Decolonising the "Native", Insider and Outsider Categories in Anthropology

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Introduction

In writing this chapter, we aim to contribute to the debate on decolonising anthropology in general. But, more specifically, we intend to challenge some persisting assumptions about the "native", insider, and outsider categories that still, uncritically, prevail in scholars' claims to and assessments of ethnographic authority (cf. Narayan 1993). Our argument is based on a three-step analysis. First, we outline and discuss selected examples of persistent and uncritical assumptions that still inform some scholarly assessments of ethnographic authority. Second, we will bring these assumptions into conversation with examples from our fields. In doing so, our aim is to further problematise the empirical foundations of "native", insider and outsider categories. Third, by way of conclusion, we offer some reflections on decolonising anthropological accounts of alterity.

We situate our endeavour within the scholarship on decolonising a discipline which is historically implicated in Western constructions of alterity (Bohannan 1966; Amselle 1990). On this topic, scholars have acknowledged that anthropology has offered one of many sites for the elaboration of the radically different other, defined by tradition as "simple societies", or "societies without history" which stand in contrast to Europe (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1992, 1997, 2012). However, there is no doubt that anthropology has in the past decades moved away from its colonial legacy, hoping to free itself from the conceptual and political errors of colonial-era anthropology (Rouch 1978; Ferguson 2006). Accordingly, anthropologists have successfully invested substantial effort into the conceptual reorientation of the discipline (Abu-Lughod 1991).

Rouch's mid-20th century proposition of "shared anthropology" is, among others, a good illustration of the decolonising efforts of the discipline. For him, "shared anthropology", implies a radical empirical anthropology that does not privilege theory over description, or prioritize thoughts over feelings, but rather promotes a sensual anthropology in which scholars no longer act as passive observers during their efforts to describe social life from the perspective of the other (Stoller 1992). In many respects, Jean Rouch's achievements anticipated the debate known later as the reflexivity turn (Hastrup 1995; Holliday 2003; Cousin 2010).

Rouch's insights and the reflexivity turn moved toward an anthropology of relationality thus departing from an anthropology that creates the other as radically different by making this other its object of study or *raison d'être* (Amselle 1990). Abu-Lughod (1991) demonstrates that the earlier anthropological usage of the notion of culture enforced separations and, by implication, created a sense of hierarchy. To counteract this tendency, she proposes three modes of writing ethnographic accounts: discourse and practice; connections; the anthropology of the particular. Abu-Lughod's second proposition is of relevance to what follows here as she urges anthropologists to focus on historical connections that tie the people under study to the world beyond. This emphasis counterposes those accounts that focus on differences or separations (ibid.:148-149). We draw on Abu-Lughod's proposition of an anthropology of connections to challenge particular categories informed by colonial ideations of alterity that remain prevalent in scholarly claims to, and assessments of, ethnographic authority.

Language, alterity and ethnographic authority *à la fin du siècle*

We begin our discussion by reflecting on how scholars assess ethnographic authority. We aim to demonstrate how these assessments promote an anthropology of separation rather than an account of connections. We take account of connection as an effort toward decolonial anthropology (Abu-Lughod 1991). Our analysis starts with a reviewer's comments written four years ago regarding an article submission made by Diallo. The reviewer stated:

"…I would also advise the author to include a description of research methodology. From this submission, we only know that the author spoke to and observed two households in Niamey, and conducted several con-

versations between 2012 and 2017. For how long did the author conduct fieldwork in Niamey? How many people was the author able to observe and speak with? How well did the author speak Tamashek? Without answers to these questions, it is impossible to judge the authority of the author's claims about this community in exile."

The reviewer's comments informed the editorial decision stating:

> "I regret to inform you that the reviewers have raised serious concerns, and therefore, your paper cannot be accepted for publication … Since two reviewers do find some merit in the paper, I would be willing to reconsider if you wish to undertake extensive revisions and resubmit, addressing the reviewers' concerns. Their recommendations include refining your argument, drawing on a wider body of literature, and explaining your methods in more detail…".

To clarify, the submission has subsequently been revised, accepted, and successfully published by the same journal. Therefore, the point of our analysis is not to fight back because the submission was rejected – quite the opposite. We found the exchange between the reviewers, the editorial board and the author productive and relevant to our argument here.

Let us begin with what we saw as implicit assumptions contained in the reviewer's comments. The reviewer raised a number of questions. For instance: how long did the author conduct fieldwork in Niamey? How many people was the author able to observe and speak with? We do not dispute these. What we want to dispute is one particular question and the concluding statement that follows it: "How well did the author speak Tamashek? Without answers to these questions, it is impossible to judge the authority of the author's claims about this community in exile". Clearly, the initial editorial decision to reject the piece prompted the reviewer to request more elaboration on the methodological section of the submission.

For us, the reviewer equates the ethnographic authority of the author with the ability to fluently speak "the language" of the people under study. This assumption is problematic as it implies that the Tuareg who participated in this research only speak Tamashek. This perspective fixes the Tuareg who participated in this research in space and time and is thus reminiscent of colonial understandings and classifications of the native people of Africa and elsewhere (see Amselle 1990; Mamdani 1996). Our point is that this portrayal

does not correspond to an empirical fact. What it silences is the reality that like the Turkana, Masai, and Pokot in East Africa who speak each other's languages, the Tuareg observed in Niamey also speak several other languages. These include Bamanankan spoken in southern Mali, Houassa, Zarma, and Songhay spoken in northern Mali and Niger. So how did people acquire these languages? Some learned them through social transactions with their neighbours. Many went to school at an early age and learned to speak French. As a result, during fieldwork, the Tuareg who participated in interviews and focus group discussions used the languages mentioned above as well as Tamashek. As shown below, we consider that conducting fieldwork in several languages allows a dynamic ethnographic account of connection (Amselle 1990; Abu-Lughod 1991; Scheele 2012) freed from colonial classifications that tend to freeze the people under study in space and time.

Reflections on language and connections in our fields

The first example presented here draws on Diallo's fieldwork among the Tuareg from northern Mali in Niger. The Tuareg are historically a pastoral nomadic group living in the southern fringe of the Sahara and in the northern Sahel. Geographically, this area includes southern Algeria, northern regions of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. The Tuareg living in Mali are homogenous. They are politically and socially organised around various rival federations that refer to themselves as Kel Adagh, Ouillimiden Kel Ataram, and Kel Tinguériguif and Kel Antsar in the regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu, respectively. The term "federation" (in Tamashek, *ettebel*) refers to a set of clans that form a political unit under the leadership of one dominant clan (Lecocq 2010: 13). The different clans that make up one *ettebel* stand in hierarchical relationship to each other. The leader of the ettebel is known as the *amenokal*, which means "the owner of the land" and he is also invested with [political?] power. Several federations rose and fell during the 18th and 19th centuries (Grémont 2010). These groups of Tuareg speak different dialects of the Tamashek language. They define themselves as the Kel Tamashek, those who speak Tamashek (Lecocq 2010).

As we have said earlier, although Tamashek is the language primarily spoken by the Tuareg, many of them use other vernacular languages spoken by neighbouring groups, such as Fulani and Songhay, and increasingly French and English are used as a result of schooling and transnational migrations. Also, like many other pastoral communities in Africa, the Tuareg's former nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle has been irreversibly altered in the course

of the 20th century. These alterations resulted from the repercussions of recurrent periods of conflict and drought, while famines that occurred during the last half-century induced exile, along with the persecution or simple neglect of northern populations by the Malian central state (Lecocq 2010; Klute 2013). These complex dynamics jointly prompted the relocations of many Tuareg in the West African diaspora where they learned to speak several other languages (Diallo 2018).

During the research conducted by Diallo between 2012 and 2024 in Niger, the methods consisted of participant observation, narrative interviews, and focus group discussions. Narrative interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in Tamashek, French, and occasionally in Bamanankan with Tuareg who had served in the Malian army or worked as school teachers in Mali prior to their migration to Niamey. These Tuareg research participants were eager to answer questions in Bamanankan, Diallo's mother tongue. The reason for that was obviously not primarily the researcher's inability to speak in Tamashek. Rather, it was to show that they could also speak other languages and had been interacting with non-Tuareg groups. For instance, a female informant, named here Fatoumata, several times insisted

> "I am so glad to talk to you in Bamanankan. It has been my main language for several years. I grew up with my sister who is married to a civil servant from the south. He is a Bambara. We lived in Kidal, Menaka, Timbouctou, Kayes, and Bamako. I spent 15 years with them. I'm glad I could pick up this language now again. Just ask me your questions, I would prefer answering them in Bamanankan."

Fatoumata spoke not only Bamanankan and Tamashek, but also Songhay. For us, the question that arose from this case and several others is as follows: why would speaking to Fatoumata in Bamanankan rather than Tamashek undermine [or challenge] the ethnographic authority of the researcher? Our answer to this question is that speaking these other languages does not make Fatoumata less Tuareg than others who don't have this ability – quite the contrary. Fatoumata's case substantiates our point that her mother tongue (Tamashek) is not the only communicative idiom for her in particular or for the Tuareg in general. Ultimately, this prompts us to re-conceptualize native/informant identity and positionality in a new and useful way.

Our second example draws on Zafer's work and his research participants' abilities to understand each other's Arabic despite dialect differences.

Zafer, originally from Egypt, conducted fieldwork in the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany with unaccompanied minors and youth refugees from Syria and Iraq. We believe this example offers another fertile area for the elaboration of an anthropology of connections rather than the differences that freeze social actors in time and space.

In linguistic terms, the "Arabic language is a collection of spoken dialects with important phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic differences, along with a standard written language, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)" (Chiang, Diab et al. 2006: 369). Although the Arabic language is the official language for all Arabic countries, each country and even each region in the same country has a different dialect. Those dialects are what people use in their daily interactions, and not "Modern Standard Arabic". The standard written language, which is mainly used in official discourses and texts, is the same throughout the Arab world. Chiang, Diab et al. (2006) add that MSA is based on Classical Arabic and is not a native language of any Arabic-speaking people, therefore children do not learn it from their parents, but in school. They add that most native speakers of Arabic are unable to produce spontaneous MSA. Chiang, Diab et al. also add that dialects vary not only along a geographical continuum, but also in accordance with other sociolinguistic variables such as the urban/rural/Bedouin dimensions (ibid.).

From Zafer's personal experience and encounters in the field, we would say that some dialects may resemble others, while others might be totally incomprehensible to people outside the region or the country. For instance, dialects in the Maghreb (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria) may, to some extent, resemble each other for someone not from the Maghreb, and are very difficult to follow for people outside this region. By the same token, dialects from Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan are, to a large extent, easily understandable within the different populations of the Levant Region; the same might also apply to dialects in the Gulf States. The Egyptian dialect, the one Zafer speaks, is the most popular and understandable one, mainly because of the popularity of many Egyptian singers, films, and theatre productions in the Arab world.[1] Additionally, most Egyptians are able to easily understand Levantine Arabic and to a lesser extent Gulf States dialectics, yet they experience difficulties in understanding dialects from the Maghreb. Since Zafer's research participants are

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[1]   It should be also noted that people across the MENA region tend to claim that their dialect is the most comprehensible and purer one. Purer here refers to proximity to classical Arabic, *al-fusha*, which MSA also refers to.

mainly from Syria, Palestine, and Iraq, he is able to understand and follow their dialects, just as they can understand his Egyptian/Cairene dialect. Furthermore, while talking with him, they tend to use some popular Egyptian expressions due to the popularity of Egyptian singers and actors they are fans of. To return to the point of the "insider researcher"– that is those who share a linguistic heritage or knowledge with the group being studied – this designation cannot be fully applied in Zafer's case. The heterogeneity of Arabic dialects controverts the uncritical assumption of the "native" which assumes that all people from Arab countries speak the same language and dialect. This perspective not only ignores the existence of internal variations within the Arab countries, but also fails to acknowledge and interpret the capacity to understand all dialects and thus overlooks the potential of social actors from these countries to transcend their differences. Indeed, there is a great deal of stratification in speaking Arabic and claims of being "native" are always relational and prone to contestation. We argue that the acknowledgement of this potential makes a positive step towards an anthropology of connections.

The positionalities of insider and outsider in our field settings

In the previous section of the chapter, we focused on language in order to examine the shifting positionality of the research participants and to advocate for an anthropology of connection. In what follows, our analysis will focus on the researcher's positionality in relation to the ethnographic account of connection. Our analysis is structured around the notions of "insider" and "outsider" as both terms are often evoked to depict the researcher's positionality during fieldwork. We discuss the ways in which these terms have informed anthropological representations and the ethnographic authority of the author (Spradley 1980). Holliday describes the concept of "insider" to define the position of a researcher doing fieldwork in his own culture. The concept of "outsider" refers to a researcher who is on unknown terrain (Holliday 2003). These notions are mostly deployed to make sense of the researchers' positionalities in the field. Whereas African researchers doing fieldwork in their own local settings are considered to be insiders, their European counterparts are conceived of as outsiders. By the same token, Nowicka and Ryan write: "insider researchers share a cultural, linguistical, ethnic, national and religious heritage with their participants" (Nowicka and Ryan 2015: 2). They stress, however, that it should not be forgotten that ethnic and national belonging and gender are multi-layered,

culturally constructed concepts (ibid.). In our view, this understanding promotes ethnographic accounts which are predicated on separation rather than connection.

For instance, in an influential contribution, Diawara has argued that while African researchers working in their own national contexts face fewer problems with language and living conditions, they might encounter more significant difficulties if compared to their counterpart Western scholars doing fieldwork in Africa (Diawara 1985). Speaking about his research (collection of oral history) among his own people in southern Mali, he notes that his being a descendent of the local nobility and from a politically dominant clan raised suspicion among the people of servile background whose oral accounts and perspectives he sought to investigate. Moreover, some scholars are in favour of abandoning the dichotomy of insider-outsider research as this scheme prioritizes one particular kind of difference – most commonly the ethnic or national – over other categories of difference.

We argue here, however, that insider and outsider positionality within fieldwork is determined by the quality of relationships between research participants and researchers rather than by the national origins of the latter. We contend that focusing on the quality of these relationships helps to promote an ethnographic account of connections that challenges an over-emphasis of the importance of the researcher's country of origin.

Insider or outsider? Reflections on positionality and connection in the field in West Africa

The following statement, made by a research participant in Diallo's research, illustrates the complexity surrounding the researcher's own positionality among the Tuareg in Niger.

> "Before you, we saw Bajan[2] and other Tuareg with white people [read: Europeans] doing research in Menaka. As the Tuareg are clever, they never gave those researchers any chance to talk to us. Because they know that

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2   Bajan is used to refer to Bajan Ag Hamatou, the political leader of the dominant clans in the area of Menaka. He is currently the deputy of Menaka at the national parliament of Mali.

many things they are telling them are untrue. For this reason, one precaution they took was to follow these Europeans closely in order to control everything they were doing. They slaughtered goats, sheep, even camels for them, all that was done in order to keep their research agendas busy and under their close watch. Another thing is that the Tuareg followed these whites for the material benefits some of these researchers might have offered them. In the end, these researchers did not even respect us. But your case is different. You respect us because you came to spend time with us although the red Tuareg warned you not to come. Also, they see you just like a poor Malian student who cannot offer them any material benefit because as an African you need that money for your own parents, too. For this very reason, you are not attractive to them like European researchers would be" (Conversation with Assaley on 23/12/2012 in Abala).

This statement derives from a conversation with a male research participant in his early sixties. We call him Assaley. In this account, the research participant pointed to how the people under study situated themselves vis-à-vis other groups through their interactions with the researcher in a way that challenged the conventional prestige hierarchy. This conventional prestige hierarchy divides Tuareg society into three main groups. At the top level of society stand the free noble warriors. This is followed by other free-born people, known as the vassal groups. The unfree-born former slaves, who are known as the Bellah in the areas of Timbuktu and Gao, Iklan, in Kidal, occupy the bottom level of the social structure. The research participant reduced the whole notion of being Tuareg to the free-born Tuareg who, in his view, had been controlling the research done by European researchers (see Bouman 2010; de Sardan 1976).

Assaley's account assumed that Diallo being a Malian and a poor African student made it possible for him to move between different social segments without encountering major obstacles. Assaley's understanding of Diallo implied that he thought that the researcher did not have adequate material means to be able to distribute resources to the free-born white Tuareg. His argument also illustrates how the Bellah-Iklan speakers perceived themselves not only as having been marginal to political processes in northern Mali since the colonial era, but also peripheral to the generative dynamics of academic knowledge. This argument allows us to discuss Diawara's insight outlined above (Diawara 1985). As mentioned earlier, Diawara has shown that he faced particular methodological challenges when attempting to talk to people of a servile condition. He explained that these challenges were due to his noble

background in his own society (ibid.). What Assaley tried to show here, which we would argue adds a new dimension to Diawara's discussion, is that [contemporary] non-African scholars may also face exactly the same dilemma that their African counterpart, Diawara, experienced during his research [four decades ago]. Assaley clearly associated the European researchers working in the area of Menaka with the politically dominant social segment of the free-born white Tuareg. To him, the European researchers were prohibited from speaking to the Bellah-Iklan because doing so could compromise the researcher's relations with the free white Tuareg who hosted them. Therefore, in Assaley's eyes, those researchers no longer occupied a neutral position if local [hierarchical] tensions were taken into account. This illustrates that as European researchers enter African societies through social contacts that consequently absorb them, they become part of the local struggles for power and legitimacy. This is precisely the feature that Diawara's account overlooks, and in so doing it fixes both non-African researchers and African societies in a rigid and static manner.

Concerning Diallo's case, although the researcher is a Malian, he is not originally from either the free white Tuareg group or the Bellah-Iklan, so in this regard, his status differs from that of Diawara who originally belonged to one of the groups on which he was doing research. In contrast to Diawara's case, our example from Niger suggests that the researcher's status becomes closer to that of non-African researchers who are not initially members of any given local groups. We would also argue that in the same way as that in which Assaley associated European researchers with the politically dominant free-born Tuareg groups in Menaka, he tended to associate the African researcher with his own social group in Niger.

This was evident in how the Bellah-Iklan research participants often overtly insulted the few free-born families living in Abala when these people were passing by and interacting with Diallo. As a result, the free white Tuareg kept their distance and did not want to interact beyond the standard exchange of greetings, especially when there were Bellah-Iklan men around. It was because of the apparent tension, which informed the free-born Tuareg and Bellah-Iklan interactions in the refugee camp that it was not possible to follow the two groups in one location, Abala. Indeed, attempting to simultaneously integrate the few free-born families as research participants in the refugee camp would have resulted in obvious tensions that could have caused problems with NGO representatives. As such, the research could have further contributed to transforming the social setting of exile into an open battle-

ground. This was obviously not the goal of the stay there in Abala. The male Bellah-Iklan's attempts to control the interactions with the free-born Tuareg indicate the challenges faced in the field. Though these challenges might have some limiting implications for the present study, the focus on a group of free-born Tuareg in Niamey enabled the inclusion of the latter's perspective in the research.

This example from Niger displays how the relationship between the research participants and the researcher is determined by a complex constellation of processes that challenges a sharp distinction between insider and outsider positionality. It shows that a researcher may simultaneously be an outsider and an insider depending on the ways in which the research participants view him or her. This complexity is reminiscent of the argument put forward by Crawford and Hastrup, namely that the dichotomy of researcher versus research participant may lose its relevance during field research as a result of social processes that undermine a researcher's attempt to maintain his/her distinctive status (Crawford 1992: 48; Hastrup 1995). Hastrup has called this "The process of becoming the other" (Hastrup 1995: 19). For her, "becoming" here is just a metaphor to point to the kind of participation that can never be completed, and which is not an immediate consequence of physical presence. It does not attempt to argue that the anthropologist becomes identical with the others among whom he or she is doing research. For example, Hastrup herself recognizes that she did not literally become an Icelandic shepherdess, even though she participated in sheep farming and experienced the extraordinariness of shepherdesses' work in misty mountains. To her, this implies that one is not completely absorbed into the other world, but neither is one any longer the same. The relevance of Hastrup and Crawford's discussion here is that the researcher does become part of the community among whom he/she is doing research, but this is not because he or she changes. Rather, the perceptions of the people among whom the researcher is doing research can change during fieldwork in such ways that they begin to relate to him/her in familiar terms.

In our view, the discussion of Diallo's positionality prompts two strands of reflection on the connections between the researcher and the people under study. First, the way in which the Bellah-Iklan research participants perceived and ascribed a certain status to Diallo suggests that the researcher becomes an integral part of, and an active agent within, the local social universe. Second, the Bellah-Iklan interlocutors ascribed a local status to the European researchers. This invites us to think about an ethnographic account of connection

in a particular way, one which involves carefully determining the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the people under study.

Insider and/or outsider? Zafer's reflections on positionality in the field, Germany

"You are an insider researcher then". This is how some anthropologist colleagues described Zafer's researcher-researched relationship despite his contestations. In fact, we see the notions of insider and outsider not as a dichotomy, but more as a continuum in which the researcher may (un)consciously move between its poles. In the following, we explore some circumstances where Zafer considered himself an insider and others where he was seen as an outsider by the research participants.

The most obvious aspect which led to Zafer being ascribed the status of insider researcher is the so-called "Arab culture identity" that he shares with the research participants. That is, he is originally from Egypt and has been conducting research with unaccompanied minors and youth refugees from Syria, Iraq and Palestine living in Germany. We will not discuss here what "Arabic culture" is or if it is correct to claim that people from Arab countries share a common culture, but perhaps it is worth noting, for instance, in recent anthropological studies, that using the term Arab-majority societies is more politically correct than Arab World since the former avoids associations of insularity and homogeneity (Deeb and Winegar 2015). Nevertheless, we argue that the term Arab-majority societies is not ubiquitously accepted since a number of Arab social scientists refuse to adopt this "politically correct" term as they believe that it is yet another Western attempt to strip the region of its identity. Indeed, one should bear in mind that the term Arab still has a meaningful social and political construction in such societies, one that affects social life for Arabs as well as for ethnic or linguistic minorities (ibid.).

With regard to the first aspect, which concerns sharing "Arab culture identity" with persons from Arab-majority societies, we believe that ideas of Pan Arabism[3] play an important role in our encounters and interactions

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3   Lawson (2014) writes that Pan-Arabism refers to two different political and historical circumstances. The first, referring to Arab nationalism, emerged at the end of the 19th century among Arabic speakers inside the Ottoman Empire and asserted that "Arab" across the empire shared characteristics that entitled them to think of themselves as

with each other (see Choueiri 2007; Lawson 2014). Pan Arabism is an ideology that has shaped the perceptions of many people in Arab-majority societies, through political and public discourses, and education. For instance, in many Arab-majority societies, this topic was and probably still is an obligatory class at public schools. Arabs were raised and educated to perceive their relations to other Arab countries and societies as brotherhood relations. They were taught that prosperity and development in this region could, or should, only be achieved when Arab countries unite against imperial Western domination and conspiracies. It is true, that quite recently and even before the Arab Spring and the disappointment caused by its failure in some countries, as in the case of Egypt, strong voices from many secular intellectuals called for embracing ideas of "Egyptian Nationalism" and a refusal to identify with the "Arab culture identity". Their calls have found many supporters, especially from the middle and upper classes. Yet, according to Zafer's experience, the brotherhood between Arabs is still inscribed and dominant in the perceptions many Arab people have of each other. This sentiment of brotherhood, derived from the Pan Arabism ideology, we would argue, is a main characteristic of the so-called "Arab culture identity".

The second aspect of being an insider researcher involves being raised in and belonging to an "Arab family". Of course, we are not claiming that there is only one model of the "Arab family": we are treating this analytical category as an ideal type in Weber's sense (Weber 1969 [1949]) for the sake of comparison, especially with regard to Western family models. Being part of and belonging to an "Arab family" allowed Zafer to have a deeper understanding of the characteristics and dynamics of his research participants' family relations, whether family members were living together or maintaining transnational relations (see Joseph 1999, 2005).

Nevertheless, Zafer's gender, an important component of his multi-layered identity, made him, in some instances, an outsider researcher. Like him, all his key research participants were males. Being a male Arab researcher/brother meant that Zafer could not recruit young females as research participants. This was due to the methodology used during the fieldwork which involved being an elder brother to the research participants and "deep hanging out" with them

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a single community. The second period refers to the political discourse of Arab governments in the mid-20th century. Pan-Arabism during that time presumed that the Arab world has common strategic and economic interests that transcend the interests of individual states.

(Clifford 1996; Geertz 1998). Being too close or trying to build a friendship between an Arab male and a young Arab female is not an easy task and could be problematic for both sides. In this regard, Zafer recalls two incidents which show that even having an informal talk with an Arab female in the social network of some research participants was not appreciated by all parties. The first incident is related to the romantic relationships of two key research participants, Jaber and Magdi. Jaber was in a relationship with a Syrian woman and Magdi with a Dutch one, and both decided to sign a marriage contract with the support of a Muslim sheikh. Jaber refused Zafer permission to meet and talk to his wife since both of them are Arabs. By contrast, Magdi did not oppose Zafer's wish to speak to his Dutch wife about their relationship. If Magdi had an Arab wife as Jaber did, Zafer claims that Magdi would also have refused to allow Zafer to speak with his wife. In the second incident Zafer was invited to the house of a key research participant, Mohamed, to meet his newly arrived family in Germany. Upon Zafer's arrival, the mother greeted him, but during the entire afternoon, she did not join them at all, neither for lunch nor afterwards in the living room. Hence, he did not have the opportunity to speak to her.

The third aspect with regard to Zafer's ascribed position in the field as an insider researcher is the migratory trajectory. The point here is not to claim that the research participants and Zafer shared the same migratory experience. It is by no means fair or correct to compare the participants' forced migration experience, their losses and their traumatic experiences to Zafer's migratory experience as a 'voluntary' migrant in Germany. Nevertheless, we do not deny that making a clear-cut distinction between voluntary and forced migration is a difficult task. Yet, especially in Zafer's case, important differences in migration trajectories, legal status and transnational relations between the research participants and himself are evident. Although it is possible that they shared some challenges due to their new life in Germany, these still do not mean that Zafer's position can be described as that of an insider researcher within the forced migrants'/refugees' community in Germany. It is important to note that in migration research, the so-called migrant "community" is usually defined ethnically (Ryan 2015). This was the case until the debate about going beyond the ethnic lens was initiated (Schiller, Çaglar and Guldbrandsen 2006). Accordingly, migrants should not be seen as simply insider members within a clearly defined ethnic community because far from being united and cohesive, so-called communities of migrants are divided by social fissures of class, generation and gender (Ryan 2015).

To sum up, from our encounters in the research fields, we would agree with Ryan's (2015) suggestion to move away from fixed notions of insiders and outsiders and focus instead on dynamic positionalities and relationality. We would not, however, support the call to completely abandon these notions, as suggested by Nowicka and Ryan (Nowicka and Ryan 2015; Ryan 2015) since being an insider has shaped and influenced the relationship with the research participants, the methodology and the research itself. We see the notions of insider and outsider not as a dichotomy, but more as a continuum in which the researcher may (un)consciously move between its poles. In this regard, we agree with Uddin, who argues that the position of an ethnographer must be in between the dichotomy of "we" and "they" or beyond (Uddin 2011). Or, as Merton wrote, "…we are all, of course, both Insiders and Outsiders" (Merton 1972: 22). This implies that the researchers are neither insiders nor outsiders: they are simultaneously insiders and outsiders. The particular connectivity that underlies this shift in positionality informs our understanding of an ethnographic account of connection in the sense proposed by Abu-Lughod (1991).

Conclusion: An anthropology of post "native", insider and outsider categories

In this chapter, we have attempted to explore the implications of the "native", insider and outsider category and proposed a future way forward. First, we sought to challenge the role attributed to speaking local languages in the constructions of ethnographic authority, and the usage of "native" and insider categories in anthropological accounts. Second, we argue that insider and outsider positionality in fieldwork is determined by the quality of relationships between informants and researchers rather than by the country of origin of the latter. By bringing these two aspects into one conceptual framework, we seek to decolonise the three categories of "native", insider and outsider, which are commonly used in anthropological discourses. Empirically, our claims draw on material collected and fieldwork conducted among Arab refugees in Germany and Tuareg refugees from Mali in Niger.

The chapter extends the concept of the anthropology of connection in two interrelated respects. One deals with the conceptual level. In this regard, we have shown that such an endeavour seeks to break away from holistic models that offer fixed views of participants and/or deflect researchers' attention from

the individual variations present within such categories as "natives" or insiders and outsiders. The other is methodological. As an appropriate methodological approach for the anthropology of the particular and connection, we have argued for proper consideration of the relation between the researcher and the research participants. In the light of these discussions, we contend that insider and outsider positionality in fieldwork is determined more by the quality of relationships between informants and researchers than by the national origins of the latter. As a result, scholars should adopt a dynamic perspective on the people under study, a perspective that does not freeze them in time and space.

We believe that, within the decolonial project, the insider/outsider dichotomy does not and should not persist any longer, especially when this dichotomy is only based on the ethnic and cultural identity of the researcher vis-a-vis the research participants and ignores their multi-layered identities. It has unfortunately become taken for granted that an anthropologist from the Global South is an insider researcher when doing fieldwork back home or among diasporic communities from his/her home region. Students and junior researchers from the Global South, including ourselves, would not really oppose such an assumption or ascription, a response that definitely affects our options regarding the research groups we choose and the research questions we formulate. It seems that until now accepting and following, whether consciously or unconsciously, this association and ascription has been the easiest and maybe the only possible way to enter the academic field in the Global North and to prove ourselves as trustworthy anthropologists and scholars. We fully agree with Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) claim that decolonisation is an unfinished business. Yet, after many decades and many debates and reflections on the notion of being "native" and insider/outsider categories, we are still at the same point. Therefore, our contribution is a reminder of the necessity of deconstructing the notion of "native" and insider/outsider categories. It is a first step, but one where we still find ourselves stuck. The second step in the decolonisation project is to further promote anthropological research on Western communities moving beyond the traditional empirical focus on non-Western societies.

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