



SESSION ABSTRACT

Waiting and State-making narratives (Young Scholar's Forum)

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Abstract: Waiting can be existential, affectual, socio-cultural and political. This session seeks to explore these various facets of waiting, particularly in regards to how waiting becomes an intrinsic part of state-making and imposing existing power-structures. Climate-change and apocalyptic narratives, COVID, infrastructures, bureaucracy, corruption, citizenship, refugees and homeland, etc. are all vast issues that can gain interesting tangents if explored via the lens of temporality or more particularly – waiting.

Blaise Pascal noted how waiting can be an indication of a life worth living for – waiting, though frustrating and anxiety inducing, can also imply expectations, hope from life. Most people's everyday relations with the state, particularly in the 'Global South' are shaped by continued passive waiting – for improved living conditions. The state hence, anchors state-making in the tropes of 'promise' which leads to further hoping and waiting. The session aims to bring out discussions that look at such state-society relations without considering them as fixed binaries or negating the fact that each can change the other in the process. Looking at the politics of waiting can help locate discussions surrounding agency too. Can waiting be agentive? From larger movements like Black Lives Matter (BLM) or smaller acts such as forgery of documents or engaging in other 'extra-legal' activities, waiting can result in brilliant moments of resistance. But waiting and agency can raise questions regarding how exactly we epistemically understand waiting – is it non-action? Stagnancy?

The session aims to prioritize ethnographic accounts that theoretically looks at waiting and the state by locating it in defined contexts and communities. Format proposed is classic presentation of 15 minutes each to carefully explore each contextual take on waiting and state-making, for we see the potentiality of coming up of interesting ethnographic accounts in regard to the issue at hand.

Discussant: Sayan Dey

SESSION SCHEDULE

Tuesday, September 27, 2022 | Slot 1 | Room 3

Rohi Jehan – Waiting: A Journey from Individual to Collective Resistance in Kashmir.

Amina B. Cervellera – Waiting for development: The Northern Apennines between abandonment and revival.

Prateek Srivastava – Waiting to be buried: Perspectives on citizenship from the forced cremation movement in Sri Lanka.

Lisa Duczmal – Waiting for a Better Life: Waithood and migration in Albania.

Arber Jashari – Waiting as an ethical practice in Kosovo's movement of non-violent resistance in the 1990s.

Thursday, September 29, 2022 | Slot 4 | Room 3

Ziyaad Dockrat – Nation-state and Epistolary Anticipations.

Sucharita Sengupta – Waiting to Belong? Women, War of words and activism in Rohingya camps in Bangladesh.

Pascale Schild – The politics of unfulfilled promises: Waiting for the state in post-earthquake Azad Kashmir, Pakistan.

Mohsin Ali – Waiting as a site of mutual (re)makings of state and subjects in Pakistan's cash transfers program.

Michael Anranter – Unintended Stopovers at a Service Area: Waiting for State Authorities to Unblock the Street.

SESSION PAPERS

Waiting: A Journey from Individual to Collective Resistance in Kashmir

Rohi Jehan

After Mogal's son disappeared in 1990, for many years she would prepare tea for her son and wait for him to return as suddenly as he had disappeared (Zia, 2019). Mogal was associated with the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), a human rights organisation in Kashmir asking for their disappeared relatives from the Indian state. Mogal died in October 2009 but the waiting of the relatives of disappeared persons continues in multiple forms.

When I interviewed Shazia, member of APDP, in March 2022, she told me that she has not met other members of the organisation since 2019. On the 10th of every month the members would meet in a public park in Srinagar Kashmir and protest for their disappeared relatives. However, since August 2019 when the special status of Jammu and Kashmir was abrogated and the gathering of more than four people was banned,

the members stopped going to the park. The government put further restrictions on the meetings after Covid 19 outbreak. While waiting for the meetings to happen again, Shazia says that the public meetings were not only a protest site for her, but the gatherings would bring consolation to her sufferings.

On one hand, Mogal and Shazia are connected to each other through waiting i.e., waiting for their relatives. On the other hand, they have individual relationship with waiting. Waiting is more than a certain amount of time, it is experienced time (Schweizer, 2008). APDP members experience time through collective resistance and they have their individual experience with the waiting like waiting in their homes, waiting for the police to register a case, waiting to start the meeting again. By taking APDP as an example, the paper explores how the common and individual experience with waiting criss-crosses the individual agency and collective movement.

Waiting to Belong? – Women, war of words and activism in Rohingya camps of Bangladesh

Sucharita Sengupta

In this chapter, I wish to explore how gender mediates between time and waiting in an apparent closeted structure like that of a refugee camp, of 'stateless'^[1] persons like the Rohingya in Bangladesh. Refugee camps very often assume the character of a semi or permanent settlements. This precarity of existence is marked by a timeless waiting and hence waiting is both temporal and fluid. Waiting however means different things for refugee women. It is pertinent to think here how one makes sense of waiting in such a settlement. How does one keep track of time and makes sense of it? It is thus intriguing to think about how waiting can be conceptualised by the everyday living experiences of migrants in a closeted space like that of a refugee camp. How does one feel about being stuck? How does one navigate through a supposedly frigid space that is spatially mobile but not in temporality? How do stateless migrants make sense of waiting- how do they look at prolonged periods of waiting that are not stagnant, but rather prolifically active? Is this a period marked by hopelessness or by intense, ceaseless hope? Waiting and hope are intricately connected with each other as without hope can there be any waiting?

While it is true that in a highly patriarchal society like that of the Rohingya, women endure several restrictions, on the other hand, for refugee women, it could be also liberating in a sense, because they often are compelled to dawn new roles of being the bread earners in absence of the men in a new setting like the camps. *What does this freedom entail? What are the risks and myths surrounding this existence?* These are some of the questions that this chapter will explore.

[1] People who are denied a 'citizenship' status

Waiting to be Buried: Perspectives on Citizenship from the Forced Cremation Movement in Sri Lanka

Prateek Srivastava

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2020, sent shockwaves over the planet, with diverse consequences for different groups. Sri Lanka responded to the outbreak rather quickly and efficiently. Along with the strategic reaction, Sri Lankans were

forced to cremate their loved ones, performed by the authorities for a mandatory charge of \$300, after a disputed prohibition on 'burials' of COVID19 victims. This strategy was seen as "discriminatory" and aimed specifically towards the country's Muslim population. Ideally, protests and marches would have taken place, but because to the prevalent COVID-19 cases and curfew limitations, hundreds of people took to social media to show their support, posting photographs of a white cloth tied around a metal gate with the hashtag #StopForcedCremations. This movement expanded in size and drew worldwide notice.

This policy, as well as the accompanying pushback, highlighted the aspect of waiting among Sri Lanka's Muslim communities. Most people who protested were waiting and trying to develop a standard argument that this regulation was discriminatory and should be abolished while the resistance was unrestrained. Their defiance sprang from a desire to be counted as citizens with the ability to exercise their religious freedom. I investigate the resistance of young Muslim activists in Sri Lanka using ethnographic data and in-depth interviews to examine how they deal with the 'wait' to bury their lost loved ones, and, more crucially, how they wait to recover their political citizenship.

This study adds to the expanding body of knowledge on resistance and the broader concept of political citizenship and is directly related to the panel's theme and expands on the bigger themes of waiting and agency, as well as larger questions of state-making. This movement is an example of how patience may pay off in the form of great moments of resistance.

Waiting for a better Life - Waithood and Migration in Albania

Lisa Duczmal

Many, especially young, people in Albania are waiting for their situation and their country to change for the better. With Albania having one of Europe's highest emigration rates, the wish to end the wait by migrating seems obvious. But the attempt to leave the country does not end the waiting - it rather reinforces it.

In 2018 I spent four months in Tirana to conduct the field research for my master thesis in Social Anthropology and talked to young Albanians who tried to return to Germany, from where they previously had to remigrate to Albania. But the plan to migrate is not an easy one and is further obstructed by the strict legal requirements Albanians have to meet to live and work in Germany. Multiple bureaucratic obstacles force the young Albanians to wait, mostly for events or decisions out of their control.

Many of them wait for a specific event, like an appointment at the German embassy or the beginning of a required language class, but for a lot of my informants, waiting has become existential. The perpetual wait for a final return to Germany oftentimes prevents my informants from making bigger life changes, like moving, getting in a relationship or starting a family - resulting in the feeling of being stuck or in a constant waiting stage.

During my research, I discovered the important role that this waiting plays in the young peoples' lives, making the wait a shared experience. Since waiting always reproduces existing power structures, the young Albanians experience first-hand how Germany and the EU actively enforce their borders and control migrants' mobility.

In my talk I will demonstrate the theoretical conclusions that can be drawn from my research and how they can be linked to and complement other approaches, especially the concept of waitthood by Honwana (2012).

Waiting as an ethical practice in Kosovo's movement of non-violent resistance in the 1990s

Arber Jashari

As the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early years of the 1990s quickly turned violent and pitted constituent republics against one-another, an overwhelming majority of ordinary people in Kosovo embraced a societal-wide movement of non-violent resistance to the oppressive policies adopted and implemented by the state of Serbia. Kosovo's non-violent movement, which ran for almost a decade but was largely overshadowed by a subsequent violent conflict at the end of the 1990s, was built and sustained upon strong moral foundations of solidarity.

In a recent overview study on the non-violent movement from an anthropological point of view, conducted as part of an MA thesis research, I argued that Kosovo's movement was characterized by the invocation of an ethics of solidarity. Waiting was among a set of concrete ethical practices in which ordinary people were invested during this period, in addition to forgiving and listening. It was, in part, through honing the virtue of waiting that ordinary people showed unprecedented solidarity in the face of adversity.

Drawing on the main arguments put forth in the above-mentioned study, in this presentation I will elaborate on the meaning and role of waiting as an ethical and affective practice within Kosovo's movement of non-violent resistance in the 1990s. In doing so, I hope to offer a concrete example which argues for an understanding of waiting as active and purposeful as opposed to the conventional view of it as a passive activity.

Nation-state and Epistolary Anticipations

Ziyaad Dockrat

In the current post-modern moment, dominated by neoliberal political commitments and micro-identities, Appadurai's notion of the nation-state (1990, 594) – where the hyphen signifies a cannibalistic tension between the nation as an entity and the state as a political actor – has cemented itself in the sociological imagination. Boundary formation has been thrust into the forefront of political discourse, igniting debates around the relative estimation of personhood and belonging: who belongs and where? Meditating upon the textually amplified identities of Indian migrants, at the twilight of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, illumines how the politics of waiting is tethered to the formation of the state, both corporeally and imaginatively. Judith Misrahi-Barak's archival work concerning epistolary Kala Pani crossings (2017), demonstrates how the beleaguered correspondence between indentured labourers and their families (remaining in India) were treated as forms of ontological doubt-seeding. Families were subjected to endlessly waiting for communication from those departed, who at times resorted to existential reincarnations: constructing fresh identities to eschew traditional caste-imposed identities with the adoption of a different name in the country of their deployment.

This provides a crucial disjuncture between the (in)activity of waiting and the activity of state-making, whereby the position one inhabits in the landscape of migration determined the existential occupation one would be indulged in. Whether one could actively reshape their identity and be included in the process of colonial state-making or whether one was fixed in the country of their origin, waiting for contact from their departed relatives.

Waiting for development. The northern Apennines between abandonment and revival

Amina Bianca Cervellera

Through the presentation of an ethnographic case related to the Curone and Borbera valleys, in Piedmont's Apennine, I intend to reflect on waiting as an existential horizon for the inhabitants of the Italian mountains. In Italy the problem of the development of mountain regions seen as marginal, depressed and disadvantaged arose in the period immediately following national unification in 1861 and is still debated today, although in different forms. State-making has historically been inseparable from attempting to incorporate the mountains, remote and peripheral with respect to the new geography of power, into the nation. However, many policies specifically developed for the mountains have not had the desired effects and territorial inequalities remain an open issue.

The valleys of south-eastern Piedmont, which in recent decades have undergone a severe process of depopulation and economic decline, are an eloquent example of developmental trajectories traced but not completed. European and state funds allocated for the development of this area have often been managed according to the urgency of intercepting public money. This resulted in the start of several buildings that have not been finished.

The unfinished buildings that dot the Curone and Borbera valleys are the symbol of a suspended present. The expectation of a new destination for these buildings is an effective exemplification of the expectation of the inhabitants of the valleys, disappointed by decades of unfulfilled promises. What I would like to argue is that waiting does not imply only passivity and resignation. For some inhabitants, in fact, marginality does not represent a limit from which to emancipate themselves, but a precondition for the elaboration of alternatives to development and of new meaningful ways of coexistence, not necessarily framed in the narratives of revival imagined by the State.

The politics of unfulfilled promises: Waiting for the state in post-earthquake Azad Kashmir, Pakistan

Pascale Schild

In this paper, I draw on the aftermath of the 2005 earthquake in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-controlled Azad Kashmir, as an ethnographic window on state-people relationships that intensified as the disaster brought new opportunities for Pakistan and the local state to intervene in the rebuilding of everyday life. While state intervention promised material help for earthquake survivors, it not only enabled people to imagine and make claims on the caring state, but also exposed them to the violence of bureaucracy and corruption, limited democracy, and neoliberal politics – causing delays, uncertainty and neglect. Using the analytical lens of emotional

ambivalence, my paper focuses on how people waited and hoped for the state to intervene and help, but sometimes did not wait for it at all, experiencing and negotiating the violence *and* care of multiple entangled forms of state power. Waiting and/or moving ahead (without waiting for the state), I argue, point us to the ambivalent feelings about the state in Azad Kashmir (and elsewhere) and the everyday practices of people who want the state, but also often reject and seek to avoid it. Rather than opposing state intervention, people negotiated this ambivalence and the promise of material help and care after the earthquake in complicated and nuanced ways through accusations of corruption, rumors and mockery, contesting and redrawing the state's boundaries in society situationally. While – due to the longstanding territorial dispute over the state of Jammu and Kashmir between Pakistan and India – the people of Azad Kashmir have been waiting for political self-determination for decades (as have the people in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir), this boundary work enabled them to navigate the lack of political accountability and to participate in 'democracy from below', binding state authorities to their promises of care.

Waiting as a site of mutual (re)makings of state and subjects in Pakistan's cash transfers program

Ali Mohsin

Last couple of decades have witnessed the rise and spread of politics of cash transfers that has been dubbed "development revolution from the Global South" (Hanlon et al. 2012). Pakistan's Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), declared an "irreversible paradigm shift" (Gazdar 2011) in social protection, was rolled out in 2008 with the ambitious goals of poverty reduction and women empowerment. It can be understood as a national version of a "global financial inclusion assemblage" (Schwittay 2011) with its own subjects, rationalities and technics. Last few years have seen a valorization of efforts to make the program more transparent mainly through reliance upon the fingerprinting biometric verification systems at the distribution centers where beneficiaries come to receive their cash grants. Biometrics-aided transparency efforts have been presented as an uncontested good in and of themselves – both by the government and its powerful international partners (World Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Delivery Associates etc.). What receives little attention is the experiences of the beneficiaries who now have to wait for hours, often under testing weather conditions, and eventually might not be able to match their fingerprints, hence being denied their cash grants. In such cases, they are told to go to the National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) offices and update their fingerprints, where they are made to wait again in long queues. Based on extensive research at the BISP's offices and the distribution centers in Lahore, this paper takes these politics and poetics of waiting as a site – even as a "theatre" (Geertz 1980) – where everyday (re)configurations of political relationalities and mutual (re)makings of state and subjects are put on display.

Unintended Stopovers at a Service Area: Waiting for State Authorities to Unblock the Street

Michael Anranter

At the beginning of my research stay, I thought truck drivers choose where to rest. Soon, however, I realised that in addition to the regular (and likewise prescribed) breaks and stops, there were also stops that were not at all intended: Accidents, weather hazards, but also medical conditions, political protest and traffic overload. All

of these cases led to situations in which the mostly Bulgarian and Turkish truck drivers were forced to turn the rest stop into their waiting room for an unknown period of time.

The aim of this paper is to better understand the forms of compulsory waiting at a service area. Did turning the service area into a waiting room alter social relations? How did people involved perceive mandatory waiting? Embedded in the depiction of blockade situations along E-79 near Vidin (in Bulgaria), this contribution is meant to explore how both, truck drivers and petrol station employees, who did not wait by themselves but equally experienced waiting first-hand, encountered waiting ordered and controlled by the authorities. Paying tribute to the various causes for interruption and avoiding simplified representation, I assume that in addition to 'waiting', at the service area I did also had a chance to observe what G. Hage describes as 'waiting out' (Hage 2009). Considering the relationship between the citizens and the state in Bulgaria, a closer look at the forms of waiting becomes exciting: the road blockade and enforced occupation of the rest stop on the part of state authorities frequently considered to be absent and to be better avoided by many of my interlocutors, challenged confrontation.