

International Sociological Association  
e-bulletin



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From the editor

With the eighth issue of the ISA E-bulletin, it is now coming close to its third year of publication. Since inception, I have tried to establish a practice of securing contributions from an international community of sociologists, both established and junior colleagues as well as graduate students, and accorded them equal space in this publication. These contributors have addressed sociological issues of a wide-ranging nature – both theoretical and empirical. This issue of the E-Bulletin carries three articles by sociologists in the featured essays segment: one from Malaysia and two from India; while the conversation piece brings together a prominent scholar from Germany and two doctoral candidates from Singapore, pursuing their degrees at the University of Bielefeld; finally the contribution to the reflections segment is from a sociologist from Israel. I continue to be open to all suggestions, feedback and criticism and welcome all contributions to the E-Bulletin. Thank you for your support of this important ISA publication.

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### **Southeast Asia as a Forum of Knowledge: Locating Ethnicity in Southeast Asian Studies\***

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In my encounter with Southeast Asian studies in the last 25 years I have always been fascinated, sometimes perplexed, by its overwhelming 'fuzziness'. Perhaps I'm the unlucky one. Most of my colleagues seemed to be quite clear in what they were doing and where they were going, and I wasn't. My predicament could have been the result of and compounded by the nature of the intellectual route that I have taken, one that continues to oscillate between certainties and uncertainties, between the macro and the micro, structure and agency, emic and etic, and so on.

I partly blame history for what I have suffered from and anthropology for making it worse. Why history and anthropology? The history that I learned, on the one hand, seems to provide certainties and structuredness, and anthropology that I embraced, on the other, continues to highlight uncertainties and doubts. This has been especially true in my effort to understand the plethora of explanations and discourses regarding ethnicity in

the context of Southeast Asian studies: history provides me clear ethnic categories and classifications but anthropology often offers just the opposite

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\* This article is a revised version of a keynote address for 'Workshop on Ethnic Minorities in Southeast Asia', jointly organized by the Institute of the Malay World & Civilization (ATMA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and the Toyota Foundation, Japan, 29-30 March 2004. Parts of it have been published without the 'ethnicity' component.

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through its continuous interrogation of the categories and classification by posing questions such as ‘Who is a Malay?’ or ‘Who is the Lue?’, ‘Who is the majority?’ and ‘Who is the minority?’.

While it is too easy to put the blame on anthropology and history for my confusion, or being dizzy and fuzzy ontologically, I thought it would be more fruitful to examine this confusion from a different angle in search of a more satisfactory reflection. I, therefore, have decided to return to epistemology to heal my ontological blues. I would like to do it in the following manner.

I shall begin with an examination of ‘Southeast Asia’ as a form of knowledge, followed by an exploration regarding the ‘knowledge baseline’ that informs the construction of the said knowledge. After that, it is useful to have a look at the process of constituting and reproducing the knowledge that would guide my subsequent discussion on the consumption of the knowledge. Finally, I shall try to locate our knowledge on ethnicity within this broader analytic-conceptual discussion on ‘Southeast Asia as a form of knowledge’.

### **‘Southeast Asia’ as a Form of Knowledge**

Society is both real and imagined. It is real through face-to-face contact and imagined when the idea of its existence is mediated through mediums such as printed materials and electronic images. So, the term ‘society’ refers simultaneously to a micro unit that we could observe and to a macro one that we could only partially engage with. We therefore have observable ‘societies’ within a macro imagined ‘society,’ so to speak. Southeast Asia, like other regions in the world, has both. But it is the way that both of these components have been weaved into an enduring complex whole, which seemed to have made Southeast Asia and Southeast Asians thrive and survive even under adverse conditions, such as the recent financial-economic crisis, that has

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become the source of endless intellectual attraction and academic inquiry to both scholars and others; hence the birth, growth and flourishing of Southeast Asian studies.

Thus Southeast Asian studies, dominated by humanities and the social sciences, have been about the study of the 'society' and 'societies' in the region, in their various dimensions, in the past and at present. The complex plurality of these 'society' and 'societies', or societal forms, that do indeed co-exist, endure and enjoy some functional stability, have made it imperative for researchers to apply an equally diverse set of approaches, some discipline-based (anthropology, sociology, geography, history, political science, etc) and others thematically oriented (development studies, gender studies, cultural studies, etc) in studying Southeast Asian society. In some cases, it even involved disciplines from the natural as well as applied sciences. Through such processes, 'Southeast Asia as a form of knowledge' came into being.

The greatest challenge in grasping the content and dynamics of 'Southeast Asia as a form of knowledge' that constitutes what is known as Southeast Asian studies, and to its experts, has been to keep pace with the major changes that have affected the 'society' and/or 'societies' and then narrate, explain and analyze these changes and present the analysis in a way that is accessible to everyone within and outside the region. Therefore, framing the analysis is critical in understanding how Southeast Asian studies constitute and reproduce itself through the study of 'society' and 'societies' within Southeast Asia. The 'knowledge baseline' approach is useful in making sense of the said framing process.

### **A Question of 'Knowledge Baseline'**

Social scientific knowledge (humanities included) on Southeast Asia has a clear 'knowledge baseline', meaning a continuous and inter-related

intellectual-cum-conceptual basis, which emerged from its own history and has, in turn, inspired the construction, organization and consumption process

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of this knowledge. The two popular concepts that have been used frequently to characterize Southeast Asia are “plurality” and “plural society”, both of which are social scientific constructs that emerged from empirical studies conducted within Southeast Asia by scholars from outside the region.

In historical terms, ‘plurality’ characterizes Southeast Asia before the Europeans came and who, subsequently, divided the region into a community of ‘plural societies’. Plurality here signifies a free-flowing, natural process not only articulated through the process of migration but also through cultural borrowings and adaptations. Politically speaking, polity was the society’s political order of the day, a flexible non-bureaucratic style of management focusing on management and ceremony by a demonstrative ruler. States, governments and nation-states, which constitute an elaborate system of bureaucratic institutions, did not really exist until Europeans came and dismantled the traditional polities of Southeast Asia and subsequently installed their systems of governance, using ‘colonial knowledge’, which gave rise to the plural society complex.

Historically, therefore, plural society signifies both ‘coercion’ and ‘difference’. It also signifies the introduction of knowledge, social constructs, vocabulary, idioms and institutions hitherto unknown to the indigenous population (such as maps, census, museums and ethnic categories), the introduction of market-oriented economy and systematized hegemonic politics. Modern nation-states or state-nations in Southeast Asia have emerged from this plural society context.

It is not difficult to show that the production of social scientific knowledge on Southeast Asia has moved along this plurality-plural society continuum. When scholars conduct research and write on pre-European Southeast Asia, they are compelled to respond to the reality of Southeast Asian plurality during that period – a period which saw the region as the meeting place of world civilizations and cultures, where different winds and currents converged to bring together people from all over the world who were

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interested in 'God, gold and glory', and where groups of indigenes moved in various circuits within the region to seek their fortunes. As a result, we have had, in Java, a Hindu king with an Arabic name entertaining European traders. In Champa, we had a Malay raja ruling a predominantly Buddhist populace trading with India, China and the Malay archipelago. Whether we employ the orientalist approach or not, we cannot avoid writing about that period within a plurality framework, thus emphasizing the region's rich diversity and colorful traditions. In other words, the social reality of the region, to a large extent, dictates our analytical framework.

However, once colonial rule was established and the plural society was installed in the region, followed later by the formation of nation-states, the analytical frame, too, changed. Not only did analysts have to address the reality of the plural society but also the subsequent developments generated by the existence of a community of plural societies in the region. We began to narrow our analytical frame to nation-state, ethnic group, inter-nation-state relations, intra-nation-state problems, nationalism and so on. This gave rise to what could be called 'methodological nationalism', a way of constructing and using knowledge based mainly on the 'territoriality' of the nation-state and not on the notion that social life is a universal and borderless phenomenon, hence the creation of 'Indonesian studies', 'Malaysian Studies', 'Thai Studies' and so on.

With the advent of the Cold War and the modernization effort, analysts became further narrowed in their frame of reference. They began to talk of poverty and basic needs in the rural areas of a particular nation, also focusing on resistance and warfare, slums in urban areas, and economic growth of smallholder farmers. The interests of particular disciplines, such as anthropology, became narrower still when it only focuses on particular communities in remote areas, a particular battle in a mountain area, a failed irrigation project in a delta, or gender identity of an ethnic minority in a market town.

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In fact, in numerical terms, the number of studies produced on Southeast Asia in the plural society context supersedes many times those produced on Southeast Asia in the plurality context. Admittedly, social scientific studies about Southeast Asia developed much more rapidly after the Second World War. However, the focus became increasingly narrow and compartmentalized not only by academic disciplines but also in accordance with the boundaries of modern post-colonial nations. Hence, social scientific knowledge on Southeast Asia became, to borrow a Javanese term, *kratonized*, or compartmentalized.

It is inevitable that a substantial amount of social scientific knowledge about Southeast Asia itself, paradigmatically, has been generated, produced and contextualized within the plural society framework, because 'nation-state' as an analytical category matters more than, say, the plurality perception of the Penans of Central Borneo, who, like their ancestors centuries ago, move freely between Indonesia and Malaysia to eke out a living along with other tribal groups and outside traders, ignoring the existence of the political boundaries. In fact, anthropologists seem to have found it convenient, for analytical, scientific and academic expedience, to separate the Indonesian Penans from those of Malaysia when, in reality, they are one and the same people.

Therefore, the plurality-plural society continuum is not only a 'knowledge baseline' but also a real-life social construct that was endowed with a set of ideas and vocabulary, within which people exist day-to-day in Southeast Asia.

### **Constituting and Reproducing the Knowledge**

There are at least four major axes along which the construction, organization and reproduction of social scientific knowledge about Southeast Asia and its societies have taken place.

The first axis is that of discipline/area studies. There is an ongoing debate between those who prefer to approach the study of Southeast Asia from

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a disciplinary perspective, on the one hand, and those who believe that it should be approached from an area studies dimension, employing an interdisciplinary approach, on the other.

The former prefer to start clearly on a disciplinary footing and treat Southeast Asia as a case study or the site for the application of a particular set of theories that could also be applied elsewhere globally. The aim of such an approach is to understand social phenomena found in Southeast Asia and to make comparisons with similar phenomena elsewhere. Those preferring the latter approach see Southeast Asia as possessing particular characteristics and internal dynamics that have to be examined in detail using all available disciplinary approaches with the intention of unraveling and recognizing the indigenous knowledge without necessarily making any comparison with other regions of the world.

The bureaucratic implications of these two approaches can perhaps be clearly discerned in the way social scientific knowledge about Southeast Asia is reproduced through research and teaching. This brings us to the second axis, namely, the undergraduate/graduate studies axis.

Those who favor area studies often believe that Southeast Asian studies can be taught at the undergraduate level, hence the establishment of Southeast Asian studies departments or programs, in a number of universities in Southeast Asia, combining basic skills of various disciplines to examine the internal dynamics of societies within the region. Acquiring proficiency in one or two languages from the region is a must in this case. The problem with this bureaucratic strategy is that these departments have to be located in a particular faculty, say, in the arts, humanities or social science faculty. This denies, for instance, those with a background in the natural sciences the opportunity to study in-depth about Southeast Asia.

Therefore, those discipline-inclined observers would argue that Southeast Asian studies should be taught at the graduate level to allow those grounded in the various disciplines, whether in the social or natural sciences or

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in other fields of study, to have an opportunity to specialize in Southeast Asian studies. Therefore, a geologist or an engineer who, for instance, is interested in the soil and irrigation systems of Southeast Asia could examine not only the physical make-up of Southeast Asia but also the human-environment relationship. This is particularly relevant at the present time since environmental and ecological issues have become global concerns.

This has made many individuals, institutions and governments think carefully about how they should invest their precious time and money when they are requested to support the setting up of, say, a program, center or institute of Southeast Asian studies. They often ask whether universities should continue to have the prerogative on the teaching, research and dissemination of knowledge about anything connected with Southeast Asia and its societies. Why not in non-university institutions?

This takes us to the third axis, namely, the university/non-university one. For many years, we imagined that only at the university we could acquire and reproduce knowledge about Southeast Asia, whether approached from the disciplinary or area studies perspective. However, many governments and international funding bodies felt that to obtain knowledge about Southeast Asia one need not go to university, but that one could acquire it through non-academic but research-oriented institutions established outside the university structure to serve particular purposes. National research bodies such as LIPI (Indonesian Institute of the Sciences) in Jakarta and ISEAS (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) in Singapore have been playing that role. 'Think-tanks', such as the Center for Strategic Studies (CSIS), Jakarta, or the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia, have also played the role of the producer and reproducer of knowledge on societies in Southeast Asia outside the university framework. However, there seems to be a division of labor, based on differences in research orientation, in the task of producing and reproducing knowledge between the academic and non-academic institutions.

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This final axis is academic/policy-oriented research axis.

While academic endeavors pursued within the context of Southeast Asian studies in the universities are motivated by interest in basic research, which is by definition scholarly, those pursued outside the universities are often perceived as not being scholarly enough because they are essentially applied or policy-oriented in nature and serve rather narrow, often political, interests of the powers that be in Southeast Asia.

It is argued that the critical difference between these two approaches is that the academic one is always open to stringent peer-group evaluation as a form of quality control, but that the applied one is not always assessed academically. In fact, the latter is often highly confidential and political in nature, thus denying it to be vetted by the peer group, hence its perceived inferior scholarly quality. The basic research-based academic endeavors are therefore seen as highly scholarly, whereas the non-academic ones are perceived as highly suspect as scholarly works and not considered to contribute to the accumulation of knowledge on Southeast Asia societies.

However, research institutes like ISEAS in Singapore would argue that, even though it is essentially a policy-oriented research institute mainly serving the interests of the Singapore government, it still produces scholarly work of high quality and encourages basic research to be conducted by its research fellows either on an individual or a group basis. In other words, a non-university research institute of Southeast Asian studies, such as ISEAS, could simultaneously conduct applied and basic research without sacrificing the academic and scholarly qualities of its final product; or put in another way, it is 'policy-oriented yet scholarly'.

The moot question is: Who are really the consumers of knowledge on Southeast Asians societies, hence Southeast Asian studies – the Southeast Asians or outsiders?

### **Consuming the Knowledge**

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It could be argued that social scientific knowledge about Southeast Asia and its societies is a commodity with a market value. Often the 'market rationale', and not the 'intellectual rationale', prevails in matters such as the setting-up of a Southeast Asian studies program, center or institute, even in the government-funded academic institutions. However, the funding of research on Southeast Asian studies has often been dictated not by idealistic, philanthropic motives but by quite crass utilitarian desires, mainly political or economic ones. There are at least three important 'sectors' within which knowledge on Southeast Asia societies has been consumed: the public, the private and the intellectual sectors.

Since the governments in Southeast Asia have been the biggest public sector investors in education, through public-funded educational institutions, they have been the largest employment provider. They have set their own preferences and priorities, in accordance with their general framework of manpower planning, in deciding what type of graduates and in which fields of specialization they want to employ them. The pattern in Southeast Asian countries has been well established, that is, there is a higher demand for science graduates than the social sciences and the humanities. But amongst the latter there is no clear, expressed demand for Southeast Asian studies graduates. However, there seems to be a significant demand for the inclusion of the Southeast Asian studies content in all the non-natural science courses at the undergraduate level in most of the government-funded academic institutions in Southeast Asia. This is not unrelated to the fact that the awareness about ASEAN as a community has now become more generalized amongst the public; hence the need for a more informed description on the different countries and societies within ASEAN (read Southeast Asia).

Outside Southeast Asia, such as in Japan and the United States of America, very rarely has specialization in Southeast Asian studies, or components of, been considered highly desired in the job market of the public sector. Perhaps having a graduate-level qualification in Southeast Asian

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studies is more marketable in the public sector, especially in government of semi-government bodies that deal with diplomatic relations or intelligence.

In the private sector, the demand for Southeast Asian studies as a form of knowledge and the demand for a potential employer who possesses that knowledge are both limited and rather specific. However, the number could increase depending on how large the investment and production outfit a particular company has in Southeast Asia. Since some of the demand for the knowledge is rather short term, often specific but detailed, it has to be customized to the needs of a company; therefore 'think-tanks' or 'consultant companies' have often become the main supplier of such tailored knowledge. Many of such organizations are actually dependent on 'freelance' Southeast Asianists or academics who do such jobs on a part-time, unofficial basis.

It has been observed that the Japanese seem to be a regular consumer of knowledge on Southeast Asia. This is hardly surprising because they have massive investments in Southeast Asia. There is, therefore, a constant need to know what is happening in the region. Research foundations from Japan, such as the Japan Foundation, Nippon Foundation and the Toyota Foundation, have been very active, in the last decade, in promoting Southeast Asian studies, academic and non-academic, and supporting research and exchange programs. Taiwan and Korea are the two other Asian countries that have their own Southeast Asian studies research centers, besides those in the United States, United Kingdom, France and The Netherlands, former colonial powers in Southeast Asia.

A more generalized demand for knowledge on Southeast Asian societies relates to marketing and this trend must not be underrated with the recent expansion of the middle class in the region. As the market and clients in Southeast Asia become more sophisticated, the need for in-depth knowledge on sectors of the Southeast Asia societies has increased. This, in turn, has increased the demand for graduates who have followed courses related to Southeast Asian studies.

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In the intellectual sector, knowledge on Southeast Asia has been consumed generally by the NGOs, namely, those that are national based as well as those that have regional networks. Because most of the NGOs are issue-specific-based interest groups, such as environmental protection, abused housewives, social justice and the like, and often seek funds for their activities from the governments and NGOs in developed countries, they find it more advantageous to operate on a regional basis because they get more attention and funding from the said source. The strength and success of their operation is very much dependent on the amount of knowledge they have about Southeast Asian societies in general, as well as the specific issue that they are focusing on as a cause in their struggle.

With the popularity of the Internet and its increased usage around the world and within Southeast Asia, it has now become an important medium through which academic and popular knowledge on Southeast Asian societies has become available. The source of the knowledge could be located outside or within the region but are now much more accessible for commercial and non-commercial purposes.

It could be said that Southeast Asian studies and what it constitutes is, first and foremost, a knowledge construct that represents only part of the region's social reality. In spite of this, it is the most important element, amongst the many, that gives Southeast Asia, the geo-physical region as well as its people and environment, its history, territory and society. Because of the co-existence of different societal forms in the region, be it categorized as 'majority' or 'minority', hence the unevenness of the tempo of social life in the region, indeed the speed of social change thus also differs from one community to the other, from one area within the region to another. Only a multi-disciplinary approach could capture these complexities embedded in the societies of Southeast Asia.

As the importance of the region increases in the globalizing world, both generalist and specialist knowledges about Southeast Asia become

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critical to the world and the region itself. In that sense, Southeast Asian studies as a knowledge construct transforms itself into a lived reality, especially for the Southeast Asians themselves. This knowledge therefore becomes indispensable both to those who study Southeast Asia and its society as well as to the Southeast Asian themselves.

It must be mentioned that when the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), New York, in the late 1990s decided to shift its focus from 'area studies' to 'thematic studies' (gender, migration and the like), reflecting a trend in the US academia as a whole, interest in Southeast Asian studies around the world remains. Indeed, in the US now, since the September 11, 2001 event and the Bali bombing of 12 October 2002, area studies, including in Southeast Asian studies, have returned emphasizing its importance in the context of security studies worldwide.

One of the salient themes within Southeast Asia a form of knowledge is the corpus of knowledge on 'ethnicity'.

### **Locating Ethnicity within the Knowledge**

There are two main areas on which I would like to focus and offer a brief schematic comment within which ethnicity has become an important and, indeed, a central theme not only in our understanding of Southeast Asia as a region and cluster of societies but also as to how we imagine, organize and pursue our lives in the 'authority-defined' context as well as in the 'everyday-defined' manner.

First, it is in the area of 'academic analyses' which covers mainly our knowledge on ethnicity based on a conscious and declared academic pursuit, that, in turn, begets monographs, books, articles, working papers, either paper-based or now in digital forms. Each of these academic products presents analysis of macro and micro in nature informed by different theoretical approaches, the data of which have been gathered utilizing different methods of enquiry as well as technique of data collection. Without these materials the

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all-important literature review prior to a construction of a research proposal, either for a degree or a general academic research, is almost impossible.

Second, 'ethnicity' is important in the area of 'public advocacy' which involves mostly action-oriented activities, such as policy making, legal undertaking, and interest groups advocacy conducted by both the State and NGOs, or by think-tanks and political parties, within and outside the Southeast Asian region. Undoubtedly, most of the public advocacy activities, including research, have to depend, in some measure, on academic analyses as a source of organizing, shaping and conducting their activities for particular pre-determined purpose or purposes. However, in general, public advocacy activities are defined as non-academic. In fact, it is these activities that have directly impacted the social life of millions of Southeast Asians. Rarely, if any, those produced as academic analyses have had such an impact. Let us now turn to some concrete examples from the region to elucidate the empirical position of ethnicity in the Southeast Asian societal and historical context.

To assist us to understand the location and importance of ethnicity in the realm of academic analyses, it useful to employ the 'knowledge baseline' elaborated above. I shall also draw some examples to illustrate my point from my own research on 'identity formation in Malaysia'.

Since the term 'ethnicity' has been introduced and became popular only in the late 1950s, in the pre-colonial 'plurality context' words such as 'race', 'tribes', 'peoples' were used instead of 'ethnic' or 'ethnicity'. This is evident if we were to look through Hobson-Jobson: *The Anglo-Indian Dictionary* compiled by Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, published in 1886, the ethnic group now known as 'Malays', for instance, was labeled by various European authors, sailors, travelers and proselytisers, quoted in Hobson-Jobson, as a 'race', 'tribe', 'people', 'community' or 'barbarism'. Such labels were based on a number of factors, such as geographical, biological, linguistics and selected cultural attributes.

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However, in the 'plural society' context, both during the colonial and post-colonial period, the emphasis was clearly more on the word or term or concept 'race', with heavy biological and linguistic attributes being emphasized. Such emphasis was made in the construction 'colonial knowledge' in which terms such as 'Malay' became critical in the technology of colonial rule, mainly for 'official procedure'. Indeed, the practice of census taking played an influential role in the creation of ethnic categories such as Malays. It is, therefore, not surprising when a famous colonial scholar, R.O. Windstedt, in the dictionary he compiled in 1957, called *An Unabridged Malay-English Dictionary*, defined Melayu 'race name' (p. 213). Implementation of laws such as the Malay Reservation Enactment of 1913 further enhanced the utility and currency of the use of the term 'Malay race'.

I am quite certain the examples I have drawn from the Malaysian context is not dissimilar to the experience of other ex-colonies in Southeast Asia, such as those drawn up by the Dutch in Indonesia, the French in Indo-China and the Americans in the Philippines. Majority and minority communities and ethnic groups were constructed throughout the colonial period for official reasons. These colonial knowledge-based categories became naturalized and accepted in everyday life of the inhabitants in Southeast Asia as the European rules and laws were. Often local inhabitants modified them for their own purposes.

The rise of ethnic-based nationalist movements during the colonial period, as a form of public advocacy-oriented organizations, has been the product of the said colonial knowledge. As Anderson has argued, partly, these categories became the basis of 'imagined communities', or, in my opinion, as the basis of the creation of 'nation-of-intents' in the various Southeast Asian societies, which, in turn, was mobilized and became the underpinning political motivation for the independence movement throughout the region.

The creation and use of the term 'bumiputera' (lit. 'son of the soil') or 'pribumi' ('the native son'), indeed an inclusive term, in both colonial and

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post-colonial Malaysia and Indonesia, is also an interesting example. It was used to separate the 'indigenous' from the 'migrant' populations, some for policy purposes and, in other contexts, for the purpose of popular labeling in the local press, for instance. The term simultaneously homogenizes or polarizes the otherwise heterogeneous society into two opposing 'they' and 'us' positions.

Anthropological studies conducted in Southeast Asia often point out to us the fluidity of such categories. For example, the term 'bumiputera' in Malaysia includes the Malays who are constitutionally Muslims, and the Orang Asli, the Kadazan and the Ibans who are mostly non-Muslims. But the Malays themselves are known to have many sub-groups, some of whom are Muslim Orang Asli. At the personal level, some Indian Muslims who practise Malay socio-cultural life would like to claim to belong to the Malays. Such situational claims have made ethnicity studies in Southeast Asian an interesting one.

At the conceptual level, there seems to be a continuous negotiation going on in both the official and personal contexts as to who belongs to which ethnic category and for what purposes. This, in turn, has led to what could be called 'majority-minority discourses' in the realm of the construction and practice of ethnic identification. In the broader sense, namely, in the global social scientific literature, such discourses are found in abundance in the 'sociology of identity formation' or 'cultural politics.'

In the empirical context, discourses on identity formation, be it from the consensus or contested perspective, is commonplace in plural societies within Southeast Asia, not only in the academia but also in the popular realm. In Malaysia, for instance, such discourse is an on-going activity, now conducted on the Internet, such as in the on-line news web of Malaysiakini or Malaysia-today. Indeed, this has encouraged a broader discourse on the role of social science in the making and maintenance of such plural societies. In other

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words, Southeast Asian studies, is here to stay, at least in Southeast Asia, if not in other parts of the world.

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### **Conflicts in Fish Trade: A Study among the Riverine Fishing Communities in Kerala, India**

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#### **Introduction**

This paper attempts to analyse the different dimensions of conflicts in the fish trading process among different actors along the *Pamba-Achankovil* River Basin in Kerala, India. Fish is part of a staple diet for around 96% of the population in Kerala. Catering to this requirement, amidst various struggles, the traditional fishing communities maintain a significant role in the capture of fish as well as in the timely distribution of their catch. In this paper, analysis of conflicts in fish trade is mainly done from the perspective of river fish vendors, who are mostly women. It is part of a larger study, which attempts to explore the cultural dynamics and social interfaces in riverine fisheries management along the *Pamba-Achankovil* River Basin in Kerala.

The present paper is structured in the context of wider perspectives, namely, market, gender inequalities and conflict. Firstly, this paper attempts to empirically examine the processes of trade and market from a cultural perspective. Markets are generally understood as wealth-generating systems. On the other hand, studies have raised the need to look at market as a social agent, where the participants' understanding and conception of their own social and economic activity needs to be emphasised (Dilley, 1992). In this regard, there is a vital need

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to look into the social, cultural and political aspects of market in greater detail to understand 'real markets' better (Agrawal, 1999).

For instance, Ostor (1984) has showed that the marketplaces also express a concept of power through differentiating symbols, legends and rituals. In addition, Appadurai (1988) suggests that the culturally formed mythologies, constructed stories and ideologies are likely to appear when the institutional distance and spatial journeys of commodities become more complex. It is also evident that multiple aspects of the sociocultural context such as the power of different actors, their ability to wait for the opportune moment to strike a bargain, the web of mutual expectations, and asymmetric social relations emerge as extremely significant factors that influence prices more so than the usual factors of quantity and levels of demand and supply (Agrawal, 1999).

Ram (1992), in her work analysing gender, hegemony and capitalist transformation among the fishing communities in Tamil Nadu, South India, argues that the cultural construction of gender occupies a central place concerning the transformation of fishing communities, as it provides the fundamental key to the allocation of economic roles. However, she observes that in most of the ethnographic analysis, economic categories have escaped any serious scrutiny. Ram cites both the advantages as well as disadvantages of those women who are involved in fish trade. The unique access to households of other castes and communities in the agrarian hinterland, the opportunity for the women to build strong work-based associations with other traders and thus strengthen mutual aid are cited as some among the advantages that the women from the fishing communities have as fish traders. However, Ram notes that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages that the women fish traders possess in terms of their wider social and territorial networks. In the auction places as well as in the selling places, the women fish traders have to compete with their men counterparts adopting tough and vocal strategies. On the other hand, the women fish traders are deprived of both credit and sources of capital (mainly transportation). The emergence of new forms of mercantile capital in the seafood business, and the decrease in the availability of fish at the local shores due to mechanised fishing

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have affected the small-scale operators like the women fish traders. Ram argues that the 'sexual codification of femininity' and the low economic position of the women fish traders have resulted in their low status as well as in their rejection by both their own community as well as by the outside caste society.

This study is also based on the nature of conflicts among different actors involved in the fish trade. In this regard, Alexander (1982), studying the trading practices among the fishing communities of Sri Lanka, has illustrated the conflicts that occur among the fish dealers and the fishermen, and among fish dealers themselves. Alexander observes that the conflicts range from mere threats to death and are mainly found to result due to the 'monopsony' in fish dealership. He also notes that it is the threat of violence that enables the fish dealer to maintain his position against competitors and fishermen alike.

The above perspectives form the background of the present study. It is evident from the above discussions that a cultural understanding of trade, markets and conflicts could provide additional insights on issues of gender equity, resource distribution and power. With these assumptions, this paper looks at the different dimensions of conflicts emerging in fish trade along the *Pamba-Achankovil* River Basin. An in-depth study of conflicts and their linkages to present-day development and local fishing culture would not only provide a better understanding of the living conditions of traditional fishing communities, but also give valuable insights on issues of power and gender inequities in resource management and market relationships.

### **Methodology**

Qualitative research methods were used to carry out the study. The paper is based on an ethnographic fieldwork among a heterogeneous fishing village (*Payippad*) and a relatively homogeneous fishing village (*Parumala*), respectively, situated along the *Pamba-Achankovil* River Basin in Kerala. Maximum variation sampling was used to select the villages to be studied with the assumption that similar patterns could be arrived out of variations. Purposive snowball sampling was used to identify respondents, namely, fish vendors, fish

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dealers, fishermen, state officials and fish consumers. Data were collected through interview guides, participant observation and focused group interviews. These techniques also favoured triangulation ensuring the reliability of the data collected. Contact summary sheets, codes and coding, pattern coding, memoing and interim case summary were made use of for analysing the data.

### **Actors in Fish Trade**

Trading fish is a post-harvest activity. It could be referred to as the diverse ways in which the exchange of fish and other aquatic species takes place among the various stakeholders, either through direct sales, auctions or barter system. In a small-scale fishery such as riverine fishing in Kerala, various types of stakeholders are involved in the distribution process – ranging from the fishermen who bring in the catch to the local fish-landing *ghat*, the fish vendors who purchase fish either from the fishermen or through intermediaries such as the fish dealers, the agencies of the State, to that of a wide spectrum of the fish-consuming population in the region.

The fish vendors, the fish dealers and the fish-consuming population are the main actors directly involved in the fish trading process. The fish vendors are mostly women from the fisher-folk households. Among the fish vendors themselves, there are different categories of vendors. They could be differentiated in terms of the source of obtaining the fish, the type of fish they purchase (i.e. sea fish, river fish or both) and the markets or clients (be it the retail shanties or the local households). Apart from the fish vendors, another key player involved in the fish trade are the fish dealers. They are fish merchants who invest the money to buy the whole catch of fish from the fishermen and then act as intermediaries to sell the catch to the fish vendors. For the same, the fish dealer takes a commission of Rs 10 from the fisherman for every Rs 100 of fish sold.

For the majority of the population in this region, fish is part of their staple diet. One could find that both the rich and the poor sections of the population equally consider fish a necessary part of their food intake and protein

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supplement. Fish is regarded as a *symbol* of taste, health and hospitality. The rich among the consumers in this region belong mostly to the Syrian Christian Communities. They are mostly plantation farmers (rubber, spices, etc.), businessmen, or dependants of non-resident Indians. The uphill towns where these rich sections of the community live (such as Ranni town) are nicknamed by the fish vendors as 'Kerala's America'. The rich usually prefer the big varieties of river fish. The poorer sections of the consumers are either Latin Catholics or the Backward Caste Hindus. A majority of them are wage labourers, blacksmiths, agricultural labourers, construction workers, small farmers, sand miners, carpenters, etc. The majority of poor families prefer the smaller varieties of river fish because they cost less. While the above section has given a brief overview on the different actors involved in the fish trade, the following section examines the nature of conflicts that emerge in fish trade.

### **Conflicts in Fish Trade**

The various dimensions of conflict in the fish vending process could be understood in terms of the causes and nature of the conflict, the parties involved in the conflict, its intensity as well as the various direct and indirect functions that the conflict serves. In the context of river fish vending in the study area, conflicts occur among different parties, namely:

- 1) among river fish vendors themselves;
- 2) between river fish vendors and sea fish vendors;
- 3) between river fish vendors and fish dealers;
- 4) between river fish vendors and consumers; as well as
- 5) between the river fishing communities and various State agencies.

It is observed that one of the major causes for the conflicts occurs when the shared values and norms of the primary stakeholders (i.e. the river fishing community) is violated or when the components of their culture clash with those of the other stakeholders (i.e. sea fish vendors, fish dealers and consumers). This

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can happen either when the river fish vendors interact with stakeholders who have an entirely contradicting value system, or the cultural elements of the river fish vendors itself gets modified such that it faces opposition from the other stakeholders. Conflicts also occur due to the presence of identical norms among the rival groups who maintain similar goals but belong to an entirely different geographical (resource) context. Conflicts are also reflected in terms of relationships of dominance and dependence (power and authority), gender and class inequalities, religious and community differences, property rights, and resource scarcity.

The intensity of conflicts is reflected by the duration of these conflicts as well as by analysing the conflicts along a scale ranging from suppression of hostile feelings and dissents, to physical violence. Conflicts between certain stakeholders (say among river fish vendors of the same village) are generally of very short duration, extending for a maximum of up to a day, while with many other stakeholders (in particular with fish dealers, sea fish vendors and State agencies) the conflicts can have strong historical roots. The above dimensions of conflicts can be understood in depth when the conflicts are analysed based on the different parties involved in it.

### *(a) Conflicts among river fish vendors*

There are two types of conflict in this case. While one occurs among the river fish vendors of the same village, the second occurs between the river fish vendors of two different villages. In the first case, conflicts usually occur at the local fish-landing *ghat* or at the wholesale fish market when the shared values and norms of purchasing fish are violated. For instance, it is a norm that while a particular vendor or group is bidding over a catch, no other vendors would bid at a remarkably higher price than that the former group was expected to arrive at. Quarrels take place among the vendors during the fish auction either when she purchases fish at a higher price than the fellow vendors' expectations, or when she buys the fish that another vendor was about to buy. Such conflicts are more frequent in the homogeneous village, as the fish purchasing arrangements

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through the fish dealers and auction mechanism pave the way for such violation of norms. However, such quarrels do not last even for a day.

Scuffles do take place between river fish vendors of different villages, when a vendor sells fish along another vendor's regular route and to his/her customers at a cheaper rate. Mutual accusations on the 'poor quality' of each other's fish, and adopting similar tactics to lower the rival's sales are a main feature of such conflict. Such conflicts continue at alternate intervals until one or the other vendor accommodates the rival into his/her vending space, considering the fact that the rival is also selling fish for his/her own survival. In this context 'fish' becomes a symbol of conflict management.

Conflicts also occur when vendors from other villages come to the Parumala fish-landing *ghat* and purchase fish at an unusually higher price. The village is already saturated with native vendors and the scene becomes hostile when outside vendors, who may have more capital, arrive to buy fish. Though the fish vendors (the majority of whom are women) frown upon this practice of permitting outsiders to buy fish from their *ghat*, the fish dealers and the fishermen in Parumala encourage this practice as their motive is to accumulate more profit. The intensity of the conflict is severe compared to other conflicts occurring among river fish vendors, in both its duration and scale. This reflects how liberalisation of trade violating local norms in a village context affects the survival of the stakeholders in their very own local economy. It also indicates that decisions are made by the minority 'men' over the majority 'women' in the fish vending process. Thus this particular frame of conflict highlights the linkages between the power structures and gender inequalities that exist in resource management.

### *(b) Conflicts between river fish vendors and sea fish vendors*

Conflicts ranging from brawls to physical assault take place between the sea fish vendors (men from the coast) and river fish vendors (women from the inland) at the shanties. Though both the groups share the same value system oriented towards meeting the livelihood needs, it is this same value system based in two

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different cultural-resource settings (coastal and inland) that comes into conflict at a common platform (the shanty). In these conflicts, the worst affected are the women river fish vendors as they are a minority compared to the sea fish vending men. Conflicts arise when the river fish vendors resort to selling sea fish in the shanty. The majority of the river fish vendors who sell sea fish do not have the technology necessary to preserve the unsold fish for the next day. Due to this, the river fish vendors sell their sea fish at a very low price the very same day, compared to the price fixed by the sea fish vendors and this often leads to conflicts.

Conflicts also occur when the sea fish vendors harass the river fish vendors to shift from one place to another in the shanties. The women who sell river fish are forced to carry out their fish sales in shabby and unhygienic conditions, while there are clear-cut seating arrangements and other facilities for sea fish vendors (men) in the shanties. Moreover, these women are not provided with a permanent selling space in the shanties, which affects sales – consumers find it difficult to find the river fish vendors at a regular place. Conflicts reflecting ‘power’ and ‘dominance’ are observed in the brawls, arguments and compromises that take place when the sea fish vendors negotiate with the river fish vendors to reduce their price of fish for some prominent persons of the former’s community (such as the clergy, etc).

The intensity of such expressions of hostility attains a peak particularly during the outbreak of diseases in river fish. During such occasions, the sea fish vendors adopt strategies to create panic among the river fish consumers and lure them towards the sea fish market. Thus, here the competitive spirit in fish trade gives way to conflicts, when certain rules of the game (such as respecting the co-vendor’s’ livelihood needs) are violated.

### *(c) Conflicts between river fish vendors and fish dealers*

The fishing community is bonded to an exploitative-dependant relationship, whereby the values of equity and equality are completely negated by the fish dealers. While these fish dealers have their active presence in Parumala, they are

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absent in Payippad. In Parumala, two brothers mainly carry out the trade (their father was the dealer previously). Twenty to thirty years ago, their father had given loans to the fishermen, on the condition that they would sell their catch only to him till the debt was cleared. The majority of the fishermen were unable to repay the loans and are still obliged to sell their catch to the present generation of fish dealers. In the presence of a fish dealer, the purchase of fish by the fish vendors is guided by an auction system. The prime objective of an auction mechanism is to obtain the maximum price for the fish catch. The vendors can purchase fish on credit, on agreement that they have to settle the credit by the end of the day. The vendors are not allowed to participate further in the auction until they clear their debts. Most often the vendors borrow money from other moneylenders to settle these credits and thus the vicious circle of debt peonage continues. The exploitation and the injustice rendered to the fishing community by the fish dealers are often reciprocated, from the suppression of anger and disgust to sudden emotional outbursts.

### *(d) Conflicts between river fish vendors and consumers*

The vendors often narrate the purchasing behaviour of the rich people to that of the poorer sections of the fish-consuming population and this offers an interesting dimension on 'class relations'. The vendors always have to bargain with the rich consumers before agreeing on a price, while the transactions with the poor takes place relatively smoothly without any such bargaining. To put it in the words of a vendor:

The poor people take river fish that is smaller in size and is comparatively cheaper than those big fish bought by the rich. However, the rich will always try to squeeze the vendors. For fish that is worth Rs 150 they will give only Rs 120, while the poor consumers pay the quoted amount without any bargaining. The poor understand our hardships and will not bargain. The rich will not understand the poor, while the poor recognizes the poor.

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Conflicts with the consumers often manifest in the form of verbal arguments and accusations between the vendors and the richer consumers. But most often the river fish vendors accommodate such divisions as they do not want to lose their precious customers.

### *(e) Conflicts between river fish vendors and State agencies*

Conflicts occur in the heterogeneous village, when the State agency (such as the Gram Panchayat) tries to influence the decision making in managing the local fish-landing *ghats*. This struggle for power and authority is characterized by a lack of mutual trust. The scale of conflicts in this context ranges from the expression of fear to that of *dharnas* (a non-violent form of communal protest). The concern for equity and equality is once again reflected when the river-fishing communities demand respectable selling spaces (in terms of accessibility and availability of clean and healthy physical environment) on par with the sea fish vendors at the local shanties. Rich contractors or marine fish merchants usually take these marketplaces for annual lease from the municipal authorities. While there are clear-cut seating arrangements for the 'men of the coast' (sea fish vendors), permanent and hygienic places are not provided to the river fish vendors, who are mainly women. Though the river fish vendors pay the rent for the selling space, they have to sell fish amidst all municipal wastes, worms, garbage, etc. The neglect by the State instruments, such as the Municipal and *Panchayat* authorities, which are in charge of the management of the shanties, as well as the absence of any visible customary law, fails to address such inequities that exist in the fish trade.

A sense of fear and insecurity also exists among the fishing community as a whole, as the State government is geared up to promote aquaculture in the region. While for the fishermen, the concern is of losing their customary fishing spaces and rights, for the fish vendors it is the fear of losing both their vending spaces as well as customers. The vendors fear that the fish farmer practising aquaculture will employ his own men to sell the cultured fish, who may not necessarily follow the customary norms of the fishing community. This could

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not only lead to conflicts but also would threaten the traditional fish vendors of their means to earn a livelihood. Such fears are articulated into organised resistance (protests and *dharnas*) against the prevailing State policies, and are incorporated in to the fishworkers' movement in the region.

### **Conflict Management**

The fish-vending scenario is not just characterised by various types of conflict, but also by various mechanisms to contain these conflicts. These range from conflict resolution measures to conflict management strategies. While conflict resolution is able to contain conflicts temporarily, conflict management strategies are long-term oriented. It is observed that the components of culture in themselves aid in managing the conflicts. For example, the fishing community is strongly guided by the value system, supported by the principle of love and forgiveness and that everybody has the right to live and thus even accommodate outsiders into the fish trade after some period of reluctance. If the business of two vendors along a same route gets affected due to the other's presence, they adopt strategies such that both the vendors will sell different varieties of fish, leaving the choice to the consumers. But such management strategies are more evident among the stakeholders within the same cultural and resource context (say, among fish vendors themselves). It is also evident that one set of conflicts would lead to the evolution of new set of norms (e.g. no two vendors will sell the same varieties of fish along the same route). Many river fish vendors consciously avoid selling sea fish to avoid conflicts with the sea fish vendors at the shanties. Thus, conflicts also serve the purpose of reinforcing certain norms. These measures are, in turn, strengthened by the value system among the riverine fishing communities that selling sea fish is a disgrace, etc. The conflicts at the purchasing centres also serve as a check against the inflation of fish prices. Such conflicts are a medium to express one's dissent over exploitative institutions such as the fish dealers.

While conflict management measures are prevalent among the river fish vendors themselves, conflict resolution strategies come into play more among

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stakeholders who have unequal power relative to one another. Conflict resolution strategies mostly require the mediation and negotiation by a third party such as the trade unions, state bureaucracy or the police. These require frequent intervention and monitoring, and are temporary in nature. Conflict resolution strategies often fail when economic relations (e.g. fish dealers and debt peonage) cloud the local level decision-making processes. Under these circumstances the fishing communities, with the support of the State agencies, have attempted to create alternate structures such as the Fishworkers' Cooperatives. However, conflict resolution strategies require a direct interaction between the involved parties. Instances were recorded when this has not been always possible (for example, when State agencies themselves become parties in conflict when they promote activities such as tourism or aquaculture). In such contexts, resistances are articulated and pressure group strategies are formulated in the form of protests, *dharnas*, etc., against the State policies.

### **Summary**

The present paper highlights the following aspects. Firstly, it has explored the nature and causes of conflicts in the fish-trading process from the perspective of the river fish vendors. Conflicts in fish vending occur due to various reasons, with the violation of the shared values and norms by different stakeholders being a major cause. Conflicts become more complex when the parties involved are defined by relationships of dominance and dependence, gender and class inequalities, religion, resource scarcity and changing property rights. Certain norms associated with fish trade are gender sensitive and conflicts occur when other actors disregard these norms or when economic maximization becomes their prime motive.

Trading fish is closely linked to the norms of distributive justice. The women vendors are the worst affected when such norms are violated or modified, especially when the resources become scarce. Compatibility between different groups of stakeholders exist when the resource (in this case, fish) is abundant. But, with the degradation of the resources the worst affected group

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violates the customary norms and appropriates the resources from others, thereby resulting in conflicts. Modifications in the prevailing components of culture could lead to contradictions as well as conflicts. Two identical norms interacting at a common platform (the fish market), but having their genesis in two different geographical and cultural contexts (marine and riverine) could also lead to conflict. 'Fish' thus can become a symbol of both conflict and conflict management.

However, conflicts are not always destructive. They could help to strengthen the existing norms as well as lead to the emergence of new norms. Conflicts also help in the carrying over of certain cultural elements from one generation to another. When direct action seems impossible over exploitative institutions such as fish dealers, conflicts could indirectly become a tool to keep a check on them.

### **Acknowledgements**

I am grateful to the fishing communities of both Payippad and Parumala villages for their earnest cooperation in carrying out the study. I would also like to thank Dr. Prema Rajagopalan, Asst. Professor, HSS Department, IIT Madras, for her constant support, guidance and comments.

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### **Rethinking Indian Villages: A Sociological Appraisal**

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#### **Dynamics of Village Community in Village Studies: A Background**

In the sociological tradition, the idea of community has been linked to locality, to identity of functional interests, to a sense of belonging, to shared cultural and ethnic value, to a way of life opposed to the organization and bureaucracy of modern mass society. Communities were viewed as closed collectivities or traditional groupings in which the question of individual choice did not matter. In this connection Tonnies (1955) is of view that living inside a community (*Gemeinschaft*) fostered a feeling of intense solidarity and belongingness, but the most important principle of communityness was that the solidarity was not based upon convergence of interest (as in *Gesellschaft* society). Community has been generally associated with those modes of social organization that are considered fundamental to traditional Indian society like *jati*, religion, village, *panchayat*, etc., and are characterized by continuity, cohesion, boundness and adherence to tradition (Carol Upadhaya; 2001). Ronald Inden (1990) also affirms in his work about the village republic as a crucial pillar of Indian society.

Extending the debate, it can be referred that if we compare the village studies of 1950s with the contemporary village studies, we find a shift from 'treating the village as a locale for the study of a chosen aspect of rural life' to 'treating village as an interacting community with the outside world, both at regional and national level'. Contemporary debates about the conceptual discussions on the nature of a village community have raised the issue of the transitional shift in the 'way of life' of the villages. In this regard Madan (2002:1)

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believed that the village in India epitomizes the essence of Indian civilization as it is considered a repository of traditional mores and folkways. In being currently lived social reality, it provides a framework for economic planning and social development, and other related efforts at modernizing traditional ways of life. It is thus also an appropriate forum for interdisciplinary research. Commenting on the progress of the village studies in India, Atal (2003:160) says that the history of the studies of village community in India may be regarded as young as the Indian independence. No doubt, there were, in the past, some sporadic attempts by British scholars and administrators to investigate the aspect of rural life, but they did not generate a 'movement' in the academia. In the wake of the above presumed changes the lively issues and agendas for future reflections are – how is the nature of village getting affected and in turn presenting new challenges to the nation-state? How are social scientists posing their methodology to encompass the complexity of contemporary villages in India? This paper is persuading the synoptic view of issues emerging in the contemporary Indian villages

The present focus is on the idea of a 'village community' which was typically based on hierarchical inequality and functional holism, and viewed to have represented a harmonic one through centuries. The intent of this paper is a re-consideration of the construct of prevailing village community. The primary aim here is to re-think and re-present the conventional constructs of 'village community' with the belief that, presently, after around half a century of India's Republic, it is conceived as disharmonic, fractured, contested, contradictory and continually in flux. There is need for capturing the drastic shift in pre-conceptualized gemeinschaften understanding of villages. The village community, which was earlier considered to be isolated, static, and thus representing social solidarity, are being tempered. The unity of oppositions representing value consensus and collective action (may be because of religious dominance) are not true today. Religion-operative system of caste, which made the synthesis possible, is no more significant today. The Dumontian understanding of two polar oppositions of pure and impure on the basis of religion is no more effective in understanding the ground realities of village community. It has simply become

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traditional ideological myth, which has nothing to do with reality. Thus, the functional unity of village is being replaced by dialectic unity (in community sense) and finally leading to more individualism and gesselschaften category.

In this context Dube (1992:37) rightly states that detailed and penetrating analysis of societies within functional analysis showed that the conceptual growth became somewhat superficial when it comes to explain change. All changes could not be accounted for by external influences, for it was soon found that most social structure had the elements of contradiction and conflict within them. Social integration was nowhere nearly as perfect, as it was assumed to be: most societies had only imperfect equilibrium. Elaborating on this idea, we can say that the village community in the past manifested through the unity of opposition (but not in a conflict mode). The unity was possible through religion (superstructure) and visibly maintained through the caste system. But influence of internal and external pressures on the village resulted in breaking the unity of the opposites (the so-called functional interdependence) and finally has put them in a conflicting situation.

The presumption here is, thus, that with the invasion of exogenous factors in terms of developmental programme through State and non-government interventions, the contradictions and the conflicting situations have sharpened and now the shift is from hierarchical inequality with harmonic tone towards competitive inequality and disharmonic society.

It is thus re-emphasized that the Indian village is no more to be treated as static and sui-gensis and should be understood on dialectical and transitional lines. It is observed that previously it was the British rule in India, which tampered the economy and social aspect of village community, but now it is the State, which is the agency to engineer the contrast to the previously existing village community. State intervention has changed the economic, social and political sphere of the village. The village life is no more considered a private and isolated affair; it is influenced by the social, economic, and political forces coming from outside. In continuation of the above process,

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even the economic forces of privatization, liberalization and globalization have shattered the imaginary boundaries to village community and made them spatially open arena for exposure, conflicts and modifications. Further, while attention has continuously been given to the depiction of all sections of rural population through fieldwork, two areas have begun to be focused upon, viz., the women in society, and the *Dalit* or the subaltern studies with special vigor. The assumption here is that the point of view of the neglected sections in defining the situation and posing the problems has yet to be fully articulated. The *Dalit* identity has been recognized and articulated more sharply in the literary field, and some headway has been made at the conceptual level through subaltern studies and linkage with ethnicity.

The above framework thus led the contemporary rural India to address itself to the question of socio-cultural processes emanating from outside the village in both the public and private sectors in the institutionalized and non-institutionalized modes covering almost every facet of life. It is also observed that the different social units and sections of society are getting involved in more ways than one and redefining their interrelations. In the wake of the above presumed changes, the lively issues and agendas for future reflections are – how is the nature of village getting affected and in turn presenting new challenges to the nation-state? How are the social scientists posing their methodology to encompass the complexity of contemporary villages in India? By reviewing various village studies, this paper is persuading the synoptic view of issues emerging in the contemporary Indian villages. Few glimpses of emerging pictures of modern Indian village have also been referred in the paper.

### *Village as Community in Pre-colonial Era: An Impression*

In India, the village (*gram*) finds mention in ancient texts and later epics. It is distinguished from the city (*nagar*) and the town or the fortress (*pur*), while all three stand in opposition to habitations of recluses in the forest (*aranya*). However, the emphasis was seen more in terms of social evolution of villages

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from nomadism to settled agriculture. Historians (Basham, 1954; Kosambi, 1965; Habib, 1999 and others) tried to describe the physiognomy and administrative aspect of villages. A detailed study of the growth and character of the village from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries has been discussed by Habib (1999) in his book on the agrarian system of Mughal India. His focus is peasant rights and tenancy, thus indirectly reflecting the nature of social and cultural life in those times. He describes that the majority of the villages then were peasant, as agriculture was a commonly followed occupation, and caste identity was a qualifier (see Madan, 2002).

Quoting Habib (1999:144), 'the village in Mughal India stood in a dual position in its relationship with the world outside. A large amount of its produce had to be marketed outside, in order to meet tax claims; and thus a part at least of its economy was dominated by the requirements and vicissitudes of commodity production. At the same time, since the village makes few claims upon anyone outside its limits, its own inhabitants' needs had to be met very largely from within it and it had, therefore, to function as a self-sufficient unit. The twin circumstances dictated that a system of individual peasant production with resultant differentiation should coexist with the organization of the village as a 'community', a network of caste divisions and customary service or barter relationships'. Thus, the discourse on Indian village has depicted the village as the locale where caste appears in the form of a strange community of collective actors and peculiar political economy of subsistence exchange, the so-called 'jajamani system'. Later, Monier Williams characterized certain features which the Indian village possess – 'The Indian village or township, meaning thereby not merely a collection of houses forming a village or town, but a division of temporary ... with its careful distribution of fixed occupation for the common good, with its inter-dining and inter-dependence of individuals, family and communal interests, with its perfect provision for political independence and autonomy'. Thus each village has an inner world, a traditional organic community, self-sufficient in its economy, patriarchal in its governance, surrounded by an outer one of other hostile villages and despotic governments.

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The idea of Marx and Engels on village in their idea of an Asiatic mode of production is – the village is a strange world and the villager a strange sort of human, for he thinks that the village lands on which he labors belongs not to him who ploughs them but to the village as a whole. He merely possesses his land only by virtue of his descent from an ancestor and patriarch of the clan. Karl Marx, thus adopting an evolutionary perspective, placed the village in Asia, just above the primitive and the barbarian social forms, and described it as a self-contained community. For Marx, the Indian village was the mainstay of a stagnant oriental social system, where property was held in common by a whole village, and class conflict was absent. For him the Indian village represented a distinct autarchic economic system – the Asiatic mode of production – combining agriculture with manufacture. The uniqueness of the system, he believed, also contributed to the unchanging and stifling character of society.

Adding further, Marx said, “these idyllic village communities ... restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies ...’ (1853a:94). The Indian village was for Marx, passive and unresistant to what was thrust upon it. While he was critical of the stagnant nature of the village economy, he also accused the British ‘intruders’ of breaking up the Indian handloom and destroying the spinning wheel.

Finally, regarding the changelessness of the Asiatic village, Marx characterizes that there was no separation of the cultivating householder (by virtue of owning his own land) from the village or the clan to which he belonged; secondly, there was an absence of a division of labor among villages. Further in his scheme of historical materialism, clans are transposed into castes and the strict form of caste-order makes them unchangeable.

Sir Henry Maine focused village as ‘Aryan village brotherhood’ organized into separate households, each despotically governed by its family chief, and

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never trespassed upon by the footstep of any person of different blood. The ancient ruler has a right only to a 'share' of the produce. A principle of patrilineal descent was for him, the principle according to which social solidarity and social order of the authority and property has maintained.

Baden Powell focused on Dravidian severalty village called 'raiyatwari'. It is the one in which separate households have their distinct lands, ownership in those households is vested in the patriarch or head, representing the idea of the joint family. To Powell, since those simple needs had not changed after the moment of caste and state formation in ancient India, her village institutions therefore remained static.

Thus the relationship of castes in the village would be characterized by ties of group cooperation and solidarity rather than of competition between individuals. The payment made for goods and services would be determined not by a market but by *Jajmani* system. Thus the absence of a free market, of individuals, of private property and of competitive spirit were said to characterize the pre-colonial Indian village.

On the contrary, Pannikar's (1992) comment on the statistical survey of the country by Francis Buchanan in the 1810s (projected an idea of self-sufficiency and immutability of the village) reveals that such a narrow view did tend to ignore other significant issues, such as the greatly unequal, weakened and unstable character of the rural economy which was reflected, for example, in the occurrence of peasant riots in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century (see Pannikar, 1992; Dhanagare, 1991). It can thus be stated that the projected view of the villages was lop-sided, i.e. only evolutionary and neglected the dialectical issues within the village setting.

### *Various Agents Leading to Unprecedented Rural India: An Overview*

Various agents of transformation have been rightly noted by Chauhan (2005; 295), including increasing participation in the national, state levels and the fact that *panchayati* Raj Institutions have highlighted the value of social linkages, as

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well as instituted a degree of local patriotism or dignity. To him, mass communication now covers the rural areas. Problem-solving mechanisms in the form of voluntary agencies – local, national and international – are at work. International organized efforts through the U.N. agencies – the World Bank, the UNCTAD, UNICEF, the FAO and donor agencies at state levels – are visible in rural areas. These have specific programs of their own, and are deeply concerned with the manner in which the funds are allocated and utilized. In the formulation of projects, social base-line studies are insisted upon. A new vocabulary in the identification of stakeholders, participatory planning, felt needs, and techniques of monitoring that could be centrally administered, were seen. It gave rise to new interconnections with user groups, micro financing, self-help group, water harvesting and capacity building for repaying loans, etc. How the traditional tools of research and long-drawn studies of village stand up to the challenge, or assert the capacity for retaining certain cautions become somewhat problematic. Then there is the question of taking into account the linkages of the international agencies with the state, the voluntary agencies at the local level as well as the people's representatives.

At this juncture, it is realized that the Indian village could not retain its originality owing to various external forces, leading to structural transformation in the lifestyle of village India. These agents were seemed as having positive and negative juxtapositions on simple rural society, thus, leading to complexity and dynamics in village social structure. They can be broadly and systematically divided under the following heads:

(I) Indian Villages vs. Colonial rule – Ist intimidate

It is true that under British rule, concrete steps were taken to describe and classify the village community. This was necessitated by administrative and revenue needs, as was the desire to understand the socio-economic conditions of the people who were being governed. Census reports as early as the 1880s, along with gazetteers, district handbooks, and regional surveys, brought together varied information on the village community. The presence of the revenue collector,

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accountant, and police boundary man were the new categories in the traditional setting. Further, in 1901, an ethnographic survey of India was attempted as a part of the 1901 census. In 1916, Gilbert Slater carried out village-based surveys with a focus on economic issues. In this regard, Dumont (1966:67) saw three connected but successive meanings in the term 'village community'. In the first phase the village community is seen by British writers as primarily a political society, in the second phase as a body of co-owners of the soil, while in the third phase, it became to Indian's the emblem of traditional economy and polity, a watchword of Indian patriotism. On the aspect of British intervention into villages, Cohn (1968) rightly criticized that colonial research stopped at the boundaries of village instead of penetrating into the domains of everyday life. Later Srinavas (1987), too, wrote about how such scholarship, and specifically the work of intellectuals like Maine and Marx cast misconceptions about village life into universal history. At this juncture, it becomes as difficult to rely on judgment by Maine as for Marx, that the caste system was the chief obstacle to change and growth in rural India. Further, it is also difficult to rely on Maine's description of the village as the least destructible institution of Indian society.

On the contrary, it can be realized that the British conquest of India had abolished the traditional feudalism and old Indian economic system. In place of village commune appeared modern peasant proprietors and *zamindars*, both private owners of land. The new revenue system superseded the traditional right of the village community over village land. Lord Cornwallis with permanent land settlement (1793) prominently in Bengal, Bihar and Orrisa forced the idea of fixed cash payment, intermediary strata of *zamindars*, peasant proprietors, commercialization of agriculture, etc. (also see A.R. Desai, 1976). Cohn (1987: 343), too, argues that the stability of traditional social structure was due to rights on land enjoyed for well over 2,000 years. It is assumed that it was the British who destroyed the old land control system by establishing an absolute, heritable and saleable right in land on part of individuals/corporate groups responsible for payment of land revenue to the government.

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The British conquest suggests that outer covering of the so-called 'Capsulated village' was attacked, which resulted in a shift from 'Organic inside, atomistic outside' to 'Organic inside as well as Organic outside'. Thus British conquest created first intimidate to the prevailing thesis of atomistic village, a negation of subsistence production to commercial production, an economic shift in qualitative and quantitative dimension.

Here it will be appropriate to state Atal's (2005:304) critical remarks on the handling of villages during the British reign. It can be stated that the Indian village became a subject of investigation and discussion as soon as the British began to administer India at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Three issues dominated the discussion for over a century: (i) the nature of the village as the revenue-paying unit, and the type of such units; (ii) the village as a self-sufficient and autonomous unit; and (iii) the place of the Indian village community in the stages of social evolution. The colonial government's efforts to understand village economy, mainly as an aid to more efficient revenue administration, became more systematic over the course of time, particularly after its department of agriculture launched village surveys in some parts of the country. Further, a real shift in intellectual interest in the Indian village took place after the Second World War. There were two major developments. Firstly, the nationalist movement under Mahatma Gandhi made reconstruction of village economy and society a crucial component of the movement. Secondly, the newly established departments of economics and sociology in a few universities also began to study village economy and society.

The above arguments project the changing village of India during colonial rule. It also reflects the administrative inclination but academic non-seriousness regarding exploring villages and thus projects a superficial and biased picture of Indian village community. One may say that the intrusion/intervention of the British has given a 'new construct' to rural India both quantitatively and qualitatively.

(II) Indian Villages vs. Nation-State – II<sup>nd</sup> intimidate

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The program for reconstructing the village economy and society became part of the national development plans after Independence. They gave a new impetus to village studies by sociologists and social anthropologists. The work of M.N. Srinivas, S.C. Dube, A.C. Mayer, Mckim Marriott and others emphasized the connection of the village with the 'surrounding region', discussing the relationship of villages with the world outside largely in terms of 'exchange', 'transaction', 'network', 'linkage', etc.

Commenting on the concern over studying villages, Atal (2005:298) rightly points out that some 50 years ago, when village studies in India gained momentum and attracted both sociologists and social anthropologists, it appeared that people were giving up old concerns with Indology and ethnology and moving whole hog towards the village. Concern with the village then was guided by two factors: (i) the need to document the existing reality before it changed through the waves of external influences: planned development, Westernization and modernization; and (ii) to study the process of directed cultural change and its consequences both to contribute to theory and to assist the planning processes of the country. While the first led to the intensive studies of single villages in the tradition of ethnography, the second factor led to theme-specific studies not only by sociologists but also by political scientists, economists and psychologists. He rightly adds that time has come to review both structural-functional and Marxist frameworks in the context of changing scenario of rural India. To him, the big difference between the 1950s and now does, indeed, include the *Dalit* awakening and the shift away from governmental action towards civil society initiatives. In this regard, Shah (1992) describes the rural poor as being diverse in their composition – farmers, landlords, artisans, *Dalit* – because of which the process of change and resistance, too, had a diverse character (see Das, A, 1996; J Breman et al 1997; Epstein et al, 1998). This could be seen in the direction of the new

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farmer's' movement, identity assertion, multiple identities and other social action in rural India.

Extending the change in village studies, Beteille stresses that social anthropology and sociology had sorely neglected the equations of power and property in the 1950s and 1960s. Since caste, ownership and control of land were issues central to village economy, unless one understood agrarian hierarchy, the significance of social relations would remain unclear (Beteille, 1974). Nevertheless, the field of economic relations itself became one of the sources of change in village social structure with the commercialization of agriculture and the opening up of the village to wider social and economic influences (see also Dhanagare, 1991; Bandopadhyaya, S&D Von Eschen, 1991; Thorner, 1976; Beteille, 1974).

It can be stressed here that the village studies in the 1960s and 1970s shifted from single-village holistic study to multi-village comparative study; problem-oriented studies; development analysis studies; and evaluative studies related to the impact of planned changes. Many village studies focused on the debate about the nature and direction of changes occurring in the rural institutions like caste, *jajmani* system, joint family, kinship, village *panchayat* and others (see Sharma, 1997). In so many ways, 'outside agencies', such as political parties, social and religious organizations, government agencies and others, impinged upon the perception of the people and led to the social, economic, political and psychological shift of the village community. Large segments of Indian population have become aware, either by self or by outside interventions, of their civil rights, democratic liberties, fundamental rights, human rights, etc. By the 1980s, village studies had acquired a new meaning. No longer just an observation center that it was once for the fieldworker, today the village has become a major part of an overall strategy for development and change. Thus, the village becoming a 'fertile testing ground' for the activist and policy-maker, it also motivated several social scientists in the 1990's to a restudy of the village.

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Emphasizing on State intervention and its implication on rural India, Sathyamurthy (1996) asserts, aegis of a planned economy, modernization and Green Revolution led to a rapid growth of food production and far-reaching uneven differentiation of peasantry. Economic development in India has resulted in a number of overlapping imbalances: between the agrarian and industrial bourgeoisie; between politicians and bureaucrats; between a rapidly differentiated middle peasantry and the agrarian classes below it; between upper castes and middle/lower castes; between middle castes and *Dalits*; between men and women.

After the mid-1960s, it was the agricultural sector which took the lead in the growth process. The so-called Green Revolution witnessed the emergence and consolidation of powerful capitalist strata. The qualitative changes occurring in the countryside includes: a section of the old rent-receiving landlords was stimulated by the enhanced profitability of agriculture in the mid-1960s to undertake productive investment in this sphere. At the same time, the rich peasantry who acquired rights over land also started commercial agriculture. Through this admixture of landlord capitalism and rich peasant capitalism, a new class of agricultural bourgeoisie emerged, which consolidated its position after mid-1960s.

### **Emerging Issues**

- Agrarian reform introduced by Congress under the leadership of Nehru in 1952 brought about a veritable revolution in the countryside.
- India's Community development program has been acclaimed as reflecting the attempt to the objective of economically and socially democratic policy in the countryside since 1952. Over the last two decades, the focus on community development shifted to community participation.
- There is a need to emphasize the distinction between regular continuing relationship between the village and the State. Although there is hardly any direct government intervention in the production and investment decision related to agriculture by farmers, the

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government does influence the legal, material and economic environment in which farmers operate.

- After Independence the State did not act as neutral referee to the caste activities and launched laws relating to untouchability, reservation, etc. Government intervention in the form of reservation in education and jobs in favor of OBC, has also contributed to the worsening of the relations between similar and dissimilar castes.
- The concept of citizenship has provided them an equal playfield to some extent.
- Universal franchise gave motivation to horizontal caste solidarity.
- Wells, tube-wells and pump-sets for lifting ground water are mostly in the hands of individual farmers. But they are subject to government regulation meant to serve the interests of equity and sustainability. Government provides infrastructure facilities to the rural areas.
- In order to strengthen agricultural development, the credit is flowing through institutional channel like NABARD, SIDBI, Cooperative banks, and other private banks.

Now let us systematically understand the sharp implications of state intervention on village community under following heads (see Saxena, 2005).

### **(a) Changing Social Aspect**

With the rapid urbanization and means of transport and communication, the rigid hierarchical order is weakened. Further, the villagers for their self-interest (especially during elections) feel the social distance mechanism as dysfunctional. Now the higher-caste people visit the house of lower-caste people and take water and food from them. The lower-caste people, too, have a tendency to sit on the cot along with higher caste, exchange *hukka* and take food. The distance in marriage practice is still surviving.

Declining *jajmani* system, caste *panchayats* and agrarian-based economy, factions in elections, contacts with the outside world, etc., have really resulted in a decline in village unity. Although the villagers know each other, they still do not

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'intervene in the day-to-day affairs of others (except few educated and power elite individual and groups). The villagers seem to be more rational and restricted in their interaction. It is found that the charm of festivals and Mela is declining, which traditionally united the whole village. Electrification and new recreational items like TV, radio have made the masses isolated in their house only. The 'hukka culture' too has declined which used to integrate the caste people.

A study in Bihar (traditional oriented) reveals the struggle for dignity (*izzat*), as a part of the anti-feudal struggle, which has gone through two phases. In the 1920's it was taken up by the economically advanced castes: Kurmis, Koeri's and Yadavas. They not only refused to undertake unpaid labor for the landlords or sell their commodities at less than the market price, but also began to adopt formerly upper-caste names, wear the sacred thread, etc. (Jha, H, 1977). Regarding the *Dalit* situation, it is being pointed that as recently as the late 1970's, they were still being subjected to various indignities. It is only with the rise of the Naxalite movement that the situation there has changed. In the course of the lower castes acquiring dignity, they started the practice of wearing clothes of one's choice, sitting on a cot, etc. Further, their participation in festivals and social occasions has also changed.

In analyzing the rural society of the Jammu region (see Saxena, 2005), it is observed that land reform in this region emboldened the weaker sections and with this, they refused to work on lands belonging to people of higher caste, resulting in intrusion of agricultural labour from outside the 'state.

Summarizing the salient social issues:

- With the advancement of capitalistic mode of production and modernization, the traditional vertical linkage of inter-caste *jajmani* system broke and was replaced by national or regional horizontal linkage of intra-caste solidarity.
- Fundamental change in the caste is the beginning of a gradual decline in the *jajmani* system; and an integral part of decline is growing disjunction between caste and traditional occupation. This is also

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linked to population growth, the increasing scarcity of arable land and migration to urban areas.

- Hierarchical notion based on purity and pollution is on the decline, and giving way to secular thinking.

### **(b) Changing Economic/Technological aspect**

Commercialization of agriculture, electrification, using of canals and tube-wells for irrigation, tractors replacing plough and bullock carts, importance of cash, etc., have not only decreased the *jajmani* system but have also brought rationality in agrarian economy and exchange. The *jajmani* relationship is only restricted between untouchables (doing menial work) and the upper caste. With the advent of science and technology, the number of service-caste people have declined, villagers no longer go to the barber for a daily shave (they do this themselves with their own razors) but only for haircuts; Potter's mud vessels have been replaced by stainless steel, bone china and aluminum vessel; the mud walls have been replaced by brick walls and cemented houses; the *dhobi*'s work is done by individuals themselves, by using new detergents. Most of the service-caste people have either left their traditional jobs or continue the same outside the village, in order to get more money and to change their status in the villages.

On the understanding of the term 'peasantry', originally it came into use at a time when most rural workers had the same relationship to the means of production and controlled only the labor of their own families. But with commercialization of agriculture, the picture has changed radically. The once-homogenous categories became stratified and split into antagonistic classes based on buying and selling of labor power. The process begun during the colonial period, but it has advanced rapidly since the Green Revolution. It has also led to progression of middle peasant thesis.

India's agricultural development has been uneven because of the variation in physical features, available technology and others. Added to this is the uneven pattern of investment in rural development. The new agrarianism that has

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emerged in the political arena has been strongly influenced by, and has in turn, influenced, different aspects of agriculture, e.g. high-yield variety seeds, fertilizers and modern machinery. After the mid-1960's it was the agricultural sector that took the lead in the growth process. The so-called Green Revolution witnessed the emergence and consolidation.

According to Rudolph & Rudolph (1967), the displacement of the large landowners by middle farmers may be accurately described as one of the most significant developments of the post-Independence period. The middle farmers today constitute the most powerful group in the countryside, economically as well as politically.

India has been experiencing the emergence of new agrarianism. Millions of farmers are mobilizing themselves against the State. Sharad Joshi, among other exponents of new agrarianism, advocates remunerative prices for agricultural commodities, electric supply at nominal rates, etc. This has led to a vertical mobilization of the agrarian classes.

Summarizing the salient economic issues thus I note the following:

- The advent of Transport and communication has led to increasing labor mobility. It is realized that the place other than native place is used for work as they retain their dignity of work and self.
- The rural migrant succeeded in climbing up to a more dignified work in the city by upgrading their skills and strengthening their bargaining position. They went to the city with the thought that they had nothing to lose but everything to gain.
- Tube well capitalism has been introduced, replacing wells and canals having uncertain water resource.
- Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana in 1999 emphasizes the formation of self-help groups for poverty alleviation, thus leading to diversification of labor.

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- What is now called 'agriculture' has become mostly sets of industrial processes physically located in the open air rather than under a roof; i.e. they constitute 'agri-business'.
- External aid (international) from countries like the U.S., the U.K., Russia, Germany; agencies like the World bank, Asian Development Bank; programs like Indo-Dutch programme for alternative to development.

### **(c) Changing political aspect**

Change is also taking place in the political arena. F.G. Bailey in the late 1950s and early 1960s wrote on the idea of the village as a para-political system, functioning in nexus with a wider political environment (see Bailey, 1963). These ideas of power and authority being governed by wider networks are reflected in Anand Chakravarti's (1975) work on the Rajasthan village of Deivsar. His analysis demonstrates that the State could be a catalyst for change in the social and political spheres, and how wider political processes like land reforms and Panchayati Raj could influence equations in the village.

In the contemporary rural India, it is found that villagers are more aware of their right to vote, factions are the visible examples of political mobilization of masses into different parties. The rural elections resemble more the urban elections having symptoms like bribery, conflict, faction, influencing masses with cash and kind, murders, etc. The leadership, too, is not restricted to any particular caste especially higher caste. People from the middle- and lower-caste groups (because of reservation policy) are more in competition for leadership. Further the dominance of older people is being replaced by youths in leadership pattern.

Finally, summarizing the salient political issues, I note the following:

- A new political culture is also emerging in the villages, and the younger villagers are being inducted into making decisions.

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- According to Srinivas (1996), with the idea of PRI becoming universal, certain changes have occurred in the power structure of the village. The most potent source of mobility to them has been adult franchise.
- In the *panchayat* elections in many states like Bihar, U.P., Punjab, etc. the lower castes were brought to the centerstage for the first time.
- The reservation in PRI's is giving some breathing space for *Dalits* to raise their voice and retain their dignity.
- There is emerging reservation politics of the OBC's and Sc's. The situation is making rural India more hostile and fractured.

### (III) Indian Villages vs. LPG (Liberalization, Privatization & Globalization) – III<sup>rd</sup> intimidate

These forces are the most powerful and deadly to the rural community as it exposes the village globally. In some sense it seems good but it is more destructive to developing countries like India. It has brought new competitors for the total village, resulting in the reshaping of the village setting.

The most critical issues on this subject can be summarized thus:

- The process of liberalization, privatization and globalization has restructured local and parochial configurations into the national and global network.
- Liberalization is leading to enlarging private sectors in irrigation and allied activities. Private corporations are acquiring land for raising crops and forests.
- The current debate on globalization focuses on the role of international trade and market as a cohesive force.
- Prior to globalization, peasants never felt threatened, as there were no barriers to exchange, distribution or multiply seeds.
- The current debate on globalization focuses on the role of international trade and market as a cohesive force.

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- Local communities feel both unstable and unsafe in the face of global market forces – perceptions that bolstered by the media and controlled by MNC's. The media impact on local communities and culture is so shattering that the consumer culture has pushed them to the threshold of extinction. Local economies are being swallowed up by global capitalism and traditional culture is being displaced by the ever-expanding global market and consumer culture.
- Aspects of eco-agriculture, like depletion of ground-water resources and land resources, are emerging.

### **Emerging Dialectical and Conflicting Issues in Village Community**

It is realized that village community is no more harmonious; rather it is highly competitive, disharmonious and vibrant. The gravity of the situation can be grasped through the following salient issues:

- The number of atrocities committed on the *Dalits* in the earlier years was by no means modest. According to the Report of the commission for the SC's and ST's, the number of incidents on them is increasing.
- The traditional dominant and new-emerging ones (like SC, women, OBC) constitutes a major challenge to Indian democracy. This problem is likely to be exacerbated by the emerging militancy of the *Dalits*. Rural violence and bloodshed are likely to rise sharply in the immediate future.
- Acute competition generated among the backward caste themselves for access to resources which are scarce, e.g. OBC *Jats* in U.P. (along with Yadav). Political reservation brings more inequality among so-called homogenous weaker sections.
- In India, the adverse effects of corruption on democracy have come into sharp focus in recent years in connection with issues of local governance and village politics. The local electoral politics are integrally linked with various development rackets and can even generate competitive corruption.

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- Competition, pronounced value difference, deep cleavages of interest, wide inequalities, and a sense of denial and injustice between different groups give rise to conflict. All these processes are happening in rural setting.
- Emerging *Dalit* leadership has corrupted the mentality and expectation of the *Dalit* poor of grabbing opportunities by following norms that breach public trust, misuse political and administrative power for personal gains, etc.
- Under SGSY, the government is giving loans for self-help groups. In Gujarat in Gandhinagar district, the big losers are those to whom these developments are supposed to benefit. They are under debt as they are not in a position to utilize the fund properly (Nikita Sud, 2003 13 4085).
- Secularization of caste system, on the one hand, has caused a separation of the caste from the ritual hierarchy of status, and on the other, has conferred on it a character of 'power group' in the political sphere.
- Agrarian unrest, especially farmer's agitation for remunerative prices, waiver of agricultural loans, electricity shortage, etc., is visible in rural India.
- According to Vidhyasagar (1996:182), the principal beneficiaries of the Green Revolution are the North-western region, the deltaic plain in the south, and the irrigated parts of central India like Gujarat and Maharashtra. He showed positive correlation between the high productive district and the farmer's movement. Emerging agrarianism took root in Punjab, Haryana, Western U.P., Gujarat, Maharashtra, Coastal Andhra and parts of Tamil Nadu. It may be noted that these regions have experienced a great penetration of market forces and capitalist development in agriculture.
- With the rise of prosperity in rural areas the incidence of kidnapping, murder, theft and other evils are emerging at a faster rate, as evident in the agricultural productive areas of Punjab and Western U.P.

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- The 1990s has ushered in an era of far-reaching economic liberalization reforms. Though initially this has least advanced in the rural sector, the signing of the GATT Treaty has brought Indian agriculture on the threshold of change and exposed the rural sector to the international market.
- Increasing rate of suicide among farmers in various states like Maharashtra, A.P., Punjab and U.P., reflecting the decline of bonds of traditional social system and increasing sign of egoism and isolation among rural masses.

### **Images of Contemporary Village: In Lieu of a Conclusion**

Although agriculture was the mainstay of the village economy, there are also a large number of villagers involved in many non-agricultural occupations, such as animal husbandry, fishing, forestry, arts, crafts and services. Since the village society has been changing, it is often said that the earlier literature on it no longer portrays the present reality and has therefore become useless. New villages are thus dramatically different societies. The improvement is manifested in a myriad of ways – in the physical health standard, in the quality of people's food, shelter and clothing, nature of consumption, etc. New village works on the integral lines and talks on the issues of poverty alleviation, environment, ecology, sustainable development, equity, social justice, water conservation, people's participation, role and empowerment of women. Social security, primary education, health and family welfare, forest conservation and safe drinking water are the emerging issues of new villages.

### **Critical Observations**

- Economic development in India has resulted in a number of overlapping imbalances: between the agrarian and industrial bourgeoisie; between politicians and bureaucrats at the central and at the regional level; between the organized working class and marginalized workers; between a rapidly differentiating middle

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peasantry and the agrarian classes below it; between upper castes and middle/lower castes; between middle castes and *Dalits*; between majority community and minority; between men and women; between the state and women (Sathyamurthy, 1996:20). These contradictions will definitely have due impact on the village setting, directly or indirectly.

- There will be significance of caste, gender and democratic rights for class struggle in rural India. Successful struggles against caste atrocities and demanding equal rights for lower castes have become burning issues in rural India.
- There is evident positive correlation between the areas of high productivity and the farmer's movement; it may also be noted that these regions have experienced a great penetration of market forces and capitalist development in agriculture. It includes states like Punjab, U.P., Maharashtra, /Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- The 10<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan has accepted the objective of extending electricity to all villages by 2007 and all households by 2012. This may lead to a drastic shift from manpower to mechanical power and will really transform the rural environment.
- A shot in the arm for the PVC pipe industry has come from the 'Swaraj Dhara' scheme for rural water supply. The government offers even the use of drip and sprinkler irrigation at a subsidized rate. This is giving rural society a wider exposure to urban-industrial world and will enhance agriculture productivity. On the contrary, this may also lead to low water levels and a water crisis in the near future.
- T.V. and computers as modern means of communication, which cut across the lines of region and nation and opens the village globally. On these lines, the program like *e-choupal*, *bhoomi* project, *gyandoot*, etc. are emerging. Private agencies like ITC group, Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) and others are emerging to bridge the rural-urban divide through information technology (see Saxena and Rao, 2005).

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- The *Dalit* assertiveness of the last few years has created antagonistic relationship between *Dalits* and other rural categories.
- Reservation policy had opened new avenues of upward mobility for *Dalits*. During the last half a century, opportunities for higher education and jobs in government departments and entry in parliamentary politics have brought forth new generation of leaders from depressed sections of society.
- Self-help groups (SHG's) are emerging as new institutions, giving more space for women and other weaker sections of the community.
- Psychologically, man avoids harassment of weaker sections in public as it gives an impression that he is more modern in outlook. Rigidity and conservatism reflect traditionalistic values while the younger generation is adopting a secular and scientific ideology.
- *Mera Gaon Mera Desh*, a program on Star News channel is presenting images of the modern Indian village. This reveals the complexity of villages yet to be captured by the social scientists.
- It is mainly the rural masses who provide the audience for political rallies, *kar-sevaks*, and serve as a mob to protest issues. They are lured by the city life and the promise of free alcohol, food and movies, and also fall prey to corruption and bribery. This leading the rural population both towards a politicalization of rural life and other urban evils.
- It is observed that the concept of '*athithi deva bhava*' is declining in the contemporary village setting. Regarding the problem faced by the researchers, it is found that while conducting research in the rural areas, the rural masses question the visitors' purpose, i.e. their welcoming attitude, hospitality, etc., have shattered. The villagers are suspicious of the researcher and try to manipulate the needed information (this action is guided either for deriving some benefits or reflecting their frustration with previous such attempts by the government, NGO's).

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- According to Sen & Dreze (2002), the slow but steady march towards universal elementary education has eroded one of the crucial bases of social stratification in India. Further the decline of fertility, the accelerated increase in female literacy, and new constitutional provision for political representation of women are likely to facilitate further progress towards more equal gender relations.
- Many contemporary villages do not look like villages because of available infrastructure. If we look at the special census 2001, it takes account of the village amenities in terms of T.V., telephone, car, Scooters, etc. The rural development in rural setting is being understood more along the lines of overall improvement in the quality of life of the rural masses.

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### **An Interview with Professor Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka**

**Interviewed by Noorman Abdullah and Kelvin EY Low**

*University of Bielefeld*



Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka is Professor of Social Anthropology in the Faculty of Sociology, University of Bielefeld, as well as Pro-Rector at the same university. She has researched and published widely in both English and German on social anthropological perspectives on globalisation; political anthropology; ethnicity, integration and minority research; democratisation processes in sub-national contexts; legal anthropology; cultural change and intercultural communication; as well as rituals. Her books include, among others, *Ethnic Futures: The State and Identity in Four Asian Countries* (1999), which she authored together with S. Nandy, D. Rajasingham and T. Gomez, as well as *[Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu State: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal (Studies in Anthropology & History)]*(1997), which she edited together with D. Gellner and J. Whelpton.

Noorman Abdullah is a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Sociology, University of Bielefeld. His research interests include deviance and social control, sociology and anthropology of religion, sociology of everyday life, and qualitative methods. His articles have appeared in 'New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies' and 'Asian Journal of Social Science'.

Kelvin Low is also a doctoral candidate at the same university. His research interests include social memory and historiography, sociology of the senses, and migration and transnationalism. His book, *Scents and Sensibilities: Smell and Everyday Life Experiences*, is being prepared for publication with Kegan Paul. His other recent works have been published in 'Current Sociology' and 'Sociological Perspectives'.

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### **The Interview**

**NA:** We'd like to start with a very broad question by asking you what shaped your intellectual development as a scholar as well as the fields of interest that you are currently working on.

**JPC:** Let me start with a digression. I started my studies with History of Art in Zurich. But very early on, in the initial term, I felt that History of Art, as it was taught at that time, did not fit my expectations. I couldn't understand why art was perceived purely from an aesthetic point of view; that the societal relations of production were not reflected in art. And at that time, I saw interesting-looking people, obviously students, who were following interesting-looking teachers, and I realised eventually that these were social anthropologists. I went to attend their seminars and one of them was taught by Hans Peter Duerr. He's a renowned German scholar who didn't start his studies in social anthropology, but very quickly ventured into social anthropology from the point of view of philosophy and philosophy of knowledge. He was very influential in developing our ideas about the relationship between a scholar and the 'irrational', and the relationship between nature and civilisation. This was in the mid-1970s. Social anthropology at Zurich University was then a rapidly expanding department. The charm of it was – among other things – its very broad theoretical foundation. Historic materialism and political economy were very much in the forefront, but also structuralism as well as the Manchester School and its methodological tools. An overwhelming discovery during my study was Pierre Bourdieu. After I completed my diploma study, I immediately started teaching in 1983. By the mid-1980s, I already was engaged in ethnic studies. In this field, the combination of three topical fields became more and more pronounced: inequality, power as well as social constructivism. But back to my very first steps at the Department of Social Anthropology in Zurich. For me it was a huge issue to be confronted with questions such as how to approach other cultures, how to negotiate distance, and what it means to look

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at society from afar. This obviously was of great interest to me because I come from an intercultural background in my family, and our migration from Poland to Switzerland was a very powerful moment. Without conceptualising the problem in these terms, at that time, I was striving to come to terms with my loss of identity. So, in a way, I started studying social anthropology not being really conscious that I was asking myself personal questions. This inter-relationship between being a scholar in-between cultures and then getting more and more involved with other cultures, proved to be fascinating and rewarding.

**KL:** I think it's interesting you mentioned your biographical position and then your relation to anthropology as a discipline. We understand that anthropology is, in a sense, a humanising discipline with a human quality very much embedded, and that the experiences of fieldworkers, investing themselves in the fieldsites, in a way, shape and change their life perspectives, so to speak. Was this similar in your case as a fieldworker?

**JPC:** It was absolutely the case. As you can imagine, in the 1970s, we were very conscious of such issues as etic and emic categories, of looking at societies from a distance, but we still believed then, to some extent, in grand narratives. Constructivist approaches were not at the forefront of our inquiries, by no means. I was also rather interested in pure models rather than in individual positions as well as modalities of negotiating one's path in a given social realm. I then went to Nepal to conduct my field research, which is already quite an amazing story, how it came to be Nepal, because I felt that I would never get myself immersed into Asian societies. I thought Asia is so different from what I knew, so powerful that I will never, as a European, I will never be able to get into anything Asian. I have the highest respect for Asia and I thought it would not be possible, but it happened that I got really fascinated by this very different world. I went to Nepal, and I would say that my field research, conducted in the Hindu context in a Himalayan village, contributed greatly to my personal development. This really made me more

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self-confident; it was a wonderful experience of, somehow, becoming more of an adult. When I came back from the field after my first eight months in Nepal, I felt like a different person. So it changed me quite a lot.

**NA:** This interest in Nepal is also very appealing, as well as your other research sites that include Switzerland as well. In some way, these places tend not to be given sufficient attention in research of what some commonly regard as 'South Asian studies', or 'European studies', where the focus tends to be on India more in the case of 'South Asia'. So perhaps you could also enlighten us on what brought you to Nepal, your interest in Nepal in the first place, and the continuing interest in studying Nepal as a nation-state.

**JPC:** All right. But first of all I would like to disagree. From the point of view of social anthropology, Nepal continues to be very interesting, so while there is this great hype on India from the point of view of economics and politics, this is something very different from the point of view of social anthropology and religious studies, because Nepal is an incredible microcosm of diverse cultures, diverse religions, diverse languages, present there in great proximity with one another, this tremendous cultural, linguistic, religious wealth. So this perception, that the centres, like India and China, are nowadays so overpowering, does not reflect the scope of research in my discipline. Well, I don't think it is very interesting in academic terms concerning how I came to work on Nepal, because this will be a story of, well, coincidental issues. I went to Israel in 1978. And when I went to Israel, I knew about a village, a vegetarian village, and there was an acquaintance. He was an acupuncture doctor, I knew him and I knew his wife. They invited me to come over. I came to this village, which had quite fascinating surroundings, because they didn't eat meat, but in a figurative sense, they were eating each other: There lived vegetarians for humanitarian purposes as well as vegetarians for health purposes and they were involved in a perennial quarrel. But when you have vegetarians, there will be, very quickly, people around who were into Hinduism. And all of a sudden, in a village in Israel, Hinduism became a

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fascinating story. And when I came back to Zurich, I saw this advertisement that two new student-research groups were forming – one to study Nepal, and one, Bangladesh. At that very moment I knew: Nepal. This was it. And then we went on a very intensive course, introducing us to Nepal. I learnt Nepali for one year before I went to Nepal. This is how it started.

**NA:** So basically you began your research by studying caste society.

**JPC:** Absolutely.

**NA:** Starting from ethnic relations within a village, it then progressed on to micro-democratisation processes in the field. I understand that your other research interests include civil society, as well as multiculturalism and ethnic minorities. How would you therefore position yourself now, in the wider literature that has been written about these issues in general, as well as your contributions into these fields of knowledge?

**JPC:** Before I start answering your question, it is important to talk about the order in which I became engaged with these issues, because one preoccupation developed out of a former field of inquiry and so on. My initial focus was on the Hindu caste society. This came about because I was absolutely fascinated by the book written by Louis Dumont, '*Homo Hierarchicus*', which is an *opus magnum* on the Indian caste society. This is a structuralist approach towards caste society – it is not a theoretical position which I share, but this is probably one single best book, one single most fascinating book that I've ever read in the academic field. It was fascinating from the point of view of the clarity and vision in the theoretical approach, a very elegant theory that was very well argued in this oeuvre. At the same time, it was a tremendous piece of ethnographic work. You'll hardly find a book comprising both, theory and ethnography of the highest standard. I always knew that I could not agree with many issues being at the centre of Dumont's argument, but this most probably created a very productive tension for me to work on; on the one hand,

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inequality, very diverse notions of inequality were of interest to me; the second one being the relationship between power and culture. Both emerged as recurrent themes in my work. So, after my first round of research on the Hindu caste hierarchy, I came to realise that in the Nepalese context, state formation on the one hand, and ethnic relations on the other hand, fit very neatly into the process of evolution of caste society in Nepal. And the moment you have inequality, combined with ethnicity formation as well as the evolution of a state society, then the next step can be, of course, conceptualising ethnic relationships, ethnic conflict, minority-accommodation – perceived among others from the perspective of human rights – and embarking upon the broader process of state-society relations. So this is how, in my Habilitation, which is this post-doctoral degree in the German-speaking world, I came to conceptualise those more modern type issues. As for where my contributions come into the picture, I would say that this is currently a quest to combine traditional anthropological themes such as small-scale societal dynamics within local communities as well as kin and friendship networks, with recent issues that became the object of anthropological research such as civil society formation, resistance, and democratisation. Social anthropology concentrates on the question of micro-structures of democratisation, in particular, that is on the question of small-scale dynamics in the framework of rapid social change within and across national borders.

**KL:** Embedded in your interests of integration of ethnic minorities is the concept of belonging, or multiplicity of belongings, if I may put it that way. Can you elaborate on the effectiveness of using such a concept, and how is it compared to current ones which are often used, like the whole notion of ‘identity’, for instance?

**JPC:** Well this is, of course, a very good question. Yes I came, about two years ago by now, to the idea that belonging is a category I would like to look more closely at, and which structures my work very well. The moment I ‘found’ the notion of belonging, I realised that this, in a way, was always very

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much at the heart of my work. It is nice when one can say that for the last 25 years I was interested in belonging, but now I can name it. When I look at belonging, four different aspects are at the very base of this notion. Belonging is firstly, formal membership. This can comprise belonging to a nation-state through citizenship, this can be belonging to an ethnic group, even though belonging in this framework is usually not very much formalised, now becoming more and more formalised within ethnic organisations. Of course, there is also formal membership within families, for instance. Usually, this fact escapes our attention but, for instance, in the case of inheritance, we realise that family membership is formalised as well. The second element within the corpus of belonging involves the material aspects. Usually, property belongs to persons or, rather seldomly nowadays, to collectives. And I'd also like to say that people belong to property in the sense that something can hold me to the ground by the very fact that I own it. Let's say, I've developed an attachment to my land, I've developed also an attachment to my flat in a particular quarter, and this plays an immense role when people should flee but don't do so. This may be because they are attached to their manifold possessions. Therefore, materiality plays an important role also in relation to inequality. The third element is given through symbolic orders. Therefore, identity relates very closely to belonging. I find the idea of belonging nowadays more complex than identity. I also suppose that we are a little bit bored by conceptualising identity all the time. Identity as well as identity politics are still very much in the forefront of anthropological inquiries, but we need to go beyond the confines of these concepts, for instance, by concentrating on the modalities of representation. The fourth dimension lies in the social relations. We belong to groups, we belong to larger collectivities, and within these formations, solidarity serves as an overarching notion. But also, diverse forms of reciprocity, within and across the boundaries of belonging, are of great importance. So now, how do we work with this notion of belonging? I think it is very important to acknowledge that in today's world, in a globalising world, as attachments are becoming more and more visible and embattled, people strive for these attachments. The moment there

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is the overarching formula of globality or world society becomes so overpowering, small-scale relations, smaller formations of belonging can become more pronounced. But we all belong to different configurations at the same time. And the question is, in which context are particular configurations of attachment more important than others? And, how do people individually and collectively deal with those diverse attachments? These are issues of loyalty, for instance; these are issues of commitment, even issues of problematic loyalties, because very often it is thought that if you are Muslim, you cannot be a proper Swiss, for instance. We all know that the internal as well as the external views on this issue differ and even tend to conflict. And still or maybe therefore, dealing with multiple belongings, creating our commonality and also mutuality, is one of the biggest problems of our time that all people are facing all over the world.

**KL:** Following from that, I'd like to connect your conception of belonging to the idea of multiculturalism. When we talk about multiculturalism, there is a burgeoning literature on this issue, and in some countries like Australia and the U.S., they are grappling with this issue. Do you think, in your opinion, there is any progress or promise with the current state of academic interrogations on multiculturalism? Is the model of multiculturalism working?

**JPC:** In my opinion, this model was very powerful and important when it started because it is crucial to acknowledge that societies are diverse. Obviously, there is no one model of multiculturalism. The models are, on one hand, informed by divergent theoretical approaches and, on the other hand, are also decisively informed by national positions from which scholars talk. Models of multiculturalism were very strongly informed by the situation in Canada and in the U.K., whereas French or Swiss positions will differ to some extent. In my view, it was very important to acknowledge that there are very different national constellations with different modalities of thinking about unity within national realms, including besides multiculturalism, diversity models that were developed in the U.S. and in the Dutch context. We also

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need to include universalist models oriented towards individual rights. But nowadays we are, of course, increasingly interested in the transnational dimensions which create even more complexity in reflecting upon multiculturalism. And we also need to be cognisant that when we talk about multiculturalism, it makes a big difference whether we talk from the point of view of the requirements of the system, how to accommodate diversity within a particular framework, let's say, national framework, or whether we think from the point of view of individuals or small collectivities who have to come to grips with particular majority-situations, where politics of recognition, for instance, requires special attention. So I think we still are very much in the process of conceptualising multiculturalism. Belonging provides an important dimension, here because it points to the tension between the quest for boundedness and the quest to transcend societal boundaries.

**NA:** Continuing on the issue of belonging, most of the situations that do emerge tend to be confrontational, and at times, a lot of work tends to be interested in conflicts which emerge, and how actors actually negotiate within these multiple belongings, and how they reconcile these instances of multiple belongings. Do you find in your work whether there is this continual tension that exists, or do people actually find a common ground, a commonality, that they give and take or negotiate between these tensions that they face?

**JPC:** Of course, there are huge tensions within different dimensions of belonging, and this is very much dependent upon specific situations and how it is dealt with. In my view, culture can achieve both. It can build bridges, but it can also erect tremendous barriers. And we choose between both options having basically the same cultural repertoire all along. With the same situation of, let's say, cultural difference, we perceive maybe between ourselves, we may search for common ground, but we can also look precisely for the distinctions and also use them and strategise in order to create conflict between ourselves. And this is what I find quite fascinating; under which circumstances people choose to create this common ground, and under which

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circumstances – using the same cultural repertoire – will do precisely the opposite. I am very much interested in this issue, in particular when it comes to our civic action. When do we perceive ourselves as members of a particular interest group, when do we strive for particular issues, and when do we do so while at the same time perceiving of ourselves as members of a broader community? How do we find the balance between different interests that structure our action simultaneously?

**KL:** With regard to what you said about your stance on belonging and on multiculturalism, can you share with us, as to what has been the response to your work within the larger academic audience, and do you conceive and employ your concepts with an intention to transcend disciplinary boundaries, beyond the empirical sites that you work with?

**JPC:** I suppose that my work so far was best disseminated within Himalayan studies, and here, I can see that I now already belong to the older generation of scholars who contributed towards defining the field of current inquiries. I'm also very happy to see, within Himalayan studies, that there is an interest in my work, and I hope that it will continue. I also have the impression that within the South Asian context, my work is fairly well-known. On the other hand, I contributed a number of articles on accommodating religious difference in European immigrant societies. If you are asking whether I intend to contribute to conceptualisation of belonging in a broader framework, yes indeed. This is now the biggest plan to write about what I know best, which is Nepal and Switzerland, to bring my writing to such a level where it can be used for broader conceptualisation. In my view, the time is ripe. The issue of belonging becomes a burning issue. The literature on belonging is rapidly growing and I think that a very interesting angle to look at contemporary societies will be from the point of view of belonging, including multiple belongings, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, on accommodation between positions making sense from the point of view of diverse societal sites. Both perspectives are necessarily sides of the same coin.

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**NA:** You are also involved in several projects with regard to the processes of micro-democratisation. I assume this concept of belonging would be a very important dimension that would emerge from these projects as well. How do you therefore position belonging, what you said previously, with regard to transnationalism, for instance, as well as your own involvement in World Society in the University of Bielefeld? Could you comment on this relationship?

**JPC:** Of course, some issues were already raised earlier, where belonging becomes a more and more important category precisely in view of globalisation, of world society formation, where our attachments may become more visible to us because there is less in-between when we conceive of ourselves as members of world society. At least some people do so. Also, when we talk about transnationalisation, there are different issues. One concerns something in my view that has been neglected in migration research. The focus has been, in the last few years, on this powerful idea that people do not have to belong to just one place, for they can belong to different places situated in the transnational horizon. But, I would still like to stress that migrants have a problem of belonging. And this is something that is of interest to me – what kind of commitments do we have if we spend more time in one particular context rather than in another? Let's say, what does it mean when members of a 'diaspora' – let us now not define what diaspora is; I'm now using it in a descriptive way – instigate conflicts from afar at the places of their origin, funding fighting and sending resources to the warring parties. Being a member of a diaspora you do not have to suffer the same kind of fear or loss as those who are on the spot. The issues of loyalty, of commitment, of immediacy, and how they translate into politics are very much in the forefront of the concept of belonging. I think such questions relate to conflict, but also to processes of civil society formation, to the attempts to find a common ground. I also find, from the point of view of belonging, that a very interesting question concerns how we create civic commonality in multicultural contexts.

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**NA:** Do you see this notion of civic commonality coming up with what is currently happening in Nepal and its own future progress?

**JPC:** Yes, I do. Even though Nepal right now is getting very much into, to some extent I would say, still an old-fashioned multiculturalism paradigm because Nepal has opened up to these kinds of issues only about 15 years ago. So right now, there is a very strong formation of distinct categories between diverse ethnic groups. And the question of civic commonality within the national Nepalese space is something rather contested than endorsed. The idea of creating a common national civic ground is something that is not very much on the agenda of a number of ethnic activists. To them, it is right now very important to reinforce and stress the burning issues of distinctive ethnic groups. So this is a very contentious issue. But I'm sure that it will become an important element, and in my view, from the viewpoint of scholars who also work with a comparative perspective, it is very important to support those ethnic activists who involve us into their endeavours to pay attention to the necessity of crossing ethnic boundaries in the political realm. Therefore, whenever I am invited by ethnic activists as an advisor, my work as a social anthropologist is also to share with them insights from other national contexts, insights from Canada, Switzerland and so on.

**NA:** So you do see parallels between Switzerland and what's happening in Nepal?

**JPC:** I do see parallels, but of course I am careful enough not to make any suggestions about institutional transfers. Nevertheless, let me give a simple example. With about a hundred or maybe hundred and ten languages that exist in Nepal, ethnic activists make a point nowadays that there is a need for basic education in these languages. So then you can ask, for instance, based upon the Canadian or Swiss experiences, the question whether people can choose themselves the language for their children's education? Or would it be compulsory that when you belong to one particular ethnic group, you must

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learn through this particular language? So I suppose that here, experiences from other countries can be very useful and these should be evaluated with one another.

**NA:** This issue of choice is very interesting because at least in the context of Singapore, for instance, ethnic groups are not really given a choice when it comes to, say, the choice of the 'Mother Tongue' language they take in schools.

**JCP:** Precisely.

**NA:** If you belong to a particular ethnic group, you used to be only allowed to study, apart from English as a First Language and as the medium of instruction, a Second Language based on your ethnic group that is decided by the state.

**JPC:** Which I consider very, very problematic, and here it is again, important when we anthropologists conceptualise these kinds of issues, we should also, now, be aware of debates going on in other disciplines. And here, political philosophy is very important. Let's say, this position was also strongly endorsed by Charles Taylor in his famous work on 'Politics of Recognition', while Will Kymlicka, for instance, has also made a very strong point, rightly so, that individuals must have enough room for manoeuvre within collective groups. That they have the possibility to find their own options. I personally find it very problematic when collectives have the say over individuals. This idea is not shared by all anthropologists, as you know.

**KL:** Academics often have to juggle research, writing, teaching and consultancy work. What is your position in relation to pedagogy and teaching? For some academics, they merge research interests with teaching. What is your approach?

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**JPC:** Well, my approach is that my position as a university professor requires a combination of the diverse fields that you just named. I am obliged to conduct research, I am obliged to teach, and it also makes sense that I'm involved in academic administration as well as in advisory bodies. Also, working occasionally as an expert in the field of development, or in the field of peacekeeping, is of course very interesting, because then you obtain privileged access to social fields you would otherwise have restricted access to. So, this sort of provides avenues for true participant observation. I find research very, very important, and I also love writing. I'm very unhappy that I don't find enough time for writing right now. But I feel very enriched by teaching as well. Two weeks ago, when I went to Zurich for an opening of a fascinating exhibition on Nepal, some younger people who are now in the process of completing their PhDs told me that they were highly influenced by my teaching, and this was very nice and rewarding to hear. Being a good university teacher is something which I deem very important.

**NA:** The research projects you are currently undertaking, include, for instance, a project which has to do with the E.U., and also, your work with other governmental bodies. Do you see any progress in the way in which such organisations make use of research in terms of their own policy making towards the betterment of a particular situation that they are interested in?

**JPC:** In particular, when we look at the E.U., we have to distinguish. On one hand, within the framework of the E.C., there is a very strong educational, academic component. And the E.U. is, of course, a political structure. So when we talk about the academic educational component, then it is of course fascinating to contribute to research, within the framework of E.U.-funded scholarship. But when we talk about the E.U. in its complexity as a policy-making body, then we are faced with the usual problem of how to contribute with the findings of our research to the functioning of this body. And there is always a huge tension, and the usual problem that has been stated many times, that is the question of how to disseminate our knowledge in such a way that it

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is attractive, that we can make an impact. We social anthropologists, we are in fact not very good at packaging our knowledge in those bits and pieces which are then incorporated into policy-making institutions. One question arising from this is, of course, whether we want to do so. I mean, our *deformation professionnelle* is to say, always, that things are very complicated and that we do not want to violate the 'reality' that we find on the ground, moulding it into clear-cut units. But this position comes at a cost, that usually we social anthropologists are not the ones who are heard. Usually, the political science scholars as well as scholars from some other disciplines are much more attuned to advisory work. Of course, there are social anthropologists who conduct social activism in trying to do advocacy work, but this is not the type of work I was doing even though I am supporting those activists who are coming to me in order to obtain my knowledge and advice. But I would say that this is a very big tension and we were not able to solve that. But if you ask me where I stand, I consider myself as a scholar, in the first, in the second, and in the third place. And only then as an advisor, but it is very important to me to make my knowledge useful whenever possible.

**NA:** To perhaps round off the interview and to use one of your works on 'Ethnic Futures', do you foresee a 'future' in terms of ethnic relations, and its management by political institutions, or even in everyday lifeworlds, particularly whether this discourse of ethnicity is more pronounced, or whether it becomes more problematic? Or is there instead a de-ethnicisation of politics that exists in the world today?

**JPC:** Well, this is another big question. It depends very much on which part of the world we have in mind. In some parts of the world, ethnic co-existence has developed in a fairly good way. In other parts of the world, there are huge disparities, there's tremendous conflict with tremendous costs to people themselves. In my view, it is absolutely necessary to protect minorities. This is very important, and in many parts of the world, not enough has been done in order to protect minorities at the very basic level of protecting human beings,

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of protecting mere existence. And it is very important to find grounds that people can cultivate their cultures, languages and religions. On the other hand, I find it very problematic when these kinds of endeavours lead, because sometimes they do, to reinforcing boundaries between people by ethnicity or by religion. And here I find it mandatory to consider the individual aspects of human agency; that people do not feel compelled to organise within collective units; that they have the possibility, individually, to step outside of collectivities; and that institutions exist that enable the creation of a common ground. So on the one hand, minority protection for sure, but on the other hand there is a huge need for overarching structures, representations, and enough resources in order to enable people to live within broader societies.

**NA:** One final question to wrap the interview up. What is in the pipeline with regard to your own research and writing projects that we can expect in the near future?

**JPC:** At present, I am going to be very busy with wrapping up the E.U. project on the micro-politics of democratisation. Thanks to my colleagues from the U.K., Sri Lanka and Nepal, we were able to generate a very significant number of materials and we are now preparing six volumes under different editorship from within our team in the framework of SAGE, New Delhi. There, we've established a series under the title 'Governance, Conflict and Civic Action'. The first book, edited by David Gellner and Krishna Hacchethu will appear soon. And all the other volumes have already materialised, to a large extent. It is very important for us to publish quickly because the notion of 'micro-politics of democratisation' as well as 'local democracy' are issues that will be of great interest in the near future. My second field of interest continues to be ethnicity and ethnic relations in Nepal, and I'm right now in the process of designing a new project developed out of a previous project on ethnicisation and de-ethnicisation of politics in Nepal. The current project looks at the discourses of ethnicity in the current world society. It focuses on the diverse figures of ethnic claim-making, and how they are

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being communicated in the political spaces, with Nepal at the forefront, but seeking to grasp the globalising effects on local discourses surrounding ethnicity. I am also working on publishing materials which emerged from my studies on accommodating religious diversity in middle European societies. But as you know, I became the Pro-Rector at the University of Bielefeld one month ago, and I'm right now quite convinced that in the long run, I most probably would make the university my 'third regional field' of research and a very obvious point of entry would be through ethnicity. I started developing an idea on how to conceptualise ethnic difference, in particular in relation to immigrant background of students within the framework of German universities. I believe this will be an interesting future subject of my research.

**NA:** Thank you very much.

**KL:** Thank you.

**JPC:** Well, thank you.

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### Reflections on Study of Habitus, Biography, Nation-State, and Trauma

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This article draws some reflections on the 'Habitus, Texts, Rituals: Elements of Acceptance, Presence and Continuity in the Israeli Art Canon'<sup>1</sup>, a study which explores artists' career trajectories in the Israeli high-art field: the processes of acceptance, presence and continuity involved in holding a central post in the Israeli art canon. The main analytic framework was derived from Bourdieu's theory concerning the field of high-art, whose core concepts are the 'field of restricted production', 'the legitimate code', 'habitus', and various modes of 'symbolic capital'. The objective of this theory is to understand the characteristic processes of the high-art field, and the stratification and reproduction order in society. In spite of his extensive theoretical and empirical studies, Bourdieu did not focus specifically on contemporary artists, but rather conducted a socio-historical analysis and theorization of processes involved in the production of culture, and the construction of the high-art field (Bourdieu, 1984; 1990a; 1991; 1993a; 1993b; 1996a; 1996b; Bourdieu, Darbel & Schnapper, 1991; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; 1979). Bourdieu's theoretical and empirical framework has been extended in the study of avant-garde artists in the U.S.A. in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Crane, 1987; 1992).

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<sup>1</sup> A cultural study conducted for a doctoral thesis at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Communication Department, which is now under consideration (submitted July 2007). The thesis was carried out under the supervision of Prof. Hanna Adoni and Prof. Tamar Katriel.

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This study is an extension of a Masters' thesis (Gal-Ezer, 1997), in which findings revealed a unique common lifestyle characteristic of a canonic group of artists in the Israeli high-art field. At the start of the previous study in 1993, the only other study available on the Israeli high-art field since 1948, which explored the topic of contemporary plastic arts, was that of Greenfeld-Peres (1982), a study focusing on the years 1950–1975. Since the culmination of the previous study in 1997, a few more studies – by Azoulay (1999), Yogev (2005) and Arieli-Horowitz (2006) – were conducted in reference to the contemporary field of high-art in Israel.

In order to understand some of the processes shaping the artistic canon in Israel in historical, cultural and institutional terms, the study focuses on the modes used by the artists to achieve a canonic position in the high-art field, and the ways in which they maintain this central position. The analysis is based on three constructs: (a) *Habitus* – the habitat of the artists' childhood, which includes family, educational and cultural institutions; (b) *Texts* – the discourse characteristics and the uses of printed texts about artistic works and how they are disseminated; and (c) *Rituals* – both institutional and informal rituals by means of which the young artists are instructed, trained and incorporated into the community of artists, and their membership in this community is repeatedly reaffirmed.

Of the three social constructs that were studied in the entire research, this article will focus on the *habitus*, exploring possible interactions embedded within *habitus*, nation-state, trauma, the high-art field in Israel, and the *habitus* and biography of the researcher. Theoretical framework, methodology, some findings and conclusions will be presented by drawing two parallel discourses or narratives – academic discourse and personal narrative – with the intention that the interaction between them should be revealed.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> These two parallel discourses or narratives will be presented in different fonts and position: academic common discourse (in 'Times New Roman', on the head and main part of the page), and personal narrative (in 'Arial', mainly as footnotes). Thus, the two different discourses can be read separately or alternately.

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### **Theoretical Framework**

The modern high art field was established in France in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the avant-garde was born, in total opposition to the bourgeoisie way of life, and against state domination of the art academy, state dictatorship and governance of crucial art field components, as well as processes of artists' socialization and reproduction, the canonic style and themes of art, etc. (Bourdieu, 1996a; Buerger, 1992; Perry, 1999; Perry & Cunningham, 1999; Wood, 1999). Since then, the high-art field has been striving for its autonomy and independence, while the main principle of operation stemmed from its critical opposition force, which was revived again in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the 1960s and its flourishing protest movements (Wood, 1999). The contemporary art field strives to be autonomic as well as critical, but is part of the globalized cultural economy dominated by the multinational corporations which dominate the global late capitalist economy (Appadurai, 1990; Jameson, 1984; October 10, 2002).

The Israeli art field was born 100 years ago, also as an avant-garde modern field of art, constructed by European habitus artists, who were greatly influenced by the French art field during the 20s and 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; while the artists also constructed local national salient discourses and styles within the process of nation building. Over the years, and also after independence in 1948, the international components of the field continued to be very dominant, alongside the local elements of tastes and discourses (Ballas, 1980; Bar-or, 2007; Gal-Ezer, 1997; Manor, 2005a; Trajtenberg, 2002).

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The unique habitus<sup>3</sup> of the artist is a crucial 'tool' in his ability to act in the high-art field. The origin of Habitus, a central concept in the Bourdieusian theory (1984; 1993b; 1996a) lies in three concepts and processes: the Latin word *habitat* which means environment, home, or surroundings; another being habit or habituation, which relates to the habitat as creating specific socialization; and finally the word refers to a mental scheme which is homologous to a historical consciousness first offered by Panofski, who explored and conceptualized the specific common mental habits of the Renaissance scholars. Panofski theorized the 'mental habit' of the Renaissance scholars who had a specific way of thinking that enabled them to write a summa, to engineer and build a cathedral, or to paint and sculpt in the particular style of the high-renaissance (Panofski, 1991). So Panofski's 'mental habit' with the other meanings mentioned above, were the foundation upon which Bourdieu formed the concept of habitus.

The Habitus as conceived by Bourdieu (1984; 1993; 1996) is an internal scheme, perceived as a social construct, constructed both through and

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<sup>3</sup> When studying for my Master's degree at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Communication Department, I took a seminar entitled 'Theories of Communication and Culture' given by Prof. Hanna Adoni. Prof. Adoni knew that I had been working in the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art, so when deciding on the articles each student would present in class, she said: 'Bourdieu's theory is complicated for people who are unacquainted with the art field, so Miri would be perfect for presenting Bourdieu, as she studied art and worked at the Tel-Aviv Museum'. The year was 1992, and I had been working at the museum for about 14 years. From 1986 to 1991, I was Founder and Director of the Art Education Center at the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art – responsible for about 1,500 children, youth, adults, teachers' art workshops programs, special high school art courses for the *Bagrut* (school leaving certificate), and special public projects.

At that time I had two first degrees: a B.A. in Art Creation and Psychology from Haifa University and another B.A. in Community Social Work from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I was 40 years old at the time, and decided to take a risk. I resigned from my high-level position at the museum, and gave up a very reasonable salary and its added benefits and prestige, because I felt that I had to learn communication, in order to understand contemporary society and culture.

But when Prof. Adoni offered Bourdieu to me, I was flattered and somewhat astonished, thinking about the connections of art to communication, but also trapped in a way, because I wanted to study communication and not go back to art again.

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by the whole lifestyle of a specific class. Thus in a society there exist different habitus: 'the structured and structuring dispositions which generate practices' (Johnson, 1993:12). The upper classes possess and deliver to their 'Inheritors' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979) the habitus of the 'legitimate code', as primarily constructed by the cultural capital of family<sup>4</sup>, and supported by the curriculum of the educational<sup>5</sup> and academic institutions, enabling the 'aristocracy of culture' of the high classes, acting in the high-art field. This multistage 'distinction' process is bound to Western society's class structure with its diverse cultural capital and lifestyles (Bourdieu, 1984, 1996).

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<sup>4</sup> Attempting to understand the Bourdieusian concepts of 'habitus' and 'cultural capital', I was initially surprised by the (supposed) cruel determinism reflected by these concepts. I thought about my socialist ideals, and my work as an art teacher for very deprived pupils in Tel-Aviv and all over the country. I worked at the special art unit, in which teams of six to seven art teachers specializing in the plastic arts, music, theater, dance, cinema, etc, and their materials and facilities traveled around in 'the transit art vehicle', attending peripheral schools and dormitories once a week, in order to teach art and cultural enrichment to new immigrants and youth from difficult, poor family backgrounds.

I thought about my pupils in the deprived suburbs of Tel-Aviv, when I was the Founder and Director of the Welfare Art Project at the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art for the deprived neighborhoods. Together with the teachers at the art museum, I discovered some wonderful talents amongst these pupils who produced drawings and sculptures very different to those by children from affluent families – more colorful, more poetic, more expressive and very creative.

Then I began thinking about my years as a social community worker, between 1977–1986 parallel to my work as art teacher and teachers' supervisor at the Tel-Aviv Museum, (before I became the art education center founder and director at the museum). I recalled the restricted future of all these pupils according to Bourdieu; they would never become artists, or elites in Israeli society, because they lacked the good fortune to have been born into affluent families.

<sup>5</sup> What would Bourdieu think about our efforts of teaching art to deprived pupils, trying so hard to transmit the wonderful art heritage of Western culture? Trying to nurture young artists? And 'in other words', would our efforts in trying to transmit the 'legitimate code' to the Israeli 'working class' and to new immigrants from various countries have any consequences?

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The habitus of the individual artist is not a unique biography<sup>6</sup> of a specific artist, nor is it the collective biographies of a group of artists. Bourdieu perceives the habitus of an individual artist as a construct which enables the artist to act in the art field and thus: 'if the post makes the *habitus* (more or less completely), a *habitus* that is made in advance (more or less completely) for the post (through the mechanisms determining vocation and co-option) helps to make the post' (Bourdieu, 1993a:142). The distances between the posts in the art field and the habitus of the artist determine his trajectory in the art field<sup>7</sup>, a trajectory that is not a unique career project, but an objective mobilization route that can be objectively identified in the field of restricted production – the high-art field (Bourdieu, 1993a; 1993b; 1996a).

Thus Bourdieu denies the tradition of the art history science, the artist monograph, which documents and analyses the contexts in which the individual artist was living and creating his specific or group style (Barasch, 1985). This classic artistic monograph, is very common as well in fields of

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<sup>6</sup> Trying to conceptualize the differences and similarities between biography and habitus, I thought about history and sociology, its related diachronic and synchronic viewpoints, French society in comparison to Israeli society, the steady cultural and national roots of the French in their country and nation-state, as opposed to 2,000 years of Jewish Diaspora, and the astonishing cultural and national continuation of a society, that only lately, in 1948, became a nation-state. So due to historical theories like those of Anthony Smith (1999), that analyzes the Jewish case as an example of Long Duree ethnic-symbolic construction of a nation (in contradiction with that of the 'Imagined Communities' of Benedict Anderson, 1991), I concluded that I would attempt to deal simultaneously with habitus and biography, but did not yet know how.

<sup>7</sup> In the second phase of learning the concepts of 'habitus' and 'cultural capital', my anger subsided, as I had reached another level of understanding Bourdieu. I had concluded that he was a real 'genius', as he was the first theoretician to claim very clearly that artistic talent is a product of a prolonged assimilation and socialization in a cultural environment, and to present it in empirical statistical and ethnographic studies in vast populations. Thus it was obvious that artistic talent has little connection with genetics (maybe some inherited biological disposition), and clear evidence showing the contribution of family and school education (and both should nurture that very vague disposition); as Bourdieu deconstructed the social construct of 'charismatic artistic talent's ideological apparatus which enables cultural reproduction.

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culture such as literature and cinema as well as in popular literature and TV<sup>8</sup>. Even though the artist biography is anchored in historical, political, economic, and social contexts, the main nature of this discourse represents the artist mythos: the artists who is in conflict with his surroundings, is nevertheless a genius who stands beyond his era.

Contemporary biographical approaches view the self as a social construct, and explore the narration of life stories accordingly as social constructs reflecting a common ideology. Thus these approaches attempt to explore and understand biographies of individuals as common mutual constructs of classes or groups, stemming from a specific society, locality, history, nationality, culture, ethnicity, religion, etc.<sup>9</sup> (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Giddens, 1997; Gubrium & Holstein, 1998; Handelman, 2004).

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<sup>8</sup> Can the transition of an artist's monograph to the popular fields of cultural production cause its disappearance from the high-art field? Would artists themselves also deny their biography?

<sup>9</sup> There were some post-modernist approaches that analyzed life-stories as an entire constructed stories, without referents in reality, or with very loose and unreliable relationships to historical events. At the beginning of my research (1993 – for the M.A. degree), I had to adopt these approaches, which had canonic status at the time, approximately until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I felt deeply that these approaches were reductionist practices and I had difficulty in assimilating them into my research. I think that this resentment originated partly from my life history, and partly based on my previous primary academic knowledge, 20 years previously, when I began my B.A. in the faculties of Psychology and Art Creation at Haifa University.

At the beginning of that academic year, 6 October 1973, the Yom Kippur War, one of the most traumatic wars in Israel, broke out. The classes were cancelled, because lecturers and students were recruited to reserve forces (the main forces of Israeli army), fighting desperately and heroically to block the joint invasion of Syrian and Egyptian tanks over the borders into Israel.

The academic year began only several months later, when citizens came back from the war. Many were broken mentally, the word PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder) was not mentioned in those days, but the psychological unit at Haifa University and the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, offered group treatment for students who felt in need of psychological aid due to the consequences of war. Two years later, in 1974, I studied 'Abnormal Psychology', using James C. Colman's English textbook, *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, Fourth Edition, 1972. The book had a humanistic, radical spirit of the late 1960s, thus rejecting the 'Medical Model' in psychology. I read chapter 7 several times, very carefully: '7 – Transient Situational Disorders: Traumatic Reactions to Combat; Reactions to Civilian Catastrophes; Reactions to Chronic Situational Stress and Psychological Problems in Space Flights'.

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On the left side of the chapter's opening page are three photographs (pp. 186-187) that have been enlarged and presented again in context of the chapter's text. Three pictures of soldiers: 'These pictures, taken through the war in Southern Asia, give some indications of the extreme stress to which soldiers are subjected during combat' (p. 192). Some pages later, the caption of the next photo is: 'After an earthquake that killed her mother, a bewildered Greek girl weeps amid the ruins of her home' (p. 202). On the next page: 'The trauma of being a displaced person is well portrayed in this picture of two young homeless refugees' (p. 203), then after few pages a photo reads: 'Although conflicts and quarrels are common in marriage, when such conditions become chronic they place each of the marital partners in a situation of severe and prolonged stress' (p. 205). The next page shows two photos, the caption of both being: 'Cruelty, torture, and mass extermination cost the lives of some ten million people in Nazi concentration camps – and left thousands of others emotionally and physically scarred for life. These pictures were taken by the American military photographers during the closing phases of World War II' (p. 208).

The significance of the sentence: 'Nazi concentration camps [...] left thousands of others emotionally and physically scarred for life' is in direct opposition to the title of chapter 7: 'Transient Situational Disorders', which was the new explanatory paradigm for these disorders in the 1960s and early 1970s. Many empirical studies in the text itself present clear evidence of the phenomenon of PTSD – the prolonged effects i.e. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. (PTSD was recognized as a syndrome by the American Psychiatric Association only in 1980 in the DSM III – Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Witztum, 2002.)

Colman's 1972 book reads: 'In some cases soldiers that had stood up exceptionally well under intensive combat experiences developed what might be called "delayed combat reactions" upon their return home – often in response to relatively minor stresses in the home situation which they had been previously capable of handling. Evidently there had been underlying damage capabilities in some cases, complicated by memories of killing enemy soldiers or civilians, tinged with feelings of guilt and anxiety (Karpe & Schnap, 1952; Polner, 1968; Strange & Brown, 1970)' (Colman, 1972:191).

Other studies reviewed in 'Chapter 7 – Transient Situational Disorders', presented the long-lasting consequences of various traumatic events and prolonged situations such as prisoners of war, although the majority of the Korean War POWs were coping and adjusted at last (p. 211). But there were prominent prolonged effects on concentration camp survivors. In a study of Jewish and non-Jewish survivors from Denmark, Norway and The Netherlands, Hafner found 'what he considered to be a basic syndrome of psychopathological sequelae to the systematic terror and cruelty experienced in these camps: this syndrome included anxiety, nightmares, insomnia, headaches, irritability, depression, and social withdrawal' (Hafner, 1968 in Colman, 1972:213).

There were also studies that revealed 'The Second Generation' phenomenon: 'In the study of first and second-year college students, whose parents were survivors of concentration camps, students who went to mental health clinics for assistance' – Trossman (1968) found that the students' difficulties were related to parental interaction. He describes 'a survivor syndrome', in which the parent suffers from chronic anxiety, recurrent nightmares of his

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As Bourdieu relates the habitus to a class, it seems that the individual and group identity is assumed by Bourdieu to be a class identity<sup>10</sup>. For instance, the petit bourgeois habitus is perceived as a petit bourgeois identity. Also French culture and French nationality seem to be perceived as transparent, although many scholars explore extensively the mutual relationships within consciousness, identity, culture, nationality, historical era and generation (Anderson, 1991; Barthes, 1975; Berman, 1996; Mali, 2001; Shapira, 2001; Smith, 1999; Winter, 1995; Winter & Sivan, 1999; Zelizer, 2002; Zelizer & Allen, 2002<sup>11</sup>) which could be a hybrid identity (Adoni, Cohen & Caspi, 2002; Bhabha, 1994; 1999; Fanon, 1999; Hall, 1997).

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wartime experiences, and intense guilt from having survived the imprisonment while others perished. The parental attitude most harmful to the student was an expectation that he would fill the void in the parents' lives and somehow make up for their suffering. Trossman thus concluded that the concentration camp experience scarred not only the survivors but some of the next generation as well.' (Trossman, 1968 in Colman, 1972:213).

<sup>10</sup> For many years, the newly constructed Israeli 'working class', especially settlers, land workers, builders and agriculture workers (in the *kibbutzim*, socialist collectivist settlements, but also in the central establishments in Tel-Aviv), were the elite that was hailed by the Israeli Labor Movement, the main Zionist movement prior to the State, and the main operator in the nation-building process, and its accompanying hegemonic ideology main producer (Ben-Porat, 1999; Ya'ar & Shavit, 2001). This elite was the supplier of the political, military, economic, cultural and artistic leaders for many years. For instance, assassinated P.M. Izhak Rabin (1922–1995), who was the chief of staff in the 1967 victorious war ([www.rabincenter.org.il](http://www.rabincenter.org.il)), won the Nobel Prize for his peace efforts (1994).

[http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/)), Ehud Barak, former P.M. and chief of staff

([http://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/mk\\_eng.asp?mk\\_individual\\_id\\_t=28](http://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/mk_eng.asp?mk_individual_id_t=28)), and the famous writer Amos Oz, who won the Israel Prize (1998) and the Goethe Prize (2005) ([http://www.ithl.org.il/author\\_info.asp?id=194](http://www.ithl.org.il/author_info.asp?id=194)).

These social and national processes were also the origin for 'thinking about the limits' of Bourdieu to Israeli history, culture, and society.

<sup>11</sup> When my research was prolonged due to a number of constraints (such as military conflicts 'The Second Intifada' that lasted some years from Spring 2001, and the 'Second Lebanon War', Summer 2006), new theoretical approaches were emerging (to my relief), which emphasized the relationships between life story and life history. Classic historical research, in its strict methodology demanding dealing with facts and evidence, was aimed to back up witnesses' testimonies, which could be incomplete, repetitive, confused, etc, because witnesses had difficulty in narrating traumatic events that they had experienced. These

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While Bourdieu's theory tends to disregard nation and history, Pickel suggested the *Homo Nationis* – 'National Habitus': an individual and group psychosocial foundation constructed through modern nation-states' historical-structural contexts (Pickel, 2004)<sup>12</sup>. Homologous to Pickel's 'National Habitus', is the older 'Generation Identity' concept, which is linked to historical trauma (Mali, 2001): WW1 'lost generation' (Winter, 1995); the Vietnam War's 'Wounded Generation' (Berman, 1996); Israel's 1948 Independence War generation (Sivan, 1991). Holocaust survivors – 'First Generation' and their 'Second Generation' – all are very common entities in the Israeli public sphere and academic research. Deep Holocaust anxiety recurs whenever there is an existential threat to Israel, also reflected in the media (Nossek, 1994; Zuckermann, 1993). Similarly, deep anxiety structures emerged in the U.S. 9/11 trauma and shaped the news (Zelizer & Allen, 2002).

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combined renewed approaches, which have been emerging in recent years, also merged into social fields. These re-established and reconstructed approaches will be cited in the following paragraphs of academic discourse.

In my eyes, the 9/11 disaster of 2001 was not only the collapse of the Twin Towers, but the public final deterioration of the post-modern paradigm. This mass death of nearly 3,000 innocent people, broadcast by global satellites, live TV all over the world, was the salient proof that although TV screen images are technological simulations, they are nevertheless analogons of reality (Barthes, 1977). The reality is there, in its all-encompassing horror and cruelty, and world citizens were seeing death live in real time. It was no longer a simulacrum, even though they were watching digital or electronic images being transmitted on their private screens.

One of the first books dealing with the 9/11 trauma was *Journalism After September 11* by Zelizer & Allen (2002), in which the 'Introduction: When Trauma Shapes the News' (Zelizer & Allen, 2002:11-24), the article 'Photograph, Journalism and Trauma' (Zelizer, 2002: 48-68) and other articles, clearly reshaped the theoretical significance of trauma in the national public sphere. Zelizer is a researcher who was also studying the impact of the photographs taken by the American army photographers in the liberation of the concentration camps (some of these photographs were presented in Colman 1972 as mentioned earlier): 'The Liberation of Buchenwald: Images and the Shape of Memory' (Zelizer, 1999). It seemed to me that the previous psychological knowledge of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, the psychological understanding of traumatic events' effects, are being renewed and refined, and finally entering other social sciences such as communication, sociology and cultural studies.

<sup>12</sup> Only in 2004 did Pickel enlarge the habitus from its class 'closet' to its national sphere, a concept that I felt was needed.

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In earlier approaches, such as the moral and narrative theories of the Holocaust representation which essentially originated in literature and culture critique such as the thoughts of Adorno: 'Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems' (Adorno, 1973: 362). There were difficulties in the representation of the Holocaust because no known cultural frames existed for its representation, thus 'absence' is being constructed, like in 'Shoa' of Claude Lanzman (Felman, 1991). The Holocaust is commonly represented in popular culture and in the Israeli media (Meyers & Zandberg, 2002; Zandberg, 2004) while Israeli fiction films only recently presented the Holocaust, and the same process can be seen in the documentary field (Gal-Ezer, 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). In the field of plastic arts, there is common agreement on 'Absence' as a unique feature of Holocaust representation (Amishai-Maisels, 2005; Feinstein, 2005) and only at the end of the 1980s individual Israeli artists began representing the Holocaust in their art (Manor, 2005b).

In opposition to some of the approaches in communication, cultural research and the historical fields mentioned above, there is another branch of academic literature, mainly post-modern, that views history as an ideological construction of narratives, emphasizes which are common in the social sciences and in cultural studies (LaCapra, 1998; 2001). The Israeli approach of this kind claimed that the Israeli state, when dealing with the question of the Holocaust cynically exploited it, silenced the survivors, while constructing a false narrative of 'Holocaust and Heroism' '*Shoa Vegvura*' (Zertal, 2002). The Holocaust controversy is part of the controversy in Israel between the Zionist academics and the Post-Zionist academics in several fields of academic research (Almog, 2004; Yakira, 2007).

In front of post-modern approaches which postulate the impossibility of the Holocaust representation, LaCapra forwards the 'Ethical Turn' (1998) which is the research ethics of the historian who like the classic historian gather 'truth claims' built on facts, whose intention is to support the Holocaust survivors' testimonies by these historical 'truth claims', because the survivors,

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who rescue the trauma have difficulties in eliciting their testimonies (LaCapra, 2001). Several other researchers act in the same manner when dealing with life stories of Holocaust survivors (Bourgois, 2005; Bourguignon, 2005; Farmer, 2005; Rylko-Bauer, 2005; Waterston, 2005).

To this debate regarding the possibility of Holocaust representation in testimonies and culture, some of the body knowledge of psychology relating to post-traumatic stress disorder is offered here as a relevant source for the analysis and understanding of the consequences of traumatic events, their enduring prolonged processes, and modes of representation.

In 2000, the American Psychiatric Association revised the PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder) diagnostic criteria in the 4th edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR). The diagnostic criteria (Criterion A-F) are summarized here. Diagnostic criteria for PTSD include a history of exposure to a traumatic event meeting two criteria and symptoms from each of three symptom clusters: intrusive recollections, avoidant/numbing symptoms, and hyper-arousal symptoms. A fifth criterion concerns duration of symptoms and a sixth assesses functioning.

The traumatic experience is very difficult to represent by its survivors, because the traumatic situation is not processed by the regular memory mechanisms of the brain. Rather it remains as a whole total experience. Thus specific triggers, which are related to the traumatic experience, can elicit the traumatic situation as a total experience without any mediations, causing 'flooding' of the experience, and the person feels unbearable horror and anxiety, as if the real traumatic event is recurring. So in many cases, survivors of a traumatic situation do not want to talk or recollect their experience because it can cause them suffering and acute distress (Bliech & Solomon, 2002; Herman, 1992).

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder can occur many years after the event, even 30 or 40 years later. 'Adaptive Repression', a psychological mechanism which causes the repression of the traumatic experiences, was found to be common and essential in the functioning of the well-adapted Holocaust survivors in Israel (Kaminer, 1993).

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Recovery from PTSD in many cases involves constructing a life story and narration of the event, or building memorial sites or producing images, artifacts, etc., which enable the production of personal and communal significance to the traumatic events (Herman, 1994). As the Holocaust survivors become old, having created the new generation – their family; and completed their life tasks, they are motivated to recall and construct their memories in the private and public spheres (Baumel, 1998).

Whereas the media and popular culture in Israel reflects history, the cultural field does not always deal with the pains of the nation, as mentioned above. The Holocaust is represented in the public sphere in memorial days, museums and monuments (Handelman & Katz, 1990) and in the media (Meyers & Zandberg, 2002; Nossek, 1994), but canonic literature and elite cinema and the art-field only recently began representing the Holocaust (Gal-Ezer, 2005a; Zimmerman, 2001). The victories (and losses) of the Independence War 1948, and the Six-Day War in 1967 were refracted into the cultural fields, elite and popular, but the Yom Kippur War in 1973, was not. Prolonged reactions to the Yom Kippur War, and its relative absence in the Israeli cultural fields, can also be understood by the theoretical framework of psychological knowledge about PTSD.

The War of *Hatasha* (Attrition War 1969–1970) is ‘hardly remembered’ in the collective memory. Three years later, came the Yom Kippur War, known as the *Hafta’a* (‘Surprise Attack’) and ultimately perceived as the *Mehdal* (‘Failure’) was especially traumatic, because of the Israeli army’s lack of preparation, and the subsequent confusion during the first days of the war, both in the high command and in the government, although it ended in an Israeli victory (Feige, 2003).

In those first days, deep Holocaust anxiety emerged (Zuckermann, 1993) which is common whenever there is an existential threat to Israel, as mentioned before (Nossek, 1994; Zukerman, 1993). Regular soldiers fought massive tank battles in the Sinai desert and the Golan Heights, with heavy casualties inflicted by the Egyptians and Syrians, resulting in hundreds of dead and wounded until the military command took over (Feige, 2003). This was

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the war that first led to the 'recognition' of the concept of 'battle trauma' in Israeli soldiers (Bar-On, 1999).

Now, more than 30 years later, this war is represented by only very few cultural works. As with 'The Lost Generation' in Europe after World War I (Winter, 1995), and 'The Wounded Generation' of the Vietnam War, the generation of the 1973 Yom Kippur War could also be considered 'A Wounded Generation' (Gal-Ezer, 2004). Some attempts to represent this war ended in public outrage, as on National Remembrance Day in 2005 in the film documentary by Nir Toib on Israel's TV Channel 2, entitled *Hachava Hasinit* (The Chinese Farm), which depicted an especially gory battle site in the Sinai desert. The documentary showed the war veterans themselves questioning the commanders about their decisions in the battle and blaming them for leaving their wounded friends helpless, bleeding to death.

Two years later, in October 2007 (the month in which the war broke out), another documentary film about the same gory battle, i.e. the 1973 Yom Kippur War, in *Hachava Hasinit*, again caused public outrage. Whereas the previous film was about the paratroopers, this documentary dealt with the Armored Division 14: 'The Division which was Lying on the Fence' by Ido Sela. The war veterans did not agree to the modes by which the film represented them as combatants in that horrible battle, and negotiated with Channel 1 public Israeli TV's executive, which led to some changes being made in the film, but they were not satisfied and appealed to supreme court, which recommended that the veterans agree to the film broadcast. They agreed and the film which also connected between the 'failure' in the Yom Kippur War 1973, and the failure in 'Second Lebanon War' 2006, was broadcast on schedule.

### **Methodology**

The article draws a secondary analysis on an Israeli high-art field cultural study. Theorized primarily on Bourdieu (1984, 1996; and others), the methodology design was a combined configuration, with hermeneutic-qualitative research methods and simple quantitative modes; also involving the

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‘Multi-Sited Ethnography’ (Marcus, 1995). Research data was gathered during the years 1998–2007, and to a certain extent from previous research (1993–1997), and was based upon: (a) in-depth interviews (interviewees gathered by the ‘Snow Ball’ method) – 37 canonic active living artists (30–50 years old, 22 men, 15 women), who had exhibited at least one piece of work in a central major Israeli art museum, were interviewed about their entire lifestyle and life-history, and about the lives of their parents and grandparents<sup>13</sup>; 11 curators, art

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<sup>13</sup> The main question concerning the artists’ primary habitus was to explore the modes in which supposed high cultural capital was transmitted from parents to children in the context of Israel’s immigrant society. This question was crucial in order to understand how immigrants who do not yet own material possessions, social status and language in their new country, can transmit their cultural capital to next generation. What means do they have, if any, to assimilate their habitus in their children?

So the solution was to try and gather information not only about artists’ childhood and parents’ life stories/histories, but also to ask about grandparents, in order to gain some information about the families’ lifestyle and history in more supposed steady times.

Thus the three generational questionnaire which reflects some life-history, as told by artists’ interviewees, was one of the solutions to the wish to analyze the transmission of cultural capital in immigrant society, to the habitus-biography ambivalence mentioned earlier, and to the difference between French and Israeli society.

The first part of the interview was about the artist’s contemporary lifestyle, the second was about his grandparents’ home and life story, his or her relationships with grandparents in childhood, the third part was about the parents’ life story and the artist’s childhood in the parental home and in the educational system, and the fourth part was the artist’s life story and career phases. So the structure of these in-depth interviews was that of a saga. Most of the interviews reflected a family saga through history, a very difficult trigenerational history from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as told by the artists.

Because of this structure, the interviews took a long time, from 4–20 hours each, so sometimes there were two or even three meetings. Interviews took place mainly in artists’ studios, which are very intimate sites, that can afford some isolation from daily life.

The first part, which dealt as mentioned with contemporary lifestyle, was relatively easy and pleasant. When coming to second interview part, questions about grandparents, and to the third, parents’ life stories/histories, many artists had difficulties in narrating their ancestors’ life. Then when arriving at last to their own life story, some events were even harder to relate. Sometimes the interviewees were flooded with emotions, could not continue, sometimes crying, sometimes talking obsessively. Some artists had a very comprehensive experience: ‘It’s the first time that I’m thinking about my life, and the family history, and it is very exciting, even very difficult, I didn’t realize that the entire Jewish history is here’. Some artists

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journalists and critics who occupied important posts in various institutions and establishments were interviewed about their life trajectory and professional work – a total of 48 interviews; (b) participant observation in: 212 exhibition rituals openings (including Venice Biennale 49 Vernissage 2001, and attendance at the Venice Biennale 50 2003; 51 2005, and the Kassel (Germany) Documenta 11, 2002), 62 art events, 14 Students Works Critique Rituals of works conducted in art academies, 9 events and ceremonies in art academies, 27 ritual openings of exhibitions in art academies (of the total 212). The participant observations were intended for 4 groups: the artists; curators, critics and journalists; art students; and ‘Art Lovers’ who attend exhibition openings; (c) critical discourse analysis of printed texts: texts in 77 solo exhibition catalogues of the 37 artists, texts in about 60 of the leading group exhibition catalogues in which the artists participated, mainly during the years 1978–2006, were examined by criteria constructed for the research; and all the texts regarding the 37 artists in the research, published in daily Israeli newspapers, which are in the ‘Artists’ Files’ in Tel-Aviv Museum’s Library, were read – a total of 2,761 (until May 2006); 104 articles were analyzed qualitatively; Internet sites of the art academies in which the 37 artists teach, and the central art galleries Internet sites to which they are affiliated were examined. There are approximately 3,030 texts altogether.

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needed a break, because of the emotional burden, so some interviews were continued at later time.

There were also complementary telephone and face-to-face interviews during the years of study. These complementary interviews supplied crucial knowledge and insights about habitus, biography and trauma, that will be presented later.

Sometimes, I had difficulties as an interviewer, because I identified deeply with my interviewees, and was in danger of losing the critical researcher viewpoint and the required distance. These difficulties were salient when traumatic emotions or traumatic situations were aroused and surfacing. I was unsure what position I should take when dealing with these situations. It was very hard for me, too, as a researcher studying her own class and generation, as some of the events triggered my own life story/history, which will be presented intermittently through findings. I tried to be sympathetic and attentive but all the while not losing my plan of research. Afterwards, in transforming interviews into academic text, I tried to be the sympathetic ‘middle voice’ and to support interviewees’ stories and testimonies with ‘truth claims’ according to LaCapra’s recommendation (LaCapra, 2001).

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### Main Findings

#### A. Family Habitus: The Zionist Narration and Habitus of the Legitimate Code

##### Grandparents

In an immigrant society such as Israel, the transmission of cultural capital to the next generation is often impaired. Therefore, information about the artists' grandparents' and parents' entire life histories was also gathered from the in-depth interviews with the artists. From the artists' detailed descriptions, it was found that most of the grandparents' families had belonged to a high-status, well-educated, wealthy, elite group of Jewish-European bourgeoisie, or rabbinical elite, and there was a link between their class positioning and their legitimate European habitus. A similar linkage of social class and legitimate European habitus was found in artists' families that originated from Islamic countries.

Some artists did not know their grandparents or their life story. Here is a typical example of the void, or 'absence' of grandparents:

##### A. Grandparents

###### Maternal Grandparents

**Grandfather's name:** 'I did not know any of them; they were exterminated in the Holocaust.'

**Place of birth:** Strikovski, Poland.

**His education and occupation:**

**Immigrated to Israel:**

**PL. Tell about grandfather:**

**Grandmother's name:**

**Place of birth:** Strikovski, Poland.

**Her education and occupation:**

**Immigrated to Israel:**

**PL. Tell about grandmother:**

**Where they got married:**

**How many children they had:**

**The family history:** Parents don't talk, there are photographs at home, my mother [ ..... ] immigrated to Israel.

**Tell about grandmother and grandfather as a child, depict their house, holidays, visits. Etc.**

###### Paternal Grandparents

**Grandfather's name:** (the artist's full name) I was named after my grandfather. They were [ ..... ] deceased in the Holocaust, I hardly know anything.

**Place of birth:**

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**His education and occupation:**

**Immigrated to Israel:**

**PL. Tell about grandfather:**

**Grandmother's name:**

**Place of birth:** Poland.

**Her education and occupation:**

**Immigrated to Israel:**

**PL. Tell about grandmother:**

**Where they got married:**

**How many children they had:**

**The family history:** They were exterminated in the Holocaust.

**Tell about grandmother and grandfather as a child, depict their house, holidays, visits. Etc.**

And then the artist (born in 1952 in Israel) said:

Uncle Shlomo [Salomon] – my father's uncle. Uncle Shlomo and aunt Yocheved [they had] a yard with *katchkes* [chicken in Yiddish<sup>14</sup>], he was preparing from breadcrumbs – animals. He had a knife and he was playing with pieces of paper. He was an uncle that I loved. He had orchards, then he had beehives, until few years before he died, he walked to his orchards and his beehives, and he always made sure to bring me wax for the painting. He was from the 'Giants Generation'<sup>15</sup> that you don't meet anymore. Aunt Yocheved was born in the country [Israel]. These relatives were the only ones we had. They lived in Rishon [Lezion, a shortened name of a city close south of Tel-Aviv]. We went to the sea with Uncle Shlomo who had a truck, and I remember

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<sup>14</sup> The ancient Hebrew language of the bible was a religious language of rituals and prayers, written and printed in religious and philosophical texts. Every Jewish man had to learn to read and pray in Hebrew, but it had been a kind of 'dead' language, people did not speak in Hebrew, and they spoke Yiddish which is an old language spoken by European Jews, or Ladino the language of Sephardic Jews, for daily use in their communal life (they learnt also the state language). Yiddish is an oral and written language, and literature and poetry, newspapers, etc. exist in Yiddish.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Hebrew settlement began in the land of Israel (then the Ottoman Empire) the Zionists planned to deliberately revive the ancient Hebrew which led to a 'Language Struggle'. The Zionists claimed that Yiddish is the language of the Diaspora, of the old and the Jews, and the new people of Israel, the Hebrews, should revive their ancient language again as a practice of their renewed nation. From then on, Yiddish was stigmatized as the language of the Diaspora, and new immigrants were mocked because of their use of Yiddish, also in popular theater (Nir, 1998).

Now, Yiddish is still used in the Diaspora, by the orthodox in Israel and by the elderly. There is a new generation that is trying to keep the dying language alive, also in special university faculties. So here, the use of the Yiddish word '*Katchkes*' is very symbolic and hints at the artist's wish to get closer, even with a single word, which is a reminiscent of a whole culture that was exterminated, to his ancestors who disappeared.

<sup>15</sup> 'Giants Generation' '*Dor Hanefilim*' a very common Hebrew expression, originating in the Bible. The expression refers in its denotation to the giants who once lived on earth, and its connotation refers to the giant people who were the builders of the nation and the country, a kind of 'Mayflower' people.

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once a voyage to Tel-Aviv for the Ad Lo Yada [a masked carnival parade during the Purim holiday].

This interview reflects a complex habitus, in part the artist had the Zionist Labor Movement habitus, even though he had the void of the Holocaust, he had close uncles, [ alternative] grandparents, who transmitted the cultural capital of the labor movement, the Zionist land laborers, Uncle Shlomo 'who was from the "Giants Generation" that you don't meet anymore. Aunt Yocheved was born in the country'. These 'giants' built 'the country'. We can hear the bees and chickens clucking, smell the oranges from Uncle Shlomo's orchards, and smell the bees' honey and wax, taken from orange flowers. These giants also had many books, loved classical music and theater, and built a cultural habitat of high European legitimate code in the Middle East, a taste which was reflected through the artists' interviews.

The first part of the interview reflects the absence of grandparents, and also the need of a child for loving, close relatives. There were other artists who had 'alternative' figures, that were grandparents for them, sometimes they were not even biological family. One artist (born in 1952 in Israel) told about his mother's employer's family, his wife and children, who 'functioned' as grandparents. Only when he graduated, he realized that his mother, a Holocaust survivor from Germany who was rescued as a 14-year-old girl via a very complicated escape route, and was the only one in her entire family who survived, had 'adopted' her employer's family as her own. The artist, her son, added to his story about his 'alternative grandparents', a vignette of his childhood in a newly built neighborhood of small apartments, for the many new immigrants, survivors from Europe (Ashkenazi) and some from Moslem countries (Sephardic) in the 1950s in Tel-Aviv:

There were times in the country that the Ashkenazi people had no grandmothers. Only the Sephardic had. There was an old lady in our neighborhood, she was called 'Mama'. She was Mama to all of us. She used to go from family to family, sitting a while and then going on to another family.

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About two-thirds of artists' grandparents were Holocaust survivors, others were persecuted in Arab countries, or wounded during the Israeli War of Independence. Only 14 artists out of 37 had close successive contact with grandparents. Below is an example of cultural transference, where a woman artist (born in 1963 in Israel) is talking about her grandmother who escaped Germany in 1939 to Tel-Aviv:

Grandmother lived in a very German style. Everything was very clean. They used to comb the '*Fransen*' (sic) of the carpet. I came there with magazines from Germany, she lived on reparations from Germany. Heavy furniture and thick white curtains, a two-room apartment, a wooden table topped with glass. She had German books, I don't remember music.

Some of the artists (9) did not have successive contact with their grandparents. Below is an example of an artist (born in 1947 in Tunisia) who immigrated by himself to Israel from France, where his family fled during riots in Tunis (1960). He recalls his childhood in Tunis:

Grandfather was from a family of local bourgeoisie; grandmother's grandfather was the Chief Rabbi. A rabbinical family that became one of lawyers and judges [...] A bourgeoisie household. They were French-speakers. Paintings of Old Masters, a grand piano, carpets, painting collection. I loved to visit them, they lived within walking distance of my parents; the European district in Tunis was small. Traditional festivals took place with all the family.

Some knew only a grandmother or grandfather, 8 artists out of 37 never saw their grandparents, but the interesting thing is the mythic narration of these lost families, typified by a story narrated by a woman sculptor (born in 1948 in Israel):

Grandfather and grandmother on mother's side were born in Poland at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Grandfather dealt with copper waste, merchandise and reproduction of copper, and artifacts. He died in the Holocaust, I don't know what happened. [...] Grandmother organized the house and business, she probably traveled, because I heard that once she

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was arrested in Russia, not because she was a criminal, but because she was without papers. She was the risk-taker and also a full-time housekeeper, dressed with good taste, and nurtured her ten children. She was an admirable character. Not the father. He was a difficult person. She was beautiful. Grandmother died in the Holocaust.

Of the four uncles who came to Israel, one brother was killed in the Independence War and another died of cancer. From 1948 (the year of Independence War) two were left: mother and her hated sister. I did not know grandmother and grandfather as a child. I don't know what their house looked like, it was very tidy and aesthetic, qualities that run in the family, the only proof that my mother is also like that. Everything must be of the best quality and taste.

The artist's father, a Holocaust survivor, was killed in Independence War before her birth. In her story we see a very unique transference of cultural capital – although the people themselves were lost, they were transformed into mythical icons, and their memory remains alive by means of their cultural capital, their taste, transmitted over three generations to the artist. This is a mythical habitus, but a very real one, a complex cultural/national identity constructed of intertwined undividable entities of family and history.

So most of the artists in the study did not have close relationships with their grandparents, and some of them did not know them at all. The study has identified four modes of cultural transmission from the grandparents that affected the artists' habitus and their works of art: (a) Full cultural transmission – in the case of grandparents who lived in Eretz Israel, who cultivated a labor-Zionist lifestyle and a taste for culture that shaped the modern habitus of the artists studied; (b) Partial transmission – rooted in a partial and intermittent relationship with grandparents and the remains of their material heritage, whose memory became increasingly dominant as the artists matured and the canon was transformed; (c) Discursive transmission of cultural myths (*Shoah and T'kumah* – Holocaust and Redemption), and a delayed memory of a European habitus in later years: a representation of the 'absence' which was expressed indirectly and brought a change in the art canon; (d) Nearly complete transmission – in families of artists who

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immigrated to Israel as children or young adults with their families and grandparents during the mass immigration from Moslem countries in post-Independence years. The grandparents' cultural heritage was thus not affected by the nation-building project, and was refracted into the grandchildren-artists' art through motifs of Mediterranean cultures, Judaic elements, Holocaust and war memory. These artists introduced innovations in the Israeli high-art canon.

### **Contribution of Parents and Educational System**

Most of the artists' parents – the 'state-building generation' – were of Ashkenazi origin, and made up an ideological elite group, with high status, as well as academic and economic capital. Links to the establishment had their origins in the cultural and economic capital of the grandparents, which were associated with social mobility and residence in the Tel-Aviv region for the artists' parent generation. These parents largely belonged to the professional class, which functioned within the Labor movement hegemony (Ben-Porat, 1999).

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Many artists in the study were raised on a kibbutz<sup>16</sup>, in which the

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<sup>16</sup> At the end of the 1950s, when I was six to seven years old, our family lived for about two years on a kibbutz in the Galilee, northern Israel, whose inhabitants were mainly Anglo-Saxon Jews. As a collectivist socialist settlement we had a collectivist life. My mother worked as a nanny for the newborn babies, and my father worked in the banana and avocado orchards. The kibbutz inhabitants did not have a private salary, only pocket money for small personal items. There was a collective budget, thus daily life was run without the use of money. In most kibbutzim there were about 100-1000 people.

Every couple had a very tiny apartment of one room, in which was the couple's bed, armchairs, a low table, shelves with books and some flowers, a bathroom and a little niche for a kitchenette, for preparing tea, or serving fruits from the orchards. At the entrance to the 'heder' (room in Hebrew), there was a cupboard, in which the work clothes were put, and father's muddy heavy shoes. Even mother wore high heavy shoes, as all the women did. The laundry was shared in a central laundry, near which there was the sewing workshop where the older women used to work. There was no need for a private kitchen, because the kibbutz inhabitants ate all their meals in the central dining room by the central kitchen and the central food storage and very large (rooms) refrigerators. During the hot summer I hid out in there, savoring the coolness, quickly eating some fruit desserts before somebody threw me out. The *Heder Ochel* (dining room) was the heart of the kibbutz – people gathered there, talking, the holidays were celebrated together and all the committees worked in there during the evening. Working in the dining room, preparing the dining room and washing dishes, and guarding every night the fences of the kibbutz were taken in turns and every person had to do this work. Like most of the kibbutzim we also had a dairy farm, a chicken coop and various workshops, such as a garage for the tractors and agricultural machinery, etc.

As children, we lived in the *Beit Hayeladim*, (children's house), every group of children of about the same age, lived together and were taken care of by the kibbutz women *Metaplot* (Hebrew nannies) in a separate house with several rooms. We had our own dining room, a central playing room, a library and reading room, kitchen, bathrooms, and a garden outside, a yard for play with swings, a sand-box with toys, we had a little water pool for playing during the hot summer days (there was also a big swimming pool for the adults). In the mornings we had baths and breakfast together; breakfast and other meals were brought from the central kitchen. During the morning meal we had to drink cod liver oil for vitamins, and were given a sticky candy after the oil. Food shortages continued into the late 1950s, though not as severe as 1949–1951 when over two years the population tripled its growth from 600,000 to 1,800,000 owing to the many new immigrants and Holocaust survivors who came after Independence. In the kibbutz, however, there was relatively enough food as we had our own supply as a agricultural settlement. But kibbutz members' relatives in England were worried, so we had a continuous supply of Marmite. Marmite is a yeast spread (full of complex B vitamins), which you put on your bread, it looks very dark and has an unpleasant smell but I became addicted to it and even today I love it.

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cultural capital of the legitimate code habitus of high culture was assimilated in their childhood. As a nurturing environment, the kibbutz was also the central habitat of the Israeli elite from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the late 1970s. The kibbutz was the origin and base structure for the institutional and ideological power of the Labor movement that dominated Israel for 70 years, from the nation-building times until the first two decades of the building of the State of Israel (Ben-Porat, 1999). There was an excellent enriching education, and many artists said that the kibbutz was a high-culture society, that even in difficult, poor and unsafe days, offered its members musical education, theater, cultural events, cinema, libraries, and even art and museums that were beginning to be built in the early 1930s (Bar-Or, 2007),<sup>17</sup> similar to the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art (1932).<sup>18</sup> The kibbutz painter, who was a close intimate friend of many artists, or the art teacher, acquainted the young artists in the artists' method of working. Thus we can see that in early

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After breakfast, we went to school in another house. At noon after our meal, we had to work in our vegetable garden, which we often ate happily, and we also fed our animals. We had our chickens, turkeys, a goat, a donkey, some white rats, rabbits, and peacocks. Sometimes there were poisonous snakes that were caught in the yards, and were put in glass cages. At the house we had (forbidden) dogs and cats that we shared.

I had built a small house for myself from wooden bricks and I spent many hours inside it together with my little black and white cat. This toy house was left complete for months by the nannies on the side of the playroom. Sometimes I ate there with my little cat. I put some curtains on the windows inside, so we had our privacy, I was then about six years old.

After a short rest, we had the celebrated ritual of the day: *Aruhat Arba* (four o'clock meal). Each child went from the children's house (sisters and brothers were separated in different age groups) to his parents' room; there we usually had a cup of tea and bread with margarine and home-made jam (of the central kitchen), and we played and chatted to our parents for about two hours. Then our parents accompanied us to the children's house, for a bath and a bedtime story, and then a kiss for sweet dreams. There were about four of us in one room, and if we woke up, or had nightmares, crying, didn't feel well, the 'night guard' (*Shomeret Lila*) nanny came with a flashlight, whispering comforting words to us. From about the age of three months, babies began sleeping in the baby houses (*Beit Tinokot*), and the mothers came during the cold nights to breastfeed them on time. During the 1970s and 1980s, it became the norm in most kibbutzim for the children to move back in with their parents, and only the youth from about 14 years old lived in youth house (*Beit Noar*). Most kibbutzim are now undergoing the process of privatization and are collectivists only in some negligible areas.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.museumeinharod.org.il/english/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.tamuseum.com/>

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childhood the artists were raised in the habitat of the 'legitimate code' of high culture (Bourdieu, 1984; 1996a), that would become the foundation for the artists' habitus later in the academy.

As members of the elite, the parents were central participants in the construction of the newly formed hegemonic culture of the State, which combined a high-culture European modern-taste habitus with Israeli nationalism (Trajtenberg, 2006) and Labor movement values (Bar-Or, 2006). This composite taste culture also reflected the rise of capitalism and consumerism, along with a familistic and home-centered ethos that was highly child-centered. Using children's artwork to decorate many of the homes of the child-artists in the study was a way of encouraging their involvement in art.

Because of their education and qualifications, the artists' mothers<sup>19</sup> played an essential role in imparting the legitimate code's cultural capital to their children (Bourdieu, 1984), and their participation in the economy as

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<sup>19</sup> Sometime in the 1960s, when we were living in Haifa after we had left the kibbutz, my mother took me and my sister to see Van Gogh's paintings at a well-attended exhibition, which, in those days in Israel, was a celebrated cultural event. Many Israeli artists who were interviewees in the study remembered this exhibition and spoke about their favorite art books, and were reminded of Van Gogh and his reproductions which were very popular on the walls of private apartments and in schools and public offices. His very modest life and his close relationship and admiration, especially for agriculture workers, whose spirit, in spite of their hard poor life, he was trying to capture (The Potato Eaters, many Peasant Women, workers and laborers in the field, The Peasant Shoes: <http://www.vggallery.com/index.html>); led the Israeli labor movement to adopt Van Gogh almost as a Jew, and as symbol for Israeli utopia for working the land, like the famous Mexican socialist artist Diego Rivera (Holzman, 1993).

I had even a closer connection to the Dutch people. I remember my second father (after my parents' divorce) talking to my mother in English mixed with Dutch and broken Hebrew words. He was a Protestant Dutchman, a Marine, who served 'Her Majesty' the Dutch Queen in Java, Borneo, Sumatra and Indonesia. Once, when he was in service, and came back to The Netherlands for a vacation, his best friend, a Jewish youngster, decided to make Aliya to Israel. So my second father, who was then a kind of a beatnik, walked through Europe, working in the Belgian coalmines to save money, and took a boat from Marseilles to Israel, to visit his friend who was living in an Anglo-Saxon kibbutz. My mother was living there with us, her two daughters, following her divorce. When they got married, he had the excuse to fulfil his enthusiastic Zionist intentions and to become a Jew officially.

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professional women was similar to the academically educated women of the 1990s (Krauss, 2004).

Here is the illustration of parents' taste; father was a very high-status university professor, and mother a high-status executive in educational TV. The woman painter (born in 1963 in Boston, USA, when her Israeli family was there due to her father's academic sabbatical) depicts her parents' home in Israel:

A four-room private house in Ramat Hasharon – Neve Magen<sup>20</sup>. Very modern Tolman furniture, both parents have sophisticated taste. She was punctilious in changing furniture; she also bought in the Old City [of Jerusalem]. She made a mixed, very non-bourgeoisie setting. Copper plates and vases, ceramic tableware, Dadi Ben Shaul paintings, a print of Elima, a reproduction of a painter named Arie Uzan, a Jerusalem painter, Aloni. Woven carpets, Persian carpets, many books, everything, literature, periodicals, I used to read loads of periodicals, countless prose, poetry, *The Hebrew Encyclopedia*, countless professional literature, masses of psychology, good classical literature.

This bourgeois high taste of European modernism combined with classic bourgeoisie high *taste* ('woven carpets, Persian carpets'); Bohemian *taste* of artistic hand-made ceramics for tableware, with the artistic folklore of oriental artifacts from the Old City, the décor of the Orient, many Israeli modernist paintings and high sophisticated literature, belongs to the specific Israeli elitist taste of the 1960s, a taste which combines the Israeli national modern habitus and the legitimate European high code that was conceptualized by Bourdieu (1984; 1996a). This 'Distinction' – cultural consumption pattern of reading

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<sup>20</sup> Neve Magen (meaning beautiful shield or guard) is a neighborhood inhabited by high-ranking officers that was built by Ministry of Defense in Ramat Hasharon (the hill of the Sharon – an affluent district in the center of Israel, the name is the biblical name of the district). Ramat Hasharon is a very affluent small city near Tel-Aviv, most of whose inhabitants are the high bourgeoisie, political, economic and military elites. For instance, the Ministry of Defense also built there a special neighborhood of private residences for the families of combat pilots. These combat pilots have a special trajectory root to becoming pilots for El Al, the Israeli national airline, which was recently privatized.

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books, large home libraries and playing and listening to classic music<sup>21</sup> – was very salient in the artists' lifestyle, and will be presented later.

In a representation of a communist family in the new city of Holon<sup>22</sup> by another woman artist (born in 1955 in Israel), whose mother was a kindergarten teacher and her father a self-employed subcontractor, we can see

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<sup>21</sup> Sometimes in winter, when the weather became colder and rains became heavier, my late mother would become restless, sigh, clap her hands and, walking back and forth in our tiny two-and-a-half-room apartment, she would cry: 'Oh, they are out in the cold and the rain, in the mud with the babies, the children and the old people, their tents are blowing in the wind, what will become of them?' Then she would declare to my younger sister and me: 'We have a very nice home, safe and warm. Come, collect some clothes, toys and books, you should not be spoiled girls, there are people in need. We must help these new immigrants in the transient camps'.

As an excellent pupil in secondary school I was ordered by my class teacher 'The Educator' to do homework every day with a French-speaking girl, a classmate, whose family had just emigrated from France. They had fled from a North African country after French colonialism had ended there, and local nationalism had begun threatening the Jews.

Because my mother was working as the main secretary of the Nuclear Physics Department in 'The Technion' in Haifa, I was kept up after school with my sister, and ate the midday meal at a neighbor's, in the next 'block' (Hebrew slang for a modernist apartment building), an Egyptian Jewish woman. In the following years I ate my midday meal at the home of another neighbor, a Kurdish Jewish woman, who would sometimes wander in the Carmel mountains behind our block, looking for weeds and herbs to add to her cooking. Next to her apartment lived a Hungarian woman, who spoke Hungarian, whom my mother visited a lot in the evenings; she would come back home crying, and then become very silent. Because my mother knew Hebrew, Arabic, English, German, French, some Russian and Polish words, but no Hungarian, my mother and the Hungarian lady were crying in Yiddish, the old language of the European Jews. The old lady was telling my mother about the Holocaust, and depicting the Death March from Auschwitz. She had survived until Death March because she had a twin sister, so they were kept in the camp where Mengele did his 'experiments' with Jewish twins, and as a result, she was unable to have children.

Our little apartment, that was always full of books and magazines (as a child I had the *National Geographic* in English), was now filled with books about the Holocaust. Those were the days of the Eichmann trial 1961–1962 (Arendt, 1994 [1963] and also <http://www.yadvashem.org/> search for Eichmann Trial). Because my mother was born in Haifa, and her father was from Jerusalem, from a family who had been there for about 200 years, this side of the family had not experienced the Holocaust firsthand.

<sup>22</sup> Holon – A new city that was built south to Tel- Aviv on the sea sands. Cholon – echoes the word sands in Hebrew, *cholot*. The inhabitants were middle and working class of those times the 1950s and 1960s.

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the crucial role of the mother in shaping the house and the habitat for the construction of her young daughter's legitimate code habitus:

A private house with a wonderful garden. The house was full of light, a pleasant house in the center of Holon. The house was open outside to all directions, you could enter from every direction. They [parents] built it on a piece of land in Holon. In the afternoon they took me with them as they built the house by themselves. When I was three we moved there, it was surrounded by sands. They made all the furniture by themselves.

Everything was very creative. The library was a combination of Jerusalem stone and wood. The armchairs were in the Bauhaus<sup>23</sup> style with intersections and wood. My mother was a very cultured woman. From ideology, nothing was bought ready-made, sculptures of friends, pictures which mother was painting and one 'Carmel' carpet.

In this family we can see the high code, which is combined consciously and deliberately within the valued Marxist praxis of autonomic production. The parents who had met one another as members of the tiny Israeli communist party, had had restricted means, but high cultural capital and ideology are transferred through lifestyle, taste and artifacts. In spite of this wonderful vignette, of cheerful childhood in the new house in the sand with nurturing creative and cultured parents, this artist, like many artists in the study, could not escape the nation and its history. The mother of the artist had a very traumatic life history, which afflicted her husband and daughter.

As a child of nine years old, the artist's mother, who was born in Poland, was hidden in a cellar, during the Holocaust. There, the mother as a little isolated girl, made drawings; she was the only survivor of her entire family, and was later brought to Israel by the Aliyat Hanoar (The Youth Immigration)<sup>24</sup>. When her daughter the young artist, was ten years old, she

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<sup>23</sup> Bauhaus in Dessau, germany <http://www.bauhaus-dessau.de/en/events.asp?p=bhkurz>;

Bauhaus in Tel-Aviv <http://www.artlog.co.il/telaviv/>

<sup>24</sup> Aliyat Hanoar was founded in 1932 by Reha Frier in Germany as a special unit to enable the immigration of youth to Eretz Israel. The founder felt the urgency to rescue the youth in those early stages, and helped them to come to Israel to boarding schools built especially for them.

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became an orphan, like her Holocaust survivor mother, who had died of cancer. Many artists' parents in the study who were Holocaust survivors, died of cancer when their children were young. Cancer is one of the long-term consequences of Holocaust survivors' trauma<sup>25</sup>.

An artist (born in 1958 in Israel), whose family members were victims of a horrible pogrom in Tripoli Libya, had had a wonderful childhood in a development town in southern Israel. He had a childish studio which he arranged in a hut in the yard, and there he put his art books and did his painting. His family comprised about 100 people, who were in close warm contact, celebrated holidays together, singing, telling stories, playing, etc. He had had the opportunity of a very rich education at school and extracurricular classes, all encouraged by his family:

In those days there were extracurricular classes for a few *grushim* (pennies). It was not an economical burden. It was paradise; a million things opened up for me after school. I learned to listen to music, mainly classical; I learned fencing, volleyball, chess, journalism. I was registered at the library, I often went to the library, I read books standing up and took books home. There were so many books I could hardly choose, I could not miss out on anything.

When I was fourteen, I was recommended to go to a boarding school for exceptionally gifted pupils in Jerusalem. I passed the exams, my parents told me that I would learn more and better and that this is a very good boarding school, and I will have a very good future. My mother was from a rich family, her childhood was surrounded by rich people, she had Italian toys as a child, and she pushed me to go to the boarding school, in order to regain her social status and she talked a lot about her family.

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During the Holocaust these efforts continued, and through the years, this special unit brought about 150,000 young people to Israel. Many of them later became leaders and elites in Israeli society. <http://www.jewishagency.org/JewishAgency/English/Home/About/History>

<sup>25</sup> Wein-Raviv, Bar-Hana, Lin & Lifshitz (2006). A vast joint population research of Haifa University, the Ministry of Public Health and the Israeli Cancer Association, revealed higher cancer rates found in Holocaust survivors in Israel, in comparison to the population that was not in Europe during the crucial years. The Israel Cancer Association site (in Hebrew).

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A complementary interview (in 2003) with this artist revealed his new understanding, in relation to his father's traumatic history. The artist talks about his new, delayed sensitivity, concerning the long-term effects of the traumatic situation in his father's life:

The Sephardim [Jews from Moslem countries] don't understand what the Holocaust is. I learned about it, I have read books, saw films about it. But I didn't understand what this does to the individual person, until I saw my wife and her mother [the mother is Holocaust survivor]. Then you understand what is trauma and post-trauma. That is the blindness of Sephardim. Learning does not give you the experience. You don't understand what this does to a person 50 years later when trying to live his daily life. What this does to his children. Until you get closer and then it projects onto my father's picture.

During the Independence War [in Israel, 1948] the Arabs instigated pogroms in the Jewish quarter [in Tripoli]. It was a pogrom in the best tradition of pogroms, the murder of a pregnant woman with an axe. Father is still post-traumatic today as a result of these events and so is my grandfather. He saw his family slaughtered in front of his eyes, and this was happening because there was a Zionist organization in Tripoli even before 1949. Father shouts at nights, fears of water, horrible fears of many things, classic post-traumatic behavior. Very low nervous threshold, any minute order can collapse into chaos, obsessive order keeping. I didn't understand these things until I met my wife's parents.

[...] Benghazi is near the sea, the Germans came, made 'selections' and set up concentration camps. At the time Tripoli was governed by Italy, so the Germans did not intervene there because it was an Italian colony. The Italians were fascists but they were 'nicer'.

Now, with the new studies published about the Moslem countries, it is reasonable to assume that the difficulties encountered by Eastern Jews when attempting to become established in Israel, could also be understood taking into consideration the background of the traumatic events they had experienced. Only on the 2005 Holocaust Remembrance Day, survivors from Auschwitz who were former

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inhabitants of North Africa began speaking about their life history on Israeli TV Public Channel 1.

Hence traumatic experiences were found to be fundamental to the artists' lives. Major difficult historical incidents, which caused multilayered traumas, afflicted the artists' families, about two wounds in each family as a result of the Holocaust and Israeli wars<sup>26</sup>, the death of a parent, and more. The educational system emerged as a crucial institution for nurturing the young artists' cultural capital, and for guiding them early on in life towards an artistic trajectory. Subsidized extra-curricular classes, and the public educational system of museums and cultural centers, where art, music, and theater were cultivated, enabled children from less affluent families to nurture their talents. The joint influence of the family and educational-cultural institutions on children's artistic pursuits can be attributed to the centrality of the welfare

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<sup>26</sup> On Saturdays, when Jewish stores were closed, my father used to take both of us girls to his friend from the Mandate days, Michel, an Arab Christian who had a delicatessen grocery, where the smells of French and Italian cheeses mixed with the bitter smells of the Arab homemade olives. My father's family emigrated from Poland at the end of the 1920s. His mother, my grandmother, looked exactly like Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain (whom she admired), with a blue-colored hairdo ('friesure' as she said), a fashionable hat with beads on it. In the hot Israeli summer she went in a three-piece suit, gloves, a fashionable handbag that matched her shoes and wearing nylon stockings, to the neighborhood butcher and the grocery store, to select the best for her precious family. From time to time she would curse the Nazis in no uncertain terms and cry over her parents who had disappeared 'burnt over there without a grave'. I grew up in Haifa, a Mediterranean-European city. I played the piano, then the violin, and was described by my teachers as an 'excellent talent in art'.

When the Six-Day War broke out in 1967, my father, as a reserve officer, was recruited and spent the war in the Sinai desert as a transportation officer. He went to the war with black hair, and returned after a week completely white, an old man, very sad and quiet. All he said was that it was horrible to see corpses all around, and that the smell stays with him even at home.

When my mother was 50, we threw a party for her. While preparing for the party, mother and I were looking through her photograph album in order to choose and enlarge some photos for her daughters' homes. There were photos of the fighters in the Independence War 1948, including herself, as a Palmach fighter in the Negev desert. ([http://www.palmach.org.il/show\\_item.asp?levelId=42850&itemType=0](http://www.palmach.org.il/show_item.asp?levelId=42850&itemType=0)). As she looked at one of the photos, holding it in her hands she said: 'I was love with this man, he was killed in the battle. A few months later, I met your father; and because he had the same name ... both first and family name, I married him, I didn't love him.'

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state during these artists' childhood (Doron, 2003), which helped to shape their artistic dispositions.

Similar to the artists' mythic narration of their grandparents' life-stories/histories, the narration of their parents' life reflected traumatic events (LaCapra, 2001) while the official Zionist narration was very salient through these interviews. Here is an example of a painter (born in 1954 in Israel), whose family emigrated to the U.S. when he was about six years old, to be with the mother's parents, and in search of a better life. They lived in the Bronx, New York. His mother became ill and when they could not manage to hospitalize her, she died of appendicitis, following which they came back to Israel on a ship, weeping all the long way across the Atlantic Ocean. They settled in a kibbutz, his father married another Holocaust survivor when the artist was about 10 years old. Here is a section in which David Wakstein<sup>27</sup> talks about his second mother:

She was born in Russia to a very educated family, she was the only child. Her uncle, her mother's brother, was very high-ranking medical doctor in the Red Army, his children immigrated to Israel over the years and all of them are doctors. The war caught her when she was 11 years old. She was in a forced labor camp; she and her mother went through the war together. She talked quite a lot about the Holocaust. I listened; I was interested in the stories [...] today I think that she and her mother were heroes. They were in Auschwitz and made the death march. They were in the camps of the armaments factory. There were stories about the long walk in the snow during weeks, as well as short stories of how the Germans helped her, etc., a struggle for survival [...].

This kind of narration is a typical Zionist narration found in the life stories of most of the artists interviewed. Wakstein narrates his second mother's story in the common frame of *'Shoa and Gevura'* – 'Holocaust and Heroism'. Most of the stories of the artists' Holocaust-survivor parents were of this official hegemonic narrative. *'Shoa and Tkuma'* – 'Holocaust and Resurrection' – was another type that was told in a one long continuing story, connecting the three

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<sup>27</sup> The full name is printed with the artist's permission.

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generations, from death to life and freedom, from the ashes of the *Gola* (Diaspora) to life in independent Israel. To these types would be added another type – life histories and life-story narration of the artists whose families are from Moslem countries: ‘*Aliya and Hazala*’ ‘Immigration [to Israel] and Rescue’ or ‘*Paamei Geula*’ – ‘Steps to Salvation’. There were also Zionist stories of the inhabitants of Eretz Israel from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: ‘The Pioneers: Conquest of the Land’.

This narration reflects the national habitus of the artists, who belong to a wounded nation. Vast major difficult historical incidents and multilayered traumas inflicted the 37 artists’ families: the parents of 17 families are Holocaust survivors (but the total amount of families affected by the Holocaust is 31); 5 suffered pogroms or deportation, some by the Nazis; 15 were afflicted by Israeli wars or in the army; 7 fought in World War II; 6 had undergone a difficult immigration process; 13 had suffered the death of a parent or sibling; 7 difficult illnesses; 2 divorces when the artist was a child. Thus the findings are 72 injuries in the parents and artists themselves without grandparents: about 2 injuries in each family.

The artists themselves were affected by the Israeli wars; they suffered prolonged anxiety as children when their kibbutz was continually bombarded by the Syrians, or when they were exposed to daily Jordanian sniper attacks in Jerusalem, accidents in army service; one artist was murdered in the Sinai desert by an Egyptian nationalist (2002), when he went there as a tourist, after the agreed withdrawal (1979) as a result of the peace treaty with Egypt (1978)<sup>28</sup>. The artists, most of whom had had a labor movement background,

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<sup>28</sup> The Annapolis Summit (end of November 2007) would be about 30 years from October 1977, the historic day when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat landed in Israel in a groundbreaking and very brave act, to try and achieve peace with Israel. He paid for it with his life, and was assassinated by an Egyptian opposed to this peace.

<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9064679/Anwar-el-Sadat>.

In 1970, Nahum Goldman, the president of the International Zionist Congress, was invited to meet the Egyptian President Nasser in Cairo, to negotiate; the Israeli government headed by P.M. Golda Meir, refused. President Nasser died in 1970, and in 1971, Egyptian President Sadat send messages to the Israeli government: Sadat wanted the Sinai desert back and promised recognition of the Israel State and a peace treaty. The Israeli Defense Minister

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and many of whom were raised in kibbutzim, had assimilated the habitus of pioneers and elite combatants through their socialization. In those days, 1970, the option of not being in the best military units<sup>29</sup> in their duty service<sup>30</sup> and in reserve service, was unthinkable. Here is Wakstein's battle vignette:

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Moshe Dayan said at the time: 'We would be better off having Sharm El-Sheik without peace than to give it back with peace'. Four years later, 1973, came the 'surprise', the terrible Yom Kippur War initiated by President Sadat, and in 1978 the peace treaty was signed and the Israeli army began its retreat from the Sinai desert (Na'or, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> The aspiration is to be a *Kravi* (combat soldier). The word *Kravi* is a 'key word' (Katriel, 1999a) in Israel culture. It is the opposite of *Kalab*, which is abbreviation of the idiom *Karav Labait* (close to home). The *Kravi* soldiers volunteer to the best units, they try their hardest to get there, even preparing themselves prior to their recruiting date in special courses to be in the finest physical and mental condition. Another idiom of last years is *mur'aal* ('poisoned') soldier, which is a common idiom amongst soldiers, denotes the enthusiastic, brave soldier, but its connotation means too much enthusiasm: the understanding which reflects the ambivalence and self-consciousness of *Kravi* soldiers, that the *Kravi*-military national ideology could be poisonous.

<sup>30</sup> My service took place during the War of Attrition (1970–1971), which is hardly remembered. As a woman socialized in the same habitat, I volunteered to be a *Kravi* (combat) soldier. I was a graduate of the best high school in Israel, The Hebrew Reali School in Haifa, which was founded in 1913 by Zionist German Jews, as a scientific high school, 'Walk Humbly' (Bible, Micha 6:8) is its motto. The Military Academy was founded in 1953, and many famous high-ranking officers and chiefs of staff studied there in their youth. (The contemporary director, Ron Kitrie was in my class, he was studying in the Military Academy then). (<http://www.hareali-aivri.haifa.k12.il/newsite/template5.asp?typeid=1>.)

It was 1969 – a few months previously, in high school, we were a group of boys and girls who had dreams of a nice good life in a better world, with peace all over the globe, we were Beatles fans, and sort of bourgeois beatniks. So as a graduate of this elite school I was sent to the Sinai desert to the tank division in the operations department. I was recruited on 13 October 1969, and two weeks later there were the elections for the Seventh Knesset . I voted for the radical left '*Ha'olam Hazeh-Koah Hadash*' (This World – A New Power), which gained 2 seats in that Knesset ([http://www.knesset.gov.il/description/eng/eng\\_mimshal\\_res7.htm](http://www.knesset.gov.il/description/eng/eng_mimshal_res7.htm)). Its leader was Uri Avneri, a radical leftist who was a very critical journalist and the editor and publisher of the magazine *Ha'olam Hazeh (This World)*. (<http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/about/1177150070>).

I spent the summer between the end of school and my recruiting date with my mate in Eilat on the Red Sea, then throughout my army service, I went to Eilat on my vacations. First we lived on a yacht, as my friend worked as a skipper for daily tourists' cruises to Sinai's wonderful shores and Bedouin villages. Later on he began work as inspector in the Israel Authority for Natural Reserves,

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([http://www.parks.org.il/ParksENG/company\\_card.php3?NewNameMade=48&from=116&CNumber=335810](http://www.parks.org.il/ParksENG/company_card.php3?NewNameMade=48&from=116&CNumber=335810)); he had a jeep and inspected the beaches for coral theft and rare-fish fishing, going deep into the mountains and canyons of the Sinai desert, filling in the white gaps in the map, with the help of the Bedouins. They became friends. Once when his jeep broke down, he was their guest, and the Bedouins managed to fix the engine and he came back after a week. The sheikh came regularly to our little apartment in Eilat, he wanted to tour the small city, to buy some things and to be our guest. From time to time, I joined my mate on his inspection tours to the Sinai beaches and desert; we would meet the Bedouins, while I met especially the women, bringing oranges and apples and simple medicine for women and children.

It was the time of the War of Attrition (1969–1971); the Egyptians were bombarding the Israeli bunkers on the east bank of the Suez Canal. I heard the shouting of soldiers in bunkers asking for aerial assistance and greater bombardments on the Egyptians; from time to time they urged us to rescue the wounded, for tank defense and aid. We could also hear Israeli jets being hit by Russian missiles on the Egyptian side; most managed to come back and the pilots were rescued. One day, I listened on the army network to the rescue of my vice-commander. In the afternoon another commander brought his helmet and put it on his desk: 'You see the hole? The bullet went through his head, it was a machine gun'. The punctured helmet lay there for few days, and then, after the burial, the commander took his friend's helmet to the mourning family.

In the late 1960s, Eilat was full of beatniks from all over the world. They lived in tents on the beaches, working here and there on simple jobs, earning enough to buy hashish, then resting for a few days, smoking and singing, playing the guitar and then back again to work. We had also Israeli friends in Eilat who lived in an artists' commune selling hand-made leather goods. In the Sinai army tanks battalions, many of the soldiers smoked hashish, sometimes trade was done by barter, the soldiers gave army food, conserved cans, frozen chicken, rice, sugar and oil, and were given hashish in exchange. So the military police decided to spread parathion poison over the army garbage sites in order to stop drug trading. From these sites the poor Bedouin collected food waste.

One afternoon, three Bedouins came into our base, shouting and crying that their women and children were dying at the garbage site. Immediately I called the operation center and asked for rescue and medical help. Many of the soldiers gathered around, and my officers came running. As they began to absorb what had happened, one of them shouted at me: 'Who gave you the order? I'm not going to bother, if they die, they die'. I argued with him, shouting, 'They are also humans, aren't they? You can't do that'. Then there was silence, and he looked at me as if I was a traitor. All three of us, the commander, the vice-commander and myself, came from the 'Hebrew Reali' in Haifa. The officers had studied there, in my high school, in the military academy, and were considered to be best officers, and we were 'colleagues' although I was only a low-ranking soldier. But now they forbade me to enter the office, to touch the operational and administration lines, the soldiers were ordered not to talk to me and they sent me to my room (naked walls and army bed). I was isolated there for about three weeks and then ordered to be judged by the woman officer, who accused me of using drugs. I said I had an allergy to the desert sand winds, which caused my eyes to be red with infection, and if they

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The Yom Kippur War (1973) broke out in the Suez Canal [...] I was fighting in the Sinai desert [...] I remember smells of flesh and smoke. It was in the tank. We were in horrible places like 'The Chinese Farm', shooting, hitting, killing, and blowing up, sometimes somebody was wounded, then evacuated and others came [...] I was wounded two weeks after the war, a difficult injury; I spent a month lying in hospital, the rest were killed except the driver, transplanted [skin] in the hospital, sewing up, a war invalid.

The battlefield that Wakstein was talking about, 'The Chinese Farm', was an especially gory battle site in the Sinai desert. It was mentioned above, that on Remembrance Day in 2005, and again in October 2007, there were public outrages, when two documentaries dealing with the battle in *Hachava Hasinit* (The Chinese Farm) by Nir Toib (2005) and Ido Solomon (2007) were broadcast on Israeli TV.

### **B. The Artist's Habitus and the Art-Field in Israel**

Acceptance of the artists into the canon is established through the artists' habitus constructed mainly in art schools such as 'Bezalel' and 'Hamidrasha'.<sup>31</sup> Both academies introduced the young artists into the field of high-art and its social network. Interestingly, however, it was also found that a central position in the art canon clearly depends on whether one has acquired a first or second degree overseas, especially an M.F.A. in distinguished art

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accused me of even a minor thing, let alone drugs, I would take the whole story to Uri Avneri's *Hao'lam Haze*. So she said: 'You competed for the officers' course, but you can't cope with the army, you are unstable and you take drugs'. She closed my file, cancelled and closed the army court, and sent me out of Sinai to the tank battalions' headquarters with a clean record.

When the sirens went off on Yom Kippur, 6 October 1973, I was trembling all over. I had a picture in my head of the military plan of the tanks in the Sinai desert, and in the Golan Heights (where I served later on). I knew that the war would be a disaster, because the government was undependable, and military high commanders were still under the influence of the euphoria of the 1967 victory, as was most of the nation. The price of the 1973 war was paid by my classmates from the 'Hebrew Reali', the 'flower kids', who were then low-ranking field officers, and their soldiers and the reserves.

<sup>31</sup> At the art academy, some of the artists in the study were supported by stipends from the Ministry of Defense, because they were war invalids or war orphans.

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academies, or lived for a long stretch of time abroad, preferably in Europe or the U.S.A.

The art school socializes students to an artistic ‘way of seeing’ and to the utilization of artistic discourse through repeated rituals of the art field. It is a fundamental site for the production of the canon, where an artistic style, its related discourse and the artists’ high-art network are first established. This network is regularly refigured through the constant innovations of its participants (Crane, 1987; 1992): the artist-teachers, the art students, the exhibiting artists, curators and gallery owners, as well as visiting artists, curators, researchers, art scholars and art critics, who are often prominent figures in the international high-art arena. This need for direct access to the international art field in various modes (such as learning and living abroad for stretches of time) was found to be a fundamental characteristic of the Israeli canonic artists’ career for about a hundred (Ballas, 1980; 2006; Bar-Or, 2003; 2006; Gal-Ezer, 1997; Manor, 2005a; Or-Noy, 1986; Trajtenberg, 2002; 2006; Yogev, 2005).

The art students occupy individual studios in the art academy, which they can use inexpensively during their study period – a crucial time in their unceasing attempts to enter the art field. The professional and educational galleries that are part of art schools operate with complete autonomy as an alternative to the museum scene, and construct an exhibition site that is unrelated to economic profit.

The artists’ lifestyle is governed by the artists’ ‘taste of refusal’ which is constructed by a central principle embedded in the artists’ habitus – the refusal to be dominated. This is a crucial component in their long-range self-positioning in the art canon (Bourdieu, 1984; 1993b; 1996a). Their life is organized through this refusal: working as teachers in art schools for a few days a week provides artists with a reasonably modest income, allowing free time for studio work so that they can survive for a long time without selling works of art. Workspaces in studios and bomb shelters are offered to the artists at a very low rent as a form of public support. All these contribute to preserving the principle of ‘the loser wins’ based on ‘the reversed economic

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rule', which is fundamental to the high-art field and allows artists not to sell ('lose') while continuously accumulating their symbolic capital ('win') (Bourdieu, 1984; 1993b; 1996a; Gal-Ezer, 1997).

Additional characteristics of the artists' lifestyle include living in small apartments, mainly in Tel-Aviv and the vicinity, modest investments in housekeeping, artifacts, and domestic equipment, with a high-taste consumption of media and culture, a preference for news and quality cinema, as well as large, well-stocked home libraries. On the walls of their homes, the artists hang only a few works of art, similar to the modern museum's 'white cube' – the widely spaced method of exhibiting works of art. From time to time they change the works on their walls. The artworks have been given to them by their artist-colleagues, a kind of tribal exchange of gifts, a custom which constructs and strengthens the network of canonic artists, extending all over the city of Tel-Aviv and its environs (Gal-Ezer, 1997).

Female artists find it difficult to establish a family and raise children. Whereas male artists marry and have children (and often enjoy the financial and emotional support of their working wives, much like ultra-orthodox *Yeshivah* students), the female artists marry later, and most of them have only one or two children, who are often raised in single-parent families without the financial support of the father.

The exhibition openings provide major ritualized sites for the reproduction of the canon, and for the maintenance of the artists' habitus in the high-art field. The social processes associated with artistic events reconstruct and support the artists' networks. At the same time, the artistic processes based on the 'pure gaze' (Bourdieu, 1993b; 1996a), and the constant accumulation of the 'seeing capital', shape both their artistic perception and autonomy, demarcating a bounded, unique group which reproduces itself through these seeing and evaluative performances.

These artistic rituals also shape and construct the artists' political attitude and how they act in the public sphere. The origin of their habitus is the Labor Movement, as mentioned previously, and now most of them are considered the leftists of the left. Their critical stance is shaped mainly by the

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artistic discourse that will soon be presented, but there are also voluntarily political acts by art exhibitions. Not only were there many art exhibitions against the occupation during the Second Intifada (the second Palestinian uprising from 2001), but money was raised actively for various purposes.

Many research artists donated artworks and attended the exhibition that was intended to support the *Seruv* (Refusal) movement, citizens who refuse to do military service in the occupied territories<sup>32</sup>. The specific exhibition (18.2.2002) that will be portrayed here, was intended to support warriors who refuse to serve in Operation *Homat Magen* in Jenin. Here is a paragraph from the field diary:

**The opening of the identification evening with *Sarvanei Matzpun* (Conscious Refusals) *Ahad Ha'am* ('one of the people') Gallery, The Rabbi of Bacharach St. Tel-Aviv, 19:00, 2nd February 2002.**

'Simply Say No' event initiated by 'The Forum in Support for the Conscious Refusers', to present solidarity with the refusers, who refuse to serve in the occupied territories. The narrow street in the south Tel Aviv Florentin neighborhood was blocked for traffic after 19:00 p.m. by the crowd that was standing outside. There were there many young people and many artists of the study and canon group. Adina Bar-On, a famous performance artist, was performing the 'hog-tying', in which she walked through the crowd of people crying a long continuous lamentation. She went slowly by the groups outside the gallery, and then she managed to enter the gallery. Not everybody understood that this was an artistic performance and not everybody knew Adina Bar-On. She is the same age as the mothers of the refusers. The more mature artists knew her. Then on the stage she continued lamenting in various tones, and then the speeches began. The works were hung crowded and carelessly, one beneath the other, two floors high. There were works of young artists and canon artists. Outside, like in the journey of the Youth Labor Movement, there was a table, on which was a very large

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.seruv.org.il/english/default.asp>

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aluminum pot with boiling tea, and disposable cups and sugar nearby. In front of the carpenter's workshop, where the workers continued working and the noise of sawing machines did not cease, was the stand for signatures and fundraising.

The Um El Fahim Art Gallery<sup>33</sup> had exhibitions (such as: 'What Remains To Be Seen' curated by Azoulay) and fundraising for 'Physicians for Human Rights'<sup>34</sup>, and the 'School for Geographic Photography', held the first exhibition of *Shovrim Shtika* (Breaking the Silence).<sup>35</sup>

This artists' habitus stands in direct opposition to their national Zionist habitus which was constructed through their family and school habitat, and by the actual and historical burden of traumatic situations throughout their life, which was reflected through their interviews, presented earlier. Another domain of constructing the artists' habitus is the domain of texts, which has also been assimilated through and by the art academy.

In the analysis of the contribution of the museum exhibitions to the research artists' positions in the canon, it was found that their path of mobility within the canon rested on their participation in the central museums' group exhibitions (Greenfeld-Peres, 1982), and about a quarter of them had not yet had a solo exhibition in a museum. These group exhibitions' ideological discourses were found to reflect contemporary paradigms of the cultural-social sciences which were adapted to the high-art field.

Four phases were found in the Israeli Art Canon Discourse, when analyzing the 130 exhibition Catalogues' texts. The phases are portrayed in brief below:

(1) *'New Horizons' – Israeli Modernism 1 (1948–1963+)*

The 'New Horizons' as the canon of its era, reflects both major processes simultaneously: Israeli nationalism and modernism, built on the bourgeoisie class that was gaining power in Tel-Aviv (Trajtenberg, 2002). This revolutionary avant-garde group of artists' (Ballas, 1980) style that was

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.umelfahemgallery.org/homeng.html>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.phr.org.il/phr/>

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.shovrimshatika.org/index\\_e.asp](http://www.shovrimshatika.org/index_e.asp)

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rocking on the edges of figurative/abstract/lyrical landscapes, full of light and aerial atmosphere did not reflect the pains of time. On the contrary, it was optimistic, even utopian<sup>36</sup>.

(2) *'Poverty as Quality' and 'Concept and Information' – Israeli Modernism 2 (1963–1986)*

The first is a famous exhibition (Curator: Breitberg, 1986) covering the years 1960–1986, which revealed and constructed the style of the 'Children of State', our research group: a very formal style, similar to their teachers, the 'New Horizons' artists – photographic collages, mixed media, texts, using plywood.

'Poverty as Quality' constructed the local 'Israeliness': according to the curator, its artists were 'The Tel-Avivians' who were the 'Inheritors' of the pioneers, originally from the Kibbutzim and the Labor movement, who conveyed their spirit. This is in contrast to the Jerusalem artists who were the carriers of 'Concept and Information' (Curator: Fischer, 1971), working in the international styles – minimal and concept.

The assimilation of these styles to the 'Poverty as Quality' canonic style was accompanied by a reduction in its critical political and societal significance, thus reflecting the emergence of the capitalistic economy of the state with its monetary capital in Tel-Aviv, and the deterioration of the former Israeli welfare state, and its 'civil servants' class' based in Jerusalem (Ben-Porat, 1999).

At this phase, when the canonic discourse and style was modern, abstract and formal, it repressed and reduced the political and societal issues, thus answering the taste of the Tel-Aviv bourgeoisies.

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<sup>36</sup> This phenomenon of the ideological merging between the entities of nation and its landscape is a part of the nation building process that is not unique to Israel, on the contrary. 'The American landscape movement emerged in the 1820s as artists, writers, and cultural leaders began to employ landscape subjects as symbols of national identity and manifest destiny.' The section on: 'Inventing the American Landscape', in 'American Identities: A New Look' the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York. ([http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/american\\_identities/](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/american_identities/)).

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(3) *Post-Modernism<sup>37</sup> and Post-Zionism – Critical Theories and Opposition to Canon and the State's 50th Anniversary Exhibitions – 1980–2000s*

In this phase, critical theories from the social sciences were starting to enter the high-art field. Art, then, did not represent the pain of wars, nor immigration, poverty or injustice, but was a play full of post-modernist style and witty games of deconstructing clichés of Zionism, women artists, identity, body and sexuality, black humor, irony and cynicism and new aesthetic concepts.

An example of the Post-Zionist discourse is the exhibition 'Desert Cliché: Israel Now – Local Images' (Curator: Katz-Freiman, 1996). 'The images [...] constitute a mirror image which reflects a specific cultural context, yet most of the works also give themselves to a universal, general reading which extract from them a meaning related to issues which have been on the agenda of the west in recent years [...]' (Katz-Freiman, 1996:10).

'[...] and indeed the manipulated representations of the national reservoir of clichés, as seen in the current show, reflect an accelerated tendency to demystify and deconstruct the historical and ideological basis on which they rely; a tendency which has recently been given the academic label "critique of Zionism" (a product of so called "New Historians") [...] Desert Cliché echoes these processes by offering a diversity of viewpoints which undermine the monolithic nature of the Zionist narrative – the collective biography which has been engraved in Israeli awareness as a single hegemonic "history" [...]' (Katz-Freiman, 1996:13).

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<sup>37</sup> Van Gogh's 'Peasant Shoes' (1887, 1888), and Andy Warhol's 'Diamond Dust Shoes' (1980) were art works (between other cultural symbols), by means of which Fredric Jameson, in his seminal work, 'Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', explained the difference between modernism and post-modernism, which he conceptualized as the 'cultural dominant' of late capitalism (Jameson, 1984).

As I was reading Jameson, I thought about the working shoes of another Dutchman, my second father, which were sometimes standing by the cupboard and sometimes beside the front door of my parents' kibbutz room, waiting to be cleaned of the mud from the orchards.

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This text clearly indicates the delegitimization of Zionist narrative as a 'national reservoir of clichés', thus the possibility of trying to narrate the traumatic events, by means of collective support, is also negated. The historical events which shape some kind of collective and national habitus, is discarded, although these burdens of traumatic events are very difficult for individuals to handle and they need society's support in recognizing their story and their suffering (Bliech & Solomon, 2002; Bougois, 2005; Bourguignon, 2005; Farmer, 2005; Herman, 1992; LaCapra, 1998; 1991; Rylko-Bauer, 2005a; 2005b; Witztum, 2002).

On Israel's 50th anniversary (1998), a celebration took place in the Israeli art field, and an ambitious effort was made to look back at Israel's art history and present fresh interpretations that reconstituted the canon anew<sup>38</sup>. Again, the artistic field was dominated by the Western art field, but a beginning of change was being felt: a local political and societal critical urgency.

*(4) Globalization<sup>39</sup> and Post-Colonial Narrative versus the 'Return of the Repressed', 2000–2007*

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<sup>38</sup> Rewriting the Canon took place at the time of the State's 50th Anniversary Exhibitions: 1998–2000s. '[...] there is a widespread assumption that New Horizons and the abstract tendency became dominant in the late 1950s, while the realism of the period was a passing episode without following and therefore relevant to today's art, both in its worldview and its artistic quality. This is to do great injustice to an important chapter in the history of Israeli art. In fact, unbiased observation of these works reveal that Social Realism reflected its period better than any other artistic current. Moreover, while Social Realism was by its nature Israeli and revolutionary, it was not a parochial phenomenon – similar tendencies existed in Europe, Latin America and the United States, and served as its models and a source of inspiration' (Ballas, 1998:199). A similar thesis to this one was also demonstrated in the 'Hebrew Work' exhibition (Curator: Bar-Or, 1998), which strived also to rewrite the Israeli canon and to include the poor workers, refugees, new immigrants and Holocaust survivors.

<sup>39</sup> At this phase, we are dealing with the 'peasant shoes' on the basis of art sociology: institutions in the art field, and the possibility in a globalized world to gather works throughout the whole world for exhibition. On July 2007, I visited a very interesting exhibition in the Musée D'Orsay, Paris: 'From Cézanne to Picasso, Masterpieces from the Vollard Gallery'. The exhibition was rich and beautifully arranged, and many new masterpieces were exhibited,

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Many exhibitions in public museums and in privately owned art galleries nowadays exhibit Israeli artists alongside foreign artists<sup>40</sup>. The international dimension has been a fundamental characteristic of the Israeli canon for about 100 years (Ballas, 1980; Bar-Or, 2007; Gal-Ezer, 1997; Manor, 2005; Trachtenberg, 2002).

Even in the former phase, the 50th anniversary group exhibition 'To the East: Orientalism in the Arts in Israel' (Curator: Zalmona, 1998),

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which were uncommon in the artbooks which shape the Western canon (Perry, 1999; Perry & Cunningham 1999). The exhibition's artworks were gathered from private collections and museums in Europe, the U.S.A and Russia. I also saw works of Van Gogh that I had not seen before even in art books. For the innocent tourist, this was one of the big D'Orsay exhibitions which exhibit the famous impressionists and their close contemporaries. For me, it was a reassurance of some research findings: the importance of social institutions in constructing artists' trajectories in the high-art field. On the wall boards was written 'sociology of art discourse', in the same manner as in the Musée D'Orsay internet site: ([http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/events/exhibitions/archives/archives/article/chefs-doeuvre-de-la-galerie-vollard-4258.html?S=O&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=252&cHash=09a80eef66](http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/events/exhibitions/archives/archives/article/chefs-doeuvre-de-la-galerie-vollard-4258.html?S=O&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=252&cHash=09a80eef66))

'A pioneer among late nineteenth-century art dealers, Ambroise Vollard (1866-1939) played a decisive role in the development of Modern Art until the early decades of the 20th century. Thanks to his intuition, his talent for business and his boldness, he has achieved a special place in the art market by his passionate defence of unknown or "banned" artists [...] His enlightened investments now seem incredibly far-sighted. Vollard maintained a special relationship with each of "his" artists, whilst his extraordinary sensitivity enabled him to discover the unique talent of each [...] Moreover, the way he developed relationships between creators, great collectors and other art dealers gave the small world of Parisian art an international dimension. Finally, Vollard also played a crucial role in the world of publishing, which was then undergoing profound changes. He published many albums of original lithographs and "artists' books". He was also the author of monographs on Cézanne, Degas and Renoir, not to mention the account of his memories. All these activities make Vollard a true promoter of Modern Art and one of the major figures of the art world of his time'. (Exhibition produced in conjunction with the Réunion des musées nationaux and organised with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago, also presented from 13 September 2006 to 7 January 2007 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and from 17 February to 13 May 2007 at the Art Institute of Chicago.)

<sup>40</sup> For instance ARTFOCUS is a big Israeli group exhibition which is funded by the State of Israel: ARTFOCUS1 (1994) and 2 (1996) only exhibited Israeli artists but ARTFOCUS3 (1999) and especially ARTFOCUS4 (2004) included well-known international artists together with Israeli artists.

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represented the Zionist Gaze on the Orient according to the ideas of Edward Said.

Another example of the post-colonial discourse is the group exhibition 'Point of View' (Curator: Ginton, 2004), that was based on Mitchell's essay (Mitchell, 2002), 'Holy Landscape: Israel, Palestine and the American Wilderness' which states: 'The perverse logic of holy landscape seems to turn it from God's gift into an obscene idol that demands human sacrifice. The sacred groves are watered by blood, and the fields are fertilized by human flesh and bones [...]' (in Ginton, 2004 without page number). Another example is the group exhibition 'Mother Tongue' (Curator: Ben Zvi, 2002) which dealt with the repression of the 'Arab-Jews' both culturally and linguistically: their (supposed) mother tongue – Arabic.

This post-colonial discourse has been dominating the international field for about a decade. The international vast exhibitions like the Biennales in Venice<sup>41</sup> and the Documenta in Kassel<sup>42</sup>, promote this discourse (De Corral, 2005; Enwezor, 2002; Storr, 2001b; Szeeman, 2001). The study reveals that the Israeli artists should assimilate the international discourse themes and style to their artworks, as an artist habitus, which would enable them to exhibit in both these global exhibitions and in central museums abroad, as well as in Israel. Thus they assimilate the post-colonial discourse and its political stand relating the Israeli occupation in the territories.

In this fourth phase of the Israeli artistic discourse, reflected in the exhibitions' texts, in which globalization and post-colonial discourse were a dominant theme, the 'Return of the Repressed' also began to appear. Although life histories were refracted at the studied artists' works, which have been exhibited in some distinguished Israeli and international art museums and biennales, they have never, or have only recently, been interpreted in art discourse either as refractions of Holocaust Second Generation, or as war experiences.

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<sup>41</sup><http://www.labiennale.org/en/art/>

<sup>42</sup>[http://www.documenta12.de/100\\_tage.html?&L=1](http://www.documenta12.de/100_tage.html?&L=1)

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The discourse and refraction of the Holocaust into artworks in recent years is complicated. There are at least three modes of representation. The first mode is related to the first generation – the survivors themselves – who commonly represented ‘Absence’, or indirect memory (Amishai-Maisel, 2005; Feisntein, 2005)<sup>43</sup>. The second mode of representing Holocaust was expressed in the first group exhibition in Israel relating to the Holocaust which took place in 2002; a modest group exhibition called ‘Lying Within the Skin: Images of Silence and Absence in the Art of Second-Generation Holocaust Survivors’ was presented in a peripheral public art gallery (Gatenio, 2002). For the first time in Israel, more than 60 years after the Holocaust, it was represented as a deep-rooted, ‘absent’, ‘silent’ theme in plastic art of the second generation. This mode of representation is very similar to the style and way of representation of the survivors, but there are differences (which are too complicated to present here) that naturally stem from the reality to which it refers. Some works of the artists in this research were exhibited elsewhere in different contexts, and were interpreted anew in ‘Lying Within the Skin’.

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<sup>43</sup> Moshe Kupferman (1926–2003) was a Holocaust survivor, **most of his family** did not survive the Holocaust. When he came back to Poland after the war with his surviving sister, to search for their family, they witnessed the Kielce pogrom, where the Polish people murdered Jews who had survived the Holocaust. Following this, his sister could not live anymore and committed suicide. Kupferman immigrated to Israel (1948) and was one of the founders of Kibbutz ‘*Lohamei Ha’geta’ot*’ (the Ghetto Fighters), with Antek Zuckerman who was the commander of the Ghetto Warsaw Jewish rebellion, and other combatants against the Nazis. There is a very large Holocaust museum in the kibbutz. Kupferman is one of Israel’s best modernist painters who has a modernist unique and famous individualistic abstract style. For many years he denied that his art had any connection to the Holocaust. When he was 74, he received the Israel Prize (2000) for his extraordinary achievements in Art. Very close to this event, he was painting a series of eight paintings for the new Holocaust museum near the old one; the museum of the Memorial of the Exterminated Children – ‘Yad Layeled’ (a memorial for the child), and only then did he name his vast paintings in Holocaust-related terms; the abstract painting number 4 is called: ‘Extermination’.

<http://gfh.org.il/Eng/Index.asp?ArticleID=121&CategoryID=95&Page=1>

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The third mode of representing the Holocaust originates from the international discourse. This mode, which is also related to the second generation, creates a totally new way of representation: ironic, cynical, and even playful. Thus a very disputed and influential group exhibition: 'Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art', which was exhibited at The Jewish Museum in New York in 2002 (Kleeblatt, 2002), included works that originated in popular culture, such as a series of color photographs of Hollywood stars, playing 'Evil' Nazi commanders, dressed in their uniforms, and ranks (Piotre Uklanski, *The Nazis*, 1998, in Kleeblatt, 2002: Plate 5). There were pornographic drawings of women who were forced prostitutes of the Nazi commanders but who were represented from the viewpoint of their torturers (Elke Kristufek, *Economical Love (Pussy Control)* 1998, in Kleeblatt, 2002: Plates 5, 7, 8). Another work was Lego sets for the use of building a toy concentration camp (Zbigniew Libera, *LEGO, Concentration Camp Set* 1996, in Kleeblatt, 2002: Plates 17, 18, 19). One piece of work of a highly disputed exhibition by Roe Rosen (Rosen, 1997), 'Live and Die as Eva Braun: Hitler's Mistress in the Berlin Bunker and Beyond', in the Israel Museum depicting the story of Eva Brown, Hitler's mistress, from her imaginary point of view was also included in the 'Mirroring the Evil' exhibit (Kleeblatt, 2002; Plate 3).

The pains of war are also starting to become apparent in this phase. For instance, Uri Katzenstein, another artist in the survey and a Holocaust 'second generation' also took part in the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the war between Israel and Egypt, in which David Wakstein was wounded. Uri was a military paramedic posted in the Sinai desert, near the battle lines, in a temporary camp for gathering and taking care of the wounded soldiers, before flying them to hospitals out of the battle-field. In the research interview he said, 'There was heavy bombardment in Abu-Rodess (in the Sinai desert) during the afternoon, on the second or the third day of war. Bombs were dropped on Abu-Rodess villas, and there were child parachuters, novices, everyone was killed. We

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Uri Katzenstein had an exhibition at the Israeli pavilion in the 49<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale – 2001 (Zalmona, 2001), a huge video installation and a body performance in which there were three dancers; Katzenstein himself was dancing and writing on the walls with his fresh blood, taken earlier from his veins, unreadable syllables. This body performance and the related video installation were interpreted anew by the researcher (Gal-Ezer, 2005b ) as a representation of a continuing cultural symbolical bloodletting<sup>45</sup>. As Uri suffered from battle trauma, as a military paramedic in the Yom Kippur War in 1973, he uses the epidermic needle as an aesthetic tool, and the blood he lets out of his body transforms to ink through the writing ritual. But these are letters written in blood; the famous poetic metaphor of the Hebrew poem of Haim Guri becomes reality. This symbolic act enables control over the blood, thus commanding the traumatic death of his beloved comrades, the dead parachuters, ‘laid row by row’, death that threatens to come again and again, triggering the hidden but active deep anxiety structure of the Holocaust, the death of ‘our’ nation, as reflected in the death of ‘our bodies’, our comrades.

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<sup>44</sup> Dani Gur, the commander who was a medical doctor, understood what was going on and decided to send me to the north. Up north I became crazy, seeing things; I had nightmares. I came back at the beginning of February (the war broke out on 6 October). I was with a girlfriend and I had beaten her and I was breaking my sculptures. This was after a year of learning in the *Avny* art academy, and mother said I should see the doctor, who said: ‘Go home’ [...] At the beginning of April I moved to America. I found jobs as a cleaner, a gardener, a house-keeper. One day when I was in New York there were jets in the sky and I threw myself under the bushes.

I then went to study art at the Indiana State University, for which my parents paid. There was a clinic for the students and a couple of psychologists took care of me [...] I was in a battle trauma for a year and a half or two years. I came to America in 1974, I completed my first degree in 1977, my second degree in 1979, and then went back to New York.’ Katzenstein studied for his first and second degree in art in the U.S.A. and came back to Israel after 15 years.

<sup>45</sup> This site has a very good example of Katzenstein's body performance [http://tracegallery.org/artists/Uri\\_Katzenstein/index.htm](http://tracegallery.org/artists/Uri_Katzenstein/index.htm)

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The ritual performance of bloodletting and writing, and the video wedding installation are an artistic means of ruling and narrating, thus recovering from trauma and returning to normality. A third 'second generation' artist in the study had a burst of a post-traumatic stress disorder about 30 years after the Yom Kippur War. His solo exhibition in the Tel-Aviv Museum was very critical and very political, conveying a clear message against the occupation, it was called: 'Shuka Glotman – Here Live Happily Mr. Poetic and Mr. Pathetic' (Goren, 2002), and its works and texts were adapted wonderfully to the art field rules. Only one paragraph in the text hinted at his life history: 'Three years ago I met Yafa Singer, head of the Post Traumatic War Syndromes Branch at the The Mental Health Officer Headquarters, Tel Hashomer. I told her my Yom Kippur War story. As I was unfolding my experience, she remarked: "You make it sound so poetic, while the story itself is so pathetic ..." Following the conversation I started reading back my life story' (Glotman in Goren, 2000, without page numbers)<sup>46</sup>.

### **Discussion: Artist Habitus and National Habitus**

The aim of this article was to draw some reflections on the 'Habitus, Texts, Rituals: Elements of Acceptance, Presence and Continuity in the Israeli Art Canon', a study that explores artists' career trajectories in the Israeli high-art field: the processes of acceptance, presence and continuity involved in holding a central post in the Israeli art canon. Of the three social constructs that were studied in the entire research (habitus, texts, rituals), this article focused mainly on the habitus through exploring possible interactions embedded within habitus,

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<sup>46</sup> Every Yom Kippur (which is a the holiest day in Judaism, when people fast in order to pray for God's forgiveness for their sins in relation to God and sins in relation to humans), I try not to remember all my buried friends, but I can't. So a few days after Yom Kippur I phoned Glotman because I was thinking about his interview. I had the feeling that something was hidden there. I was trying to tell him that I was finishing my research and had a feeling about his experience in the 1973 war, and he said, 'Last year I was diagnosed with PTSD. 'Following the conversation I started reading' carefully the text of his exhibition: 'following the conversation I started reading back my life story'.

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nation-state, trauma, the high-art field in Israel, habitus and biography of the researcher.

Going back three generations to analyze the transmission of cultural capital to the artists in this study demonstrates that in spite of the historical context of Israeli society as a society of immigrants and refugees, the reproduction of status within this elite group could be identified. While Bourdieu's findings present the legitimate code's transmission in the bourgeoisie dynasty, which is the foundation for the transformation of this cultural capital to the artists' 'taste of refusal', this study demonstrates a complex transmission of cultural capital in a specific historical contexts and its derived configurations and transformations of taste. The legitimate code's habitus was found to be represented in the three generations; but national and memory elements were consolidated within the trigenerational cultural capital transmission. This process of familial transmission was assisted by the educational-cultural institutions which consolidated it and enabled initial access to the high-art field. All of these were transformed once again by the socialization process in the art academy that resulted in the artists' habitus of the 'taste of refusal' refined by contact with global art trends.

Modernism rejected the artist's biography, because the artist was conceived as a mythical genius beyond his time, and his 'biography' was his trajectory in the art field – played by the 'Artist Habitus'. Thus, the classic knowledge of the 'Science of Art' – the artistic monograph – was rejected as well. Post-Modernism elicited the rejected group of the 'others', and thus, by the 'Identity Politics', the individual biography of the artist was again excluded.

But the multilayered traumatic experiences were common in the life histories of the artists in the study. These experiences were deeply assimilated in the artists' minds as a postponed memory, without linguistic frames or organized visual constructions. When the traumatic experience passes a threshold or a trigger arouses the trauma, it becomes an unbearable experience, the return of the traumatic situation itself, with no mediation or

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transformation to any cultural codes. Culture is postponed as language (Blicch & Solomon, 2002; Herman, 1992; LaCapra, 1998; 2001).

It seemed that many artists were trying to construct an artistic narrative, but what was happening was a confusion and a merging of two processes: multilayered traumatic experiences of 'second generation' and wars, that were confronting the art common discourse. Just as the pains of wars are beginning to rise within the artist habitus, the Holocaust should be represented in discourse of cynicism, irony and humor, and in accordance with the international art discourse about the occupied territories which is linked to the post-colonial narrative. Thus the rules of the art field, whose common paradigm is post-Zionist discourse, dictate the 'opposition' to hegemonic domination (Gal-Ezer, 2007a) combined with the common post-modern discourse that could be also part of Holocaust denial (LaCapra, 1998; 2001).

Only a careful study that detects life stories also as life histories (Bourgeois, 2005; Bourguignon, 2005; Farmer, 2005; La Capra, 1998; 2001; Rylko-Bauer, 2005; Waterston, 2005), and not as mere constructions without referents in reality, can explore disjunctions between artistic symbolic constructions, habitus constructions and reality: historic and national trauma.

Thus the artist's primary habitus at his parents family habitat was revealed as a hybrid construction made of two constructs: the habitus of the legitimate code, whose European cultural capital was transformed in the bourgeoisie family with the support of the public or state educational and cultural institutions. On the basis of this primary habitus and cultural capital, the artist's habitus could be constructed in the art academy as a modernist artistic habitus without any history (Bourdieu, 1984; 1996a; Gal-Ezer, 2007a).

The other construct is the national habitus (Pickel, 2004) which includes the historic national capital, the Jewish culture, and the traumatic burden of the nation which is narrated in the hegemonic Zionist narration, found in the artists' life stories which reflect their life histories. This national habitus is regularly repressed in the art field. But when the time comes for 'the return of the repressed', the Zionist national habitus of the artist 'confronts' the post-Zionist discourse and post-colonial international discourse which are

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assimilated and embedded in his way of operating in the field – his artistic habitus.

These analyses, which emphasize the contribution of institutions and organizations to shaping the canonic position of artists, are anchored in an exploration of a trigenerational biography that deconstructs the modernist myth of the ‘born artist’ whose talent is divine. Thus, the analysis of the tensions reflecting overt and deep processes associated with the artists’ traumatic historical ‘National Habitus’, and the typical ‘Artist Habitus’, can lead to better theorization of the dynamic exchanges involving these social constructs, nation-state and trauma, and possible future research implications.

In analyzing the career trajectories and social positions of the specific group of artists included in this study, considered as a generational group in the Israeli art canon, most of them were found to produce innovative, critical art, which stands opposed to hegemony (Bourdieu, 1993b; 1996a; Crane, 1987; 1992). However, it is not clear whether their art is genuine avant-garde art, or whether they are producing crucial social-artistic innovations, like the avant-garde artists in the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, who struggled for social justice and radical political and societal change. The artists’ weak position of economic dependence (Bourdieu, 1996a) makes it very difficult for them to protect the autonomy of the high-art field against ideological, economic and political pressures in context of Israel’s deteriorating welfare state.

It should be noted that this study investigated a generation group of artists, embedded in specific historic, political, cultural and economic circumstances, thus generalization of the findings is limited. At the same time, the combination of social science theory and methodology with a biographical perspective and an emphasis on the ethics of seeing, allows for the construction of complementary viewpoints for social research. It is offered here with a view to future studies in the field of cultural production<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> According to the Bourdieusian theory, there are professional habitus, which enable agents to act in specific fields. Thus artist’s habitus is a similar social construction as academic habitus (Bourdieu, 1996b). When considering the divide that was discussed here between national

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habitus and the artist's habitus, using the concept of traumatic national history, a similar process can be found in academic socialization. The academic trajectory is not a unique biography of the individual researcher, but an institutional construct, shaped by the international paradigms discourses, which flow globally to various cultures (Appadurai, 1990) even if their agenda is different. Thus research questions, methods and interests, are not commonly embedded within the society in which they are conducted, but within the international doxa. Thus power knowledge is taken out of societies which need them.

The research on trauma was very developed in the late 1960s, as I presented in my biographical story, but the paradigm was shifted into linguistic turn and post-modernism. Knowledge of historic trauma is very crucial in my eyes, to detect the national general anxiety that characterizes nations and societies in conflicts. Recognizing these deep processes can lead to better handling of political and social conflicts. It can also lead to better and clearer definition when a nation should define its real enemies, and anxiety's constructed enemies.

But another dangerous process originates in traumatic national habitus, as in the individual – the tendency for repetitive fixation. Thus, due to repetitive wars, we do not see that there is another existential threat to Israel, the deterioration of the welfare state, and the growing polarization of society: legendary richness in front of cruel poverty. This process which is masked by continuous wars, is also gaining legitimacy through wars.

I think that we should return to our society's deep interests, open up the doxa, dogma and scientific paradigms and through these renewed perspectives and knowledge, we can share new insights with the global academic community.

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