A Collection of Essays in Honor of Professor Lambros Comitas

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# Table of Contents

**Letters from the Field (Imagined)**
- Bambi B. Schieffelin ............................................................ 3

**A Rite of Passage**
- Ellen M. Schneipel ............................................................... 8

**Personality and Ethnographic Meaning**
- Renzo Taddei and Kenneth Broad ........................................... 12

**Across the Street**
- Joan Vincent ............................................................................ 21

**Fishing Communities: More and Less**
- Conrad P. Kottak ....................................................................... 24

**Occupational Multiplicity and Social Transformations in Rural Zambia**
- George C. Bond ......................................................................... 29

**Occupational Multiplicity and the Informal Sector: Lambros Comitas and Anthropology**
- Donald K. Robotham .................................................................. 34

**Dominicans, Haitians, Israelis, Palestinians: Anthropology and Ethnic Conflict**
- Gerald F. Murray ....................................................................... 43
Letters from the Field (Imagined)
or
Summer 1966: fieldwork in Bolivia with Lambros
Bambi B. Schieffelin

In March of 1966, the NY Times reported that Bolivia’s military junta, which exiled President Victor Paz Estenssoro two years earlier, granted him a visa to return to La Paz. He promised not to seek re-election.

In April, the Washington Post reported that terrorists attacked a newspaper office and a small army post in Cochabamba. Later that month, the Bolivian government announced that it had crushed a revolutionary plot timed to explode May 1, and had arrested various leaders of the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR).

On July 3rd, The New York Times reported that Gen. Rene Barrientos Ortuno won the national election by a large majority, and that things were generally quiet in La Paz, though the miners claimed voter fraud. Later that month at the White House, President Lyndon Johnson hosted the new president-elect who announced that if his government lagged in its accomplishments, he would not object to being deposed by a military coup d’état. President Johnson toasted Barrientos, lauding the efforts of Bolivia for the welfare of her predominantly Indian population.

In November, Che Guevara made his way to Bolivia. But by that time Lambros and I had left.

The Bolivia that I visited with Lambros in the summer of 1966 bore few resemblances to what was reported in the NY Times and the Washington Post. A Columbia undergraduate, I had been working at the Research Institute for the Study of Man. I spoke Spanish, knew a little anthropology, and was ready for an adventure. My application to the Columbia-Cornell-Harvard-Illinois Summer field school, directed by Lambros, was successful. I was off for a “visit to Bolivia.”

When I tried to retrieve my memories of 1966, they were fuzzy, a little out of focus, like the few photographs I have, until I found unexpected archival materials - a dozen or so letters that I wrote from the Sucre Palace Hotel in La Paz to my parents, who put them in a box, which I found when I was cleaning out their attic a few months ago.

Written just after I turned 21, they are a mixture of youthful enthusiasm with the occasional, thoughtful reflection. Reading them now, I see the encouraging and supportive role Lambros played not only in the context of my Bolivian summer, but which foreshadowed the impact he had in my professional life. He encouraged me to continue my studies and, after a couple of years in Papua New Guinea, I returned to New York, and with Lambros’ confidence in my work I received my Ph.D. in Anthropology in 1979.

For all anthropologists, every journey begins with the minidrama of just getting to the field. My account from 1966 was typical in that respect,
and surprisingly like many trips I have taken recently. There were numerous delays getting to La Paz, and little information about most of them. Something was going on during our unexpectedly long stopover in Panama such that the airport was patrolled by a large military presence and we had to stay close to our departure gate. Once we finally got off the ground, there was no food, little air, and a lot of noise on the overcrowded flight. Landing in La Paz, at El Alto airport, was a relief.

The several days of uncertain travel had convinced me what every anthropologist knows: there is no such thing as "on time." Coming from New York, I had my own expectations of time. I could hardly wait to see it all, to move like a New Yorker on the run. It took but a few days for me to learn that time in Bolivia, had a life of its own, expanding to fit in everything and everyone.

The first nights in La Paz, however, were something unanticipated. I did a lot of heavy breathing in bed, nothing erotic, but just coping with oxygen deprivation at nearly 12,000 feet made me breathless. Lambros’ remedy was simple and effective- coca tea, which was foul-tasting. But it also had a side-effect- the fantasy that I was walking on the wild side - imbibing coca, a forbidden drug. Little did I know how important coca based drinks would become during my stay.

My first week was spent at the Sucre Palace Hotel in La Paz. My letters detail my unending curiosity about the local foods, which ranged from skewers of roasted meat sold on the street with names I did not recognize - a good thing - to whatever I saw that was safe and familiar, such as, mandarin oranges in the markets. When I got sick from eating raw, unpeeled tomatoes, Lambros again took care of me. I’m not sure that it was part of the field director’s job description, but I don’t think he wanted to put me in the hands of the Peace Corps doctor. Lambros’ highly recommended medicinal and nutritional aid for my guts was a bottle of coca cola, always warm, because Lambros told me that amoebas could live in ice cubes.

Coca Cola was special in Bolivia. In the high altitude any carbonation disappeared in seconds, leaving a warm syrupy drink that bore little resemblance to what was bottled in the US and came out of machines. I came to love warm coke as a health tonic, better than Pepto-Bismol or gelusil. Although I gave up my "coke" habit after returning to the States, when I do have an occasional glass, I prefer it warm, a comfort food of sorts, a reminder of Lambros and Bolivia.

Lambros had other good recommendations for the body and the soul, one of which was ice cream. It was the best excuse to make endless trips to Max Bieber’s, a wonderful little cafe, which made and served exotic fruit ice cream. It was at Bieber’s that I heard a young American Peace Corps volunteer tell the waiter in carefully enunciated Spanish,"Tengo hombre." His shocked expression was a startling reminder of the danger of language slips.
After a week or so, I left the urban delights of La Paz for Achocalla, a rural community a few hours away. Its main attraction was its numerous, small schools, perfect for my project on Bolivian education. I made arrangement to live in the center of town in the house of the 60 yr old mayor and her older sister. I had my own tiny cement block room with a bed and 8 blankets. All necessary. In addition to no heating, there was also no plumbing or toilet. The chicken yard was the place of choice, and while I grew up on a large poultry farm in New Jersey, my previous experience with chickens did not prepare me for fending them off when I was trying to have a little privacy.

Lambros made sure I visited other parts of Bolivia. When Dr. Vera Rubin came down from New York, he secured a "new" Peace Corps jeep for a trip to Oruro. The corduroy roads in the very cold, dry and dusty altiplano, made travel a multisensory event. The jeep continually broke due to the low grade of gas sold locally, and apparently, dust does not help the engine either. Between the three of us, our knowledge of car engines was close to zero, even less in Spanish. On one occasion Lambros flagged down a group of Indians who spoke more Aymara than Spanish, and as I tried to explain that the gas line was clogged and the accelerator was no longer attached, Vera offered chocolate bars to those that tried to make it run. Finally, late in the day, after hours of jogging and stopping, a contingent of Bolivian soldiers came to our aid and fixed the jeep so that it ran, but only in 4 wheel drive. Three hours later, we arrived in Oruro, meeting up with other members of the project. We stayed at the "best" hotel, which had no heat, all 6 of us in one room. We survived the night mostly due to Lambros’ wry humor.

My eye-opening experiences were not limited to Aymara villages, Quechua towns, or adventures in the yungas and altiplano. Lambros shared much of the La Paz that he knew with me; perhaps it was part of his effort to civilize me. One of those indelible moments was the night he took me along to the Circulo Israelita, literally the highest synagogue on earth, where in addition to religious services, one could also have dinner. I was amazed to see knishes, borscht and matzo ball soup served, my heritage foods. But even more impressive was hearing the codeswitching between Yiddish and Spanish, and other European languages. This experience put my grandparents’ Yiddish-English repertoire into an entirely new perspective.

The Circulo Israelita was memorable for another reason: It was the first time I saw concentration camp numbers, something I had only read about. These permanent marks were on the arms of those who came there as regulars, the members of this community. This was another branch of my diasporic community, a diasporic imagination that I did not share until that point. While I came from Manhattan, these moments in Bolivia made me realize that I was in fact, very provincial. So as to get an even broader view of world history in Bolivia, Lambros also took me to La Paz’s German Club where everything was in German.

As part of my summer fieldwork education, Lambros took me along to all varieties of social gatherings. I met Jorge Sanjines and his colleagues at the Film Collective, and attended a screening of Ukamau - in black and white, the first film in Aymara with Spanish subtitles. I had never seen anything like it.
My participation in Bolivian cultural life, however, was not all exciting conversations with filmmakers, glitzy parties with diplomats, writers and Peace Corps staff, or interviews with ministers of education. There were also the rare social dramas that I managed to participate in without Lambros, for example, my robbery.

August 20th at 10 in the morning, as I was shopping in the Mercado Rodriguez, someone stealthily razor-slash my Bolivian bag removing documentos (my passport and social security card), travelers checks ($40), dinero, (b. 120) and two lucky amulets which I had purchased in the Indian market when I first arrived. I filed a police report, which involved paying the police, and not just for the stamps, and was told to come back in a few hours. When I returned, to my surprise, (but not theirs), the police had all of my things, except for the bolivianos. While I believe the payment helped, I prefer to think those amulets, facilitated the return of my documents and wallet.

One is never too young to learn that flexibility in the field is essential. Due to strikes, holidays, and frequent unannounced school closings, my project on schools in Achocalla was difficult to complete. So, Lambros decided I could be of assistance on some of his projects, and included me in them. For example, as part of observing peace corps-based initiatives, I attended lectures on latrine building and birth control, and also helped by interviewing volunteers for an evaluation project. We traveled to distant Andean communities by jeep to find, and visit volunteers, sometimes along some very minimal roads, with even more minimal hotels. Lambros always managed to find sardines, crackers and coke at a local store, so we were never hungry. In the evenings he often appeared astonishingly elegant in a silk dinner jacket, sometimes with a silk ascot as well, when everyone else looked just awful.

Without intending to be one, I became the altimeter on these Andean mountain road trips. As soon as we climbed over 15,000 ft, I would get altitude sickness, and want to be
left by the side of the road. While Lambros documented these moments, he also rescued me, making sure that when we got to the lower altitudes, the only thing I lost was my shoe.

During my summer in Bolivia, I enjoyed talking to people and translating - making sense of what was said and meant. It was intellectually challenging, a precursor to my study of linguistic anthropology. But even more important was the way Lambros helped me understand who I was and who I could be. He was a model for how to be a person, a teacher, and an anthropologist.

I quote from one of my letters: "Lambros treats me like a mensch, he is really one of the finest men I have ever known, and it really comes out when we are in stressful situations out in the campo. I am really lucky to be under his wing." These are some of the memories saved in my letters from the Summer of 1966. Forty-one years later, I still feel the same way - lucky to have been under his wing.

Thank you, Lambros.
A Rite of Passage
Ellen M Schnepel

Anthropology is a very different field from the time when Lambros Comitas first entered. While he left Columbia College to fight a war, my generation stayed in college to avoid the draft. It was a time when faculty chairs (all men) handpicked newly minted graduates for positions in their departments. After receiving his Ph.D., Comitas went to Teachers College and soon followed Sol Kimball as chair of the Joint Program in Applied Anthropology, one of the first in the country. Now with the proliferation of applied anthropology programs, anthropologists are more likely to work outside the academy than within. Writing culture has also changed, incorporating postmodernism and the reflexive voice, and in the search for a wider, more inclusive audience, a number of anthropologists are producing creative non-fiction, known as "ethnographic fiction." My contribution in honor of Lambros Comitas is a literary piece, a creative short story based on my initial field experience in the 1980s in Guadeloupe in the French Antilles.

Introduction

Who is this Lambros Comitas? One may ask.

I met Lambros in New York City somewhat innocently in the winter of 1979 when I was looking into Ph.D. programs and he was on sabbatical from Teachers College. I had become fascinated with the Caribbean through the writings of Aime Cesaire but was unsure whether to approach the study of the region through literature, linguistics, history, or anthropology. Enrolling in a Masters program in Latin American Studies at Stanford University gave me the luxury to decide, and while there I asked St. Clair Drake, then an emeritus professor of anthropology, for advice. He told me I had only two choices in terms of Caribbean Studies-Mintz and Price at John Hopkins or the "bibliophile" Lambros Comitas at Columbia. That Lambros was a bibliophile was evident from the plethora of bookcases filled with all sorts of books and journals in his office suite in Thompson Hall. These he seemed to have graduate students re-arranging every year while others like myself wrote annotated reviews for the Handbook of Latin American Studies using as a model his four-volume Caribbeana.

I entered Teachers College/Columbia University at a time when cultural materialism reigned. Even though Marvin Harris had already decamped to the University of Florida, his ghost was on Morningside Heights. Taking interest in creole languages when language ideologies or language-and-power had not yet become critical theoretical constructs was not an easy task. But Lambros was eclectic and immensely supportive. He cast a wide theoretical net, allowed independence in his students, and would often reel us in to his imaginary dory named "Ithaca" when the seas of anthropology were choppy, coaxing us at times with Bajan or Jamaican rum. He would on one occasion refer to the multiple anthropology departments at Columbia, Barnard, and Teachers College and their internecine battles as "the Balkans on the Hudson," a fitting description by a Greek-American and native son.

Anthropology is a very different field from the time when Lambros first entered Columbia College as an undergraduate. While he left college to fight a war, my generation stayed in university to avoid the draft. When Lambros received his Ph.D., faculty chairs were an exclusive white male club who handpicked newly minted graduates for positions in their departments. Lambros merely crossed West 120th Street and soon
succeeded Sol Kimball as chair of the Joint Program in Applied Anthropology, the first applied program in this country. He is still there and on many a Saturday morning, I have seen him, dapperly dressed, donning a beret and silk scarf, newspaper under his arm, walking the familiar path between his office and the M4 bus on Broadway.

Now with the proliferation of graduate programs in applied anthropology, anthropologists are more likely to work outside the academy than within. Little did Lambros know that his concept of "occupational multiplicity" might several decades later have more application or relevance to anthropologists like myself than Jamaican peasants or fishermen. Writing culture has changed, too, incorporating postmodernism and the reflexive voice, and in the search for a wider, more inclusive audience, a number of anthropologists are writing creative non-fiction or "ethnographic fiction." My contribution to this panel in honor of Lambros is a literary piece, entitled "A Rite of Passage." It is a short story based on my initial field experience in the 1980s in Guadeloupe in the French Antilles. How to navigate entry into the field and gain the locals' trust while winning their respect were traits our teacher, mentor, and friend passed on to many of us.

I should like to dedicate this piece to Lambros.

A Rite of Passage
Dedicated to Lambros Comitas on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

"Ki non-a"? I asked hesitantly of the burly, sun-tanned Saintois fisherman as he repaired his fishtraps on the beach in the lazy afternoon tropical sun while shaded by an almond tree. Shirtless and wearing a straw hat, or bakoua, the man was barefoot, in torn workpants that were rolled up to his calves and hung below his protruding gut. Poverty clung to him like the tentacles of an octopus to its prey.

"Etien," he replied, announcing his name proudly, while seemingly amused by my accent as I tried to speak Creole. "What brings you to Gwadloup, to our little fishing village, St. Francois?" he asked in his native tongue.

"I'm here to learn Creole. I want to pale kreyol kon zot. You know, to speak Creole just like you."

"Mmm. Kreyol, its patois, broken French. It's not a language," he said, as if wanting to discourage my enthusiasm.

I had heard this refrain before from Guadeloupans of all social classes, rich and poor, young and old, men and women, city and rural dwellers, Indians and Creoles. How could they think otherwise when living on an island that had been under French domination since 1635, where school was taught in French, and TV and radio programs were all broadcast in the refined Gallic tongue? Few of the Saint-Franciscans spoke of their ancestors from Africa, or how in the forced transplantation across the Middle Passage to the Caribbean, their languages had been lost and a new mixed or hybrid language, Creole, was born. Many didn't know its history, let alone their own. But back in 1981, only one radio program, Pikenga, on Radio Guadeloupe aired broadcasts in Creole for listening enjoyment on lazy Saturday afternoons. Few written materials existed in the language and when writing in Creole, people wrote spontaneously in their own individual way, following no apparent system or rules.

After a pause, the silence was broken. "Creole's not good for much but jokes, insults, vulgarity," Etien said,
obviously with some ambivalence.

"How can you say it’s not a language when you speak it everyday, when it’s your mother tongue?" I countered.

"Lang manman-mwen," he corrected me, emphasizing the nasalized vowels that are so typical of Guadeloupean Creole. "So why would someone from the Metropole want to learn our language? You speak French. That should be enough. It will get you a good job. What do you want with Creole? It won’t get you work," he emphasized as he looked down at his torn bamboo and chicken-wire fishtrap.

"But I’m not from the Metropole."

"Ki kate ou soti?" he asked, curious about my origins. "I'm American."

"Ameriken? That’s different! Ah, se moun an-mwen. You’re one of us!" he responded in delight. From that day on we were friends.

Early every morning the fishermen would go to sea in small, hand-hewn wooden boats with poetic names painted on their gunnels - Mon Dieu, Sans Souci, Marie-France, Siyola, Etoile du Matin - and then return by 10 or 11 to sell their catch to a throng of expectant customers, mostly women. Afterwards the fishermen would retire to the local rum shops to drink "on ti sek" (straight rum) or two or three, and I’d willingly join them. They were all from Les Saintes, the tiny, two-island archipelago to the southwest of Guadeloupe: Rene, Marceau, Etien, Hector, Achilles - names that masked the illiteracy of their commonplace lives. While Terre-de-Haut ("High Land") was flat, its companion isle, Terre-de-Bas ("Low Land") was hilly, much like a sugarloaf that protruded from the sea. I soon learned that their curious nomenclature came from seafaring days. Terre-de-Bas was farther to the west, the last of the two islands one would reach when sailing downwind, hence "plus bas" or beyond.

After lunch and the habitual afternoon siesta, the fishermen returned to the beach to repair their nets working until the sun went down. This was the time when I’d engage Etien in conversation. He regaled me with stories of the hardships at sea, the days when they used sails to navigate their boats, and the fishermen who’d been lost in the unforgiving waters. The sea was not kind to Guadeloupeans, in the same way it was to tourists from the North, and many island natives had never learned to swim.

My afternoons with Etien were mutually beneficial. He had female companionship and I improved fluidity in his language. The only problem was that our daily afternoon ritual of Creole conversation began to attract every straggler on the beach - older men, unemployed boys, jobeurs, and voyous. Like the roots of the mangrove, unemployment stretched out its limbs from one end of the island to the other, and savings were as meager as a cow in Grande-Terre during the dry season.

The male bystanders were curious about my relationship with the married fisherman who’d fathered numerous children, including ti-moun dewar, or "outside children" in Creole parlance. According to a local proverb, on pechekokebyen- "a fisherman makes good love." I soon became fascinated with the progressive verb form ka in Creole that was used to show continuous or habitual action and wondered why the Creole verb koke ("to make love, copulate") was one of the few verbs that didn't need this marker. Did frequent
practice make it redundant?

One day as I was seated beside Etien as he toiled, an old man leaned over and began to proposition me in front of the crowd. "On bel fanm kon-ou dwet mete kor-aw adan couch amnwen! A beautiful woman like you must spend the night in my bed!" he remarked. I didn’t know how to handle his advances. I didn’t want to hurt his feelings and say no. After all I was to live in the community for the rest of the summer. How would he handle rejection? What would the others think of me, a female not succumbing to a man’s sexual charms, albeit from someone a bit tattered in appearance and ravaged by time and the local rhum agricole?

Then all of a sudden I blurted out in Creole, "Mesye, dapwe mwen, a laj-aw, kok-aw pa ka mache ankor;" or quite literally that at his advanced age, perhaps he couldn’t get it up anymore! I was amazed by my bravado as well as the perfect turn of the Creole phrases. Someone must have entered my body and taken over my voice for never, never would I have the nerve to say such a thing, especially as a foreign visitor trying to learn the local cultural norms.

The men on the beach burst out laughing. Bellies jiggled. They sucked their teeth in approval. Perhaps the poor old man was indeed impotent, for in these small villages sexual reputations traveled widely. But if not, he surely didn’t call my bluff.

I soon learned that sexual innuendo and banter were appreciated by the town folk. It was part of daily language play in a culture where life was hard and talk important. Word traveled fast by the local bwa patat, or "sweet potato vine." By nightfall the episode had been discussed from one end of town to the other, from le haut du bourg to the presbytery where Pere St-Felix was nursing his final rum punch before retiring.

The next day the men on the beach left me at peace to carry on my conversations with Etien. Although my Creole was still rudimentary, the Saint-Franciscans didn’t mind. As a stranger I had come into their world on their terms, not my own. At first a curiosity, I was now la reine de laplage, "the queen of the beach." And I was beginning to like Guadeloupe.
Personality and Ethnographic Meaning
or
From the Ethnographer’s Point of View: Lambros Comitas Through His Visual Anthropology
Renzo Taddei and Kenneth Broad

Abstract

This article analyses the photographic production of Lambros Comitas as a way to discuss the linkages between photographic production and ethnographic experience. The foci of analysis are the building of rapport with local populations, the photographic imagination as an act of deconstruction and reconstruction of the local reality, and also of the relationship between photographer and photographed. The text suggests that if we transcend the impetus to estheticize ethnographic photographic productions, photographic works like Comitas’ present us the challenge of evaluating our own capacity for rapport and for existential synchronization with the local realms we study.

Keywords: photography, rapport, Comitas, visual anthropology, photographic imagination

Resumo

Este artigo analisa a produção fotográfica de Lambros Comitas, com o objetivo de discutir a relação entre produção fotográfica e experiência etnográfica. Os focos de análise são a construção de rapport com as populações locais, a imaginação fotográfica como ato de desconstrução e reconstrução da realidade local, e também da relação entre fotógrafo e fotografado. O texto sugere que se conseguirmos transcender o ímpeto de estetizar produções fotográficas etnográficas, trabalhos fotográficos como o de Comitas nos colocam o desafio de avaliarmos nossa própria capacidade de construção de rapport e de sincronização existencial com as realidades locais estudadas.

Palavras-chave: fotografia, rapport, Comitas, antropologia visual, imaginação fotográfica

In 2008, Lambros Comitas commemorates 50 years dedicated to teaching and research in anthropology. As a student at Columbia University, he had Margaret Mead and Conrad Arensberg as professors. He would eventually become their colleague, joining the faculty at Columbia in 1958, where his childhood friend, Marvin Harris, had also become a professor some years earlier. Comitas dedicated his career to the study of societies in the Mediterranean, Latin America and the Caribbean, and to the anthropological research of drug use, education, and, lately, the anthropology of disasters. As chair of the applied anthropology program and
director of the Institute for Latin American Studies at Columbia, he had the opportunity to train many
generations of anthropologists, and
today many of his students fill the ranks
of university departments in all
continents of the globe.

Throughout his career, Comitas
produced a voluminous amount of
ethnographic photographs and films in
Barbados, Jamaica, Greece (the
homeland of his parents), the former
soviet republic of Georgia, Spain,
Andorra, and Canada. Yet, as happens
to most anthropologists, his visual
material is much less known than his
textual production. This is unfortunate,
not only for the richness of the
photographic register in terms of ethnographic documentation, but especially for the fact that Comitas'
photos have qualities that transcend his work as social scientist, revealing a talented artist and a humane,
extraordinary person. The goal of this paper is to explore, through an analysis of his photographic
production, the nature of the relationship he
developed with his local interlocutors. Rapport is
acknowledged as one the most important features of
the ethnographic work, upon which the results of the
anthropological enterprise are largely dependent. It is
also one of the greatest challenges in intercultural
contact, where the minutiae of everyday rites and
practices that go unnoticed to members of a group
overwhelm the senses, feelings and cognitive efforts
of strangers. As we intend to demonstrate, Dr. Comitas'
photos are provocative and revealing in this regard.

For this analysis, we selected some of his Bolivian,
Jamaican and Barbadian pictures. The Caribbean and
Bolivian series represent his earliest material.
Photographs provide us information about the reality
documented, and also about the photographer's point
of view (Novaes cited in Frehse 2005:185). We can see
through Comitas' Caribbean and Bolivian pictures the
perspective of a young anthropologist in the early
moments of his career. At first, it called our attention
that he paid special attention to his photographic
production from its very beginning. A good part of the
photos were taken in diapositives (slides), an expensive alternative to regular film, but where the colors are registered with higher quality and intensity. For that reason, he has photos taken in the 1950s and 60s that have a color quality that negatives would not achieve until decades later. In a world where our imagetic references are structured around printed media, the color quality of Comitas’ photos causes a certain temporal vertigo: accustomed as we are to indexing the temporal elements of an image by its color quality (and how much of the color fades with time), along with clothing styles and technological time references, we may easily forget that some of his children subjects are now middle aged adults. One of his pictures, where a boy runs naked on a Jamaican beach, is a nice example of that: that boy would eventually become the Jamaican First Minister.

His black and white photos don’t produce a different effect: if here we cannot index the color quality of the photographic material (and its resistance to time) to a specific era, it IS the exceptional esthetic quality of his photos that erase time references. The advent of color photography reinforced the aura of art associated to black and white photography. Some of the best photographers of our times, Sebastiao Salgado for one, only photograph in black and white. Comitas’ photographic style incorporates the virtues of the some of the best photographers of the 20th century: the sophisticated visual compositions that we find in Cartier-Bresson (pictures 1 and 2), the tender view of everyday life of Doisneau (pictures 3 and 5), and the use of counter-light that we see in Salgado’s work.
There is an etymological equivalence between theorizing and gazing (from the Greek term theorèin, to gaze upon; Taylor 1994:XIII). At the same time, the analyses of photographic production restricted to searching for the objective realities of the social situation depicted miss the important phenomenological point that imagination and illusion are both, sociologically speaking, forms of mediation widely present in how realities are constituted (Martins 2002: 225). So if photographs are witnesses of the physical encounter between photographer and the photographed, and carry in them indicators of the circumstances in which they were produced (Frehse 2005: 187), they are also the registry of the fact that the photographer reacted to what he or she saw (Martins 2002: 235) - in the form of puzzlement, amazement, rejection, or esthetic delight. Photographs carry the mark of the extraordinary, from the point of view of who took them. To his or her reaction to reality, the photographer adds a "photographic imagination," (Martins 2002: 223-224) that is, the specific ways through which the visual is deconstructed and reconstructed through the process of visual documentation, motivated by esthetical or archival factors. Photographic images encode the deference shown by the photographer to the elements depicted in their first plane (Frehse 2005: 191-192)- and here we’re using Goffman’s idea of deference (1967) as the attention paid by the individual to the symbolic implications of his or her acts when in the co-presence of objects or persons that have a special value.

From this perspective, Comitas' photographs put in evidence some elements of his relationship, as photographer and as anthropologist, with the local peoples and social realities he was witnessing. In the Caribbean photos, one thing that immediately calls the attention of the viewer is the proximity between photographer and subjects, both physically and psychologically.
Comitas’ photos show a predilection for wide-angle lenses, what can be seen by the fact that the pictures have a great depth of field (that is, background and first plane are both in focus) and luminosity (pictures 5, 7, 8, and 11). The use of wide-angle lenses to photograph human subjects implicates physical proximity (and that is why the paparazzi world is by definition the realm of the telescopic lenses). Added to that, we can see that very often his subjects have direct eye contact with the photographer and have a relaxed, casual, and smiling attitude (pictures 3, 7, 10, and 12). In a word, not surprisingly for those who know Comitas, his Caribbean subjects were at ease with his presence. Experienced ethnographers and photographers know how much effort getting such spontaneous and relaxed attitude from locals take.

Another evidence of Comitas’ psychological proximity to the Caribbean populations he studied is the constant presence of children, women, and everyday homely situations as his themes. This contrasts to the fact that the overwhelming majority of anthropological photographic production has rituals (sacred and secular) as preferred theme, where, among other things, locals are too busy with the formalities and the psychological and emotional implications of the ritual action to pay attention to the photographer. Comitas’ attention to ordinary, everyday intimate dimensions of local life, in his photographic and textual production (e.g. Comitas and Lowenthal1973), demonstrates his facility for establishing rapport with local populations. Of course, at the twilight of the era of colonial rule in the Caribbean, but not of the coloniality of racial relations, the white Anglo-Saxon anthropologist could have forced his way into the everyday lives of his local
ethnographic and photographic subjects; nevertheless, it would have never produced the candid, tender, spontaneous laughs in the face of the local kids, as so often we see in his photos (picture 3). It would also not produce his rich documentation of ganja use (and, later, drug use in other places of the Caribbean and in the U.S.; see Comitas 1975, 1976; Rubin and Comitas 1976, 1983) in a social context in which the white colonial elites criminalized it as a way of racial and class social control. It would not have produced those beautiful intimate, but never intrusive, scenes of family life, as the mother breast feeding her baby in Jamaica (picture 7), in a society where the values of colonial elites attached the honor of females to their physical and emotional reclusion. Comitas’ photos provide a clear evidence of the fact that the locals with whom he engaged could differentiate his presence from that of the local white colonial elites.

There is a temporal element in Comitas’ photos that is also worth mentioning. As argues the photographer and sociologist J. S. Martins, the photographic act put in the same visual horizon objects and themes that have different relations to time, different temporalities. This is what he calls the “time of photography”, where social relations are deconstructed and reconstructed by the technical process of photographing, but also by the photographer’s point of view, where his or her social identity and motives are encoded. Here is where lies the potential for the birth of the sublime, or of symbolic violence. With the advent of photography, society starts to see more and to see less at the same time (Martins 2002: 224, 225), because its gaze is now mediated by a technical instrument of a society that has modernity and rationality as key elements in its agendas. Comitas’ photos give us evidence of his attitude towards the temporal elements of the ethnographic work: they seem to be synchronized to the times of local work life,
to the times of local family rituals, to the times of local social relations (pictures 5, 6, 8, and 11). They show a lack of hurry towards reaching anthropological and sociological conclusions, a rare and valuable ethnographic virtue (that sadly has become a lost luxury in our publish-or-perish academic world). It is said that timing is everything in comedy. Perhaps that explains why documental photographs are usually so serious. The laughter that trespasses Comitas’ photos shows us how well he was able to navigate the local temporalities.

The Bolivian series of photos share the qualities of his Caribbean photographic production, especially in what concerns his artistic talent and domain of the technical elements of photography. But there is something else here, not seen in the Caribbean series: the impact the monumentality of the natural environment of the Andes had on him, and on his photos. Comitas is fascinated by the landscape, by the open spaces, and by the way the local societies interact with the local nature (picture 9).

For all the beauty and emotional content present in Comitas’ photographic production, a comparison with Levi-Straus seems inevitable. For the Frenchman, the tropics were sad (1961); nevertheless he declared, half century later, through a book of photographs (1994), to miss it. Comitas’ tropics, in its turn, seem to be inherently happy, but his pictures remain largely unpublished. One wonders why Comitas never published his pictures. Perhaps that is a result of the cold dominance of the textual in the academic realm, especially prior to the linguistic, historical, and other turns in the late 20th century. Or perhaps that is due to the intimacy registered in them, not only in what concerns the private lives of his interlocutors, but also due to the dense, authorial style of his photographic production, which almost reveals more about the photographer than about the photographed.

If, as said Octavia Paz, 'history is knowledge situated between science proper and poetry” (Martins, Eckert, and Novaes 2005: 9), Comitas’ photographic production is a reminder that anthropological craft and poetic vision cannot be dissociated; there is no anthropology that doesn’t have a poetics. Yet Comitas' photos take us further ahead, making us question the forms through which this poetics is enacted in our responses to the pictures. At first, our impetus is to estheticise his photos, imposing a spectator/art work/artist relationship between observer, photograph, and photographer, what frames our perception in a way that distances us from
what we see, and also from who took those pictures. If we make the effort of transcending that impetus, we find ourselves, qua anthropologists (as Comitas, and therefore reconstructing our identity with him), in the position of questioning our rapport capacity, the quality of our relationship with our interlocutors, our capacity to get in synchrony with the local temporalities we study. In that sense, Comitas’ photos are at once a visual delight and a challenge.

Bibliography


Across the Street
Joan Vincent

I first made a North Atlantic crossing in the year dot, traveling to New York on the Queen Elizabeth - or was it the Queen Mary - so that I might see the Statue of Liberty at dawn. I then traveled on to Chicago University by train, carrying a letter of reference, written in Arabic, from the Sultan of Zanzibar to the Department of Anthropology. Its royal seal, presumably, gained me admission to the university where, changing from one line to another in the registration queue, I left with a Master’s degree in Comparative Politics instead of Anthropology and a letter welcoming me to Columbia University for a stopover in New York.

I tell you this to indicate to you that I was, indeed, an innocent abroad.

One of the first courses I dropped in on at Columbia was given in a very large room on the ground floor of a building on the corner of Broadway and 120th Street. I think it later became a tennis court for a short while and is now an appendage to the Science facility. Anyway, the course was given by a handsome, young lecturer who turned out to be Professor Lambros Comitas.

I was VERY impressed. Particularly as I saw in his audience two extremely sophisticated, fashionably dressed, wealthy looking ladies that I remembered seeing on the Queen Elizabeth (or was it the Queen Mary) nine months earlier. There and then I knew that I had stumbled not simply on a brilliant set of lectures on the Caribbean but clearly a distinguished Columbia professor of high repute.

I sat through the entire course, week after week, even absenting myself from some of the first year lectures I was supposed to be attending. I was learning more about family and household structures in the Caribbean, the tropical fishing economy, than I had ever dreamt was known.

Never again, I determined, will I stand in dread of Greeks bearing gifts!

AND- YES, OF COURSE, OCCUPATIONAL MULTIPLICITY.

But here I owe Professor Comitas a very belated apology.

Like so many others (I believe I am third in line on this one occasion alone) I made free with his concept of "occupational multiplicity" in my writings - indeed, I did so on three occasions.

The first time was over thirty years ago in an article on "Agrarian Society as Organized Flow: Processes of Development, Past and Present" that I revised at the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex. The final version was published in Peasant Studies as an effort to "refine the gross category of landless wage laborer. Agrarian society, I asserted, "is characterized by individuals in multiple occupations which may include farm labor, itinerant labor at 'odd jobs', unskilled labor in craft occupations and service tasks … and so on." BUT - mea culpa.

I cited Lenin and Sir Henry Maine at certain points BUT, so absorbed in my subconscious were those Caribbean lectures, that I neglected to credit Professor Comitas.
The second time was in a study of agrarian society in the Irish Northwest. On this occasion, I was pouring scorn on a board of touring English commissioners who, in 1834, came to the conclusion that Irish peasants were poor because they were lazy. They worked for only four months a year, it was said; lived on nothing but potatoes, it was said -AND the mounds on which they planted their potatoes were called "lazy beds" it was said -- as if this clinched the argument.

Later in the same book, I am able to suggest how census takers who asked Irish countrymen and women their occupations in 1841, failed to recognize OCCUPATIONAL MULTIPLICITY among the laboring poor. Thus they inscribed over eighty percent of the men in county Fermanagh where I worked, as farmers - regardless of whether they held 20 acres as well-placed tenant farmers or a quarter of an acre on which they could barely scrape a living for themselves let alone a family. With that small a plot of land, and growing only potatoes, most gained their livelihood from digging and cutting turf for fuel, digging drainage ditches or quarrying for stone to pave the streets of the rapidly developing county town of Enniskillen.

YOU GET THE LAMBROSIAN PICTURE!

At that point I stop in awe. My computer does not protest my coinage-- LAMBROSIAN. This sends me rushing to my dictionary but this, alas, is only the shorter concise Oxford dictionary and is clearly behind the times! Lamarckian, yes. LAMBROSIAN, no.

Or-- at least-- NOT YET.

Which brings me to this very special opportunity (for which I am very grateful to our organizers) to say to Professor Lambros Comitas what I could never say to his face.

To express my admiration for his role as head and frequent chairman of the joint Program in Applied Anthropology at Teachers College that brought together- even in the most difficult of times -- faculty and students from across the street on Morningside, from both graduate faculties and Barnard College. For me - and I think probably for many here - this brought joy in our time at Columbia and will doubtless shape our recollections of it well into the future.

As a member of the Barnard College faculty after 1968 - that fateful year - I was overjoyed to be invited to attend what was, on the Morningside campus, a much envied TC innovation. The support for -nay, the insistence on - a spell of field research early on in a student’s graduate career and, most critically, the presentation of field reports followed by discussion and analyses was unique on the Columbia curriculum.

I was privileged to meet so many hardworking - and more importantly, perhaps, in the post 1968 era - so many dedicated students working towards their dissertations and a future in the historic field of Applied Anthropology. Theirs was an entree into what has now become the most important and most challenging and in many instances the most rewarding -- aspect of twenty-first century anthropology -albeit, today, under the rubric of Development Studies.

Some of you may remember that experience in the late 1980s of entering a bookstore in search of, let’s say, a title by Clifford Geertz or Laura Nader. I recall going into Barnes and Noble on 84th and Broadway looking for the Anthropology section. It was nowhere to be found. Instead, after my simple-minded inquiry, I was
directed to Cultural Studies, a field that teemed with subject matter that stretched from Ancient Greek myths and legends to Zeitgeist and Zulu.

I had a similar experience in London this past summer. At Waterstones, I found that a tiny section of anthropology books was tucked away in a remote corner whereas across several bookcases half the room was blazoned with the one word DEVELOPMENT.

Certainly this was in Portugal Street a few doors away from LSE, but I found the same phenomenon in the bookstore of the University of Sussex. Development Studies had pride of place with only a smattering of social anthropology on lower shelves.

It was at Sussex that Britain’s first Institute of Development Studies was founded by Dudley Seers in 1968 when, with my degree barely in hand, I was invited to give my first published paper ever. But that’s Britain.

In the United States, the Teacher’s College Program in Applied Anthropology was similarly a force to be reckoned with. With Conrad Arensberg “across the street,” the founding of the Society for Applied Anthropology, and the publication of a new Journal, Human Organization, Lambros Comitas spread his wings as he and his full-time faculty embarked on the fieldwork tradition in the department.

And the fieldwork seminars certainly bore fruit. A listing of its Alumni and their dissertations is magnificent.

I remember so well being asked to help with or serve on some of them. And serving on TC dissertation committees was always a typically relaxed Lambrosian pleasure. I, as an outside reader, especially appreciated the subtlety with which he extracted the most perceptive of answers on key issues.

I recall to this day Tony Barclay’s study of "The Mumias Sugar Project: A Study of Rural Development in Western Kenya" in 1977 and my invitation to serve on his committee, presumably as a fellow East Africanist.

And then there was Loretta Ryan’s "Lowell in Transition: The Uses of History in Urban Change," a phenomenal piece of fieldwork carried out while she earned her livelihood by working in a local factory in 1987. Whether it was my love of historiography or the fact that I was following in Arensberg’s footsteps by working in Ireland with the ancestors of Irish immigrants to Massachusetts, I don’t know. But it was a privilege to read her thesis.

And then there was Alaka Wali’s dissertation that I (with Max Gluckman in mind) always recall as "The Bridge." It was actually a study of the Bayano Hydroelectric complex in eastern Panama entitled "Kilowatts and Crisis."

That was in 1984.

And so many more.

How ahead of the game the TC Applied programme was in those glorious pre-Escobar decades.

Along with many others I could mention, whose work in the making I was privileged to read, how very apt it is that we can today appreciate Lambros’s achievements in theirs. He has served as a mentor and a model to so many of us.
Fishing Communities: More and Less
Conrad P. Kottak

I've studied Arembepe, an Atlantic coastal fishing community in Bahia state, Brazil, since 1962, with my most recent visit in March 2007. Lambros Comitas taught me introductory anthropology in 1960, and I took two other courses with him as an undergraduate at Columbia College. Later Lambros would join my dissertation committee as the "fishing expert." In 1957-58 Lambros (Comitas 1962, 1973) had been asked to do a survey in Jamaica of five "fishing communities" that actually turned out to have quite varied economies. Based on his findings about occupational multiplicity in coastal Jamaica, along with my own fieldwork from 1962 to 1965, I concluded that Arembepe simultaneously was more of a fishing community, but paradoxically a less typical one, than those described by Comitas.

Over the years, however, Arembepe has undergone a transformation, in which fishing has become a much less prominent part of its economy. As a result, Arembepe seems to have become more typical of the fishing communities Comitas studied 50 years ago. A key contrast appears to be that Jamaica was much more a part of the world capitalist economy than Arembepe was back then. Indeed, Comitas cites M.G. Smith's (1960) discussion of occupational aspirations in rural Jamaica as "inspired by the mass communication media, the schools and even the parents," which "keep the young in hope of high paying and prestigious wage employment" (Comitas 1973, p. 167). In 1960, Arembepe had poor schools, low literacy, no electricity, and few viable alternatives to fishing. Over the decades since then, Arembepe has experienced a process that eventually led me to change the subtitle of my book Assult on Paradise (orig 1983) from Social Change in a Brazilian Village (editions 1-3) to The Globalization of a Little Community in Brazil. (4th edition-2006). That process has made today's Arembepe far more similar to the communities described by Comitas for the late 1950s than it was then.


The scale of change has been dramatic. Rather than the sleepy 1960s village of 160 houses and 750 people, Arembepe today is a large town with televisions, computers, cell phones, Internet access, e-mail, a supermarket, a bank, and cops and robbers. By the mid-1970s the stage had been set for the transformation evident in Arembepe in the 1980s and ever since. Nowadays change in Arembepe is in scale, change of degree rather than of kind.

Already apparent by 1980 was Arembepe's significant participation in a global process of cultural exchange. Mules and donkeys had become rarer than automobiles. Television antennas bedecked even modest homes. The international telephone system was about to arrive. These developments mirrored what was happening throughout Brazil. With electrification (by 1977) villagers could enjoy the advantages of water pumps, refrigerators, freezers, and an array of consumer goods. Future archeologists excavating the Arembepe of 1980...
could uncover hundreds of different products designed and marketed by corporations based thousands of miles away.

**The Fishing Community of the 1960s**

In the 1960s the trip out from Salvador, the state capital, had taken three hours of travel on dirt and sand roads in a four-wheel drive vehicle. Fishing was the mainstay of Arembepe’s economy. Most men fished for subsistence and cash, and Arembepe’s most regular visitors were fish buyers from Salvador. The fleet was unmotorized. Fishermen sailed to the nearby continental slope, where they specialized in migratory species. Arembepe’s low-tech economy was as sustainable as the poverty that made the village somewhat less than the paradise suggested by the title of my book.

Arembepe’s partial market economy supported little social differentiation. Besides fishing, villagers grew and sold coconuts, ran small stores and sold low value items from their homes. Except in storekeeping, women had few opportunities to make money. Signs of machismo and the social devaluation of females pervaded local life. Despite the evident gender stratification, an ideology of socioeconomic equality prevailed, reflecting the reality that everyone in Arembepe belonged to the national lower class. Sailboats and fishing equipment were inexpensive and available to any industrious fisherman. A fully equipped boat cost the equivalent of 400 kilograms of marketed fish. Since boats rarely lasted a decade, few were inherited. Land holdings were meager, produced little cash, and were fragmented through inheritance. Any ambitious villager could find land to plant coconut trees, which supplied Arembepe’s second export.

**Motorization, Highway, and Factory**

When I revisited Arembepe in 1973, after an eight year absence, these characteristics were in flux. By 1980, when I next returned, major and dramatic transformations were evident. Three economic changes had enmeshed Arembepe much more strongly in the Brazilian nation and the world capitalist economy:

(1) changes in the fishing industry, from wind power to motors;
(2) opening of a paved highway and the rise of tourism, attracting people from all over the world;
(3) construction of a nearby factory and resulting chemical pollution of Arembepe’s waters.

**Motorization:** Arembepeiros started motorizing their boats during the early 1970s, with loans from the government agency charged with developing small-scale fishing. That agency loaned money to successful captains, owners, and land-based entrepreneurs. However, young industrious fishermen, who previously could have earned enough to buy a boat of their own, lacked sufficient collateral to get a loan. And it no longer was possible to accumulate enough money to buy a (motor) boat through one’s own fishing efforts. Profits from motorized fishing were reinvested in more costly fishing technology. The larger and much more expensive boats traveled farther and relied on fossil fuels. The new capacity for long-distance fishing combined with chemical pollution of nearby waters to transform Arembepe’s economy from a local to a more regional scale. The economy could no longer be sustained through local resources. Tourists came from outside, and local fishing boats had to travel well outside familiar territory to find their fish.

Wealth contrasts also grew in scale. As the value of property increased, so did the owners’ share of the catch. Social relations in the fishing industry grew less social, more economic. Owners became bosses instead of co-
workers. Given their traditional ideology of equality, Arembepeiros resented these changes. Many stopped fishing, but a swell of immigrants helped fill the void, forming another thread in the transformation of Arembepe’s fishing economy from local to regional.

Highway and Hippies: The paved highway was planned by an ambitious outsider landlord (owner of most of the land on which the village was built), to increase tourism and enhance land values. Its speedy completion, coinciding with the international hippie diaspora of 1969-1971, was assured by financial assistance from the owners of the new chemical (titanium dioxide) factory rising nearby. Hippies were among the first touristic outsiders to flock to Arembepe, and their arrival from Brazil, Argentina, and many other countries—looms large in local perceptions of how Arembepe has changed. The first hippies reached Arembepe in the (ustral) summer of 1966-1967, but the main hippie years were 1968-1971. A flood of Bahian tourists soon joined them, fueling rising property values and rents.

Occupational Multiplicity: This opening transformed Arembepe’s entire economy, increasing occupational multiplicity (Comitas 1973) and changing the nature and role of fishing, which declined as the main local occupation. Many young men found wage work at the chemical factory (Tibras), built by a multinational corporation (Bayer—of aspirin fame) based in Germany. By 1980 fourteen percent of male, and thirty-one percent of female, cash earners worked in business. Many of them catered to the weekend and summertime tourist trade that developed because of the highway.

Social Effects

Effects on Social Structure: The new economy promoted general socioeconomic stratification while reducing gender stratification. It offered women new chances to make money in sales, services, and rents. Female status rose as access to resources by women and men became more equal. Like fishermen, female cash earners acquired pension rights from the government. Women became less dependent on men for support.

As the economy grew more complex, so did the local social structure. Arembepe was now divided by social class, occupation, neighborhood, place of origin, and religion (Catholicism, fundamentalist Protestantism, and Afro-Brazilian candomblé). Social change in Arembepe offers clues about the means by which any egalitarian or simply ranked society is transformed into a stratified one. Not just in Arembepe, but more generally during such a process, attributes that once were associated with particular individuals become markers of different social groups. For example, during the 1960s a handful of villagers had had psychological problems, but they were classificatory oddities. Other villagers didn’t know what to make of them, how to explain their behavior, so they just ignored them. In other words, during the 1960s, the role of the "mentally ill person" was undeveloped. By contrast, by 1980, the mentally ill had become a salient social category with characteristic generalized behavior (e.g., public nudity, talking to oneself, confused speaking, accosting others without clear intent, seeking professional treatment outside Arembepe).

In the realm of religious expertise, too, the idiosyncratic perceptions and special talents of individuals had found no social reinforcement in the old Arembepe. By 1980 they had. For example, no one cared in 1965 that one woman occasionally got possessed by spirits. A niche for her, and others with similar talents, had opened up—in candomblé—1980.

Another individual trait that had evolved into a social category by 1980 is linked closely to the development
of socioeconomic stratification out of a hierarchy of graduated wealth contrasts. Although there had been relatively wealthy Arembepeiros in the mid-1960s, villagers had always insisted that no one in the community was really rich. By 1980, by contrast, "rich people" had also become a salient social label.

Microevolution: Anthropologists interested in sociocultural evolution have tended to base their theories of culture change on such major, generations-long, transformations as are revealed by the archeological record or chronicled in historical documents. There also is value in longitudinal ethnographic studies of sociocultural microevolution—the change process Arembepe has experienced. Such longitudinal ethnographic studies provide a speeded-up picture of the local-level effects of the processes affecting thousands of small communities currently being drawn into the world system.

Some of the more intimate and gradual changes in individuals' experiences, attitudes, and behavior that accumulate over the years, so that they are finally perceptible as major structural transformations, can be observed in a living context in places like Arembepe, where the forces of change work rapidly and dramatically. It is likely, for example, that the creation of social categories out of individual idiosyncrasies is an important generalized characteristic of social microevolution. Indeed, this may be one of the powerful mechanisms by which social complexity grows (See Kottak 2006, Chapter 10). Specifically, by 1980 in Arembepe, the traits and behavior of unusual individuals were no longer seen as idiosyncratic but as diagnostic of membership in newly recognized social groups—such as the rich, alcoholics, the mentally ill, and candomblé participants.

Development and Ecology

Field studies that illuminate "the interaction of global processes with the ecological and social characteristics of particular places and of sectors" (Kates et al. 2001) make it evident that local people, including Arembepeiros, don't automatically absorb or accept lessons from the world system—even potentially beneficial ones about ecology. For reasons embedded in a local culture or economy, people may resist the ecological values ("environmentalism") that Northerners now offer as an alternative to their long-standing model of economic development (developmentalism—see Kottak and Costa 1993). Field studies in Arembepe and at other ecologically troubled Brazilian sites have revealed just how underdeveloped ecological consciousness was and remains—in the Brazilian lower class.

Interviews in the early 1990s showed that most Arembepeiros considered Tibras, the nearby chemical factory, advantageous for their town—e.g. if some recognized the ecological problems it had caused. Arembepeiros continue to seek jobs in Tibras (whose ownership and name later changed to Millennium Inorganic Chemicals, headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland) and to fish in polluted waters.

In 2003-2004, when I visited Brazil twice, heightened ecological awareness was evident throughout the country, including the Bahian coast. Arembepe's new turtle station, billed as an "ecological refuge," is staffed mainly by locals, but employees of wildlife-focused NGOs, including the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), also work there. Besides protecting endangered animals, the turtle station is a tourist attraction, with tanks where turtles are on display and a gift shop.

Arembepeiros remain ambivalent about the global processes that affect them. One observes diverse and sharply contrasting local values concerning environmentalism, development, culture, nature, and change.
Development (factory construction and water pollution) has certainly damaged the local resource base, but fishing boats, with motorization and refrigeration, now use more distant banks, where the scale of possible overfishing remains unclear. Only a handful of native Arembepeiros now fish. Despite pollution, tourism has grown steadily. Along with other communities on the Bahian coast, Arembepe becomes more and more like those varied Jamaican communities described by Comitas. As well, its residents now share those rural Jamaicans’ unrealistic aspirations involving education and employment.

Arembepe now has a diversified economy, occupational multiplicity (ala Comitas 1973), and cultural contacts that link its future with the dynamics of capitalist globalization. Industry, tourism, and a service economy are in place. Depleting fish stocks are being supplanted with a range of jobs in a cash economy with opportunities for men and women. Locally, environmentalism still casts a pale shadow, expressed mainly in the protection of turtles. As the globalization beat goes on, local people express substantial nostalgia (saudades) for what might have been, whether it actually was or not. Meanwhile, much of Arembepe’s population will tune into the Globo network this evening to catch the next installment of the latest novela.

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Occupational Multiplicity and Social Transformations in Rural Zambia
George C. Bond

Introduction: Lambros Comitas

As a distinguished Professor, Dr. Lambros Comitas is a complex and multifaceted scholar who has established his career on extensive field work amongst peoples living in the Caribbean, Latin America and Eastern and Southern Europe. He is known for his concern with order, the careful arrangement of ethnographic facts within appropriate categories, so that bits and pieces of information become readily retrievable, and also for generating well organized transparent bibliographies. I would guess that by now he has thousands of entries derived from his voracious reading of books, articles, reports, newspapers and the grey matter produced by obscure social movements and folk intellectuals in the Caribbean. In his continuing quest for order it is not unusual for him to conjure-up an esoteric photograph of a dreaded Rasta man or a blissful, delicate black and white photograph of Ruth Benedict. Each image has its place. However, Professor Comitas appreciates the subtle negotiations and compromises that go into maintaining a well crafted set of arrangements. He recognizes the importance of individual manipulations and structural flexibility and the manner in which incumbency of multiple occupations may bridge and yet, at the same time, separate structures and institutions. It is difficult to say whether he applied theory to practice or generated theory from practice. I once tried to count the number of posts he occupied at the same moment in time.

I make these brief observations as an introduction to my own present concerns, the use of Professor Comitas's formulations as a point of reference in my attempt to understand the social history of a Zambian people known as the Yombe. My main concern is to explore the effects of changing economic and environmental conditions on the local occupational arrangements of the rural small town of Muyombe, the capital of Uyombe Chiefdom, in Isoka District, the Northern Province of Zambia.

Occupational Multiplicity

I am going to use Professor Comitas's 1973 article entitled "Occupational Multiplicity in Rural Jamaica" as my point of departure to discuss some of the taxonomic and empirical problems involved in exploring occupations in rural Zambia. Let me say a few words about the article. It lays out the concept of "occupational multiplicity" in such a manner that it brings together a number of different and yet interrelated strands. It is a statement about order and taxonomy. It is both a theoretical observation and an empirical description of the positioning of individuals and institutions within the progressive construction and complex webs of intellectual paradigms and historical and social fields. As an intellectual paradigm, it is an attempt to challenge the imposition of existing categories that are fixed within established theoretical schemas. It is also an implicit critique of the schemas themselves.

Comitas uses the term "occupational multiplicity" to identify the characteristic feature of a socio-economic stratum of rural Jamaican society. It refers to the situation "wherein the modal adult is systematically engaged in a number of gainful activities, which for him form an integrated economic complex". (Comitas: 1973: 157) An important feature of the concept is that it links individuals and domestic units into a series of economic systems and cultural fields; the linkages and positions are themselves part of a plurality of economic
relationships and institutions. In other words, the non-salaried tillers of the land in Muyombe are as much a part of the order of capitalism as are urban wage laborers of Kabwe, a mining center in the Zambia copper belt. In fact they may be the same individuals framed at different moments of economic necessity.

The concept recognizes and attempts to capture the flexibility inherent in economic activities and relationships and to question the descriptive validity of the designated categories employed by Sidney Mintz and Eric Wolf. It points to the fact that an individual may simultaneously hold a number of jobs within the same and different domains. The individual constructs his own minimalist economic order that will enable him to meet his social obligations. To make his point, Comitas, however, emphasizes only one dimension of his formulation providing the impression of social closure and balance. For him, occupational multiplicity "generates patterned relations, established for economic gain," that are "essentially lateral ones connecting members of the same stratum into horizontal socio-economic segments." The very process of acquiring different occupations, complying with their temporal and productive demands, and integrating their priorities into a coherent, viable complex enhances one's reliance on persons within the same stratum and reduces the interaction between these fragmented segments and the superordinate strata of the wider society. From this perspective there is the appearance of social closure and fragmentation, with multiple shifting occupational identities and consciousnesses contained with a single stratum. There is the potential for structural isolation and autonomy. Comitas observes that "The internal rationality of such a confined system is self-evident to its participants. A socio-economic balance is achieved which offers maximum security within minimum risk, in a basically limited environment." (171) However, in addition to this basically rational choice model, Comitas recognizes that individuals may hold occupations within different economic domains and that their productive activities in one domain may contribute to maintaining other economic domains. There are, thus, situations of integration and dependence and of separation and autonomy.

In the Northern Zambian case to be described below I wish to stress the bridging dimensions of "occupational multiplicity" related to the changing properties within the economic environment. In Zambia, cultivators and their produce have been essential to the localized agrarian economy and also to the economic systems of the urban areas. The agrarian economy, though potentially autonomous, is an integral component of the Zambian and global economies. And yet, with the decline in the urban wage economy the people of Uyombe reinitiated historic commercial and trade routes that extended east into northern Malawi and west into the Republic of the Congo. The capitalist and the agrarian economies are co-joined through the intersection of economic activities and relationships expressed by occupations and their local configurations. An adult Yombe may have several different occupations leading to complex, ordered social relationships. These patterned relationships may lead to segmented clusters and yet, they may be integral components of broader social fields.

**Typologies**

The scrutiny of typologies has been a central theme in the exposition of African peoples, especially those of Central Africa. It seems to have been most pronounced during the 1980s and the 1990s, a period of theoretical turmoil and economic decline. The typologies have been based upon access to and control of land, labor and wages. According to Comitas, in the Caribbean three main terms were used to designate local, rural economic types: plantation laborer, farmer and peasant. In Africa the designations were a bit more complicated in that Africans spanned a wider range of economic and environmental situations, producing
greater occupational possibilities. In addition to a broader range of terms, finer distinctions could be and were made between and within productive modes and occupational categories. The distinctions frequently centered on what terms were to be used to describe settlements, collectivities and social units as well as modes of livelihood and their dominant, accompanying occupational properties. Meillassoux, for example, emphasized the properties of the "agricultural domestic community", a community composed of individuals who "a. practice self-sustaining agriculture, b) produce and consume together, on common land, access to which is subordinated to membership of the community, and c) are linked together by unequal ties of personal dependence. Within the community only use-value emerges." (1981 :3) Though Muyombe, and many other northern Zambia settlements appear to possess these properties, the picture is far more complicated and subtly variegated than this general characterization.

There have also been disagreements as to who and what constitutes a farmer, peasant (Hill: 1986: 1-14)) and/or a proletariat, the appropriate application of the terms, and the theoretical formulations to which they should be attributed and imbue with explanatory authority. In at least one article on Zambian labor migration (Cliffe: 1979) men are described as proletarians and their wives as peasants. More recent studies are wary of formal taxonomies and economic types such as labor aristocracy, proletariat, and peasant, and the dual processes that they are supposed to exemplify, proletarianization and peasantization. (Pottier: 1988; Crehan:1997; Pritchet: 2002)

**Occupational Multiplicity: Examples from Muyombe**

For my purposes, occupational multiplicity draws attention to the manner in which individuals respond to changes in the environment and the economy as well as in the agricultural policies of the central government. These responses became apparent to me over a period of some forty years of field research in the rural small town of Muyombe. By exploring individual occupational configurations I intend to establish the way in which the Yombe have dealt with situations of environmental and economic crisis. As Comitas suggests, it may not be sufficient to use a single category to describe "country folk". My position is that for individuals to maintain themselves and meet their social obligations, they may take on several occupations. Moreover, the fact that individuals may have several occupations at one time reflects the limitations of fixed typologies as descriptive and analytic tools. Occupational multiplicity reveals the flexibility of individuals and of institution.

**Background**

I am going to take a very brief look at the economic arrangements of Muyombe at different periods. In the early 1960s, at the end of British colonial rule, Muyombe could be taken as a classic example of Meillassoux's "agricultural domestic community". It had the four main characteristic features: individuals practicing self-sustaining agriculture; common land; personal dependency and use-value. In 1965, Muyombe was an agriculturally based settlement with 63 of its 64 households heads engaged in small scale subsistence farming of maize, millet and beans. The household was the basic unit of production and consumption and agricultural crops were not produced primarily for sale on the open market. Land was not owned by individuals and access to it was acquired through the Chief. The people living in Muyombe were linked together through a complex network of unequal political, economic and social relationships based on kinship, residence, and friendship. Most relationships were thought of as rooted in use value. The Yombe
were small farmers or "country folk" primarily engaged in agricultural activities. But to characterize Muyombe as an agricultural domestic community or as a peasant community, or to say that occupational multiplicity generated segmented lateral ties, would not be entirely appropriate and analytically sufficient.

**Comparison: Muyombe, 1965**

Though everyone farmed, there were also 17 other occupations held by 26 of the 64 household heads. Of the 26 heads holding a second occupation, 25 were men and only one was a women. Five of the men were self-employed as traders and storeowners; 8 held unskilled jobs, and 5 were skilled. The remaining men held jobs within the local political party and government. The one woman held a job as a teacher. Although, during the period of colonial rule, extensive interaction with the ruling strata was greatly limited, occupational multiplicity tended to generate relationships beyond the local agrarian situation. Farmers who were also self-employed as traders and businessmen were part of complex short and long distance commercial networks. The local government and political party officers, themselves former teachers, integrated Muyombe into Zambia’s national political structures and arenas. In the case of Muyombe focusing on occupational multiplicity makes one look beyond the local setting.

There is still another dimension. Though Muyombe might appear to possess the properties of an "agricultural domestic community", it was also an integral part of a commercial world based on an emerging global economy. In addition to extensive commercial linkages, its men were labor migrants. It supplied the developing urban and mining complexes of central and southern Africa and the agricultural plantations of East Africa with cheap labor. The men sent home remittances and at the end of their period as labor migrants, they returned to Muyombe to cultivate and apply there urban, industrial skills to local projects.

**Transition: 1965 - 2002**

In the years following independence in 1964, Zambia experienced an extended period of seeming prosperity. During the 1970s and 1980s the central government heavily subsidized agriculture. It introduced hybrid maize and chemical fertilizers at low prices to the farmer and provided inexpensive transport of harvested crops to marketing boards that paid high prices for bags of maize. However, by the late 1980s the Zambian economy was in serious decline. The urban areas experienced high rates of unemployment and domestic units living in towns began to return to the countryside. As the demands on the rural economy increased, urban remittances declined. In response to World Bank recommendations, the central government began rapidly to remove its agricultural subsidies. This policy coincided with a period of severe drought and erratic rainfall in many regions of Zambia. From the mid-1990s until 2002 Muyombe experienced a steady economic decline and its people a struggle for survival.

**Comparison: Muyombe 2002**

In 2002 the Yombe were just emerging from the traumas of this economic and environmental crisis. Though there were similarities in the structure and composition of households between 1965 and 2002, there were also subtle and significant changes. The number of households had increased from 64 to more than 178 and the number of heads engaged in farming had declined from 100% to 75%. In response to the declining opportunities for commercial hybrid maize farming and urban employment, many Yombe became entrepreneurs. Counting both first and second occupations in 2002, 63 (30%) heads were self-employed
compared to 7 (10%) in 1965. Thus, overall there was an increased reliance on some form of independent commercial activity. This situation may also be seen more clearly by a closer scrutiny of individuals holding second occupations.

In 2002, I surveyed 178 households. 105 (60%) were headed by men and 73 (40%) by women. 78 (or 43%) heads held one or more of the 23 second occupations. The persons with second jobs were primarily concentrated in one category, that of self-employed. 28 (60%) male and 20 (62%) female heads with second occupations fell into this category. Though all involved some degree of entrepreneurial activity they were not all the same. Some were locally based using local materials and serving a local clientele, while others were part of non-localized economic configurations.

At the individual level, the combination of occupations promotes differential strategies and reveals structural constraints. Here gender becomes a significant diacritic. Women are usually restricted to particular customary occupational niches, for example, beer making and under some circumstances commercial farming. Men have a much greater range in commercial entrepreneurial activities such as general trader and businessman. In Muyombe, the primary second occupation for women (28%) was brewing and selling beer, as well as saleswomen in local stores, while for men it was business and trade (33%). The commercial activities of women kept them close to home, while those of men involved movement, travel and acquiring and understanding market information. The former developed tight knit networks while the men were tied into regional and national loose knit commercial and political social fields. Thus, it may be said that the farming self-employed women would fit more closely into Comitas's Jamaican workers rural paradigm than would the men of this category. Each had sought solutions to the nature of their economic condition within the given constraints of their own individual positions and Yombe social institutions.

Conclusion

Let me be very brief indeed. Professor Comitas’s concern with order expressed in the critique of dominant taxonomies, his construction of theory to explain observable realities, his careful application of methodology in the analysis of ethnographic circumstances, and his demand for fieldwork has made him a formidable scholar. Occupational multiplicity is an expression of his scholarship and also, I might add, of his personal pursuit. In this brief paper I have used occupational multiplicity as a point of reference and a point of departure to frame my own central problematics and analytic endeavors. The concept provides the basis for demonstrating the limitation of taxonomies and the imposition of narrow descriptive typologies on settlements, social units and peoples and their activities. Comitas uses a rational choice paradigm to frame occupational multiplicity. He emphasizes its segmenting, fragmentary aspect, and that it generates lateral relationships, reducing the interaction between strata. In the Yombe case, I have suggested that much depends on the occupations, the manner in which they are combined, and the extent to which they are fixed within different economic domains.

References Cited

Introduction

I first met Lambros Comitas more than 30 years ago before I even arrived at graduate school in Chicago. Raymond Smith was taking a group of students from the University of the West Indies as research assistants to Guyana and we met up with Lambros and a group of students from Columbia in the old wooden hotel at the ancient airport of Port of Spain—sadly no more. I begin here because this crossing exemplifies one of the most important but neglected aspects of his contribution to anthropology—a contribution he shares with the earliest generation of Caribbean anthropologists. Along with Ray Smith, MG Smith, Sid Mintz, Connie Sutton and others, throughout his long and distinguished career, Lambros worked hard to develop the indigenous intellectual resources of Caribbean societies.

I am not referring simply to his work with the Research Institute for the Study of Man which is so well known and without which Caribbean Studies would have hardly attained the level which it has. Nor am I thinking only of the enormous work involved in putting together the exhaustive Caribbeana bibliography. I am referring to his efforts to train graduate students from the Caribbean as anthropologists who then go and conduct research on their own societies in interaction with the global anthropological community. This can be narrowly construed as ‘institutional building’ one of the mantras of the development community. Lambros has played a critical role in this kind of institutional building, notably in the area of education at the University of the West Indies. But his contribution goes much further. What Lambros Comitas has done is to contribute in a substantial manner to the release of the intellectual energy inhering within Caribbean society and thereby bringing into anthropology a world of scholarship which would not otherwise have been possible. Lambros’s doctoral students—Professor Barry Chevannes and Dr. Rebecca Tortello to name only two—occupy positions of real influence in the intellectual and policy world of Jamaica and the English-speaking Caribbean. Indeed, it is not going too far to see the influence of Lambros in the work of Professor Chevannes who, as the Chair of the Jamaica Ganja Commission, recommended (unsuccessfully) the decriminalization of retail ganja in Jamaica. In this very academic year, he graduated yet another doctoral candidate who did her dissertation on Jamaican middle class returning migrants and who is also occupying an important role in public policy.

In all the debates which have taken place on the relationship between anthropology and colonialism, this whole range of activities has been neglected. No doubt, where some parts of the world were concerned, the relationship was as portrayed in the literature. In the Caribbean however, the situation was more complex, and this has never really been recognized much less discussed. Most metropolitan anthropologists were staunchly anti-colonial and understood their public responsibilities as primarily beholden to the subjugated populations and not to the powers that were. This celebration of the work of Lambros Comitas provides us with an opportunity to begin to correct this gap in the history of anthropology.
and, without being invidious, to single out the achievements of Lambros in this critical area for special recognition. If one looks both at his academic work and his personal relationships one cannot fail to detect a deeply held devotion to the region and its people, not just abstractly and intellectually but emotionally and personally. Not Caribbean 'society' or 'culture' pre-occupied Lambros Comitas but the real difficult conflict-ridden lives of real, particular individuals. That this is deliberately obscured by a humorous self-deprecating manner—perhaps the fruit of mixing too long with too many people from the Anglo world!—should not blind us to the inner integrity behind this presentation of self.

**Occupational Multiplicity**

I wish to focus on what I regard as the single most important contribution of Lambros Comitas to Caribbean Anthropology and, as I shall maintain, to anthropology more generally. This, of course, is the concept of occupational multiplicity. The seminal paper in which this fertile concept was presented was his 1962 doctoral dissertation at Columbia on Fishermen and Cooperation in Rural Jamaica which was a study of five Jamaican fishing villages. The key article from this dissertation was the famous one presented in 1963 at the Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society and published in the AES Proceedings of the following year, and entitled Occupational Multiplicity in Rural Jamaica. This concept was also applied by Lambros in his work in Bolivia, was taken up by David Smith in his dissertation on occupational multiplicity in the Caribbean family and by Cancian, de Janvry and Vandeman more generally. It has been utilized by Handler in Barbados and by Michael Chibnik (originally in his dissertation on Belize in 1974) and Lynn Sikkink in their work in Peru and the Bolivian Andes respectively and Marilyn Silverman drew heavily on the concept in her mode of production analysis of Guyanese society in 1979. Indeed, in 1995, Jim Weill devoted an entire number of the Anthropology of Work to the ethnography of "multiple livelihoods"—which basically sought to demonstrate that what Comitas had identified in Jamaica more than 30 years before, was a global phenomenon—also to be found increasingly in developed economies. Katherine Browne linked the concept with the informal economy and creolization concepts in her work on Martinique in 1995—such has been the vitality of this important concept. In this paper I sketch out four broad areas in which this remarkable concept has continued to be influential: first in the political economy tradition; second, in informal economy studies; thirdly, in culturalist anthropology; and fourthly, in post-structuralist anthropology. Finally, I raise the question of where the concept stands today, in the era of neoliberal globalization and amidst the sharp changes which have occurred in Caribbean society in the last 20 years.

Lambros defined occupational multiplicity as "a situation wherein the modal adult is systematically engaged in a number of gainful activities which form for him an integrated economic complex." (Comitas, 1964, p. 41) Or as Silverman put it in 1979 with respect to a Guyanese rice farming village: "A rice farmer also may be a wage laborer, a smith, a shopkeeper, a cattle herder, a "hire-car" owner or driver, a mill owner, a huckster, a commercial vegetable grower, and so forth.

As others have pointed out, Lambros's seminal article, coming 12 years after the dissertations of Wolf and Mintz on Puerto Rico, was partially a critique of the typological excesses of Wolf and to some extent of Edith Clarke as well. Most will recall that in the earliest formulations of those approaches, a sharp distinction was drawn between the 'peasant' mode of life and the 'proletarian' mode. This distinction was the cornerstone on which many early analyses were built with various scholars choosing the mode of which they approved as the
driving force in Caribbean social and political life. In some of these analyses—especially those of what later came to be characterized as 'the plantation school' (Best, Polanyi-Levitt, Beckford)—following Edith Clarke, the peasantry was seen as the repository of all that was virtuous in Caribbean society as distinct from the oppressive plantation with its long historical connection with land monopoly, rural impoverishment, racism and colonial political oppression. Others, the late Ken Post being the primary example, saw the rural proletariat as the driving force in Caribbean history—the inheritors of a tradition of slave revolt going back at least to the 17th century and born again after 1938 in the Caribbean labor and political movements originating during the Depression.

Lambros’s concept cast doubt on this clear-cut distinction. By careful ethnographic documentation of the lives of the fishermen and others in the community, he was able to establish that the preoccupation with a too-rigid schematization built on Weberian ideal types could suggest a precision and clarity in rural socio-economic relationships which was unwarranted. Rather than a clear-cut distinction between ‘peasants’ on the one side and ‘proletarians’ on the other, Comitas argued that the situation in Jamaica was murkier—one characterized by “fuzziness” to use Trouillot’s term. Some people worked in wage labor some of the time and worked for themselves at other times. The same person who was fisherman, was also farmer and on occasion shoemaker and small shopkeeper. Any anthropology of the Caribbean which was constructed on the assumption of social relationships or ecologies which were either one type or the other, failed to grasp the complexity and the peculiarity of the region.

This was, indeed, a profound intervention into the entire field of Caribbean studies and indeed of anthropology. For Lambros’s Jamaican fisherman, in a totally different context of course, was more akin to the future socialist man of The German Ideology: He (definitely a ‘he’) hunted in the morning, fished in the afternoon, reared cattle in the evening, and, given the endemic poverty and colonial misery, not to mention the in-bred Jamaican rebelliousness—criticized the plantation ‘Babylon’ the entire day long! In this initial formulation it was not difficult to see a tendency to a liberal-minded functionalism with something of the individual agency of transactional anthropology being foregrounded. The argument seemed to be that occupational multiplicity was a rationalistic risk management tactic deployed by individuals—those elusive ‘modal adults’!—who found themselves in particularly oppressive economic and social circumstances. At the same time the claim seemed to be being made that occupational multiplicity had come to "form for him an integrated economic complex" with a certain integrative functional stability. In other words, what at the individual level may have been simply the ‘coping strategy’ had over time developed into a strategic structural necessity for the rural population as a whole to survive in the harsh conditions of colonial oppression. At the same time, the inherently untenable nature of this ‘integrated economic complex’ was recognized because the analysis rested firmly on a recognition of the context of rural poverty within which occupational multiplicity had necessarily arisen.

Thus the concept had certain ambiguities and perhaps raised more questions than it could possibly answer. But to dwell on these issues misses the point of the crux of Lambros Comitas’s work and inner inspiration. The point was that he did not wish to present a lifeless structural analysis of Caribbean society—an anthropology of victimhood. Such an approach would have been completely antithetical to all that he stood and continues to stand for. Lambros thought it essential to demonstrate that the individuals caught for hundreds of years in the net of British colonialism were not simply passive objects shunted hither and thither
by larger structural forces which couldn’t care less about them. He wanted to show that Caribbean people made every effort to take hold of their own destiny and to seize whatever initiative they could eke out from the hostile world in which they found themselves, even if this was only at the individual level. His point was to affirm the agency of the people and to show that they in fact never accepted the subordinate positions which history had so far reserved for them. This is what led him to formulate this very processual concept. What impressed Lambros in rural Jamaica was the dogged assertiveness and irrepressible insubordination of that particular part of the Jamaican personality—what Jamaicans call ‘ambition’ and which the English often glossed as ‘ignorant’ win the sense of irascible and unappreciative of the many blessings of British colonialism. These particular qualities were most famously expressed in Rastafarianism, aspects of which it seems to me, Lambros has always admired. This concept therefore, which has entered the academic literature in so many forms and with so many contradictory results actually had its inspiration here: a silent admiration for individual persons who, in extremely harsh historical circumstances, found ways and means to assert their independence and to support their families, even if, in the end, this strategy had dubious ‘integrative’ results and did not do much to change the overall structural oppression which lay at the root of their condition.

**Marxist Anthropology**

This more transactional and functionalist anthropology of Lambros intruded on a deeply structuralist Caribbean anthropology in which a Marxist-inspired scholarship held powerful positions. Given the particular history of the Caribbean this should occasion little surprise. As Diane Austin pointed out, the region as a whole and Jamaica in particular, is characterized by "conflict contained by domination" and social science scholarship in the region represents an effort to come to grips with the full implications of this long history of social oppression. Lambros’s emphasis on the Agency generated by these structures did not undermine structural analysis. It compelled it to become more sophisticated. Whether this was due to the influence of the work of Lambros or not, the work of Sidney Mintz captured this more sophisticated structural analysis most effectively. In many different papers and publications Mintz stressed the structural ambiguity of the Caribbean situation in analyses which had a far reaching impact on the study of slave plantation regimes in the New World. Mintz pointed to the "permanently unbalanced oscillation between plantation or other outside labor and subsistence cultivation" in the region. Indeed, he went further-giving historical depth, if you will to the phenomenon of occupational multiplicity. He pointed to the ‘feudal’ way in which British plantation regimes were constructed- in such a manner that the enslaved population was at the same time a landholding (but of course not landowning) peasantry who developed an extensive internal marketing system which fed themselves and sections of the minority white population. Thus was born the concept of the ‘proto-peasant’ which it would not be too much to regard as a Marxist representation of the same phenomenon captured by Lambros in his more functionalist conceptualization.

Mintz’s work, and by implication Lambros’s, had not only fundamental intellectual implications for how one understood the region and its history but also how one understood its future. If one saw the region as basically comprised of a substantial rural proletariat side by side with a significant peasantry then one could foresee a political process which followed these relatively clear social and, indeed, ideological, configurations. If, on the other hand, the social and economic situation was less clear-cut then one could anticipate an entirely different political process which was far more contradictory in character and in which ‘the same’ political formation found itself having to appeal to and express the aspirations of ambiguously positioned
social groups. The question was what was the radical political potential of the social forces present in Caribbean and Latin American rural society. In the period of the Vietnam War, Maoism, the Cuban Revolution and many different peasant movements in Latin America, this was a crucial issue. This political side of the issue was of course captured by Mintz in his famous discussion of "the problem of rural proletarian consciousness."

All of this had huge implications for the presence, degree and nature of class and racial antagonisms in Caribbean society and on their potential for a deep-seated political instability. Frucht, had famously discussed similar issues in his formulation of 'neither peasant nor proletarian.' Silverman, perhaps influenced by Roseberry’s studies of class differentiation in Venezuelan coffee production as well as by Terray and Wolpe and the articulation of mode of production debates, carried the argument further. The novelty in her analysis was to take the occurrence of occupational mobility out of the context of the rural poor and to extend it to cover wealthier farming strata. In her work on rice farmers in Guyana she argued that "occupational multiplicity is a complex phenomenon that crosscuts all classes rather than being simply an index, as is often assumed, of lower class/rural adaptation patterns caused by vaguely defined exploitation or limited opportunities. Rather, occupational multiplicity was a product of increasing differentiation caused by expanding capitalism and a concomitant product of individual households responding to various opportunities/constraints presented by a wider structure that, although dependent, was becoming increasingly complex." (p. 482).

This made the political consequences even more complex. Indeed, the entire point of Silverman’s analysis was to stress how occupational multiplicity of the rich Guyanese rice farmers led them in what one could call a 'creole' direction-away from a radical politics and into collaboration with tendencies on the Right. This brings out one of the most striking differences in the way Lambros deployed the concept. By and large, Marxist-influenced anthropology seemed to conclude that ‘proto-peasantness’ and occupational multiplicity were vehicles for conservatism in the rural population. But from the analysis of Lambros one could actually draw a more flexible conclusion: that the aspirations which produced that particular survival strategy had the potential to go in any direction but were fundamentally a positive social force. Where it went politically could not be predicted but would depend very much on the particular circumstances obtaining at the given time, in particular the nature of the political leadership.

There is a further point being made by Silverman. She takes up the processual element in Lambros’s analysis to argue that occupational multiplicity rest on an inherently contradictory and dynamic set of relationships which develop in antagonistic ways. Thus what in Lambros was at best a case of unstable equilibrium, in Silverman’s hands loses all the elements of integration present in the initial formulation. We now arrive at an idea of occupational multiplicity as a set of forces pulling in a variety of contradictory directions with unpredictable political consequences.

**Informal Economy**

But perhaps the most striking area in which the occupational multiplicity concept has extended its influence is in notions of the informal economy. As far as I know, Keith Hart, was not influenced by Comitas when he first formulated this notion in the 1973. The seminal paper here which must rank as one of the most influential analyses every produced by an anthropologist is *Informal Income Opportunities and Urban*
Employment in Ghana. The Journal of Modern African Studies 11(1), 1973, pp. 61-89. Here what is relevant for our purposes is not the widespread use and abuse of this concept by economists. Lambros and Keith Hart can be criticized for many things but no one would be so uncharitable as to saddle them with the responsibility for Hernan de Soto and their many apologists! What is of relevance in the linkage between Lambros and Keith’s work is what one might call, following Keith Hart’s formulation, the Maussian critique of Polanyi.

Hart formulates his general problematic in a manner very similar to Comitas, and, indeed, the Marxist peasant studies literature, briefly discussed above. His is a study, he claims, of the ‘sub-professional proletariat.’ The issue for Hart is whether "the reserve army of urban unemployed and underemployed really constitute a passive, exploited majority in cities like Accra, or do their informal economic activities possess some autonomous capacity for generating growth in the incomes of the urban (and rural) poor?” (p. 61) In other words, Hart, like Comitas, was concerned to paint a dynamic picture of the urban poor as one composed of rationalistic individuals brimming with agency and involved in a series of market transactions of a complex nature in which this agency was manifest. Hart does not suggest that the FraFra migrants in Nima have hit upon a strategy which is in any sense stable or integrative.’ But he does contrast his account with a more structural one as opening up possibilities for a ‘liberal bootstrap’ strategy to be developed as a major policy reaction-as indeed it was.

In contrast to Comitas, the locus of Hart’s analysis is entirely urban—we are taken to the abode of an immigrant population in the Nima suburb of Accra, Ghana, perhaps the poorest ward with the strongest reputation for criminal activities. This links Lambros’s work not only to informal sector studies but to the more recent work on urbanization for example, Mike Davis’s book Planet of Slums. In keeping with this difference of location, Hart’s study includes "illegitimate occupations as prostitute, burglar, embezzler, and con-man...the hustler, moneylender, drug-pusher, and gambler.” One of the most relevant parts of Hart’s analysis remains his discussion of crime and how this arises out of a certain set of market relationships-crime, so to speak, as a form of ‘occupational multiplicity.’ Yet although Hart does not stress the ‘adaptive’ capacities of the informal economy he does make two points which resonate with both Lambros’s formulations and the Marxist analyses. He stresses that the informal sector is highly differentiated—indeed it is depicted as being in a constant state of flux which hides an unraveling into pauperization at one end and accumulation by urban ethnic ‘big men’ traders on the other. Second, Hart is at pains to show that this urban informal economy is not a den of anomic. On the contrary one of his most important points is to show how ties of sentiment and trust emerge in what at first sight appears to be merely the proliferation of lumpen self-exploitation. Hart, influenced by Mauss, wants to show that the market does not only generate individualistic self-serving maximization and is not only a den of possessive individualism. The point is to show that the market—resting as it does on the division of labor—also produces its own forms of ‘solidarite,’ or, following Adam Smith, ‘moral sentiments’ if only implicitly. While from one point of view the market is the ultimate expression of ‘the animal kingdom of mankind,’ from another it has the potential to emancipate humanity from paternalistic noneconomic forms of oppression and cannot be easily dispensed with. Here one has to recognize that the concept of occupational multiplicity only makes sense within a market context. Lambros identified a series of individual responses which only are possible precisely because of the deep historical penetration of Caribbean society by market forces, in this given case, the labor market. From this point of view, occupational multiplicity can also be regarded as a complex of trust and labor market solidarities which
not only work to deliver some (limited) economic viability to individuals with insecure incomes but also creates a broader structural solidarity in the marketplace. In other words, the occupational multiplicity is not only an economic resource. It is also the domain in which notions of individual rights and freedoms originate and find their expression. Here we return to Rastafarianism and its natural law notions of the inherently inalienable rights of individuals-'man free' as the expression goes- an idea, as argued above, which deeply informs Lambros's work. In his latest work on money Hart also is at pains to make this point-stressing in other words, the civil society consequences of the market and the degree to which this generates a Habermassian (petty?) bourgeois public sphere of popular debate and disputatiousness.

**Cultural Economics and Post-structuralism**

This leads us to the final areas in which the influence of the occupational multiplicity concept can be detected. This is in the cultural economics of Browne. This work which reifies occupational multiplicity in Martinique almost into a metaphysical cultural category, to some extent draws on the work of Wilson on reputation and respectability. In a sense, some of the work of Carla Freeman shares a similar root, although to her credit she is critical of this brand of anthropological romanticism. In these formulations, but more particularly in Browne, reputation and respectability are, to some extent, Mintzian 'oscillations' which the Caribbean person moves perpetually between. In other words, while Comitas presents occupational multiplicity as a rationalistic response to an oppressive situation, here the argument is made that it has congealed into a cultural category which drives the behavior of Caribbean individuals on a very broad basis. What appears as occupational multiplicity in the economic realm is therefore only one instance of a more general characteristic which finds expression in all domains of Caribbean cultural life. The point, one supposes, is a Levi-Straussian one-that there is a Caribbean 'deep structure' which is clever, devious, playful, flexible, joyous-the cliches are endless-and an understanding of this reality is the key to unlocking the secrets of Caribbean society and culture.

Such reifications are so antithetical to the spirit, theoretical framework and methodology of Comitas’s work that one hardly knows where to begin. Suffice it to say that the point of Comitas’s (and Hart’s) work is precisely to show that any human being placed in a similar set of socio-economic circumstances would probably act in a similar manner. There is nothing peculiarly 'Caribbean' going on here and the concepts of respectability and reputation-themselves highly questionable-have nothing at all to do with the issues at hand.

This leads us to the final area to which the concept of occupational multiplicity has travelled. Perhaps to the intense annoyance of our distinguished honoree, I think one can detect his hand even within the forbidden cities of post-structural anthropological economic anthropologists. If one reads the most recent work of Jane Guyer for example, one is struck by the emphasis on what she calls "composites" (Guyer, 2004,2007). She is mainly referring to the process of price formation in the contemporary neo-liberal world economy, whether this price formation is at the level of the global oil futures market or within a local market in Nigeria. She writes:

Within the system, and taking its own accounts ethnographically in the first instance, one can ask whether and how price is apprehended as unitary/singular or as composed, and with what implication for a cognitive and ethical orientation towards living in a price-pervaded world. Does one or another component move differently, and resist pressure? Does the seller 'have to make a living' in a 'just world' and what margin then comes into view?
The point here is to stress the multiple ways in which value and price are understood and expressed in various settings. From this point of view price multiplicities indicate that this is a deeply subjective process, far away from the objectified rationalistic market clearing assumptions of neo-classical economics. Indeed, although Guyer does not herself go so far, in the post-structural view, economic behavior, including occupational multiplicity and price formation activities are not to be understood as structures or strategies in either the sense of Comitas or of a Marxist anthropology. On the contrary, these are simply drawn from a ‘repertoire’ of possible cultural ‘performances’ which can be ‘enacted’ in various situations, depending on the particular social and cultural drama which is unfolding, as, for instance, in some of the arguments presented by Maurer (Maurer, 2006). Perhaps the most extreme formulation of this viewpoint, which also obviously draws on the ideas of Latour, is the work of Knorr-Cetina in which the powerfully assertive individuals of Lambros’s narrative would be reduced to the status of a non-descript collection of ‘post-social’ actors who are constituted by a series of ineluctable ‘microstructures’ which dominate their lives.

The use of the notions of ‘multiplicity’ to destabilize conceptual clarity is the hallmark of the post-structural approach. Whether in the more tentative form of Guyer or in the more extreme formulations of Knorr-Cetina, they express a profound philosophical pessimism which is the very opposite of the approach of Comitas to life and academia. Comitas stressed the stable instability of Caribbean rural life while refusing to accept that individuals confronted with such a situation were powerless. Regardless of the criticisms which can be legitimately made of the concept of occupational multiplicity, it did not identify multiplicity with an amorphous, alienated, narcissistic subjectivity. Comitas understood and made it clear that complexity could not be an excuse for obscurantism-on the contrary it demanded even greater conceptual clarification and lucidity. Neither then nor now was Comitas an exponent of anthropological expressionism. To his eternal credit he remained firmly grounded in some rather solid realities of Caribbean and New York society and that is why his work will always be influential.

Conclusion

After this rather lengthy journey it remains to make some brief concluding remarks about the relevance of the occupational multiplicity concept today. When Lambros wrote his famous article Jamaica was 75% rural and with a population of about 1.6 million people. He wrote at the height of the 30 glorious years of the post-Keynesian Bretton-Woods arrangements, in a world of the Cold War, it is true, but also in a world dominated by social democracy and restrictions on international capital movements through a global system of exchange controls. Today all that has been dismantled in a manner which would have been inconceivable in the days when the concept first was formulated. In keeping with these profound global changes-Caribbean societies, historically themselves products of an earlier era of world market formation-have experienced profound changes with highly differential results. Jamaica is now about 35% rural and the once-dominant sugar industry is on its last legs, as indeed it is in Cuba and Barbados as well. Old formulations of Caribbean society as ‘plantation economies’ hardly fit either Jamaica, Cuba or Barbados in which tourism-driven services increasingly dominate the economy. A substantial black middle class—indeed, a wealthy black bourgeoisie—has arisen in a number of countries, including Jamaica. At the same time youth unemployment and violent crime are increasing problems throughout the region, as is the issue of social, economic and racial inequalities. One thing which sadly has not changed: the most reliable predictor of poverty in Jamaica is an index which is a combination of being rural, young and female.
It is a tribute to the acuity of Lambros Comitas that even in these radically new conditions, the concept of occupational multiplicity still retains utility. Empirically, it can still be documented as a reality not only in rural society but in many urban contexts as well and, as others have pointed out, in the middle and upper strata of society. The spirit of individual assertiveness which so inspired Comitas, though battered and bruised by the vagaries of globalization as well as local politics, is alive and struggling to find new outlets. Where this will lead is anyone’s guess. We look forward to the Lambros Comitas’s of the future to shed light on those ever intractable issues.
Dominicans, Haitians, Israelis1 Palestinians: Anthropologists and Ethnic Conflict

Dominicans, Haitians, Palestinians, Israelis:
"Racism", "religious fundamentalism" and pseudo-causality
Gerald F. Murray

Introduction

This is an abbreviated summary of a longer work in preparation. Its departure point is the healthy skepticism which I learned from my dissertation advisor, Lambros Comitas, against the mechanical application of neatly-bound academic categories to the messy shifting realities of the Caribbean. I entered Columbia’s anthropology program through an intellectual back door, never having had an undergraduate course in anthropology. I simply wanted to return to the Dominican Republic to do research among the Dominican campesinos among whom I had worked as a Peace Corps Volunteer during the turbulent period of the Dominican Revolution of 1965. On the one hand, entering anthropology, I was enthralled with the alluringly neat categories of 1960’s anthropology: Bands, tribes, chiefdoms, states. Reciprocity, redistribution, market exchange. Tribal cultivators, peasants, farmers. I discovered a fascinating academic world with neat categories that seemed to organize the human experience into phenomena with clearly defined and clearly labeled boundaries. I was embarrassed, however, when I realized that "my" Dominican campesino systematically violated the rules of peasant behavior laid down by anthropology. They didn’t produce for their families and sell only surpluses. They sold practically everything and bought food back later in the year. Maybe I should study a human group that behaved the way anthropologists said they were supposed to behave. Lambros’ work on occupational multiplicity saved me for the Caribbean. The entire concept seemed to be a polished Latin phrase capturing the obstinate refusal of Caribbean populations to keep their place within anthropological categories.

If Caribbean fishing and peasant production and exchange protrude from conventional categories, imagine the even messier phenomenon of ethnic conflict. In this summary I will share the manner in which fieldwork in two quite disparate conflict settings forced me into an examination of professional conscience concerning two analytic constructs that the international community, including anthropologists, seem to toss around with reckless poorly defined abandon as vehicles for glibly explaining intergroup conflict. The two conflict ridden field settings are the Dominican/Haitian border and the Gaza Strip. The two abused constructs are racism and religious fundamentalism. My contention, based in large part on field observations, is that they are more often used as vehicles of demonization than as tools of logically and empirically cautious analysis.

Empirical basis

For more than a decade I have been carrying out fieldwork in Haiti and the D.R. in the context of contract research into human trafficking and in cross border conflict resolution. I am currently finishing a book on Dominican racial categories and attitudes. The interviews for this research were all done in Spanish and Creole. My fieldwork in the Gaza Strip was briefer, a full month during the summer preceding the expulsion. I spent an additional month in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Beersheba, visiting anthropologists working in three universities. My interviews in Gaza, both with the Israeli farmers and the Palestinian employees, had to be
done in Hebrew, as at the time I had not yet begun the study of Arabic. My firsthand knowledge of and involvement with the four groups in question, therefore, is obviously unbalanced. My access to Palestinian voices has been through reading of the numerous books that have been written by and about them, focusing on books that have word for word transcriptions and translations of life histories.

**Populations of the territories and nature of the conflicts** (Maps will be projected)

There are over 18 million people in 76,480 square kilometers of the island of Hispaniola. Though Haiti has only 36% of the territory of the island, 48% of the people are in Haiti. Added to the 9.4 million people in the Dominican Republic, however, there may be anywhere from 600,000 to 1 million undocumented Haitians not captured by any census - i.e. as many as one Haitian for every ten Dominicans on Dominican soil.

Current conflicts and accusations- directed by Haitians and their international supporters against Dominicans - focus on subhuman living conditions on Dominican sugar cane bateyes, on mass roundups and deportations of Haitian by the Dominican army, on the withholding of citizenship papers or I.D. cards from Haitians born in D.R., on the racial profiling of possible Haitians and of many black Dominicans by Dominican soldiers and police at checkpoints, on the withholding of wages by construction employers who delay payment and alert the army to have the unpaid workers deported, and on verbal abuse of Haitians on Dominican streets. Complaints of Dominicans against Haitians are particularly frequent in the border area: Haitians sneak across the border, steal livestock, harvest plantains and other crops, and bring them to Haiti.

**Racism and the Haitian-Dominican conflict**

(Project overheads quoting Amnesty International and U.N. reports that posit racism as the prime causal variable in Haitian Dominican tensions. Counter first with a description of the tripartite racial classification of the Dominican system.)

I have seen in my interviews a Dominican variant of the American "one drop" rule. American black/white racial classification is based on dichotomized system and assigns an individual to the lower taxon if even a small mixture of "African blood" is known to exist. In the Dominican Republic the "one drop rule" operates in reverse. There are three categories, not two: white, brown, black. Brown is NOT a subcategory of Black as in the U.S. Any evidence of non-African ancestry - lighter skin, straight hair, etc. - places one in the intermediate category rather than the black category. Blackness is negatively valued. The term negro is a potential insult. The term moreno is used as a surrogate euphemism. Individuals with African skin and hair have to tolerate negative comments and discrimination in occupational and marital spheres. It is not pleasant to be black in the Dominican Republic.

The analytic point at issue here is not whether there is racism in the Dominican Republic. There is, by most definitions of the word. The issue rather concerns causal analysis. The issue is whether racial attitudes can be accurately posited as the root cause of Haitian I Dominican tensions. *They cannot.* Evidence? (1) Dominican blacks are as hostile (or more hostile) to Haitians than other Dominicans. (2) A content analysis of anti-Haitian discourse shows a focus on cultural, non-biological factors: scorn for Haitian language (patua), fear of Haitian popular religion (vudu), memories (taught in school) of former Haitian domination of the Dominican Republic, disdain for the types of jobs Haitians will perform, anger at the low wages for which
they will work, and (now) the intimidating penetration of Haitians into so many sectors of the Dominican economy. And of course the lingering fear among older people that Haitians may wish to rule the Dominican Republic again. In any stream of anti-Haitian epithets, their black skin may be mentioned. By no empirical measure, however, is it the dominant theme in popular discourse about Haitians. Unless we expand the term "Dominican racism" to mean "any attitude or behavior by Dominicans of which I disapprove", the burden of causal proof is on those who attribute Dominican I Haitian antagonisms to racism. Not every example of ethnic antagonism is racist. And whereas a private organization like Amnesty International will predictably act as attorney for the prosecution, searching for anecdotal evidence to support their attack, not as a dispassionate research organization, it is a professionally irresponsible abuse against the Dominican Republic when so called experts from the United Nations behave in the same way and, on the basis of a one week visit by a Rapporteur, glibly characterize an entire nation as racist abusers of Haitians.

The population of Israel/Palestine

Let us travel from the Caribbean through the Atlantic and Mediterranean to Israel/Palestine. This piece of territory - including Israel proper, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank - occupies slightly less land than Haiti by itself. And the human population on that territory is larger than that of Haiti: 10.4 million as opposed to 8.7 million.

The 10.4 million are largely subdivided into two groups: Arab and Jew. The Jews comprise 5.3 million of that population, that is, 51%. 91% of the Jews live in Israel proper. 9% of them, some 450,000 live in communities located in the West Bank.

The Arabs belong to the subclass labeled as Palestinians. It is a hyponym (a subclass) of "Arab", comprising former residents of the territory of the British Palestinian Mandate. Of the 5.1 million Palestinians living within that former mandate, 1.3 million, or 27%, live in Israel as Israeli citizens. The remaining 73% are stateless residents of Gaza and the West Bank.

In addition to Palestinians living in Israel/Palestine, others live in UN-serviced residential conglomerates in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. These units are urban centers with paved streets, multi-story buildings, commercial establishments, schools, hospitals, mosques. We would call them cities. But the UNRWA (the permanently temporary U.N. Relief and Works Agency created in the late 1940s to provide Palestinians with emergency educational, health, and other services) still calls these cities "refugee camps" on their official websites.

There are, in short, minimally 6.7 million Palestinians in the region. What is the nature of the conflict. The Palestinians not only want the removal of the 450,000 Jews from the West Bank and the formation of their own State in Gaza and the West Bank. They also want the right to return to the homes in what is now Israel from which their parents or grandparents were ejected in the 1940s. Those that accept in principle the existence of Israel want an Israel with a substantial and perhaps majority Arab population. But they want a Palestinian State from which all Jews have been removed, as they were removed from Gaza. There are numerous additional complaints: death of civilians in Israeli retaliatory air or tank attacks, abuse at checkpoints, a security wall being built, destruction of Palestinian fruit orchards. The list is long. But the three core demands - the right of return to Israel, expulsion of Jews from the West Bank, and a separate
Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank - are at the core of the conflict. Israeli complaints concern, among others, the recruitment of Palestinian youth as suicide bombers explicitly targeting civilians in buses and marketplaces, the continued shelling of Israel communities by Hamas from Gaza even after the withdrawal, the shelling of northern communities by Hizbullah based in Lebanon, and the continued demonization of Israel not only in, but also by, the United Nations and the European Union, the granting of a podium by the U.N. to a Muslim leader who vows to wipe Israel off the map.

Fieldwork on the Gaza Strip: The myth of religious fundamentalism

My own preliminary theoretical assumption in going to Gaza concerned the linkage between State violence and religious violence. In the absence of a State for some 2000 years, and as a religion of a harassed minority, Judaism had adopted pacifist discourse. With the emergence of a Jewish State in 1948, with its armed forces, one would predict the reemergence of religiously motivated violence in Judaism, analogous to that which has motivated Muslim and Christian armies. This seems to have happened in the form of armed Jewish religious fanatics, many of them from Long Island or other American cities, robbing land from Muslims in the name of God. But whereas the Muslim fanatics were killing Jewish civilians in the name of Allah, Jewish fanatics seemed to limit their aggression to capturing Muslim real estate in the name of their God. I went to a religious moshav in Gaza to explore this phenomenon on the ground.

I now state this with some embarrassment and repudiate as off-target the entire formulation of the question. I had allowed myself to be bamboozled by the media and by typical academic discourse about "religious fanatics". A major element of my month long research was the elicitation of some 15 tape-recorded family histories paying particular attention to the motives that led the residents to move there.

The community was a religious "moshav" of some 80 households. A moshav is an agricultural cooperative in which farmers own their own land and houses but manage certain matters, including admission of new members, collectively. It differs from the totally collectivized arrangements of the traditional kibbutz in which members not only work common land, but live and eat under collective arrangements as well. It was religious in the sense that members minimally committed themselves to avoid public violations of traditional Jewish religious law particularly concerning sabbath observance and dress codes. Neither daily nor even weekly synagogue attendance was required or monitored, but about a third of the males in the community, most of whom were farmers, attended both morning and late afternoon daily services and many engaged in additional study sessions.

The community had been founded in the 1970s several years after the Six Days War at the invitation of the then-reigning Labor government. The older people had been there more than 30 years. Its economic base was the production of vegetables, spices, and flowers, some for sale in Israel, some for export to Europe and the U.S. Crops were grown directly on sand dunes utilizing a hothouse arrangement driven by a drip irrigation system based not only on the careful control of water quantities but also on the supplying of nutrients to the irrigation water rather than to the soil. The irrigation water was piped in from the Sea of Galilee in Northern Israel. In line with the moshav system, farmers had purchased their land, had paid for the construction of their houses via conventional mortgages, and paid for construction of the hothouses and for the water and electricity used in the hothouses. Most of the agrarian labor in the community was done by several thousand Palestinian day laborers from the neighboring town. I interviewed some of these Palestinians
Jewish "Religious fanaticism" as a pseudo-explanation of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict

The following points can be made about the causal impact of Jewish religious fundamentalism:

• The founding of Israel was done largely by secular Zionists who rejected all religion, including and particularly Judaism. The settlement (or invasion, depending on your perspective) of Palestine was NOT a religious migration.

• The migration of the moshav residents into Gaza 30 years ago was part of a demographic strategy on the part of the Labor Government in the 1970s, a militantly secular and anti-religious administration. It was emphatically NOT a religiously driven settlement.

• The farmers whom I interviewed fit no empirical definition of "religious fundamentalism". They were the datiim leumim, a centrist group in Israel between hiloniim (secular Israelis) on the left and charedim (black hatted yeshiva world) on the right.

• Life history interviews indicate that their motives for going were linked to a dual interest in breaking out of the urban jobs they were trapped in and trying out farming, and being in a religious environment. They would have gone to the Negev rather than Gaza if the government had opened that possibility. Their move to Gaza was not an attempt to capture back God's real estate.

• They did not steal their farmland from Arabs in God’s name. (Discuss the uninhabited sand dunes of southwestern Gaza.) It was public land, uninhabited sand dunes, controlled by the Egyptian state and subsequently sold by Israel to the Israeli farmers. Arab residents flocked to the newly arrived Israelis seeking labor on the new farms, though they warned the Israelis that it was insane to try to grow food on these barren dunes.

• Much of the contemporary settlement in the West Bank is done by secular Israelis searching for cheaper real estate within driving distance of Jerusalem or Tel Aviv.

Conclusion: religious fundamentalism is NOT driving the Jewish side of the Jewish/Arab territorial conflict. The label is being used instead as a weapon by factions within Israeli society and by the international media to caricature and demonize a sector that formerly used to be admired for patriotic commitment to Israel, in a purely secular sense. I momentarily succumbed to the demonization of "Jewish religious fanatics" in the formulation of my research question, but was forced by fieldwork to jettison the entire conceptual template...
as inapplicable to the situation on the ground.

**Arab religious fanaticism: prime mover?**

The Arab side of the conflict is also being misconstrued as religiously driven. This is the only part of the quartet on which I have no real field observations or interview data. Let me make a few brief observations.

- The initial resistance to Jewish settlements and to the formation of the state of Israel was done by secular Arab leaders.
- The Six Day War was spearheaded by a militantly secular Egyptian leader, Abdel Nasser.
- The Palestinian Liberation Organization was led by Yassir Arafat, a militantly secular figure with few public allegiances to Sharia.
- The major religious leader who participated in the early phases of the process was Sheik Huseini, the Mufti of Palestine under the British, who had frequent meetings with Hitler. The details depend on which history book you read, but there was some religious Palestinian leadership.
- Suicide bombing is the element of the fight that probably could not happen without religious input: the notion of the martyrs being greeted by 14 virgins. That particular weapon, the explosive belt strapped around one's body, probably depends heavily or entirely on religious beliefs in reward for voluntary death. One commonly cited Islamic version of paradise entails, at least for men, not only shade and coolness, but also sexual gratification.

**Conclusion**

Racial and religious antagonisms can easily be distinguished from each other empirically. They both play important roles in human life. Religion in particular, in this day and age, has demonstrated its power to exert autonomous impact on the course of human events. In the cases discussed here, however, the labels "racism" and "religious fundamentalism", have been used, not as tools of analysis, but as surrogates for analysis, as ideological weapons in the inventory of observers who approach the scene through the lenses of a Villain - Victim Template. I will, if time permits, propose an alternative template that permits engagement with human rights issues but does not relegate anthropology to the role of cantor in one of the choirs.