No *Feierabend* after Fieldwork?
Reflections in Retrospect

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Introduction

The German term *Feierabend* combines the words *Feier* (a celebration or party) and *Abend* (evening). It is often used in a rather general way, to describe the time 'after work' or the moment when 'free' time begins. Instead, the term *Freizeit* (literally translated as 'free time') describes a period free of duties, free of work and social obligations. When "Feierabend!" is announced, a work task is declared completed or postponed. Germans are especially known for distinguishing between working time and private life. As Fischer (2014: 108) rightfully states, "Feierabend—that time after the workday is officially over—is taken seriously even by many professionals in a way Americans would find odd". Leisure time takes place after (or during) *Feierabend*, without the task of formal and informal obligations.

In this essay, we reflect on *Feierabend* and leisure time in our early fieldwork experiences. When we studied anthropology during the 1980s in Germany, we were taught that fieldwork is the discipline's key method, and that the researcher should plan to spend at least one year away from their home community to study what was framed in this period as 'the other' or "the culturally different" (cf. Kohl 1993). However, there was little systematic teaching on how to go about this at the time, although learning by doing seemed to be the most common procedure. In any case, we do not recall much debate about what anthropologists do in the field

when they are not actively researching, although it is well known that Bronisław Malinowski withdrew to read fiction to escape from the Trobiands. Thus, when we prepared for our fieldwork – Eveline Dürr in Mexico and Frank Heidemann in India – we had no plans for 'leisure' time. Rather than thinking about 'leisure' in terms of 'time off', we were excited to join in the daily life of the host societies and – of course – share *their* leisure time. We considered fieldwork an ongoing endeavour with as few interruptions as possible.

Our approach to fieldwork as students was shaped by ethnographies conveying the impression that 'fieldwork' was a solitary affair: it was expected that anthropologists should be on their own while participating in other people's everyday life as much as possible. Particularly in German ethnographies, documenting seemed to prevail over theorising. However, German anthropology was also influenced by international debates. Thus, the 'writing culture' debate took shape (Clifford and Marcus 1986), and we discussed issues such as authorship, authority and power in ethnographic work as well as culture as 'text' and fieldwork as 'reading' (Geertz 1973).

Another key dictum was the notion of holism, insisting that all aspects of society and culture are somehow connected. This did not mean that we worked without any focal point; in fact, we searched for subtle interconnections of ideas or norms which, at first sight, seemed unrelated to one another and to our initial research question. As a first step, we tried to embed our observations in the local setting, and only as a second step did we refer to a specific anthropological sub-discipline. Today, ethnographic fieldwork and publishing focus more on specific topics or sub-fields in anthropology. At times, the everyday cultural knowledge of the 'host family' appears less important than that of specialists.

Electronic communication media has enormously transformed the 'field' and the rhythm of fieldwork. In this vein, the process today is 'interrupted' by a range of professional duties: as professors of anthropology, we address reviewers' comments on our articles based on previous fieldwork, we review other people's publications, respond to students' queries and work on applications for future research projects – and we keep in touch with relatives and friends (Dürr und Sökefeld 2017). We be-

lieve that these developments transform the way we conduct fieldwork, albeit we are not sure whether this transformation creates more opportunities for leisure or 'free time' than some decades ago – maybe quite the opposite.

In what follows, we offer some reflections on our individual situations in the field as postdocs in the 1990s. While we did not reflect on 'leisure' at the time, we identify retrospectively a range of issues that made it difficult for us to find space and time for ourselves or to carry out activities not related to our field(work). We argue that what prevented us from 'withdrawing' from fieldwork was not only the wish to immerse in the respective context as much as possible, but also the entanglement of our positionalities as 'other' or 'different' and with specific conditions in our respective fieldwork sites. As we shall illustrate in the following, while Eveline found it challenging to deal with the sensation of standing out and being observed while conducting fieldwork in a rural Mexican community, Frank could hardly escape close companionship and social embeddedness during his research in rural India. Our reflections recall our experiences of our fieldwork in rural settings and what were called 'face-to-face' communities at the time.

Eveline Dürr: Observing and standing out in Mexico

As a postdoc, I conducted fieldwork in the mid-1990s in Mitla, a touristified small town in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca (Dürr 1996). I followed early feminist anthropologist Elsie C. Parson's footsteps, who published a comprehensive ethnography on the then Zapotec village, whose economy relied on trade between the central valley and the mountainous hinterland (Parsons 1936). Elsie Parsons, influenced by Franz Boas, conducted fieldwork as a solitary woman in Mexico, which was certainly unusual at the time – both for US-American anthropologists and the village dwellers. As I read more about Elsie Parsons, I discovered that she was not as alone as I had thought during her three fieldwork stays in Mitla from 1929 to 1933 (Parsons 1936: xiv), and she was actually in contact with other US anthropologists working in the Oaxacan region. I suspect

that Parsons joined up with them when she was not 'researching'. However, not much information exists in her ethnography about what she did when she was not engaged in the field(work).

Arriving in Mitla, my intention was to explore issues of cultural change, and I wanted to find out more about how 'innovations' are accepted and implemented – or not – in this specific community. Mitla seemed to be a good choice for a re-study, as I could count on a solid dataset because another US anthropologist, Charles M. Leslie, had also conducted fieldwork there in the 1950s. Unlike Parsons, however, Leslie took his family with him to Mitla, where he stayed with his wife and his son for one year (Leslie 1960: 1). In his book, there are some reflections on his family's interactions with the village dwellers, but it is hard to find details regarding leisure time. Nonetheless, he mentions the entertainment of another US-American couple living in Mitla, and the hospitality of Mexican colleagues (Leslie 1960: v-vi).

As Mitla receives many tourists, drawn by its famous archaeological site, called *ruinas* by the locals, I thought that as a white German woman I would not stand out that much. Mitla is spread out, and tourists are commonly seen walking along the major road, making their way from the town entrance and bus station up to the archaeological site. I quickly realised that there was not just a spatial but also a temporal dimension to tourists' presence. They would take a special route up the main road, checking out the artisan stores along the way and wander back the same way, hardly leaving the main tourist path. Very few would consider staying overnight, as the capital city Oaxaca is less than an hour's bus ride away and offers far more tourist attractions than Mitla. Thus, in the late afternoon, once the archaeological site had closed, hardly any tourists would be seen around – and that made me stand out even more.

From the beginning of my fieldwork, I was fortunate to live close to the town centre with a local family and their three children. As my research focused on social life in the town, I was not really mobile, i.e., I did not travel a lot to other places; rather, I stayed put and spent most of my time in Mitla itself, exploring the town on foot. This mirrored people's everyday life, as walking to the town centre to attend the market, or walking up to a tourist hotspot to sell artisan goods, was part of their

daily practice. Streets were busy, and town dwellers usually knew who went where, and why. Still, they would ask each other, including me, as a kind of greeting, "Where are you going to?" (*¿A dónde vas?*) and receive the standard answer, "On an errand" (*Al mandado*).

I started my fieldwork through the social network of my host family, who generously acquainted me with their relatives and friends and also advised me to whom it would be best to talk, and when. My daily routine consisted of walking to the homes of my interlocutors, having conversations with them and then returning to my host's house. Thus, I walked a lot in the streets, was visible in public spaces, attended a range of ceremonies and joined in with other activities. Upon my return from daily rounds, my host mother would inquire where I had been and to whom I had talked. As I was hesitant to give away my full daily schedule, she would easily guess what I had omitted – and to my surprise, I felt that she enjoyed letting me know that there was not much I could hide from her. In fact, she knew where I had been even before I was back home – at times, she would receive me at home by telling me not only whom I had visited, but also which visit I had skipped. When I asked her how she knew, she would smile and respond that this is how things worked in the town – everybody knew what everybody else was doing by watching and being watched.

I realised that observing was not only an ethnographic method I was exercising, but also an essential practice in people's everyday lives. Nevertheless, a simple parallelisation of these practices would not be appropriate. The ethnographic method includes immersion in the lives of the inhabitants, which makes a mutual observation inevitable – even though the effects of this observation may not be disclosed to the ethnographer (Verdery 2012). In Mitla, I learned that people were fully aware of mutual observation amongst themselves, which served not just as a kind of social control. Rather, rumour and gossip are embedded in a communication network and can normalise transgression, thus making it potentially possible for others to do the same (cf. Hagene 2011). Moreover, there was also talk about who was particularly attentive to other people's behaviour. For instance, when a speed bump (*tope*) was built to slow down cars in front of a house with big windows facing the street, my interlocu-

tors told me there were rumours the owners had asked for the bump to be built there, as they were located at the intersection of two main streets and would thus be more able to watch who was going where. The members of this household, a grandmother and her daughter, the latter of whom was a single mother of a teenage girl, had the reputation of being extremely gossipy. I took my interlocutors' statement as a warning to be cautious when I went to visit there and to stay alert, as they would listen very carefully to what I would say and what I would not say.

This situation of being watched while being an observing researcher affected me in various ways. I became aware that walking in the streets or just being in a public space were not innocent practices but were rather inherently performative. I also felt that there was always somebody watching, and subsequently commenting on me, regardless of what I would do and to whom I would talk – or have failed to include in my conversation. This put quite some pressure on me, as I wanted to get it 'right'. I wanted to comply with the local protocol and hoped that the town dwellers would comment positively on me. Thus, I felt unhappy when negative remarks about my behaviour were channelled towards me via my host mother. One day, she told me that I had taken the wrong kind of bread to a wedding ceremony – I had placed bread for funerals on the altar of the hosts instead. But she also told me that people took it with good humour and were not really offended by my mistake, which made me very much aware again that I was seen as a stranger, a person who does not really belong but whose behaviour is nevertheless noted and talked about.

The feeling of being on display deepened my sense of non-belonging, as it made me aware of my own self in an inescapable way, which was not only through not yet knowing sufficiently about how to behave, but through my body. At the time, ideas of embodiment had just begun to unfold as fieldwork techniques. Less of an instrument for a sensory ethnography (Pink 2009), the body was still seen as something that needed to be controlled and overcome, for example by staying awake during long ceremonies, eating and digesting everything the locals do, adjusting to environmental conditions and so on. I became hyper-aware of my European phenotype, and as a relatively tall female, I literally stood

out in many ways, regardless of where I was; in other words, not just in a public space, but also in more private and intimate situations in people's homes. Early on in my fieldwork, I attended a ceremony shortly after a person had passed away in the house of my hosts' relatives. Still not fully familiar with the appropriate behaviour, I realised the formalisation of interacting with the bereaved when visiting their house: entering with a bent posture, crossing yourself toward the east where the house altar was, placing your offering there, then curtsying to the host, followed by a mock hand kiss, then taking a seat and watching more guests arrive, each following the same procedure before being offered a meal. To my surprise, the host asked me if I had my camera with me, which I had. She asked me to take pictures of the scene, including the women who prayed and wailed as a form of ritualised mourning for the deceased. I did what I was told, but I felt particularly uncomfortable. I was extremely present, not only because of my 'otherness', but also because of the flash-light on my camera, which I felt disturbingly heightened this attention. It was impossible for me to just 'be there', let alone to blend in, and as I had anticipated, not everybody present approved of me taking pictures.

However, there were also other instances in which my embodied otherness was a vehicle to engage in conversations, for instance when a teenage girl asked me which kind of shampoo I used, as my hair seemed to be so different from hers. This stirred a conversation about our (different) bodies more generally, and it was precisely the conversation about otherness and our differences that created a bond between us. On other occasions, I was mistaken by a male teenager for a 'gringa' from the US and asked if I could facilitate his migration *al norte*. When I told him that I could not help him in this matter, he still wanted to know if I had been there and how life was in places he thought he had no access to – other than watching them on TV. After our conversation, I bought a map of the world, which we rolled out in front of us, and we talked about place imaginaries, ranging from Jerusalem as a well-known religious site to Madrid as the centre of political power during colonial times.

Being under observation also applied to more private spheres, for instance when I was in my room. In my host household, the rooms were arranged around a patio, and so my host family expressed concerns that

I would read too much, as they considered this unhealthy for my brain – in particular because I occasionally suffered from headaches.

Thus, while my experience of being under observation differs from being surveilled by a state institution while conducting fieldwork, as Sabine Strasser and Martin Sökefeld (2016) discussed, I saw little space where I could act unnoticed or not be commented on. As much as I tried to see myself through my interlocutors' eyes, I was often only guessing and left unsure about the ways people interpreted my behaviour. However, it is important to note that my situation differed substantially from the image of a solitary researcher. While in the field, I frequently received visits from family, friends and sometimes other anthropologists, but I would not consider this an 'interruption' to my fieldwork per se. It was somewhat difficult for me to think of 'time off' or leisure in terms of a 'break' from fieldwork while being on site – I would rather withdraw from field(work) by leaving the field site physically. For instance, I went on holiday with friends, during which I visited a Mexican beach. I experienced this 'break' and socio-spatial distance from the immediate field context as a key factor in reflecting on myself and my social relationships, not only directly related to the 'field', but also to re-focus my research. This also points to the interplay between immersion in and distance from the field, which is pivotal in ethnographic work. As an alternative to spatial distancing, I would withdraw from the field, at least to some extent, by engaging with my 'own inner world', e.g., by listening to music or reading novels or letters coming my way, all of which seemed to stem from another world. I conceive of this as more than a simple 'break' from fieldwork and rather as an important time in which I could balance my own wellbeing.

Through these examples, I wish to highlight that observations are always relational and that observers are not detached from what they observe (Dürr 2023). Moreover, what observers observe says at least as much about them as what they overlook, and there is also a spatiality and temporality to watching and being watched. I was not everywhere and constantly exposed to being watched with the same intensity, nor did I conduct participant observation with the same level of intensity all the time. Instead, there were times when I was particularly attentive, for

instance during a ceremony, a ritual, an interview or an informal conversation – and in these situations, town dwellers would also be more attentive toward me. It is important to note that observers are not to be understood as isolated and solitary but as part of a specific observation scenario, for they play an active role in the situations they observe, and, even more so, they not only change them but are themselves transformed by them. It is precisely this mutuality of watching and being watched that lays the ground for common interpretations of others' practices in relation to one's own (cf. Whittaker et al. 2023).

Frank Heidemann: Social embeddedness in India

In the period from 1988 to 1998, the time to which I refer in the following, I worked with the Badaga people, the principal farming community on the Nilgiri Plateau, about six hundred kilometres west of Chennai at the border to Kerala and Karnataka. Historically, the Badaga grew millet, but when the Nilgiris became a 'British' hill station in the nineteenth century, they planted 'European' vegetables for white people. After Indian independence in 1947, they began to cultivate tea, many of them with great success. Many families spent their surplus on the education of their children or in other investments. Badagas won political elections and became the undisputed dominant group. They speak their own language, worship their own gods and live in exclusively Badaga villages (Hockings 1980). I first lived in the eastern part of the district, with my wife Bernadette and our recently born daughter Lena, for 12 months in the small town of Kotagiri. Later, I went alone to the hills for 2–3 months a year, and for some time I stayed in the Badaga village Jackanarai (Heidemann 2006). Since this research, my ethnographic interest and family contacts have continued to the present day.

    I am trying to remember what I did when I was not working explicitly on my research questions. I was often invited, fed, accommodated and taken to family parties, weddings or other events. I also enjoyed the landscapes and the never-ending search for new topics and projects. However, I have no memory of what could be called 'leisure time'. I did

not pursue any hobbies or specific passions in India, and I barely moved away from my research on my own initiative. This is not a complaint, though, because I felt extremely comfortable among the Badagas. The short answer to the question regarding what I did as an ethnographer when I wasn't researching is simple: I waited. Waited for a bus, waited for the rain to let up on motorcycle rides or waited for priests and headmen in their villages or for people who wanted to see me in my house. I waited long before the advent of cell phones and a direct-dial system that could make long-distance calls. I often spent half a night in a post office, from where I could be connected manually to Coimbatore, from there to Madras and from there to Germany. Above all, however, I waited for interlocutors. These waiting times were later shortened with the introduction of cell phones; however, the new technology led to last-minute cancellations of many appointments – after I had already reached the meeting point. Fortunately, I was almost never alone while waiting, and new topics of conversation arose – often somehow linked to my research questions.

I know of no ethnography on rural society in India in which the authors reported a lack of companionship. An early example of this friendliness is the classic monograph "The Remembered Village" by M.N. Srinivas, who stayed north of the Nilgiris in a remote village in the 1950s; he was even accompanied when he followed the call of nature (Srinivas 1978). Later, Michael Moffatt (1979) abandoned his first attempt to do fieldwork in Tamil Nadu because he could not bear the lack of privacy. Perhaps they were lonely, but they were hardly alone. In my circle of Indian friends, many had never travelled alone or slept alone in a room, at least in the 1990s. When travelling to metropolitan areas, they always had company or stayed with friends and relatives. Most movements were in groups, and mobility and everyday life were transparent. In the villages, houses were usually unlocked, and neighbours walked in and out. On one occasion, I asked a Badaga friend to look after my cash while I went travelling, but he refused because everyone in the neighbourhood had access to his locked desk drawer, and someone might see the money by accident and spread the news. Consequently, in the case of an emergency, such as a serious illness or accident in the

neighbourhood, he would not be able to resist lending out my cash to pay for treatment.

In Jackanarai and Kotagiri, my movements were accurately registered, and I always had to report to anyone where I was, with whom I talked (and about what) and where I planned to go. When I went to the photographer to get my film rolls developed, he told me that someone had seen me at the bakery earlier, where I had two milk coffees. At the bakery, they knew that I had already bought the daily newspaper. Badagas would see it less as a form of control but more as caring, as many considered it impolite to leave someone alone; as such, when I walked from Jackanarai to the nearby Aravenu bazaar, young men would join me out of courtesy. Once, I had documented a ritual at night-time in the next valley and wanted to ride home on my motorcycle. For whatever reason, a man (I did not know him before) decided to ride pillion with me, following which, after arriving at my destination, he walked back, leaving me confused. The next day, I learned that he was the only one who wasn't afraid of ghosts, so he had been sent to accompany me. In short, I was rarely alone, and neither are Badagas. Two short anecdotes will illustrate this point.

The first incident tells the story of Ravi, who was always late for our appointments. In the late 1990s, my longtime friend and collaborator Mathan could not travel with me to the surrounding villages during a two-month stay. Ravi, his friend, filled in, but he was regularly running extremely late, much more than what I considered to be normal. He replied to my questions about the reasons for his tardiness with invented stories, obviously fictional narratives, always with a dramatic element. The following year, when we talked about the issue, he opened up to me as follows. Every day, when he had to change his bus at a junction, a friend called him over to his store across the street. Each time, the friend said the bus had just left and ordered a tea for Ravi. He missed the next bus, waiting for the tea. When another bus came, Ravi was involved in conversations with honourable persons and had to answer questions about the well-being of his family members. Ravi's friend could not bear Ravi waiting completely alone at the bus station, and so being alone had to be avoided at all costs. Day by day, Ravi faced

this dilemma. However, it would have been too trivial for him to cite this as a reason for his unpunctuality. Thus, 'out of respect', he kept making up new stories. The involvement of an individual in patterns of expectation and politeness also reached out to me when I planned something that could be called 'free time'.

On another occasion, and never thereafter, I planned a hike with a friend. I wanted to go on a three-day hike with a young and energetic Badaga environmentalist. I had already seen much of the countryside from my motorcycle but rarely had the opportunity for longer walks. My friend planned for the two of us to spend two nights in a Forest Department log house, since he had good contacts with the rangers. Our plan spread through our extended circle of friends, and instantly the idea came up to involve more people and to drive most of the way in a jeep, as this would allow us to transport more provisions. In the course of planning the excursion, another friend's friend came into the picture who was a good cook, but whom I had never seen before. The three-day trip was reduced to two days because two people were time-bound due to family rituals. Not everyone in the group was really aiming for a hike, and concerns were expressed in terms of heavy rain possibly making the trail impassable, even for a jeep. My objection that I wanted to walk anyway was not even heard. Another objection cited the size of the log house, which was too small for a group, but I made no protest in this regard because the group size was already set and it would have been impossible to exclude one of them. Another participant had heard from a reliable source that a tiger had been spotted near our destination the previous week. Slowly, it became clear to me that it was not a three-day hike planned by me but an excursion arranged by the extended circle of friends, to which I was cordially invited.

After a few days, the trip was re-scheduled with a new agenda. The small travelling group, men aged thirty to forty years, was now limited to six – as per the passenger occupancy of the rented vehicle. The newly revised destination had the advantage that one could drive up to the doorstep with a car. It was a private house, which was used by its owner only occasionally, nestled in the wilderness north of the Nilgiri plateau. I had seen the natural landscape many times from the Kodanad view-

point, which offers a dramatic view of the wider region. In the years before, I had joined worshippers of the "Seven Mariyamman" as they walked down to the plains and was able to document the rituals for a goddess there (Heidemann 2017).

The planned trip did not correspond to my original wish, but I was still looking forward to joining my friends. I did not have to worry about anything, as everything was organised. No one in the group believed they had gone against my original intention. Their planning was based on the idea that no one should travel alone, and preferably not in a small group of two. From the Badagas point of view, one also 'shows' one's inclusion in social structures by travelling in group sizes of four and up. A second basis for planning this trip was that one should not do too much unnecessary walking. The wilderness experience I envisioned in a log house would be no better than the private house in the wild. In addition, more people could come along and do so comfortably in a passenger car. In their perception, they had made a trip better than I had originally envisioned. Badagas are caring people.

The departure time for the trip was moved from morning to lunchtime, due to fellow travellers' family obligations, and then delayed for other reasons that I forgot because I never really understood them. In the afternoon, we took a diversion via Coimbatore, where one of our friends had to drop off something and where a newly opened eatery awaited us. The onward journey took place only after the first round of alcohol had been consumed, and so the view during the ride through the darkening landscape was limited to the reach of the car's headlights. Finding the destination proved difficult, but everyone was in high spirits, and the prospect of not being able to have dinner after midnight was part of the plan. The next day, after a long sleep and a hearty breakfast, we prepared for the return journey. On the way, Badaga songs were played, which I would have enjoyed, too, had the speaker system not been half-broken. The journey was always interrupted when someone wanted a coffee or for any other reason. One friend, for instance, did not want to pass by his brother-in-law's parental house without a greeting, so we made an additional stop. I learned a lot about group dynamics in this peer group, in which every need was met with great

consideration by every fellow traveller – after all, one has free time and is not in a hurry. Moreover, the subordination noted within a hierarchical structure like a family or a village community was conspicuous by its absence.

At times, I was integrated into the free time activities of my host society. On such occasions, however, I remained a participant observer. On picnics with an extended family, or excursions arranged by the local lawyers' association, I took note of how gender relations change in an extra-village context, how the table order is transformed, how photographs are staged in the private sphere and so on. Even in retrospect, I cannot draw a clear distinction between working time in the sense of empirical data collection and 'free time'. A private invitation, attending a wedding or a funeral, reading the daily newspaper or going to the movies cannot be sharply separated from my research on "Religion and Politics of the Badagas." In wedding halls and at tea shops, politics are discussed, at funerals, the dead are forgiven their sins and human lives are honoured, and at the movies, a dreamworld unfolds before viewers that also acts as a generator of ideas for life plans or an upcoming pilgrimage. In retrospect, 'leisure times' were defined and created by my host society; they were mandatory parts of my research but not 'my leisure time'.

After writing, I asked my wife, Bernadette, to read the text. She had often visited me during the fieldwork periods, and twice we spent a full year together in India. We compared the content with our memories, and it wasn't long before it occurred to her that I had forgotten something! In 1988, I had brought along a high-8 video camera and a postcard-sized monitor to view my audiovisual documentation in Kotagiri. This enabled us to watch video tapes that had been recorded for us of a TV programme in Germany. When we had many sleepless nights with our first-born daughter Lena, the greatest thing for us was to watch the ARD programme "Tatort" on the small black-and-white monitor. Every month, we received a cassette in our mail which we could play on the camera, and often, we received with great joy two or three copies of "Tatort" on one tape, usually a few weeks after the broadcast. Unfortunately – and often – the film lacked the end of the story because the tape had come to an end. Knowing this, there was even more suspense in watching. In that

year, which for me was more exhausting than any other because we were highly concerned about the health of our daughter, we enjoyed watching "Tatort" at night. That was leisure-cum-pleasure.

Conclusion

Thinking through notions of fieldwork and leisure makes us even more aware of the fact that this separation is hard to draw. While we were in the field, we did not actively seek 'leisure' time, maybe also because, in our view at the time, this would have been almost impossible to achieve. However, both the experience of being watched (Eveline) as well as being strongly embedded in social life (Frank) had consequences for our ethnographic work. In Eveline's case, the awareness of being under observation made her more attentive toward her own self and embodied practices while in the field. It also complicated her own observations as an anthropologist, in that she tried to refrain from the colonial gaze and sought rather to engage in co-producing knowledge, challenging categories of the self and other. In this vein, she experienced the relationality of fieldwork in a particular way – as mutually observing each other and drawing conclusions from these observations. In Frank's case, the host society followed their norms of hospitality and care around the clock. Leisure time, in their view, was always a collective activity, and since their leisure time constituted a social field which was of ethnographic interest, it did not become the ethnographer's leisure time. This does not mean that Frank did not enjoy such moments or events, but it was not leisure in the sense that he was 'off work'.

It is important to note that our experiences are drawn from particular settings and shaped by how fieldwork is defined and practiced over a specific period of time. For instance, in urban contexts, these experiences can differ fundamentally, not to speak of today's approach to fieldwork as a joint cause between the researchers and interlocutors, often dissolving their clearcut roles. Mobile phones and social media networks have opened up other social spaces that are detached from the 'face-to-face' offline space, and thus other possibilities for leisure time, but also

for more 'work', have emerged – allowing us to switch easily to different worlds. In our fieldwork contexts in the 1980s and 1990s, however, there was not much *Feierabend* after fieldwork – at least not in the strictest sense of the term.

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