserved arguments in our data seems to cover well the doubtful arguments towards advance directives, reviewed by Ditto and colleagues (2006). Likewise, they suggest certain levels of paternalism still permeate medical decision-making (Laine and Davidoff 1996; Kiesler and Auerbach 2006; Légaré et al. 2010; Pollard et al. 2014). We do not, however, claim statistical generalizability of a reserved tone in physicians' talk, but instead wish to draw attention to how this tone was constructed in the course of interviews with the physicians, and further, what assumptions about agency were involved in this process. The presented frame analysis was conducted to these ends.

Our analysis uncovered how the interviewees actively reframed the constellation of frames involved in the prompt presented to them. By nesting patient autonomy within biological and medical frames they, on the one hand, questioned the patient's agency, and, on the other, highlighted the superi-

ority of the physician's agency based on expertise. Thus, whereas the process of medicalization is often discussed at a macro cultural level, elaborating on the use of the biological and medical frame allowed us to grasp how medicalization operates at an interactional level—that is, it demonstrates that physicians rely on their professional knowledge to render aspects of patient's autonomy a medical issue (Conrad and Schneider 1980). It also exemplifies how tensions between competing cultural discourses (i.e., medicalization vs. bioethics) are elaborated at the grassroots level.

The use of autonomy as a tool to debate about social power positions is familiar in other contexts, as well (Stock and Forney 2014). In our data, we detected two constructions of patient autonomy. Both were present in the formulations of the reserved comments pinpointing deficiencies in the patient's agency. On the one hand, the comments contested the patient's agency over the treatments, namely, the patient's ability to understand, assess, and make decisions about medical options and issues. On the other hand, they questioned the patient's agency as an agent for oneself—one's ability to define one's interests.

The latter construction resonates, for example, with the idea that patient autonomy transcends its instrumental value so that individuals self-directing the outcomes of their lives is a value in itself, regardless of the outcomes (Lidz and Arnold 1993). Our interviewees, however, reframed patient autonomy by using an ethical frame suggesting that the physician is enacting agency for the abstract ideals of medicine as an institution (Hippocratic Oath). This further legitimates the physician's expertise and authorizes physicians to act as agents for patients. The agent position includes defining and interpreting

the patient's best interests, besides enacting professional proxy agency (Bandura 2006) on behalf of the patient. Interestingly, physicians are positioned as an agent for patients, but this agency is authorized by a principal higher than the patients themselves.

Our data attests agency of the interviewed physicians in the sense of an ability to use talk to reframe patient autonomy in delicate yet determined and credible ways so that the patient's autonomy is not negated or rejected, but is somehow constructed as vulnerable and deficient in comparison to that of the physician's agency. A further indication of the agentic use of framing in the interviews was the use of an interaction frame to reconcile the patient's autonomy and medical frame into a broader frame. In this broader frame, decisions evolve through interaction and negotiations between the patients, medical actors, and possibly also the patient's loved ones.

Our analysis applied the idea of elementary social frames as either built around single actors (individual or collective) making things happen or around the collection of actors in interaction, drawing directly from Goffman's (1986) frame analysis. The results of our frame analysis could be further reflected upon from the perspective of attribution research, where the tendency to make sense of events by attributing their causes to individual actors is a well-established conclusion regarding everyday thinking (Ross 1977). Attributing events to relations and interaction have gained much less attention, although studies are suggesting that people are quite capable of making relational attributions as well, at least if this is functional in their profession (Eberly et al. 2011; Vesala, Anderson, and Vesala 2017). In this light, the use of an interaction frame by our interviewees attests a degree of depth in their argumentation, although we did not elaborate on

different types of interaction frames (Tannen and Wallat 1987) in our data. Moreover, contrary to the argument that Goffmanian frame analysis constitutes a structural approach in which frames stand unrelated to each other (Sharron 1981), our analysis of interview talks demonstrates how physicians actively coordinate different, and often contradictory, frames while constructing the patient's agency.

Our interviewees used the interaction frame to tackle the ambiguous and open-ended nature of social encounters and negotiations between the patient and the medical actor. On the one hand, the interaction frame acknowledges patients as principals whose interests should be served and who should be heard as agents for themselves. On the other hand, when using the interaction frame, the interviewees depicted a process in which the interests and will of the patient are negotiated by participating social actors—actors who are potentially also serving other principals besides the patient. In such a framing, the patient's autonomy is constructed as the agency in the sense of participating in a negotiation or having a voice in a discussion. This deviates clearly, for example, from autonomy understood as the sovereign private ability to define one's interests. As pointed out by Frank and colleagues (1998), autonomy discourse does not account for all the variation in end-of-life care preferences; instead, it is necessary to supplement such discourses with relationship discourses.

By using the interaction frame the interviewees constructed the physician's agency as interpreting the patient's will and interests, and as managing the negotiations between themselves, the patient, and potentially the patient's loved ones. In some comments, the physician's ability to influence the patient through negotiation was stressed, while in others, they could assist the patient. In both cases, the patient's autonomy was constructed as an agency deeply embedded in social processes, instead of a fixed mental capacity. Yet we should remember that our interviewees also presented general comments expressing approval of patient autonomy, pointing out that the patient's will and decisions should be respected and obeyed.

Conclusion

Previous studies (Ditto et al. 2006) found that patients have limited psychological resources to assess their situation and adequately choose between different end-of-life care treatments; such findings seem to challenge the central role that the notion of patient autonomy has in bioethics. Similarly, our analysis of physicians' talk showed that despite general approval of patient autonomy, they reframed this autonomy in ways that question patient's abilities to define their interests. However, departing from the notion that autonomy, or agency, concerns an inner property of patients, our findings have shown how physicians also reframe patient autonomy in terms of interaction in which patient agency appears as participation in negotiations during end-of-life care decision-making. As such, our findings have implications concerning the relationship between doctors, patients, and family members during end-of-life care decision-making. As far as the use of advance directives is concerned, such documents must function as discussion starters. We propose that these documents could be part of an ongoing dialogue between the many stakeholders invested in the process. Recognizing agency as a relational accomplishment may help conciliate the efforts of right-to-die movements in promoting the value of self-determination without circumscribing the role of physicians and family members.

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A Penile Implant: Embodying Medical Technology

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Body

Abstract: This article situates the experiences of having penile implant surgery between medical interventions and privately understood meanings and practices. Using my own experiences, supplemented with information from online sources, I document the changes that occur in the meanings and the practices that implant surgery enables. My analysis derives from the concepts of habitus and the looking glass body, and it begins with a diagnosis of impotence and moves through the various considerations that lead to surgery and its aftermaths. I suggest that understanding how medical technology interacts with everyday meanings contributes to a wider application of the concept of habitus while expanding a symbolic interactionist perspective of the body.

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While research on embodiment relates various ways that people imagine their bodies and their parts (Waskul and Vannini 2006; Allen-Collinson and Owton 2015), fewer studies exist of the social penis, that is, of the imputed meanings and cultural contexts in which the penis is displayed and understood. Some feminist scholars consider the penis to identify the "mechanisms of effacement by which the specificity of the physical penis is obscured by a phallic ideal" (Stephens 2007:85). By challenging phallocentric assumptions that underlie popular portrayals of the penis, feminists suggest that new meanings and relationships are possible. In other words, ideals about the po-

tency of the penis are said to obscure the realities of it. Apparently, a close analysis is necessary to separate myth from reality.

In contemporary society, taboos against displaying and discussing "private" body parts have lessened. Consider such popular literature as *The Little Book of Big Breasts* and *The Little Book of Butts* (Hansen 2012; 2013). Most pointedly, Dodsworth's (2017) book, *Manhood: The Bare Reality*, displays photographs of 100 penises, pictures accompanied by personal narratives that the men tell about themselves and their penises. These men relate the impact of early experiences, trauma and illness, anxieties, and even pride about how they think and feel about their penises. While her book intentionally eschews any theoretical analysis, the narratives accompanying each picture reveal the emotional connections that men have with this particular organ. In another book, Paley (2000) covers anatomy, preferences in size and shape among men and women, and the roles that the penis plays in popular culture and art. And, Miller (1995) offers a brief history of the penis in sports, fashion, and literature, emphasizing the role this organ plays in defining masculinity.

Underrepresented in all this literature is a symbolic interactionist analysis of the social penis. However, the notion that body parts take on meanings that are functionally related to core and peripheral values of a culture and practices of a society is commonplace in anthropology. For instance, early ethnological studies of penis sheaths suggest that this particular aspect of a society's material culture reveals functional interdependencies among institutions. The sheath may actually promote modesty and enable its wearer to control any spontaneity of the penis, such as an erection (Ucko 1969).

Body parts have undergone analytic scrutiny. For example, Hoffmann-Riem (1994) relates in detail her experiences, emotions, and consequences in her relationships with others due to losing her eye to cancer surgery. And, as Atkinson (2006) shows, men may resort to surgery to preserve or reinforce meanings of masculinity, and with the advance of surgical technology, repairs of and improvements upon body parts can be spectacular successes. For example, the re-attachment of a severed penis was recently accomplished by a surgical team in India in 2016. Also, the surgical practices developed for penile implants (PIs) have been applied to constructing penises for transgendered individuals (Rooker et al. 2019). This application is a medical means of reaffirming gender identity.

In her research with women who elected to have female genital cosmetic surgery, de Andrade (2010) draws out the connection between the motivations of women and market-driven influences. She points to norms and images widely distributed through mass media that influence women's decisions to have such surgery. She also discusses ethical problems physicians face as they deal with possible ways to alter bodies.

Atkinson's (2006) study of men who have had facial surgery documents how, in an age of gender precarity, men privately and silently manage what they perceive as their shortfalls in meeting ideals of masculine appearance, while still achieving a modicum of control over it. While common supplements to the body such as glasses require less interactional work than surgical interventions, it appears that any altering of the biological body may call into question the social body. Ideals of appearance and medical procedures to achieve those ideals are conflated in the social meanings of the body.

Medical interventions often alter the body, sometimes permanently. For instance, Manderson and Stirling (2007) depict how women refer to the site of the mastectomy, and they examine the shifts in perspective that are indexed in the way women talk about this absent body part. Women may objectify the scar by referring to "the breast" instead of "my breast," or even tattooing the scar to transform the absent breast into a part of the body.

Friedman (2001) documents using mythology, historical events, and changes in medical knowledge and practices how the relationship between man and his penis is often the key to a deep comprehension of epochs. Moving from ancient civilizations through changing conceptions of man and his penis, he identifies distinctive eras of the penis, from its roles in myths of the creation, through its demonization (the demon rod), its use to subjugate black men (the measuring stick), its role in psychoanalytic theories of nearly everything (the cigar), to the way scientific knowledge (both invalid and valid) changes the penis and its man. Friedman suggests that the penis is more than an organ: it is an idea that changes with history, as do all ideas of the body. However, at least in Western culture, understanding changes in the meanings of the penis can further understanding of culture in general.

According to Friedman, underlying meanings can be traced, however, to an ambiguous relationship between the man and his organ, a relationship that Friedman sees challenged by what he calls the erection industry (the industry built around the use of drugs, products, and procedures to enable an erection). In this article, I explore the aspects of the relationship between men and their organs by describing the changes that medicalization affects in awareness and practice after a penile implant.

Private Parts

I use Bourdieu's concept of habitus to specify an aspect of what Weinberg and Williams (2010) call the looking glass body. They employ the concept of looking glass body in their study of the meanings of the naked body as related to sexual performance. I suggest that conceptualizing the body as social and consisting of at least a private parts habitus allows a symbolic interactionist perspective of the consequences of alterations of the penis.

I relate how PI surgery modifies and integrates into the looking glass body. As a device of this body, habitus refers to the physical embodiment of cultural capital, to the deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that we have acquired through life experiences in a particular social and cultural nexus. Habitus allows for and enables the navigation of social worlds. And, since it exists in a reciprocal relationship with "objective" social structure, understanding the particular aspects of a given habitus and its functions permits extrapolation to structures and back to situations. The concept has been applied to an astonishing array of subjects from cars (Sheller 2007), barbershop singers (Nash 2012), linguistic practices (Jones 2001), and even bathroom habits (Weinberg and Williams 2005).

A private parts habitus refers to meaning and practices associated with intimate anatomy that accumulate over one's lifetime, and that reflect sexual history and eccentricities. Of course, there can be variation within this habitus. For example, while Dodsworth's (2017) book centers on the penis, its main message ranges outward to stories of sexual conquest, failures, embarrassment, and bragging rights. Clearly, men develop an understanding of what this part of their self means and what they

can and cannot do with it. Ambiguity and/or crisis in this habitus is implicated in decisions to have PI surgery.

A private parts habitus is embodied in institutional meanings and societal structures at the macro level and in a concept of the body at the micro. From childhood, boys learn to conceal their penis, display it in situationally appropriate ways, and most importantly, to treat the penis as private. These social practices and the meanings that one gives the penis can have medical meanings, or as Friedman suggests, a crisis of the penis and medical response to this crisis has lead to the erection industry. A patient, hence, has a well established private parts habitus that remains largely tacit whenever he visits a urologist, for example. Impotency creates a crisis within the private parts habitus. What follows are narratives of that crisis that illustrate the linkages among meanings and practices.

Medicalizing the Penis

A symbolic interactionist perspective can augment the medical model. By conceptualizing the habitus as one of many cognitive and emotional devices for creating what Weinberg and Williams (2010) call a looking glass body, by which we mean the interpretations and emotional reaction that an actor makes of their body within the imaginations of the judgment of others.

The medical model begins when a patient seeks a physician's help for his impotence. The physician typically pays little attention to the patient's private parts habitus. I recall being asked no questions about how I think about my penis. After diagnosis, the physician describes possible causes, but they move quickly to detailed accounts of remedies. By

overlaying the looking glass body and its device, the private parts habitus, on the experience of having PI, I intend to understand the personal and social consequences of PI surgery. Whereas the medical model emphasizes outcomes, the symbolic interactionist model highlights meanings.

All manner of human fragilities, from drug abuse to deformities, have been transformed into medical problems that purportedly have solutions that are devoid of stigma and thoroughly normalized. Such is the case with male impotency. Impotency, in everyday life meanings, goes beyond the dysfunction of an organ to the man himself. When we say a man is impotent, we degrade him, and, as the word suggests, we see him as having lost power in some sense. Men who experience impotency often experience challenges to their self-esteem and sense of worth. Impotency, we might say, shatters the looking glass body. Impotency may become a stigma, but since it is not public, it discredits only in private or intimate interactions. Goffman (1963) might have called it a stealth stigma had he analyzed impotency since it is invisible in public interaction. Of course, as a cause of more visible manifestations, such as depression or irascibility, impotence, if uncovered in interaction, could be a stigma. Some people who have used online dating services for senior adults report that potential partners may discuss sexual activity. Thus, neutralizing stigma becomes necessary for continuing the relationship (personal communication).

The condition of impotency, especially in older men, has ramifications that affect self-concept, and, certainly, relationships not only with intimate partners but with others as well. A study of the expectations men with erectile dysfunction (ED) have before treatment shows that relationships

with partners are an important consideration in choosing a treatment and that expected outcomes include increased quality of life (Henninger et al. 2015).

Therefore, impotence, once seen as a character weakness or even the consequence of immoral and lascivious habits, is discussed in the medical model in anatomical and metric terms, and medical technological interventions are the main resources for restoration, normalization, and stigmatic neutralization (Friedman 2001).

The vast literature on the medical model covers an array of illnesses and dysfunctions (Conrad 1992; 2005; Conrad and Schneider 1992), but there are few detailed narratives about the penis. Critiques of the medical model do exist: for instance, Tiefer (1994) refers to phallocentrism (the assumption that it is possible to achieve the perfect erection through medical intervention) as detrimental to appreciating the full range of degrees of erections and the accommodation that partners make to these variations. His critique implies that couples can have pleasure with a partially erect penis. However, correctives such as his to the medical model are rare and remain outside the scope of the medical model of the penis.

The medical model begins with the physician's assumption that the patient had at one time a "normal" sex life. Whatever that life might be is irrelevant since the physician uses this assumption as a starting point for diagnosis. Usually, this amounts to a brief account of the cause of impotency. The causes of impotence are richly depicted, running the gamut from traumas such as automobile accidents, sports injuries, to diseases of various kinds, most typically those that restrict the flow of blood to the penis. However, regardless of the cause, attention shifts quickly to remedies, glossing over the details of a man's private parts habitus.

Knowledge and description of the remedies for impotence is rich and detailed in the medical model. These remedies vary from pharmaceutical to elaborate accounts of surgery. In the case of PI surgery, one can find technical professional descriptions of the surgical procedures, a video showing an actual operation, and one demonstrating in a manner devoid of eroticism how to use the penile pump. Most of these websites are sponsored by physicians or businesses that manufacture the devices.

PIs have been available as a treatment for ED since the 1970s. There are several types of implants, but the most popular use a reservoir implanted in the abdomen, a squeezable rubber pump inserted in the scrotum, and inflatable tubes implanted on either side of the penis. While no accurate count exists for the number of men in the US who have an implant, PI is a common treatment for men for whom pharmaceutical treatments have proven ineffective, and for those with ED as a condition resulting from some health issue. Cases of ED are increasing in the US, with an estimated 30 million men with the condition. There are several causes for ED, some of them linked to obesity and arterial diseases, others to diabetic conditions or trauma. For example, some causes of ED include Peyronie's disease, side effects of prostate surgery, and even reaction to medications.

With the introduction of ED medicines such as Viagra and Cialis, the percentage of patients electing to have the surgery has declined (Smart, CNN,

June 23, 2015[1]). Still, the procedure is considered one of the most "successful" of all operations. Surveys have reported impressively high patient satisfaction with the outcome of the surgery. Generally, a consistent 90% of patients and their partners report they are satisfied or happy with their implants; that they have resumed intercourse within weeks of the surgery; and that they are largely satisfied with the surgical result (Bettocchi et al. 2009; Carvalheira, Santana, and Pereira 2015). These surveys gloss over the details that constitute satisfaction and leave unexplored the interactional impact that a technological intervention on the genitals can have.

I relate aspects of my account of male impotence and those of men who post comments at websites devoted to such discussions to supplement and enrich the medical model with lived-through meanings. At the forefront of the analysis is the sense that men make of the "problem," and how a private parts habitus is modified and maintained. While the medical model minimizes the patient's private parts habitus, emphasizing technical and anatomical features of the penis, a symbolic interactionist narrative considers the significance of the surgery for the nature and character of the habitus, even though the medical narrative frames the overall process.

My Method

My experience of ED and my decision to have a PI provided an opportunity to describe the private parts habitus in general and for myself, specifically (see: Riemer 1977). After several visits to my family physician, I learned the reason for my ED was prob-

ably circulatory—plaque somewhere in the system. After a negative carotid artery scan by my general practitioner, I was referred to a urologist who specialized in PI surgery, who encouraged me to read and think about having the procedure done. I began to ponder my private parts habitus and to imagine the accommodations my wife and I would have to make to the implant. She and I had long talks about the operation, and some of those discussions are referred to in the text. I also visited the website, Frank Talk (https://www.franktalk.org), where I searched discussion forums and active topics for posts that could serve as evidence for my analysis.

I offer here an account of selected aspects of my experience of having an implant. This analysis rests on my experience with this transformative process, but it pushes observational opportunities to a degree that collapses the distance between the observer and observed, that is, I observe myself. However, as Becker (2017) writes, using one's experiences as evidence for sociological ideas is not new. Roth (1963) turned his tuberculosis into an opportunity to test sociological concepts. Roy (1952) used his job in a machine shop to create evidence for generalizations about how workers organized their time on the line.

While my method is primarily participatory, similar to such works as Murphy's (1987) *The Body Silent* (1987), I also follow what Anderson (2006) calls analytic auto-ethnography, which emphasizes that personal experiences are grounded in a sense of membership (for me, men with PIs). In analytic auto-ethnography, one's presence in the text is committed to situating one's experiences within an abstract set of concepts that permit sociological insights. Hence, as I recall experiences, look at notes, and reconstruct events, I do so both as a patient and sociologist.

How the Transformation Starts

The decision to have implant surgery follows a process. While I identify this process from my experience, other men describe it similarly. First, there is a disruption or breach in the private parts habitus resulting from a variety of sources. Then comes a period, usually fairly lengthy, of various remedies for ED. These remedies, while successful for many, do not work for all men. In fact, the "success" rates for ED drugs are often greatly exaggerated in popular understandings. As the following quote suggests, while there are many causes of impotency and many remedies tried, for a man who decides to have PI surgery, there develops an awareness that pharmaceutical remedies are not working and the hope of easy restoration disappears. At some point, such men have a "come to Jesus" moment, that is, face the biological reality that one will never again have a "natural erection." An anonymous man in a chat room put it this way:

> I am 59 years old and have had ED for about 6 years. Probably a side effect of my diabetes type II. Have tried the pills and that was great for a few years but kind of expensive. After that it was pump [a reference to a mechanical device] which worked but was damn trouble having to stop the flow of love making to pump up the penis. Tried the shots but I could not get past sticking my penis with a needle. It is just not natural and I did not get a real good erection and now take Cialis 5 mg daily and use the pump. it works but there had to be something out there that was better. I had a come to Jesus meeting with my Uro and we discussed all the pros and cons of the implants. Based on his information and talking to the guy on Frank TALK, I have decided to go ahead and get the implant this fall. that in a nutshell is my story. [Frank Talk, 2016 (original spelling)]

The Medical Examination

The pre-operative examinations for PI surgery bear similarities to the emotional management and de-eroticization that Emerson (1970) describes in her article on observations of such examinations. Just as doctors and nurses follow routines of action and speech that are aimed to take any sexual intent or meaning out of a woman's gynecological examination, so do the doctors and nurses who specialize in a man's PI surgery and treatment.

For example, after a discussion of the way a penile pump works and how mechanisms of ejaculation remain unaffected, a lengthy warning about the percentages of cases involving infections, and answers to questions about the effects on the glans (will it engorge post PI operation?), the doctor looks solemnly at me and says, "Now, let's look IN your penis." After the shock of the "IN," he proceeds to do just that. The examination includes an internal manual check of the prostate and a look for abnormalities; and, after the doctor's decision that surgery is a possibility, there is a consultation between doctor and patient. Sometimes the patient requests time to "think about it." Finally, a mutual doctor-patient agreement is made and a date for surgery is set. In my examinations, my wife accompanied me and took part in all discussions.

The Surgery

The experience of surgery as a social form remains a relatively unexplored domain. Millions of people around the world have "had surgery." In the US, it is a highly routinized experience with pre-operative procedures that include the creation of a "case" and "charts," all of which can be understood as the construction of a medical entity, that is, a person

becoming socialized as a patient (cf. Parsons 1951; Arluke, Kennedy, and Kessler 1979; Perry 2011). Surgery transforms the status and identity that one brings to the hospital, and thereby one loses most, if not all, of their previous social identities. A patient may also have high social status, for instance, be a physician or another kind of "very important person," but while these statuses may affect when and where surgery is scheduled and whether a particular surgeon performs the procedure and other perks associated with high status, "surgery" as a social form governs the experience. Of course, surgeries vary from saving life to cosmetic alterations of facial features, and considerations such as the ethnicity, race, or gender of the patient do influence, sometimes dramatically, the social contexts that accompany undergoing a surgery. One such context can be the economic impact of the procedure, but in my case, because of being age 74, Medicare covered it, which saved quite a bit of distress, given that the cost of inpatient operation with overnight recovery is about $50,000 at a state medical center and more at private facilities.

In the case of an alteration of male private parts, the experience of surgery is not distinctive from other forms of surgery. The check-in is the same, as with any surgery that requires an overnight stay, protocols govern virtually every step leading to the surgery itself. I point out the ordinary nature of the preliminaries for having PI surgery to contrast the extraordinary effect it has on altering the "private parts" habitus.

Out, Damned Catheter

After the operation, coming out of recovery, and upon awaking from the night in the hospital with all that it entails (blood pressure checks, sleep in-terruptions from nurses), I saw two young women standing at my bedside. One of them cheerfully announced that they were there to remove the catheter, which had been in place since the surgery. That they did, grabbing my penis with one hand and pulling the catheter out with the other. Such pain I have rarely experienced!

I was able to walk a little and joke with my wife about my hopefully temporary predicament, but the swelling of my scrotum was nothing short of spectacular. When I asked about whether this was normal, a nurse claimed that she had seen them the size of a basketball. Some patients, she added, swell very little. I concluded that my set of black and grapefruit-sized balls were somewhere near average, but I was only slightly relieved.

Furthermore, not disclosed in the preliminaries leading to surgery, was that the procedure included a deliberate puncture of my huge blackened scrotum, which for several days bled a steady drip, soaking several pads a day. Of course, this drain hole was there to minimize swelling. Still, keeping the swelling under control required ice packs and soaks in the bathtub. These soaks in the bath were particularly memorable since the water was often red with blood. At this point, thoughts about sexual activity were remote, and I hoped for at least a return to a normal scrotum. With a bruised penis and a huge leaking scrotum, my private parts habitus had been severely transformed.

Over the next few weeks, my penis and scrotum slowly returned to normal sizes and colors. My private parts habitus slowly re-emerged, as I recognized the shape and feel of my "normal" penis, that is, according to my pre-operative private parts habitus. Several months later, I had more or less

fully recovered. Later, my family care physician asked how the surgery went, and I showed him a picture of my swollen, discolored scrotum. His eyes widened, and he said, "I haven't seen anything like that since I worked on a cadaver in medical school."

Total recovery from the surgery took weeks and required serious rethinking about what my scrotum should feel like. Since the pump mechanism in it now has become a "third ball," the habitus must adjust. Within two to three weeks after surgery, it is possible to pump up the penis. However, since lingering swelling can last several months, the very thought of squeezing the bulb to achieve an erection does little to evoke erotic images. Also, since the entire scrotum has been recently bruised, pumping it up can turn the scrotum blue. Since patients sometimes have trouble learning how to pump, return trips to the doctor's office may be necessary.

As time passes and swelling goes down, normal skin tone appears and thoughts of a resumed sex life, the primary reason for the ordeal, return. Penetration after surgery can be thrilling and quite satisfactory for both partners. During foreplay, for me, there were moments of doubt as to whether the penis was "hard" enough to penetrate, and whether or not I had mastered the technique of achieving full inflation (erection). For my wife and I, the first try was successful and joyous, as we laughed and welcomed the return of our previous sex life.

The return of the "rod," as Friedman (2001) might say, can be a marker for the re-established habitus. Eventually, perhaps six months post-surgery, the pump becomes a "natural" part of one's anatomy, and the outline of the pump and its deflation valve

can be felt. The bulb can be moved around within the scrotum and squeezing it to inflate the penis no longer made me squeamish. In fact, so does squeezing the penis become "normal," as does the low squishing sound produced by fluid passing from tubes in the penis, back to the reservoir.

De-Erotic Techniques

A private parts habitus enables various interpretations of touching one's genitalia, from scratching and masturbation to the erotic. And, whenever a medical procedure requires touching some part of the genitalia, as Emerson (1970) documented, it entails de-eroticizing techniques to convert private meanings into medical. Some of these techniques include: settings (medical offices, standardized decorum, medical equipment, a sterile and officious ambiance), use of the patient's surname, uniform surgical dress for the medical staff, and a gown for the patient.

Controlling gaze is another technique used by medical staff. This involves not only minimal eye contact, but also facial expressions and body language that neutralize any possible erotic meanings. Touches are brief, glove-covered, and mechanical. Soon after my return home from surgery, I was having difficulty inflating the tubes to achieve an erection. Inflating or pumping up entails grasping the bulb that is now inside the scrotum and squeezing it hard. Since that entire area is sensitive for weeks after the surgery and since squeezing the bulb pinches the skin of the scrotum, learning to accomplish an erection requires a little practice. The bulb is slippery and the bulb sometimes "airlocks," which means it is necessary to squeeze harder to move the air bubble out of the bulb. I had to return to the doctor's office twice to ensure that

the mechanism was operating properly. Both times I was assigned a female nurse who had a reputation of being skilled at helping patients learn "pumping up." She entered the examination room, requested that I drop my pants (no gown this time), then quickly and clinically, without looking me in the eye, seized the bulb and, with a deft forefinger to the thumb, squeezed to demonstrate the proper technique. I was impressed with her skill.

The doctor then entered the room and suggested that when I become comfortable with the inflating technique, it could become part of foreplay. He and the nurse were offering advice about how to reconfigure a private parts habitus so that the mechanical procedure can replace or substitute for the organic arousal stage of foreplay. But, I learned that before that can happen, the technique must become effortless, and distracting "airlocks" must be cleared well before foreplay starts, so for my wife and me, it never became part of foreplay.

Throughout these post-operative visits to the doctor's office, the use of medical jargon and references to studies and results from others' experiences also function to de-eroticize the meanings associated with discussing private parts. By allusion, however, common-sense everyday knowledge was acknowledged by the doctor; for example, he referred to variations in penis size among patients and pointed out that the devices are designed to accommodate the size. Needless to say, such discussions concerning the pros and cons of the different types of PI devices (Coloplast Titan, AMS 700, non-inflatable, AMS Ambicor), the results of patients' satisfaction surveys, peppered with medical terms such as glans and prostheses, can be quite effective in de-eroticizing any conversation about one's private parts.

Reconfiguring the Private Parts Habitus

The meanings carried within habitus have relative permanency, particularly since their enactment reinforces and turns social structures into useful interactive devices (Wacquant 2016:70). As the term itself suggests, habits and deeply rooted cultural tropes, reinforced by everyday applications, result in firmly established ways of making sense of male genitalia. Describing the ways that accommodation takes place illustrates both the flexibility and the permanence of core meanings, and the habitus is so persistent that it allows the cultural tropes to continue. For example, if a man were particularly proud of the length of his penis, and penis length is a cultural trope in mass entertainment and common-sense knowledge, he must re-interpret what the loss of length means.

Irrevocable changes in the size and shape of the penis result from PI surgery. Both girth and length of the penis are, post PI, determined by the tubes and what is left of the corpus cavernosum, columns of tissue running along the sides of the penis, and the corpus spongiosum, a column of sponge-like tissue running along the front of the penis and ending at the glans. Since the anatomy of the penis has been altered and these components are central to a "natural" erection, there can be no "natural" erection, and the girth of the penis is slightly smaller. Of course, "slightly less" in an objective sense can be "much less" in the private parts habitus. Many men seem to be bothered by this effect of the PI, as this is often mentioned in online chat groups.

Most men consider these losses to be more than compensated by restored function. After recovery from surgery, most men report that they regain that "old feeling," especially after an ejaculation.

During sexual arousal, they report having phantom sensations of a natural erection. This is partly the result of the glans enlarging and of the neurological linkage between the brain and penis that triggers a natural erection. Whatever the "natural" connection, in the reformed habitus, these sensations become "natural" in the sense that they form a reconstructed habitus.

In addition to the altered feeling of arousal, there are other changes to the anatomy of the penis that require interpretation. A flaccid penis becomes a deflated penis, and an erect penis no longer stands upright, but sticks straight out from the body. The feeling of pumping up replaces spontaneous arousal, and there is the feeling of having a "hybrid dick," since the flexible plastic tubes on either side of the shaft, when deflated, feel as if they are kinked like a garden hose. According to online sources, partners, including mine, mention the altered feel of the shaft (Frank Talk 2018). They report learning to accept "new" sensations as "ordinary," when caressing and stimulating the penis. One modification mentioned by a partner had to do with recognizing when her partner was "truly" aroused. In "normal" foreplay, the penis shaft becomes tumescent to a degree that is obvious to the person stimulating it. However, after a PI, the shaft is non-responsive to stimulation; hence, a partner must rely on communicative cues and sensing the slight enlargement of the glans. The period of adjustment to this change is typically short, though in some cases, it may become a problematic feature of the foreplay routine. In my search of the chat rooms, discussion boards, and literature, I saw no mention of the long-term effects of this modification of the penis.

Routinization plays a crucial role in normalizing the effects of the PI. Most men report that within a few months of the operation, after healing is complete, there is no sense of artificiality. Still, sitting and sleeping in certain positions, is a reminder that "it is industrial" down there: the bulb requires accommodation while crossing one's legs. In due time, the apparatus transforms into something natural and becomes "mine."

Also, problematic are public displays of the penis after PI. Whenever daily routines such as exercise at the gym, hunting trips, or other occasions requiring being undressed in front of other men, one must be sure that the penis is completely deflated to appear non-sexual. Since the penis can no longer shrink and daily movements, especially rigorous exercise, can cause some fluid to enter the shafts, resulting in a semi-erection, it is necessary to deflate it fairly regularly to avoid embarrassing situations.

In one particular case, an informant remarks, half-jokingly, that he is troubled that his "new" penis leans to the "right," which is contrary to his political inclinations. While this seems a trivial concern, it illustrates just some of the necessary changes required for the habitus to routinize and de-problematize the appearance of the penis.

Another aspect of public display involves deciding with whom to discuss having had the operation. Do you tell family members or friends about the PI surgery? I did tell some friends about it, one who had had PI surgery himself and another, a physician, both in presumed confidence, to avoid stigma. However, in the case of family members who knew I had had an operation, my wife and I referred to it as hernia surgery. In other words, I maintained my previous self-presentation through lying (cf. Sacks 1975).

The Looking Glass Penis

Charles H. Cooley's (1922) concept of the looking glass self suggests that our images of ourselves are formed from our imagination of how we think and feel about how others think and feel about us. Weinberg and Williams (2010) apply the concept to how partners think and feel about their naked bodies during sex. They find that the looking glass body is directly related to more general assessments about the meanings of sex. For example, more positive images of one's body are associated with a greater variety of sexual activities, and among women, negative or self-critical attitudes about their nude bodies restrict sexual practices.

Whether a sex partner or a shower buddy notices, or cares to glance at the naked penis, the habitus is still affected. As indicated above, many changes must be refigured both literally and within the mind (cf. Mead 1934). Following Cooley (1922), here is a sketch of the looking glass penis:

> My imagination of how I think my penis appears to others, both privately and publicly.
> My imagination of how others evaluate its appearance.
> My emotional reaction to that imagined evaluation.

To add a description to the concept of the looking glass penis, consider the matter of size. Research shows a variation in size and appearance of the penis (Veale et al. 2014). Furthermore, an "objective" study of how women think about penis size (Prause 2015) shows that women may vary in what they prefer in penis size, according to whether they imagine an encounter with one in a one-night stand or a long-term relationship. For example, the women in the sample of this study preferred a larger penis for a casual encounter and one only slightly larger than average for a long-term relationship.

In contrast to this "objective" reporting, consider what a man imagines his partner's view of the appearance of his penis to be. He may think of himself as small or large, and he may project this image onto his partner's view. The insight that interactionism contributes to such an understanding is that it is what the man thinks his partner thinks that shapes the private parts habitus. If a man imagines that others (intimate and public) see him as "large," he may be dissatisfied with the loss of both girth and length from PI surgery. Likewise, if he is "small," then the surgery may exacerbate the perspective of being small. If there are other irregularities in the penis or scrotum, the possible concerns become more complex.

When a man imagines how his appearance is evaluated by others, he may see the decrease in size as irrelevant, since his partner never mentions it. Also, he may limit exposure to the public by avoiding showering at the gym or managing his exposure through the use of a towel or robe. On the other hand, the tubes in the shaft of the penis prevent a fully flaccid penis and a man may imagine that he appears "larger" than he was preoperative. Hence, he may be even bolder or less reluctant to expose his "public" penis.

The emotional reaction to altered genitalia may range from "what do I care" to "you should be so lucky." Generally, survey data following PI surgery indicate that men are quite satisfied and quickly establish a "normal" private parts habitus (Carvalheira et al. 2015). In other words, the altered penis and the meanings of intimacy become

normalized through routine and acceptance, even if imagined.

When Technology Fails: Disembodiment

Even a brief visit to chat rooms where PI surgery is discussed reveals that there are circumstances in which PI surgery might be considered a failure. These outcomes and the sense that men make of them are typically due to general poor health, problematic relationships with partners, or even a fatalistic stance towards aging. While these interpretations of the consequences of the surgery are fairly uncommon (less than 10% of all PI surgery), they do reveal another way to make sense of the experiences.

> I got my implant several years ago and have always had problems with it. Got an infection and had to have it removed and then re-implanted. My partner is not much interested in sex anymore, and frankly, if I have any more infections, I'll just get the thing out and forget about it. [Frank Talk, 2017 (original spelling)]

I have no information about how this man's partner thinks and feels about this situation. Our chat room friend, however, clearly has a fatalistic view of the whole matter. Emphatically, I agree that enduring PI surgery more than once with an unenthusiastic sex partner could well lead one to wish for dispensing altogether with the pain and the troublesome aspects of sexual relationships. However, even though the PI apparatus can be removed, the reconfiguration of the habitus has already happened, so PI surgery continues as a lingering influence on the habitus. In this case, I can imagine this man being reminded of the ordeal each time he touches or looks at his permanently limp penis.

Conclusion

Both medically and socially, PI surgery requires the patient to rethink what constitutes a normal penis. The normalization process outlined in this article traces the meanings of a penis through erectile dysfunction, testing for diagnostic purposes, medical remedial steps, the decision to have surgery, the experiences associated with surgery, and the subsequent modifications of his private parts habitus, as well as that of the looking glass body.

Bourdieu (1984) intended his concept of habitus to strengthen a theoretical understanding of the articulation between individual and society (Wacquant 2016). The depiction of a private parts habitus uncovers interrelationships among individual understandings of body parts and the embodiment of medical interventions. In the case of PI surgery, the individual (the patient) and society (modern evidence-based medicine) interact to rationalize medical intervention and normalize an altered aspect of the looking glass body.

The embodiment process described here may be prescient of other technological interventions such as bionic prosthetic legs and hands. The malleability of self-awareness and its accommodation to radical changes demonstrated in this analysis may extend to the merger of technology and biology. I suggest that understanding changes in the private parts habitus may contribute to understanding how technology and biology interact. In particular, the testimony of partners and the experiences related by men who have undergone the PI procedure demonstrate the resiliency of habitus and the flexibility of the looking glass body.

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Citation

The Activation and Restoration of Shame in an Intimate Relationship: A First-Hand Account of Self-Injury

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Abstract: This paper is grounded in a first-hand account of my own experiences with self-injury and shame. By using my personal diary entries as support for this account and a sociological framework of shame, I explore the process of shame and shame reactions in an intimate relationship. I illustrate how shame was activated by my internalized critical other, how the shame cycle de-stabilized my relationship, and, finally, how shame was restored through the other's validation and acceptance, or how it led to more shame managed by self-injury. However, this account is not simply about self-analysis, or a need to indulge in my pain; rather, it is an inner dialogue that rests on the commitment to develop a richer understanding of the personal and interpersonal experiences of self-injury and shame. Today, I finally understand how shame works and this has helped me to not get caught up in my emotions. So, although shame may take a hold of me at times, I am no longer, like before, controlled by my shame.

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This paper is grounded in a first-hand account of my experiences with self-injury and shame. By using my personal diary entries as support for this account and a sociological framework of shame (e.g., Scheff, Lewis, and Retzinger), I explore the process of shame and shame reactions in an intimate relationship. I wrote the diary entries in proximity to the actual events and self-injury activities, sometimes in the moment of despair

and shame, sometimes in a more distanced moment (hours or occasionally days later). However, I did not keep a diary to have it published, and it was not intended as a record of a researcher's experiences of shame and self-injury. The diary, however, provides written interpretive material that allows me to look at how shame disrupts a relationship and threatens the connection between the self and the other. Although the diary is about past experiences, I still embody similar experiences. Also, I can never observe the unmediated "I," as Ellis (1991:29) put it, because "reflection changes it to a past "me."

I have tried for many years to understand shame in myself and to make sense of my unbearable emotional pain, and my behaviors because of that "pain," to be able to live a life I consider to be ordinary and good enough. However, this account is not simply about self-analysis, or a need to indulge in my pain; rather, it is an inner dialogue that is supported by shared significant symbols of emotions and identity that allow for new insights to extend sociological understanding (Sparkes 2000). Using the self as a source of data has been criticized for being self-indulgent, narcissistic, introspective, and individualized (Holt 2003; Atkinson 2006). However, such criticisms, according to Mykhalovskiy (1996), are misguided, as the individual and the social are not two separate things. On the contrary, "writing about the self involves, at the same time, writing about the 'other' and how work on the 'other' is also about the self of the writer" (Mykhalovskiy 1996:133).

Self-injury is a strategy used to manage unbearable emotional pain. It involves acts of cutting or burning one's skin, pin sticking, interfering with wound healing, and smashing one's hand or foot bones (Adler and Adler 2011; Favazza 2011). It is about in-ternal pain that is manifested in external injuries, wounds, and scars. Although self-injury is a highly privatized act, carried out outside of others' views and often kept hidden from others, it is nevertheless a highly social practice that needs to be understood and explored as an interactive and cultural practice/phenomenon (Adler and Adler 2011; Steggals 2015; Brossard 2018).

In a previous theoretical publication (Gunnarsson 2020), I argued that shame is significant for understanding self-injury and that self-injury is performed as a response to shame, to mitigate it. By fending off shame through self-injury, the individual can (temporarily) uphold social and cultural commitments and maintain social bonds with others. He or she can thus control the self and go on with everyday life (Brossard 2018). However, because self-injury is a stigmatized practice (Long 2018), it tends to lead to more shame, thus disrupting the social order (Gunnarsson 2020). In this first-hand account, I illustrate how shame was activated by my internalized critical other, how the shame cycle de-stabilized my relationship, and, finally, how shame was restored through the other's validation and acceptance, or how it led to more shame managed by self-injury.

A Sociological Framework of Shame

Emotionality relates to the self, but also relationships, thus, to social connections and social bonds. Denzin (1983:404) defines emotions as: "temporally embodied self-feelings which arise from emotional social acts persons direct to self or have directed toward them by others." How we view the self and act is heavily dependent on what we believe the other(s) think of us (Cooley 1902; Lundgren 2004). Some emotions, like shame, are more social than others

(Scheff 2003), but all emotions are directed at the self and the other (Scheff 2000).

Scheff (2000; 2014) considers shame to be a repressed emotion in the western world. An individual may thus have a hard time acknowledging experiences of shame, and it tends to be hidden in interactions and relationships. Shame can be viewed as a family of emotions that range from an "ordinary" shame, that is, mild embarrassment and social discomfort, to a more intense and penetrating shame, which Scheff and Retzinger (2000) describe as pathological. This latter kind of shame is known to be experienced by individuals with emotional and mental difficulties or illnesses (e.g., Retzinger 2002).

Scheff (2014) defines shame as a self-other feeling that is generated when there is a threat to the social bond. He draws on the works of Cooley's looking glass self, Elias' civilization thesis, and Lewis' shame theory, thus presenting an account of the role of shame in social life. Lewis (1971) acknowledges that relationships move through interludes of connection, disconnection, and reconnection, although when one feels shame, disconnection is at the forefront of one's self-other relationship. In shame, one may either question whether one is worthy of connection or one may feel utterly unworthy of connection. Shame thus involves an awareness of others' regard for oneself; it involves always having an audience, real or imagined, specific or generalized. This audience can be internalized, because we can feel shame even when we are alone, hence "in response to actions in the inner theater, in the interior monologue in which we see ourselves from the point of view of others" (Scheff 2000:95). Shame, therefore, reflects our concerns with how we are perceived by others and arises as we take the role of the other.

Experiences of shame can include being scorned, ridiculed, belittled, ostracized, or demeaned, and may disrupt relationships with others; it causes potential disconnections between the self and others. There are hundreds of different code words for shame, which are used to label shame without calling it by name (see: Retzinger 1995). Retzinger (1995; 2002) presents a list of such cue words for shame, which may be *verbal cues* of separation, isolation, ridicule, foolishness, and inadequacies, or *verbal hiding behaviors* that can serve to distance a feeling from the self or affirm a bond with others. Both verbal and non-verbal cues often come in combination and are triggered in certain contexts, that is, it is the position of the self in relation with the other, the situation, and the verbal statements used by different parties that determine whether or not shame is experienced.

In shame, the position of the self in relation to the other is connected with an imbalance in the relationships, and "the self is always perceived to be in the inferior position" (Scheff and Retzinger 2000:66). Shame also entails alienation from others and reveals the extent to which individuals are attuned to each other. When social bonds are secure, individuals feel connected with others and experience pride and solidarity. In shame, the social bond is insecure or in some way threatened (Scheff 2003). Scheff (2001:216) understands an insecure bond as a relationship that lacks a "history containing moments of mutual understanding (both cognitive and emotional)" or a relationship that entails low levels of equality. Scheff also pinpoints that shame is not solely negative, but signals to people a need to manage the threat to the bond.

Shame and anger often concur (Lewis 1971), and an individual experiencing shame wants to hide from

the hurt, which means anger can be turned against the self or be pushed outwards, towards the other. Hence, there is an escalating alternation between shame and anger in interactions and relationships (Retzinger 1995). When ignoring the shame, identification with the other also becomes difficult. Retzinger (1991:39) notes that "the other person is then experienced as the source of the hurt."

To summarize, shame is not triggered in isolation within the individual self, but derives from how one believes one appears to others. It is activated whenever there is a threat to the social bond, whether this constitutes a real threat or an imagined one. For shame to be repaired, one needs to acknowledge and communicate its presence (Lewis 1971; Lynd 2013) or change other people's judgments (Leeming and Boyle 2013). It is when others can accept and validate a person that a person's shame is likely to lessen. When shame is acknowledged, it is often a brief experience in everyday life; moreover, it allows the social bond to be repaired (Scheff and Retzinger 2000). Open expressions of shame can then lead to negotiation, compromise, and problem-solving. This means expressing one's shame is a functional means of lessening shame. However, if individuals do not know that it is shame they experience, it becomes impossible to negotiate and solve problems within interactions and relationships, hence leading to alienation and risk for suicide, self-injury, and mental illnesses (Retzinger 2002; Gunnarsson 2020).

Shame and Self-Injury

Shame figures frequently in literature, research, and individuals' experiences about self-injury (Steggals 2015; Gunnarsson 2020). For example, shame in self-injury may be bound with self-persecution, self-punishment, self-blame, and experiencing that

one is a "fundamental failure of human being" (Steggals 2015:167). Furthermore, it may be expressed in terms of different cue words such as "self-loathing" (Solomon and Farrand 1996), a sense of "failed self" (McDermott, Roen, and Scourfield 2008), "self-doubt," "self-disgust" (Rao 2006), "humiliation and aggression against the self" (Le Breton 2018), as "negative self-evaluations" (Huey, Hryniewicz, and Fthenos 2014), or thinking one "deserves to be punished" (Hill and Dallos 2011; Steggals 2015).

Moreover, shame is often studied as self-hatred, low self-esteem, self-punishment, and self-dissatisfaction (e.g., Ivanhoff, Linehan, and Brown 2001; Gilbert et al. 2010; Victor and Klonsky 2014). Ivanhoff, Linehan, and Brown (2001) highlighted that no other emotions, but shame could predict the increase in urges to self-injure. The existence of high levels of shame before starting therapy increased the odds of self-injury within the first four months of therapy (Ivanhoff et al. 2001). Xavier, Pinto-Gouveia, and Cunha (2016:583) found how self-criticism in the form of self-hatred was strongly associated with self-injury and those with "persecutory and hatred self-attacking" were most likely to engage in self-injury. Schoenleber, Berenbaum, and Motl (2014) disclosed how proneness to shame was associated with more frequent bouts of self-injury, which, in turn, could reduce the individual's feelings of shame. Self-injury, thus, worked as shame management to lessen shame. Other studies have shown how self-injury and suicide are used to avoid or escape shame (Fullagar 2003; McDermott et al. 2008); furthermore, McDermott and colleagues (2008) emphasized how shame was an unspoken emotion in self-injury.

My experience of shame was not the "ordinary" mild and quickly resolved shame or embarrassment that everyone experiences from time to time, which

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Goffman (1967) found is almost always present in everyday face-to-face interactions. Rather, it was the kind of a shame that overrides and engulfs the entire self (Scheff 2000), a penetrating and intense form of shame, which may be said to be pathological in its intensity and prolonged duration. It has "stayed with" me for many years, almost becoming part of my self-image and identity (Scheff and Retzinger 2000). Such shame, when it is outwardly manifested, is extremely painful and damaging especially for the individual self, but also in terms of relationships, interactions, and connections with others (Lewis 1971; Scheff 2000).

An Autobiographical Note

The self-injury started in my adult years (at approximately 35 years of age), after having attended my first drug and alcohol treatment. Although I was self-destructive (e.g., binge drinking, drug abuse, reckless behavior) from my teens and during different periods of my life, the skin cutting was never repetitive until later in my life (Favazza 2011). This first-hand account particularly focuses on an intense period over five years when I repeatedly injured my body, by cutting and burning myself. At the time, I was a Ph.D. student and a single mother. I was also involved in an intimate heterosexual relationship, which I ended after approximately two years. The termination of the relationship was a response to my realization that I could not continue because of all the different self-destructive feelings and behaviors. The reason was that shame was intensely and repeatedly triggered in my intimate relationship.

At the time of writing in my diary, I did not know much about shame. Although I was attending intensive therapy, we seldom spoke about shame.

Over the years, I read a vast number of studies and publications about self-injury and shame. Eventually, I also started to talk about shame in therapy. It was then that I gradually came to comprehend how shame affected my own experiences of the self and my connection with the other (e.g., my partner). I also began to ponder more seriously about shame as a possible core emotion in self-injury, and the possibility that it could explicate the seemingly inexplicable act of physically injuring one's body. This resulted later on in an article that explored shame as an explanation to why individuals physically hurt themselves (Gunnarsson 2020).

A fair amount of time has passed since those approximately five years with on and off self-injury. Nonetheless, I have also had numerous periods of self-injury since then. Regardless of whether or not I engage in self-injurious behaviors, I always have an embodied "skin-cutter membership," as materialized through the scars on my body, most of which reside vividly on my arms. In the eyes of others, I will always be a potential skin-cutter, or the very least a former one. My belonging to the potential skin-cutter category, therefore, is a lifelong and non-negotiable membership. Although most scars have faded into white marks, they can hardly be missed or mistaken for what "they are."

To Make Use of the Personal

Personal experiences are said to offer new insights by drawing on personalized accounts from the author/researcher and to extend sociological understanding (Sparkes 2000). There are different approaches to writing the personal, that is, where the researcher's experiences are described and analyzed, and where the voice of the researcher is present in the text. There is the sociological introspection

(Ellis 1991), autobiography (Mykhalovskiy 1996), first-person accounts (Rier 2000), and autoethnography (Anderson 2006; Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011), to mention a few. In autobiography, the author retroactively writes about past experiences, while in ethnography, the researcher becomes somehow engaged as a participant-observer in the culture (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011). Autoethnography, according to Ellis, Adam, and Bochner (2011:277), is a combination of the two, where one seeks to "produce aesthetic and evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experiences." Here, I draw on first-hand accounts of my own experience of shame and self-injury. It is not autoethnography as such, but has elements of an autobiography that makes use of personal diary excerpts and rests on the commitment of developing a richer understanding of the personal and interpersonal experiences of self-injury and shame. The focus on shame came about after exploring the issue theoretically in a previous article and also because I knew from experience that my shame was particularly triggered in intimate relationships and interactions.

For Mykhalovskiy (1996), the personal is always social; and to write individual experiences is to write social experiences. As individuals, we do not accumulate experiences in a social vacuum; therefore, it is always an intersubjective attempt to write the personal. To write myself into my work means that I experience and present the phenomenon of self-injury and shame simultaneously as both subjective/personal and objective/public (Church 1995). As Church (1995:5) argues:

> I assume that my subjectivity is filled with the voices of other people…Writing about myself is a way of writing about these others and about the worlds which we create/inhabit…Because my subjective experience is part of the world, the story which emerges is not completely private and idiosyncratic.

This means that I am part of the cultural context from which I experience myself, others, and our jointly shared world. If my perspective cannot speak of more general and social experiences, how then can any narrative and story from the other(s) be culturally relevant (Sparkes 2000)?

There are some important reasons as to why it is significant and informative to use personal accounts and introspections in making sense of self-injury and shame. First, since people often are poor subjects when it comes to making witness about their emotions, especially shame (Scheff 2003), personal accounts can make it possible to come closer to a deeper and fuller understanding of emotions and emotional states involved, before one makes the "decision" to cut. This may be especially important in terms of shame experiences, as they are often repressed or hidden from the self and others (Lewis 1971; Scheff 2003). Second, self-injury is a stigmatized practice and something people carry out privately and in secret, and the self-injurer's experiences are often intertwined with professional and medical discourses that find self-injury to be pathological (Favazza 2011; Long 2018). Hence, drawing on my experiences with shame and self-injury and retrospective journal accounts written in close proximity to the accounted for events, there is an advantage that I can "speak about the unspeakable" and disclose experiences otherwise forgotten or hidden.

Ethical Issues

This article draws on personal diary excerpts that show what happens in an intimate relationship

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when shame is involved. There is an actual person besides myself that figures in the diary extracts, who has not consented to appear in the study. Thus, I have carefully omitted any details about the person in question, and although there are occasional paraphrased dialogues in the examples, it has no discerning content.

Another ethical issue is about the amount of personal disclosure and how much of myself I put out there. This ethical issue also pertains to the scientific objective, and hence agreeing with the criticism that writing about the self needs some level of abstraction and/or connection with theory and literature (Atkinson 1997; Wall 2016). Moreover, an ethical position is not just about asking oneself if one is "saying too much" (Wall 2016), it is also about not forcing too much of my emotions and experiences on others, namely, people who have not asked for my personal disclosures. Here, I have tried to balance this by not exposing everything about myself and my life, but instead focusing on a few happenings.

The Personal Text Materials

The personal texts and discourses that comprise my diary, written between 2004 and 2015, are used as empirical data. The diary encompasses 128 pages and 46,858 words. In particular, the diary entries from 2005 until 2008 are analyzed more thoroughly, covering forty-eight pages, including 16,317 words. The entries in my diary were written in Swedish and were translated by an English/Swedish-speaking language editor and myself. The entire diary covers events, accounts, thoughts, and emotions, specifically relating to intimate relationships. The present study uses diary entries concerning a specific relationship, and these were the extracts chosen for the analysis. It was during this time that I frequently

engaged in episodes of self-injury. The contents of the diary were analyzed by looking for verbal and non-verbal clues of shame, according to Retzinger's (1995) list. I considered the position of myself in relation to the other (my partner) and the verbal statements exchanged between us, and how the specific situation could be indicative of shame experiences. Besides my personal accounts, the study also draws on the accounts and experiences of other self-injuring individuals, for example, in previously published self-injury autobiographies (e.g., Kettlewell 1999; Smith 2006) and research publications (e.g., Harris 2000; Rao 2006).

Although I am not presently injuring myself repetitively, there is no distinct line between the past and the present or of what may happen in the future. The trajectory of self-injury continues, and I cannot say that it was then and there and that I have now overcome the urges to cut my skin. While the diary entries are retrospective, I also have memories, embodied emotions, and bodily sensations of these times that linger in my body/mind. Moreover, the past is always felt, understood, and rewritten from the present, and this first-hand account is an attempt to make sense of a specific social and cultural phenomenon by re-experiencing it. By doing so, I also create the conditions for my own experiences and choose what parts should be in focus. In my diary, I have written about other subjects and aspects of the relationship and self-injury. Nonetheless, in this account, the focus has been on reflections on how shame can be activated and restored in an intimate relationship.

My diary contains reflections and accounts that explain my own and the other's behavior, for example, how my seemingly unacceptable behaviors were excused and justified (Scott and Lyman 1968) and

accompanied with shame and shame reactions. In previous literature and theories about shame, this account addresses what triggered my shame, and how shame worked through the self-other relationship. Moreover, it also addresses how shame not only initiated self-injury, but also how self-injury was used to manage shame states/reactions by restoring the connection with the self and the other (Gunnarsson 2020).

Scott and Lyman (1968:47) have suggested that people construct social meanings through accounts, which they see as likely being invoked when "a person is accused of having done something bad, wrong, inept, unwelcome"—hence untoward. Although Lyman and Scott do not mention it, justifying accounts may also include what a person may think she/he has done wrong, with no wrongdoing necessarily being done. Considering the self-conscious nature of shame, justifying accounts are likely to occur in response to one's critical other and will, most likely, also involve emotions, such as shame. The emotional aspect, however, is omitted from Scott and Lyman's accounts. They (Scott and Lyman 1968:46) define an account as "a linguistic device used whenever an action is subjected to evaluative inquiry, or a statement made by people to explain unanticipated or untoward behavior." Furthermore, accounts may or may not be honored, that is, they can be respected by the other (Scott and Lyman 1968). When an account is honored, it is viewed as effective in restoring stability in a relationship, for successfully having re-established social and interactional order. Hence, one would assume that shame is also reduced when an account is honored.

Below, I recount those instances in my diary when shame was activated, often through the view of the critical internalized other. I also address how shame generated more shame in the self-other relationship, leading to a cycle of shame, which only grew more intense in each judgment that was bestowed in the interactions. Finally, it was through the other's validation and justification of the self, which mended my self-image that made it possible for me to reconnect with my partner again. As it was not always possible to be validated by the other, self-injury became a way to validate myself, or a way to restore shame and myself, to be able to go on with my life and interact with others and fulfill my different social and cultural commitments (Gunnarsson 2020).

The Critical Internalized Other

In my diary, the activation of shame is always connected with how the other viewed me or the imagination and anticipation of the other's view, and as evaluated in my inner theater of seeing the self through the other's eyes (Scheff 2000). Shame is related with the other, how I assume I appear to him, which I interpret as me embodying an internalized critical other (Lewis 1971). As humans, we are an object to ourselves (Mead 1934), meaning we can perceive ourselves, have conceptions of who we are, and communicate and act towards ourselves. This self-interaction is the basis for social interaction, that is, how we interpret and respond to others is embedded in how we view ourselves. Moreover, to view the self as one thinks the other would, and be judged accordingly, is about internalizing that view *per se* as being the self, that is, I am the person whom I think the other sees me as. The potential judgment of others is a reality whenever one merely imagines or assumes the self-negativity, and as Cooley (1902) put it, to be imagined is to be socially real.

In the first example from the diary extract below, I realize that the unworthiness, the shame I am feel-

ing, is not only about the current situation, but also stems from experiences in the past. It is about past insecurities or threatened bonds that make themselves known in the present.

Example 1

At the moment, I am dazzled by my own shame, guilt, and fear. Traumatized by my past; you are a part of it and the now escapes in my spasm. You disappear from my conscious sphere, and I retreat into my own dark soul, filled with bitter memories that not even I know about. Afterwards, I understand that you have had to give up on yourself, so I may exist. And it comes as a letter in the mail. Shame follows the actions of my way. I crawl into a corner to escape my imagined executioner. Your irritation and powerlessness are my punishment. [The diary, Monday morning, November 13, 2005 p. 35]

I write openly about shame, but other cue words are also used, such as retreating, as well as paralinguistic cue words such as "crawl into a corner to escape," which is a visual response to shame (Retzinger 2002). I believed I needed to be punished for being the person I presumed he saw in me. His irritation (anger) thus makes him frustrated with me; consequently, I feel rejected by him. As shame also signals a potential threat to survival (Scheff 2003), it also triggers the infant's experience in me. My partner becomes in that moment my "imagined executor." Here, I have a hard time identifying with him and he becomes someone who might hurt me. This is because, in shame, the hurt can be felt like it is coming from the outside, from the other (Retzinger 1991). Still, I realize now when writing this that it was and is all in my mind; he is an imaginary perpetrator or someone from the past. My emotional response here depends on contextual cues, whereas I react to how I perceive the situation in the moment

of shame. My reactions are internal, but manifested externally and acted upon by past, historical memories of threatened or broken social bonds.

In example 2, my shame awakens due to an incident that happened the day before. I wake up with shame, as I remember what had transpired the day before. My outburst of jealousy and anxiety/despair for thinking he had cheated on me. The example continues to describe what happened in our conversation in the morning, over the telephone. I talked to my partner, and at first, his voice soothes me. It is, however, a "brief peace" because his voice is distant and judgmental, and he scolds me for the jealousy I had displayed the day before (being jealous may also be a sign of shame). Even today, I can recall his irritation, his voice being distant and full of contempt. Here, our bond is clearly threatened by my display of jealousy, but I try to mend the bond by explaining why I had drawn such conclusions. However, at the moment he cannot honor my accounts (Scott and Lyman 1968). So, my shame just spirals away, and I am caught in a state of self-hatred. This relentless hatred is a clear sign of how my entire self, the general self (Turner 2006), is involved in this overt shame experience (Lewis 1971), which is displayed in the diary entry. In overt shame, emotions are felt intensely, but may be mislabeled by, for example, self-hatred.

Example 2

I awaken and feel ashamed. I remember yesterday and my behavior, my jealousy, and anxiety. I can look at what happened a little through your eyes, with my common sense intact. Having a healthy human being's mental images. I also understand that nothing has happened and that you have not at all fooled around or cheated on me. A brief moment of peace because your voice and your distancing, as well as

your feelings, make my shame awaken. Despair takes a grip on me when you say my expressions of jealousy are not okay. As if I do not know it, as if I am not already two steps ahead of you and hate myself, unrelentingly. I know that that is not what you want, for me to hate myself, but how can I not?

I try to explain how my thoughts and feelings at that moment are real, how there is nothing else, until now in the morning. My common sense is blown away in the affective storm. But, there are no explanations that give me peace; no explanation can erase your feelings and your powerlessness. [The diary, Saturday, January 14, 2006, pp. 46-47]

It is clear that my guilt, when enmeshed with shame, cannot easily be discharged by a simple apology. I do not even try to apologize because I am caught in a cycle of trying to justify my behavior. Not to excuse it (because I know very well I was wrong), but to explain what had led me to draw the conclusions that I did and how "my thoughts and feelings at that moment are real, how there is nothing else." In my account, I try to create social meaning by drawing on the past and the present (Scott and Lyman 1968). I write that at that moment, my common sense "is blown away in the affective storm." I am left within the storm of my affects; I am caught in my shame and the shame cycle (Gunnarsson 2020). Shame is activated through how I see myself in him, and I know that I am righteously to blame for how he sees me and for what happens between us. The cycle of shame is a reaction to him not wanting to hear my explanations, and I am stuck in experiences of self-contempt that I cannot get rid of on my own. Shame is known to trigger more shame in what Scheff (2000) calls a triple shame loop, that is, being ashamed, being ashamed of being ashamed, and being ashamed of causing further shame in others.

Throughout the diary, the self-blame is recurrent (see also: Long 2018), and there is no criticism on my part about his actions and words towards me. He simply cannot, in my eyes, do anything wrong. I am the one to blame for all the problems in our relationship, for what happens between us, and also for what happens in him. My self-worth may be related to what Bartky (1990) considers determined by women's status in the social hierarchy. However, I also internalize the societal ideals, which contribute to the inferiority that I experienced in the relationship (Seu 2006). I position myself as being beneath him, and this intrinsically informs my shame. I think that I am to blame for what goes on in our relationships. I contribute as such to my inferiority, to the "perpetuation of women's position," as Seu (2006:289) puts it.

The Shame Cycle

The excerpt in example 2 above continues below in example 3. In this extract, the cycle of shame becomes clear, that is, how shame turns into more and more shame (Scheff 2000; Gunnarsson 2020). When taking the perspective of the other (Mead 1934), it can cause a cycle of shame and self-injury that can arise in seemingly trivial situations and ordinary interactions and become self-perpetuating (Gunnarsson 2020).

Below, I try to explain my predicament, but my partner does not allow me to get away with it. I blamed him, and he is mad at me for not taking responsibility for my actions and my words. What I am doing in this account is what Scott and Lyman (1968) call accounts of scapegoating. It is a type of excuse for an untoward behavior that calls the other into question. I allege in the example below that my behavior is a response to his behavior (i.e.,

that of not calling or texting me). Guilt and shame are likely to follow both before and after excuses and justifications have been made. What is especially significant here is the fact that my excuse is not honored because, in my partner's mind, the excuse is unreasonable (Scott and Lyman 1968). He sees right through my scapegoating and refuses to "take on the blame," and this turns into another shaming situation for me. I am ashamed again upon being accused of blaming him; he quickly redirects the blame back to me, and shame is "at its rightful owner."

Example 3

I cannot fix what is happening, but must accept what you are saying and feeling. If only you could have called, if only you could have sent me a text message, I try to say. You don't accept it. Don't put the blame on me, you say, and my self-contempt tries to find its way out. I put my shit on you; you push it back and I accept it, gratefully. The burden grows and the guilt and the shame are at its rightful owner. But, I don't want it either, so stop! You don't accept my projections and I must carry them myself—all these hard feelings that I'll do anything to get rid of.

My feelings alternate during our conversation, from a growing, intense panic to an absent-minded resignation. I am ashamed of what I say and do. I am ashamed of needing to explain myself to you and making excuses for my behaviors. I am ashamed of who I am. And I am ashamed of not being able to love myself. [The diary, Saturday, January 14, 2006, pp. 47, 49]

When he does not accept my projections, this makes my shame even more intense. The shame intensifies, and it becomes more and more unbearable for each word exchanged between him and me. I feel ashamed of everything I do and say, and for what I cannot do (e.g., love myself). It is socially and culturally expected that an adult loves oneself, or at least accepts the self. There is a vast amount of self-help books and professional literature about self-esteem and shame, stating how one supposedly needs to learn to love oneself before being able to love someone else. Hooks (2000), for example, proposes that self-acceptance and self-love are necessary to have a sound relationship. I experienced myself as a failure, for not living up to the social and cultural values and ideas of intimate, adult love. I remember how belittled I felt in these moments when I could not get a grip of myself. The progression of shame may also mean that one feels inferior in relation to the other (Scheff and Retzinger 2000). I experienced the relationship as unequal; his opinions and attitudes were often influencing my thoughts and feelings about myself. I felt I was nothing without him. But, I was also nothing with him. This discrepancy was my everyday companion, and I did not know how to retract the shame I felt for being lesser than him.

The Validation and Justification from the Other

If shame is triggered in interactions and relationships with a critical real or imagined other, this means that there is a need for a repositioning of the self in relation to others (Leeming and Boyle 2013). According to Leeming and Boyle (2013), the most important factor in repairing shame is changing the judgments of others. Thus, when others could once again accept and validate the person, then shame was likely to lessen, which is some sort of forgiveness, or validation of one's behavior, intentions, or self-worth from someone.

In example 4 (a continuing entry from example 1), the assurance from my partner that he is not going to leave me is what lessens my shame: "I let go of my weight and [my] tears wet your shoulder." When I feel that his love returns and that hope for a future together seems possible again, I write, "at that moment, I am again a woman that is worthy to be loved."

Example 4
In the morning, we talk; I love you for that. You know what I am thinking and assure me that you will not leave me. I let go of my weight and tears wet your shoulder. Love returns in your eyes, happiness seeks me in my yearning, and hope puts us back together again. Hope that a future might still be possible, side by side with the illness of fear. At that moment, I am once again a woman, worthy of being loved. [The diary, Monday, November 13, 2005, p. 35]

The above example shows how shame is repaired with the other's ability to lessen my shame by validating my experiences and me. Here, it rests upon his reassurance that he will not leave me. Hence, the social bond is for the moment intact or secured, and the feeling of abandonment temporarily vanishes. This is because the love returns in his eyes, and I feel justified again for being a woman who can be loved and is worthy of that love. Shame goes away when I can reconnect with him and feel connected again, and the social bond is, at least temporarily, mended and our relationship is back to where I do not feel inferior to him. On the other hand, as I am dependent on how I look in his eyes, to reduce my shame, I also need to constantly monitor myself to know what he expects of me and my behavior, which may further drive feelings of shame.

When an account is honored, it means that it was effective, and that "equilibrium" is restored in a relationship (Scott and Lyman 1968). If shame is triggered in interactions when one feels unworthy, incompetent, unlovable, or simply failed, or in any other way feeling rejected, ridiculed, or told off, then shame will follow in the footsteps of many excuses and justifying accounts. When an account is honored, shame is likely to be less intense or perhaps even dissipate. When considering that shame may be a significant emotion that accompanies the accounts given to explain untoward behavior, the act of honoring the excuses and justifications is similar to that of being validated by the other.

The Restoration of the Self through Self-Injury

When situations were such that no validation, forgiveness, or repair of my shame was possible from the other, what was left was for me to try to validate myself. But, often, I submitted to my shame. It is not just about how we evaluate the self in the mind of the other, but also which emotions are connected and directed at the self that is grounds for shame (Cooley 1902) and then also for the possibility of a restoration of shame. To validate the self and restore oneself to a different mindset in relation to the other means being able to regulate one's self and emotions. Self-injury has to do with self-control (Brossard 2018) and coping (Adler and Adler 2011). Experiencing intense emotions of shame made me feel out of control and I needed something to "get myself together." Because shame did not easily lessen or disappear through more socially acceptable self-soothing practices. In fact, most of the time it did not work, as described by other self-injurers (see, e.g., autobiographies by Kettlewell 1999; Smith 2006).

In the next example, I continue to judge myself harshly. I see myself as driving my partner away,

and I am certain that he cannot possibly respect me and love me. I retreat into my shame—wanting to go away. Here, we again talk over the telephone, and I write that I cannot endure how I think he sees me; his voice is filled with contempt and his eyes I imagine as being full of "disgust and frustration."

Example 5

Again, I became the pain in the ass, the one who does not understand. I am so ashamed because how can you continue to respect and love me now? Why do I drive you away? God, what is wrong with me? Take me away please, from the world, from my reality. My reality is a hell, my personal ocean, inextricably debased. What am I doing to myself, with us? You. You cannot be my love. You cannot save me, no one can. Not as you think.

You hang up the telephone. Silence and emptiness. I cannot love you like this. I believe I walk and walk, forward and forward, because I want to strive for life, a meaning, and a goal, but I don't get anywhere. In the end, I don't know who I am, more than lonely, empty, back to where I came from. I cannot find a way out; to continue loving you and allow you to love me back. I cannot hear you talk about me the way you do, to me, and I cannot see the disgust and the frustration in your eyes. Even if it is unintentional. I cannot stand the thought that, in certain moments, you cannot endure the person I am. [The diary, Monday, January 16, 2006, p. 53]

The diary example above is what happened when my partner was unable to validate me or justify my actions. When shame cannot be restored through the other or between two people in a relationship, it is then that we need to validate and make justifications for ourselves. However, when the workings of shame take control over you and your emotions

in the way that it did for me, there is not much left that may provide relief. Then, you are way too deep in the feelings of shame and self-hate to calm yourself down. It was then and there that self-injury worked as my salvation; it could temporarily recondition me, allowing me to continue with my everyday life (Kettlewell 1999; Gunnarsson 2020). Self-injury makes it possible for an individual to control the self and the painful emotions that result from experiences of threatened social bonds. By controlling myself, I could again continue to meet social and cultural expectations and reconnect with others and with "society" (Gunnarsson 2020). However, since self-injury is considered a pathological behavior and a deviant practice, self-injury as a means of control and coping becomes yet another source of possible shame and stigma. Although self-injury was used to mitigate my shame, I can also be judged by others for engaging in such practice. Thus, shame and self-injury may turn into a self-perpetuating cycle of shame and self-injury (Gunnarsson 2020).

In the next diary excerpt, the actual decision to cut makes me calm, and I am decisive in what I am about to do, although there was often some hesitation involved. When I see the wide gap and the blood, calmness enters my body, like a relief. It is "a promise of peace and life." Why a promise of life? Because as the excerpt below shows, I can go on without all that despair and panic, and continue with my life, go to bed, and fall asleep. In that sense, the cutting becomes a way to validate and restore myself, when the other cannot or does not want to. The cutting always, more or less, worked. Sometimes, deeper cuts were necessary, but "the blood needs to come" and "there is no turning back" once I had pressed the razorblade against the skin.

Example 6

The blood needs to come. I lock myself into the bathroom. I press the razorblade against my left arm. When I have decided to cut, it gives me a calm, but also an excitement that takes away the anxiety and the despair I might have felt earlier. Unfortunately, when one has come to where I was at, with the razorblade pressed against the arm, in hesitation, in fear (the heart is pounding and the pulse is beating), and when a drop of blood presses through and slowly drips down the arm, there is no turning back. What is running in our bodies, it cleanses us, nourishes us. Is it perhaps after all the solace of life I see, and not death as you think? The cutting, the blood, is a promise of peace and life. There and then. [The diary, Monday, January 16, 2006, p. 54]

The shame I felt was entranced in all I was and all I did. I felt I was the one responsible for what was going on in the relationship. I could not fathom his wrongdoings because when in love, you want to see the other as a good person (Jones 2012). One could feel shame for the other, but I always felt shame for who I was, especially in his eyes. As Cooley's (1902) idea of the looking glass self suggests, every word, gesture, facial expression, action, or implication from him provided some message to my self-worth. I often perceived messages from my partner as low self-worth, which generated and reproduced my deep shame. It could be a simple look on his face, of indignation; a gaze, which revealed that he did not find me trustworthy; or a sentence like "your arms look really horrible" (e.g., because of wounds and scars). When both of us ignored the shame I experienced, then I thought the hurt was coming from him (Retzinger 1995), even when this hurt was all in my mind. At times, I felt discredited (Goffman 1963), like a tainted and discounted person in his eyes, and this is what I also became to myself.

I needed the other, my partner, to rescue me from my harsh judgments that I thought came from him (Lewis 1971). When I was validated and I could feel acceptance from my partner, then the shame was lessened, and I could once again feel connected with him (Leeming and Boyle 2013). Often, I could not count on being validated by the other or having my justifying accounts honored. At such times, self-injury became a significant solution. I could punish myself, regulate my strong anxiety and other painful feelings stemming from shame, to uphold interactional (Brossard 2014) and social orders (Gunnarsson 2020). Emotions are significant for social order, as they are the social glue that holds us together. However, as shame is about disconnection or the mere threat of disconnection, self-injury becomes a way to restore the self and the self-other relationship, and hence to uphold social order, to get on with life and my various social and cultural commitments (Gunnarsson 2020). Arguably, the attacks on the body are a form of social control, as Mead (1934:255) puts it: "behavior controlled by self-criticism is essentially behavior controlled socially." It is not individual sadomasochism, as described in psychiatric literature and research (Favazza 2011); rather, it is an extreme form of self-criticism that is controlled socially.

The attacks on my body were not to destroy, but to uphold or salvage the relationship and the bond to the self and others (Gunnarsson 2020). By temporarily fending off shame by self-injury, I could calm myself down, without going haywire (Brossard 2018); moreover, I could get on with my life and reconnect with my partner. Self-injury becomes a form of social control (Brossard 2014), which the self enacts upon itself. By controlling the self—or in the words of other self-injuring

individuals, by cutting the bad out of me (Harris 2000)—I may transform and be "good" again, and thus worthy of the gaze of the other, thus, mending the broken social bond that holds the shamed-self trapped. Then again, as self-injury is a practice that can also be a source of more shame (Gunnarsson 2020), there is no easy way out of the intense feelings of shame.

Concluding Remarks

In this article, I have used accounts of my personal experiences to explore how shame is activated and restored in an intimate relationship, as well as what function self-injury has in the process. By writing myself into my work, I have tried to trace shame and shame reactions in my diary accounts and showed how the personal can be a means to writing the public (Church 1995). I argue that writing about myself can capture something of what it means to experience shame in a relationship and how shame can be managed by self-injury, which is as much about other people who self-injure as it is about me. Previously, shame has been found to be an unspoken emotion in self-injury and also used to escape, avoid, or fend of shame (McDermott et al. 2008: Gunnarsson 2020).

Shame and self-injury are taboo subjects (Scheff 2003; Steggals 2015). In shame, you want to hide, and the act of self-injury is mostly carried out alone and in secrecy. Still, both are very social phenomena. Shame is about whom I think I was in the eyes of the other (my partner), and self-injury is about what I sometimes did to manage this supposed perception from the other. The personal is such only on the surface because, in reality, we are all connected to one another. We are extremely aware of how others view us,

and we culturally in-tune with the perceptions and attitudes of other people (Cooley 1902). In shame, we feel disconnected from the other; it is an emotional separation and injury to the self through insults, rejections, disapproval, unrequited love, betrayal, unresponsiveness, for example (Retzinger 1995). The diary entries show how hard I tried to reconnect with my partner; thus, my shame was also a signal that reminded me of the need to deal with our threatened bond (Scheff 2001). I dealt with it, at the time, to the best of my abilities, despite feeling alienated from him and myself, on a daily basis. As I could not adequately control myself in my relationship, I blamed myself, that is, I was the crazy one, sick, the broken one (see, e.g., Long 2018 on self-blame and self-injury). Self-injury was a way of achieving such control, at least temporarily. Although self-injury works temporarily to manage shame, in the long-term, it offers a similar shaky premise as being dependent on the other for the resolution of shame. As long as self-injury is comprehended foremost within a psychopathological discourse and not an intentional act of control and coping, individuals who self-injure will have to continue monitoring themselves for the reactions of others, thus, eliciting possibly more shame.

In the present moment of working with this study, I am no longer the same person I was before. I have changed, and although that change does not mean that I will never again use cutting to manage shame, it means that I am capable of acknowledging today when it is shame that I experience, and communicating it to others. I finally understand how shame works, and this has helped me to not get caught up in my emotions. So, although shame may take a hold of me at times, I am no longer, like before, controlled by my shame.

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