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CONTENTS

Articles

- Temporary Employment, Permanent Stigma? Perceptions of Temporary Agency Workers Across Low- and High-Skilled Jobs** 6
Pia Cardone, Markus Tümpel, Christian M. Huber
- Organizational Challenges in the Public Sector. A Qualitative Study of the Swedish Armed Forces and Elderly Care** 34
Pernilla Hoke Åberg, Elisabeth Arenö, Aida Alvinus
- Mooring in the Homeless City. A Practice Theoretical Account of Homeless Urban Dwelling and Emplacement** 56
Natalia Martini
- The Social Marginalization of People Living with a Mentally Ill Label—Family, Friends, and Work** 76
Kateřina Maloušková, Martin Fafejta
- An Exploratory Study on American-Born Imams: Negotiating Pastoral Responsibilities and Expectations** 90
Anas Askar
- Mobilities, Individuation, and Agencies: An Analysis Based on Young Migrants' Biographical Narratives in Buenos Aires, Argentina** 108
Silvia Alejandra Tapia, Pablo Francisco Di Leo

Book Reviews

- Wodak, Ruth. 2021. *The Politics of Fear: The Shameless Normalization of Far-Right Discourse*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington: Sage 130
Linda R. Waugh, Theresa Catalano
- Magala, Sławomir. 2021. *The Third Enlightenment (or Globalizing Meritocracies)*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 136
Jakub Isański

Temporary Employment, Permanent Stigma? Perceptions of Temporary Agency Workers Across Low- and High-Skilled Jobs

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Abstract: Research on temporary agency work emphasizes that temporary agency workers (TAWs), particularly those in low-skilled jobs associated with precariousness and low social prestige, are likely to be exposed to poor treatment, as well as stigmatization. On the contrary, stigmatization of TAWs in high-skilled jobs has not been treated in much detail in previous studies. Literature provides an incomplete picture of stigmatization within the broader field of temporary employment regarding the focus on low-skilled jobs. Hence, the present qualitative study is based on data from interviews of a heterogeneous sample of TAWs employed in low- and high-skilled jobs in Germany. By using and modifying Boyce and colleagues' (2007) model of stigmatization, the study shows that stigmatizing treatment towards TAWs occurs across all skill levels, although the intensity and form of those experiences, as well as coping strategies, differ. Thereby, this study contributes to a more differentiated and skill level-specific understanding of how TAWs perceive and cope with stigmatization linked to their employment status. It also provides an important opportunity to advance Boyce and colleagues' (2007) complex model of TAW stigmatization with empirical underpinnings.

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Despite its theoretical and practical relevance, research on stigmatization in organizational settings is rather scarce (Summers et al. 2018). Organizations represent social spaces with specific power relations and inequalities that provide a breeding ground for stigma phenomena. A relationship deeply embedded in the power structures and functioning of organizations is the one between permanent and temporary workers (Boyce et al. 2007; Rybnikova and Cardone 2018). Temporary agency workers (TAWs) hold a lower position in client firms than the core workforce because of inferior working conditions. This issue has been frequently addressed in amendments of legal regulations and union actions across the globe to improve TAWs' job security and equal treatment (see: Pulignano and Doerflinger 2013; Keune and Pedaci 2020). Although these efforts have led to improvements, TAWs remain disadvantaged and short-term employment, less favorable work activities, lower wages, and benefits, lack of career opportunities, as well as separation on an artifact level, result in a disproportionate amount of power given to permanent workers within organizations using temporary agency work (henceforth referred to as client firms) (Rybnikova and Cardone 2018).

Research on occupational stigma has predominantly focused on forms of stigmatization linked to occupations with low prestige, associated with low status, power, quality of work, education or income, and on how people cope with the stigmas that are brought on to them because of their work status (Kreiner, Ashforth, and Sluss 2006; Benoit, McCarthy, and Jansson 2015; Bosmans et al. 2016; Benoit et al. 2019). Stigma research has also highlighted that occupational stigma is particularly dangerous, as an occupation is crucial to an individual's self-presentation and is perceived to be controllable (Volpato, Andrighetto, and Baldissarri 2017). Work status, as opposed to other social categories such as ethnicity, gender and sex, or physical inability that are seen as inevitable, is believed to be chosen by those affected and thus makes them responsible for their own "misery" (Crandall 2000). Occupational stigma research has been criticized for considering a variety of occupations under the umbrella of "dirty work," referring to occupations that are somehow socially, physically, or morally tainted, without emphasizing the differences between them (Kreiner et al. 2006). This might also be an explanation why stigma research has made only a few attempts to address particular occupational fields or specific forms of work arrangements such

as temporary agency work. However, an exception represents the study of Boyce and colleagues (2007) that, based on a large corpus of literature, proposes a comprehensive model of TAW stigmatization, including organizational conditions, perpetrator motives, forms of stigmatization, as well as stigma perceptions and consequences. Their model comprises a large number of relevant factors and thus provides an adequate basis for empirical studies aimed at understanding the various facets of stigmatization in organizations. Yet, despite the study of Boyce and colleagues (2007), research on temporary work lacks empirical evidence in regard to understanding stigma phenomena. However, several studies indicate a marginalization of TAWs as an inferior group of organizational actors associated with negative attributes including a low skill set, lack of intelligence, or weak work ethic (Byoung-Hoon and Frenkel 2004; Bosmans et al. 2015a; Helfen, Hense, and Nicklich 2015; Rybnikova and Cardone 2018; Stasiowski and Kłobuszewska 2018). Thus, jobs through temporary agency work have been identified as socially tainted (Boyce et al. 2007; Winkler and Mahmood 2018), and there is evidence for higher risk of experiences of bullying for workers in these occupations (Djurkovic 2018). Generally speaking, the prevalence of bullying is significantly higher for unskilled workers (Ortega et al. 2009; Lange et al. 2019). Consequently, this applies to a large proportion of temporary workers, of which, in Germany, 31% have no professional qualification and even more (54%) are doing unskilled work (BA 2020).

Furthermore, recent research has highlighted the negative effects of employment status on TAWs' well-being, health, job satisfaction, and commitment (Bosmans et al. 2015b; Chambel, Castanheira, and Sobral 2016; Borgogni, Consiglio, and Di Tecco 2016; Aleksynska 2018; Imhof and Andresen 2018; Stasio-

wski and Kłobuszewska 2018; Hünefeld, Gerstenberg, and Hüffmeier 2020). Nevertheless, the findings of previous studies on temporary agency work show an ambivalent picture regarding the experience of poor treatment within client firms, indicating that it is not solely employment status causing these experiences. Other reasons can include the working conditions, particularly in competitive work environments in which permanent workers perceive TAWs as a threat, the stigmatizing treatment of TAWs can become a function of permanent workers trying to maintain their superior status (Boyce et al. 2007; Becker 2015; Bosmans et al. 2015a; Stasiowski and Kłobuszewska 2018). Notwithstanding TAWs' disadvantages compared to permanent employees that are predefined by the legal framework (e.g., lower wages, higher uncertainty), client firms have a certain degree of freedom to interpret legal regulations and organize the use of TAWs. Consequently, they have the power to establish management policies that shape the interactions between permanent workers and TAWs (Boyce et al. 2007; Becker 2015).

Furthermore, experiences of stigmatization depend on the individual and might differ according to the TAWs' circumstances, their skill-level, and whether they are voluntarily or involuntarily employed in temporary agency work (Sitte and Lehmann 2013; Selvarajan, Slaterry, and Stringer 2015; Bryant and McKeown 2016; Stasiowski and Kłobuszewska 2018). The legal and institutional framework of their employment, with respect to compensation, length of employment, and training opportunities, differs significantly depending on whether they are employed in high-skilled or low-skilled jobs (Sitte and Lehmann 2013; Bryant and McKeown 2016). Sitte and Lehmann (2013) classify TAWs according to the required job qualifications in low-skilled positions as helpers (perform activities for which no complet-

ed vocational training is required) and high-skilled positions as specialists (perform activities for which completed vocational training is a prerequisite, but no academic studies), and academics (perform activities for which academic studies are a prerequisite), a classification adopted in the present study.

Previous empirical research on TAWs' integration in client firms has either focused on low-skilled (Boyce et al. 2007; Bosmans et al. 2015a; Rybnikova and Cardone 2018) or on high-skilled jobs (Augustsson 2014; 2016; Bryant and McKeown 2016). While TAWs in low-skilled jobs are mainly associated as powerless, involuntarily employed workers likely to be exposed to stigmatizing treatment by their permanent employed colleagues (Boyce et al. 2007; Rybnikova and Cardone 2018), high-skilled TAWs are identified as professionals that are voluntarily employed in agency work and have a high degree of autonomy in their decisions (Kunda, Barley, and Evans 2002; Vallas and Prener 2012). Bosmans and colleagues (2015a) even hypothesize that TAWs in high-skilled jobs who enter client firms as experts are hardly affected by stigmatization. Previous studies, that have mainly considered TAWs in low-skilled jobs to be at risk of experiencing stigmatization, provide an incomplete picture of stigmatization in the broader field of temporary employment. Bryant and McKeown (2016:390), who analyzed the effects of the use of TAWs with different motives and skill levels on the social capital of client firms, also emphasized that TAWs' "experiences are more nuanced and ambiguous than how they are often presented in the literature." Their qualitative study with TAWs employed as IT experts revealed the struggles of highly skilled TAWs who identified themselves not only as experts but also as outsiders and strangers in client firms. Addressing this issue, this study aims to provide insights into stigmatization experiences of TAWs engaged in both low- as

well as high-skilled jobs and answer the following research question: *How do TAWs across different job skill levels perceive and cope with employment status-based stigmas?*

This research question is approached by adapting and modifying Boyce and colleagues' model of TAW stigmatization and analyzing collected data from 16 interviews with TAWs. Our sample consists of TAWs of different ages, gender, and work experiences in low- and high-skilled jobs from independent temporary employment firms in Germany. The importance and originality of this study are that it explores the stigmatization that TAWs experience with regard to the skill level of their position. Moreover, this project provides an important opportunity to advance the empirical underpinnings of Boyce and colleagues' (2007) complex model. This study shows the multifaceted range of stigmatization experiences from subtler to more direct forms and takes a critical look at the working environment of client firms in Germany.

Theory

Our analysis is based on the conceptual framework proposed by Boyce and colleagues (2007). They developed a model comprising the organizational conditions and consequences of the stigmatization of TAWs. With this holistic approach, they offer an analytical framework for critically studying the organizational practices that might lead to the poor treatment of TAWs (Boyce et al. 2007). Using this framework empirically to provide knowledge on TAWs' experiences of stigmatization may help "to ensure that the financial gains anticipated through the use of temporary workers are not offset by any negative consequences that result from these workers being treated in a stigmatized manner on the job" (Boyce et al. 2007: 6). In particular, we focus

on the following areas that guide our study: work environment, stigmatizing treatment, perception of stigma, and coping strategies. These categories are described and underpinned with findings from recent research in the next section.

Work Environment

Boyce and colleagues (2007) subdivide stigmatization into three basic conditions: perceptions of perpetrators, characteristics of the worker (referring to the visibility of their employment status), and characteristics of the work environment. Theoretically, it is plausible to separate these factors, but empirically it is reasonable to more closely consider the interdependencies between them. Hence, this study—contrary to Boyce and colleagues’—subsumes and discusses all three aspects under the umbrella of the work environment. The work environment is crucial for stigma phenomena as a stigma is a socially constructed perception of being tainted that is highly context-dependent. While a social category might be associated with negative stereotypes and beliefs in one context, the social category might not be considered tainted in another (Thomson and Grandy 2018). TAWs’ stigmatization addresses the employment status as a socially tainted category, which is strongly embedded in the power structures and functions of an organization (Boyce et al. 2007). Not every work environment triggers stigmatizing treatment against TAWs on a social level. Legal regulations provide a framework for the employment of TAWs that already perpetuates the disadvantages for them as compared to permanent workers. However, client firms still have the freedom to frame their respective work arrangements (Becker 2015). Empirical studies provide evidence that management practices and policies are influencing the occurrence of interpersonal conflicts between temporary and permanent workers, as well as the power

potentials of both groups (Byoung-Hoon and Frenkel 2004; Håkansson and Isidorsson 2012; Viitala and Kantola 2016; Rybnikova and Cardone 2018). According to Viitala and Kantola (2016), this finding holds true for both, low- and high-skilled jobs. Håkansson and Isidorsson (2012) show that labor portfolios in the context of temporary agency work are diverse and determined by client firms’ policies in regard to employment duration, assigned tasks, and access to training for TAWs. Depending on how different the tasks between TAWs and permanent employees are and how closely their activities are interrelated, the separation between permanent workers and TAWs is weaker or stronger. Another factor that is decisively influenced by management policy is the visibility of employment status. Boyce and colleagues (2007) suggest that stigmatizing treatment towards TAWs is stronger in work settings in which TAWs are easily identifiable. Some companies reinforce their separation from the core workforce on an artifact level, for example, through different dress codes (Rybnikova and Cardone 2018). Client firm management can organize the use of TAWs and their integration in the organization differently, for example, through the workload, work allocation, length of employment, access to resources, formal and informal norms of equal treatment, or visible differentiation based on working status (Bosmans et al. 2015a; Rybnikova and Cardone 2018). Because of different everyday practices in dealing with TAWs, it is possible to promote solidarity or exclusionary behavior in the permanent workforce (Viitala and Kantola 2016; Rybnikova and Cardone 2018).

In addition to the diversity of activities and interdependencies in the work relations between temporary and permanent employees, Byoung-Hoon and Frenkel (2004) emphasize that a *company’s history* plays an important role in the conflicts between temporary

and permanent workers. Established conflict structures in client firms increase the tendency to discriminate against TAWs. Previous research findings further indicate that interpersonal problems are mainly an issue in organizations using extensive temporary work for cost reduction and to create a highly competitive climate between their permanent and temporary workforces. Depending on how organizations handle the use of TAWs, permanent workers can see them as competitors or a helping hand (Schwaab and Durian 2017). So far, the work environment has proven to be relevant to the stigmatization of TAWs.

Stigmatizing Treatment

Stigmatizing treatment does not occur in a vacuum; it serves the perpetrators to help achieve their goals. So far, the perceptions of perpetrators, such as permanent workers and management, play a relevant role in the existence of stigmatization in client firms. Both management and permanent workers may favor excluding and discriminating against TAWs to maintain their power and define a target for downward comparison (Boyce et al. 2007; Becker 2015; Rybnikova and Cardone 2018). Through alliance building, management and permanent workers can stabilize the inferior position of TAWs (Byoung-Hoon and Frenkel 2004). Nevertheless, interdependencies in the work processes and social interactions between the worker groups often put permanent workers in a dilemma between showing solidarity and reacting in a stigmatizing manner to the perceived threat (Bosmans et al. 2015a; Rybnikova and Cardone 2018). As Boyce and colleagues (2007) suggest, the social norms of acceptance also determine the extent to which permanent workers treat TAWs in a stigmatizing way and what forms of stigmatizing treatment they adopt. According to Boyce and colleagues (2007), stigmatizing treatment

occurs in both overt and covert forms. While overt stigmatization includes direct statements regarding inferiority linked to employment status, the more subtle, covert forms can occur as nonverbal expressions, such as avoiding eye contact or withholding resources or information (Boyce et al. 2007). Flenitz (2018) found that when compared to their permanently employed colleagues, TAWs are hindered in their work by being denied access rights and by being confronted with poorer work conditions, including working on short notice, holiday restrictions, unpleasant tasks, or not receiving benefits. Holm, Torkelson, and Bäckström (2016) provide similar evidence for the poor treatment of TAWs, showing that they often have less access to information, are excluded from professional camaraderie, and are mainly used to do undesirable work. In addition to the more covert forms of stigmatization, TAWs also report stronger and more overt forms of poor treatment, speaking of being exposed to derogatory comments from their permanent colleagues, being bullied, or threatened with physical abuse (Holm et al. 2016). While those disadvantages have been empirically emphasized in the context of low-skilled jobs, highly-skilled TAWs were mainly identified to receive less learning and networking opportunities, to be kept out of decision-making processes (Augustsson 2014; 2016), and to be less likely asked for advice (Wilkin, de Jong, and Rubino 2018). Overtly hostile behavior has not been mentioned in this context. Regardless of the level at which stigmatization takes place and whether it is overt or covert, it essentially serves three objectives: to keep people down (domination), to keep people in line (avoid norm violation), or to keep people away (maintaining exclusiveness) (Link and Phelan 2014). Tyler and Slater (2018) emphasize that most concepts of stigma based on Goffman's classic approach often sideline "questions about where stigma is produced, by

whom, and for what purposes" (Goffman 1990:721). While Boyce and colleagues (2007) considered the perpetrators' motives in their analytical framework, Tyler and Slater (2018) still criticize the missing account of the inner organizational power structures that shape the perpetrators' motives.

Perception of Stigma

Stigma, in contrast to prejudice, considers the actual perception of the people affected. Boyce and colleagues (2007) identify five moderating factors believed to have an influence on stigma perception: the perceived perpetrator's motive, the justifiability of poor treatment, stigma consciousness, group identification, and employment status congruence. Poor treatment is not necessarily linked to employment status (Boyce et al. 2007). If TAWs associate poor behavior towards them with other reasons, such as a generally harsh attitude in the company, this behavior has no stigmatizing effect (Flemnitz 2018). Justifiability determines the perception of stigma as follows; if TAWs perceive the treatment towards them as legitimate, for example, because it is in line with the communicated management policy and their expectations, this treatment barely develops a stigmatizing nature (Boyce et al. 2007). Chambel and colleagues (2016) found that TAWs tend to have lower expectations of client companies' efforts and treatment towards them, and, consequently, often interpret poor treatment as in line with their expectations. If client companies establish policies in favor of TAWs, they perceive these policies as exceptionally positive (Chambel et al. 2016). However, if poor treatment is perceived as unjust, it is likely to be perceived as stigmatizing (Boyce et al. 2007). The perception of being stigmatized also goes along with a conscious identification of employment status as a criterion for discrimination and deval-

uation. TAWs who see their employment status as a tainted social category are more likely to interpret their experiences within a company based on this assumption. As a consequence, they most likely define poor treatment towards them as stigmatizing (Boyce et al. 2007). Furthermore, the ambiguity in how TAWs identify themselves has been highlighted in several studies. Both TAWs employed in low- and high-skilled jobs identify themselves simultaneously as employees with valuable knowledge and expertise, and as outsiders, whose knowledge is neglected (Bryant and McKeown 2016; Winkler and Mahmood 2018). However, as a self-protective coping strategy, highly-skilled TAWs are more likely to define themselves as autonomous, self-directed employees seeking freedom from conventional work arrangements (Bryant and McKeown 2016). In addition, identification with employment status is important for the perception of stigma. According to Boyce and colleagues (2007), TAWs who see their employment status as a core part of their identity are more likely to perceive poor treatment as related to this attribute than others who are not as strongly committed to this social category. Previous research also suggests that gender affects stigma perception. Selvarajan and colleagues (2015) found that men see their job as more central to their identity than women, and, consequently, are more likely to perceive their status as a TAW as stigmatizing. As previously stated, TAWs are by no means a homogenous group. According to their life situations, personal attitude, motives for accepting temporary employment, or their qualification levels, TAWs might attach varying importance to how they are treated in a client firm (Selvarajan et al. 2015; Flemnitz 2018; Stasiowski and Kłobuszewska 2018). Those working voluntarily for a temporary work agency and who make sense of their work as something that gives them flexibility will have greater employment status congruence

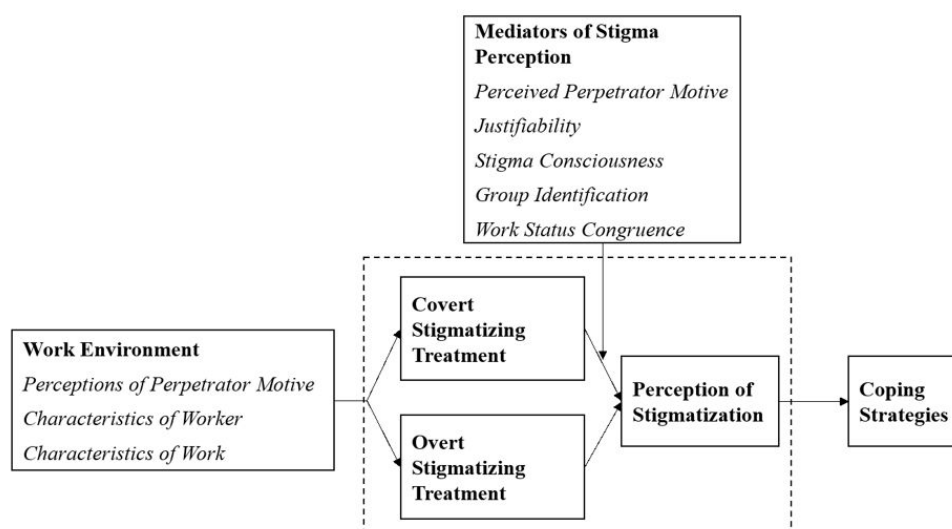
and, consequently, may draw less attention to how they are treated by their permanent colleagues or client firm management (Boyce et al. 2007). Moreover, Bosmans and colleagues (2015a) assume that higher-skilled TAWs more easily accept their employment status and have fewer difficulties going along with it than lower-skilled TAWs.

Coping Strategies

Boyce and colleagues (2007) refer to various outcomes of stigmatizing treatment for TAWs. Mainly, they address consequences for the well-being, job satisfaction, commitment, mood, and job-related behaviors of TAWs in response to perceived poor treatment (Boyce et al. 2007). Current empirical studies also provide evidence for negative effects, especially on the job satisfaction, commitment, and well-being (Boswell et al. 2012; Borgogni et al. 2016; Aleksynska 2018; Imhof and Andresen 2018; Stasiowski and Kłobuszewska 2018). In contrast, however, Winkler and Mahmood (2018) found that TAWs respond to poorer working conditions compared to permanently employed workers by a rapid adaption and demonstration of willingness to safeguard their positive self-image and impress client firms. Responses to stigmatization might be of a passive or active nature. Based on their literature review, Boyce and colleagues (2007) refer to a lack of research on more active coping strategies used by TAWs. One reason for the little empirical evidence of active response strategies might be that the coping resources of TAWs are limited due to their potential exclusion from social

networks, a lack of representation by trade unions, or perceived mistrust within organizations (Bosmans et al. 2015a). Still, Boyce and colleagues (2007) refer to collective action, problem-solving, or organizational citizenship behavior as active responses. There is, however, evidence that TAWs might develop different coping strategies due to their situations and employment sectors. For example, Bosmans and colleagues (2015a) highlight the differences between higher- and lower-skilled agency workers in coping with stigmatization. As they more often have purposefully chosen their work arrangement, TAWs in higher positions appear to have fewer difficulties in dealing with their employment status. Also, they are more likely to be offered opportunities for training and learning (Bosmans et al. 2015a). Taking into consideration the above-mentioned theoretical remarks, we used a condensed version of Boyce and colleagues' (2007) model of TAW stigmatization as a starting point for our fieldwork. This model is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Condensed model of TAW stigmatization



Source: Adopted from Boyce et al. (2007).

Understanding Temporary Agency Work in Germany

In Germany, temporary work represents a highly dynamic branch of employment; since 1991, the number of TAWs has quintupled in size up to more than one million. After slightly decreasing, there are currently 948,000 TAWs (BA 2020). In relation to the total population, Germany is one of ten countries worldwide that have the highest percentage of TAWs (Flemnitz 2018). Agency work is most common within the manufacturing sector, although the service sector is gaining importance (Keller and Seifert 2013). Originally functioning as a service provider primarily for metal and electrical-related jobs, temporary agency work is now relevant for a broader spectrum of activities (Schwaab and Durian 2017). From an organizational perspective, the use of temporary agency work mainly aims at productivity and performance enhancement. Holst, Nachtwey, and Dörre (2010) identified three different usage strategies in German client companies serving this objective: ad-hoc assignment, usage as flexibility buffer, and strategic use. The strategies differ in the quantity of use, the qualification and working tasks of the TAW, and the impact on job security and status of the permanent workforce. Depending on the client firm, the various strategies result in different interactions between permanent employees and TAWs. Particularly in client firms aiming to create a competitive work environment between permanent workers and TAWs, interpersonal conflict is to be expected (Becker 2015). A common employment strategy seems to be the assignment of more demanding tasks to permanent employees while giving TAWs simpler tasks. This not only strengthens the permanent workers' feelings of superiority but also provides a breeding ground for tense relationships between the two groups of workers and evokes an informal hierarchy (Rybnikova and Cardone 2018). As mentioned before, TAWs in Germa-

ny often occupy low-skilled jobs (BA 2020). In line with that, the proportion of TAWs without any vocational qualification (31%) is almost twice as high as the proportion of all employed people without a vocational qualification (BA 2020). Qualified work, on the other hand, is carried out only by a very small number of TAWs (Schwaab and Durian 2017). However, there are also highly-skilled employees working as temporaries, but fewer of them. Only 10% of all TAWs possess a university degree (BA 2020). Across all job-skill levels, TAWs are disadvantaged with regard to wages. On average, a TAW in the helper sector earns 28% less than permanently employed workers in the same sector. TAWs in the specialist sector still earn 24% less, and those in the academic sector 17% less compared to their permanently employed colleagues (BA 2020). Considering public discourse on temporary agency work in Germany, one can perceive this employment status as socially tainted, considered less prestigious, and with poorer working conditions than permanent workers (Summers et al. 2018; Thomson and Grandy 2018). This negative image is additionally fueled by the argument that temporary agency work replaces permanent jobs and is used by companies to maximize profits and exploit the workforce (Sitte and Lehmann 2013). There are positive effects of temporary agency work acknowledged in public discussions, such as the improvement of organizational flexibility or eventually bringing unemployed people back into the job market (Sitte and Lehmann 2013). However, the negative image of temporary work dominates the discourse in Germany (Flemnitz 2018). Consequently, TAWs often have to deal with problems surrounding social recognition within organizations and society.

Material and Methods

This study is based on a qualitative research design and analyzes data from 16 interviews with people working

for independent temporary employment firms. After several phases of data gathering, data collection ended in 2018. TAWs were contacted via three different channels: a temporary employment agency, a direct request to a client firm, and Xing© (a social network for professional contacts within German-speaking regions). The sample included eleven men and five women. This imbalance in favor of male interviewees can be explained by the structure of employment in Germany. As most client firms still represent male-dominated working sectors (Keller and Seifert 2013), temporary agency work in Germany is, in contrast to other countries, a male-dominated branch consisting of about 70% male employees (BA 2020). For this reason, our sample represents the sex division of TAWs as they exist in the contemporary German labor market. The age of the interviewees ranged from 20 to 62 years. They had worked for temporary employment agencies for two months up to 20 years. The sample consists of seven TAWs employed in low-skilled jobs as helpers and nine employed in high-skilled jobs as specialists and academics. This heterogeneous sample of less or

more experienced workers, men and women, older and younger people, as well as those employed in low- and high-skilled jobs enabled us to gain rich insights into the various facets of TAWs' perception and experiences of stigmatization (see Table 1). To ensure a low threshold for participation in the interviews, we tried to provide the most convenient and comfortable settings for the respective interviewees. Accordingly, four interviews took place via telephone and twelve in person. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes; they were recorded, entirely transcribed, and anonymized (Davidson 2009; Dresing, Pehl, and Schmieder 2015). The interviews aimed at the understanding of TAWs' experiences while being assigned to their client firm(s) and included questions about working conditions in the interviewee's current client firm and their respective expectations. They also covered treatment by permanently employed colleagues and management, as well as the perceptions of poor treatment linked to the interviewee's employment status. Other topics included the visibility of working status, as well as behavioral consequences and possible coping strategies.

Table 1. Interview sample

No.	Job skill-level	Employment position	Job title	Sex	Age	Employment duration as a TAW
1	Low-skilled	Helper	Production assistant	m	48	2 years
2	Low-skilled	Helper	Forklift driver	m	33	2 years
3	Low-skilled	Helper	Production assistant	m	49	2 years
4	Low-skilled	Helper	Production assistant	m	50	4 years
5	Low-skilled	Helper	Production assistant	f	47	3.5 years
6	Low-skilled	Helper	Production assistant	m	62	20 years
7	Low-skilled	Helper	Production assistant	f	45	4 years
8	High-skilled	Specialist	Automotive merchant	f	20	1 year
9	High-skilled	Specialist	HR administrator	f	27	0.5 year
10	High-skilled	Specialist	Mechanical technician	m	37	3 years
11	High-skilled	Academic	Project engineer	m	27	1.5 years
12	High-skilled	Academic	Project technologist	f	27	0.5 year
13	High-skilled	Academic	Logistics planner	m	29	3.5 years
14	High-skilled	Academic	Development engineer	m	34	3 years
15	High-skilled	Academic	Technical project manager	m	28	0.5 year
16	High-skilled	Academic	Technical project manager	m	30	2 years

Source: Self-elaboration.

The material was analyzed by using qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2014). As was mentioned above, the study is based on the framework shown in Figure 1 and mainly relies on the four key categories stemming from the stigmatization model developed by Boyce and colleagues (2007): *work environment*, *stigmatizing treatment*, *perception of stigma*, and *coping strategies*. Whereas the initial coding followed these categories in a deductive manner, a second

step also included inductive subcategory building. This means that we applied a mixed approach for categorization. Thus, we inductively extended the original analytical framework based on empirical evidence for additional interdependencies (Table 2). The basic coding scheme based on these findings is presented below, as well as in the discussion section where we also conceptualize our proposition of a revised model.

Table 2. Coding overview

Main- and subcategories	Explanation	Examples
Work environment • Characteristics of the worker • Characteristics of the work environment • Perceived perpetrator motives	This category describes how client firms influence the stigma experiences of TAWs depending on their strategy of use and organizational practices in dealing with TAWs. This category also illustrates the perpetrator motives behind the stigmatizing treatment of TAWs.	“everything was explained to me in detail, I could participate in everything, there were really no restrictions and that was really nice. You really noticed that this is also a bit of corporate philosophy. You didn’t feel excluded.” [Int.9S]
Stigmatizing treatment • Forms of stigmatizing treatment • No stigmatizing treatment	This category includes all forms of stigmatizing treatment experienced, as well as all statements indicating an absence of stigmatizing treatment in client firms reported by TAWs.	“The other employees didn’t even know that I was from a temporary employment agency. They thought I was a permanent employee. But, when I said it, the behaviors towards me didn’t change.” [Int.11A]
Perception of stigma • Stigma consciousness • Justifiability • Group identification	This category includes TAWs’ perceptions of poor treatment linked to their working status and the rationales they apply to those experiences.	“Why should a temp do clean, pleasant work and the permanent employee bend and work in the mud? That’s not what you’d expect, would you?” [Int.1H]
Coping strategies	This category includes statements of how TAWs deal with experiences of stigmatizing treatment.	“But, it’s simply a system that I don’t want to work for and that’s why I’m looking for a long-term permanent position.” [Int.16A]

Source: Self-elaboration.

To address possible claims of intersubjective comprehensibility and validity, theory-driven and computer-aided data analysis has been carried out using software for qualitative data analysis (MAXQDA®).

To sustain a high standard of qualitative investigation, a triangulation strategy was applied: investigator triangulation (Flick 2011; 2018). All three authors were equally involved in the analysis; they cross-

checked the coding and discussed their interpretations on a regular basis (Kuckartz and Rädiker 2019).

Results

In the following section, the findings of the empirical study will be described. Particular differences between TAWs employed in low-skilled jobs as helpers and those employed in high-skilled jobs as specialists or academics are highlighted and—in addition—critically reflected in the discussion section of the paper.

Work Environment

Our findings reveal that client firms differ in how they organize and define the work arrangements of TAWs, as well as their positions within the organization. The client firms' strategy, along with their history of use, shapes the work environment on several levels. Depending on the field of employment and on basic attitude, to treat TAWs for their period of use as members of the organization or as an external group, client firms either try to keep the differences between temporary and permanent employees to a minimum or highlight these same differences. Highlighting differences can take place at the artifact level (i.e., clothes, email addresses, access cards), by dividing tasks, as well as participation in organizational events and benefits that often work to the disadvantage of TAWs.

What I mentioned is that external employees are treated like guests at best. That you aren't allowed to park in the company parking lot, but only in the guest parking lot is an example. But, not the one for the special guests, which is right in front of the entrance, but the one on the other side of the company site. [Int.14A]

Through these practices, client firms can increase the visibility of employment status and facilitate differentiating TAWs. Visibly and externally perceptible differences, our results suggest, support the emergence of informal hierarchies and status differences. A common experience shared by our interviewees across different skill levels was the assignment of more pleasant, more important tasks to permanent employees and of less pleasant tasks to TAWs. Thereby TAWs become constructed as an inferior, subordinate group compared to the core workers. The resulting imbalance of power in favor of the permanent employees opens up opportunities for the permanent employees to act as informal superiors vis-à-vis the temporary workforce. How an interviewee reports, there are colleagues who treat the TAWs on equal footing. Nevertheless, there are also such kinds of permanent employees who are of the opinion that they are superior to TAWs. For example, this is expressed by the fact that no objections are accepted (Int.2H). As a result, TAWs receive commands from permanent employees and are pressured to at least partially meet their expectations. Our interview partners suspect that permanent employees see an opportunity in the employment of TAWs, which consists of the possibility to improve their work environment. On the one hand, this can be achieved by passing on unpleasant tasks to TAWs.

When it comes to the unpleasant tasks, which come up every now and then. Then the regularly employed colleague says: "I don't need to do that, that's what we have the temps for!" [Int.1H]

On the other hand, permanent employees might be able to improve their situation by using TAWs as buffers who, due to their independence from the client firm, address unpleasant issues in the name of per-

manent employees. Nevertheless, not all client firms equally enhance the visibility of employment status. Particularly in employment sectors with higher qualification requirements, some client firms, apart from discreet hints in their email signature, did not draw attention to employment status and tried not to strengthen the differentiation between the core workforce and TAWs. Interviewee 15 even reported having had experienced interactions with permanently employed colleagues from the client firm who did not know that he was employed via a temporary employment agency and who stated their regrets when his work arrangement with the client firm ended. Some client firms also actively support the equal treatment of TAWs within their walls:

There was a company guideline that I read, and it said that “Temporary workers are to be treated like coworkers, so there should be no difference.” And if the company serves as a good example, then the employees will see this with different eyes and will implement it accordingly. [Int.9S]

This policy was noticed and well-respected by TAWs. It further represents one example of how client firms can shape the work environment and work relationships with little effort.

However, unlike these positive experiences, our results show that most of the temporary employees interviewed experience less harmonious relationships with the permanent employees at their client firm. Client firm policies shape the relationships between TAWs and the core workforce by pre-structuring those relationships with an atmosphere either of competition and mistrust or of equality and common interests. Our interviewees stated that their poor treatment by permanent workers might be based on several different fears. In the case of

TAWs in low-skilled jobs, permanent workers’ fears concerned mainly status loss linked to possible decreased productivity from working with the untrained, unqualified TAWs in their team. Fears of job loss through competition with TAWs, as well as an expected increased workload due to the additional training of newcomers were perceived motives for permanent employees’ poor treatment towards TAWs across the different skill levels. Additionally, highly-skilled TAWs in the academic sector perceived permanent workers’ fear concerning the loss of know-how as a competitive advantage of the client firm as a possible motive for their poor behavior towards TAWs. Based on the work environment in which TAWs have their first experiences, our findings suggest that they become more or less likely to perceive their employment status as something negative. Experiences in a work environment that is rather exclusive and discriminatory towards TAWs might leave them “branded children” (Int.10S) who will be more likely to suffer because of their employment status.

Stigmatizing Treatment

Focusing now on the question of what forms of stigmatizing treatment TAWs experience, it becomes obvious that no clear boundary can be drawn between overt and covert forms of stigmatization. Nevertheless, there are a few clearly identifiable examples of such forms of stigmatization; however, within the majority of reported experiences, the boundary becomes blurred. An undisputedly overt form of stigmatization is illustrated clearly in the following sample statement:

During the meeting, it became clear that various approaches weren’t correct. So, I said to myself: “You can’t leave it like that, because it’s simply wrong from

a planning point of view.” Well, then I mentioned it and, in that context, I was told to keep my mouth shut, that I was only a TAW. In front of all the others! [Int.13A]

Even in high-skilled jobs, employment status is used to prevent employee resistance in problematic situations. By highlighting the lack of affiliation with the company, TAWs’ contributions within the work environment are devalued if they do not work in the favor of their permanent co-workers or management. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that interviewee 13 represents an extreme case within the surveyed interviews. Here, TAWs were not allowed to share their lunchtime with permanent employees in the canteen and instead had to have their lunch in their office. They were excluded from meetings, had no access to work-related training, and received less work-related information compared to permanent workers (Int.13A). So, forms of distinction in more highly qualified sectors are less visible, but still exist. In knowledge-intensive industries, this is problematic not only for the workers affected but also for the company in which TAWs with no access to the necessary information are rarely able to perform their tasks to a high standard. As previously mentioned, the boundary between overt and covert stigmatization is becoming predominantly blurred. So, being called a TAW can itself be perceived as overt stigmatizing treatment when the term is perceived to be linked to degrading features.

The only thing that bothered me was that a colleague in my office was always talking about me as a “temporary worker,” and I find the term “temporary worker” so outdated and a bit degrading. [Int.9S]

For persons employed in temporary work, terms that are more appreciative, for example, a “person

who temporarily assists,” are more desirable (Int.9S). This may seem banal at first glance, but for people with low resilience, it is an important and influential factor for their self-esteem within a work context. This situation is similar to the case of interviewee 14. Here, only permanent workers, not TAWs, are allowed to state their academic titles in email signatures (Int.14A). This is a mechanism for enhancing the status differences between permanent workers and TAWs, including negative consequences for both parties, employers and employees. According to our interviews, financial disadvantages are also reflected as stigmatizing treatment. Interviewee 10 stated that only TAWs who are on loan to the client firm for nine months reach the same wage level as workers with the same qualifications. However, only a few TAWs are able to overcome this obstacle, as they often leave the client firm before the nine months are reached. Hence, legal regulations on equal pay are thwarted by the client companies, which, in turn, creates additional stigmatization for TAWs. Interviewee 16 perceived the financial disadvantages as discriminatory practices, and he feels obliged to ask for his rights and perceives the client firm as being without understanding. Instead, these firms develop strategies to avoid the legal regulations of equal pay (Int.16A). Hence, there are certainly financial disadvantages even in more highly qualified jobs, but payment can still be perceived as “good,” such as in the case of interviewee 15. It depends on both the temporary employment agency, as well as the client firm (Int.15A, Int.16A). The simultaneous dependence on two separate companies has further disadvantages for TAWs. Being excluded from, for example, a Christmas party is legitimized by legal restrictions (Int.12A). TAWs in this client firm are not allowed to attend more than one company event per year. Ergo, if they participate in an event hosted by the temporary employ-

ment agency, attending the client's Christmas and summer parties is considered taboo (Int.12A). This was subsequently followed by a further finding that no defined contacts, linked to a lack of clarification of responsibilities for TAWs, in the client firm are perceived as a form of marginalization because no one explicitly cares about helping TAWs integrate into their new working environment (Int.8S). This is problematic not only for the TAWs affected but also for the company in which TAWs with no clear integration into their new working environment are less able to fulfill their tasks from the beginning. In the field of low-skilled jobs, open forms of stigmatization are often associated with the assignment of unpleasant tasks. Moreover, the language used here seems to be "rougher" and easily might turn into actual chicanery and bullying. This, in the eyes of an interviewee, requires a certain physical constitution, as well as a certain degree of resilience on the part of TAWs:

For me, temporary work is almost like its own profession, which not everyone is suitable for. As a temporary worker, you have to be quite tough, and you have to want that! [Int.1H]

If that were not enough, TAWs not only have to do the "dirty work," they are also deliberately given unpopular, difficult tasks:

There's an older man with us...I think they treat him very much... they give him everything they don't want to do. Then he has to lift the glass and put it on the car, and if you do that all day long, you're beaten! [Int.4H]

But, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Another form of stigmatization is being assigned to dangerous tasks where the TAW is not aware of the risks (Int.1H).

It seems that permanent employees exploit the inexperience of TAWs. As already mentioned above, they do this in particular to avoid unpleasant tasks and to simply delegate away parts of their work to them (Int.4H). Additionally, depending on the respective company, working hours are very strictly monitored. The slightest break or interruption is noticed, and even going to the bathroom is suspiciously observed (Int.6H).

Many were there only for two days and then left. They don't get the hang of it. I mean, it really gets you when you know that everyone's looking at you...that you don't stand around, that you're in motion, that you don't blabber. [Int.6H]

Furthermore, certain privileges and benefits, such as free meals, are simply not available for TAWs within the low qualification sector (Int.2H). Other forms of open stigmatization in this sector include verbal attacks or deliberately ignoring legal regulations.

That's how they hold the pistol to your head. Once, I had a situation when I was supposed to work the night shift. At noon they call me, saying I've to switch to an earlier shift. Of course, I know there has to be a break of eleven hours or so. And they don't give a damn! They said: "You want to work, so be here immediately. If not, then you don't need to come here tomorrow anyways!" [Int.2H]

In contrast to the low appreciation of skills within the helper sector, TAWs in higher-skilled jobs encounter another problem tied to expectations. As external employees whose relationships within the client firm are less pronounced, they are expected to openly address problems and fight battles with management for their permanently employed colleagues who are at risk of losing status (Int.9S). However, in

higher-skilled areas, TAWs have to struggle with stigmatization in the form of financial disadvantages, too. A lower salary, as well as a lower bonus or none at all, are perceived as a significant difference between permanent workers and TAWs (Int.9S). Now, after clearly open as well as blurred forms of stigmatizing treatment have been exemplified, the logical next step is to consider clearly covert forms of stigmatization. An undisputedly covert form of stigmatization is illustrated by the following statement from an interview:

You have to say that when you went through the factory as a temporary worker and said “Good morning” to someone, you didn’t necessarily have to expect that something would come back. [Int.13A]

As a result, TAWs are partly ignored by the permanent workforce, or at least they assume that they are being avoided. On the one hand, there is a perceptible increase in cohesion among permanent employees. On the other hand, TAWs represent newcomers and do not benefit from existing group cohesion (Int.10S). Interviewee 16 also lacks a sense of belonging. He further reports that all agreements that apply to permanent workers are not valid for TAWs and are always subject to renegotiations (Int.16A). Regardless of his qualifications, interviewee 14 was treated as less qualified, was given special attention by the permanent staff, and his suggestions were not taken into account (Int.14A). Interviewee 2 assumes that the stereotypes that exist in the minds of the permanent workforce are difficult to overcome:

prejudices exist anyway. You’re a temp standing in front of a qualified permanent employee. And he thinks: “Well, he might be okay, but he’s one sandwich short of a picnic!” [Int.2H]

It is apparent that there are fewer discrepancies between TAWs in high- and low-skilled jobs with-in covert stigma than within overt stigma. Lastly, what this research should not ignore is that TAWs also report the absence of stigmatizing treatment. Apart from financial differences and a marginal perception of the position as not a fully-fledged member of the company, temporary employment can also be perceived as a good model by those affected. Certain efforts on the part of the company, such as a good presentation of the company at the beginning of the assignment or philosophy of equal treatment, contribute to this.

I could participate in everything, there were really no restrictions and that was really nice. You really noticed that this is also a bit of corporate philosophy. You didn’t feel excluded. [Int.9S]

In the case of interviewee 12, the use of TAWs is deeply embedded in the firm’s history, and the firm constantly uses a high number of TAWs to ensure productivity, which is why the permanent members are used to working together with TAWs and do not perceive them as a threat, but rather as the necessary support. There is even a feeling of solidarity towards the TAWs among the permanent staff, or at least this is interviewee 12’s perception (Int.12A). Temporary work can also be understood as a positive context in which problems can be solved with a flexible change of workplace. This perspective highlights aspects of work stability that seem to go hand in hand with the conscious choice of this employment status mentioned by TAWs in high-skilled jobs (Int.8S). On the whole, stigmatization does not occur at all workplaces. As expected, it depends on the company, organizational culture, and colleagues (Int.2H). There are also depictions by TAWs who experienced their day-to-day work as equal to

permanent workers (Int.5H). There are companies striving to integrate TAWs. Hence, TAWs are invited to corporate events and parties, they can participate in staff meetings, and they get presents and even bonuses (Int.6H). This, again, supports the impression that stigmatization very much depends on the worker's specific context.

Stigma Perception

Our findings showed an ambivalent picture of how TAWs perceive their employment status and related stigmatization. TAWs in jobs requiring higher qualifications experienced poor treatment linked to their employment status in person-to-person interactions less often than TAWs in low-skilled jobs. However, they perceived their employment status as stigmatized on a societal level based on the negative image of temporary work in public discourse. This public stigma may be one reason for TAWs in highly qualified jobs to less openly communicate their employment status to others, even though their personal experiences within client firms are, in most cases, positive.

Well, that's the thing about it. People ask: "What are you doing these days?" Then I say: "Well, I work at [client firm name]." Which is ultimately the case. I've a temporary employment contract...Only that I'm paid from another position. Yeah, right. As I said, I won't say it explicitly now. [Int.11A]

Linked to the negative image of temporary work, TAWs in higher qualified jobs criticize structural disadvantages, addressing issues of unequal pay or being excluded from client firm benefits. Instead, TAWs in the helper sector reported experiencing poor treatment related to their employment status in face-to-face interactions within client firms and

perceived themselves as being stigmatized, resulting partly in self-stigmatization. Strong awareness of an existing stigma around temporary work was also expressed by the self-descriptions of these TAWs: "You're a second-class worker, you're a temporary worker. A temporary worker is a temporary worker. Is and will always be!" (Int.3H).

The perceptions of being degraded or placed in an inferior position because of employment status become even more evident when reflecting on their level of training: "and I asked myself: 'Why am I here even though I know I can do better?'" (Int.2H). The perception of being degraded, however, is also an issue that TAWs in more highly qualified jobs have to deal with:

But, obviously, you feel like a fool if you have studied at university for a few years and got a degree, and still receive work from someone who is formally not qualified and treats you like an idiot. [Int.14A]

The perception of structural disadvantages on the part of the majority of TAWs in specialized and academic employment sectors and the perception of interactional stigmatization of the majority of TAWs in the helper sector led to different rationales in TAWs' narratives justifying their experiences in client firms. Across all job skill levels, TAWs argue with a specific market logic that client firms are following when planning to work with temporary employment agencies. For example, one interviewee considers that modern technical production cannot actually be marketable without TAWs because temporary work has developed into a proven method to react in line with the market demands (Int.1H). Within legal restrictions, client firms are able to extend their workforce using TAWs without offering the same benefits they offer their core workforce.

If there weren't temporary workers, some regular workers would have to do it. But, if you've got the possibility, you take a temp, 'cause this job is easy to learn or instruct. But, that's absolutely normal, that's what I'm here for...Why should a temp do clean, pleasant work and the permanent employee bend and work in the mud? That's not what you'd expect, would you? [Int.1H]

Within these limits, our results suggest that TAWs accept being treated differently without blaming the client firm and its members.

TAWs in high-skilled jobs further refer to the legitimate fears of client companies and their attempts to protect themselves. They argue that client firms develop practices of exclusion concerning information sharing or access rights towards TAWs to protect themselves from the perspective of data or patent law.

When I think about IT and IT security, it's quite understandable. Because permanent employees can be threatened with being fired if they do something stupid, if you look at it like that. The company has more confidence in its permanent employees. I can understand that a bit and I agree with that. [Int.14A]

TAWs in the helper sector mainly use a completely different argument to justify being treated poorly within client firms. They see the negative image of temporary work and the associated negative attitudes of permanent employees towards TAWs as being rooted in a subgroup of TAWs who fit the existing prejudices. Instead of blaming the client firm policies, legal restrictions, or societal discourse, they search for reasons among their own. Hence, they establish some sort of secondary order:

There are two kinds of temporary workers. There are people, I've met enough out there, they really haven't learned anything in life. [Int.3H]

...the cliché isn't far away that there really are alcoholics or people who somehow have difficulties in life, who then also gain a foothold through temporary agency work. [Int.1H]

Although our interviewees clearly distinguish themselves from the group of "bad" TAWs, they assign to a part of their own group attributes such as being lazy, without skills, or acting less committed, which all justify the stigmatizing treatment, or at least the existing prejudices, towards them. Moreover, poor behavior towards TAWs is simply seen as an innately human characteristic, almost some kind of anthropological constant: "Well, it's human, I'd say...After all, man is a pig!" (Int.4H). Our findings suggest that the stigma consciousness of TAWs across different job skill levels differs according to the rationales to justify the status quo. Disadvantages at the monetary level associated with employment status and a negative image of the temporary employment industry, in general, play a more significant role in the narratives of TAWs in high-skilled jobs than in those employed in lesser-qualified jobs. In low-skilled jobs, the interactional, immaterial level tends to come to the surface, which can be attributed, among other things, to the lack of alternatives for those affected. In contrast to academics or specialists, TAWs in helper roles do not expect their situation to change in the near future and are more likely to accept their status as a TAW as part of their identity.

Coping Strategies

Turning now to the question of how TAWs individually cope with stigmatizing experiences, one can

observe different strategies. Whereas companies use the threat of immediate lay-off, TAWs also make use of the opportunity to leave a company:

I said: "Go, find yourself another stupid! If you don't like it, you get my timesheet, you can sign it and goodbye." Short, concise, functional, clear. [Int.3H]

A similar strategy is to give up temporary work to find a "regular" job. Interestingly, the perspective of potentially leaving a client firm could be found in all sectors, but it seems to be even more important for highly qualified TAWs. Here, temporary work is actively used as a bridge to professional life, such as to gain experience after graduating from a university. The perspective of moving from temporary employment to normal employment quite easily or within a relatively short period suggests that people identify less strongly with their status as TAWs. In the same way, impression management is one strategy used in high-skilled jobs to avoid being noticed as a TAW or in any negative manner. What appears to be very crucial here is the impression of having control of the situation. This is reflected in the perception of having chosen the work arrangement and the feeling that it serves a certain purpose:

You have somehow in the back of your mind, maybe you have the chance to get a foothold there, that means you try hard and try to do all the tasks that come up...I've used the temporary work for myself, I've acquired a lot of knowledge. [Int.13A]

This supports the idea that TAWs in high-skilled jobs try to avoid any form of identification with their employment status. This is also supported by the fact that this group shows no form of self-stigmatization. For the highly qualified, temporary work is considered to be just a short phase or a step-

ping stone. In that regard, TAWs in the sectors with higher qualifications see the possibilities of training within client companies as further privileges that are rarely made accessible to TAWs in the low-qualified helper sector. Even though some of the TAWs in the low-skilled sector try to gain skills and knowledge, such as reading hand-outs and leaflets or willingly taking up new tasks, they also do it with another objective:

I'm paid for my time anyway and if they say now perhaps you could do this or do that, then I'll do that. It's rewarding for me, you know? 'Cause I learn something, too. [Int.6H]

This appears to be a form of assimilation, actively integrating oneself thus gradually overcoming the role of TAW. For example, one interviewee describes how he volunteered to step in for another co-worker to help him get a day off. On this occasion, he asked for a crash course to be able to take over this colleague's tasks. In line with these findings is a strategy for making sense of one's respective work, or feeling like one's work is meaningful.

What I also think is a very liberating factor, and this is my deep personal impression, it is that you basically do an honest job where you are needed. [Int.1H]

When it comes to verbal discrimination, one coping strategy is to perceive it as humor, or as comments that are not to be understood as real attacks towards the TAWs, especially within highly qualified fields. This is a rather remarkable outcome, as this perception might be a mechanism of highly qualified TAWs protecting their status and self-worth against discrimination. On the other hand, a coping strategy across all sectors for dealing with poor treatment is to simply ignore it. This can also include a general

stance towards temporary work. One of the interviewees describes his attitude as follows:

I believe I go there to work, I don't care what people think about me. 'Cause after work I'm with my people, so this doesn't matter anymore. [Int.2H]

The missing affiliation to the company and the opportunity to quit at any time also gives TAWs the opportunity to speak frankly to their superiors:

A temporary worker sometimes has a certain distance, I can talk to the really big boss without any hesitation. I also sometimes had the impression that he likes it when he gets straightforward feedback from the bottom. [Int.1H]

Also, the perspective of being in a company for only a short period seems to help when it comes to poor treatment and working conditions:

There are companies where I keep telling myself, "You're only a holiday replacement for three to four weeks," so you bear it and it's alright. [Int.6H]

Overall, these results indicate that when it comes to coping strategies, an important factor seems to be individual resilience.

Discussion

Previous research on temporary agency work emphasized that TAWs, particularly those in low-skilled jobs, are likely to be exposed to stigmatization. However, stigmatization of TAWs employed in high-skilled jobs, as well as experiences of stigmatization across different skill levels, have not been treated in much detail. With a focus on low-skilled jobs, existing research provided a rather incomplete picture of

stigmatization within the broader field of temporary employment. In contrast to earlier studies, this study considered both TAWs employed in low- and high-skilled jobs and has been able to highlight the differences of perceiving and coping with stigmatization. Using and extending Boyce and colleagues' (2007) model of TAW stigmatization enabled a holistic perspective on stigmatization processes in client firms. In the literature, job-related stigma has been associated with negative outcomes for both the individual and the organization. This is exemplified in a study undertaken by Boswell and colleagues (2012:455) who explain how poor treatment towards TAWs and their self-perception as workers with lower status might affect their "work-related attitudes and behaviors which are critical to business operations." Notable are also recent findings with regard to negative effects on TAWs' well-being, health, job satisfaction, and commitment (e.g., Aleksynska 2018; Imhof and Andresen 2018; Stasiowski and Kłobuszewska 2018; Hünefeld et al. 2020). Other studies emphasized organizational losses caused by stigmatization, such as a waste of TAWs' knowledge and skills, as well as a decrease in organizational social capital (Augustsson 2014; 2016; Viitala and Kantola 2016; Wilkin et al. 2018; Winkler and Mahmood 2018). These findings demonstrate the need for better strategies to integrate TAWs to avoid their stigmatization in client firms. This study contributes to research on temporary work and stigmatization by providing knowledge of the multifaceted range of stigmatization experiences in jobs with different skill levels. Thereby the findings may help to develop strategies to avoid negative consequences resulting from this type of stigma. The results show that the stigma experiences of TAWs differ depending on the working environment embedded in different employment sectors. Regardless of qualification level, stigmatization was more of an issue for those TAWs whose employment status visibil-

ity was reinforced by the client firm. Such problematic measures comprised different clothing, the assignment to inferior tasks, or the spatial separation of office and lunchrooms. These status-reinforcing practices on an artifact level have been explicitly mentioned as means to promote separation between the core workforce and TAWs. One interviewee expressed how the treatment of TAWs drastically changed after a new management board was introduced, which implemented procedures that resulted in a sudden change in the permanent workers' behaviors and gave rise to stigmatizing treatment towards TAWs. Organizational change, such as the change of management board, has been identified as a trigger for growing hostile work environments in previous studies, especially if connected to intensified job insecurity, competition, or role conflict (Skogstad, Matthiesen, and Einarsen 2007; Spagnoli, Balducci, and Fraccaroli 2017). Moreover, prior studies suggest that management and permanent workers may have an interest in keeping the status of TAWs low to maintain their power (Byoung-Hoon and Frenkel 2004; Boyce et al. 2007; Becker 2015). For example, Rybnikova and Cardone (2018) found that the behaviors of core workers depend on whether management policies support or sanction inclusive behaviors towards TAWs. Our study confirms this argument and shows that management that promotes a status-reinforcing atmosphere along with strong differentiation between the two groups endorses permanent workers' tendencies to distance themselves from TAWs. By doing so, management policy provides the basis for stigmatization by legitimizing open discrimination of TAWs across the different skill levels. Several reports have shown that permanent workers seem to face a dilemma when confronted with TAWs. They are framed as outsiders and a threat, but permanent workers need to cooperate with them to perform their jobs (Rybnikova and

Cardone 2018). Consequently, previous findings indicate that the strategic separation and devaluation of TAWs has negative effects on the core workforce, and potentially on the organization itself. With regard to working context, our findings show a blind spot in the previous model of TAW stigmatization (Boyce et al. 2007). An important contextual factor appears to be the role of the temporary employment firm and its relationship with the client firm, as well as with the employed TAW. From the experiences of our interviewees, it became apparent that these relations shape stigma perception. On the one hand, the negotiation between the companies clarifies the basic terms and conditions that pre-structure the TAW's work arrangements. On the other hand, the actions of the temporary employment agency can shape the TAW's perceived level of uncertainty. Our data indicate that TAWs' perception of poor treatment is less severe if their employment agency is supportive when problems arise (i.e., helping to find a new client firm). If the client firm and the temporary employment agency have strong ties and build an alliance to the disadvantage of TAWs, poor treatment in the client firm becomes more serious. These findings are not taken into account in the current stigmatization model and represent a meaningful extension to the theoretical framework for future studies. One unanticipated finding was that the pre-structuring effect the work environment has is evident for all interviewees and across the different skill levels. However, the specific forms of stigmatizing treatment differed according to the worker's position in low- and high-skilled jobs. Basically, we found the forms of stigmatization already highlighted in previous literature (Bosmans et al. 2015a; 2015b; Helfen et al. 2015; Stasiowski and Kłobuszewska 2018), but we were able to identify which of these forms are more relevant in each respective sector. While verbal discrimination (e.g., devaluing the skills and contributions of

TAWs) and task-related discrimination (e.g., allocation of undesirable activities to TAWs) were more obvious in low-skilled jobs, TAWs employed in high-skilled jobs more frequently reported the denial of information or rights—matters that were perceived as a lack of trust. Following the descriptions of the interviewees, the emergence of verbal devaluation in the helper sector can possibly be explained by the generally tougher tone in the manufacturing industry. There seems to be a higher level of politeness in interpersonal interactions in office jobs with higher qualification requirements. However, this sector seems to be open to more subtle forms of stigmatizing treatment. For TAWs in jobs with higher qualification requirements, these experiences led to very uncomfortable situations in the client firm. As our interviews have shown, distrust towards TAWs can easily develop and manifest in exclusionary practices, especially in knowledge-intensive and innovation-driven professions such as engineering. In previous research, there is some evidence suggesting that highly-skilled TAWs' knowledge and skills are not efficiently used in client firms and that their opportunities to contribute to organizational developments are strategically cut off (Augustsson 2014; 2016; Viitala and Kantola 2016). Whereas those studies evaluated potential organizational losses, our findings additionally raise awareness of how holding back information or denial of rights can promote the emergence of stigmatization. Moreover, and quite contrary to the theoretical framework, we found that the boundaries between overt and covert forms of stigmatizations are mostly blurred. According to Boyce and colleagues (2007), overt forms of stigmatization include direct devaluing statements linked to the employment status, whereas covert forms include nonverbal expressions of dislike, practices of social exclusion, and denial of resources or information. Difficulties with this classification arise, however,

when attempting to place the empirical findings in this framework. According to this classification, many of the stigmatization experiences reported by the interviewees in our study would have to be classified as covert forms of stigmatization, for example, the exclusion of temporary workers from the canteen. The interviewee himself, however, perceived this as an overt form of stigmatization, which is why we conclude that this classification needs revision. We propose to avoid the strict subdivision of overt and covert forms of stigmatizing treatment, even though differences certainly exist. Particularly for qualitative empirical studies, this solution offers greater flexibility. In addition, our study shows that not only do the forms of stigmatizing treatment differ according to the skill level but there are also major differences in the extent to which stigmatization is perceived at all. We found TAWs to have developed various ways of justifying poor treatment and defining their identity as a TAW, for instance, as an inferior worker. Nevertheless, all of them, albeit to varying degrees, were aware of the stigmatization connected to their employment status. Within the highly qualified employment sector, including specialists and academics, the perception of stigmatization shifted to a more structural level with regard to resource issues such as the denial of information, access rights, or benefits. Interactional stigmatization was rather rare within this sector. Instead, we observed a certain consciousness of being poorly recognized on a societal level. As highlighted in previous studies, temporary work in Germany is socially tainted (Flemnitz 2018). It is interesting to note that this aspect did not play a major role for TAWs in low-skilled jobs, at least in the context of our study. TAWs tended to argue on an interpersonal level and emphasized interaction with permanent employees as central to their experiences of stigmatization. In the current study, justifiability as a mediating factor for the perception of stigmatiza-

tion (Boyce et al. 2007) proved to be very multifaceted. Although TAWs across all sectors agreed that certain disadvantages of their employment status are due to market logic and the rationality of business organizations, the justification of practices encountered in client firms differed largely. Again, TAWs in high-skilled jobs relied on rather global issues such as legal restrictions and data protection, while TAWs in low-skilled jobs argued that prejudices were the main reason for poor treatment. They even partly confirmed the existence of these prejudices within their ranks. Whereas TAWs in higher qualified employment sectors tended to blame external factors, those in lower qualified sectors indirectly blamed themselves. Compared to specialists and academics, one possible explanation for the more pronounced self-attribution of TAWs in the helper sector can be found in a stronger identification with their employment status. Referring to Boyce and colleagues (2007), TAWs are more likely to sense stigmatization if their employment status is a core part of their identity.

This takes us to the coping mechanisms of TAWs that our study uncovered. Particularly TAWs in high-skilled jobs avoided identifying with their employment status. Our findings show they are more committed to the work activity itself and more likely to perceive temporary work as just a stepping stone, or a short stopover, while pursuing a career. Identification serves to maintain a positive sense of self through self-distinctiveness and self-enhancement. TAWs employed as specialists or academics perceive a greater chance of moving from temporary employment to regular employment and might experience no advantages from integrating their employment status into their core identity. Perceived as a socially tainted work arrangement, classifying themselves as TAW might have negative effects on their sense of self, in contrast to commit to a specific profession

(e.g., engineers). To strengthen one's association with contributions and qualifications rather than with employment status as a TAW, another strategy of high-skilled workers is impression management. It serves to manage external perceptions and can be used to encourage self-respect and respect from others (Winkler and Mahmood 2018). TAWs highlight that being in this work arrangement only helps them to acquire knowledge and develop business contacts.

In general, for TAWs across all qualification levels, having the perspective of leaving the client firm, whether it is for a better arrangement in another client firm or for a regular job, is a coping strategy that helps them take poor treatment less seriously. However, TAWs in low-skilled jobs often have fewer opportunities to engage in regular employment and their job might also be considered less prestigious compared to high-skilled jobs. This explains why the attachment of low-skilled workers to the TAW category seems more likely here.

However, TAWs employed as helpers also seek to maintain a positive sense of self. In this case, one coping strategy to protect self-distinctiveness and self-enhancement can be seen in downward comparisons within the group of TAWs. In accordance with Kreiner and colleagues (2006), we can state that TAWs in the helper sector show an ambivalent identification with their group. In general, they identify themselves as TAWs, but, at the same time, they do not identify with the inferior parts of the group. These people seemingly confirm prejudices about TAWs, such as being lazy, less committed, or less qualified. Such devaluing comparison processes within one's group can be understood as a form of in-group disidentification that aims to distance oneself from the stigmatized group (Bosmans et al. 2016). In this case, TAWs themselves contribute to the reinforcement of

prejudices against them. Another coping strategy we found to be mainly relevant to TAWs employed in low-skilled jobs was the valorization of work activity. Perceiving the tasks of TAWs as meaningful contributions to the client firm's success was reported to help TAWs interpret the assignment of less pleasant tasks more positively and to perceive their position within the client firm as relevant. Such reframing tactics have been identified in occupational stigma research on domestic workers (Bosmans et al. 2016). Through reframing, TAWs overwrite the negative aspects of the employment status and infuse them with positive values.

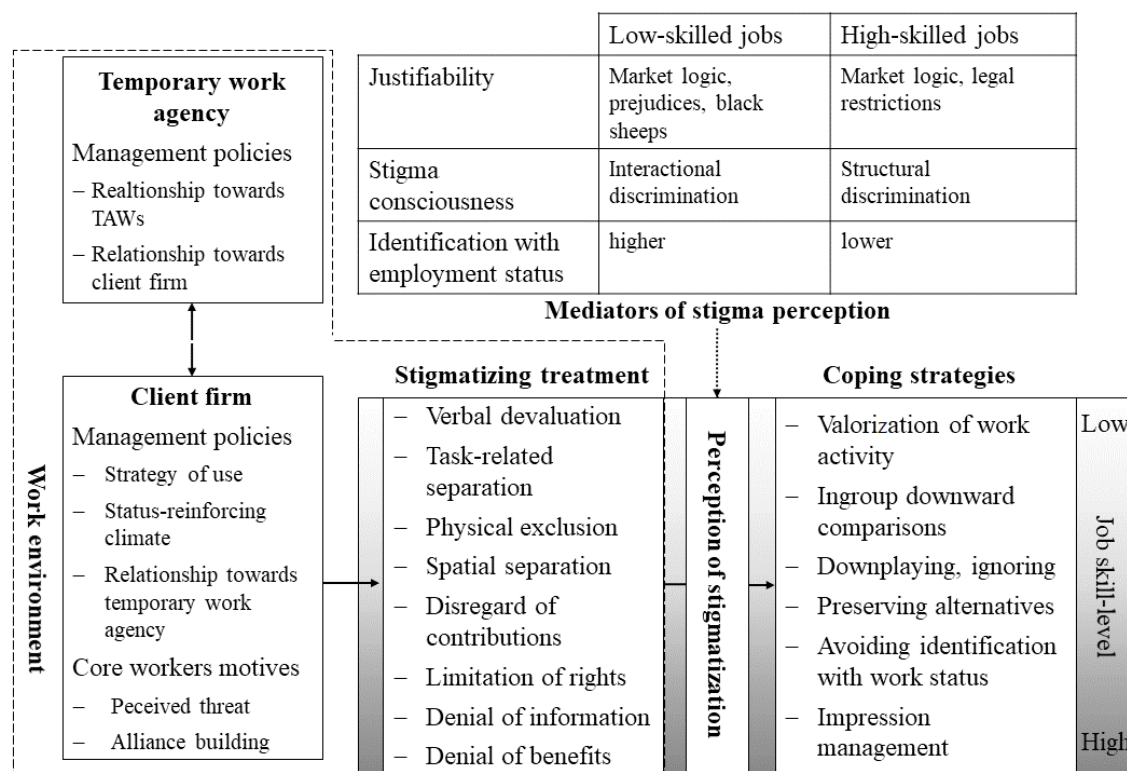
Ultimately, despite job qualification level, TAWs' narratives also showed evidence of downplaying and ignoring poor treatment. Consequently, not all negative experiences in client firms were perceived as stigma-

tization; verbal abuse, for instance, was framed as humor, and the exclusionary behavior of permanent employees was simply regarded as irrelevant.

Conclusion

The purpose of our study was to explore the stigmatization experiences and coping strategies of TAWs employed in both low- and high-skilled jobs. In addition, we critically analyzed the narratives presented by TAWs in regard to the work environments in which these stigmatizing experiences took place. Our findings provided empirical evidence for Boyce and colleagues' (2007) model and simultaneously enriched the framework for further qualitative research. Figure 2 provides our proposed model of TAW stigmatization, based on the ideas of Boyce and colleagues (2007) and with the integration of our empirical findings.

Figure 2. A modified model of TAW stigmatization



Source: Self-elaboration.

Although our study provides new and valuable insights, it has several limitations. Our findings reflect the perspective of TAWs themselves; however, including the perspectives of management and permanent workers would have extended our focus and could have helped us dig deeper into questions about power structures, perpetrator motives, and the rationales behind certain practices. Furthermore, our findings represent a snapshot of the period in which our data were collected. In a complex and highly dynamic society, stigmatization in regard to a specific work arrangement might change over time, particularly with revolving societal discourses. Another limitation of this study is the relatively small sample, although the heterogeneity of the interviewees enabled us to identify factors crucial to stigmatization processes. The strength of this study is that it explores the multifaceted range of stigmatization experiences that TAWs experience with regard to the skill level of their position. From a practical perspective, a critical reflection on existing practices of client firms in dealing with TAWs with regard to their effects is recommended. In particular, for client firms employing TAWs in low-skilled jobs, exclusionary practices on an interpersonal level should be reflected and avoided, whereas client firms employing TAWs in high-skilled jobs should strive for more equality on a structural level to achieve the anticipated objectives associated with the use of TAWs. Furthermore, prospective studies could clarify the importance of trust issues in temporary work. Our findings revealed a lack of trust to

be a crucial factor in the stigma perception of TAWs in high-skilled jobs.

By focusing on the employment status embedded in specific work organizations, we have also chosen to narrow our perspective and exclude other characteristics with the purpose of conducting an in-depth analysis. However, existing literature provides evidence for other drivers of stigmatization practices that go beyond our research focus. On the one hand, leadership styles, psychosocial factors, as well as occupational risks are mentioned as relevant triggers for hostile behaviors in organizations (Feijó et al. 2019). On the other hand, additionally to employment status, several other social categories, such as gender, age, ethnicity, sexual identity, religion, sickness, and obesity, are well-known as the basis for stigmatization in organizational contexts (Thomson and Grandy 2018). Particular emphasis is also placed on the intersection effects of employment status with other categories such as gender or ethnic origin (Einarsen et al. 2011; Salin and Hoel 2013). Consequently, for future studies, it would be intriguing to focus on the intersections between different social categories, such as skill level and migration experiences of TAWs. Current developments show that migrants, particularly refugees, suffer from being placed in inferior positions. Moreover, stigma research has emphasized that ethnic minority groups are segregated into jobs that tend to be stigmatized (He et al. 2019). This is a trend that should be more closely examined in future research.

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Organizational Challenges in the Public Sector. A Qualitative Study of the Swedish Armed Forces and Elderly Care

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Abstract: Society is continuously impacted by accelerating technical and social changes that challenge individuals, organizations, and societies. This appears to lead to the emergence of negative organizational behavior patterns that impose high levels of demands on employees. Firstly, the purpose of this study is to qualitatively examine how three organizational challenges—organizational anorexia, organizational greed, and organizational narcissism—are expressed in the Swedish public sector. Secondly, the Swedish Armed Forces and the field of elderly care are compared to discover additional organizational challenges by carrying out comparisons. The sample of organizations used is described in the Methods section. The study’s main findings show that these three organizational challenges have been experienced in different ways in these organizations. A new organizational challenge has appeared, organizational temporality, describing participants’ perceptions of time when carrying out their assigned tasks.

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We live in a time of accelerating technical and social changes (Bauman 2000; Giddens 2013; Rosa 2013) that challenge individuals, organizations, and societies. From an organizational perspective, these changes result in high levels of expectations imposed on organizational members and the organizations they belong to as they must constantly improve productivity in increasingly narrow time-frames. Due to these external and internal requirements, dysfunctional organizational behavior patterns appear (Rosa 2013; Alvinus, Johansson, and Larsson 2016). In organizational research, it appears that dysfunctional organizational behavior occurs continuously and is a result of a combination of environment, organization, people's cognitions, and their choices (Vaughan 1999). For example, Alvinus, Johansson, and Larsson (2016) have integrated three theoretical concepts that, in the public sector, organizations such as the Armed Forces, are perceived negatively. These are *organizational greed*, such as the demands imposed on employees and the balance between their work and leisure time; *organizational anorexia*, for example, cuts and resource reductions; and *organizational narcissism*, such as self-assertion and egocentrism. A similar theoretical integration of these concepts has not been posited in the civilian public sector context. Consequently, these three concepts form the point of departure for the continued analysis of the data collected.

The purpose of this study is twofold: a) to study how organizational anorexia, organizational greed, and organizational narcissism are expressed in the military organization and elderly care, and b) to gain a deeper understanding of other dark organizational characteristics in both organizations.

The Context—The Swedish Armed Forces and Elderly Care

In this section, we intend to explain our choice of organizations whose task is to deal with different types of stressful conditions in the public sector. The field of risk, crisis, and defense can be described through the causal chain threat-risk-crisis-crisis management-care-elderly care (Mellström 2010). This chain of events may be compared to the descriptions of how work is carried out before, during, and after an accident. This means that the risk, defense, and security sector is a male-dominated area and that the institutions that have to deal with the consequences of crises and accidents are, on the other hand, female-dominated, that is, healthcare, school, and care/treatment (Alvinus 2019). As a result, we have chosen to study organizations that are towards the two ends of the chain; the Armed Forces and elderly care. However, the focus is not gender. Both types of organizations handle different types of stressful conditions as their core task. The research gap identified concerns how they handle internal organizational strains. This is the primary reason for the choice of these two organizations. In the next paragraphs, the organizations are defined in more detail.

The Swedish Armed Forces is a government authority led by a Supreme Commander. The Authority is organized in various operational units plus a General Staff and Armed Forces Headquarters and operates in three branches; Air Force, Navy, and Army (Swedish Armed Forces¹). The organization is hierarchically structured, meritocratic, and male-dominated (Alvinus, Ohlsson, and Larsson

¹ See: <http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/sok/#!/all?query=uppdrag>. Retrieved October 10, 2017.

2020). It is a complex organization, spread over large geographical areas, technologically advanced, and employs many different staff categories with varied educational levels and duties. The military task is dichotomized. On the one hand, the military is to develop and, if necessary, apply violence and, on the other hand, respect the norms of civilian society. The Swedish Armed Forces have been working for peace for a very long time, and the absence of war has impacted day-to-day operations. The organization operates in an institutionalized environment and is influenced by, and aligned with, other organizations. It is subject to many stipulations and regulations: from environmental requirements to gender issues to financial monitoring.

Elderly care can be described as a female-dominated activity with centralized control over resources and decentralized responsibility for execution. Primarily, the Social Services Act (SoL) and the Health Services Act (HSL) govern operations at the same time as unit managers must also comply with the Working Environment Act. Elderly care is defined as:

the part of the social services providing inputs for elderly people, both individually needs-tested and generally targeted. Housing in a particular type of accommodation, home care, and daycare are examples of individual, needs-tested inputs. Open activities are examples of general inputs. [SOU 2017:21² (trans. PHA, EA, AA)]

Care and treatment activities are relational and are based on a professional meeting between staff and the elderly person. According to the National Quality Plan for Care and Treatment of Older Persons

(SOU 2017:21), staff must have room for freedom of action to manage individual needs and cope with unexpected situations. To this end, the staff need preconditions consisting of training, supervision, and sufficient time.

Organizational Dark Sides

Organizational research is broad and interdisciplinary. A complementary perspective to existing research could be studying “the dark sides of the organization.” To understand organizational challenges, we offer three different overall perspectives to use to observe and perceive the organization—the greedy, the narcissistic, and the anorexic. These have been summarized in previous studies to examine the contexts that affect organization members rather than the purely individual (Alvinus, Johansson, and Larsson, 2016; Ohlsson, 2020). The genesis of the concepts is, as mentioned, interdisciplinary and originates from sociology, psychology, and business administration, and together they offer a more holistic view of organizations and organizational behavior. However, knowledge is very limited in terms of how these organizational characteristics affect organizational life, its arrangement, and the ability to recruit capable staff. In addition, there are no studies that primarily focus on characteristics in different types of organizations—such as the male-dominated defense or the female-dominated elderly care. Reasonably, organizations implement these changes and demands from society to varying degrees and remain more or less greedy, anorexic, and narcissistic. Therefore, we have chosen the theoretical framework of these three organizational characteristics (greed, narcissism, and anorexia), which are initially deductively applied to interviews of staff from two selected organizations, and then also develop the underlying theoretical reasoning and note the

² See: <https://data.riksdagen.se/fil/F62427D9-5549-4467-802A-988B954060C9>. Retrieved May 22, 2021.

difference. The starting point in this study can be said to adopt an abductive approach, which is specified in the article's methodological section. Below is an account of the three chosen concepts.

Organizational Anorexia

Anorexia concerns morbid self-starvation, and organizational anorexia deals with the cuts, resource reduction, and security risks associated with downsizing (Brännmark 2012). Theorell (2012) describes how one consequence of organizational anorexia is an imbalance between resources and tasks that may create stress for employees. For the individual, this may lead to long working days, shorter breaks, and, in the end, sick leave. Cutbacks concern all types of resource reduction: financial, time, material, and personnel. Radnor and Boaden (2004) use the terms "lean," "lean working," "leanness" to describe what is perceived as an anorectic organization. Organizational anorexia, according to Radnor and Boaden (2004), may be a consequence of organizational change, which leads to an inability to effectively utilize or balance the organization's resources.

Organizational Greed

Greed at the organizational level affects the domains of acquisition and the balance of rewards and demands between the employee and the organization. According to previous researchers (Coser 1974; Sullivan 2014; Alvinus, Johansson, and Larsson 2016; Ohlsson 2020), greedy institutions exemplify how individuals struggle to balance their freedom and the demands they experience from the various institutions and organizations they belong to. Coser (1974) describes that some organizations make very strong claims on their members and establish systems to enforce them. First, they seek exclusivi-

ty and loyalty, and to achieve this, they act attractively. Second, they try to create an exclusive image and attempt to influence members to reduce ties to other competing organizations or individuals that may pose a threat to their loyalty. Third, members acquire strong affiliation and identification with the organization by creating a strong symbolic value for the organization. The exclusivity and extraordinary demands made by these organizations on their members make them greedy organizations, and boundless and manipulative behavior patterns are clear features of this. At the same time, the greedy organization weakens or even hijacks social ties to family and friends. The individual's relationship with the greedy organization must be exclusive and it cannot stand competition. Membership of a greedy organization causes conflict between family life and work life. Members feel that they have to make a considerable personal sacrifice to achieve balance. The roles of family life and work-life tend to be reversed and work offers stimulus and affiliation while the home is increasingly experienced as being a place with too much to do in too little time (Hochschild 1997; Watson 2003).

Organizational Narcissism

Several researchers have begun diagnosing organizations with narcissism. Grant and McGhee (2013) argue that narcissism derives from individuals with a strong belief in their superiority as compared with others and develops in an organizational culture seeking extra reward above all else. Organizational narcissism is most visible in the context around the leader, and from there, it gains a firm foundation in the organization (Grant and McGhee 2013). Blindness to unethical activity often occurs in the organization, and subordinates begin to mimic the behavior and unethical approach of the narcissistic leader,

thereby normalizing behavior patterns and preserving the unhealthy culture. This narcissistic organizational behavior is harder to detect for outsiders (Rosenblatt and Sheaffer 2001; Alvesson and Spicer 2010). The narcissistic organization is characterized by an *entitlement* to exploit resources, employees, and other organizations. Organizations *deny* facts about themselves via spokespersons, propaganda, or campaigns. *Rationalization* allows organizations to develop a justification for their actions, decisions, and responsibilities. By expressing its uniqueness, its design, its status, and prestige the organization displays its *grandiosity*. Failures are blamed on external factors, and successes are explained by internal virtues, which means the organization shows the *attribution of egotism*. Finally, there is *organizational anxiety*, which in itself is not a mechanism that defends the ego but rather a mechanism for improving the ego (Brown 1997).

Method

The method used in this study is explorative and inductive with deductive elements. Consequently, empiricism governs the concepts and theoretical reasoning that are crystallized in the analysis. The results of the study are then explained with the help of previous research (Bryman and Bell 2015). This study is based on thematic analysis, and is mostly of an inductive, but partially of a deductive, nature. It is not uncommon for thematic analysis to be carried out both using an exploratory approach and driven by already existing theories (Clarke and Braun 2013; Bryman and Bell 2015), which is the case here. Thematic analysis is considered to be well used in behavioral science and in a number of other social science subjects. The method is very suitable for identifying codes, categories, and themes in a structured manner.

The chosen focus is a subjective social constructionist ontological perspective concentrating on the perceptions of the participants (Aspers 2011). We have explored descriptions in the experiences of each organization and conducted the study as a qualitative interview study. For interviewees to have the opportunity to make interpretations freely based on their experience and the organizational context, the interviews have been conducted using an open-ended interview guide and adapted follow-up questions (Aspers 2011). The following questions and themes were raised: a) background issues regarding professional experience, education, and skills, b) views of their organization, c) experience of self-centered organizations, cutbacks, and high levels of demands.

Selection

Interviews were conducted with individuals to gain a breadth of experience, background, age, and gender. Interviewees come from the Swedish Armed Forces and municipal elderly care. The selection of subjects in both organizations has been strategically based on the fact that we wished to interview managers at the middle-management level as they seem to experience cross pressure and are particularly vulnerable to demands both from the top and the bottom of the organization (Larsson et al. 2005). We have established contact with all our participants using the Snowball Principle (Esaiasson 2012 et al.) for their selection. Some through the Swedish Defence University (skills enhancement training) and some through previous contact networks. The Snowball Principle (Esaiasson et al. 2012) is defined as the request for interviews being made by asking the representatives of each organization whether they could recommend individuals who fit the study selection criteria. We got in touch with

the study's first participant, who led to the next one through their recommendation. Before each interview, the participants received an information letter that included the purpose of the study, ethical aspects, and the main themes of the interview guides. All times and places were determined by the participants. The time required was set between 45-60 minutes. A total of seven people were included in the study, three interviewees in the field of elderly care (two women and one man from three different operations in the same municipality) and four active in the Armed Forces (two women and two men who represented different branches and organizations within the Armed Forces). A smaller number of interviews was, therefore, preferable. According to Bryant and Charmaz (2007:230), "the better data quality, the fewer number of interviews." As this model also complies with the principle of theoretical saturation (Glaser and Strauss 2017) and requirements for reliability and generalizability, we argue that seven interviews are sufficient to respond to the purpose and problem formulations.

Data Collection and Analysis

Five of the interviews have been conducted as telephone interviews due to hectic work schedules, and two as personal interviews held at the participant workplace and on Armed Forces premises. Interviews lasted 40-90 minutes. All interviews have been recorded (native language—Swedish) and transcribed verbatim. The coding and interpretation process was initiated inductively with open coding aimed at generating a variety of codes without taking into account the whole at that stage. Codes are the definition from which the material is structured and they may be related to the opinion of the actors, what is called first-order construction. Open coding is made to create overall meaning and provide an

understanding of the written material (Aspers 2011; Glaser and Strauss 2017).

Thematic learning took place in a process where we searched for "meaningful devices" in the empirical data. After the material was coded, it was cut up and sorted according to the codes, thus beginning the creation of the thematicization of the codes. It should be mentioned here that all interviews were analyzed by all three authors to achieve inter-rater reliability (Bryman and Bell 2015).

One basic theme became the three dark organizational characteristics, and a new topic was found in the material after the inductive analysis. We, therefore, started from the existing theoretical concepts (anorexia, greed, and narcissism) and tested, using selective coding, whether they appeared in the data. The material that did not fit into existing themes was sorted as organizational temporality as different views concerning the time at work were very prominent in the organizations studied. Under each of the basic themes, we categorized sub-themes as and when they were generated from the data—sub-themes such as "anorectic consistency" and "anorectic strategy." One example of how we coded is based on the following quote from an Armed Forces employee:

there are not enough people, I have so many different plates in the air that I need to work on with my staff, the same individuals need to be at two or three meetings at the same time and it is just not possible; of course, we do not try to divide the employees into working cells, but it just doesn't work. We have tried a few times, but it doesn't work.

This quote was coded as *many employees need to be in multiple locations at the same time*, and this category

ry was sorted as an *anorectic strategy*. Then, we analyzed all the material submitted under each basic theme and continued the analysis by looking at the parts in relation to the whole and vice versa. The entire analysis process was based on the application of the hermeneutic circle, which means that the parts are understood in relation to the whole and vice versa (Aspers 2011).

Results

The analysis will be presented initially using organizational anorexia, followed by organizational greed, organizational narcissism, and organizational temporality, which is identified as a new organizational challenge perceived by the participants.

Organizational Anorexia

The analysis shows that the participants seem to experience signs of what is interpreted by the authors as anorectic organizational challenges within both the Armed Forces and elderly care. There are both similarities and differences in how this anorexia is expressed. Similarities include: a) imbalance between tasks and resources, b) time management, c) false economies, and d) security risks. Differences concern: a) loyalty and pride, b) management of newly-allocated resources, and c) lack of accommodation in elderly care. Below all these themes are presented in more detail.

Imbalance between Tasks and Resources

The fact that fewer people must do more is found as an anorectic expression in the analysis of both organizations. Similarly, fewer people are required to do more in less time. The Armed Forces show

a markedly lower operational level that has been consistently reduced since the 1990s with the imbalance between resources and tasks as a consequence (Holmberg and Alvinus 2019). An interviewee gives the following description of cuts, explaining that it is a “triad” where time, tasks, and the number of staff interplay.

If we had the same staffing levels as we had about 10 years ago, then there would be no problem balancing time with work.

In elderly care, cutbacks are primarily described as rationalization regarding staff and scheduling. Cutting back on staff is described by an interviewee as the measure that has the greatest financial impact. Another strategy to solve financial challenges is that, in addition to direct staff reductions, work is transferred between groups to cut costs with the anorectic consequence that fewer people do more tasks. Another interviewee describes how cleaning assignments had been transferred to assistant nurses in an attempt to make savings.

You stop sending in the cleaners and then let the assistant nurses clean up instead. It could be an easy way to reduce your expenses.

Time Management

One consequence of resource reductions is that it often leads to overtime for existing staff and creates increased pressure on those remaining (Theorell 2012). In elderly care, it is sometimes stated that overtime becomes compulsory.

You might have to work over if something happens. You can't just go. Because they don't have such a long overlap.

Organizational anorexia can lead to long working days, shorter breaks, and a culture where individuals feel that they have too much to do (Theorell 2012). One strategy described by an interviewee is schedules using split shifts.

You end up in situations such as having to work every other weekend or such long days you are off for three hours in the middle of the day. Then there will be changes in the schedule, and then it gets worse from a work environment perspective.

Within the Armed Forces, the participants' experiences can be interpreted as a strategy against anorexia. For example, the manager's task is to help their employees to prioritize when, for example, someone is to attend three meetings at the same time.

I assess which is the most important with those involved, which ones we have left as walkovers, and then I take the decision in dialogue with my colleagues.

The participants describe their frustration as the untouched job remains and must be done later. Priorities are made and reported upwards by the manager.

False Economies

Analyses of interviews from both organizations show how financial cuts can lead to strategies that, in turn, lead to additional costs even though the strategy was intended to manage financial cutbacks. In the field of elderly care, we see examples of false economies in terms of increased expenses as temporary staff must be employed for what regular staff did before. For example, accompanying a patient

to a doctor's appointment is described by an interviewee.

If there were three of us there for a certain period, then you could do some things there, someone could go to the doctor, and there was a certain amount of room to maneuver.

Without this maneuvering room, the interviewee describes, what is not visible but still needs to be done occurs under conditions of greater uncertainty, causes more frustration, and is performed less flexibly. The fact that reductions mean that temporary workers must be deployed if necessary entails a lot of extra work for managers. "All extra recruitments that are not on the schedule are a lot of work," says one of the managers.

In the Armed Forces, the analysis shows how the increased pace due to financial tightening results in poor decision-making concerning, for example, purchases. The following shows that organizational anorexia leads to actions that ultimately lead to higher costs for the organization.

...and then we get material that we have not even asked for, does not fit into our operations, but everything has to happen so rapidly, someone stated authoritatively, "We need personnel carriers," and then a decision was taken, and that's not what we needed at all.

Security Risks

One consequence of cutbacks, which is similar in both elderly care and the Armed Forces, is that these reductions may create a riskier environment (Brännmark 2012). In the Armed Forces, OP (Officers' Program) students lack knowledge of, for example, core

operations, which increases and poses challenges in practical terms when they are training. This knowledge gap could lead to erroneous decisions and greater risks for everyone involved. We illustrate.

...but when the cadets start working...they become leaders, and since they do not really have any confidence in implementing practical training, because that's what specialists do, they cannot lead the specialists in their operation...Many of them envisage that they will go straight from the officers' program to headquarters, and for someone to sit at headquarters and have no idea how core operations are conducted, and then make decisions about them, this will become apparent to the specialist officers who are on the line.

In elderly care, safety risks appear to increase for both staff and residents when cutbacks mean fewer employees taking care of more people with dementia and when some/several of these people do not get the support or care they need. For example, not being allocated accommodation that is adapted to your needs, but having to move around while waiting for the "right" accommodation, which one of the interviewees addressed.

[The negative consequences] are that everyone is moving around. Because you know that there is evidence that, especially for people with dementia and most elderly people have at least some kind of cognitive impairment, that for each relocation, you shorten their lives a little.

Organizational anorexia is also expressed in completely different ways in one organization without having an equivalent in the other. This may be because the organizations studied undertake such different tasks, and, consequently, resource cuts cause different results.

Loyalty and Pride

In both organizations, loyalty to purpose is expressed, even though resource reductions and changes create "change fatigue." From both organizations, expressions such as "We are loyal, and you do as much as you can" (Armed Forces) and "You just have to take care of people, and I think that all praise to the nurses and the assistant nurses, all this...they are doing so much good. So admirable" (elderly care).

On the other hand, there is a difference between staff and manager loyalty to their organizations. In the interviews with representatives of the Armed Forces, employees' approach to the organization appears to be pride in the purpose of the Armed Forces and its increased acceptance and legitimization in Sweden. Employees are trained to give everything and be loyal (Ydén 2008; Alvinus, Holmberg, and Johansson, 2019). One participant expresses the preparedness of the organization, and another highlights the broad-based general acceptance of the organization.

Yes, that's how great it is, it's happening quickly and easily, and lots of people have missed that we are, like, more legitimized somehow.

...and it feels like the Armed Forces once again have a broad basis in society, which is really to say I'm an officer and stand for that compared to before when I felt it was a bit more difficult.

Within elderly care, there seems to be loyalty to the difficult tasks that managers and employees struggle to find solutions to, but according to the interviewees' statements, there are a significant proportion of managers and employees within the organization

who are neither proud nor particularly loyal. Wredner (2005) describes in her dissertation a similar duality in the view of employees. Statements from staff show exclusion of the “others.” These “others” consist of staff described in negative terms because they do not perform their duties properly. Participants in this study express, among other things, disappointment and concern that some people seem to be tired of the profession and have lost focus on the fact that there are people to help.

I mean, do they not want the best for this person? Sometimes it sounds like I'd rather see the easy way out; medicate more. In that case, I think you have a responsibility to look for some other work.

Management of Newly-Allocated Resources

One difference is that there is no equivalent to the turnaround in recent years that has occurred in the Armed Forces in elderly care, with more resources beginning to flow in due to responsibility for overall defense and a new situation worldwide. However, cutbacks are still a factor that affects the organization to a considerable extent, according to the interviewees.

I think that somewhere at the beginning of the 2000s and maybe until 2012, 2013 it was very administratively heavy, while, as I now see it in the Authority, the pendulum has begun to swing back a little bit, that it has become more operations-related, and I think that this is connected to the increasing activity in our vicinity, they are waking up from their little nap in which they thought eternal peace was here to stay.

Lack of Accommodation in Elderly Care

In the care of the elderly, needs assessments are made for each individual, and then assistance inputs

are assigned. A place in a residential home could be one of these inputs. An elderly care-specific consequence of cutbacks is the lack of residential homes and the difficulty in getting the right type of accommodation based on individual needs. An interviewee describes a chain reaction of relocations of elderly people who, due to accommodation shortages, are moved around to different accommodations such as “waiting-for-residence,” “medical assessment” placement, and “short-term residence,” until accommodation that suits the needs of the person becomes vacant.

Then you have moved from the hospital to the X-house, to the Y-bay, and the Z-hospital...so you understand how many moves it means.

The concept of creating needs-specific housing that has been implemented in X municipality seems to be welcomed by the interviewees, but lack of space, unfortunately, results in many relocations, which is not good for elderly people and has consequences for the organization with increasingly confused individuals to be taken care of and acclimatized to new accommodation. An interviewee expresses this as follows:

It's such a big change, and it takes up to ten days to acclimatize to a reasonable level, and then maybe it's time to move again...I mean that if you are not already confused, this will make you confused.

Organizational Greed

Organizational greed is characterized by high levels of internal requirements or expectations, demands for availability, and commitment. The analysis shows that organizational greed exists in both the Armed Forces and elderly care and can be ex-

pressed in both similar and different ways. There are more differences than similarities in organizational greed between the organizations; however, the common consequence is perceived stress. Similarities are: a) accessibility, b) overtime requirements, and c) demands from relatives. The differences are: a) requirements for adaptation to the outside world, b) requirements for academicization, c) demands for rapid processes, d) demands for physical exercise, e) meritocratic requirements, and f) emotional management demands in the care of the elderly.

Accessibility

There are modern technical tools such as e-mail and smartphones that make access easier and the balance between work and leisure may become blurred. In both the organizations analyzed, several interviewees expressed that there are expectations of being available via e-mail or telephone even outside of working hours. An interviewee from the Armed Forces describes the importance of clear guidelines and structures for managing accessibility requirements.

I want to say that it is very important that you, above all, from the manager's perspective, make it very clear to your employees that there is no need to respond to an email or a telephone call after working hours, unless you are on-call or your job means that you must apply a response time so to speak. Because it is easy to look at your mail and answer the phone even though it is an evening or weekend, and then we make a whip for our own back and our willingness to solve the problem is so strong that we may go too far and there will be staff burnout in the long run, which is not positive.

Even in elderly care, accessibility requirements are handled individually and in dialogue with employ-

ees. One interviewee describes how clarity is central to managing accessibility requirements and exemplifies the fact that it is OK to contact if there are emergencies, but that you have confidence in the staff to solve more everyday events.

If it's really an emergency situation, I've said yes, OK, call me. So it is an emergency if someone has died, or if a staff member has died...If they call me to tell me they don't have enough staff, then I think, "solve it yourselves!"

Overtime Requirement

Overtime management is something that the interviewees from both elderly care and the Armed Forces expressed as a concern. Elderly care describes how overtime requests must be handled with care since, for many of the employees, free time is valued higher than extra pay. One interviewee says:

And you don't always want to, even if you get paid for it.

Within the Armed Forces, overtime is paid either with money or with leave. Like in elderly care, sometimes time is valued more highly than the money paid for overtime, and time off in lieu is experienced as difficult to utilize when diaries are so well-filled. The quote below describes opportunities for overtime management.

There should be a dialogue between the boss and the employer if you are going to take your overtime in cash or time and, without this dialogue, it will be the cash, but if you are not interested in money just now but want to have some time back, that's what is important, it's just not possible.

Demands from Relatives

Demands from relatives are identified in different forms in both organizations. Requirements and expectations from the elderly person's relatives are something that the elderly care staff must deal with. These requirements may relate to how the staff manage the elderly person and the activities undertaken in the accommodation. An interviewee describes as follows:

It may be from relatives who think they own the care facility. They think they are entitled to determine the activities around their mum or dad. That's where we are, yes, it's clear they're going to join in, but where do the limits go? And how will we fix it so it is good for everyone? So you always feel a little bit unsure about how tough you can be.

The challenge for the staff is to relate to these requirements and to balance requirements from the employer, from the elderly person, and from their relatives, which, according to Coser (1974), characterizes organizational greed.

Within the Armed Forces, demands from another family group appear as examples. Here, it is the employee's family who is at the heart of the dilemma. The Armed Forces is one of the organizations identified as the greediest organization (Coser 1974) where demands concerning commitment and career are high level. One interviewee describes the understanding that comes from their boss on how to balance work and family life.

My boss is good, and he understands me when I say that everything has to work at home and then, like today, I sit at home and work because my husband is busy working all day and evening, and then I travel up tomorrow.

Within the Armed Forces, the analysis shows expressions of organizational greed that do not appear in elderly care. These are demands that are basically due to external factors that affect operations and organizational requirements. In the field of elderly care, we find factors that can be linked to the relational interpersonal professions, the emotional management that occurs in everyday practice.

Requirements for Adaptation to the Outside World

Over the last few decades, the Armed Forces have adapted their operations to conditions prevailing in civilian society (Ydén 2008). Such an adjustment is, for example, a more gender-equal view of parental leave. One interviewee states that the Armed Forces now compete for labor with other employers in a manner that has not previously been experienced and has consequently been forced to adapt, for example, as concerns parental leave. This adjustment leads to a conflict of claims on the employee in their balance between private and working life. On the one hand, you should take parental leave and, at the same time, work demands are piling up according to organizational traditions from when the organization was completely male-dominated, and parental leave was left to women (Ydén 2008).

Requirement for Academicization

Another adaptation to the civilian context that the Armed Forces have recently implemented is academicization and professionalization (Ydén 2008). Today, employees must have an academic education, but this education is perceived to have content that does not correspond to the competence objectives of what is considered by the interviewees as core operations—armed conflict and battle.

I personally have quite a hard time with this academicization that is underway and it spills out over all operations just because those coming out of the OP [Officers' Program] are not really suitable for my world. They have not learned the right things and it's quite a long process to get them to actually function the way we want them to.

Demands for Rapid Processes

The analysis also shows examples of how the Armed Forces are affected by external environmental patterns such as rationalization and increased pace. It is about how processes take place much faster, with consequences such as poor decision-making and reduced quality. It is about demands concerning everything from how new employees are to be incorporated into operations to requirements to deliver rather than completing a task, or purchasing processes that lead to major purchase failures. One interviewee describes the situation as increased pace and reduced quality and that thoughtfulness could mitigate the situation.

This faster pace, it's a little bit about what I talked about before, doing everything so fast, for what benefit? Instead of making sure it's good...it feels like you care less about quality. There must be a result, and then we get shouted at when it does not turn out as it was supposed to, but if we had had the time to think twice, it would have been better.

Demands for Physical Exercise

Within the Armed Forces, employees are required to carry out physical exercise during working hours, and this is also linked to salary criteria. The analysis shows that there are challenges linked to this requirement for employees, as physical exercise must

often take a step back to the benefit of other tasks and becomes deprioritized. Introducing physical exercise during working hours may in itself appear to be a generous act on behalf of the employer, but without the prerequisites for being able to implement it in relation to workload, a stressful situation arises for employees as they must match tasks and requirements. For the interviewee, this was not possible with a family and a long journey to the workplace.

This discussion that we are going to work out during working hours, but this often doesn't happen because there is so much else, and then you have to balance time with resources. Then physical exercise is also an assessment used for salary statistics...I protested because we complained that there was too much to do, how are we going to do this, too?

Meritocratic Requirements

The Armed Forces is a meritocratic organization, and the career system is clearly defined. This includes job rotation, which allows employees to move around the country with contract periods of a few years, there is an expectation that employees will work for some time at the headquarters in Stockholm and also carry out an international service period (Ydén 2008). The meritocratic system is something that the interviewers describe as part of the Armed Forces career and something that they must take a position on.

A typical example is that when we finish the higher staff education we are currently undertaking, we are expected, or at least we perceive the expectation, of a number of years working centrally at headquarters in some position, that's how it is. Even though it is not written in any law or order or in any directive any-

where, it is felt that there is such an expectation by the organization.

Emotional Management Demands in the Care of the Elderly

Elderly care is a value-based activity and can be described as performing relational work with high-level demands on managing emotions during the course of daily activities (Olsson 2008). The analysis shows that the participants have to relate to the expectations of the residents, how they are doing that day, and their illnesses. The staff experience that they give a lot of themselves, and activities do involve emotional stress. One of the interviewees highlights the challenge of supporting and managing the feelings of the staff group while pursuing more strategic management work.

They live with the moods of these people. So the intrinsic feelings and what's happening day-to-day versus what I have to do and have to bring up to work with form a very difficult and challenging balance.

For some periods, operations are also carried out under time pressure that must be managed. No matter how stressful the situation is, the residents (and their relatives) must not experience this, states a head of the section. The manager is responsible for managing these stressful situations.

Yes, it is my responsibility, the treatment you receive when you come to us. That's really important. That you feel safe, regardless of whether it's crazy on the floor or not, you do not want to see a nurse running down the corridor. It is not possible. So you get [taking a deep breath], like this. Always be calm. Always be super calm and collected even when you are panicking inside. Otherwise, you will take them with you.

These two examples show how emotion management is present in the daily activities of elderly care and is something that the organization does not really have any preparedness or skills to handle. This is in line with previous research on emotional management in the care sector (Olsson 2008). In comparison with Armed Forces employees who, through education and socialization processes that clearly support emotion management, create a high level of collective trust between colleagues (Ydén 2008). Due to the lack of organizational support, emotional management in elderly care is challenging organizational greed that requires the individuals themselves to manage it or have the managers receive all these emotions.

Organizational Narcissism

Organizational narcissism can, to some extent, consist of a self-preservation function and may create a certain cohesion among organization members. However, in its extreme form, it may lead to several organizational problems. Similarities in organizational narcissism between the Armed Forces and elderly care are: a) hidden agendas, b) culture of silence, and c) grandiosity. The differences are as follows: a) moral dilemmas within elderly care and b) reorganization within the Armed Forces.

Hidden Agendas

Narcissism is individualized in both elderly care and the Armed Forces, but analysis shows that individuality is expressed in different manners. The Armed Forces reveal the fact that there are signs of narcissistic leaders with their agendas, their career is their focus, and almost everything circles around the leader oneself. At the organizational level, it is stated that there are individual agendas at different

units which, according to one of the interviewees, may be due to unclear leadership, and that results in each unit primarily looking after its operations without taking the whole into account, which we interpret as an expression of the narcissistic organizational characteristics as stipulated by Brown (1997) and Grant and McGhee (2013). We illustrate.

Individual agendas at different units...in that there has been no clear leadership you can go in and pick out different people and tasks and it has not really coagulated with the overall defense approach of the Armed Forces.

From elderly care, one of the interviewees gives an example where they were to arrange with another manager to receive an elderly person who was to move into the facility. The interviewer found that it depended on which manager she met—one had the older person's best interests in focus, and the other had her agenda that governed her actions.

...usually, it depends on the person. Because it is people who interact with each other to try and fix this for the other person. And this is where there can be challenges sometimes...We are left with a person who is in the wrong place [unsuitable accommodation] because they do not really want to receive her/him at the right place.

Culture of Silence

The culture of silence means that you do not speak openly about perceived problems. In the Armed Forces, this culture expresses itself through the strong sense of loyalty that causes employees to bite the bullet and struggle to do the job. It is said that you “vent in the mess,” but then you are back working on the task. An interviewee, for example, stated:

When I get annoyed about things, I let it all out in the mess and then carry on.

In elderly care, there are several examples of when the interviewees describe disassociated colleagues (individuals and groups) who avoid talking about problems. Here is an example from an interview:

From the healthcare assistant who thinks she is doing the world's best job to the boss who thinks he is doing the world's best job and then the whole organization upwards. And there is hardly any who dares to take up problems.

Grandiosity

One expression that organizational narcissism may take is grandiosity. This means that the organization, in an inflated, self-taught manner, emphasizes the uniqueness of its design, status, and prestige (Brown 1997). In the Armed Forces, the grandiosity of the organizational structure is reflected by the meritocratic system that contributes to high levels of status and prestige. This is experienced throughout the interviews with the Armed Forces representatives and their loyalty to the Armed Forces and their tasks, which is extremely high level. The self-image of the officer and the participant's image of the Armed Forces seem to be an expression of grandiosity and, despite the fact that the Armed Forces have adapted its operations to the structure of other authorities, the Armed Forces' special position remains, according to an interviewee.

So the Armed Forces must comply with the same requirements as other authorities, but it still has a special position because it is the ultimate guarantor in some way.

In the field of elderly care, the grandiosity of the core operations is revealed in the relational aspect. Here, what resembles a martyrdom condition forms the front to grandiose behavior due to the lack of prestige and status, which forms the basis of the martyred grandiosity. Despite the lack of status and prestige (Wreder 2005), the operations produce something good with a high level of human value, and there seems to be pride and loyalty in the organization. One of the Heads of the Unit expresses their admiration for how co-workers struggle in spite of difficult challenges.

You just try to solve it [situation], it's like this, we're in the middle of this. You decide that this is what will happen this time only...but there's no point in asking, "How should we...?" You just take care of it, and I think that all the nurses and the assistant nurses deserve real praise, they manage so well. They are really admirable.

Moral Dilemmas within Elderly Care

The elderly care challenges associated with organizational narcissism concern ethical dilemmas. Whatever you choose must answer to the needs and interests of the person who is the subject of it. We thematized these into three types of dilemmas; in relation to elderly people/residents, to relatives, or to colleagues. A Head of the Unit told us about a typical moral dilemma that arises when the staff are forced to interact with a relative whose perception of a situation is different from the perception of the staff.

A moral dilemma, I think we encounter them almost every day. A lot in the staff management bit can deal with morality, what is happening at work, and we integrate with each other...But, then it may also be, "My mother is not getting out as much as she should do,"

even if...we have done it but...we experience the situation differently.

Reorganization within the Armed Forces

Organizational narcissism perceived within the Armed Forces concerns one aspect that is given in many different examples; reorganization and its consequences. The results show an organization that has become increasingly self-centered with a reduced holistic perspective.

It is clear that when you sit here in the middle of a reorganization and are busy with it, the Armed Forces in itself are more inward-looking when you keep on reorganizing or in your department, obviously, there are a lot of discussions around what is going to happen to the staff and with the jobs and everything.

Organizational Temporality

Another category appeared during the exploratory analysis, namely, organizational temporality. These are challenges seen from a time perspective and linked to everyday operations where the organization may not always be completely ready or possess sufficient knowledge to handle the emerging situation. Staff are not trained to deal with these challenges, but are sometimes forced to deal anyway. These include: a) when calm everyday operations become an emergency in elderly care and b) staff who are trained for fast, stressful conditions but must endure a calm, constant pace.

Calm Everyday Operations Become an Emergency in Elderly Care

In the field of elderly care, we interpret the participants' statements about emergencies as expressions

of what we have termed a challenging tempo shift. Suddenly an emergency or extreme situation occurs, which must be rapidly dealt with. We illustrate.

When someone has two giant dogs or when someone lives in a druggy flat. This has happened to me, lots of their mates there all the time when we are going to help the person. Just because you get old, you don't necessarily become good [laughter]. Or, for example, I had a client who had a partner, a man, and we were supposed to help the woman, and the man was mentally unstable and had lots of knives all over the house.

Staff Who Are Trained for Fast, Stressful Conditions Must Endure a Calm, Constant Pace

Within the Armed Forces, the challenge is felt in a diametrically opposite manner. This is an organization whose driving force and core operations occur in a more emergency or extreme situation. Here, the organization is equipped for battle and confrontation. The Armed Forces' website describes their mission:

The main task of the Swedish Armed Forces is to be responsible for Sweden's military defense and to protect the country. We do this by carrying out operations and exercises around the clock, all year round, on the ground, in the air, and at sea. Whenever the need arises, the Armed Forces must be ready to act. [Swedish Armed Forces³ (trans. PHA, EA, AA)]

Over the last few decades, Sweden's external situation has been assessed as stable, and the Swedish defense has reduced focus on intervention opera-

tions and increased administrative activities (Ydén 2008). Several interviewees testify to management operations and how employees do not find the situation satisfactory and feel that skills are being lost.

A soldier can never hang around and fester in a regiment, then they become a nobody. No soldier wants that, soldiers want to work, and, for them to work, they must either be on exercise or in action.

The consequence of this shift in pace, from slow to rapid and from rapid to slow, becomes what we call the fourth challenging organizational characteristic; organizational temporality. Tempo shifts occur in situations where preparedness levels are not high.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how organizational anorexia, organizational greed, and organizational narcissism are expressed in the Armed Forces and elderly care. The ambition was also to discover additional organizational challenges when comparing the two organizations. It may be noted that organizational narcissism, anorexia, and greed are perceived as occurring in the Armed Forces, as well as in elderly care. Organizational temporality also tends to express itself as a challenge, but is perceived differently.

There are similarities and differences between these organizations since they carry out different tasks, enjoy different statuses, and varying resource allocations in the public sector. The above is, therefore, an important theoretical contribution to organizational research, especially when the two, so different, organizations have been compared based on the threat-risk-crisis care and treatment scale (Mell-

³ See: <https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/om-forsvarsmakten/darfor-finns-forsvarsmakten/vart-uppdrag/>. Retrieved October 10, 2017.

ström 2010). The challenges that have been studied may, however, affect the work environment and reduce well-being (Alvinus, Johansson, and Larsson 2016; Alvinus, Ohlsson, and Larsson 2020). A central task for managers at different organizational levels is, therefore, to deal with these dark sides to exercise the necessary damage control. Unhealthy work environment risks increase if the connection with organizationally negative aspects is not highlighted in these organizations. One conclusion of this study could be of a practical nature, namely, to recommend that newly-appointed managers examine and diagnose their organization and adapt their leadership styles to the prevailing situation.

Results confirm previous research on the position of the Armed Forces as the greediest organization (Coser 1974; Segal 1986), but when it comes to caring for the elderly, there is research that shows the presence of narcissism, but not that it was widespread throughout the organization (Kälvemark et al. 2004). Researchers (Coser 1974; Segal 1986; Ohlsson 2020) believe that a greedy organization exercises power over its members' legitimacy and attempts to maximize their loyalty by behaving attractively with high-level access to the organization's values and by creating different benefits. Results show that it appears positive for the organization to have loyal employees and may also be positive for employees. However, when the organization violates the privacy limit and the autonomy of the individual, it becomes a greedy organization, which causes the individual to have to parry different demands (Coser 1974). Both earlier research (Ydén 2008; Holmberg and Alvinus 2019) and this study show that the Armed Forces enjoy a very high level of loyalty built into the organization, which, in turn, contributes to organizational greed.

Organizational narcissism in elderly care tends to dominate. One reason may be that the participants experience a lower level of organizational loyalty in the care of the elderly, according to Coser's definition of greed. Loyalty to the task seems to be strong, however, society's view of the status of female- and male-dominated professions differs. Hence, also the allocation of resources and the degree of loyalty to the organization itself (Mellström 2010; Oscarsson and Danielsson 2018). Research in elderly care has previously highlighted the profession's low status (Wreder 2005), which may reinforce the argument for lower loyalty levels within elderly care. As we briefly described in the introduction, elderly care is characterized by decentralized management and employees with different types of qualifications. This may be regarded as an example of the *heterogeneity* of the organization as opposed to the more *homogeneous* Armed Forces with its clear structure of central governance and employees with similar qualifications. We consider that this heterogeneity in elderly care also influences the perception of the organization among its employees.

Based on this reasoning, we ask whether it may be the heterogeneity among employees in the elderly care organization that leads to lower levels of loyalty to the organization, which makes the properties of a narcissistic organization easier to attach. Narcissistic properties are often more disguised, according to Rosenblatt and Sheaffer (2001), and the high level of organizational loyalty within the Armed Forces may hide narcissistic properties, while the lower organizational loyalty in elderly care will make it visible.

We consider that the above reasoning on the impact of loyalty and whether and how the dark organiza-

tional characteristics express themselves shows the importance of the organizational context. According to Larsson, Lundin, and Zander (2017), multiple contextual relationships (such as structure, regulations, power distribution, and culture) can affect leadership opportunities. These multiple patterns of different organizational and contextual factors influence leadership differently than one aspect alone. To create efficient operations, all organizations group their members. This is often to create an organizational home for everyone, but also to facilitate cooperation internally. The other organizational relationship that may affect leadership is the regulatory framework, that is, to what extent operations are governed by legislation and regulations. Higher degrees of regulations reduce the scope for local subcultures and self-government. We have seen examples of this in our analysis, that is, the effect of strong regulation in the Armed Forces while in elderly care there are legislation and guidelines that must be interpreted, which can lead to local subcultures. The third aspect that Larsson and colleagues presented deals with the distribution of power, the extent to which operations are centralized or decentralized.

In other words, the impact of the organizational context on leadership opportunities, as Larsson and colleagues (2017) describe, reinforces the relevance of this study's ambition of examining the existence of the three organizational challenges in a new organizational context.

The inductive analysis shows that the three organizational challenges can overlap when one challenge shifts character. The analysis showed, for example, that anorexia shifted over into greed based on how the participants in this study expressed their experience. Another result was entitled *or-*

ganizational temporality and relates to shifts in pace and the preparedness of the participants in the organization for this tempo change in operations. We have highlighted two separate examples of this in our analysis and conclude that this is also an aspect that may be regarded as a challenging organizational feature.

This analysis is based on seven interviews, which may appear to be a small sample; however, the interviews have been analyzed and have resulted in a number of opinion-bearing units. To achieve greater generalizability, the intention is to quantify the study results in the organizations studied, and among several other professional groups in the public sector. For this study, whose purpose was to describe how these organizational challenges express themselves, these interviews may be enough. The study is qualitative and does not intend to generalize at present but describes the experiences presented in self-reported data. In addition to a survey, further research may be carried out based on a gender perspective and in a completely new context such as the Covid-19 pandemic, which appears to have affected local and global values. Results from this study can be used in educational settings in the organizations concerned. It is important to make both management and employees aware of these results to reduce any consequences that may arise from these organizational challenges. By drawing the attention of organizational members to the effect of these organizational dark sides, managers and employees may be able to focus on managing them. Otherwise, lack of insight can lead to scapegoating—everything is blamed on the individual without insight into how organizational structures and human actions are connected (Perrow 1978; Alvinus, Johansson, Larsson 2016).

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Mooring in the Homeless City. A Practice Theoretical Account of Homeless Urban Dwelling and Emplacement

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Abstract: Taking a practice theoretical approach and building on the research conducted with a group of people who live their lives on the streets of two Polish cities, this paper provides an account of the homeless city dwellers' mode of emplacement. It offers the terms *licensed*, *invisible*, *motile*, *material*, *relational*, *affective*, and *ad hoc mooring* to describe how homeless people establish a place of and for various activities that make up their everyday practice of inhabiting the city. While highlighting the accomplishments of homeless places, the paper also underscores their tentativeness and instability. It situates the homeless mode of emplacement within a wider landscape of normative urban geography, against which the ways homeless people establish themselves in place are often judged out-of-place. It attends to the role that this transgressive potential plays in limiting homeless dwellers' capabilities for mooring and considers how they might be enhanced.

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Her current research focuses on everyday practices of inhabiting the city. It uses participatory, mobile, and reflexive methods to discover how homeless dwellers navigate the city and anchor their places in various urban spaces, and how their capabilities for exercising the right to stay put might be enhanced.

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In this paper, I provide a practice theoretical account of the homeless city. That is to say, I provide an account of the city rooted in everyday practices of dwelling carried out by homeless people. More particularly, I describe how homeless places are being established within the socio-material context of these practices. I engage with practice theoretical notions of spatiality and anchoring (Schatzki 2010) to develop an understanding of this situational and relational accomplishment of place, calling it “mooring,” and consider it in terms of practical-material realization (Duff 2017) of the right to dwell.

By attending to the homeless inhabitation of the city (and the city emerging from that inhabitation) in its makings (Lancione 2020), I wish to unsettle the dominant representations of the homeless city as a landscape of despair (Dear and Wolch 1987) conjured solely by the disciplining structural forces framed as the “carceral city,” the “revanchist city,” or the “post-justice city” (for a detailed discussion of such framing of the homeless city, as well as a critique of its limitations, see: DeVerteuil, May, and von Mahs 2009). Without diminishing the role of the strategies deployed to control and contain homeless spatiality, I acknowledge the need to attend to “the ways in which homeless people themselves, rather than others” (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008:242) shape the contours of their lived urban world. Further, I recognize the need for bringing out the fact that there is more to a life lived in a homeless situation and concerning the urban than bare survival (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008; Lancione 2020) performed through more or less strategic coping or tactical adaptation. Instead of “survival,” “strategies,” and “tactics,” I prefer to think about homeless urban dwelling in terms of certain ways of doing, governed by implicit logics of social practices, and

certain agencies enabled by these logics. That is not to say I belittle the hardships of homelessness or ignore the constraints of homeless agencies. It is rather to suggest I acknowledge the necessity to emphasize that if we listen carefully to the voices from the homeless city, what we hear is not only a cry for help but also “a political demand for an ethical recognition” (Duff 2017:528) of how things are being done in and despite precarious circumstances. I respond to this demand by focusing on the situated efforts by which homeless people anchor their places in various urban spaces and thereby establish socio-material abutments of their lived urban world despite various attempts to eradicate, or at least control, the homeless spatiality through practices of containment, displacement, exclusion (Snow and Mulcahy 2001), and repression (Wright 1997), to name a few. Whilst not questioning the validity of the framing of the homeless urban dwelling as “continuous displacement” (Lancione 2016:172), which “cannot be considered apart from the experience of movement” (May 2000:737), I would suggest that it also cannot be considered apart from continuous struggle for a place more or less securely fixed in space. For one, existence (in a homeless situation or otherwise) as an embodied phenomenon unfolds in a place anchored in space. It necessitates space for a (homeless or not) body’s place to *be*. Secondly, in the light of the experience of forced mobility, some form of stasis associated with a more permanent anchoring of one’s place in space is what the homeless bodies crave for and put a lot of effort to achieve. At least this is what I learned from and with a group of people who live their lives on the streets of two Polish cities, Cracow and Lodz, whilst researching the practices of inhabiting the city in a homeless situation. Thus, in the remainder of this paper, I focus on the homeless dwellers’ capabilities for mooring, that is, capabilities for accomplishing a place of and

for various activities that make up their everyday practices of dwelling.

What I know about the homeless city, and report on here, I know from its dwellers and not from people whose job is to reach out, treat, manage, or get rid of them. Although my account will feature police officers, security guards, social workers, charity volunteers, and others who constitute intrinsic parts of the practice-arrangement bundles within which homeless places are being established, the focus is on homeless people. I believe they deserve full attention given the marginal position they occupy not only as urban dwellers but also as urban knowers. Homeless people rarely hold any epistemic authority (Fricker 2007), even over their lived circumstances (Kawash 1998), not to mention urban development or planning, or other things urban. Deemed un-inhabitants of the cities, they do inhabit, homeless people are often wronged “in their capacity as subject[s] of knowledge” (Fricker 2007:5). Through my account, I wish to contribute to recognizing homeless people as knowledgeable and skillful practitioners of urban dwelling—especially a certain sort of it, a homeless one—and their mode of emplacement as “a proposition of its own standing” (Lancione 2020:34). I have structured it in the following way: I begin by introducing a theoretical and methodological approach to studying homeless urban dwelling as a constellation of embodied and emplaced practices of inhabiting the city. I then discuss various ways of mooring drawing on the results of my research conducted in Cracow and Lodz, as well as praxeological reading of other relevant accounts. I use the last section to consider homeless dwellers’ capabilities for mooring in relation to the practical realization of their right to dwell, embedding my analysis in a broader debate on the right to the city. Finally, I reflect upon the possibilities of enhancing homeless dwellers’ ca-

pabilities for accomplishing place, highlighting the practical implications of my findings.

Praxeologizing Homeless City and Place

In this section, I outline the general assumptions of practice theoretical perspective and introduce key concepts used as a heuristic device with which I have approached the generation of knowledge about the homeless city presented in this account.

Practice theoretical perspective as a general framework through which social phenomena can be investigated is founded on a distinct social ontology (Schatzki 2001; 2018). According to its main ontological assertion, the social world is nothing but a vast, complex plenum of linked social practices and material arrangements (Schatzki 2016). In this sense, “bundles of practices and arrangements provide the material out of which [all] social phenomena, large and small, consist” (Schatzki 2011:6). Practices refer to arrays of activities, linked and governed by shared practical understandings, teleoaffectivities, and rules (Schatzki 1996), carried out by people involved in doing things (cooking, eating, driving, parking, praying, working, socializing, in general—living); arrangements refer to nexuses of material entities (people, organisms, artifacts, and things) that channel the carrying out of activities. Central to this framework is the understanding of the social reality in terms of “enactment” (Mol 2002)—objects in the social world are constituted via recursive enactment in practice. They are brought into being and sustained through the recurrent performance of social practices entangled with material arrangements, that is, recurrent doing of things, circumscribed by implicit logic of practices, amid and with the use of material entities. Praxeologizing social phenomena means treating them as rooted in practice-arrange-

ment bundles (Schatzki 2018) and attending to what, that is, which social and material components, is involved in their enactment (Sandberg and Dall’Alba 2009:1350). The conceptual repertoire of theories of practice provides an integrated way of conceptualizing the homeless city as a socio-material phenomenon established within everyday practices of dwelling performed by homeless people amid various arrangements of urban materiality. In developing the framework for this account, I engaged specifically with Theodore Schatzki’s notion of spatiality to conceptualize homeless dwellers’ practices as the sites at which the abutments of the homeless city in a form of places are being established, and the notion of anchoring to better understand the mechanics of their establishment.

Spatiality, in my interpretation of Schatzki’s praxeological reading of this Heideggerian term, may be understood as a practice-specific mode of emplacement. It consists of the transformation of the milieu of human activity into a matrix of places of and for this activity (Schatzki 2010). Every social practice produces its spatiality by specifying the locale of its performance. It embraces an implicit understanding of “where” it is performable (sensitivity of performance) or ought to be performed (normativity of performance). It articulates certain spaces (material entities and arrangements thereof) as places to perform actions of which it is composed, as material anchors for these actions, and defines their meanings vis-à-vis these actions—a bed as a place to sleep, a table as a place to eat, a bathroom as a setting to carry out activities that make up a practice of maintaining personal hygiene. Thus, every practice implies certain rules of emplaced conduct—rules of anchoring places at material entities and their arrangements, that is, rules of handling people and things, and acting toward and amid them in places produced through

this handling. If practices are regimes of performance (Nicolini 2017), then they necessarily are also regimes of placement. They circumscribe not only the “what” but also the “where” of routinized doing.

Spatiality, as a mode of emplacement, is localized in objective space through material anchoring. When carrying out a practice (performing actions that compose a practice) amid an arrangement of people and things, one proceeds through an array of places anchored at and amid, and thereby located at and amid, an objective spatial arrangement formed by those people and those things (Schatzki 2015). This arrangement of material entities, together with bodily performances of actions, form an objective spatial configuration (Schatzki 2015). Thus, when carrying out a practice one proceeds through a spatial arrangement, but “in its pertinence and involvement in [one’s] activity” (Schatzki 2010:36), that is transformed into a set of places of and for this activity via its performance. Hence, a performance of practice constitutes as well its emplacement—it transforms a material entity, a setting, a three-dimensional space into a place of and for this practice. Therefore, a place may be considered an event. It is a lived space of interaction (Mallett 2004), constituted through “a gathering of elements that are themselves mutually defined only through how they are gathered together within the place they also constitute” (Malpas 2006:29). It “takes place” in an encounter of the acting human body-mind with the socio-materiality of the arrangement. Place happens.

Now, which places happen amid which material arrangements is a matter of convention as the use of certain objects (such as benches) or arrangements of objects (such as parks), and thus the anchoring of places in those objects and arrangements, is standardized within practices (Schatzki 2010:53). It is also

a matter of power. For some practice-specific spatialities gain and sustain the status of “binding,” whereby their modes of emplacement gain and sustain the status of “proper” within settings in which they are being performed. What is more, the dominant spatialities usually pass “the trial by space” (Lefebvre 1991), which means that the settings themselves are being purposefully designed and erected to house (anchor) their (and only their) arrays of places. They appropriate urban spaces and secure this appropriation through the naturalization of their arbitrariness (Cresswell 1996), enforced by, if necessary, other, more tangible means of defense. Other spatialities are judged inappropriate against these orthodox normative geographies and their performances are perceived as acts of transgression (Cresswell 1996). And for those whose modes of emplacement do not harmonize with the dominant spatialities, like homeless city dwellers, the “happening” of place cannot be taken for granted. Their capabilities for anchoring places in many urban spaces are limited, thus every successful anchoring, a “mooring,” can be considered an accomplishment. Thusly conceived establishment of place within the socio-material context of homeless inhabitation of the city constitutes the object of my considerations presented in the remainder of this paper.

Learning How to Dwell and Establish Place in the Homeless City

In my attempt to apprehend the homeless city as a product of the everyday practices of homeless urban dwelling, I was guided by 36 people who live their lives on the streets¹ of two Polish cities, Cracow

(the second largest and one of the oldest cities in Poland, an important academic, business, and tourism center, inhabited by approximately 1,062 people in the homeless situation), and Lodz (the third-largest city in Poland, a former industrial center, currently undergoing an intensive revitalization, inhabited by approximately 891² people in the homeless situation). Between March 2018 and June 2019, I participated in a natural unfolding of their daily routines or reenactments of their typical mobilities and moorings during walk-alongs, a hybrid between participant observation, interviewing, corporeal engagement, and auto-observation (for a detailed discussion of the deployment of this method, see: Martini 2017; 2020; forthcoming). I was shown how and where things are being done—things that make up a daily life which is lived in a homeless situation and concerning the urban. And I attempted to learn how to do some of them. That is to say, I underwent a sort of practical training in homeless urban dwelling, engaging with homeless people in a peculiar form of pedagogy, with them guiding my process of learning how living in the city is routinely being done (which designates something substantially different than learning *about* this way).

This positionality enabled me not only to observe and to participate in the routines through which the homeless city is being enacted in practice but also to disrupt them. My disruptive, “incompetent,” novice way of doing engendered learning situations (Schatzki 1996) where explicit formulations of implicit

feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion. Retrieved June 01, 2019.

² The number of homeless people in Cracow and Lodz according to the Polish Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy data on homelessness gathered in a point-in-time headcount of February 2019. See: <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/wyniki-ogolnopolskiego-badania-liczby-osob-bezdomnych-edycja-2019>. Retrieved June 01, 2019.

¹ In terms of the European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion developed by FEANTSA, their living situation might be described as “rooflessness,” which means living rough or in emergency accommodation. See: <https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion>.

logic of homeless urban dwelling as a social practice have occurred. Organizing research processes and procedures around the attempt to learn from homeless dwellers in a manner of an apprentice looking for guidance was crucial in overcoming the natural attitude (Giorgi 1970) towards daily routines and articulating the tacit understanding around which they are centrally organized. It allowed for an embodied and reflective immersion into the homeless city enacted in practice and apprehending it from within its logic that molds its making.

The analysis for the present article has been framed by one of the results of that immersion—the lived experience of the limited capabilities for mooring and the effort required to stay put in the homeless city. It has been informed by the notions of spatiality as a practice-specific mode of emplacement and mooring as a successful anchoring of a place in space via the performance of activities amid material arrangements. Procedurally speaking, the analytical and interpretative process involved (1) reading the research corpus (consisting of transcripts of the introductory pre-walking interviews; spatial transcripts, phenomenological descriptions, and visual documentation of the walk-alongs) through the notion of mooring to identify instances of successful anchorings (research question [RQ]: what are the examples of successful anchoring); (2) conducting within-case analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994) to characterize individual cases of successful anchorings (RQs: what kind of place has been accomplished; where and how it has been accomplished); (3) conducting cross-case analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994) to compare various cases of successful anchorings and identify distinctive and common features (RQs: what similarities and differences with regard to what/where/how are there between particular instances of mooring; what patterns of what/where/how combinations are there

across cases). These steps facilitated the initial development of a typology of moorings refined through axial coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998) focused on uncovering the mechanics of particular types of moorings (RQ: under which conditions does a particular type of mooring occur), as well as diffractive reading (Mazzei 2014) of my findings. I read the results of my analysis and the insights from past research through one another, tracing the alignments of findings and the possibilities for consolidation of knowledge emerging from other, not necessarily practice-based, accounts of the homeless city.

Mooring in the Homeless City

In this section, I consider the complexities of accomplishing place within the socio-material context of homeless urban dwelling, where capabilities for mooring are limited as a homeless mode of emplacement is often judged transgressive. The following account comprises a mix of situated details (including particular places anchored in particular settings when I felt relatively sure that providing this information will not expose particular people) and more general ways of accomplishing place abstracted from the fieldwork experiences in Cracow and Lodz. In what follows, I will not focus on the particular sorts of places that punctuate the map of the homeless city (see, e.g., Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008; Johnsen, May, and Cloke 2008), nor will I enumerate the sorts of spaces in which they usually occur (see, e.g., Snow and Anderson 1993; Perry 2013). Instead, I will describe the conditions and how these anchorings happen. Although the following types of moorings have been analytically distinguished on a basis of their main features, they are not mutually exclusive.³

³ They also do not include the conditions and how home-like places are being accomplished, as my essential interest was held by the practices of inhabiting the city, not the practices

Licensed Mooring

There are various settings (shelters, night shelters, day centers, warming centers, soup kitchens, and soup runs in the case of Poland) where homeless dwellers anchor their places under license, so to say. These are the spaces that one first learns about when down and out on the streets, from fellow members of the homeless scene or special maps and guides handed out by outreach workers and charity volunteers. These are the spaces that constitute what has been called the homeless archipelago (Gowan 2010), also the nodal territory of the homeless city (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2010), where the basic needs can be met. Settings where “an individual’s homeless status—conferred ‘other’ in most contexts—becomes the norm” (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008:252), and where certain “bodily appearances, odors, and...behaviors (for example, sleeping under a table) that might be deemed ‘odd’ or ‘inappropriate’ elsewhere are accepted without remark” (Parr 2000 as cited in Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2010:130). They accommodate various homeless places, from the better-known ones like places to sleep, eat, maintain personal hygiene, warm-up, or pass the time, to the, perhaps, less obvious, like places of sociality, conviviality, refuge, and care, but also, on the contrary, of frustration, anger, unease, and fear.

Given the license to “be as one is” operating in these settings, it may seem that accomplishing place in a service space should be effortless. But, as people from whom I have learned pointed out, whether they anchor their place in these settings depends on many things. First of all, it depends on whether

one is ready to bear the cost of admitting they need assistance, where the currency in the economy of asking for help is one’s self-esteem and self-respect (also see: Hall 2017). Or, whether one is ready to publicly expose their shaming incapacity for taking care of daily necessities on their own when awaiting the provision of services, which usually happens outside of a setting and in a line, being *the* spatial formation that homeless bodies are expected to assume before entering, for example, a night shelter or a soup kitchen (also see: Bourlessas 2018). Second, it depends on whether one is willing or able to stay sober as the “rite of entrance” to many service spaces involves a sobriety test, known on the streets as “blowing into a breathalyzer.” If you “blow zero or green,” you are allowed to enter. If not, access (and a warm meal, a bed, a shower, an act of kindness or compassion, or whatever else is sought behind the doors) is usually denied. Or, whether one is willing to participate in religious practices that often constitute an inseparable component of services provided by faith-based (mostly Catholic in the case of Poland) organizations. It also depends on whether one can get used to living in conditions that would make “any normal person drop dead from a heart attack,” which is how homeless dwellers described conditions in some, certainly not all, shelters in Cracow and Lodz. Or, whether one can get used to being told what and when is good or bad for them, or rather prefers solving their problems on their terms, like Alek,⁴ Jarek, Aga, and many other homeless people I have met. Taking all of this into account, many homeless dwellers choose to avoid service spaces (also see: Kawash 1998). But, to be fair, many do not. They appreciate (or just make use of) the support and take this opportunity to accomplish place.

of domesticating urban space (for an account of these sorts of practices and these sorts of places, see, e.g., Groot and Hodgetts 2012; Rennels and Purnell 2017; Nózka 2020).

⁴ The names of the individuals mentioned in this paper have been changed.

There is another license under which homeless dwellers anchor their places, the one which operates outside of the service nodes and is given by homeless people themselves rather than others. A license to “be as one is” (with an exception for violent behavior), which operates in settings that accommodate homeless places of sociability or more or less accidental groupings. So-called “drinking schools” (Archard 1979), for example, anchored at squares, in parks, or less visible residual spaces, are being established under such license. Deemed an offense against public order within the dominant normative geography, for homeless dwellers, they enact a place of inclusion where and when “everyone will have a seat, a talk, and a drink with everyone,” as I was told in Lodz. But also, as I observed in both cities, where and when hands are being shaken, greetings exchanged, personal stories told, and pleasures of the company enjoyed—things that are much appreciated by homeless people given that what accompanies them is, most often, solitude. When places are being established under the license of communal association, homeless dwellers also conform to the rules of emplaced conduct, but the ones they regard as proper. The acceptability of their participation in these places is based on their standards of aesthetic appearance and appropriate behavior. What is more, being among others who know how it is to live on the streets, shelters homeless dwellers from the condescending views of those who “don’t get it.” And this means a temporal alleviation of the emotional burdens of social opprobrium, which operates outside of the licensed moorings.

Invisible Mooring

Beyond, not necessarily safe, havens of the homeless archipelago and judgment-free oases of communal gatherings, where and when “spoiled identities”

(Goffman 1963) of homeless dwellers start to stand out, the success of many of their anchorings relies on invisibility.

Social invisibility allows for establishing moorings in settings like shopping malls, libraries, or means of public transport. Homeless dwellers can appear in such settings when they do not meet “certain stereotyped characteristics ascribed to the imagined homeless body” (Schmidt 2015:286), or, in the homeless people’s words, when they “look like human beings.” “You have to make sure you are... you look like a human being. You can even get on the tram or go anywhere,” was explained to me by Michał (in his fifties, living in Cracow for ten years, in a homeless situation also for ten years), “You can if you look like a human being.” Keeping oneself clean, neat, and tidy, which at times involves literal washing off traces from one’s body left by the homeless situation, like dust on one’s clothes or grass in one’s hair, entangled there after a night spent on the ground under the bushes, increases the ability to “look like a human being,” that is, to appear as non-homeless. And this matters in accomplishing place, especially in public or semi-public spaces, because “those who are not perceived to be homeless are treated far better than those who are” (Rennels and Purnell 2017:503). It is as simple and as unjust as that.

Social invisibility, achieved through blending into the human backgrounds of various urban settings, is thus a precondition for many homeless moorings to happen. This “artful self-concealment” (Hopper 1991) involves careful attempts to disguise certain attributes that make a person identifiable as homeless. “When writing about this, don’t forget to mention the gadgets given out by charities,” said Aga (in her thirties, born and raised in Cracow, in a homeless situation for three years) while pointing out to

bright yellow backpacks worn by a group of people we went past during our walk, soon after the World Day of the Poor celebrations were held in Cracow. “I call these backpacks homeless people’s IDs. They sure help to identify us,” she added. A bright yellow backpack is just one of the potentially stigmatizing attributes—mismatched clothes, worn-out shoes, plastic bags, ungroomed hair, bloated face; even the way one walks, sits, or smells may need concealment as giving away the spoiled identity of people living in the homeless situation. “I try to take care of my appearance,” said Jarek (in his forties, living in Cracow for twenty years, in a homeless situation for four years) when commenting on these issues, “I try to look more or less, let’s say, normal, you know, shaved, washed, well dressed. And people let me in some places.”

Once self-concealed and let into a setting, homeless dwellers establish and affirm their presence through the pretended enactment of “proper” spatiality—pretending to be doing the shopping while actually anchoring a place to warm up, pretending to be browsing a library’s catalog while anchoring a place to charge a phone, pretending to be going somewhere by bus while anchoring a place to pass the time. They need to be cautious, though not to reveal that they are in disguise. Not to ever forget that their anchoring is fleeting and accomplishment of place only temporary, that what they craft through the art of self-concealment is “a provisional, tentative, and always unstable space of appearance” (Duff 2017:524). They need to stay alert not to ever feel too comfortable on a sofa in a shopping center, on a chair in a train station waiting area, or in a back seat of a night bus, because if they do, the next thing they will most likely experience will be expulsion, punishment for an act of transgression committed through “improper” anchoring. I was walking with

Jadwiga (in her thirties, living in Cracow for a year, in a homeless situation for two years) around the Planty Park in Cracow when she drew my attention towards an older man sitting on one of the benches. “You see what they did to him?” she asked. His face was showing signs of physical violence. “Poor guy, he fell asleep in Galeria Krakowska,” she commented. He closed his eyes in a temporarily accomplished place of respite, rendering the true character of his anchoring visible, and experienced punishment for trespassing “the limits of what is considered permissible” (Wikström 2005:52) by those guarding the “proper” mode of emplacement in a shopping mall setting.

Not everyone is equally capable of or willing to render their homelessness status invisible—this is particularly not easy for “individuals with serious drug and/or alcohol addictions whose presence [in the settings mentioned above] is significantly more likely to appear ‘out of place’” (Johnsen, May, and Cloke 2008:203). Some anchorings are then being established through physical invisibility. Places to drink are usually accomplished in settings hidden from the sight of the authorities (in Poland, drinking in public spaces constitutes an offense punishable by a fine), places to beg—beyond the gaze of CCTV cameras. “If you’d like to have a drink here, you wouldn’t sit on this bench,” said Darek (in his forties, living in Cracow for six years, in a homeless situation for fifteen years) when asked about doing the “drinking” at one of the public squares in Cracow. “You’d rather choose that one, behind the parked cars, so the city guards wouldn’t see you, but you’d be able to notice them coming.” “You have to stand at such a point that the camera won’t catch you and you won’t get noticed by the security. And you can’t stand for more than half an hour,” said Marek (in his fifties, living in Lodz for three months, in a home-

less situation for seven years) when explaining his way of accomplishing a panhandling place in front of one of the shopping malls in Lodz. Invisibility is also achieved through anchoring only at particular times of the day or night—between rounds of a security patrol in or outside of a shopping mall, before the arrival of passengers at a train station, after closing of a convenience store. Physical invisibility, achieved through meticulous positioning and scheduling of moorings in unmonitored points in time and space, allows for accomplishing a place beyond the regulatory gaze of social authority looking over the normative ordering of space, and securing the dominant position of “proper” spatiality.

There is another element of the regulatory apparatus operating in urban spaces that pushes homeless dwellers to disappear into their surroundings. That is disgust. Disgust “operates as means to exclude the body from the public, to relegate the body to the status of not visible” (Mathews 2019:6). Homeless people try to stay out of sight to avoid the voyeuristic stares they attract that mark a destabilization of public comfort (Boyer 2012). Comfort disrupted by the sight of the homeless body occupying space that is considered to be a transgressive mode of emplacement. Homeless dwellers emplace themselves in the hidden cracks of urban materiality to avoid meeting other people’s eyes and seeing distaste and contempt in them. In other words, they disappear into the surroundings to salvage their dignity. They hide not to provoke a sense of dis-ease (Kearns 1993). Marek once gave me a tour around his nooks spread around the inner city of Lodz. He showed me an interstice, maybe one meter wide, between a concrete wall and a security booth in a parking lot, a stone at the back of a fast-food stand, and stairs leading to a hospital’s basement, descending beneath the level of the sidewalk. “These are my nooks of peace

and quiet,” he said with a hint of tenderness in his voice. “This is where I can be aside, you know, keep myself to myself, where I don’t cause unease among people, I don’t embarrass them.” Marek and other homeless dwellers that I have met were able to accomplish many places in such barely noticeable spaces—a place to sit, to rest, to eat, to drink, a place to be without being looked down on, a place to be without being hurt by the gestures and the looks, by the various forms of social opprobrium, in other words, they were able to establish a niche (Hall 2017) for themselves.

Motile Mooring

Sometimes the state of invisibility, and the accomplishment of place it enables, is being achieved through motility.⁵ Under certain circumstances, stillness may perform social difference and movement may constitute a way out of the process of “Othering.” “If someone spends five hours just sitting, then, well, you know, something is wrong in their life,” Bartłomiej (in his fifties, born and raised in Lodz, in a homeless situation for a year) told me when we were discussing the conditions of mooring in Manufaktura shopping center in Lodz. When spatial fixity starts to draw unwanted attention, homeless bodies begin to move. Their movement is either a means for disappearing from one location and appearing in another or a mode of emplacement in its own right. Homeless dwellers thus move either to simply change the site of the anchoring, to be somewhere else, or to establish a place on the move,

⁵ I engage the notion of motility to describe how homeless dwellers accomplish place “on the move” and distinguish it from the notion of mobility often used to characterize their general existential condition (Radley et al. 2010) as in framings such as “being fixed in mobility” (Jackson 2015) or enacting an identity of a “mobile hermit” (Hodgetts et al. 2010) or a “drifter” (Bourlessas 2018).

to be somewhere (as one needs some “where” to *be*) but nowhere specifically, as an alternate appearance and disappearance of the mobile body constitutes only momentarily localized presence. This is how, for instance, walking accommodates a place to pass the time. When homeless dwellers have nowhere to go (when space for their place is lacking), they keep on going. And as they walk, they either attend to the immediate urban environment, by pleasing their eyes with historical tenement houses, like Jarek used to do, or enjoying urban greenery, as Darek often did, or, on the contrary, they transcend it engaging in fantasy, distraction, or escapism (also see: Hodgetts et al. 2010). As a result, they accomplish a place that is not fixed in space.

Material Mooring

There are mundane things, seemingly worthless material objects, which mean a lot for homeless dwellers; a receipt, a ticket, a vacuum flask. These objects legitimize their presence. They afford them to *be*. They allow them to establish temporary moorings in settings where their presence would otherwise be perceived as out-of-place. A receipt from KFC or Burger King found in a trash bin or obtained from other customers, entitling to refills, beside a free soft drink, provides a legitimization of presence in the food court area in the Manufaktura shopping center in Lodz and mediates the anchoring of places to sit around and socialize. The cheapest ticket, bought at the Cracow Main Bus Station, provides a legitimization of presence in the waiting area and mediates the anchoring of places to warm up and shelter from the elements. A vacuum flask engraved with an inscription “Thermo-Coffee,” obtained within a charity initiative, entitling to a free cup of coffee or tea, provides a legitimization of presence in several cafes in Cra-

cow (participating in the initiative) and mediates the anchoring of places to be attended upon and treated with dignity.

Homeless places happen in forms of relatedness to objects also when homeless dwellers comb through urban spaces in search of things they may use—sell, wear, eat, drink, smoke, spend, et cetera. Cans are the reason Przemek (in his forties, born and raised in Lodz, in a homeless situation for twenty years) attends mass events organized at Atlas Arena (Lodz); unfinished drinks and leftover drugs draw Błażej (in his twenties, living in Lodz for most of his life, in a homeless situation for three years) to OFF Piotrkowska Center (Lodz) on Saturday mornings; lost wallets, cameras, and phones bring Jarek to Szewska Street (Cracow) on Friday nights. Thrown away food draws to the back of stores, cigarette leftovers to the entrances of university or hospital buildings, recyclable beer bottles to parks. These objects and their locations are in themselves the sites of performances of practices and thus constitute their (practice-specific) places, but they are also further possible places, as gathering of things and their further distribution within different settings within different practices establishes further places.

Interpersonal Mooring

Interpersonal moorings are established through forms of relatedness to people. From mere tangencies to complex relations. From an acquiescence to the presence of an anonymous homeless person to an acquaintance with a homeless dweller known by their name. A variety of homeless places happen by getting along with people—security guards, clerks, members of cleaning crews, students, ticket controllers, bus drivers—establishing acquaintances and then sustaining the goodwill of people who form

part of the homeless city's social infrastructure or, as Darek once told me, "the links in the chain that helps you survive through the day."

Turning a blind eye to the presence of a homeless person by a member of the security staff in a shopping mall food court area allows for the anchoring of a place to ask for food. Doing the same in the parking lot in front of a grocery store allows for the anchoring of a place to earn. Not minding the presence of a homeless person on the stairwell by residents of a residential block allows for the anchoring of a place to sleep. It means a lot when people simply do not mind you being somewhere—I learned from the homeless dwellers. But, there are rules—they cautioned. Civility and tidiness. You have to always be polite and keep the site (of the anchoring) tidy. Otherwise, the site is compromised, and the anchoring is gone. At times, there are additional rules, as I later discovered, regarding, for example, the frequency or the time of the day of the anchoring, whether it may involve entering or just appearing near the premises. I remember being once explicitly reminded of the rules of establishing place when we sat with Mikołaj (in his sixties, living in Cracow for thirty-seven years, in a homeless situation for seventeen years) next to a grocery store entrance, where he was spending most of his time during the day. Once we sat, Mikołaj brought a can of beer out and opened it. The hissing sound drew the attention of a familiar clerk—"You can stay here but don't drink. If you wanna drink, go out there. Mikołaj, I'm telling you. You drink, you move. You don't drink, you're fine to stay."

Being known somewhere (which performs something more than simply being noticed) marks particular locations in the homeless city. A particular grocery store, a vegetable stand, or a sandwich bar

visited by a particular homeless dweller regularly. Where temporary moorings are being recursively established within brief (but regular) interactions between owners or employees who give food to the visiting homeless. These brief interactions, which, once their pattern has been established, may even happen without any verbal exchange—just an appearance, a nod acknowledging this appearance, a handing down of produce, and an expression of gratitude—afford the anchoring not only of places to procure food but also of places to experience sympathy. It may not be the food that is being given (it may be hot water—to make coffee, or access to a power socket—to charge a phone, or scrap materials—to sell). There may not even be any giving involved (it may be letting a person sit in front of a store, letting stay on a bus, letting sleep in a trash bin shelter, letting claim recyclable bottles without a receipt). Or, to the contrary, there may be a rich repertoire of activities being performed, when the relational mooring is established not through brief interaction but more complex mutual relation when certain reciprocity is developed. Like in the case of Darek, whose daily emplacement in the food court area in the Galeria Krakowska shopping mall (Cracow) involved helping in one of the food stands, bringing dirty dishes, changing money, having friendly conversations with the staff, and being treated with a meal; or in the case of Marek, whose daily emplacement by the kiosk on Kilińskiego Street (Lodz) involved sitting, chatting over a cigarette, at times being let to borrow a needle and a thread to stitch a torn piece of clothing, and helping with closing the heavy metal kiosk's gates. Those moorings, besides the tangible benefits, afforded the uplifting experiences of being trusted and needed.

Central to any relational mooring is the form of relatedness to people, which results in the practical un-

derstanding of the material arrangement, of which those people are part, as accessible for a homeless dweller. Accessible through the sympathy raised and nurtured and the rules of the anchoring of the homeless place established and adhered to.

Affective Mooring

People, as parts of material arrangements within which homeless places are being anchored, are also central to another type of mooring, but in a slightly different way—through affecting or being affected.

Begging practice, for instance, a basic source of income for many street urban dwellers, is essentially an affective practice. Begging pitches are being anchored where other people may be encountered. Encountered and affected through a direct approach or a mere exposure to the sight of a begging body. The emotional registers of a successful affective transition (Massumi 2002) that is supposed to happen in a begging encounter need not be positive—shock, guilt, fear, pity, frustration may be as effective “motives” for sparing some change as sympathy or compassion (although the latter kind is preferred). Whether one sits on cardboard in an underpass, or plays guitar on a busy pedestrian street, or meanders through a crowd spilling out of a train station, a homeless dweller transforms (or at least attempts at transforming) the atmospherics (Duff 2017) of these settings. One anchors their place to affect. Like Mikołaj, whose presence tempered the atmosphere of a doorway leading to a bakery and a grocery store where he regularly established himself shifting the affective capacities of otherwise unremarkable and affectively indifferent spatial arrangement. The following scene illustrates “the emotional traces of [this] affective transition” (Duff 2017:524).

Mikołaj sits in his regular spot in a recessed doorway. On his left, he has an entrance to a grocery store, on his right—to a bakery. He sits quite comfortably on his cardboard, leaning against a wall, sheltered from the elements. People notice him. It is impossible not to. He sits exactly in between the doors. He just sits there, yet his quiet presence still affects people, and they, in return, affect him.

A: Sir, would you like a toast? Asks a man on his way to the bakery.

Mikołaj: Pardon me? Asks Mikołaj, making sure that the question was addressed to him.

A: A toast? Man repeats.

Mikołaj: I will, yes, absolutely, thank you so much.

A: I'll order one.

Mikołaj: Great, of course.

Hardly half an hour passes, and a woman approaches Mikołaj.

B: How did you like the hunter's stew? She asks, referring to a meal she had left for him in this spot the day before.

Mikołaj: Oh, superb. It was yours, ma'am?

B: Yes, mine.

Mikołaj: Oh dear...

B: Here's some more, sir, and some bread, and a cake, too.

Mikołaj: Oh, dear Mother of God, thank you so much. Thank you, God bless you.

When the woman leaves, Mikołaj turns to me and says:

Mikołaj: You see, sweetheart? Why would I go anywhere? They get me things by themselves.

But, affective moorings may also work the other way around—when the success of the anchor-

ing relies on the lack of affective transition where a homeless dweller is hoping that their appearance and presence will not affect anybody and will not alter the atmosphere of the setting. It was the affective atmosphere of relaxed leisureliness that was drawing Bartłomiej every single day (except when it was raining heavily or snowing) to the 3rd of May Park in Lodz, where positive emotional registers could be felt, even among strangers. It was the judgment-free, truly public, one might say, the atmospherics of the gatherings formed around street musicians that were pulling Marek on weekends to Piotrkowska Street (Lodz) where he could relax, take his mind off of troubling things. What those and other settings with similar affective atmospheres afforded homeless dwellers is not only a place of respite but also a place to enact more-than-homeless identity and to have a temporal stance in the public, or if this would be too much to say, then at least in other-than-homeless assembly. Again, this has to do with their visibility. “People look at you differently there,” said Bartłomiej about the park. “People don’t look at you at all, they focus on the musician,” said Marek about the street scene. What they meant, of course, is that they do not *see* you as homeless.

Ad hoc Mooring

One afternoon, I was sitting with Michał in a hall of a building at Sienna Street (Cracow) where medics from an NGO called Przystań Medyczna were supposed to check on his legs. While waiting we were talking about the city. “Do you have a favorite place in Cracow?” I asked. “This, right here, next to you. It’s so nice talking to you here,” he said. “It’s very kind of you to say, Michał,” I replied, thinking that he was not answering my question, rather flirting. “But, seriously.” It was only later that I have

realized that he was serious and was telling me about his favorite place—a place that was happening right then and there, a place “at the moment,” as two other homeless dwellers that I have met and learned from called this sort of mooring. Both Alek (in his forties, living in Cracow for thirteen years, in a homeless situation for fifteen years) and Darek (already mentioned), though independently, when asked if there was a place that they call their own, said: “Own place, in my case, is the one where I am; it is here where I am” (Alek) and “Own, that is where I am at a given moment. A place at the moment. I can claim it, right? Because I am in this moment” (Darek).

Leaving aside the fact that what took me a long paragraph to describe (I am referring to the notion of place as an event, elaborated on in the theoretical section), they were able to capture in one brilliant sentence (each); what else is there is an overarching way of accomplishing place within the socio-material context of homeless inhabitation of the city, a capability for mooring that homeless dwellers develop within their “tenacity to cope” (Ruddick 1996)—a capability for establishing place and evoking a sense of belonging in that place through and within an event of appearance. The sort of place established ad hoc may vary according to the end pursued (an action performed) in the moment of appearance. The mode of appearance itself may vary, that is, it may be performed in various ways, such as motility or stillness. The point is that within the limited capacity to *remain* in place, to develop, and sustain relatively stable teleoaffective forms of relatedness to space, homeless dwellers draw upon their capacity to *appear* in place in making space available for the unfolding of their spatiality and constituting a self-determined time and space or a timespace (Schatzki 2010) of belonging.

Enhancing Capabilities for Mooring in the Homeless City

Having described how homeless dwellers accomplish a place of and for various activities that make up their mode of doing the “living” in the city, in this section, I reflect upon the possibilities of enhancing their capabilities for mooring. This has implications for supporting homeless dwellers in staking their claim to urban life, as the capability for anchoring one’s place in space is a necessary condition for exercising one’s right to dwell. If dwelling is a practice of being-in-the-world (Shields 1991:52) and being emerges only in and through the place (Malpas 2006:6), then, paraphrasing Jeremy Waldron (1993 as cited in Mitchell and Heynen 2009:614), to dwell, one must have a place to dwell. What is more, if being is embodied, and bodies occupy space, then a place to dwell necessitates space. Thus, the right to dwell issues from a “bodily demand” (Duff 2017) for space for and of its place. Mundane efforts to accomplish place that I have described in this paper may be thus considered as everyday struggles for the right to dwell, and capabilities for mooring as crucial resources in these struggles insofar as they are understood as socio-material conditions of establishing place. As such, they bear importance for the practical-material realization of the right to the city founded upon the right to habitat and to inhabit (Lefebvre 1996; Mitchell and Heynen 2009; Duff 2017).

In this regard, the importance of neutralization of transgression for enhancing homeless dwellers’ capabilities for mooring should be stressed. First, it should be noted that transgression is not a guerilla-like tactic employed by homeless people to resist exclusion. On the contrary, success in everyday struggles for place performed by homeless dwellers

usually depends on them not being noticed, that is, on them not being transgressive. In this, I follow Tim Cresswell (1996:23) who argues that “transgression, in distinction to resistance, does not, by definition, rest on the intentions of actors but the results—on the ‘being noticed’ of a particular action,” and that “transgression is judged by those who react to it.” Resistance, in the form of practical appropriation of space (Casey, Goudie, and Reeve 2008), if not done carefully, becomes transgression, which fosters the defense of the proper. Hence, one way of enhancing homeless resistance would be to neutralize its transgressive potential.⁶ How could that be achieved? At least three ways come to mind.

Firstly, we may focus more on exposing the violence of orthodox appropriation of urban spaces by the dominant spatialities, that is, in many contemporary cities, by the spatialities produced by housed, middle-class lifestyles. Having transgressed the dominant spatialities during my fieldwork, and having faced, at times violent, reactions that this “trespassing” brought about, I experienced the existence of boundaries that are controlled and defended, so that those whose modes of emplacement harmonize with the dominant spatialities can comfortably proceed through an array of places secured through the displacement of “Others.” I realized the existence of displacing effects of “functional fixedness” assumed by this dominant logic of inhabiting the city, which is based on “an abstract notion of place; [as if] places are fixed and their function is determined in advance” (Kawash 1998:333). Having seen urban spaces in their practical intelligibility for homeless dwellers, having seen what else (what other places) they can, and in practice do, afford, I realized

⁶ Another would be supporting their voice (Wright 1997), but this is beyond the scope of this paper.

that this dominant functionalism is a form of strategic (Certeau 1984) concealment of possibilities if it truly is that within practical engagements with the environment “we see not shapes but possibilities” (Lingis 1996:14). The dominant logic of urban dwelling through its “powerful mechanism for policing proper uses of the city and the proper places for its residents” (Kawash 1998:333) makes it hard to see possibilities (other than those which correspond with the proper). Nonetheless, the possibilities are there. Possibilities of different uses of the city, and thus of different urban places. But, those who try to make use of them, like homeless city dwellers, often face hostility to their transgressive mode of emplacement.

Secondly, and consequently, we may think of tinkering with the sense of the proper mode of emplacement for it to embrace at least some of the uses of urban spaces circumscribed by the homeless practices of dwelling. This is what is being done, to a certain extent, by the Homeless Bill of Rights⁷ that legitimizes certain homeless anchorings through validating specific activities that produce and necessitate these anchorings. An awareness-raising campaign, described by Rennels and Purnell (2017:508), provides another example: “Several benches at bus stops and in parks [in Vancouver] have been modified so that they can fold out like airplane tray tables into miniature emergency shelters...During the day, UV letters on the benches react with sunlight revealing the phrase, ‘This is a bench.’ At night, a different message is revealed with glow-in-the-dark letters, which read: ‘This is a bedroom.’” This

endeavor may easily be read as an attempt at normalization of transgressive anchoring, resulting in the harmonization of supposedly conflicting modes of emplacement, and thus creating a setting that accommodates different spatialities.

Thirdly, we may let the homeless accomplishment of place to “speak its proposition” and provide additional support for its realization, for instance, in a form of infrastructure. A paradigmatic example of an infrastructure that enhances homeless city dwellers’ capabilities for mooring is sanitary facilities given the crucial role played by physical appearance (also see: Langegger and Koester 2016) in achieving social invisibility and the variety of anchorings it enables. Another one would be us becoming an infrastructure given how many homeless places happen via forms of relatedness to people. We may intermediate interpersonal moorings through material entities like a receipt pinned on a board in one of the restaurants participating in action “Suspended Dinner” in Lodz where a homeless dweller (or other in need) may enjoy a meal paid in advance, or we may participate in them directly in places like Zupa na Plantach, a soup run that happens every Sunday evening in Cracow city center where cultivating relations with homeless dwellers is as important as providing them with a bowl of soup.

And if all of this is too much to suggest and wish for, then we may at least decide not to be a part of the exclusionary apparatus operating in urban spaces by simply not expressing our distaste (if this is what we feel) when a homeless dweller appears next to us on a street, in a park, or on a bus. We may at least not interfere with their accomplishment of place. Not displace them from a place “at the moment.”

⁷ A form of legislation affirming civil and human rights of homeless dwellers, for instance, access to and use of public space, propagated among local authorities in EU countries by FEANTSA and Housing Rights Watch. See: <https://www.feantsa.org/en/network/2016/11/17/housing-rights-watch>. Retrieved June 01, 2019.

Lessons Learned from the Homeless City

In this paper, I presented a practice theoretical account of the situational and relational accomplishment of place within the socio-material context of homeless inhabitation of the city. Engaging with the notions of spatiality and anchoring, I developed an understanding of the practice-specific mode of emplacement and used it to explore how homeless dwellers establish a place of and for various activities that make up their practice of inhabiting the city. By analyzing licensed, invisible, motile, material, relational, affective, and ad hoc moorings, I also provided the characterizations of the conditions under which successful homeless anchorings occur, and thus created a space for reflection in terms of the possible enablement of homeless spatiality. In this regard, I stressed the importance of the neutralization of the transgressive potential of homeless dwellers' mode of emplacement, that is, the neutralization of its potential to be judged as improper against the dominant spatialities. I further suggested that this might be achieved either through tinkering with the sense of the proper via legal or social interventions into the dominant logic of inhabiting the city, or supporting homeless dwellers' ways of resisting the dis-

placing effects that the appropriation of spaces by arrays of places through which only the privileged few are allowed to proceed has on the "Others." Homeless dwellers are not the only ones subject to the displacing effects of the city within which only particular spatialities are granted the status of proper. For the disabled (Butler and Bowlby 1997), mentally distressed (Knowles 2000), or breastfeeding (Mathews 2019) urbanites, to name a few, the capabilities for mooring are also limited. Therefore, the approach and the findings presented in this paper may prove useful in researching and supporting other marginal and marginalized spatialities.

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The Social Marginalization of People Living with a Mentally Ill Label—Family, Friends, and Work

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Abstract: This paper is based on qualitative research among people diagnosed with a mental illness who voluntarily attend a mental health center. Such individuals are given a degrading “mentally ill” label, which transforms them into a “new” person. This study showed that—due to their label—research participants are often socially marginalized—not only in the public but also in the private sphere. As members of an “organized deviant group” (the mental health center), they follow a “deviant career” and find a job outside the regular job market. Their marginalization is not only caused by their health problems (by their impairment), but they are also disabled through social reactions to these problems. Psychiatry based on the biological model of the disease cannot, therefore, help them without the cooperation of social science approaches dealing with social marginalization.

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This paper focuses on the social aspects of mental illness. Individuals diagnosed with a mental illness are given a degrading label by the majority, which transforms individual medical symptoms into the overall identity of the person. The text shows how this label may lead to the exclusion of the labeled person from the majority. Therefore, their marginalization is caused not only by mental illness but also by social reactions to individuals with mental illness. For this reason, the article further argues that psychiatric approaches based on pharmacological treatment, understanding mental illness as a purely biological matter, cannot suffice to integrate an individual into society. Unless society's attitudes (stereotypes and prejudices) towards individuals with mental illness change, these individuals will be socially marginalized despite advances in medical diagnosis and development in pharmacy.

Research Design

The research was based on a qualitative study among individuals diagnosed with mental illness voluntarily attending a client center for people with mental illness. One of the researchers attended this center for one month. For the first time, the researcher visited the center as part of a regular monthly informative meeting for clients, which brought together about twenty people. During this meeting, the research project was presented, and four clients responded positively to the call to participate. The rest of the participants were recruited through snowball sampling wherein the original informants led the researchers to other members of the target group (i.e., clients of the center). This is how a sample of a temporary population with relative existence was obtained—

this temporality and relativity are given by their dependence on the existence of the center where the research participants meet and engage in joint activities. This association formed a social group with shared values, norms, and goals. At the same time, these individuals share the same label and similar experiences resulting from the label (Becker 1966).

A total of 13 persons participated in the study, men and women aged 35 to 68 years. These interviewees have varied diagnoses, which were not the focus of the research as the participants themselves stated that their diagnoses had changed several times in their lifetime. Semi-standardized interviews were used to gain insight into what it is like to live being labeled “mentally ill” and how the label affects the social life of those concerned. Non-participatory observation of the center's activities showed that the clients were used to talking in detail mostly about their mental health conditions, so the interviews were conducted to keep clients focused on their social life. The “comprehensive interview” technique by Kaufmann (1996) was employed. Kaufmann's approach is based on grounded theory and aims to disrupt the hierarchy between the researcher and the research participant, more closely resembling a conversation between two equal partners. Informed consent was signed with each participant before the interview, and all data were anonymized.

The researchers were particularly interested in whether the clients of the center felt discriminated against in certain social situations, and whether they felt the label affected their relationships with other people and job opportunities. The paper will focus primarily on three categories: family and partner relationships; relationships with friends and neighbors; and work and employment.

Theoretical Framework

Impairment and Disability

In the article, mental illness is seen through the concept of disability studies distinguishing between impairment and disability. While impairment arises from specific physical or mental conditions, disability is socially or culturally imposed on top of the impairment. In the declaration of the *Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation* (UPIAS 1976:3), disability is understood not as a personal fact but a social one—it is a label that “unnecessarily isolates and excludes a person from full participation in society.” Disabled persons suffer, for example, from work segregation, and they have lower incomes and higher unemployment than the majority. “Disability is, therefore, a particular form of social oppression” (UPIAS 1976:14).

This concept originated as a critique of the “medical model” of disability. The medical model sees disability purely as an individual problem and considers the isolation of people with impairment from the majority to be due to their impairment, and the only way to treat their problems is through medical tools. The sociocultural model of disability, which theoretically elaborates and specifies the original statements of the *Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation*, points out that “it is not impairments per se which disable, but societal practices of ‘disablement’ which result in disability” (Waldschmidt 2017:21). For example, most of the words referring to mental problems in everyday speech are defamatory or condemning. A person with mental illness is labeled with pejorative terms, such as “freak,” “loon,” “hysterical.” The labels are usually metaphors, the original meaning of which is given little thought by many (Goffman

1963). As members of society have internalized these phrases into everyday communication as part of the socialization process, they are unaware of the fact that they reproduce the stereotyped image of mental illness, which leads to the marginalization of concerned people.

Therefore, in addition to the problems that impairment causes to individuals, it is necessary to study disabling social mechanisms. At the same time, the factual nature of the impairment cannot be ignored and the whole problem cannot be viewed only on the social level. Regardless of discriminatory labeling practices, the consequences of impairment often make it impossible for individuals to fully participate in many social activities. As Goodley states (2017:85 [original emphasis]), “impairment is a predicament and *can* be tragic.” Disability is, therefore, “produced as much by environmental and social factors as it is by bodily conditions” (Adams, Reiss, and Serlinet 2015:5). Thus, in the case of mental illness, an individual’s specific behavior reflects not only their illness but also how their social environment perceives them through the stereotypical view of mental illness.

In this context, the diagnosis of mental illness must, therefore, be seen not only as an individual disease but also as a social label that contributes to individual social marginalization. Diagnosis is not only a neutral description of the disease but also a prescription for how an individual should behave and be treated by society. “[I]t seems politically naive to suggest that the term ‘impairment’ is value-neutral, that is, ‘merely descriptive,’ as if there could ever be a description that was not also a *prescription* for the formulation of the object (person, practice, or thing) to which it is claimed to innocently refer” (Tremain 2001:621 [original emphasis]). Disability is a label

that is imposed on an individual, and the individual gradually internalizes it, often not able to distinguish the societal disabling mechanisms from the effects of impairment.

Thus, while it is necessary to distinguish impairment and disability on a practical level, and to be aware of the sociocultural dimension of marginalization of individuals with impairment, in fact, these two entities form a whole wherein the factual state of impairment cannot be separated from how the individuals with impairment are viewed by society and how they internalize that view themselves. “From a critical and deconstructive point of view, impairment is no longer conceptualized as a distinct sign, neither a natural nor a cultural one” (Schlegel 2017:107). Moreover, the individual is marginalized and excluded through one’s label by the dominant discourses of the majority and its institutions, but, at the same time, the individuals themselves accept and reproduce their label not only concerning themselves but also in relation to the other labeled individuals and the majority. The individual’s disability is not only produced by the dominant discourse but they often reproduce it themselves through their activities when they accept their inferior position in society (Foucault 1985; Tremain 2006). In this way, both disability and (often) impairment, both society and (often) the disabled individuals themselves partake in the process of marginalization.

Labeling

The personality of individuals with mental illness is socially constructed as deviant in the sense that the individuals are often perceived as persons unpredictably violating social norms. This unpredictability may stem, in part, from the nature of their illness (from their impairment), but, based on the impair-

ment, individuals get a social label, a group identity of the deviant (which is a disability).

When individuals violate the group’s norms, they trigger a social reaction (Lemert 1951). It is rare for one act to provoke such a strong reaction as directly identifying the perpetrator as deviant, and so the individual has the option to rationalize their behavior—this is the primary phase of deviance. Once the individual no longer wants to or can rationalize their behavior, they reach the secondary deviance phase. The individual is not only stigmatized by the majority; they also gradually begin to identify themselves with the label. When the deviant role is accepted and adopted, an integrating process comes into play, in which the individual also begins to identify with other roles arising from the main deviant role. The “adjusted” deviant is, in short, an individual who accepts their deviant “social status, role, and self-definition” (Lemert 1951:96).

Lemert also sought to find the answer to what makes a person stop rationalizing their actions and embrace their deviant role. He identified two main reasons. The first is that it is exhausting to be constantly struggling with the social definition of one’s self (with the label), to be forced to always present adequate reasons for one’s behavior perceived as deviant. The other reason is joining an existing “deviant social organization” with a value system the person may identify with and thus enjoy the group solidarity (Lemert 1951). In the case of this study, the deviant social organization could be the participant’s family or the client center for people with mental illness that they visit.

Becker (1966) calls this process a “deviant career.” He, like Lemert, claims that there are sequences of events that occur when norms are broken, which

can lead a person to adopt a deviant personality as their own. The concept of the deviant career refers to a person's shift from a position in a "normal" social system to a "deviant" one. One of the most important steps in building a stable pattern of deviant behavior is the experience of having been publicly labeled "deviant," which leads to the change of the individual's public identity, due to which the individual is suddenly seen as someone else than whom they had been considered to be until now—suddenly the individual is, for example, a "schizophrenic." Having a deviant characteristic may create a symbolic value, thanks to which the individual is automatically expected to have undesirable characteristics associated with the deviant label—people labeled as "schizophrenic" are, for example, seen as unreliable and unexpectedly aggressive.

Treated as deviant by society, the individual is confronted with a self-fulfilling prophecy—a set of mechanisms is developed, shaping the individual into the form attributed to him or her by others. The individual is excluded from participation in "conventional community," and they finally join an "organized deviant group" (Becker 1966; also see Lemert's [1951] "deviant social organization"). This has a major impact on the self-concept of the individual. They begin using the language of the deviant group and expressing their motives with phrases learned from interaction with other people labeled as deviant. As these people face identical problems owing to social rejection, being a member of an "organized and institutionalized deviant group" only strengthens their deviant identity. Organized groups serve to teach people with a deviant label how to anticipate problems when they break rules and how to rationalize the fact that they have not stopped their "deviant" activities (Becker 1966). Although the client center that research participants attend is intend-

ed to help these people to cope with their illness, it is often a place where they confirm their differences, reinforcing their separation from the majority.

A very effective way of segregating an individual into an organized deviant group and deviant label is to block them from assuming a non-deviant role. For example, former psychiatric patients have problems securing a job even if their behavior is acceptable, as the research showed. This shows that the rejection of people with mental illness is a deeper manifestation of stigmatization rather than an assessment of actual behavior (Scheff 1999). Even if discharged patients no longer have any symptoms and could regain full social and economic competencies, they continue to be closely monitored by others who consider them suspicious. An ordinary mistake or conflict is dramatized as the relapse of incurable mental illness (Lemert 1951).

Certainty from Uncertain Diagnosis

In psychiatry, a medical diagnosis—as uncertain as it often is—can irreversibly change the patient's status (Scheff 1999). Using the terminology and approach of mad studies (see, e.g., Menzies, LeFrançois, and Reaume 2013), Wilson and Beresford (2002) call themselves "psychiatric system survivors." They joined the movement of mental health service users, criticizing the symbolic violence manifested in the power held by medical discourse over the formation of a patient's identity.

Generally, the psychiatric community views mental illnesses as being similar to physical illnesses—they have their origin in an individual and can be identified with the help of an expert (Kutchins and Kirk 1999). However, mental illnesses cannot be established using a laboratory test, which is acknowl-

edged by an increasing number of psychiatrists. “We will never have a biomedical science that is similar to hepatology or respiratory medicine, not because we are bad doctors, but because the issues we deal with are of a different nature” (Bracken et al. 2012:433). The patient’s problems are context-dependent, and treatment cannot be successful if it does not take into account the relationships and values shared by both the patient and the society in which the patient lives (Bracken et al. 2012). Mental illness is not just an impairment treatable by means of pharmacology, but its manifestations are also created by the disabling mechanisms of society.

In the traditional psychiatric model, built on the model of other medical disciplines, the patient is not seen as a specific personality, but as a representative of the diagnosis assigned to them by the psychiatric system, often based on subjective assessment of psychiatrists, leaning on symptom descriptions published in diagnostic manuals (Wilson and Beresford 2002)—see also the situation described by the research participants: their diagnosis has been changed several times in their lifetime. Based on this diagnosis, society gives an individual the label of mentally ill. The individual is placed by this label in a category around which society often acts in a way that is discriminatory in many respects (Becker 1966; Waldschmidt 2017). The individual is then no longer a unique individual having a particular disease, but a personification of the disease itself. They no longer suffer from, for example, schizophrenia, but they *are* schizophrenic, or just “crazy” and “insane.” Patients themselves often internalize this attitude and are unable to verbalize their experiences without using the concepts of experts and describe their mental states using medical terminology—this is how many research participants referred to each other within the client center. Thus, they reproduce

the privileged position of medical discourse over the categorization of highly individual states and feelings of patients. This can have, among other things, a negative economic impact on them, when psychiatrists warn their patients that they will probably not be able to do stressful work, if they can work at all, and thus make “second class citizens” from them (Wilson and Beresford 2002).

Research Findings

Family and Partner Relationships

In the context of mental illness, family plays a pivotal role, as was evident from how frequently the interviewees discussed the issue at hand. Family members are often swayed by prejudice until they gain first-hand experience with mental illness (Thornicroft 2006). All interviewees reported someone in the family who had no understanding of their mental illness. The interviewees were criticized for being too lazy and inefficient, and for making their family ashamed of them. Apart from this, they were treated with exaggerated care, which humiliated them as it portrayed them as being incompetent.

The interviewees coped with these reactions in several ways. Some said they finally separated themselves from their family. Almost half of the interviewees confirmed that one of their family members had suffered from mental illness and that this had affected how the family responded to their illness. As a result, these people were met with greater understanding in their family than those whose families had no experience with mental illness. In that case, however, it happened that the family as a whole was labeled “mentally ill” and was marginalized by society as an organized deviant group (Berger 1966).

Amelia described an utter lack of understanding by her family wherein the members of the family did not believe she was mentally ill: “Well, they don’t want to admit it, my mental health disorder...I’ve also been treated for a thyroid disorder. And so they’re always asking me about my thyroid, but never ask how I’m doing mentally. They say it’s not a condition at all.” Thus, her family does not accept her impairment, which is disabling as a result. Amelia’s family tries to rationalize her rule-breaking behavior, attributing it to a socially acceptable health disorder, to prevent her from being labeled as mentally ill. One of the reasons is that Amelia’s family fears that her mental illness would harm the public identity of the whole family. Families like Amelia’s may fear the label and stigma to such an extent that they try to discourage the relative with an illness from receiving psychiatric treatment (Praško et al. 2012). The family worries that once a member is diagnosed as mentally abnormal, the entire family will be labeled. Goffman (1963) refers to such a transfer of stigma from a labeled individual to their family as “courtesy stigma.”

Family members can make an individual’s mental condition worse not only by passively ignoring his or her impairment, but can also actively deepen the negative conditions associated with impairment. Hugo was talking about his mother, who had been a strict parent and remained so even dozens of years later, long after Hugo fell ill: “if I suffered an episode, mom would just scold me. Which makes things even worse, ‘cause getting all stressed doesn’t do me any good.” When someone in the family develops psychotic symptoms, the family usually finds it very difficult to understand what is happening, which may cause their inappropriate reactions only to aggravate the condition (Thornicroft 2006). In this case, Hugo’s mother is disabling him by amplifying

his mental condition. The approach of Hugo and Amelia’s families makes them marginalized in their families, and therefore they seek support elsewhere (often in the client center), thus separating themselves from their families.

Elisabeth’s family is, on the contrary, an example of the organized deviant group. Elisabeth believes her disorder is partly inherited: “In my family, it’s my granny, mom, a cousin, another cousin, an uncle who have suffered from depression...And my family, they took it really well because they’ve been through it.” Her family not only views Elisabeth in a non-discriminatory way, but they are also able, thanks to their experiences, to help Elisabeth when the illness presents itself: “I can’t really tell when I’m already on the way. People around me are better at this...Mom just warns me, ‘Hey, Betty, you’re getting manic.’ And I can see she’s right, and I didn’t use to be able to see that.” On the other hand, Elisabeth thinks her mother is too worried: “She’s always checking on me...I know that she does that because she loves me, but I’m 40 and I still have to call her every morning and evening. I just think it’s way over the top.” Thus, the mother’s approach to Elisabeth can be seen not only as helping but, at the same time, as disabling. Moreover, many of Elisabeth’s relatives had experiences with psychiatric treatment, labeling, and social stigma. By embracing the social status they received due to the label, they helped Elisabeth accept it, as well. In this way, the family deepens her separation from the majority.

In some cases, the interviewees believed that their psychiatric diagnosis improved their quality of life and relations with others. This is the case of Susan, who had mental problems before, but was diagnosed with mental illness only when she was

40 years old. She and her siblings had a very strict upbringing. When she felt sick and had trouble getting out of bed, her mother was angry at her for being lazy and sometimes gave her a beating. Susan herself was not sure what was wrong with her. Not much attention was paid to those things back then, and so no one thought to seek professional help. She attempted suicide when she was 18 years old. She was not properly examined then either: “I was interviewed by a psychiatrist as to why I had done it, and she said: ‘That was a silly thing to do, wasn’t it?’ And I replied: ‘Yeah, it was.’ And that was it.”

Susan has been ill for a long time without knowing it, and she found it difficult to cope with her mood swings. When she was diagnosed and began to receive treatment, she felt a great relief: “I was happy to finally know what was wrong with me... And also, the moment I got medication, everything fell in its place for me, just the way it should be.” In addition, Susan appreciated her diagnosis for improving her relationship with her eldest son, whom she thought had suffered from her extreme mood swings: “That’s, I’d say, the greatest benefit that I was able to talk about it...and managed to explain what’s wrong with me.” In Susan’s case, the relatives who had no previous experiences with mental illness did not understand her situation and tended to reject her. However, her son, when he got the information, supported her and, today, she babysits his children. Thus, the diagnosis itself and its treatment, if not accompanied by stigmatizing social reactions, can help the individual. Nevertheless, Susan fears negative social reactions outside her primary family. She does not even include her current partner in her family, and therefore she is unwilling to discuss her mental problems with him. While he knows she is on medication, he is unaware of the true reason. Susan does not spend much time with him, and she

referred to him as a “stranger,” saying that “I do not disclose my condition to strangers.” She tries to spend a lot of time on her own because she is unsure how he would handle the information: “Sometimes I sleep for a day when I am not well...I’m not sure whether my partner would put up with something like that if he saw me like this.” Susan’s case demonstrates that diagnosis may help eliminate troubles; impairment, if not seen as impairment and if not treated as such, may be a real burden for fulfilling life. On the other hand, she tries to hide her diagnosis from some people to avoid the mentally ill label, and she often segregates herself from other people, even her partner, to avoid negative reactions.

Neighbors and Friends

One’s hospitalization in a psychiatric ward is likely to become known to members of the local community. They may view the hospitalized through the label associated with psychiatric treatment and thus contribute to their exclusion from the majority. Every interviewee has faced prejudice; some of them mentioned in this context their neighbors. Elisabeth reminisces: “I was hanging up the laundry, and she said something along the lines of, ‘Why don’t you go back to the madhouse, where you belong.’... Neighbors look at me differently now. I think they talk about me as the ‘loony Beth.’” This is a way people with deviant labels are symbolically excluded within their social environment.

The interviewees strove to “look normal” when dealing with people outside their family who are considered mentally healthy. In the case of people with mental illness, trivial failures are seen as direct evidence of their difference. The labeled are aware of it and conform their behavior to it. For example, when talking to “normal” people, the stigmatized

individual has to carefully choose every word (Goffman 1963). This can lead to withdrawal from society, as was the case with Susan: “And I never try to make small talk...I tend to keep out of sight. So as not to give a reason or something. I’m worried about it, don’t wanna be made fun of or something, don’t wanna say the wrong thing.”

Having to constantly check oneself requires a lot of energy (Lemert 1951), so the majority of the interviewees withdraw from social life and form relationships mostly within a deviant social organization made up of individuals sharing the mental illness label. Most of the interviewees conferred that mental illness had completely changed their lives—their priorities changed, they started to see different people. This transformation of the labeled individual is a typical example of a deviant career. It involves isolation from a conventional community, followed by the decision to join an organized deviant group (Becker 1966), the client center in the case of the research participants. This is where labeled individuals meet people facing very similar problems, who are empathetic to them, and thus they mutually reinforce their “deviant” identities. Many interviewees describe joining the center as a “new beginning.” They were able to make friends there, to whom they did not need to explain how they felt or apologize for their behavior. The fact that the clients felt fully accepted in the group has led many of them to withdraw from the conventional community to the point that they have no other friends than those with mental illness.

For example, Helen made her first closer friend at the age of 18, but the friend ended their friendship after learning about Helen’s time in the psychiatric ward: “She thought I was a loon...She stopped talking to me ‘cause of my illness.” Later, Helen made a new

friend. Helen was not having any symptoms, and when she decided to confide in her friend, the friend did not judge her for her mental illness: “she was fantastic, took it really well. Also, because she knew me when I was doing well.” However, when Helen was hospitalized again, and she called her friend, she felt the friend was not happy to hear from her. Today, Helen no longer tries to make friends outside the client center, where she has found people who understand: “I don’t try to find friends among the healthy crowd anymore. You can be yourself here [in the center].”

Helen’s case illustrates secondary deviance (Lemert 1951), characterized by gradual identification with the label given by society and by the adoption of the resulting role. This is manifested by isolation from the majority and by a focus on relationships within deviant social groups, which hold values and norms different from those prevailing in social groups considered normal. Helen’s view was echoed by the vast majority of the interviewees, such as Sylvia: “I’ve made good friends [in the center] who make me happy...I just don’t hang out much with healthy people ‘cause they live different lives.” In addition, some of the interviewees have met their partners in the center, for example, Helen and James: “Mental illness gave me Helen...I don’t think I’d be able to, since I’m sick, to have a healthy partner. Things are awesome between us like this. I mean, we’re just very much alike.”

Work Experience

Work plays a pivotal role in one’s mental health. It offers the opportunity to gain skills, money, social contacts, and it can become a source of a valued social position and identity. The absence of employment is often connected with exclusion from society.

Although those with psychological problems may greatly benefit from employment, diagnosis is one of the most effective ways to disqualify them from the job (Thornicroft 2006). This is why employment was a much-discussed issue for the interviewees.

Although none of the research participants worked full-time at the time of the interviews, work is an important factor for many of them, not only financially but also socially. Employment would make them part of the majority and earn them a non-degrading social status. For many of the interviewees, “being normal” means working, but illness and medication make them too tired for “normal” work. That is why most of them claim benefits providing financial support to those unable to make a living because of their impairment.

Employing people with an impairment is financially supported by the state, so employers create protected jobs for them. However, although they promise a protected environment to their employees, many interviewees have never been given such benefits. For example, Melissa and another client from the center took a protected job in a museum café. The other people working in the café first kept their distance, but it disappeared over time, which was not always an advantage: “Once they saw...that we could manage, they...wanted us to give 100% at work.” Finally, Melissa had to quit because the job proved too demanding. Helen worked for an IT business, which employed people on impairment benefits, but failed to provide them with sufficient working conditions: “I was made to work just like the healthy people...All I can say is that it’s a business that hires the impaired. And it’s not taken into account at all.” Therefore, Helen had to leave the job. This shows that although the label makes life difficult in many situations, disregarding the im-

pairment, which is a life complication in itself, is not a solution; the disregard can disable the individual.

Helen also worked as an administrative assistant in a law firm, where all employees knew they would be helped by clients of a mental health center. The clients, on the other hand, knew nothing about their co-workers: “That was a real handicap...Some of the staff made direct fun of us and things like that.” Therefore, Helen quit the job since working there was not the way to overcome her impairment; on the contrary, the labeling environment strengthened her disability.

Multiple interviewees also reported that people labeled as mentally ill would be denied some of the jobs designed for individuals with impairment. This experience was reported, for example, by Bonnie: “I told them I had a mental condition. ‘Mental, you say? I’m sorry.’” Elisabeth shared a similar story: “And he asked me why I was claiming [impairment benefits], and then he never called again.” The interviews showed that research participants were discriminated against due to their mentally ill label even when applying for jobs that were publicly promoted as protected.

Former psychiatric patients struggle to find a job even if their behavior is acceptable. Although the symptoms of the disease are eliminated, they are mistrusted by potential employers. Therefore, most of the interviewees said they would conceal their illness from their employers to avoid dismissal or rejection. One of them is Janine, talking about her job in a hotel. She was hired by a woman who knew her, but did not precisely know about her condition: “Well, she found out later and got really upset with me, and she said I should’ve told her...I told her I’d not done it because I’d thought she wouldn’t

have hired me. And she said: ‘Yeah, you’re right, I wouldn’t have hired you.’”

Impairment Benefits—Aid or Disadvantage?

Claiming impairment benefits is a complication for some of the interviewees. There are conditions they are required to meet to be able to claim the benefits, and so they worry that they could lose this stable income if they find a job. This is described by Thornicroft (2006), who focuses on the causes that prevent people with mental illness from joining the workforce. One of them is the effects of social welfare payments. For many people with health impairment, these are the only reliable sources of income. Mental health service users are thus not willing to surrender this financial security because they fear they could soon lose the new job. This is why they often do not even seek jobs and stay separated from the majority.

This is the case of Janine, who had only a few part-time jobs but no permanent employment since she was diagnosed with mental illness. Ironically enough, she believes she would benefit from having a regular job: “I’m home all day long. It’d help if I went to work and had to get up, have a routine.” Although Janine would like to work, she is not seeking any employment: “It’s all limited by the fact that if you’ve a pension and fix yourself with a job, you could lose it.” In short, impairment benefits help those who are unable to work at full capacity, and yet they also serve to segregate individuals into a deviant label.

Many of the interviewees find a solution to their work-related problems in the client center. It provides them with simple job positions (receptionist, cleaning staff, etc.) without putting pressure on

performance. As Janine says: “Well, it’s only the center who don’t mind when...you don’t cope well with stressful situations.” These are often unpaid positions, and yet they are popular with the interviewees. Phillip was paid for cleaning in the center “about a year and a half,” and then, as he said, “I had to decide whether I’d go on cleaning the place and not be a client or be a client and not do the cleaning. When I had to make a choice, for me, it’s more important to hang with the people here than make money.”

The demand for employment at the mental health center supports Lemert’s (1951) concept of secondary deviation, where the individual with the deviant label is rejected by the majority and isolated. The isolation is further reinforced by employment in an environment filled with people stamped with the same label of the mentally ill. In line with Becker’s (1966) theory, not only did these individuals enter an organized deviant group, separated from the conventional community, and made friends there, they also found jobs there thanks to the support the group provides, which further strengthened their deviant identity. Preventing the individual from entering a non-deviant role, namely, a standard job, is an effective tool used to segregate the individual with mental illness into the deviant label (Scheff 1999), which is embraced by multiple interviewees.

Conclusion

The research suggested that family played an important role in the lives of the research participants. Some of the interviewees were helped by their families. It was the case of the families which had experience with mental illness and had gone through the same labeling process and social stigmatization

as the participants. In these cases, the family has itself become an organized deviant group which, in fact, enhances the individual's isolation from the majority. Some others were given degrading labels by their relatives, who treated them as inferior or felt ashamed of them in their worry of receiving "courtesy stigma" as a whole (Goffman 1963), or were overly concerned to a degree that made them appear incompetent. Research participants were also rejected by their neighbors, former friends, and in the working environments outside the client center—they were discriminated against in the field of work even when applying for positions designated for disadvantaged people.

People labeled mentally ill often prefer minimal contact with their families, neighbors, and former friends; they do not have regular jobs and seek support in a different environment. Thus, in a way, they exclude themselves from the majority, finding a solution to their problems in the client center that, as a result, functions as an organized deviant group. The entrance to the center is a "new beginning" for them that may lead to almost complete withdrawal from the majority. They have friends there; some of them even found their partners there. They can also work there, free from pressure from the employer about their performance. However, the positions are often unpaid and isolated from the majority, so they are, in fact, a part of work segregation.

Therefore, the interviewees agreed that mental illness had completely changed their lives. The label changed their identity as they were suddenly viewed as a different person, an "outsider" (Becker 1966). Their illness and label made them become interested in other things and see new people dealing with the same problems as theirs, not due to shared impairment (their diagnoses are different

and change over time) but because the "mad" label leads to similar afflictions (Kolářová 2012). They empathize with one another, mutually reinforcing their "deviant" identity.

The disabling label "mentally ill" can cause more harm than impairment because it creates an idea of how the labeled behave and what their place in society is. Society tends to see people with mental illness as the personification of a diagnosis/label, which affects their self-concept. People with mental illness internalize the degrading view of society and lack the ability to face the stigmatizing label and its effects. Their problems are thus largely caused by the social attitudes that these people face and which medicine is often not able to take into account in its treatment procedures. Without changes in social attitudes towards people with mental illness, their condition and situation cannot improve. Psychiatry needs to cooperate more with the social sciences because without such cooperation it cannot help these people enough. It is necessary, using the theoretical approaches and methodology of the social sciences, to study the attitudes of society and "be more open to the experiences of patients" (Uchtenhagen 2008:538); not only to rely on "the words of those who tried to cure, tame, correct, or end it," but also focus on "a rich and self-conscious record of the perspectives of disabled people themselves" (Adams et al. 2015:9), which was the attempt of this study.

Psychiatrists, no matter how good they might be as diagnosticians and with the best medical tools at hand, cannot change the disabling attitude of a patient's social environment from the position, which is built on the biological model of the disease and the pharmaceutical paradigm of treatment. This model is not able to take into account that some of the symp-

toms may not be caused by the disease itself, or only by this disease, but are also caused by social attitudes. The psychiatrist then treats the cause (impairment), but until the consequences caused by society (disability) are eliminated, the treatment cannot be successful. And so, even in the framework of psychiatry, “there is a growing appreciation that personally meaningful recovery from a serious mental disorder is not necessarily related to the specific treatments that are prescribed” (Bracken et al. 2012:432).

Psychiatric approaches based primarily on the biomedical model of disability should be replaced by a model that takes into account the socio-psychological dimension of the disease, in which “in the words of its founder Engel...‘all three levels, biological, psychological, and social, must be taken into account in every health care task.’ No single illness, patient, or condition can be reduced to any one aspect” (Ghaemi 2009:3).

This is a model that is “more scientific (since it includes also psychosocial sciences), pragmatic, and humanistic” (Ghaemi 2009:3). It offers a new approach in the form of “social psychiatry,” which focuses on “keeping the emotionally and mentally ill in the community, or at least attempting social reintegration wherever possible...enabling the individual to live adequately in a normal social context” (Uchtenhagen 2008:535). And this cannot be successful without the education of a society focused on removing negative labels and prejudices that are stereotypically associated with mental illness.

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An Exploratory Study on American-Born Imams: Negotiating Pastoral Responsibilities and Expectations

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Abstract: Symbolic interactionism, applied in the context of Muslim clerics, suggests that society is constructed based on lived experiences and shared symbolic meanings where people see themselves and the social environment through the eyes of others. For this study, data collected from in-depth interviews were examined to investigate the viewpoints and occupational pathways of American born imams. Thus, this study explored the responsibilities assigned to imams and their communal objectives. Overall, this study found several challenges that imams experienced, professional and organizational. Utilizing symbolic interactionism, these issues were explicated, and the following overarching themes were generated: imams received inadequate training as religious leaders in their communities, relationships between the mosque board and an imam can directly reinforce or mitigate a challenging work environment, and it is most advantageous for American communities to hire American-born imams over foreign-born imams. The findings indicate that organizational support extended to imams from mosque boards leads to not only an amicable relationship but more productive community engagement.

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Etymologically, the Arabic word "imam" may mean to guide, direct, or a prayer leader (Ansary 2009; Abuelezz 2011). Imam implies somebody, subsequently, who has some administrative or leadership capacity whether or not the individual is acceptable or malevolent (Abuelezz 2011). Notwithstanding, this definition is lacking when applied to imams dwelling in America as imams are required to lead prayer, fill in as instructors, and advocate for social justice (Haddad 1999). The jobs of imams are like Chris-

tian pastorate and Jewish rabbinate individuals (Ali, Milstein, and Marzuk 2005).

In addition to religious knowledge, imams are expected to be culturally mindful of different Muslim backgrounds and have the necessary communication skills to relate with diverse ethnicities. Acknowledging the influence of spiritual leaders, Weber (1993:76) observed, “the pastor will be consulted in all the situations of life by both private individuals and the functionaries of groups. Among those whose pastoral care has influenced the everyday life of the laity and the behavior of political officials in an enduring and often decisive manner include Muslim imams.” Similar was stated by Ibn Khaldun (1967), who documented that imams were revered due to their religious status and were approached with different issues due to their scholarly knowledge and praise-worthy characteristics.

This paper offers insight into imams’ struggles, despite their cultural competence, and their complex challenges of identifying their place internally within religious institutions and outside their institutions. As a result of their experiences, many imams maintain that foreign-born imams may struggle to culturally adapt to the American context, considering the vast roles the position demands. The analysis begins with a historical background of Muslims’ arrival to the United States, the establishment of Islamic institutions, and the routine tasks that imams perform. Utilizing a symbolic interactionist theoretical approach, imams symbolize leadership and serve as liaisons by representing their communities’ interests, more accurately, American communities. An analysis of American-born imams’ experiences reveals a lack of structural support from mosques and the extensive, rare, yet sought-after requirements of satisfying the imam profession.

Background

Understanding the struggles associated with building Islamic institutions (e.g., mosques) and establishing the role of imams within their respective communities requires a brief overview of Muslims’ history in America. Accounts trace Muslim migration to America before Columbus. However, this viewpoint is considered controversial among some historians (Nyang 1999; Van Sertima 2003; Abu-Bader, Tirmazi, and Ross-Sheriff 2011). Research indicates that the coerced enslavement of Black and Brown bodies that came to America, via the Atlantic slave trade, an estimated 30% of Africans were Muslims (Al-Islam 2006). Also, Muslims came to the United States through immigration beginning in the year 1875 to 1912, where the earliest immigrants were of Syrian and Lebanese descent (Nyang 1999; Al-Islam 2006). In terms of mosque-related rituals, the first documented Friday prayer took place in Ross, North Dakota, in the early 20th century (Nyang 1999). In addition, Detroit (MI) and Cedar Rapids (IA) were the earliest cities to build mosques in America (Nyang 1999). In 1965 and thereafter, Muslim immigrants were keen on building religious institutions that sought to preserve their identities and simultaneously encouraged civil engagement (Zaman 2008).

Masjid (Mosque) Role and Structure

The term *masjid*, or mosque, is described as a place of worship that is derived from the root word *sajada*, which means to prostrate (Omar 2005). The most original of studies that endeavored to reveal insight into mosques in America as organizations were by Haddad and Lummis (1987). The researchers were interested in how mosques served as institutions that advanced the integration process of

Muslims in American life (Haddad and Lummis 1987). In the American context, with Muslims as minorities (1% [Lipka 2017]), mosques may assume the role of acculturation into American culture where such a message can be disseminated (Cooley 1927). Furthermore, the underlying messages propagated within mosques are the following: religious identification, beliefs, and the practice of religious rituals (Gattino et al. 2016).

Relating to the administrative and managerial aspects of mosques, Nyang (1999) identified four different Muslim leadership models in America. First, a mosque in which there is a sole individual who oversees total control over mosque-related matters. A second model of leadership consists of a board of directors, who are usually the founding members of the mosque and assume the responsibility of recruiting and employing the imam. Third is a mosque that is affiliated with a central organization that usually hires a foreign-born imam who reports to and is supervised by the main organization. The fourth model of leadership is a hybrid one, where a board of director committee members is elected and then tasked to employ an imam while also serving as an independent institution from larger organizations. A later examination of mosque administration models omits Nyang's third model of institutions affiliated with larger umbrella organizations. This may be attributed to the expansion of mosque construction projects nationwide, which sought independence in the form of self-governance while also placing elected members on mosque board committees.

Furthermore, Bagby (2012) highlighted three mosque governance models where 47% of mosques are dually managed by a board and an imam. In this model, the board is responsible for administrative aspects of a mosque, and the imam directs the

spiritual and instructional community needs. In the second model identified by Bagby (2012), the imam is the lone leader without the oversight of a committee board (31% of American mosques). As for 22% of mosques in America, the third model is where the committee mosque board dictates and governs the majority of mosque-related matters, while the imam plays a symbolic and small role. Noteworthy to mention, a clergy class is nonexistent within Islam, and the varying mosque models are meant to provide organizational structure, according to Weber (Djedi 2011).

Imams

An imam is defined as a leader, prayer and spiritual leader, an example, teaching authority, and a standard (Wehr 1994; Omar 2005). It is pertinent to be aware that through interactions with the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims and non-Muslims both characterized him as an honest and trustworthy individual (Al-Ghazali 1999). With this background, further support for the utilization of a symbolic interactionist approach becomes apparent when evaluating imams who seek to embody the prophet's tradition.

In addition, the term imam varies and holds specific meanings depending on the Islamic theological sect, whether one is mainly Sunni (90% of Muslims) or Shiite (10% of Muslims) (Al-Krenawi 2016). In Sunni theology, there is no clergy class or anointment of a divinely inspired imam, whereas, in Shiite theology, the imam is restricted to specific individuals who are considered infallible, beginning with Ali (Ibn Khaldun 1967; Al-Krenawi 2016). According to Shiites, the legitimacy of an imam lies mainly in the hereditary succession from the lineage of Ali and his wife Fatimah (Ibn Khaldun 1967).

Historically, it has been the trend to hire immigrant imams since early accounts mentioned the Pittsburgh community hiring of an imam originally from Sudan (Nyang 1999). The practice of employing full-time imams from overseas continues till today, as only 15% of full-time paid imams were born in America (Bagby 2012). In fact, many mosques do not employ an imam on a part-time basis, and 19% of mosques have no imam at all (Bagby 2012). As for full-time imams, they are tasked and overloaded with various responsibilities that lead to burnout as they take little to no vacation time. This is a theme across faiths, and some faith leaders have not had a vacation in 18 years, which undoubtedly takes a toll psychologically and emotionally (Vitello 2010a). Regarding burnout amongst Muslim faith leaders, Imam Shamsi Ali said, “We have all of these problems, but imams are reluctant to express it because it will seem like a sign of weakness. Also, mosques do not pay much and many of them work two jobs” (Vitello 2010a). By serving God and their congregants, imams epitomize what Cooley (1927) termed “social consciousness” (awareness of society) in tending to the needs of their community members, which could lead to exhaustion.

Theoretical Framework

In analyzing human interactions from a microlens, the European sociologist, Georg Simmel, influenced American sociologists George Mead, Charles Cooley, and Herbert Blumer into forming the symbolic interactionist perspective (Babbie 2004). Mead concluded that individuals develop the “generalized other” through the practice of empathy, thereby allowing one to consider life from other individuals’ viewpoints (Babbie 2004). As a result of language and symbols, Mead suggested that individuals develop a common understanding and shared mean-

ings (Babbie 2004). Similar to Mead, another sociologist who conceptually advanced the interactionist approach was Cooley, who developed the concept of the “looking glass self” where we see ourselves and the social world through the eyes of other people and often adopt those views (Aronson, Wilson, and Akert 2007).

However, it was Herbert Blumer who famously advocated for symbolic interactionist theory. Building upon Mead and Cooley, Blumer (1969) posited that the two main conceptual pillars of societal interactions were culture and social structure. Culture is viewed as the result of what people do, and social structure is the result of how relationships impact the way people act towards one another based on shared meanings (Blumer 1969). Charon (1979:36) wrote, “each individual depends on society for symbols, without other people, each individual would be without a symbolic life and all the things which symbols make possible.” As Morgan (2010) outlined, ministers and imams symbolize sources of knowledge through their profession. Hence, imams are continuing to develop their identities based on societal relations and their socio-historical contexts (Scheuringer 2016).

Methods

For this study, in-depth and structured interviews were conducted with ten American-born imams across the nation. All interviews were completed between July and October of 2016 (see: Askar 2017; IRB approval through East Carolina University). Concerning the interview questions, the imams in this sample were requested to answer questions related to their career pathways, issues regarding the community’s and their personal mental health, American political rhetoric, interfaith relationships,

and stereotypes around the profession. To adequately address these discussion topics, questions were open-ended so that participants would voice their opinions using their language, resulting in rich and in-depth qualitative data (Stark and Roberts 1996; Denzin and Lincoln 2013). On its own, an in-depth exploratory study that yields rich data can diagnose social problems without the need for a deductive theoretical approach (Hammersley 2010).

Participant recruitment in the study was challenging, as contact with potential participants at a large Muslim conference yielded the participation of only one of the ten imams. The challenge in participant recruitment was attributed to three primary reasons: lack of contact between myself as the researcher and the participant imam, the focus on Muslims and minorities from politicians during the 2016 election, and issues with availability and scheduling conflicts. First, the lack of contact between myself as a researcher and an imam was a hurdle as the imams did not know me personally. In particular, many imams who were not local had no previous interaction with me, as I was unfamiliar to them due to distance. Second, the political rhetoric of the 2016 election, where there was talk of establishing registries for Muslim communities proposed by the Republican party, led to some reluctance and fear amongst potential participants. Lastly, for imams who agreed to participate, scheduling the interviews was a challenge due to their busy workloads. For some participants, flexibility in scheduling was critical, as participants rescheduled their interviews on multiple occasions.

To address some of the challenges related to my unfamiliarity with the participants, a list of potential participants was constructed from online databases and directories. Thereafter, I reached out to

imams that were local by email and through in-person introductory greetings. Emails were sent out to twenty imams from the directory list requesting their participation in my study. From the first imam who agreed to participate (after a brief meeting in person), I resorted to snowball sampling (Babbie 2004), where the first imam then referred me to other imams who were willing to participate in my study. As a result, snowball sampling was an effective method towards contacting participants by building a rapport with the referrer that I could not have established without snowballing. In fact, my attempts to contact imams individually without an imam's referral yielded non-responses. In addition, although the interviews were recorded on my mobile phone, imams were reassured that their participation was confidential and that I would use pseudonyms. I also reminded the imams that their participation was voluntary, they had the absolute right to not answer a particular question, and they were free to leave the interview at any point. With this in mind, imams felt comfortable expressing their viewpoints while also referring my study to other participants.

In total, ten imams elected to participate in my study. As previously mentioned, building trust was vital, as my participants seemed more comfortable knowing one of their colleagues participated in my study more so than knowing I had IRB approval. To develop the initial trust of participants in me, I revealed my positionality as a researcher who shares the same faith as the respondents, which was comforting and reassuring towards building a relationship, albeit a temporary one since I had no prior association with the participants. Furthermore, my interest in the topic resulted from a palpable enthusiasm found amongst congregants upon hearing that an American-born imam was set to be hired in

a community. This event was the impetus for my exploratory study. In terms of an operational definition, a potential respondent was any Muslim religious figure with Islamic knowledge regardless of ideology and who was born in America.

The interviews for this sample were conducted in-person, and for participants who were distant, the interviews took place through telephone. However, participants within driving distance were given the option to participate over the phone for convenience purposes. Three respondents participated in the interview face-to-face, and seven respondents were interviewed by phone. In terms of length, the shortest interview lasted 30 minutes, and the longest interview was an hour and 20 minutes. After completing the interviews, I transcribed the recordings from my phone, by which more than 130 pages of transcribed interview notes were generated. This sample's imams were racially and ethnically diverse, as the respondents were African American, Middle Eastern, Indo-Pakistani, and White. Also, some respondents were converts to Islam, while most were born into the Muslim faith.

Findings

Inadequate Training for Imams

A central theme that arose from the interviews was the inadequate preparation that this sample's respondents received. Although the respondents varied by religious educational attainment, they expressed the inadequacy of their training for the imam position. Specifically, by religious educational background, imams ranged from holding a certificate in Islamic studies to a doctorate in Islamic studies. In addition, this sample's imams were not lacking in experience, as the range in years serving

as imams were between 1 year and up to 29 years (average was ten years of experience). Nevertheless, the wealth of experience and education attained did not lead this sample's respondents to feel qualified to serve. These feelings were expressed by both Imams William and Jacob, although they had experience teaching and serving on a part-time basis within mosques. Their feelings are confirmed and supported through Al-Krenawi's (2016) study, where the sentiment of inadequate training for the imam position was likewise prevalent among European imams and largely attributed to the expansive role an imam is required to fulfill.

When speaking about the need for training in pastoral care, Imams William and Tim cited the numerous expectations of imams (leads to mental health stressors among imams and clergy, see: Vitello 2010b; and Pooler 2011; Abbasi and Gassas 2016) that include family and marital issues, domestic abuse, substance abuse, counseling, media relations, public speaking engagements, and other matters. These expectations require training rarely found among imams as there is no formal process towards becoming an imam (Morgan 2010). According to the participants themselves and based on suggestions provided from the imams interviewed, possible explanations as to why there is insufficient institutional training of imams include: an unclear definition of the term imam, imams receive general non-contextual training and education rooted in the religious sciences and Muslim community's stereotypes associated with imams that devalue the position.

Unclear Definition of the Term Imam

The participants in this sample reasonably attributed inadequate training for their roles to the lack of a standardized definition of the term imam.

This was obvious when the imams themselves differed as to what the term entailed. The participants found it challenging to explain the meaning of the term imam as Imam Stanley said, “Though I knew you were going to ask about that, I didn’t really, unfortunately, give it the thought that it deserves. I don’t think I really have a definition of the word imam.” Relatedly, it was Goffman who proposed the idea that people construct and negotiate their identities to develop meanings of situations (Howard 2000). When it comes to imams, this negotiation of identity was evident as most imams in this sample agreed that an imam in America vastly differs from an imam in overseas countries where they are expected mainly (and sometimes solely) to lead prayer in a mosque (Abuelezz 2011). As such, Imam Malcolm provided a metaphoric answer in describing what an imam represents, “imam, the word itself has a root for the word mother. It comes from the same root word in Arabic, so it’s like a mother.” Considering the male-dominated field of imams, stating the term “mother” was an interesting and ironic parallel drawn by Imam Malcolm, requiring further exploration into gender biases. [Attempts were made to interview Muslim women chaplains and religious leaders, yet to no avail.] Perhaps, Imam Malcolm’s utilization of the term “mother” as an imam aligns with other respondents’ views, wherein the definition was fluid, according to Imams Jacob and William, who stated that an imam could be a scholar, or a community leader, and can carry other definitions that disregard specific roles.

By providing a diverse and varying set of definitions of the term imam, the respondents expressed that an absence of a distinct meaning of the term imam did not bode well for the position. On this, Imam Erick said, “when we all come to America and grow

as a Muslim community, there’s no coherent definition, then it’s a position that is doomed to fail.”

General Education Lacking Cultural Context

Another reason cited for the deficient preparation of an imam for the position is that overseas educational seminaries do not consider the American cultural context. Most imams in America study the Islamic sciences abroad, where the overwhelming majority (94%) of imams obtained their degrees from overseas institutions (Bagby 2012). Compounding the issue, Islamic institutions and seminaries in America are still in their infancy (Burnett 2013), and contextual application issues arise from learning abroad (Abdul-Hakeem 2015). Although Imam Malcolm stated that there had been noteworthy progress and development of religious seminaries in America, another issue that Imam William brought forth is the shortage of competent imams in need across the nation. Accounting for the diversity in cultures was another critical challenge cited by Imams Tristan and William. Here, Imam William’s quote suffices: “the research shows that the Muslim community is the most racially diverse faith community in America. And in an Islamic center, there was a study that found that more than 75 different nationalities represented the Islamic center.”

Other contextual training issues cited by the imams included interfaith relations and addressing community members’ mental health. Studies have cited the lack of mental health training and counseling as a significant flaw among educating imams (Al-Krenawi 2016). Regarding interfaith relations, Imam Tim believed that imams from foreign countries are not trained in interfaith work, which is an expectation of American imams. In my sample, all the respondents affirmed their involvement in interfaith dia-

logues and outreach activities. Their involvement in interfaith work is comparable to the percentage (79%) of mosques in America that participate in interfaith activities (Bagby 2012). In summary, studies have confirmed my respondents' attitudes towards establishing new comprehensive training programs in America, and domestic institutions are viewed as the best means towards training future imams (Abuelezz 2011).

Imam Stereotypes and Devaluing of the Position

The third reason cited as an explanatory factor for the inadequate training of imams is that imams are labeled and stereotyped by the Muslim community. In addition, congregants devalue the imam position and conclude that their salaries should be modest. The imams in my sample mentioned stereotypes they encountered internally from the Muslim community, which included being money-driven, culturally regressive, incompetent, and too spiritual for congregants to approach. Intriguingly, the imams in this sample were not immune from having stereotypes towards imams, which is captured in Imam Erick's statement, "my own experience growing up as a young teenager in America, I look at all the imams around me, and the first thing that comes to my mind is that these guys are from another planet." A stereotype held among Muslim congregants is that imams are financially motivated. However, Imam Calvin saw that his colleagues were underpaid, considering the immense expectations and desired requirements linked to the position. There appears to be a generational difference—in Imam Erick's experience, second-generation Muslims see the value of paying more for a qualified imam.

An additional stereotype that arose from this sample's imams was the idea among their congregants

that they were unapproachable. As seen in Imam Michael's experience, he had to insist to community members that he was just a regular person. Also, Imam Tristan mentioned, "some people have some kind of superstition, and they might think you're a holy person or Allah [God] is going to answer your prayer or something like that." Commenting on the belief among congregants that imams view themselves above their constituents, Imam Stanley stated that congregants felt that an imam was keen on shaming them, and this false notion was damaging as it leads to communal distance and avoidance of interacting with imams.

Other stereotypes that imams tackled were incompetence and cultural backwardness. Imam Jacob was well aware of this stereotype and proceeded to defy the stereotype when he remarked: "So I try to sometimes go out of my way to kind of undo some of those stereotypes and let you know that, hey, I do have a science background, I do understand that the earth is round and it's not flat." Providing historical and background context, Imam William explained that overseas educational systems socialize their citizens to look down upon imams. Imam William said, "the number one highest-scoring students usually attend medical school, number two go to engineering, and, literally, the lowest-achieving students go to Arabic and Islamic studies." The ripple effect has extended to familial attitudes, where Imam Jacob said, "a lot of families who discourage people from or their kids from becoming imams...and so you should go back into a proper career."

The imams in this sample mentioned the lack of proper training for their profession. According to my data, three primary reasons arose in explaining the inadequate training of imams, which included: an unclear definition of the term imam, a general

education in the religious sciences that did not account for the American context, and stereotypes attached to imams that have led to the undervaluing of the position from further development.

Board Politics

Usually, a mosque board comprises community members who originally founded and established the mosque from its inception. However, mosque boards present another challenge for imams as they negotiate fluctuating identities between the community and board members. In *The Athaan in the Bull City*, the author notes two of the most outstanding issues found within mosque boards, which include the complications associated with hiring a full-time imam and intra-religious strife between Black Muslims and immigrant Muslims (Abdul-Hakeem 2015). In my study, disputes arose when the board disagreed with the imam's vision, which led to tension and a dissatisfying work environment between some of my participants and their respective boards.

The tension between the imam and the mosque's board led to some of my respondents' resignations from their positions. As such, three imams in my sample faulted the mosque board for their resignations and mentioned the disorganization found within their respective mosques. In addition, out of the ten imams interviewed, only one imam stated their non-involvement in board politics and said it dissuaded him from pursuing an imam position in the past. In the case of Imam Steven, after failed negotiations with the board, he said, "There was not a whole lot of conversation there. Then it was two weeks later that I called them into my office and I told them I was resigning. But, it was unfortunate because, in the end, everything was fine except for one person, but that one person had control." An-

other respondent who spoke about the friction between himself and the board, Imam Erick, mentioned, "I do believe there is a mismatch between my vision of how I'd like to build a community and how the board members and the institution and direction that they wanted to go. So, a combination of a lack of professionalism, perhaps not the clearest path outlined by the community board."

Colleagues have encouraged their fellow imams to live bi-vocationally following the life of Imam W. D. Muhammad to have a second and separate source of revenue (Rashaad 2015). It appears that the resignation of imams in America is a pattern, as former imam Marc Manley (2015) resigned due to long-standing discrimination, a lack of mosque board support, and a dysfunctional community vision. Theoretically, symbolic interactionist theorists observed that functional organizations have "some leadership, some policymakers, some individuals who speak on behalf of the group, and some individuals who take the initiative in acting on behalf of the group" (Blumer 1969:199). According to my data, the underlying reasons that explain why imams encounter challenges with their respective committee boards are organizational, cultural, and visionary differences.

Organizational Challenges

According to the respondents, organizational and structural issues within mosque boards were manifested in their lack of experience needed to manage an operational staff of individuals. This is captured in the statement of Imam William, "I think even step one of the awareness of what we are expecting of imams is quite lacking among hiring teams and among *masjid* boards, the congregation, and all across America." Also, upon speaking about the

peculiar hiring process, Imam Michael later found out that the board's search committee never saw his application, which he considered a sign of mismanagement and a poorly run administration. As it specifically relates to Imams Michael, Steven, and Erick, they resigned due to a dysfunctional mosque board. Imam Steven experienced four different mosque boards over two years, which indicates an unorganized organization.

The participants in my sample were surprised by the disorganization they experienced in working with mosque boards because of their professional backgrounds. Most of my sample (with one exception) did not actively pursue a career in serving as imams. My respondents' educational and professional backgrounds allowed them to experience a more organized structure than in the mosques they were employed. Since mosque boards exercised control over the institution, symbolic interactionist theorists mention how power has a significant impact in shaping meaning and the control of experiences (Rock 1979). These meanings and experiences left an indelible mark on Imam Erick as he observed, "I'm coming from the corporate world, there's a certain level of professionalism that you learn, and there's a way to navigate when it comes to hiring and negotiating these types of things, and I came to see that in the nonprofit Islamic world and the imam world it was very different." Imam Michael issued similar statements.

To improve and enhance board relations, several respondents offered suggestions in attempting to solve organizational issues. Imam Tim recommended a mosque model where the imam was the leader, and the board was set up to provide a type of checks and balances within the system. There has been a shift towards imams being leaders of their

mosques. In 55% of mosques, the imam is considered the leader, a noteworthy percentage change from the year 2000 when 41% of mosques considered the imam as the leader (Bagby 2012). As a result of challenges with disorganized mosque boards, Imam Jacob advises future imams to exclusively accept positions if the mosque's system permits institutional reforms; if not, then one should work outside the mosque system.

Cultural Challenges

In addition to organizational issues, a second reason found in the transcripts as to why there were disputes between the board and the imams revolved around cultural matters. From the viewpoints of my sample, some respondents believed that mosque boards lacked diversity in thought and racial representation. Moreover, some imams described board members as inflexible, while others were power-driven. To prove their ability to control and lead mosque-related matters, board members viewed imams as individuals who would potentially infringe upon the authority of the committee board. Imam Erick commented that the board becomes uneasy when an imam is the community's visionary leader because the board views its role as the community's driver. In an example highlighting the extent to which the board impacts the freedom of imams to speak about certain issues, Imam Malcolm said, "A lot of the imams they may not feel comfortable, especially since you're in a paid position that sometimes you have to bite your tongue because this board that sits over you tells you to do this and do that."

The power struggle between the board and imam was also evident in what Imam Tim observed as a racial difference where in immigrant-led mosques,

the imam has no authority, and the board yields the power. In comparison, in Black Muslim-led mosques, the imam is the sole community leader and the authority figure. Imam Tim's observations are supported in some studies where 69% of mosque boards hold the final decision (Bagby 2012). On the other hand, in Black Muslim-led mosques, the board has less influence than in immigrant-led mosques, where the last word is settled by a mosque board in only 25% of their mosques (Bagby 2012). Similarly, Imam Stanley attributed the struggle for power as a challenge rooted in the board's attained educational or socioeconomic status, which the board perceives would deem them as influential as the imam.

The influence of the board can repel imams from their occupations, as in the case of Imam Steven, who left the position due to the sway of a single board member. The decision made by Imam Steven and other imams to resign is a reflection of generational cultural differences. Annotating this perspective, Imam Calvin insisted that American-born imams would not tolerate being pushed around, but acknowledged that mosques needed to accommodate imams better. Consequently, the current relationship with mosque boards is unhealthy and unsustainable.

Differences in Vision

A combination of organizational and cultural differences between mosque boards and this sample's imams naturally lends to differences in vision. When a difference in vision occurs, a need for compromise arises, and sometimes, the board may need to approve the overall direction and vision of an imam. Nevertheless, Imam Tristan cited continued differences, and two respondents recalled their inability to continue pursuing higher education (as resident

scholars) as legitimate and valid concerns leading to their resignations. The committee boards declined to support the educational attainment of the imams, as Imam Steven recalled, "I need time to study, even if it's just a handful of hours a week. And they didn't see the need for that, so, for me, that was kind of like the last straw...the work was going to destroy me; that's not going to be healthy."

In addition, clashes in vision between the board and imams centered on financial and hiring practices. In most mosques (61%) in America with a full-time paid imam, the imam is often the only individual who is financially compensated (Bagby 2012). As such, mosques depend mainly on unpaid volunteers to manage their events and activities. Similar to imams, volunteers are likely to experience burn-out as many mosque boards display an aversion towards compensating staff members. Detailing the issue, Imam Michael stated, "we need to put our money where our mouth is if we say we want to run professional organizations. We have to take actual steps towards doing that, and a volunteer board cannot run a large organization or the day-to-day activities of the place." Adding to the problem is how mosque boards then choose to funnel resources towards building a larger Islamic center (preference of the board) instead of investing in human capital (preference of the imams). Two respondents, Imams Erick and Steven, definitively maintained the stance that finances should be distributed differently, and this difference in vision was another reason for their resignations.

In the experiences of this study's sample, imams struggled to maintain a healthy and mutualistic working relationship with their respective committee boards. For the imams that especially resigned from their positions, they viewed their board mem-

bers as individuals who sought control over the institution in general, and the imam in particular. According to the transcripts, three underlying and prominent factors explained issues between the board and the imams in this sample. Organizational challenges, cultural differences, and clashes in vision were critical reasons that impaired the work environment, according to my respondents.

Whether It Is Advantageous Being an American-Born Imam

As aforementioned, one of the primary motivational factors for exploring this study was the palpable excitement expressed by congregants of a community upon knowing that an American-born imam was being hired. Relatedly, a question that was discussed in my interviews was whether my respondents' experiences boded well for future American-born imams or if foreign-born imams could aptly fill open imam positions. In specific, my sample was asked to compare and contrast the hiring of an American-born imam as opposed to a foreign-born imam. There was a slight difference of opinion with my sample, where most respondents (seven imams) opined that American-born imams needed to fill open imam positions over foreign-born imams. Conversely, two imams felt that there were no differences between who was hired as long as the imam was culturally competent, and the ability to display this quality may lead the two participants to favor a foreign-born imam.

No True Advantage to Being American-Born

Beginning with the minority of respondents, it was Imams William and Tristan who did not conclude that an imam's birthplace was a predictor of an effective and successful imam. As a proponent of this

viewpoint, Imam Tristan was keen on mentioning his lack of proclivity towards a foreign-born or American-born imam. About who was more suitable for employment, Imam Tristan commented, "different Islamic centers have things in common, but also differences, so it doesn't work the same everywhere. So, you won't necessarily have a good fit in some communities. But, it's hard to generalize about that." Likewise, emphasizing the point of considering each community as particular cases, Imam William said, "media, pastoral care, youth work. In some mosques, the imams have facilities and logistics, and administrative roles. And so each one has to define what the congregations' needs are; obviously, people can come in with a breadth of experience, and they have competence in some areas." In addition, Imams William and Tristan stated that a central attribute that mitigates against the need for hiring an American-born imam lies in the ability of an imam to become acclimated with the American community in general, and their local community in specific. Adapting to their local contexts was not quixotic, according to Imams William and Tristan, and communities should not adopt sweeping generalizations that affect their decision-making upon hiring a new imam.

What was apparent from the transcripts with Imams William and Tristan was their non-preference of an American-born imam over a foreign-born imam. However, an intriguing and subtle conclusion of Imam William was that he felt that a foreign-born imam was more of an appropriate hire for smaller Muslim communities. One may make a distinction that Imam William differentiated who would be a better hire based on the size of the community, but in his silence on larger communities, there was no general rule that pointed to favoring an American-born imam, in his opinion.

American-Born Imam Is Preferred

The majority of my respondents expressed their preference for hiring an American-born imam over a foreign-born imam. Several factors were cited by these respondents that guided their rationale, namely, the political climate post 9/11, socio-cultural differences (see: Nyang 1999), and linguistic advantages favoring American-born imams. Of the most significant was 9/11, as the involvement of Muslim communities in social and political activism was under the spotlight (Bagby 2009; Al-Krenawi 2016). After 9/11, restrictions on visas granted for imams to work in the United States led to a growing need for American imams to fill the void.

In my study, in terms of cultural understanding, an emphasis was made by the proponents of American-born imams over foreign-born imams due to their extensive experience with the American context. In this study's sample, most of my respondents strongly advocated for American-born imams and desired a change demographically of who served as an imam nationwide. Imam Jacob stated the percentage should shift from the current 85-90% where immigrants serve as imams to where 85-90% of imams are born and raised in America. These attitudes were likewise found among Muslim congregants, where studies have shown that communities become dissatisfied with an imam who cannot address religious and secular issues of first- and second-generation Muslims (Ul Mobeen 2012; Al-Krenawi 2016).

From a symbolic interactionist lens, shared meanings of American culture have assisted Imam Jacob when speaking to the concerns of Muslim youth and displaying the ability to relate to non-Muslims socio-culturally. Amplifying this attitude was Imam Michael, who said, "A foreign-born imam doesn't know what it

means to work a 9 to 5 job. Doesn't know what it means to have a household where, say, for example, the father is working, and the mother is working, and the kids have their schedule because they didn't grow up with that and didn't see that." In addition, Imam Michael objected pedagogically with foreign-born imams as they lacked the cultural competency when he said,

And so I saw people in the *masjid* who don't understand the American Muslim experience, and they are lecturing me about how to live, and I couldn't sit knowing that ability you had in giving more. So, until there was actually a formal opening in one of the *masjid* [mosques] for a position, that's when I first started considering the position. And I felt that I had more to offer because I was born and raised here, and I know the American mindset; why not go into this field?

Some respondents, notably Imam Stanley, recalled that the Muslim community's socio-demographic makeup is the majority being American-born, which should coincide with more American-born imams being hired.

Moreover, another factor cited as an advantage for hiring an American-born imam over a foreign-born imam was the awareness of potential professional development opportunities. Specifically, these opportunities consist of access to training opportunities and social activist causes based on the relationships formed with interfaith groups. The respondents in my sample believed that overseas imams struggle to build alliances with marginalized communities, especially Black communities and communities of color. Both Imams Stanley and Malcolm expressed the necessity for imams to form coalitions based on social justice, and this advantage was afforded more strongly in favor of an American-born imam as Imam Malcolm articulated,

I think one of the biggest advantages is knowing the topography of this land, and we know...and actually being an African American. Because we've struggled and came out of slavery, there's people here, and we're better equipped to deal with them, and so it was a mistake for any of the immigrants not to align themselves with us. Many of them recognize now that they should've done that and not set themselves up somewhere else, because we know how to deal with that.

Lastly, the justification for employing an American-born imam over a foreign-born imam was based on proficiency in the English language. The ability to communicate, written and oral, using the English language was a significant asset that worked in the favor of American-born imams. Imam Michael vented,

The language is so important, and I'll be very honest, I'm still frustrated on a national stage, it sort of seems you see thickly accented people where their command of English is fine maybe, but it's a disconnect that you're building with society. Look, this is who Muslims are, no, that's not who Muslims are, and why is this person representing who I am and what I am about. We are trying to represent the Muslim American faith, so those kinds of things are very frustrating and also translate into how we address communities.

In my sample, imams mentioned that through social media and other online platforms, audio and video recordings of their sermons could have a global impact as English continues to gain a universal audience. The importance of language has been found in Morgan (2013), where—due to their foreign accents—immigrant clergy across various faiths struggle to communicate their messages clearly.

The inductively concluded theme of preferring an American-born imam over a foreign-born imam re-

quires further empirical analysis. Although the theme was apparent in the interviews conducted, and most respondents shared their preferences for an American-born imam, more data collection is required that would enable a comparative investigation. Nevertheless, in this sample, seven respondents were more inclined towards hiring more American-born imams. Two respondents did not acknowledge a true difference in hiring an imam based on national origin—as long as cultural competency was displayed.

Discussion and Conclusion

My study's goal was to understand the personal perspectives, challenges, and career paths of American-born imams. Several implications emerge from the findings of this study. Amongst the implications that may benefit in understanding the challenges and career paths of imams is the intersectional analysis of gender and race. Since a finding of this study was the lack of exclusionary standards for the imam position related to gender and race, studies are needed that shed light on the path of women and minorities as Muslim leaders. Symbolic interactionism provides a suitable theory for understanding the individual "self" and identity (Blumer 1969), particularly of women and non-Arab imams. Questions arise about how the challenges and professional progressions differ by race and gender, where social issues such as prejudice and discrimination may be at the forefront. Another implication based on the findings of this study is the continued need for training. Professional training seems to be a dire need and includes non-profit institutional management for board members and professional development workshops for imams themselves. In such training, emphasis should be on workshops that lend to professional development and leadership, increased public engagement with local officials

and student organizations, interfaith coalitions, media relations, and social justice issues.

Additional research is required explicating the differences between American-born imams and foreign-born imams. A topic of profound consequence, this study's sample believed that the future of Muslim leadership was largely contingent on the messenger, which would then shape the message itself to the Muslim community in particular, and the American society in general. As such, imams in my sample have been tasked with immense and vast communal responsibilities that are not required of overseas imams. Hence, a need arises for the development of Muslim seminaries and institutions that focus on leadership training domestically.

Here, I suggest a potential program that would assist in the development of aspiring imams. Specifically, I recommend that mosques and leadership seminaries construct an imam internship program that would be paid for by the hosting institution. In this program, after undergoing an interview, the intern would shadow an American-born imam for some time in a community that is foreign to the intern. Contributing to the development of the intern, they would be involved in the following activities:

1. Participate in meetings with board and committee members.
2. Prepare for and give Friday sermons.
3. Conduct town hall meetings with community members to discuss the needs and issues of the community.
4. Participate in local interfaith and social justice initiatives.

5. Coordinate meetings with college and university clubs such as the Muslim Student Association.

6. Address the local media regarding matters related to the Muslim community.

Transitioning to mosque boards, here I provide some recommendations to board members that would facilitate a positive and collaborative work environment. As it relates to my theme of challenges with board relations, imams work under a board that is mostly older than the imam. As chronicled in the documentary *UnMosqued* (2014), the average age of a board member in American mosques was 52. This represents generational issues that impact an imam's vision regarding the organizational structure of an institution. As such, board members should consider grooming the Muslim youth through mentorship programs. In addition, board members should come into their positions without the expectation that they should serve multiple terms or accept lifetime membership. As a result, an institution will continue to have diverse voices and opinions that are valued within the Muslim organization. Furthermore, of significant importance is that board and committee members address staffing issues within Muslim organizations and rely less on unpaid volunteers. Muslim organizations should budget for paid employees and staff besides simply compensating the imam.

The significance of my study was that it provided a platform for imams to voice their concerns and perspectives, which offered insight into the trajectory of Muslim leadership in America. Utilizing only qualitative data, this study was limited as an exploratory study as it relied on a small sample size. However, the limitations of this study provide an avenue for future research that delves into differences

between mosque leadership models and a comparative study between American-born imams and foreign-born imams. To conclude, further research

could investigate the attitudes and the perspectives of Muslim congregants regarding the imam they would prefer to serve as their community leader.

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Mobilities, Individuation, and Agencies: An Analysis Based on Young Migrants' Biographical Narratives in Buenos Aires, Argentina

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Abstract: Social studies point out the unequal conditions for moving or staying, internally or internationally, that young people from different social sectors face in their biographies. In this article, we analyze the migratory experiences of young people from popular sectors of the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, Argentina. To do that, we put into dialogue recent studies on migration and proposals of the sociology of individuation and the new mobility paradigm. We approach the individuation processes of these young people through the qualitative analysis of their biographical narratives in which their migration experiences emerged as turning points in their lives. The article argues that young migrants from popular sectors draft their agencies and shape themselves as individuals by mobilizing material and symbolic supports and accessing different social shock-absorbers that allow them to cope with three major social challenges in their migratory processes: the *socio-labor trial*; the *family trial*, and the *identity trial*. By identifying the discontinuities and the common evidence present in the migratory experiences of these young people and their families, the paper ends highlighting the articulations among coercions, elasticities, and strategies that these youth migrant mobilize, individually and collectively, around themselves and others, through *border-links* to create shelters and deal with such challenges.

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In the last ten years, social research began to distinguish the peculiarities in young migrants' mobilities. These analyses point out the unequal conditions for moving or staying—internally or internationally—present in young people's biographies from different social sectors, as the economic and social consequences that these mobilities cause in their families and places where they move around (Frändberg 2014; van Geel and Mazzucato 2018).

Such approaches introduce young people's experiences and agencies as relevant dimensions for the study of migratory processes (Dako-Gyeke 2016; Lee 2016; Moskal and Tyrrell 2016; Kok, Coetzee, and Elliker 2017). Looking to recognize children and youth as subjects of rights and independence, the first inquiries tended to observe their experiences as individual actions and disconnected from the family environment. However, from the recent critical perspectives, youth mobilities are identified as relational processes and in a continuum of *independence/dependence* concerning their family bonds (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009; Giralt 2016).

To understand young people's experiences, some authors go back to the concepts of *the second or third generation*. Notions that were discussed because of their static character, based on ethnic condition or the role in the family, that makes invisible the multiple dimensions of the youth identities go through in migratory processes (Raffaetà, Baldassar, and Harris 2016).

Other analytic proposals associate the transition processes between geographic spaces and transitions to adulthood (Punch 2015; Huijsmans 2018). These transitional approaches, prevailing in the studies about youth, set out the idea of some milestones, especially linked to the education, labor, or family, as

needed steps to adulthood. Such perspectives—with a sense of progressive or lineal development of being young—tend to (re)produce static, homogenizing, and adult-centric visions of youth. Although they recognize possible discontinuities in modern societies, they thrive on the notion of common stages to get through adulthood and the use of the term *transition* (Skelton 2002; Coulter, van Ham, and Findlay 2015; Roberti 2017). Distancing us from such approaches, we consider social transformations of the last decades, that de-standardize and singularize trajectories, require new analytic lectures like the ones that the sociology of experience (Dubet 2010) and sociology of individuation (Martuccelli 2007)—we will go back to this perspective and develop it in the following section.

In many studies taking place in Latin America about young people's experiences, tensions arise between the static and homogenizing perspectives about children and youth, based on biological, psychological, or unilateral sociological definitions, and, on the other side, conceptions that exaggerate the fragmented and momentary character of young identities (Reguillo 2012). Both analytic postures contribute to reproducing the negation and *negativization* processes of the young people—especially in popular sectors—their existence as total subjects is denied (in transition, incomplete), and their practices are relativized (youth-problem, young-deflected, rebel, marginal, and criminal, among other stereotypes) (Chaves 2010). Facing these dichotomous conceptions, thinking of the youth from the notion of generation, allows us to visualize those socio-historical aspects that delimit common settings of socialization, as well as the capacity of the actors for the comprehension and identification of a series of common challenges that they encounter in a specific historical moment (Di Leo and Camarotti 2015; Vommaro 2015).

The research findings reported here are framed within a doctoral thesis and three financed projects in which we analyze the bonds between the social inequalities, experiences, and processes of individuation of young people belonging to popular sectors in diverse regional and institutional contexts in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (MABA), Argentina (Di Leo and Camarotti 2013; 2015; Tapia 2016; 2019; Di Leo and Arias 2019). In the last of these projects, we inquired into the involvement experiences and the intergenerational bonds of young people in social institutions and organizations that promote, in popular neighborhoods, the access and exercise of rights. In these studies, we approached their (im) mobilities, affections, and bonds, since their articulations and tensions are present in the biographies and personal trajectories. To do that, we went back to the theoretical framework of the sociology of individuation by Martuccelli (2007) and Araujo (Araujo and Martuccelli 2012), looking to identify the social trials presented in their biographies, as well as their works and supports they use to overcome such challenges.

Going back to the results of such investigations, in this article, we focus our attention on the following questions-problems: What characteristics and senses represent the migratory mobilities in the young biographies of popular neighborhoods? What social trials are connected to such migratory processes? Which supports these young people and their families make use of when facing such challenges? How do the agencies of these people draft themselves concerning such evidence and social support?

As we develop in this work, the main finding of our research is the identification of three big *social challenges* or *trials* in which young migrants from popular sectors draft their agencies and shape themselves as individuals, moving various supports and

accessing or drafting different social shock-absorbers that allow them to face multiple risks and vulnerabilities:

- A. *Socio-labor trial*: searching for a job and housing is one of the young people and their families' main motivations when they want to move internally or internationally.¹ In this search, multiple displacements cause significant biographical changes in their narratives.
- B. *Family trial*: the tensions and conflicts in the shaping, the maintenance, the regrouping, or even the breakdown of relationships, as well as the new bonds and affections linked to the familiar are significant for the young in their migratory processes.
- C. *Identity trial*: the different forms of discrimination given in their biographies are lived as authentic challenges for the young people, to which they have to spread several tactics to get accepted or integrated into public or private spaces.

This article is organized in the following way: first, we review the perspectives of agency, sociology of individuation, and the new paradigm of mobilities. Then, we present the methodological strategies we followed for the construction and data analysis from biographic narratives. Third, we develop the results from our analysis taken from the young migrants' biographical narratives, organized around the three main social trials mentioned in their individuation processes. In the conclusions, from the summary and articulation

¹ According to King and Skeldon (2010), we understand that the historical differentiation between the internal and international migrations needs to be discussed. Such distinction was based on the differentiation between the politics and symbolic boundaries, the number of people who mobilize, the covered distances, or the linguistic and cultural barriers. Whereas, we consider the (im)mobilities from their complexity, advising their tensions and articulations, which exceed such standards.

of such challenges, we consider the drafting of young people's agencies and identities in popular sectors concerning their migratory experiences.

Theoretical Framework

One group of theoretical and methodological approaches in social sciences is focused on the problem of social order, which would be a product of a series of emerging structures (political, economic, symbolic, and cultural) and coercions (a structured forced system) that articulate and interpenetrate the different social actions between each other. From an opposite analytic posture, a group of philosophical currents and social theories are faced by the biologist, economist, culturalist, and/or structuralist determinism, putting the topic of the actor's freedom in the center. Facing these dichotomy positions (and simplifiers), Martuccelli (2016) proposes to put the problem of the agency in the center of new sociological questions: What specific social characteristics make it possible to always act in a different way? Based on some of his empirical and theoretical research, this author proposes an ontological answer to this inquiry: "Social life can be defined metaphorically as an area with resistant malleability among variable elasticities" (Martuccelli 2016:18 [trans. SAT and PFDL]).

As in social life, there are a thousand layers of textures (cultural and symbolic) and coercion (economic and political) that operate in an irregular, sporadic, and variable way; the agency is possible, that is to say, we always can act in many ways. This does not mean renouncing the existence of clashes with reality but making the sociological analysis of such encounters more complex. The individuals permanently act in various social and elastic *in-between-worlds* that make the moments of encounter with reality more complex. This deviation of the perspectives allows us to understand, for example,

the multiplication of strategies developed by different actors—individual and collectives—to get access to social *shock-absorbers* that allow them to protect themselves from the risks (economic, political, environmental, and/or sanitary) multiplied in the current stage of modernity (Martuccelli 2016).

The narrow homology between social inequalities, collective identities (social class, gender, race, generation), and personal experiences discloses with less effectiveness than in the mid-twentieth century, under the increased amount of anomalies, uncertainty, and possibilities that characterize our globalized societies. As Araujo and Martuccelli (2010; 2012) analyze, in Latin-American societies, most of the individuals feel that their social positions are inconsistent, which leads them to spread several practices directed to anticipate and protect themselves against threats. The subjects build a series of singularized *refuges*, combining the following: a) a heterogeneous group of social and state shock-absorbers (for instance, the infrastructure of public services, social rights, and family support); b) cognitive capacities, forms of reflexivity to identify the exact nature of the threatening risks; c) collective and individual possibilities of risk factors control. Taking these actors' strategies in the sociological analysis of inequalities into account "allows us to describe, more precisely, the differences between the individuals and understand what these differences produce politically" (Martuccelli and Santiago 2017:140 [trans. SAT and PFDL]).

During many decades, social sciences—considering uncritical theories and metanarratives originated in central countries—have cast doubts on the existence of individuals in the peripheral societies; and, especially, they have denied that condition to members of socially subordinated groups (like women, children, young people, poor, and migrants). "These people were seen

as anomalies and so, other modalities of individuation were invisibilized" (Araujo and Martuccelli 2014:25). To get through these epistemological barriers, Martuccelli (2007) and Araujo (Araujo and Martuccelli 2012) develop social research in France and Chile in which they identify and articulate the structural *trials* and the *supports* concerning which the actors are constituted as individuals. There is no individual without a group of supports—affective, material, and symbolic—that are spread in their biography. They function as long as they remain under a threshold of consciousness. Some occur at the interchange between the inner worlds—functioning as individual self-support—and external, objectified as a support for the subject. They also use the concept of *social trials*, defined as:

structural and historical challenges socially produced, culturally represented, unequally distributed that individuals—all and each of them—are forced to face within society. The notion of trial, therefore, proposes, like so many others, an articulation between the structural processes and the personal experiences, but where other notions, for example, the theory of socialization, seek to establish the necessary bonds...the study for evidence leaves this relationship always open, and therefore, problematic. [Araujo and Martuccelli 2012:16-17 (trans. SAT and PFDL)]

This concept is constructed by articulating two analytical levels: on the one hand, it starts from the *narratives* through which individuals express themselves; and, simultaneously, it constructs an *analytical representation* that distances itself from concrete narratives, seeking to relate socio-historical changes and the actors' lives (Martuccelli 2007; Araujo and Martuccelli 2012).

The recent analyses of the migratory processes also cause tension and re-signify the concepts about society and individuals. The approach of *the new par-*

adigm of mobilities (Sheller and Urry 2006) allows us to notice that studies about migratory processes have been sustained in static notions of territories and cultures associated with them. This does not mean considering the moving as newness or a more moving contemporary world than in the past. Nor prioritizing flows, the speed over the fixed, and the stable.

Such an approach proposes, instead, to recognize the intersections between the mobilities and immobility of people, objects, images, money, or information, problematizing the positive exaltation of freedom to move that does not question the conditions that lead or limit the movement of people. In this sense, how certain mobilities are regulated and limited by legal, economic, or symbolic restrictions are tracked, while others are allowed, motivated, or desired (Salazar and Smart 2011). Thus, the aim is to identify the different capacities to be mobile—or to be immobile, to remain—deployed by the agents. These capacities are unevenly distributed among different social groups (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004).

Methodology

Taking up previous studies made by our team, we approach the processes of individuation and mobility of young people through the qualitative analysis of their biographical narratives. Qualitative research seeks to increase our understanding of society from the meanings that individuals assign to their experiences (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). Framed in this paradigm, biographical methods are oriented to the analysis of the relations between the individual and the society—they give an account of the lived experiences and the senses attributed to them and, at the same time, allow us to understand how they are inserted in certain historical, social, and cultural conditions. It seeks to transcend the particular case through interpretive procedures

that approach the interrelations between the personal, the historical, and the social in their mutual constitution (Chamberlayne, Bornat, and Wengraf 2000).

In this sense, Wolfram Fischer-Rosenthal (2000), in dialogue with the sociologies of Simmel and Luhmann, among others, proposes the conceptual tool of *biographical structuring* to connect the individual and the social—subject and object, citizen and State—in the present stage of modernity. Biographical structuring is a practice and a form of temporalization through which individuals, institutions, and societies can deal with the growing contingencies, sustain complex social structures, to interpret and balance the multiple options they face daily.

Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1980) use the biographical method to carry out a typological analysis of bakers in Paris. To do this, they use the procedure of informative saturation, consisting of the accumulation of stories of different individuals of the same social category to construct, from these stories, a single one. Both this typological analysis and the *representativeness standards*—which Pujadas-Muñoz (1992) proposes that should guide the selection of informants to fit a certain social type—are inadequate in a context characterized by the increasing singularization of biographical trajectories in the current stage of modernity (Araujo and Martuccelli 2014).

Therefore, we consider the epistemological, ethical, and methodological position of Michèle Leclerc-Olive (2009), who propose the use of *biographical narratives*,² more relevant for our study. According to the

author, these biographical narratives have two main characteristics: they are *performative*, that is, they are the narratives that institute a story; they are *referential* because, having their roots in the actors' experiences, they also belong to the historical-sociological genre. In her research works, she seeks to analyze the heterogeneity of the temporalities of individuals—even within the same social category—from the construction the actors make of their biographical narratives around the *significant events* pointed out by them.³

The articulation between the performative and referential dimensions of biographical narratives occurs around significant events, *turning points* or *turns of existence*: nodal points of biographical experience; moments when the representations of the individual around oneself, society, and the world are altered (Lincoln and Denzin 2003; Leclerc-Olive 2009). These are situations where the subjects question themselves, interpret, and try to find meaning, produce new theories about their world:

a biographical event is an intersubjective and shared experience...Although during the meeting with the researcher, whole parts of the set time of “prefabricated narratives” are available, the exchange can allow the emergence of hidden memories, the formation of new configurations, or unknown reconciliations. In any case, recovery coexists with co-production. What makes the meeting with the researcher exceptional is the journey of the biography that is carried out jointly and that allows a relatively distant look. [Leclerc-Olive 2009:19-20 (trans. SAT and PFDL)]

² There are some distinctions between the terms *stories* and *narratives*. Stories have narratives embedded in them in addition to interweaving elements. Narratives are intersubjective co-constructions of meaning involving a narrator, a listener, and the linguistic and social rules of interpersonal communication (Kohler Riessman 2008; Corbally 2011).

³ In this sense, we agree with the theoretical-methodological proposal of Gómez-Esteban (2016); and we differentiate ourselves from other recent studies, such as that of Pac-Salas and Ventura de Pedro (2015). Such studies use the life story method to study the influences of classical social institutions (family, education, labor market) and class on the transitions of young people to adult life, putting analytical emphasis on social continuities rather than on individual heterogeneities.

In our research, the construction of the biographical narrative was agreed upon throughout five or six interviews with each young person. We began the first meeting with a question aimed at accessing their subjective self-identifications: “If you had to tell me who you are, what would you say? How would you describe yourself?” Then, we proposed to them to identify the most significant events in their lives: “If you had to choose the main moments or situations that caused very important changes in your life, what would they be?” During two or three subsequent meetings, we suggested that young people describe and consider each of the significant events they identified, which we wrote down and recalled in the course of the interviews.

Around the fourth or fifth meeting, we asked interviewees to order the selected events on a sheet of paper as they wished and explain why they decided to do so. The theoretical-methodological justification for this “putting on paper” of the *significant events* lies in the fact that they “constitute the narrative framework of the narratives and have a temporality function: they are not placed on dates of a pre-existing calendar but build a *personal calendar*” (Leclerc-Olive 2009:4 [trans. SAT and PFDL]).

After each meeting, the transcripts of the previous interview are returned to the young people so that they can introduce the desired modifications. In the last interviews, we propose to them the first draft of their biographical story, written in the first person based on the interviews transcribed and corrected, organized in chapters corresponding to each of the events identified and ordered by them. The consensual writing of the biographical story ends when young people consider that they no longer have anything to add or modify. As a final product, texts that narrate and organize in a personal way the events considered most significant

in their lives are obtained. These documents have a dual purpose: first, they constitute objects of value for each subject interviewed, since they are their biographical narratives; second, they are valuable materials for sociological analysis, without replacing the interviews *per se* (Di Leo and Camarotti 2013).

Sample

The conformation of the sample, following the guidelines of grounded theory, responds to the permanent search for categories, their properties, and articulations between data and theory. Its delimitation is based on the standard of *theoretical saturation*, that is, to notice when a new case no longer allows providing additional information for the construction of new categorizations (Glaser and Strauss 1967). In our research, the young people were contacted through their participation in institutions and community organizations, located in the MABA’s popular neighborhoods, which offer education, work, and spaces of sociability and recreation free of charge: secondary schools, popular high schools (*bachilleratos populares*),⁴ churches, health centers, a social circus, and a labor cooperative (COOPA). A total of 35 young people (18 males and 17 females) between the ages of 16 and 26 who live in these neighborhoods (see Table 1) took part. For their selection, we used different diversification criteria: age, sex, spaces of sociability, neighborhoods, and educational levels. Ethical aspects such as anonymity and informed consent were considered in each case.

⁴ *Bachilleratos populares* are middle-level schools for young people and adults created by social organizations located in vulnerable neighborhoods of Argentina. They are recognized as self-managed spaces. They develop political-pedagogical practices with territorial anchorage, following the proposals of emancipatory Latin American popular education. They seek to facilitate school completion and encourage citizen training processes, through the dispute of senses around the territorial and educational (Aguiló and Wahren 2014; Said 2018).

Table 1. Profile of young people interviewed

PSEUDONYM	AGE	GENDER	PLACE OF RESIDENCE	SCHOOL LEVEL	OCCUPATION / EMPLOYMENT STATUS	MARITAL STATUS / CHILDREN
Carlos	26	Male	CABA	High school (incomplete)	Employee	Single / No children
Charly	26	Male	GBA	High school (complete)	Employee (family business)	Single / No children
Dora	20	Female	CABA	University (incomplete)	Student	Single / No children
Facu	19	Male	CABA	High school (incomplete)	Student	Single / No children
José Luis	23	Male	GBA	Elementary school (incomplete)	Employee	Single / No children
Juana	20	Female	CABA	University (incomplete)	Student	Single / No children
Julito	26	Male	CABA	High school (incomplete)	Employee	Single / No children
Lili	23	Female	GBA	High school (incomplete)	Housemaid	Single / No children
Nora	19	Female	CABA	High school (incomplete)	Employee	Single / No children
Purly	18	Male	GBA	High school (incomplete)	Student / Employee	Single / No children
Iván	23	Male	CABA	Pre-university (in progress)	Student / Informal jobs	Single / No children
Omar	20	Male	CABA	High school (incomplete)	Informal jobs	Single / No children
Gustavo	20	Male	GBA	University (in progress)	Unemployed	Single / No children
Lolo	18	Male	CABA	High school (in progress)	Unemployed	Single / No children
Nicolás	18	Male	CABA	High school (in progress)	Unemployed	Single / No children
Sofía	18	Female	CABA	High school (complete)	Unemployed	Single / No children
Chinita	20	Female	CABA	University (in progress)	Student / Not working	Single / No children
Romina	19	Female	GBA	High school (complete)	Unemployed	Single / No children
Edrul	19	Male	CABA	High school (incomplete)	Employee (family business)	Single / No children
Solanch	20	Female	CABA	High school (complete)	Employee	Separate / 2 children
Mateo	23	Male	CABA	High school (complete)	Unemployed	Single / No children
Ramona	23	Female	GBA	High school (in progress)	Student / Housemaid	Lives with partner / 3 children
Alberto	21	Male	GBA	High school (in progress)	Student / Unemployed	Single / No children
Carla	24	Female	GBA	High school (in progress)	Student / Informal jobs	Single / 1 child
Juan	21	Female	CABA	High school (in progress)	Student / Employee (state program)	Lives with partner / 3 children
Fatu	18	Female	CABA	High school (in progress)	Student / Housemaid	Lives with partner / Pregnant
Víctor	19	Male	GBA	High school (complete)	Informal jobs	Single / No children
Tincho	18	Male	CABA	High school (in progress)	Student / Temporary internship	Single / No children
Mariana	17	Female	CABA	High school (in progress)	Student / Employee	Single / No children
Jorge	18	Male	CABA	High school (incomplete)	Unemployed	Single / No children
Liz	21	Female	CABA	High school (complete)	Unemployed	Single / No children
Miguel	18	Male	GBA	High school (in progress)	Student	Single / No children
Pecosa	16	Female	GBA	High school (in progress)	Student	Single / No children
Fernanda	17	Female	GBA	High school (in progress)	Student	Single / No children
Susana	16	Female	GBA	High school (in progress)	Student	Single / No children

Source: Self-elaboration.

Study Context

The research presented here is located in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (MABA), Argentina, in southern Latin America. This area is composed of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (CABA) and a suburban sector formed by 24 municipalities (GBA). The CABA is the capital city of Argentina, which centralizes the political and administrative organization of the country, as well as economic and service activity. Due to its economic and demographic growth, it expanded its limits to the so-called GBA, establishing itself as the largest urban agglomeration in the country with a population that, according to the 2010 National Census, exceeds 15 million inhabitants. The area as a whole presents important social and economic inequalities expressed in growing segregation and urban fragmentation (Di Virgilio, Marcos, and Mera 2015; Cravino 2016). The neighborhoods, where the young people interviewed live and where the chosen institutions are found, are located in the south and west of the MABA, in areas of greater social and educational vulnerability.

Process and Analysis

Following the strategy of constant comparison proposed by grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990), we construct, encode, and analyze the data corpus simultaneously, using as an auxiliary software ATLAS.ti. All of the interviews were coded and transcribed in the most literal way possible in text files, recording silences, laughter, significant intonations, and all the information relevant to contextualize the situations in which we applied the techniques. We controlled the transcripts by listening to the recordings and, in the necessary cases, corrected them and incorporated other data that we

would have remembered later. As we corrected the documents, we incorporated them into a hermeneutic unit, previously created in ATLAS.ti. We made new readings of the corpus, making the first codifications of it from two complementary procedures:

- *Top-down* codification: Taking up our previous conceptual work and the main dimensions of interviews and narratives, we formulated the first list of codes, which we applied to the documentary corpus to make a first classification of information.
- *Bottom-up* codification: We were incorporating new codes and modifying the existing ones as we identified relevant topics, information, and nucleus of meaning from the reading and re-reading of interviews and narratives.

At the end of the coding work, we grouped the codes into families, according to affinities in the themes, meanings, or their links with concepts coming from the theoretical framework and the state of art—which we finished building in dialogue with the data. Using the different search tools of ATLAS.ti, we made specific excerpts of interviews and narratives, combining in different ways the codes, the families, and the different types of primary documents that made up the hermeneutic unit. From these new readings, we wrote down notes or *memos* and *networks* in which we outlined possible relationships between codes, families, and emerging categories (Chernobilsky 2007). In turn, these new operations of classification and rereading of the corpus facilitated our work of constant comparison—between the narratives, the categories, and the theoretical-conceptual framework—from which we formulated new questions and identified the central categories.

In this way, through the successive back and forth between theoretical assumptions and (re)readings of interviews and narratives co-constructed with young people, we identified three major structural challenges that go through their migration experiences and concerning which their agencies are configured: *socio-labor trial*; *family trial*; *identity trial*. In the next section, we will develop our analysis around each of them.

Results

The Socio-Labor Trial

The detailing of neoliberal reforms in the 1990s caused a major economic, political, and social crisis towards the end of 2001 in Argentina (Vaccotti 2017). In such context, the interviewees as children, and their parents being young, travel from countries like Bolivia, Peru, or Paraguay and provinces of northern Argentina to the MABA. As other studies point out, migrations in the region have been traversed by the intention to transcend limitations in access to land and labor opportunities (Punch 2007; Crivello 2015). From the narratives of our interviewees, we note that their displacements are oriented, especially, in two directions: the location of housing associated with their potential access to schools and work, and the meeting with relatives who have previously traveled. In this search, their movements involve multiple transitions between and within different cities. At the beginning of his story, Iván⁵ (23 years old) introduces how these mobilities mark his biography.

I was born in Salta. I moved here when I was a kid, my parents came. And we had quite a life moving from

one place to another. We only settled down when I was 13 years old. And for the last 10 years, I have been living in the same place since then. [Iván]

These movements lead Iván and his family to live in different types of housing with different tenancy modalities: from living in a “shed” and renting different properties to buying a house with the help of other family members. These displacements caused constant changes in school, being in charge of the care of younger siblings, or household chores. Although he experiences loneliness and discomfort in this process, he mentions this process as a necessary work done by his parents to improve the quality of family life.

For these families, due to the costs of housing in the MABA, one of the most common options has been to settle in marginal areas, particularly in neighborhoods called *villas*⁶ (Vaccotti 2017). Nora (19 years old) points out in her biographical account the arrival to one of these neighborhoods and the limitations of her first home.

We are from a town in Paraguay. When we arrived, we went to live in a house with only one room, a bathroom, and a kitchen. We all slept together in the same bed. Then my uncle died (he lived in front of my house); we bought the property from his children and we expanded. [Nora]

Another residential option has been the boarding *house hotels*. Collective housing is centrally located in the city, informally contracted, characterized by high overcrowding and poor building conditions

⁵ In the presentation of the results, we have replaced the names of the interviewees with pseudonyms.

⁶ *Villas* are informal urban developments resulting from unplanned occupations of vacant urban land. They have a high population density and housing built with precarious materials. Their inhabitants are mostly informal or low-skilled workers to whom stigmatizing characteristics are often attributed.

with high rental prices per room (Marcús 2017). Two of the interviewees pointed out their passage through this type of housing upon their arrival in Argentina.

As soon as I came from Peru... and from there we left because, supposedly, the building where we were in was being rented, you see, and no, it was not being rented, it was being taken over. [Juan]

I was living in Once [neighborhood's name] until the building was demolished, they threw it down. And, well, we had nowhere to go and my aunt who lives here [*villa*] also in the neighborhood, a long time ago, she is the first of all, let's say... She gave us a piece of land there, which was empty. And well, we built our house there. [Fatu]

Cotton and Schwartz-Barcott (2016) identify among low-income families in the United States that problems with property owners, the deterioration of their homes, and social and family violence are reasons for continuous relocations, generating quasi-permanent conditions of *residential instability*. The unequal living conditions and possibilities of deciding on migratory and residential mobilities require, therefore, not only the ability of different social groups to be mobile (*motility*), but also their ability not to move (Schrooten, Salazar, and Dias 2016). In the case of the interviewees and their families, even when residential precariousness and instability force their transit between multiple dwellings, family networks that enable access to land, and even to their homes, facilitate their possibilities of settling down.

In the family decisions present in the migratory processes, labor insertion is also fundamental. Edrul (19 years old) resides with his family in the outskirts of a *villa* in the south of the city. They established

their textile business, which they had already been developing in Bolivia. After his father's death, he is forced to drop out of high school and take over the workshop. De Freitas (2014) analyzes the migratory processes of young Bolivians in textile workshops organized by other Bolivians in São Paulo and the MABA. Ethnic discrimination and limited options in those cities limit labor opportunities in other areas for these young people. Edrul had sought to avoid working in the workshop before his father's death. In his story, he reports the difficulties in finding steady jobs, but does not associate them with his migratory status.

And I'm there in those decisions of... looking for a job that more or less gives you freedom [what do you imagine that can give you "freedom?"] Freedom. A job where... a creative job could be... I feel that the circus could be one, but I feel that it's not very... it's difficult, the circus is difficult...Instability is what worries me the most. The instability and the payment, I guess. If I was on my own, I wouldn't mind, but since I have siblings and I have a mother, my father is gone, so I have to help out with something, right? [Edrul]

In his job choice, the tensions between family and responsibilities, the search for salary stability, and the interest in pleasant work practices are expressed. Participating in the social circus enables Edrul to imagine a job as an artist and to question his perception of work. However, the familiar will ultimately have more weight in his decisions.

In other cases, instability and informality of access to housing and work require young people to alternate their place of residence between different cities for limited periods. For Julito, in the transit between Argentina and Paraguay, such mobility is linked to a difficult process the young man undergoes due to

his problematic drug use, which even leads him to live several months on the streets in the MABA.

I have been using it for 10 months. I was on the street, I no longer bathed, I no longer gathered to buy clothes, nor to pay the rent. And there I talked to my boss, you see, he trusted me because I never touched anything, even though I used drugs I never touched anything. I told him that I wanted to go to an institution, that if he knew of any institution around there. And one day he took me to talk to Pepe, I mean, he went to talk, I didn't, I was really bad, I couldn't speak. And he took me on his motorcycle. [Julito]

Faced with health and housing problems, such as those experienced by Julito, the presence of another person who helps, listens, and trusts becomes a support for him. Support that is material and economic in the face of the possibility of sustaining a job or being taken to an institution for treatment and that is, at the same time, affective support valued for the possibility of feeling understood and accompanied.

The Family Trial

In the interviewees' experiences, migratory (im)mobility causes temporary and permanent separations from parents, children, or partners. They make possible, in turn, new configurations of family groups. One of the conditions that transform families is related to the migrations of the interviewees' mothers motivated by the search for a job. Female labor migration in Latin America has caused significant changes in the conformation and reorganization of care networks, as well as in gender and generational relations (Gil Araujo and Pedone 2014; Martelotte 2015).

For José Luis (23 years old), his mother's leaving in search of a job is associated with emotions of pain,

but also of "anger." For Fatu (18 years old), his mother's continuous trips between Paraguay and Argentina cause her contradictions about the mother figure.

I grew up with my grandparents since I was 11 months old and I called them "mom and dad." I didn't know my mom was my mom. She was in a relationship and she had my little brother with my stepfather. And my brother was born here and they went there. And when I was 7 years old, my mom brought me here. But, then I cried and cried because I didn't want to come because I said she wasn't my mother...I used to see her as my aunt. [Fatu]

The permanence or relocation of mothers produces anger in the face of situations considered as abandonment and the uncertainty caused by the encounter with other relatives. Fatu's discomfort is associated with the diffused nature of the bond with her mother and the effects of her (im)mobilities on other bonds: she is her grandparents' "daughter," her "aunt" is her mother, and she must live with a stepfather and a new brother. Crivello (2015) analyzes the migration experiences of young Peruvians and their families in which decisions to migrate appear chaotic and fragmented. However, the intentions behind such decisions are grounded in strengthening the family. In the case of our interviewees, although the search for greater family well-being is valued, for young people, the departure of fathers and mothers is experienced as a difficult and painful process.

After the mobilities, the young people also distinguish conflicts and violence in their families based on the contrast with other dynamics and customs. Iván identified two family configurations: "inside," a conflictive family way, and "outside," a collaborative and friendly way.

A partner invited me to his house and up to that moment... as we come from Salta, we don't know what other families are like. We have our own family, our own mess...Then I started to see what other families were like. And there were comparisons: "Why do they get along so well with each other and we fight all the time?" His father was very extroverted, he talked a lot with his son, and so was his mother. It was like creating a different environment. [Iván]

Kleidermacher (2017) inquired into the representations of Senegalese migrants about their life in the CABA. In their narratives, they contrast their values linked to family and to moments of encounter such as dinner time—even in contexts of precariousness in which they live—with the individualism they observe in Argentine. The contrasts between routines and ways of bonding make it clear to Iván that, even when changing residence, the same family habits and conflicts are maintained. However, finding another family space, where the interaction among its members is warm and joyful, causes a before and after in his biography. An environment that becomes valued affective support.

Migratory movements diversify the spaces of sociability that mobilize, in turn, the meanings that young people attribute to family. Juana (20 years old) highlights the blurred boundaries she glimpses in gender relations in family and friendship ties when she traveled to Paraguay when she was 13 years old.

I came from here [CABA], to go wherever I wanted, I don't know, to have male friends. It was impossible to have male friends there. A friendship between women and men, forget about it! There's already something going on. Not even with cousins, you could have so much friendship or affection because

they already confused everything. That is typical of Paraguay, it is very typical. [Juana]

Heath (2002) points out that studies on transitions from the home and the domestic tended to focus on young adults leaving the parental home to start living with a partner and made invisible other intimate ties that are significant in youth biographies. Upon arriving in the CABA, Solanch and Edrul mention that older people, such as their neighbors, played an important role in their upbringing. For Lolo (18 years old) and Facu (19 years old), the formation of new family assemblies generates bonds with a stepsister and stepfather, who are valued and considered "family" and are associated with the presence of help and affection, more than with blood ties.

Maintaining bonds with other relatives such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins in different cities is also important for the interviewees. This occurs especially during vacation periods or at times of return.

It was like, "Oh, how nice!" To see my uncle again, because I didn't go to Córdoba 2 years ago, I haven't been able to go to Córdoba [Argentina] for a long time. [Lolo]

In other cases, family residence alternates between different cities. For Solanch (20 years old) and her parents, their arrival in the CABA does not imply their definitive settlement or the end of the bond with their family in Paraguay.

...my mother is Argentinian, but my father is a foreigner, he is Paraguayan. And I was born there, and when I was one year old, we moved here. And from here, I have lived here since I was one year old, that is it, I made my life here. In Caacupé [a city in Paraguay] I spent a year living there all the time. Then we were

two, three months there, two, three months here, and it was like that... [Solanch]

Staying or moving does not necessarily occur sequentially or linearly. Migrations were commonly analyzed as movements from a place of origin to a final destination. The stability was considered a norm, fixing people and their practices to territories and ignoring that mobilities express multiple dynamics, simultaneous and interconnected scales, blurring legal and symbolic boundaries (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Schrooten, Salazar and Dias 2016).

The Identity Trial

Young migrants report experiences of discrimination at different points in their biographies. They experience these situations as real challenges to which they must spread various tactics to be accepted or integrated into public or private spaces. Generally, these experiences arise from encounters in which other individuals or groups assign them stereotypes based on their socioeconomic conditions, places of residence, ethnic or national origins, especially when they come from countries in the region such as Paraguay, Bolivia, or Peru.

Stereotyping is a process of naturalization of differences between individuals or groups that marks a symbolic and physical boundary between "us" and "they—the others." Discrimination is based on an elusive logic that seeks to avoid one's inadequacies to denigrate others. These processes are based on social categories to which certain negativized traits are assigned as natural and which justify various forms of violence on those who possess them (Gavazzo 2013; Jones and Ariza 2018; Reygadas 2020).

The production of stereotypes, stigmas, and forms of discrimination against migrants from Latin American countries in urban centers in Argentina—especially in the MABA—has been accentuated since the consolidation of the neoliberal model during the 1990s: the historical invisibilization was replaced by a hyper-visibilization of differences. Since that decade, these groups of migrants have been held responsible—by official discourse and the media—for the growing social problems generated by that model: poverty, unemployment, and urban violence, deficiencies in access to health, education, and housing. This stigmatization process was transferred towards the children of migrants born in Argentina—for example, some of the young people interviewed—who, although legally Argentinian, are identified in everyday interactions as "Bolivians," "Paraguayans," or "Peruvians" (Grimson and Caggiano 2012; Vaccotti 2017).

As José Luis reflects on, young people feel these repeated experiences as injustices that cause them daily discomfort.

I was discriminated against, you know, because I don't want to hurt anyone or anything, you know, but it hurts to be discriminated against because you come here to look for a future...So it's like the people here sometimes see you as you are invading their territory, it's like that, you know, and, obviously, they are going to be like that because there is a lot of competition. [José Luis]

Here, we see the centrality of the symbolic dimension in youth sociability. In the social and institutional scenarios in which they mobilize and develop their individuation processes, young people are permanently attentive to signs of approval, stigmatization, or humiliation from others. Faced with situations of

contempt—especially when other significant people such as family members, partners, friends, or representatives of public institutions—perpetuate them, the subjects experience the denial of recognition as individuals, full members of the community, diminished in their rights and autonomy (Honneth 1995).

As José Luis synthesizes, by considering themselves as equal to others, young people especially feel the wounds caused by these forms of denial of respect experienced in the MABA because of their migrant status (Martuccelli 2007; Dubet 2017). However, while denouncing the injustice of these forms of contempt and discrimination, both in Argentina and in returns to Paraguay, he develops a hard work on himself, seeking to hide those symbols of the stigma that can convey social information about his origin, to be respected by others.

I am quick to change, to change, and to change, you see? When I went there [Paraguay] for a year, in three months I spoke again with the accent I used to speak before. It was hard for me, but I had to speak like that because otherwise, they would call me *curepi*. As if I wanted to become, I don't know, you know, "Oh, you come here and speak Spanish" [laughs]. So I tried to speak... Then it was hard for me to speak because I had already learned Spanish well. There we use Spanish, in Asuncion, we speak Spanish and Guaraní. [José Luis]

This feeling of shame concerning the use of the language generates marks in the subjectivities of young migrants like Nora (19 years old), especially when they attend school.

Because on top of that it was hard for me to speak Spanish, it's like I spoke a little bit in Guaraní and a little bit in Spanish. At school, I tried not to speak

too much. I was always very shy. I don't know, I was not very sociable. I was very introverted, I swallowed everything... [Nora]

In contrast to these scenarios of discrimination and exclusion, in some institutions and social organizations that promote the exercise of rights in poor neighborhoods, young migrants construct social experiences that are highly valued and understood as exceptions, shelters, in which they choose to participate because they feel recognized as "individuals."

In this type of institution and social organizations, spaces and times of meeting, coexistence, and work with others are generated in which young people feel listened to and treated as individuals.

Interviewer: What do you like most about your experience at COOPA?

Juan: The treatment of each of the teachers. Apart from doing graphic design, we do literacy and job orientation and each teacher tries to integrate you in each group, that's one of the things I liked: the support they give you. On top of that, if they see you are not well, they ask you, "How are you?" They keep track of you, that sort of thing...

In these institutional experiences, young people spread their agencies and generate new possibilities of living, working, and acting in a public space, a scenario of intersubjective recognition between young people and adults. This generates the power to reinvent a "we" that functions as a collective mediator in intersubjective bonds. From these institutional experiences, young people create and appropriate new senses of equality and freedom. In this way, citizenship ceases to be an abstract concept to become a concrete and everyday way of living together with other people (Dubet 2017).

Conclusions

In their migratory experiences, young people from popular sectors of the MABA, Argentina, face three major social trials linked to each other: *socio-labor*; *family*; *identity*. As we developed in the article, about each of these challenges these people spread and

connect a heterogeneity of biographical events and personal meanings. At the same time, as shown in Table 2, we identify for each trial a series of common and interconnected coercions, supports, and elasticities, in relation to which these young people individualize themselves and draft their agencies, act in other ways.

Table 2. Social trials, coercions, supports, and elasticities in the migratory experiences and agencies of young people of popular sectors of MABA

SOCIAL TRIALS	COERCIONS	SUPPORTS	ELASTICITIES
<i>Socio-labor</i>	Stigma and socio-economic conditions in accessible but precarious neighborhoods	Offer of creative training	Search for and concretion of new employment and residential opportunities
	Intergenerational transmission of precarious, informal, or undervalued work options	New ways of participation Spaces of receptive sociability Family networks	
<i>Family</i>	Discontinuities and family break-ups	New ways of support, recognition, and meaningful affective bonds in multiple spaces of sociability	Strategies to sustain family bonds through <i>mobile links</i>
	Silenced young people voices		
<i>Identity</i>	Discrimination linked to migrant, ethnic, generational, and socio-economic conditions	Institutions or social organizations that function as material, affective, and symbolic shelters	Strategic use of social information they transmit in daily exchanges to diminish or nullify stigma symbols Articulation of internal, personal, and external intersubjective aspects of their identities
	Symbolic and material boundaries Hyper-visibility of community or national differences and identities		

Source: Self-elaboration.

In the migratory processes analyzed, the configuration of these youth agencies *on the move* reveals what we call *border-links*. These processes set out the tensions between the establishment of relationships with oth-

ers and the edges that draw up these bonds and, at the same time, express the tensions between the distances/closeness of these relationships, as well as the blurring of their limits and the senses associated with them.

Border-links that close. From personal and family practices, young people develop strategies to become linked and integrate themselves to the conditions of the labor and residential markets, under the coercion and symbolic and material limits imposed on migrants: precarious housing, low-wage informal jobs, discrimination, and stigmatization. Faced with these limits established by markets or hegemonic discourses about migration, young people find interstices that break with crystallized logic. Thus, the presence of social bonds such as family, neighborhood, or institutional networks introduce new ways of living—for example, in the use of land through the transfer of land among family members—and transit through spaces that are valued shelters and that, in turn, enable the possibility of staying.

Border-links that open. In the presence of legal and symbolic borders, such as those established between countries, cities, or even areas within the same city, the constant migratory-residential movements which young people describe as significant events not only question these formal boundaries: in contexts that force members of these families to distance themselves physically or that produces new encounters with other people who become emotionally important, borders of what is supposed to be family, fraternal, and affective are broken, altered, and (re)created. In these processes young people observe coping and facing these situations supported by their emotions that transit not only between pain, discomfort, or displeasure but also from recognition and appreciation. In this regard, the creation of new relationships of trust, in particular those enabled by the institutions in which these young people begin to participate, makes it possible to

redefine and rethink the bonds of the family environment and friendship crossed by the (im)mobilities. At the same time, this encounter stresses the frontiers of identity by recreating the relationship with themselves, their desires, their expectations, and their rights, not reduced to their status as migrants or “children of migrants.”

The articulation between the sociological perspective of the individuation and the methodological strategy of the biographical narratives has allowed us to identify the discontinuities and the common evidence present in the migratory experiences and the mobilities of these young people. In this process, we identify some supports, tactics, and strategies that mobilize these people individually and collectively, around themselves and others, to create shelters and face such challenges.

In this way, we make visible the chiaroscuros and elasticities present in the social, political, and economic structures that produce social inequalities and injustices. We consider that this elastic perspective of the social is valuable both for the social sciences and for interventions and public policies, since it allows us to glimpse different forms of agency, linking, symbolic, and institutional supports through which young people from popular sectors find new possibilities to constitute themselves as individuals and citizens, appropriating and exercising their rights.

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Book Review

Wodak, Ruth. 2021. *The Politics of Fear: The Shameless Normalization of Far-Right Discourse*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington: Sage

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Ruth Wodak's second edition of *The Politics of Fear* could not have come at a better time. As Wodak notes in the preface referencing Bob Dylan's famous song "The Times They Are A-Changin'," politics have shifted greatly since the time she submitted the first edition of *The Politics of Fear* to the publisher when the 2014 European Parliament elections were about to be held (her discussion in the book goes from those elections to the 2019 European Parliament elections). In the context of her book, these political shifts are the mainstreaming of far-right populist parties, their policies, and their rhetoric. When the first edition,

The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean, came out in 2015, Donald Trump was rising to power in the US. In a virtual presentation given at the Centre of Discourse Studies, Wodak (2020, slide 5) noted that the new version of the book is "quite different from the first one" because in the six years in between the two editions our world has changed "in many, many ways." In fact, this version has a new subtitle: *The Shameless Normalization of Far-Right Discourse* (with an important change from "right-wing" to "far-right"). By "Shameless Normalization" she means how it has become the norm to no longer need to apologize for blatant lies or neglecting rules and norms of polite behavior and how this has come to be perceived as authentic and "an attractive tool

against so-called elites" (p. xii). This new subtitle aims to highlight the shift of populist parties to the extreme or radical right. It also marks the shift in her stance from explaining the "meaning" of populist discourses to a "micro-analysis" of the history in 2014-2019 of the "shameless normalization" of far-right discourse through tracing "small and gradual transformations and recontextualizations" (p. xiii) of every instance of text and talk and highlighting the dialectic interdependence "between discourse and society, media, communication, policies and their implementation" (p. xiii-xiv). In addition, there are three new case studies (vignettes), a few new sections on far-right populist rhetoric, an updated overview of theoretical approaches, and a new glossary of far-right populist parties or movements. She has also added sections on "anti-genderism," defying political correctness, the impact of social media on the rise of the far-right, and anti-Sorosism. There is also a completely new chapter on Hungary's "illiberal democracy" and new vignettes that analyze "the language of walls" and victim-perpetrator reversal in regards to anti-refugee policies. Having taken a glance at the main differences between the first and second edition, we will now provide some highlights of each of the nine chapters in the book and a brief synthesis of what we think the most important points are.

The first chapter begins by discussing recent changes which have led to the "shameless" normalization of far-right politics, such as the 2016 Brexit referendum, the election of Donald Trump, the so-called "refugee crisis" in 2015/2016, and so on. The chapter then goes on to explain the theory behind the study of right-wing populism, its relation to the media (including provocation and scandalization), and then provides vignettes from Austria's HC Strache and a scandal over antisemitic content published by

the politician on Facebook. One particularly valuable element of this first chapter is the way she has updated and exemplified her insightful concept of the far-right populist *perpetuum mobile*, which maps out how far-right populists move through certain predictable (but effective) stages and rhetorical strategies. As Wodak explains on page 26, the *perpetuum mobile* begins with a scandal that is first denied, then once evidence is produced, it is re-defined and equated with different phenomena, then the right to freedom of speech is proclaimed. This triggers another debate, victimhood is claimed by the original provocateur, and the event is dramatized and exaggerated. This all leads to the construction of a conspiracy and the creation of scapegoats who then provide counterevidence and rebuke the provocateur's claims. At this point, a "quasi-apology" follows (in other cases, no apology), and then a new scandal is provoked, and the entire process starts all over again. The description of the *perpetuum mobile* is followed by characteristics of far-right populist parties such as the way they claim to represent "*the people*" (p. 26), the attributes of leaders of these parties, and the way far-right populism correlates with anti-intellectualism. This first chapter is fundamental knowledge for anyone studying right-wing/far-right populism or anyone who just wants to understand it.

Chapter 2 provides a more theoretical basis to the study of far-right populism (and populism in general, including left-wing populism) and its link to identity politics, and Chapter 3 provides a detailed outline of Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach, which she utilizes to de-construct and analyze far-right discourse, which she then models in vignettes. Particularly effective in getting her point across in Chapter 3 is Vignette #5, which shows how Austria's government used the *victim-perpetrator reversal* strat-

egy to label refugee children as “notorious trouble-makers” (p. 89) to trigger fear in constituents.

Chapter 4 connects nationalism to far-right populism and demonstrates how it is functionalized by populists to show who are “Us” and who are “Them” and how mainstream political parties have increasingly adopted nativist and national body politics like those of far-right groups in to obtain/maintain votes, which results in the normalizing of far-right ideologies or practices (p. 101). This chapter also includes some excellent multimodal examples of how far-right ideologies manifest themselves visually across countries and parties. Another noteworthy section of this chapter is Vignette 8, “The Language of Walls,” in which she masterfully connects Trump’s “build a wall” discourse and resulting anti-refugee/asylum seeker discourse and policies to those of the US in the 1930s and 1940s in which Jewish children were essentially sentenced to death by not being allowed to enter the US for safety during Nazi times. She then carefully analyzes how Trump’s arguments for building a wall follow the classic argumentation scheme of “If the US is in danger, a wall will provide security” (p. 122).

Chapter 5, which concentrates on antisemitism, has become even more important since the first edition was written due to a worldwide rise in antisemitism and the need for people to recognize how verbal and visual discourse from the past is recycled to regain support for antisemitic discourses. This is because many symbols used during Nazi times are now being used by White supremacist groups today, but they have more power because social media helps them reach larger audiences. For example, there were many antisemitic symbols (e.g., Swastikas, Rune symbol representing Aryan heritage and cultural pride) circulating on online communities

such as Gab and 8chan before the massacre at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018 (Gab and 8chan: Home to Terrorist Plots Hiding in Plain Sight 2021). Her section on anti-Sorosism is especially enlightening given how many White nationalist groups in the US have risen in power in the last few years and become dangerous threats to US democracy (e.g., the January 6th insurrection in congress), and to Jewish people and other minoritized populations in the US and elsewhere. Wodak explains how neo-Nazis on social media and elsewhere support the demonization of Jewish American philanthropist George Soros who is depicted as a villain with “nefarious plans to reshape the planet” (p. 139) and the construction of a “Soros-Feindbild” (i.e., the concept of a person as a hostile and threatening enemy).

Chapter 6 deals with the way that far-right populists take advantage of the media and includes examples from the 2019 political campaign in Austria. Wodak also explains the concepts of “frontstage” and “backstage” to talk about the right-wing politicians’ relationship with the media by drawing on Goffman’s work (1959), which metaphorically compares politics to the theater. In this metaphor scenario, “backstage” is where the politicians are, but the audience is not, and “frontstage” is where the performance (that all can see) takes place. Wodak describes this concept beautifully through the example of the video of Donald Trump’s bus ride with Billy Bush in which he notoriously says that he can grab women “by the pussy” and how he justifies this talk as “backstage” or “locker-room talk” (p. 167). The chapter also does a great job explaining why repetition is so important and effective in foregrounding ideas and persuading people to believe them even when they lack logical support, and she provides a detailed analysis of Heinz-Christian Strache’s fall in Austria in 2019.

Chapter 7 deals with the “Politics of Patriarchy” discussing the gender gap in far-right populist voters (far-right parties generally have more male than female followers and voters) and the way that successful female far-right politicians have to perform contradictory roles of being feminine while, at the same time, reproducing male domination over women because sexism is so closely tied to nationalism. While reading this chapter, we could not help thinking of Italy’s Georgia Meloni, who frequently references her identity as a mom while endorsing anti-immigration and other policies that infringe on human rights endorsed by nationalist (or sovereignist, as her party, Fratelli d’Italia, refers to themselves) groups. Meloni has gained power during the pandemic due to growing discontent with lockdowns and economic hardships in Italy, and it is likely that she will continue to play an important role in far-right circles in Europe, pushing anti-immigration and anti-globalist agendas (De Maio 2020). Wodak’s book provides the tools to understand politicians like Meloni and why we should be wary of her and others like her.

Chapter 8 takes us to the core of the issue of why and how the normalization of far-right populism occurs. Wodak clarifies that this discourse functions to undermine liberal democratic systems and human rights, dominate the media, and “create separate and parallel discourse worlds” through the spreading of alternative facts and lies (p. 227). It also serves to recognize and legitimize people who feel unfairly treated by elites or not listened to. That is, far-right populist leaders polarize society by being shameless (i.e., saying whatever they think) and, in the process, disgust one side and empower those who have felt ignored. Wodak draws on Fareed Zakaria’s notion of “illiberal democracy” to refer to the way these governments are increasingly limiting

the freedoms of their electorate, and she provides a good illustration of this through a discussion of Hungary’s Viktor Orbán and his understanding of “illiberal democracy” as “supporting pure political majoritarianism” (p. 232). Not only does Wodak deconstruct Orbán’s “illiberal democracy” through examples of his speeches and policies, but she also illustrates this through multimodal data of the way that Orbán has normalized anti-Sorosism on billboards and campaign posters. She also helps readers understand the long-term consequences of “illiberal democracies,” such as the rendering of rational discussion impossible and how this has implications for freedom of the press.

In the final chapter of the book, Wodak summarizes the most important points she had made about the danger of the shameless normalization of far-right populism and then provides some suggestions for how mainstream parties can deal with this normalization. First (as many scholars of right-wing populism have noted in the past), she advises parties to address the problems that underlie why people support populist governments in the first place instead of sweeping them “under the carpet” (p. 262). Second, she suggests more dialog in local settings and to promote more alternative frames which emphasize equality, diversity, and solidarity. She also warns that in order to avoid far-right populist traps, those who believe in democracy have to develop and maintain alternative patterns of media reporting, stop reacting to, imitating, or adapting populist agendas, and “resist the temptation to jump on the far-right populist bandwagon out of fear of losing voters” (p. 265).

In summary, for those readers that study right-wing/far-right populism, or live under it, this book is essential reading. This is because to counter far-right

discourse and policies we must first understand them. *The Politics of Fear* show us how it functions and why. Not only does Wodak explain how far-right populism works, but she also helps us comprehend how it has functioned to influence the politics of mainstream parties by pushing them to the right and, as a consequence, endangering democracy further. Importantly, *The Politics of Fear* encourages what Wodak calls “reflected deceleration,” which involves “critical reflections, challenging strategies, decisions, proposals and policies” and advocates for the prohibition of the “essentialization of beliefs, ideologies and socio-political processes” (p. xiv). Through “reflected deceleration” we can allow for new ways of understanding the global/local challenges that surround us. Besides the points we make above, the book is also worth reading because the topic is current and important, and, like the first edition and Wodak’s other books, it is well-researched

and written, made understandable for the average reader, and it uses a variety of types of data (including, e.g., social media, cartoons) to explain and argue for the main points.

Although Wodak does provide a very enlightening discussion of the need to combat far-right populism, examples or vignettes of actual speeches/videos in which people successfully (verbally and/or visually or multimodally) counter far-right discourses would be useful for readers to see in future editions of the book. These examples could serve as a model for those of us working daily to denormalize far-right ideologies and behaviors which are detrimental to democratic societies and if not countered, will continue to defy human rights and put people (especially vulnerable people) in increasingly hostile, dangerous, and violent situations.

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Book Review

Magala, Sławomir. 2021. *The Third Enlightenment (or Globalizing Meritocracies)*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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The book consists of three parts, preceded by an introduction. Their titles are “Let’s Move,” “Let Us Know,” and “Let’s Do It.” Its subject matter concerns the issues of contemporary changes in social life. Although these changes occur globally, their local variations allow for the observation of differences in understanding issues such as the role of universal education systems, the future of democracy, or the importance of international migration for economic or social development. In the following chapters, one can find a wide range of issues covered, for example, the discussion on the tasks of universities in a world where, in addition

to the many years’ unsolved dilemmas regarding truth, peace, or responsibility for educating future elites, there are also challenges resulting from the development of Internet technologies, artificial intelligence, or the emergence of humanoid robots. The author supports these discussions with numerous examples, quotations from the classics of social thought, and compelling neologisms, such as in the chapter “Eco-Evo-Devo-Robotevo.” It seems that the common thread running through the pages of the book is the search for some ideal model of social life, in paradise, utopia, or the “Artificial Intelligence Society” (p. 90). However, reflection on these searches is increasingly interrupted by warnings against the dystopian, historical nightmares of totalitarianism,

genocide, and crimes committed in the name of human progress.

The content is presented in a colorful erudite manner, which allows reading it with interest and pleasure. The book is written from the perspective of an author who knows the academic realities of Western Europe and the broader context of social and economic changes in the eastern part of the continent in the last half-century. Hence, in the book, we can find references to university examples from Rotterdam (the Netherlands) or Poznan (Poland). As the author points out, the performative turn has made us communicate through an immediate and intimate exchange of thoughts and impressions, constantly comparing ourselves with other social media users. In a sense, this book refers to such mechanisms of perception and description of reality, repeatedly transporting the reader through time and space, recalling dates, facts, or names of prominent intellectuals, and remarks about their influence on recent history. Numerous references to literary works, films, and events of our continent make us return to these issues many times when reading the content, which, in turn, enables us to confront the author's interpretations with our own. On the one hand, this may constitute a barrier for a less careful observer of social life, who may feel like a student at a lecture for which they are not properly prepared. However, the book prepares for the exam—even if it were a conversation with an interlocutor who employs commonly used terms such as “political correctness,” “troll farms,” or “temporary nomadism” of modern people and the ways they communicate. It is, therefore, a pleasurable reading—offering an intellectual journey through the achievements of European authors, which allows the recalling of their thoughts. In this context, the editor's note on the last page of the cover—concerning other publi-

cations by this author—is of great importance here. Especially Magala's previous piece, *Walka klas w bezklasowej Polsce* [*Class Struggle in Classless Poland*], can be seen as a prologue to many of the issues raised in the book. The book cites several times the most famous mistake of the American sociologist, Francis Fukuyama, who predicted the end of history a few decades ago. Magala, on the other hand, returns several times to his question about the class struggle, inquiring if we are witnesses, participants, or rather victims. Considering these dilemmas, the author briefly analyzes the contemporary class structure, referring to the middle-class—the “underdog” of successive totalitarian and authoritarian systems of 20th-century history. Today, belonging to the middle-class or social promotion therein is one factor that prompts people to act. As we read in the book: “The dream class of humankind” is understood as “US-like consumers” (p. 97). However, they do not necessarily retain their charm for the millennial generation. Is living in harmony with nature, caring for the climate and endangered species part of the charm for them?

It seems that changes within the class structure concern not only the proportions between its segments but also its openness to subsequent generations aspiring to privileged positions and posts. Therefore, on the one hand, there are questions about the uberization of the labor market and the middle-class, whose members can be identified more by their on-credit lifestyles than by the wealthy account balance and propensity to invest capital. On the other hand, there is an increasingly affluent and more effectively isolated-from-society upper-class, who accumulates its resources and effectively defends access to its ranks against economic upstarts. Will the global meritocracies that the author describes ultimately consolidate the existing lines of inter-class

divisions? In one of the recent issues of the *New York Times*, one can read about the scale of debt of university graduates, or their parents, in the US. Yet, when one reviews the history of this topic, it is visible that this problem has been discussed for decades. There, and in many other places on earth, the promise of entering a privileged part of society requires years of paying off debts. One may also wonder if a similar situation does not happen to entire national economies that are constantly indebted beyond the limits foreseen by the Bible, Hayek, or just common sense, in exchange for the promise of development and prosperity.

Among the warnings the author gives us, political correctness deserves particular emphasis. It is crucial to draw attention to its Marxist roots and its oppressive nature, inconsistent with the requirements of democracy. As the author notes, the phenomenon of political correctness has been “rediscovered many times in history” (p. 111) as a tool of totalitarian control. Is it also visible today? If so, should the author of the book be treated as a whistleblower and his arguments not only as a diagnosis, a warning but also a commitment to action? The author guides the reader through his elucidation, posing numerous queries, but not always answering those. We cannot be sure if this is because some of them are rhetorical questions or because the answer to some of them would also seem too confusing. This is so not only due to the matter itself but also because of the social context, such as the aforementioned political correctness. Or perhaps because, as the author writes, “asking questions without fear of authoritarianism and arbitrary punishment requires democracy” (p. 106). And what about freedom? The pursuit of obtaining it, regaining it, or securing it seems to be one of the most important drivers of social changes in our times. Will artificial intelligence algorithms

soon become its guardians? Or maybe they will be clones of the robot Sophia, which recently obtained civil rights in Saudi Arabia (the author writes about it on page 85)? As we are warned elsewhere, “the dream of total control did not die” (p. 12). One of the mythological Hydra heads here is the Chinese “Social Credit System.” Will we find the strength and ways to fight it as soon as the dust falls after dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic?

If we should use the results of the disputes of the most powerful intellectuals in this struggle, then we should know their achievements. However, as the author regrets, the Popper-Kuhn debate in the 1970s ended the time of great public intellectual debates. Still, let me recall at this point one of the online debates of two contemporary intellectuals—Jordan Peterson and Slavoj Žižek, which took place in 2019 (at the beginning of 2021, its official version available on YouTube had over 3 million views, it was also viewed countless times on other Internet channels). As I learn from my students from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, it is also one of the most popular online academic lectures, eagerly watched by the generation of today’s twenty year olds and, most importantly, discussed by them over coffee. Perhaps, this form of thought exchange has not ended, but rather the channels of its distribution have changed? Thus, maybe the titular third enlightenment is broadcast in digital cathedrals and transmitted from there to the whole world? What is worse, the vitality of our thoughts and their emanation do not exceed not only 15 minutes, as Warhol predicted years ago about popularity, but even 15 seconds (the author mentions this on page 74). Let us add—luckily for us, one of the most popular social networks gives us a chance to share our stories as part of the so-called “insta-stories” for 24 hours.

The paraphrase of von Clausewitz's sentence about war as a policy conducted by other means is used in the book in another military dogma, "no one left behind," but in a version elevating education to the rank of a weapon for a better future. The author writes, "Not only should no child be left behind and denied an education, but also no hard-working citizen should be left behind and denied a mortgage loan" (p. 93), expanding its semantic capacity also to the hard-working parents of studying children. However, he sneered elsewhere in his book the provocative question of whether universities are becoming "centers of ignorance for new generations before they hit the labor market" (p. 17). What is essential here is that the author writes about the resources of the knowledge to be passed on to talented and hard-working representatives of the next generations. On this occasion, accusations of corrupt development, resulting from the work of people who misunderstand democracy and disregarding its inclusiveness, are recalled. Therefore, there is room for the NIMBY syndrome (the acronym of the phrase "not in my backyard"), widely discussed in sociology, which defines persistent regional and national strategies, but also individual ones, in the face of emerging development challenges and the need to participate not only in its profits but also costs. And again, after the author, one can ask—Where will it lead us?

Sporadic references to the situation regarding the Covid-19 pandemic—and, above all, to its consequences—leave us with a hunger for more concerning this book's contents. Social isolation and the breakdown of social ties (mentioned on p. 109) are all too visible. But, how will the social world look in the coming months and years? Will we appreciate the lack of direct contacts, or will we hide permanently behind our digital avatars, avoiding, under

any pretext, even turning on our webcams? What will social life, stratification, and social divisions be like then? What will the conflicts and methods of solving them be?

The greatest value of this book, I believe, is the author's incredible skill in asking questions. Many of them are very uncomfortable, embarrassing, and shaming, but they all force us to self-reflect. As long as we take the trouble to answer them, they can lead us to question existing paradigms, narratives, and well-known versions of history (and the social memory of it). That is the case when the author draws attention to the political provenance of environmental movements. Or, when he describes the little-known in Europe significance of the Polish trade union, or rather of the huge social movement *Solidarność* [Solidarity], referring to the influence it had on political changes in Poland and throughout Europe. Let us recall only one of the 37 idealistic theses adopted by the 1st National Congress of *Solidarność* Delegates: "The Union will fight against hypocrisy in all areas of life, because society wants and has the right to live in the truth" (Cywiński 1984:110 [trans. JI]). Polish heirs of *Solidarność* still argue about the importance of individual factions and coterie in their impact on the history of Poland. The undoubted advantage of this book is also several important observations about the recent history of our continent, the selective amnesia of the apologists of communist social experiments, and the cry from "graves that do not exist"—of victims from Cambodian death pits, Ukrainians who died during the Great Famine provoked by Stalin, or people murdered during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the number of victims of which exceeded the expectations of European intellectuals (and, for many, it exceeds these images to this day). Let us also add one more inconvenient fact—many dictators are graduates of renowned Eu-

ropean universities, which again forces us to think embarrassingly about the responsibility of intellectuals for the development of our world.

In one of the articles in the last issue of the Paris-based *Kultura*—an important journal for political refugees under the communist regime—we read a student’s account: “Frankfurt is a terribly ugly city, it lacks something. I don’t like it there” (Stach 2000:201 [trans. JI]). Can it be the disapproval of the

reality surrounding us that can drive change? It remains to be asked if the author is an optimist. An active participant in the turn of the century, a veteran of social protests in Poland under communist rule, a political refugee, and a professor at one of the best Dutch and Polish universities. The book’s ending allows an affirmative answer to such a question; still, it leaves us with a disturbing “but.” A commitment to answer that question may be one of the benefits of reading this book.

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