# Introduction

# The Artistry of Social Life

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Currently, much of anthropological literature on identity finds itself in unanticipated dialogue with other social science disciplines in a period of deepening global insecurity. The optimism of the last half-century, an era viewed as one of unparalleled economic progress for much of the world, is now being replaced by a profound pessimism in the West about the spread of social intolerance and terrorism in the twenty-first century. Even before the events of 11 September and the London bombings of July 2005, unease was surfacing. American political scientists took the lead in the cultural commentary, drawing attention to the decline in associational ties, trust, and 'social capital' in daily life (Fukuyama 1995; Putnam 1995a, b). Huntington (1996) argued that, at a global level, Cold War East–West political antagonisms had dissolved, to be replaced by misunderstanding and distrust between historically differentiated cultural blocs. According to Fukuyama (2000), the unravelling of familial social responsibility and the severing of social links in neighbourhoods, at workplaces, and within nation states at large were associated with individuals' quest for lifestyle freedom and women's feminist goals pushing women into the workplace, corroding time-honoured social norms, undermining existing social institutions, and atomising individuals.

This clutch of American political scientists deployed the concepts of cultural identity, individuality, and modernity to dramatise their findings. They borrowed from anthropological constructs, but normative political science informed their findings and conclusion. The picture that emerges from their work is one of Western societies and the world more generally becoming far less than the summation of its parts. Their vision is one of weakening associational ties, individual atomisation, and vacuous space where people collide with indifference. Terrorism and counterterrorism now fill this void with distrust and fear.

The chapters that follow take issue with this dejected view of humanity and social life. While we are indeed in an age of tumultuous questioning of individual identity and radical reordering of social institutions, which engender alienation, nonetheless the world is witnessing enormous social creativity. Collective identities are being reconfigured spurring new patterns of social networking. The

concern of this book is to examine the ethnic and gender relationships and networks that congeal in the process of identity reformulation. A number of questions are posed. Under what circumstances does trust arise, paving the way for friendship, collegiality, national unity, or loyalty to leaders? How is social life constructed as a collective endeavour? Does the means towards sociality become its end?

Our inspiration for probing these age-old social conundrums is the work and persona of Shirley Ardener, to whom this volume is dedicated. A tenacious scholastic networker in the fields of gender and ethnicity studies in Oxford for more than four decades, her research and publications are formidable, repeatedly cited in the literature and continually influencing researchers. Yet Shirley rarely mentions her own work and instead uses her theoretical insights and broad empirical awareness to foreground the work of others around her. Her seemingly effortless way of bringing people together to debate the cultural patterns and peculiarities of the day has launched many academic careers, deep friendships and enduring collegial ties. Shirley's subtle hand in the artistry of social life is illustrative of how social agency can facilitate the widening and deepening of trust and associational ties. Through the nurturing of working relationships with people from a variety of backgrounds and interests, Shirley has catalysed new insights into the cultural intricacies of the world we live in.

The contributors to this volume are primarily anthropologists who have in one way or another collaborated with Shirley over the years, benefiting from her perceptive mind and enthusiasm for academic enquiry. I would like to note that, as a non-anthropologist, my engagement with anthropology over the past two decades has been largely prompted by Shirley's welcoming attitude to people of other social science disciplines participating in the seminars and forums that she has organised – a refreshing departure from so many social science circles where disciplinary allegiance becomes essentially tribal in nature with exclusionary territorial claims to the discipline's theoretical domain and deployment of terminology impenetrable for outsiders. While devoted to anthropological enquiry, Shirley has maintained an open-door policy towards non-anthropologists. This has afforded me and countless other non-anthropologists a deep appreciation of anthropology's insights into the social world around us.

This book is an acknowledgement of Shirley's inspirational role and our ongoing engagement with her numerous projects, edited collections, and zest for multicultural life. The collection illustrates the broad range of Shirley's comparative cross-cultural influence, spanning African, Asian and European case studies. Many of the authors have deliberately subjectivised their analysis, building on their fieldwork, teaching, and personal experience, not only in rejection of positivist objectivity per se, but also as a means of demonstrating the intersubjectivity of social life and cultural interpretation. All the chapters focus on public life, but not at the expense of its interconnections to private life. Social identities and networks at the workplace, in places of worship, amongst political leaders, and amongst urban residents and national citizenries are explored. This

chapter considers the nature of different non-familial associational ties followed by the case-study chapters, which probe how shared ethnic, religious, and gender identities are collectively formed and serve as arenas for associational ties and ultimately social networks.

The authors in Section I explore the many facets of identity formation, be it cultural, social, political, or religious, traced through the popular media (Macdonald), Shakespearian theatre (Hastrup), nation building (Mach), religion (Webber and Cohen), and the formation of collegial ties (Callan). Section II examines gender agency in a wide variety of cultural contexts, with particular attention to the role of 'muted groups', a conceptual category that Shirley Ardener has deployed to cast light on the subtle, but cumulatively powerful, influence of women and other marginalised groups in bringing about social change. Women's agency sways the resolution of political, economic, or social dilemmas and, as Shirley Ardener (1975) argues, the relationship between dominant and muted groups in any society is always in flux, warranting theoretical enquiry into the interaction of the two and their respective internal dynamics. Thus, authors in Section II consider the agency and collegiality of women in the widely different settings of China (Jaschok and Shui Jingjun), early twentieth-century British feminist struggles (Swaisland), academia in Europe (Kubica and Okely), Southern Africa (Buijs), British Asian families (Loudon and Frankenberg), an English car factory (Moore), and Venice (Sciama).

The first section of this chapter explores aspects of associational relationships between people in public life, drawing from the case-study material presented in the following chapters. Social bonds of compatriotism, friendship, collegial professionalism and group leadership are considered. Thereafter, the relational substratum of these social ties, ethnicity and gender is discussed.

## Fashioning Identity: Beneath Surface Appearances

Identity studies of Western societies during the twentieth century have been underpinned by the notion of self-destiny; birthplace, ethnicity, and class do not delimit one's identity. Postmodernist studies have emphasised the multiplicity of roles and the individual's 'divided self'. Both aspects point to the malleability of identity encapsulated in Hastrup's definition (chap. 2): 'identity is the means by which individuals can act consistently and convincingly within multiple plot spaces and change in the process'. The self is composite and – just because it is composite – it is malleable.

Using a 'theatre of action' motif, Hastrup draws attention to the reflexivity of individual identity and social context. The social nature of self and social agency of the individual are in Hastrup's words a 'character dialectic' expressed in individual speech and action, framed by a 'collectively endorsed illusion of society'. Through dialogue people create 'a world of shared understanding', which is transformational at the same time as it is an illusion. Hastrup argues that this

comes about through humans sharing the ability to imagine one another. Shakespeare's characters take shape in relation to other characters. For example, honour and reputation are not inner qualities of the individual but rather lie in the recognition of others.

Her reflexivity argument contrasts with the dichotomy between individuality and sociality posited by the political scientists earlier cited. An anthropological perspective stresses the fluidity of individual and collective cultural identities. Social agency takes on multiple purposes and meanings. The political scientists commenting on cultural change see the individual as a maximising decision maker within a fixed cultural frame of reference reacting within a context of narrowing associational ties likely to generate misunderstanding or conflict upon contact (Putnam 1995a; Huntington 1996). In other words, atomistic individuals in hermetically sealed cultures gradually become more socially isolated and politically polarised. Fukuyama (2000), however, identifies a way out. Individuals, he argues, are essentially social beings and, despite the current moral and social degeneration, he predicts reconstruction through 'renorming' and individual acceptance of more social responsibility on the basis of a surge in religious belief and women's reprioritisation of work and family life. Social and moral values, in his view, are cyclical and will eventually become aligned with the political values of Western liberal democracies. This normative political science perspective, infused with the alleged cultural superiority of the West and now so influential, serves to underline the need for more reflected cross-cultural comparison of social agency.

## National Compatriots

The study of national cultural cohesion is facilitated by the fact that the creation and perpetuation of nation states are the focus of historical record keeping and living memory. The cultural dimensions of collective identity go beyond the military battles and political power struggles that make their way most readily into the history books. The chapters by Cohen and Mach reveal how national cultural unity is enhanced by a common foe. For the Welsh this was the English, perceived as potential wreckers of the national language and culture (Cohen, chap. 5). In Poland, national cultural integrity was ironically safeguarded by the dual threat of invasion by the Germans as well as by the Russians during the first half of the twentieth century. Both invasions came to pass and the Polish identity endured, but at the cost of sacrificing its multicultural foundations, as argued by Mach (chap. 3). After decades of oppositional politics against German and later Soviet occupation, liberal-minded Poles now struggle to regain a sense of the cultural plurality that was lost on account of these invasions, military occupations, and changes of political frontiers.

Religion frequently merges with national identity. In Poland, Catholicism became a central pillar in the construction of Polishness, both symbolically and materially, in the minds of Poles in their struggle against foreign occupation,

particularly during the nineteenth century. In so doing, Catholicism and Polish nationalism often became synonymous, thereby denying the Polishness of non-Catholics, notably Jewish and Lutheran Poles. Mach argues that identity may be context-driven, especially when the balance of political power may be such that the stronger party is able to impose identities on the weaker. Indeed, in the post-Soviet era, Poland faces a Catholic fundamentalism, which posits Poland as the cultural saviour of Europe fighting its liberalism and moral decay, once again undermining the Polish identity of non-Catholics. Cohen (chap. 5) traces how the community-based social values of Nonconformism fanned Welsh nationalism in the mining communities of Wales during and after the Industrial Revolution. The chapel provided an anchor in local societies undergoing a transformation from rural to urban lifestyles. Nonconformist chapel services were conducted in the Welsh language, nurturing the now-famous Welsh oratory and singing. Interestingly, more recently, the Welsh language has experienced a resurgence, whereas Western secular tendencies have dealt a heavy blow to Welsh communities' attendance at Nonconformist chapels. Now, even where chapels provide distinctive physical landmarks in the Welsh countryside, their form and function may be completely changed.

National and religious identities in China, by contrast, are oppositional. Jaschok and Shui (chap. 7) write of the tension that arises when the state refuses to sanction the religious identity of its nationals. China's Muslim population is accorded a 'minority status' and in fact constitutes a 'muted group' within China, along the lines identified by Edwin and Shirley Ardener. This is so even during the recent years of relatively less centralised state control. In the consolidation of the national identity of a people pushed into exile, Webber (chap. 4) shows how Jews' common religious identity and 'peoplehood' have been fostered, in the context of international diaspora and historical memory interpreted by rabbis through ritual observances which encourage and reinforce social apartness. Jewish historical memory entails making sense of a past of repeated persecutions and in particular of a 'holocaust that makes no sense'. The duty to remember is profoundly Jewish. Yet ritualised historical memory presents the world as changeless: it is posited as generating an active relationship with God. For secular or 'lapsed' modern Jews nowadays, however, history becomes a liberating experience, countering the power of the rabbis. The intellectual study of history affords Jews a common collective identity as a historical people, now politically affirmed by the existence of the Israeli state. Under these circumstances, the transnationalism of diaspora Jews can be acknowledged as well as their long-standing bifocal cultural vision, whereby, in addition to their Jewish identity, they are (and were) nationals in their lands of residence, with cultural preferences in food, clothing, daily rhythms, and associational ties dictated by the local environment. This bifocal cultural vision tends to be asymmetrical in favour of locality rather than religion for secular Jews.

Macdonald (chap. 1) provides a contemporary look at the nature of national identity through the comparative analysis of popular do-it-yourself house

improvement television programmes in the United Kingdom (*Changing Rooms*) and Germany (*Tapeten-Wechsel*). In her exploration of national similarities, differences, and national stereotypes, she finds that the homogenisation of national culture through TV is evident in the programmes' format but, despite expectations to the contrary, globalised consumption patterns are not reflected in the participants' stylistic choices for their home decoration. The home becomes a metaphor for individual identity. Do-it-yourself decorating is a powerful statement about fashioning identity, at the same time as it embodies national aspirations and politics. German participants insisted on quality craftsmanship and conventional colour schemes, with a strong preference for wood grain surfaces, which Macdonald linked to the importance of forests in German symbolism. Meanwhile, the British programme, on a far smaller budget, relied more on bold colours and paint techniques to create eccentric or whimsical interior designs, whose saving grace may have been that they were made of less durable materials and would eventually have to be altered.

*Changing Rooms* appeared at the peak of Britain's DIY boom, following Thatcher's policies to encourage individual property ownership with the sell-off of council housing for private purchase. Unique interior designs reinforced the notion that someone's house was uniquely theirs. In Germany, on the other hand, the reunification of the East and West, merging two different national cultures and economic systems, inevitably sparked unease. Criticism of the spread of shoddy production from the East and the decline of (West) German manufacturing standards was one manifestation of this unease. *Tapeten-Wechsel*'s insistence on good craftsmanship and durable materials could be read as a reaction to these broader political and economic fears.

## Political Leaders and Participation in Public Life

The construction of national identity is generally recognised as an ongoing historical process, whereas political leadership of nation states as well as other political groupings is commonly associated with the personality and 'leadership qualities' of men as opposed to women in most cultures to the present day. Both Buijs (chap. 10) and Swaisland (chap. 8) document the context and leadership paths of women. Buijs explores the nature of political leadership in patrilineal societies of Southern Africa who accord women ritual leadership roles as mothers or sisters of the male leaders, showing that these women hold far more real decision-making power than their symbolic positions suggest. They command respect from the populace and awe in their ritual role of rainmaking. Colonial officialdom was uncomfortable with their presence and attempted to dampen their influence. Despite these attempts, queen mothers and ritual sisters remain valued authority figures in many Southern African ethnic communities.

Swaisland (chap. 8) traces the background and career trajectories of some of Britain's early feminists, including Mary Kingsley, Florence Nightingale, and Jane

Waterstone, rebels against Victorian values of female subordination and economic dependence. Interestingly, most of them had close relationships with their fathers, who encouraged their access to education and careers. Their pursuit of independent work lives in the fields of education and health provided role models for later generations to follow and helped pave the way for the women suffragettes' demand for voting rights at the turn of the nineteenth century. Women's participation in the Boer War as nurses and administrative support gave their labour-force contribution more acceptance, setting the stage for their active labour involvement during the First World War. Swaisland stresses that although these early feminists achieved significant strides in education, educated women were not able to easily acquire jobs other than those in the health and education sectors until after the Second World War. Wars can dramatise the importance of female employment to the society as a whole.

In several other chapters, political leadership opportunities are denied women largely on the basis of their familial roles. Cohen (chap. 5) indicates that while women were the backbone of the Welsh Nonconformist chapel congregation, they were not afforded leadership roles other than as members of sisterhood support committees. Jaschok and Shui (chap. 7) indicate that Chinese women's marginalisation in politics and religion spurred them to establish women's mosques, where they could exercise female autonomy. Contrary to expectations, Islam in China uniquely granted women their own space to worship and their own female religious leaders. Loudon and Frankenberg's case study (chap. 11) of a young British Asian woman whose life was transformed when she became blind shows how her disability gave her more scope for participation in public life. Her family abandoned their attempts to find a suitable husband, freeing her to pursue further education and a career of her choosing.

## Work Colleagues and Research Informants

Callan (chap. 6) draws our attention to a hitherto neglected field, the anthropology of colleagueship. She notes that colleagueship is both emotionally satisfying and culturally significant while being occupationally contingent and functional. By definition, collegial relations are vested with cordiality and positive outcomes. The issue of hierarchy and competition at the workplace and the antagonisms that they may engender can be smoothed over by reference to colleagueship. The salutation 'Dear colleague' resolves the tensions of hierarchy between different professional hierarchies. Furthermore, colleagueship gives co-workers the means to suggest professional interaction outside the workplace or beyond normal working hours and job descriptions. Alternatively, it is a tool for constructing work relations with others outside one's own workplace, as illustrated by Callan's personal experience of working in an international agency that was building an emergent group of professional experts with wide-ranging language and cultural differences. The bonhomie of colleagueship, symbolic as it

was, nonetheless gave the group a stimulating, egalitarian atmosphere, encouraging the flow of information, ideas, and work output. Collegial relations are ambiguously poised on the cusp of cordial friendship and normative professionalism.

Jaschok and Shui (chap. 7) chart the nature of their collegial ties in the course of academic enquiry about Chinese women's mosques. Coming from markedly different social, political, and professional backgrounds, they found that their respective vantage points, skills, and contacts complemented each other. Nonetheless, there was always a need for them to consciously structure their collegial relationship in order to avoid allowing outside political and economic forces to shape their collaboration into one of hierarchical imbalance, as is too often the case in First and Third World collaborative research.

Are women more amenable to collegial relations of collaboration than men? Many of the chapters touch on the widely varying evidence of women's collegial ties. Kubica (chap. 9) follows the career path of the remarkable Maria Czaplicka, whose mastery of languages and encounters with cultures as a young Polish anthropologist did not accord with the strictures of the conservative, male-dominated, ivory towers of England at the beginning of the twentieth century. Kubica's analysis of Czaplicka's subjectivity reveals much about her collegial ties at a time when being a female anthropologist was very rare. In her fieldwork settings and working professionally amongst men, she was treated as an 'honorary man' but paradoxically without the camaraderie, opportunities, honours, and privileges normally accorded men in these contexts. Her suicide at the age of 37 may have been linked to the loneliness and ambiguity of her work position and lack of collegial relations. Kubica sees Czaplicka's androgynous persona as a logical outcome of her desire to succeed in a male professional world, in which emotion was sublimated to reason.

Okely (chap. 14) encounters a similar male-controlled ivory tower setting over sixty years later. As a female anthropologist, she contended with male colleagues, many of whom resented her attempts to put gender on the curriculum, research British subcultures rather than far-flung societies, and experiment with new lecturing styles. Her status as a woman with a male partner pursuing his own career elsewhere marginalised her from university housing opportunities and continually shifted her career prospects in unpredicted directions. Okely tells her story with humour and irony, drawing on the numerous collegial ties she has had with women and men through her career, both stimulating and comforting, which have triggered innovation and a sense of fulfilment in her work.

Moving away from the hierarchical pecking order of universities, Moore (chap. 12) examines the managerial hierarchy of a car factory, highlighting the collegial relations between factory workers that she directly experienced in her participant-observation fieldwork as a factory worker. Collegial ties amongst factory workers were solidified by the commonality of an 'us versus them' perspective. As the factory management persistently attempted to improve lines of communication between staff and management with newsletters, meetings, and channels for

complaint, the workers continually tried to distance themselves from the management's gaze. Collegiality was ensured amongst factory workers by shared problems: the speed of the factory assembly line and the factory's demanding product quality controls. Nonetheless, there was a wariness on the part of women towards their male colleagues. Most of the women were loath to attract the sexual attention of their male colleagues. They chose to present themselves dowdily for work even though their verbal interaction with their female colleagues indicated keen interest in fashion (see also Barnes and Eicher 1994).

A variant of collegial ties, peculiar to social scientists especially anthropologists, is the relationship between researcher and informant. Sciama (chap. 13) was confronted with a dilemma when a student reported that her main informants were her mother as well as family members and friends. While her male colleagues disapproved, Sciama was confident that such informants would afford ready rapport and opportunities for data gathering, ultimately providing more penetrating insights. Loudon and Frankenberg (chap. 11) explore the subject/object focus of research and the transformative relationships that occur around this relational abstraction. Their collaboration began as a relationship between student and professor, which transformed into a working tie between two colleagues. As a medical doctor, Loudon was a direct participant in the health-care process. So too, Loudon and Frankenberg's subject/object of study, an Asian woman adjusting to recent blindness, was in fact a participant in the study rather than an object or subject. Loudon and Frankenberg recorded her observations and insights over the course of the adjustment process. Acquiring a disability gave her social autonomy, escape from an enforced marriage, and a new-found freedom to study and seek a career, which could ultimately transform her relationship with her researchers from research participant to one of collegiality.

Callan (chap. 6), citing Hastrup (1987), considers the concept of researcher and subjectness from the perspective of participant-observation fieldwork, noting that the anthropologist's understanding of a newly encountered culture reaches a watershed when the anthropologist herself becomes a 'subject' in the eyes of her 'subjects'. This mutual subjectivity allows for exchange of meaningful information and deeper understanding. The complementarity embedded in Jaschok and Shui's collaboration (chap. 7) afforded them a 'fluid' field in which the boundaries between subject and observer became indistinguishable. They adopted a participatory research approach in which ongoing dialogue between themselves and with local people generated knowledge and understanding. Local people were as much analysts as subjects in this discourse.

## Friends

Many of the chapters in this book self-consciously explore the subjectivity of anthropologists' interaction with their fieldwork, teaching, and professional world. Interspersed throughout these chapters is evidence of the serendipity of

friendship in anthropologists' field and home settings. Indeed, anthropologists, as travellers across space and between cultures, may be in one of the most enviable settings for gaining not just the acquaintance, knowledge, and understanding of the places and people they visit but also the environment for 'falling into' friendships of mutual support, often of an enduring nature. It is in this light that Shirley Ardener and Margaret Niger Thomas's research in Cameroon during the 1990s 'meandered' into the rewarding path of serendipity, where their mutual trust and companionship provided the opportunity for delightful and unique research discovery. Sciama (chap. 13) highlights her friendship with her informant and the personal relationships that follow with other members of the informant's family over the decades. Callan (chap. 7) observes the enigma of friendship's two-way exchange of sentiment and meaning in which the meanings imparted to the friendship are elusive.

Happenstance has an important part to play in sparking friendship but anthropological field findings suggest that friendship is most apt to occur between people sharing either the same gender, ethnic group, class or age group – or in some cases religion. On the factory assembly line Moore observed (chap. 12), women of different ethnic groups compatibly interacted with one another, but social clusters during lunch and tea breaks tended to be mono-ethnic in composition. Cohen (chap. 5) writes of the tight-knit communities of Welsh Nonconformists, who saw each other as extended family members. They spent prayer time together and also sought to associate with one another in their wider daily lives. They chose their friends from their own ethnic group, class, and religion. There was also a preference to keep their commercial transactions amongst themselves. Nonconformists chose to shop at a butchery, bakery, or grocery owned by a fellow Nonconformist. The Welsh chapel thus functioned as a centre for networking and, in some cases, facilitated information gathering about employment opportunities during a period when jobs were scarce.

## Weaving Networks

The preceding section has discussed individual and collective identity construction, exploring various categories of non-familial associational relationships. This section examines aspects of how these associational ties link to one another to form network patterns.

As the global mobility of people, commodities, and information has intensified over the last decade, diasporic peoples, hybrid cultures, and multilocational identities that bridge geographical space have kindled anthropologists' interest in networks (e.g., Appadurai 1996; Brah 1998; Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). Network theory is an area of interest for social scientists more generally, particularly geographers, sociologists, demographers and political scientists (e.g., Cohen 1997; Castells 2000; Buchanan 2002). Given anthropologists' sensitivity to cultural difference and the coherence of individual

cultures, networks pose an epistemological challenge with their tendency to merge rather than accentuate cultural difference. It is worth asking what distinguishes the anthropologist's approach to social networks as opposed to those of other social science disciplines. This edited collection provides theoretical and empirical evidence of anthropological approaches to networks.

One of the major insights into the operation of networks in recent decades relates to the importance of 'weak ties' for extending network range and flexibility (Granovetter 1973). The strength of bonds between individuals is not uniform. Some bonds may be very frequent and strong whereas others may be far weaker and infrequent. Granovetter recognised a recurrent pattern in social networking. There is a tendency for an inverse relationship between the strength and number of bonds any one person has. Most people bond strongly to one another in clusters – based usually on age, ethnic group, gender, or religion, as noted above – but these clustered associational ties can be isolating in the absence of 'weak ties', namely between people who are mobile and gregarious and whose contacts are more numerous and varied, although their interaction is less frequent and hence deemed 'weaker'. The weak ties are vital to the connectivity of the overall network. Any one cluster constitutes a restrictive circle of people without the bridge provided by 'weak ties' capable of linking one cluster with another.

In the Oxford academic community, Shirley Ardener somehow manages to combine strong bonding within the gender, ethnic, and African clusters she belongs to with that key role of being a vital link between clusters. Social connectivity and intellectual inspiration amongst her colleagues have been Shirley's hallmark. Yet, unlike so many successful networkers who revel in the range and diversity of their contacts, Shirley emphasises the importance of the bonds she has cultivated within her collegial clusters. Her numerous between-cluster ties, which link so many people to one another, have greatly enhanced network connectivity in her chosen fields of interest.

Anthropologists are especially attuned to horizontal linkages. Their professional interest in remote pre-industrial communities has no doubt sensitised them to small tribal communities, many marked by inclusiveness and egalitarianism. Postmodernism has further enhanced anthropologists' interest in linkages but made them defensive about their traditional search for 'the exotic other'. Amidst anthropology's recent emphasis on cultural interconnectivity, we may now be witnessing a convergence of disciplinary focus or an inversion between anthropologists and non-anthropologists. Whatever the case, the relevance of the anthropological perspective for other disciplines is readily apparent.

Political scientists, sociologists and management and administration specialists have generally approached networks from the perspective of vertical hierarchies, tracing formal and informal chains of command in government bureaucracies, military organisations, corporations, etc., while largely ignoring the associational ties of civil society and everyday life. Now, however, non-anthropologists in the social sciences are increasingly focused on horizontal associational ties, which

they see as the basic building blocks or essential glue of society (e.g., Fukuyama 1995; Putnam 1995a). Why have they turned their analytical attention to the close-knit, strong bonds of small clusters within the community? Putnam's concern was that these bonds were dissolving and causing alienation in the society at large. Nonetheless, the findings of Western security analysts suggesting that terrorist cells are small, strongly bonded clusters of a semi-autonomous nature, with weak connecting linkages, may ironically dispel this worry.[2]

Some of the case studies in this collection document people's desire to sabotage hierarchy and propagate associational ties on a smaller, more close-knit scale. Moore (chap. 12) describes the subtle ways that car workers undermined the factory management's attempts at managing them through 'participation'. They could ignore management's attempts at control because they had no career aspirations within the firm. In a period of low unemployment, their jobs were dispensable if they became dissatisfied with any aspect of them. Sciama (chap. 13) found that women from the outlying islands of Venice have been actively seeking new friends and acquaintances in the city. By extending their social networks, they have been able to bypass or overcome old barriers of hierarchy and social class. On initiating her research, she endeavoured to avoid being associated with any patron, knowing that building good rapport with her informants depended on horizontal egalitarian association with them.

However, the dichotomisation of horizontal as opposed to vertical networks is perhaps overstated and seen as too static by social scientists generally. Swaisland's case study of early British feminists (chap. 8) demonstrates how they realised their career goals as path-breaking women and built viable networks that helped win political voting rights. Women's acquisition of education at this time illustrates horizontal and vertical networking. Education provided the trellis upon which women's educational opportunities, their careers, and political activism spread.

In juxtaposing the strong bonds of the small group with the weak bonds linking groups, there is always the complicating factor of multiple identities that individuals hold and conflicting bonds that pull them in different directions. This is clearly illustrated in Cohen's biography (chap. 5) of Llywelyn Jones, Welsh chapel minister and personnel manager for a British oil firm. As unemployment deepened in his community, Llywelyn Jones felt compromised, wedged between the obligations he had to help his chapel members as opposed to his accountability to his administrative superiors in London and professional duty to ensure the firm's efficient management and profitability. A very far cry from the moral universe of Llywelyn Jones, suicide bombers nonetheless face not dissimilar dilemmas of identity and loyalty. They are likely to be torn between their cell membership and the bonds they have with their respective families and communities of origin, who rarely have any inkling of their terrorist associations.

## Imagining Common Ground: Ethnic and Religious Collective Identities

Mach (chap. 3) considers the institutionalisation of Polish nationalism during the nineteenth century, when Poland did not exist as a sovereign state, and Webber (chap. 4) provides insights into the two millennia when Jews lived exclusively as a diasporic people and yet preserved a common identity. In both cases, identities were constructed on cultural foundations of a more or less religious nature. Cultural diversity was therefore threatening to these identities. Polish nationalism's allegiance to Catholicism pertained to a subset of the national population, alienating the rest. Over the centuries, rabbis had woven an elaborate ritual tradition based on key historical memory markers that served to reinforce Jewish identity within the cultural community. Emphasis on the theology of exile further detracted from identification with the nation state where they resided. Contrary to political scientists' notions of cultural network association as horizontal, both of these examples were hierarchical in nature, presided over by church and synagogue authorities. Before the current secularisation, rabbis cultivated a sense of alienation underlined by a notion of being surrounded by heathen impurity. In Poland, Catholic clergy and other nationalists popularised the theme of Poland's martyrdom for Europe and its ultimate capacity for redeeming Europe from the clutches of decadent Western liberalism.

Language is and has always been central to the formation of ethnic identity. The commonality of language generates a strong sense of solidarity in the face of language plurality. Cohen (chap. 5) documents the frustration experienced by those wanting to assert their identity as Welsh speakers who are hindered by work and school contexts where they are obliged to speak English. The forums in which Welsh was spoken became highly significant culturally. 'True religion' could only be taught in Welsh. People who lost their ability to speak Welsh or children who did not use the language sufficiently to make them proficient were marked as having lost their Welsh identity.

Increasingly, consumer preference has become a way of asserting one's ethnic identity. Whereas before clothing and housing styles were usually dictated by the ready availability of materials for producing such items, now, with the globalisation of consumer markets and the juxtaposition of different styles of material life in the minds of consumers through foreign travel, people can consciously exert their national identity through their sense of style. Macdonald's comparison of German and British consumers (chap. 1) shows that, even in a trans-European TV format, striking differences emerge, reflecting Germans' insistence on good craftsmanship and quality of materials as opposed to British 'expressive individuation' conveyed through bright colours and paint techniques.

Ethnic identities continually change. Negotiating history and historical memory may be a key aspect of redefining collective identities, even if technically there are many different types of historical principles involved: linear versus

cyclical notions of understanding time, beliefs in the uniqueness of events versus the generalised patterns they represent, and the concern with both cause and meaning (Tonkin et al. 1989; Baumann 2002). But the use of historicisation, as in the case of modern Jewish identities discussed by Webber (chap. 4), is a good example of how such redefinitions can come about, using a completely new kind of historical principle, which is absorbed into contemporary Jewish culture.

Hastrup (chap. 2) makes a similar point commenting on the role of the Renaissance in attributing individuals with the power to shape their own destinies and influence history. The role of history in the reshaping of identities is an issue that Mach highlights (chap. 3). Under communism, minorities in Poland were presented in official contexts as survivors of pre-socialist historical formations; it was politically expedient to forget the Holocaust and maintain negative stereotypes of Jews as anti-Polish. What has happened since 1989 is a public process of reinterpreting Poland's national history as a basis for working out Poland's new identities, especially vis-à-vis Europe. Interestingly, the 'most spectacular change', to quote Mach, is the rapid growth of Polish interest in Jews – not necessarily to learn about Jews as such but for Poles to better understand their own Polish history. This is, of course, a liberal project; right-wing Poles see Polishness in danger and want to return to past simplicities and straight binary oppositions between essentialised ethnic groups. Thus today, to the extent that Polish identity is now seen within the framework of a multicultural society, the key marker is the contestation and debate over history. This national exercise illustrates what Hastrup (chap. 2) terms the 'philosophy of imagination', in which members of a collectivity explore their similarities and differences in the search for identity with 'all social worlds dependent on illusion for their wholeness'.

Finally, there are instances when ethnic identity is subordinated to class identification, a situation described by Moore (chap. 12) in her car factory case study. Workers, regardless of their ethnic affiliation, felt solidarity against the management's work output demands and rebuffed the German management's attempts to introduce a participatory style of management.

## Trials and Triumphs of the Intrepid: Women's Gender Identity in the Twentieth Century

Several chapters in this volume confront the historical, cultural, and experiential outcomes for those seeking to move beyond the boundaries of gender ascription. Swaisland (chap. 8) shows how early twentieth-century British feminists started redefining women's occupational prospects through their insistence on greater formal education. Women were eventually allowed into key professions such as nursing, teaching, and medicine. Swaisland asks if the two thousand women who applied for teaching and nursing positions in South Africa during the Boer War were motivated by patriotism or simply a shortage of vocational outlets in Britain. In effect, these intrepid women were able to exploit the 'elsewhere' for careers

beyond the domesticity of being a full-time wife. Her chapter documents the dramatic changes that took place during the first half of the twentieth century. Well into the mid-twentieth century some professions, including the civil service and some medical positions, were barred to married women. Those single women in these posts had to give up their professions upon marriage. When there were no formal restrictions, informal ones remained in place, as Okely's chapter reveals.

Kubica (chap. 9) explores the biography and work of Maria Czaplicka, the Polish contemporary of Malinowski, both of whom moved to England to study at the London School of Economics, but Czaplicka, constrained by the mores of the time, met with a far different fate from that of Malinowski. She strove to break free as an individual agent 'and yet remain anchored … so as not to be discarded as mad'. The Western Enlightenment privileged the rational over the emotional, associating men with the former and women with the latter. Hastrup (chap. 2) argues that Shakespeare selects this historical period when 'individuals were attributed with the power to shape their own destinies' to enact his plays, pitting passion against reason. Kubica (chap. 9) describes how Czaplicka was fascinated with the problems of sex, love, and corporeality, viewing them in terms of a Cartesian body/mind dichotomy. Believing that emotion must be suppressed in favour of reason, Czaplicka became a model for androgyny, trying to avoid identification with femininity, which she feared would marginalise her in the public professional domain. Czaplicka's biography bears witness to an individual striving for innovation and for the professionalisation of women in anthropology to the point of personal tragedy. Whereas she could venture to Arctic Siberia for an extended period, it seems she could not survive the marginalisation afforded an 'intrepid' woman back in a British university.

There are parallels with the position of the female academic in the 1970s universities described by Okely (chap. 14). In early twentieth-century Britain, the female academic was seen as a sexless bluestocking, an image that persisted through the 1970s. The privileging of reason did not mean desexualising male academics, only females. Hilary Rose (1994) documents how this dichotomy persists amongst women scientists, who must appear gender-free and suppress all emotion at suspected exclusion.

The chapters by Swaisland, Kubica and Okely address differing historical and cultural contexts where women have attempted and sometimes achieved escape from prevalent definitions of womanhood through education. Like de Beauvoir, it seems that Czaplicka may have been downwardly mobile and without sufficient wealth for a dowry. Whatever the case, both women had to choose between extended education or marriage. This stark choice was in effect perpetuated in traditional collegiate universities, as illustrated in Okely's chapter and case studies of Cambridge and Oxford by Ardener and Sciama (see Ardener and Callan 1984).

The category of wife as opposed to sister and/or self-chosen spinster is found to be associated not only with Western academia but also with exported colonial systems in patrilineal societies, where women, treated as 'outsiders', were

important mainly for their role as mothers of future leaders. Buijs (chap. 10) draws attention to the usually ignored political power and significance of the sisters and daughters of rulers in traditional Southern African societies. The political influence of headwomen and female chiefs resonates with the political prominence of women in South Africa today. Although it might be argued by some that influence is never the same as formal power, it is significant that the colonial authorities and missionaries were disturbed by the power relationship between African brother and sister in view of the prevailing Western notion of women's proper place in the family as that of wife.

The threat of the sister with hereditary political powers as opposed to a wife who owes her position to selection by a man has poignant parallels with the position of the spinster woman academic. She is presumed to be autonomous rather than individually selected by one man and controlled within a male-dominated power structure. Like the sister Buijs describes, she threatens the western European patriarchal tradition. Wives, on the other hand, without the autonomy accorded by birthright or educational qualifications, are dependents, subordinate to their husbands.

But the struggle for women's public and professional identity goes beyond the individual. Women consciously or unconsciously have worked together. In Callan's discussion of collegiality she refers to the negotiation of identities 'under construction' and the 'double vision/divided self', i.e., the observer self subordinated to engaged actor. In a coalescing world, she describes the very newness of the category and its rhetoric, which enable individuals to experience solidarity with each other, in opposition to the usual contrasts of language, personal occupational background, political culture, position in education, privilege, gender and age. In so doing, ethnic identities and nationalities are negotiated in new situations, especially where, as in the cases she describes, there is an absence of symbolic systems characteristic of mature organisations and established communities of practice, showing how in the real world the bridging of differences and building of solidarity are actually undertaken. Jaschok and Shui (chap. 7) provide a concrete example in China. Similarly, Loudon and Frankenberg (chap. 11) illustrate this, although in the case they document identity springs from unexpected and what might otherwise be considered tragic material circumstances.

## Conclusion

Identity and network, the central themes of this book, have gained renewed significance in our global world of intensified cultural exchange, collision and recomposition. The chapters that follow were written to celebrate Shirley Ardener's contribution to the anthropological study of gender and ethnic identity and the intricate collegial networking she has engendered over the last four decades. The authors are friends and colleagues of Shirley Ardener, who readily

and gratefully admit to Shirley's intellectual and social stimulus for their work. The 'Afterwords' of this book provide several reminiscences from her colleagues and outline the fruits of her creative energy – her numerous publications and institution-building activities.

## Notes

1. This introduction reflects extensive discussions about the thematic content of this edited collection between Judith Okely, Jonathan Webber, and myself. I am grateful for their insights but take full responsibility for all of the chapter's shortcomings.
2. For example, see 'Comment and Analysis: The Ordinary Bombers', *New Scientist*, 23 July 2005, p. 18.

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