

May 3, 2005

## 23 TRANSNATIONALISM, GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURE

Read: Appadurai, Arjun, 1990, Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy

Verdery, Katherine, 1998. Transnationalism, nationalism, citizenship, and property: Eastern Europe since 1989

- I. Today we'll look at transnationalism and ethnonational identity in Tonga, and an essay on Croatia and the Canadian Croatian diaspora
- II. Transgenderism is widespread in Tonga and elsewhere in the S. Pacific<sup>1</sup>
  - A. Traditional patterns of cross-dressing—not brand new
    1. Beauty contests with prizes are held
    2. In Tonga: a yearly Miss Galaxy pageant
      - a. Seems to be a display of transgendered glamour
      - b. But equally the contest is a show of *translocality*
        - 1) Modernity and hybridity are performed; cosmopolitanism, migration, non-local values, symbols, languages, body practices, etc
      - c. Translocality is opposed to *Locality* (here meaning Tonganness)
  - B. The stereotype of local transgendered men, called Fakaleiti is:
    1. Feminine comportment
    2. Greater affinity with women than men
    3. Being responsible for domestic work in the home
    4. Employment in professions regularly associated with women
    5. They associate with domestic rather than public spheres
    6. Some experience with cross-dressing

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<sup>1</sup> Information from Niko Besnier, Transgenderism, locality and the Miss Galaxy Beauty Pageant in Tonga. *American Ethnologist* 29. 3: 534-566, 2002.

7. Engaging in sexual relations with “straight” men
- C. The Miss Galaxy beauty pageant
1. The antithesis of the Miss Heilala pageant
    - a. Which involves real women performing Tonganness
    - b. With speech, body postures
    - c. Tongans will return from New Zealand, Australia, California to participate
      - 1) Are likely to be judged as poor dancers, not proficient in spoken Tongan
    - d. In this contest, locality is supposed to triumph over cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, the industrial world
  2. Contrasts:
    - a. Carnavalesque (as opposed to the serious—at times tedious Miss Heilala)
    - b. Is for fun
    - c. A “camp” sensibility. An event of outstanding exoticism
    - d. Nonlocal clothing, language, names, mannerisms, performances, gender itself
    - e. Examples of nonlocality:
      - 1) Contestants appear in “national” costumes
      - 2) Miss Rarotonga, Miss Switzerland, Miss South America
      - 3) Emulating beauty pageants, watched on TV
      - 4) Their names: Lady Amyland, Suzie from Sosefo, Priscilla Pressland, Aisa De Lorenzo, Aodushi Kiroshoto—chosen for exotic sounds
      - 5) Background music: William Tell Overture, etc.
      - 6) Language: supposed to speak English as much as possible

- 7) Fakaleiti are in general expected to speak English more readily than nontransgendered
  - 8) Seen as self-assured and brash, shameless (even though many are self-effacing)
  - f. Clearly, the stereotypes depict contestants as oriented toward modernity, the West, transnationalism
3. The interplay of gender and modernity
- a. In general in Tonga, speaking English has feminine undertones
    - 1) Competes with a code of traditionalism
  - b. Because in general a language of modernity is associated with women's aspirations for upward mobility and emancipation from the strictures of tradition
  - c. Notion that girls study harder, and women more talkative by nature
  - d. So, all men who speak "too much" English do so at the risk of compromising their masculinity
  - e. Tongans born overseas are awkward in performing Tongan maleness
  - f. They are often branded as fakaleiti-like regardless of lack of effeminacy
  - g. In general, the use of English indexes (points to) a deficient Tonganness, masculinity
4. Discuss: difference with situation described by Marisol de la Cadena for Peruvian Indians?
5. An extra ingredient: the complicated identity of the Fakaleiti with respect to gender, class, and translocality
- D. What are the Fakaleiti hoping for?
- 1. These men are socially marginalized in many ways—economically, socially

2. The link-up to international glamour provides a (temporary) escape route from local dynamics of social exclusion and poverty
3. Temporarily can try to constitute selves that foreground their superiority over, and autonomy from the rest of society
  - a. Can't actually travel
4. tPerforming/subscribing to nonlocality provides symbolic resources
5. Enables them to claim that they are exempt from local morality and forms of exchange that marginalize and degrade them (like marriage)
6. Many of them idealize the West
7. See it as a source of desirable marriage partners, financial security, etc.
  - a. A source of partners who will take care of them, rather than their having to financially take care of their Tongan boyfriends ("straight" Tongan men)
  - b. Obviously a fantasy, not the reality of what the West offers
8. They reject hormones to increase feminine appearance
9. As elsewhere in the Pacific, they reject gay identity
  - a. "God made man and woman," they say
10. They scorn what they see as the foregrounding of sexuality in Western gay identity (e.g., gay pride parades)

E. Conclusion:

1. Some authors say that globalization brings challenges to the received order
  - a. Modernity, etc.
2. But although we see the fakaleiti temporarily enacting a glamorous translocality
  - a. They reject Western gay and lesbian identities
3. "The modern," "the West" is reconfigured and local meanings are worked into the meanings that arrive from elsewhere

4. Appadurai's notion of homogenization and heterogenization

### III. The Croatian case<sup>2</sup>

- A. Croatia: following the 1989 collapse of communism and Yugoslavia
  1. Verdery: political parties had no recognizable political platforms
  2. Democratic process very unfamiliar, to say the least
  3. Rejection of communism, opening for discourses relating to pre-Soviet era
- B. National symbols proved so potent that no political group could entirely avoid them
  1. Nationalism was turned into political capital, and increased—which surprised everyone
  2. Rewriting of constitutions began
  3. Socialist-era constitutions: all socialist citizens had been on equal footing
  4. This collapsed—ambitious politicians manipulated the very definition of citizenship
- C. Verdery's discussion of Latvia, Estonia, Croatia, Slovenia
  1. Nationalities were turned into majorities and minorities
  2. New, differential citizenship rights
  3. Particularly restrictive citizenship procedures in the Baltic states
  4. Disenfranchising large numbers of the resident Russians
  5. Estonia 1992 elections, nearly 40% forbidden to vote, most of them Russians
  6. Citizens were defined by native Estonian language and descent
  7. We can call this "Constitutional nationalism"
    - a. Privileges members of one ethnation over others

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<sup>2</sup> Information from Daphne Winland, The politics of desire and disdain: Croatian identity between "home" and "homeland" *American Ethnologist* 29. 3: 693-718, 2002.

- D. Croatian independence in 1992 fulfilled a one-thousand-year-old dream
  - 1. Recuperation, revivals, festivals, etc., Croatian icons, monuments, folk songs
- E. An estimated half of all Croatians live outside the homeland
  - 1. Diaspora Croatians desired a free Croatia, but independence has created conditions for the emergence and exacerbation of often fraught relationships within and between groups
  - 2. Desire for the homeland not necessarily coterminous with return to it
  - 3. Not much scholarship has been done on the roles of homeland peoples
    - a. They change as a result of interaction with diasporic peoples
  - 4. Remember point made earlier in semester that ethnicity is a relationship?
  - 5. Clearly everywhere diasporas construct notions of homelands in ways often very different from homelanders' constructions
    - a. Leading to ambivalence and tensions
- F. History: economic immigrants to Canada earlier in century
  - 1. Endured hardships early in Canada, target of stereotypes of racial inferiority (E. Europeans)
  - 2. The early ones had leftist leanings
  - 3. They labeled those who came after World War II as "war criminals"
  - 4. "Ustase"—the Croatian fascist separatist organization during WW II
  - 5. These later ones resented the earlier ones, saw them as naïve about communism
- G. Tensions within Croatia played out in Canada too
- H. Canadian state's policy of official multiculturalism
  - 1. Point we've encountered often—the state wields power, influences the nature of ethnicity

2. Croatian heritage language programs, music and folklore groups flourished
  3. They had to play the politics of recognition on the basis of terms set by the Canadian state
  4. Foregrounding ethnocultural traditions as part of the Croatian contribution to the (cultural) fabric of Canadian society
- I. Over the years Toronto Croatians had seen themselves as a victim diaspora
1. Saw their countrymen Croatians in communist Yugoslavia as their oppressed brethren
  2. Independence brought changes
  3. To already unstable and ambivalent bases of loyalty, affiliation and identity
- J. Homeland Croatians had endured enormous upheavals sociopolitical, economic, personal nature
1. Needed to come to terms with the transition from communism and see themselves as citizens
  2. Many said yes, we should valorize Croatian culture and heritage, but large number of critics inside and outside disapproved of the direction of post independence political, economic and social processes
- K. Initial euphoria at independence
1. But soon the national policies and practices of Tudjman's regime were criticized (autocratic and corrupt, many believed)
- L. Tudjman's support came from diaspora Croatians
1. Many are strongly nationalist, represent sentiments and qualities valorized by nationalist elites at home
  2. Illustration of Verdery's citation of Anderson's "politics without accountability"
    - a. Refugees who contribute funds to violent nationalist organizations in their home countries while living peacefully in a suburb or Paris or Montreal<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Verdery, p. 293

## M. Diaspora Croatsians

1. Vote in federal elections...Croatia is a multi-sited nation-state maintained through transnational means
  - a. They were politically and economically involved
2. Interested in promoting the reproduction of images depicting a romantic and idealized social, cultural, and political landscape
3. Nationalist sentiments of diasporic Croatsians were resented by many homelanderers
4. Who do not share the ethnonational vision of Croatia
5. Regional differences hardened; came to be defined in cultural terms
  - a. People held very firmly fixed notions of regional identity—impervious to change
  - b. “The snob from Zagreb,” etc.
  - c. Some nationalists said that some Croatsians could never be “good” Croatsians
    - 1) If they’re unpatriotic, if they don’t valorize the Croatian past
    - 2) Are said to be “Yugonostalgic”
    - 3) Called “Yugo-zombies”
  - d. Those targeted tended to be intellectuals and journalists
6. Some of the most ethnically based negative comments author Daphne Winland heard
  - a. Were not about Serbs or Bosnian Muslims
  - b. But about Croats from Bosnia-Herzegovina and diaspora Croatsians
  - c. These are the two groups most valorized by Croatian nationalist elites

- N. Croatsians at home characterized diasporic Croatsians as:
1. “Nationalists from the last century”
  2. Resented them
  3. Said they act preachy and superior
  4. Also resented politicians’ high regard for diasporic Croatsians
  5. Said that those who return from the diaspora receive preferential treatment by government authorities
  6. Inferred (and resented) diasporic Croatsians’ ideas that
    - a. Homelanderers are somehow suspect for remaining in Croatia
    - b. Homeland Croatsians are stupid
    - c. Homelanderers are lacking in Croatian political or national consciousness
    - d. Because they tacitly accepted Marshall Tito (who had ruled communist Yugoslavia)
- O. Many of the Croatsians who fled to Canada after WW II
1. Did so because they feared retribution by Tito’s Communist party for suspected involvement with Ustase insurgents
    - a. Which had installed a puppet during Nazi occupation
    - b. Killed lots of Serbs, Slovenes
- P. Comments by Tudjman before he died
1. In essence he relativized the genocidal aspects of the Ustase past as a “normal” process of war
  2. The post-1990 process of ethnonational homogenization produced fears among Croatsians in Canada that Croatsians would be seen as an inherently fascist people
- Q. The intensification of transnational links has resulted in a movement to reclaim and redefine Croatian origins and affiliations
1. The nationalist dream

2. This did not necessarily signal a desire by all to replace the communist regime with one modeled on the Canadian liberal-democratic plural state
  3. The virulently anticommunist nationalists were suspicious of democracy
- R. So, independence has served to exacerbate existing tensions and contradictions
1. A concretization and essentializing of a distinctively Croatian culture
  2. Many diaspora Croatians feel that homelanders should look to them for inspiration and guidance in transition to democracy
  3. For they see themselves as exemplars of a democracy
  4. Say that homelanders “don’t know the meaning of democracy, were under the communists for so long, they have a lot to learn”
- S. Conclusions:
1. Verdery’s point: diaspora and homeland relations and identities are mutually constituted
  2. The classic modernist logic that diaspora patterns of identification function to undermine the cultural and territorial goals and political vision of the nation-state
    - a. Is wrong
  3. One must study the impact of diaspora-homeland relations on identity formation
  4. Examine the local in relation to transnational connections
  5. Keeping in mind that the homeland dimension is more than just the object of diaspora imaginings
  6. Rather, it’s a crucial site of diaspora identity politics
  7. Diaspora and homeland relations must be analyzed in their historical specificity