

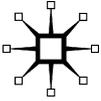
A COMPARATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY
OF ALTERNATIVE SPACES

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Edited by
Jens Dahl and Esther Fihl

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is a result of a collective and interdisciplinary research project formulated by the authors of the chapters. In the initial discussions when comparing our ethnographies from different parts of the modern world, we came to envision certain structures, networks, situations, and livelihoods as bearing features of in between or twilight realities located between established states, local institutions, or moralities. Since we saw some of them as resembling cracks in formal power structures or as volatiles with no permanent or codified structures, we decided, as a research group, to try to explore our different ethnographies as alternative spaces.

Our ambition has been to challenge existing understandings of cultural encounters by confronting these with empirical knowledge from the current global world order. Through a series of long-term and short-term fieldwork studies in Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Central Asia, China, India, Caucasus, Mexico, Russia, Singapore, Syria, Tanzania, The United Nation in New York and Geneva, as well as through Internet studies, we have obtained material on innovative forms of global social organization and communication among cultural and religious groups. This led to studying the new kinds of agendas and the effects and affects involved in the different settings.

Many ideas and theoretical perspectives have along the way been shared within the research group. However, we are sincerely grateful to all the colleagues and the audience who participated in our conference and PhD seminar “Alternative Spaces and Cultural Translations,” which we arranged with The Regional PhD school in spring 2009, and for all the constructive comments we received on very early drafts of the chapters of this book.

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Our research project was entitled “Alternative Spaces—Cultural Awareness and Cross-cultural Dialogues” and has been part of a larger research program on “cultural understanding” launched by The Danish Council for Strategic Research of the Danish Agency for Science. To promote effect and relevance for the research findings we have been collaborating with *Kulturkurser.dk*. We are grateful for substantial funding from the above research program and are also thankful for financial support from The Faculty of Humanity at the University of Copenhagen, The Danish Research Council for Culture and Communication (FKK), The Danish Research Council for Society and Trade (FSE), and for the Elite Research Price granted by the Minister of Research to Ph.D. fellows Andreas Bandak and Stine Puri Simonsen, respectively.

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JENS DAHL AND ESTHER FIHL
Copenhagen, June 30, 2012

ABOUT THE COVER ILLUSTRATION

In her life, the Danish artist Emilie Demant Hatt (1873–1958) looked for alternatives to her farmer family background and in her paintings she often captured the alternative in the form of twilight and the floating “in-betweenness”. In 1907–1908 she lived for one year among Sami reindeer herders of northern Scandinavia, taking ethnographical notes, photos, and making sketches and paintings of nomadic life. She did most of the transcriptions and the organization of the manuscript for Johan Turi’s “Book of Lapland” (1931), which as the first text written in Sami by a Sami author has become a classic. Later, she married Gudmund Hatt, professor of cultural geography at the University of Copenhagen, and with him, she traveled to various parts of the world, including the Tropics, and the cover illustration is from that part of her life. Oil painting, privately owned.