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The survival of *dugnad*

Exploring the meanings and adaptabilities of *dugnad* as a concept and function in contemporary Norwegian society.

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1 INTRODUCTION

I started my fieldwork in May 2020, two months after Norway went into lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. And two months after, I was supposed to leave for Berlin, where I initially planned to do my master's project. During March and April, faced with the travel ban and complete collapse of my plans, I spend days locked in my home, almost obsessively consuming news from Poland, my home country, and Norway, where I currently live. The difference in media coverage, authorities' responses, and citizens' approaches were vastly different. As soon as the Polish authorities imposed restrictions, I was flooded with news reports and social media posts about people resisting it, finding ways around recommendations, and questioning the existence of the virus. Included in the denialist discourse were prominent politicians from the ruling party. That fact juxtaposed with the Norwegian government and citizens responding with rationality and complying with rules, made me curious as to why it is like that. That led me to explore the concept of *dugnad*, a word that I was familiar with and identify with outdoor cleaning, that I have suddenly seen in every store, corner of the street, and newspaper. *Dugnad* is the term for common, unpaid work for the community (Simon, Mobekk 2019). The day Norway went into lockdown, Bent Høie, health minister, called citizens to join the national *dugnad*. I wondered, is using it in political rhetoric so powerful that it can make everyone stay home? Initially, I wanted to find out how people in Tromsø are reacting to the pandemic and the reasons for that. *Dugnad* was supposed to be just the departure point.

By the time I picked up the camera, the situation in northern Norway had stabilized. Compared to other places in the world, we were living a "normal life". That left me, once again, questioning my research project idea. That also meant that, with keeping precautions, people could physically meet in groups and that I could attend the actual *dugnad*. I decided to follow that path and explore the concept in its whole complexity. I observed people working together, taking part in what is generally considered a *dugnad*, and discussing symbolic use of the term by asking about the *corona dugnad*. As an outsider, I considered it an amazing opportunity to better understand the mentality, and grasp a sense of who Norwegians are. I wanted to get a better understanding of the social reality surrounding me.

The purpose of my research project is to understand the meaning of *dugnad* for people practicing it. I start with giving a historical overview of *dugnad*. The practice can be traced back to agricultural societies. In those days, *dugnad* was a form of mutual aid on the farms (Norddoølum 1980). Despite modernization and the shift to modern, industrial society, *dugnad* prevailed. That leads me to the following questions:

How did the tradition change and evolve throughout the centuries?

Why has dugnad as a cultural practice prevailed?

What are the functions of dugnad in modern society?

Dugnad is, in the end, work for free. Participation is not obligatory. Yet, people choose to dedicate their free time. I attempt to find out:

What is the motivation for participating in dugnad?

What personal benefits does participation in dugnad give to an individual?

Throughout my fieldwork, I participated in four events. Two of the *dugnads* were organized in housing cooperatives in Tromsø, one in a small village of Stonglandseidet, and one in an urban gardening project, also in Tromsø. That gave me an opportunity to draw comparisons between those events in different settings. Hence the next objective is to explore:

What are the qualitative differences between dugnads in different settings/places?

2 ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

2.1 *Dugnad*

Norway has a long history of *dugnad* as unpaid voluntary work. Tradition can be traced back to rural fourteenth and fifteenth century communities (Simon, Mobekk 2019: 820). In the pre-industrial peasant community, *dugnad* was established as a vital part of social organization. Most of the work was done within a farm unit, but neighbor assistance was often needed and exchanged when tasks requiring more extensive labor beyond the capabilities of a single farm unit had to be accomplished (Norddølum, 1980:102). Frimannslund-Holmsen defines *dugnad* as "many persons assisting one person" and "work done by neighbors which is performed at the same time by a collective neighborhood in the interest of one farm." (1965 in Norddølum, 1980:103) Norddølum adds, "The *dugnad* was an institution made use of in certain extraordinary situations to assist a farm with well-defined task."

As structural conditions changed, trade increased and the modernization process started, neighbor assistance was no longer a means for survival. The use of the term *dugnad* has undergone a notable change, becoming a term referring to joint efforts for collective interest, not a system of neighbors' help from one individual farm to another (Klepp 1982: 84-85). During the twentieth century, *dugnad* was increasingly used to describe any kind of common work that serves the public purpose (Ibid.: 82). As Klepp claims, this proves that *dugnad* is a prestigious word and is still productive. It retains the link to its original meaning and is identified with values of loyalty and solidarity, which are still desirable, despite changing social and economic constraints.

Dugnad is voluntary work done as a community or collective, and is traditionally a way of solving problems locally. The core elements of *dugnad* are: 1) unpaid work; 2) face-to-face meeting; 3) defined tasks with start- and endpoints; 4) work is followed by a social gathering (Simon, Mobekk 2019: 818). "*Dugnad* spirit" contributes to the common good with ones' efforts, time, and work (Haugestad 2003: 1). *Dugnads* are organized in all sorts of communities: kindergartens, housing cooperatives, schools, sports clubs, voluntary organizations, amongst others. Events are usually followed by a social event, such as a shared meal, grill, or waffles.

As the term became more recognized, volunteer-based organizations also started utilizing *dugnad*. The word has also been politicized and increasingly used in national rhetoric, with politicians starting to use "national *dugnad*" as a concept (Klepp 1982: 91). It is often referred to by politicians who want to encourage certain behaviors and mobilize people to take action (Simon, Mobekk 2019:820).

Simon and Mobek (2019) ascribe the significance and widespread characteristic of *dugnad* to the unique climate and spatial features of Norway. "It is likely that special Norwegian conditions such as the spread settlement in a landscape with fjords, forests, and mountains led to the growth of small isolated communities that favored the development of the *dugnad* tradition." (ibid: 820). As people lived in sparsely populated, widely spread settlements, they were more likely to rely on neighbors' help. Until gaining wealth from an oil industry, Norway was also a relatively poor country with infrastructure deficiency; people had to deal with it on their own by a call to join voluntary work, like the building of roads, or a kindergarten. As the Norwegian model of a welfare state was developing and Norway was becoming wealthier, building infrastructure became the responsibility of the state. This meant a decrease in the need to rely on unpaid, voluntary, and unprofessional work (ibid.:821).

2.2 Norway

Norway is a relatively young state, yet an old nation. For centuries it was under Danish rule and only regained statehood in 1814. After a union with Sweden that lasted until a peaceful cease in 1905, Norway became a fully independent state (Potthoff et al., 2013).

The vast area of the country is sparsely inhabited, with a relatively small population. As of 2012, Norway reached a total of 5 million people, and today is at 5,4 million people (Statistics Norway). The main reason for population growth is migration. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Norway experienced an outflow of citizens who emigrated. It became a country of import immigration with nearly half a million migrants from non-Nordic countries, who gained residence between 1990 and 2010. In the 1960s, the majority coming to Norway were people from Pakistan and Morocco. That pattern has changed after the expansion of the European Union in 2004. Despite Norway not being part of the EU, agreements allow free labor mobility within it. A very large portion of immigrants come from Poland and the Baltic states, with migrants from Poland making up the most significant minority in Norway today (Potthoff et al., 2013; Rose Tronstad 2013).

Regarding domestic migration, some municipalities and smaller villages are increasingly overpopulated by older people. Percentage of population inhabiting urban areas is growing (Gullestad [1984] 2001: 42). As more citizens decide to pursue higher education, they move to bigger areas, often resulting in no return to rural areas, as there are no job opportunities relevant to their education (Potthoff et al. 2013). In the last decades, there have been significant changes in the labor market. As Norway was steadily becoming more and more urbanized after Second World War, employment in sectors other than fishing and agriculture was increasing. At the moment, nearly eighty percent of all jobs are in services, and a third of the workforce is employed in the public sector (Dølvik 2013).

Norway is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government and a social-democratic political system. The country has a three-level government – national, county (*fylke*), and municipal (*kommune*). Together with Denmark and Sweden, it falls under what is called the "Nordic model" of a welfare state. The model was mostly developed in the 1960s and 1970s. Welfare states are meant to be based on and value social trust, inclusiveness, equality,

and egalitarianism. It entails extended public services that are meant to provide safety and be accessible for everyone, regardless of income level or place of residence. What characterizes welfare state politics is generous parental leave, universal healthcare, just income distribution, pensions, public schooling system, and unemployment benefits. Scandinavian countries are scoring exceptionally high when it comes to gender equality, with women's participation in the labor market and politics are relatively higher than in other countries. Welfare state family politics are a big contributor to that (Dølvik 2013; Johansen 2013; Gullestad [1984] 2001).

Ensuring the security of citizens and high quality of public services result in Norway scoring high in international comparisons of life quality and living standards. That also translates to high social trust and trust in political and social institutions. Norway is often leading in international rankings as a state with the biggest trust in government (for example, in Edelman Trust Barometer or the Human Development Index) (Potthoff et al. 2013; Dølvik 2013).

I have conducted my fieldwork in northern Norway. It consists of two counties: Nordland and the northernmost Troms og Finnmark, located between 65°N and 71°N, forming the northernmost brim of the European continent (Olsen 2008: 306). The biggest city considered to be the capital of the region is Tromsø, with a population of 76,000 (Statistics Norway 2020). The region makes up one-third of the country's area, yet is inhabited by only 10 percent of the population. It lies largely beyond the Arctic Circle. Despite this location, thanks to the Gulf Stream that mitigates the climate, agriculture and farming are possible. Until the last century, people of the North were predominantly fisherman and farmers, and that has been a major source of livelihood. The last sixty years brought progressive urbanization, the shift in employment patterns, and migration from isolated fishing villages to towns and cities (Jones 2008: 291).

2.3 Visited places

Three out of a total of four *dugnads* I have visited took place in Tromsø, where I currently live. Tromsø is the biggest urban area in northern Norway, that turned into a vibrant city relatively recently. It has shifted from a rather small city into a place with a heterogeneous, international population due to growth, and immigration from both surrounding villages as well as distant countries (Nyseth 2011). A big role in that change was the establishment of the university (The Arctic University of northern Norway) in 1968 (Statistics Norway) and the popularization of Tromsø as a great location to experience the northern lights, meaning a significant growth in international tourism.

Two *dugnads* were organized in *borettslag* (housing cooperatives). *Dugnads* were called to organize spring cleaning as the snow melts, and people gather to clean up the area.

Tomasjordnes

Tomasjordnes is a modern, big, and densely populated housing cooperative in Tromsdalen, on the outskirts of Tromsø. Blocks are inhabited by roughly 2,500 people. Most of them are from small villages and towns in northern Norway and moved to Tromsø because of work or to attend the university. Foreigners live there as well. However, none of them participated in the *dugnad*. Size and the spatial organization of the neighborhood, together with population density, does not facilitate face-to-face interactions or close neighbors' relations. On top of that, many of those I met moved there fairly recently, thus a lot of houses are rented out.



Figure 1 Tomasjordnes housing cooperative

Olsgård III

Olsgård III is a much smaller housing cooperative built in the 1970s. It is located in the western part of the Tromsøya island and is inhabited by roughly 200 people spaced out in three blocks of flats. Relations in Olsgård III are significantly more personal compared to Tomasjordnes. Residents, just like in the first *borettslag* mentioned, are mostly not originally from Tromsø and relocated to the city as young adults. Some with non-Norwegian backgrounds live there as well, and I had the chance to meet some of the foreigners during cleaning.

Dyrk

The last *dugnad* I studied in Tromsø had a different character. *Dyrk* is a city community garden located in Tromsø, in Rambergan & St.Hanshaugen. The location has a history of being a place of social gatherings for the people of the city. This is where occasions like New Year's Eve were celebrated in past times. Once a vibrant square covered with roses, it was forgotten for many years. *Dyrk* is an attempt to bring it back to life and restore its character. *Dyrk* was established five years ago. The number of members varies from year to year, with the year 2020 being an exception because of the pandemic, where there was an increase in interest for the initiative. As Norwegians were strongly encouraged not to plan their holidays abroad, many people spent most of the summer in the city. Additionally, some lost their jobs, leaving them with the free time they can spend gardening. The garden consists of forty raised garden beds

with vegetables, herbs and berries planted. Much of them are for common use; everyone involved can use crops. Some are assigned to specified members.



Figure 2 Dyrk

Stonglandseidet

One of the *dugnads* I visited, contrary to those mentioned above, took place in a rural setting. Stonglandseidet is a small village with a population of nearly 250 people, located in the southern part of Senja island. Senja is known for being a great tourist destination due to its breathtaking landscape and nature. The village has its own supermarket, school, kindergarden, hospital, church, and two cemeteries. The shop is the center of life in the village: this is where people meet, and all the local announcements are shared. All my informants were deeply rooted to the place, having spent significant part of their lives there, and were strongly involved in the community. I could clearly tell that those who came to the *dugnad* have known each other for many years and are connected by bonds more substantial than just neighbors' relations.

2.4 Identifying main actors

My research was focused on the phenomenon, not the individuals. To get an extensive and nuanced understanding of *dugnad*, I aimed to get in touch with as many participants as I was capable of and as circumstances allowed. My objective was to gather and compare various perspectives on what *dugnad* means for different persons. Hence, the list of main actors is quite long. Not to mention I had many conversations and interactions with other participants of *dugnads*. Below I will provide a brief introduction of the informants I spent the most time with.

Tomasjordnes

My main informant and a person I was in touch with before arriving was Rigmor, an older woman who is chair of the board in Tomasjordnes *borettslag* and is responsible for organizing *dugnad*. She was born and grew up in a small village called Kåfjord, 150 km north of Tromsø. She has lived in Tomasjordnes since 2006. She is a very kind, caring person who feels strong responsibility for the neighborhood and her immediate surroundings. As she stresses, she was raised to be like that and taught to care. She is unhappy with the fact that some parents are not teaching their children the same. Lack of interpersonal relations in the rather anonymous space of Tomasjordnes is quite concerning for her as, from her point of view, people are predisposed to seek connections and need it. She herself keeps in contact with some of the neighbors, even during the Covid-19 pandemic, where they had socially distanced friendly meetings, drinking coffee with open doors while sitting in their apartments.

I also met Ronja, Øyvind, and their daughter Adelen. The family comes from Hammerfest, a much smaller town than Tromsø and with only 10,000 inhabitants. They moved to Tromsø three years ago when Ronja was starting University. She is 29 years old. This year she graduated and found a job as a pedagogue in kindergarten. They are not planning to return to Hammerfest, rather build their life in Tromsø as it gives them more opportunities. Øyvind is a warehouse employee. Together they raise seven-year-old Adelen. From their perspective, Tromsø is a big and anonymous place. They find neighbor relations in Tomasjordnes radically different from what they were used to in Hammerfest. The apartment in which they live is not spacious enough for three people, and they are planning to move somewhere else in the nearest

future. Despite possibly leaving Tomasjordnes soon, they found it essential to be part of the neighborhood life and come to the *dugnad*. They emphasized the good influence it has on Adelen as well as the satisfied feeling they themselves have after fulfilling this duty.

Lastly, I was introduced to Mette. She has lived in Tomasjordnes for several years together with her teenage son. Mette describes herself as a "hundred percent Tromsø girl", as it is where she was born and grew up. Later in life, she lived in London and Oslo. In the end, she chose quiet Tromsø over busier, hectic cities. She is a contradiction of a stereotype of Norwegians being reserved and distant people. Her sparkling personality, as she mentioned, makes many jokingly claim that she is not, in fact, from Norway. During *dugnad*, she was "the soul of the party," interacting with everyone around and provoking conversations.

Stonglandseidet

I was mainly focused on two persons during filming. The language barrier was quite problematic on Senja. Both because of I only have a basic competence in Norwegian, and because of a strong dialect that is spoken there.

Ann Karine is a 68-year-old retired woman with superhuman energy reserves. She was born in Tromsø and moved to Senja as a young woman after getting married to a man who originally comes from there. It has been 48 years since she settled in Stonglandseidet. Her importance in the small community is undeniable. Before she retired, she was working in healthcare as a home assistant. For that reason, she visited most of the households in the village. Since she stays in good health, she cannot imagine her life without work and keeps herself more occupied than many younger than her. Among other things, she is an active gardener, runs a summer café in her cabin, takes care of some Airbnb apartments (where she greets guests and cleans after they leave), produces homemade juice and jams that she sells at the local farmer's market, and runs a canteen on a construction site. In addition, she is the head of a local union and the person in charge of organizing *dugnads*.

The second character is Eivind. Eivind is pensioner who I met at the *dugnad*. He was born and grew up on Senja but lived in many other places in Norway throughout his years. He dedicated his entire career to teaching and coaching sports. He talked about his work with great passion and was clearly profoundly dedicated to it. During the conversation, he was constantly

referring to and comparing his experiences of living in cities like Bergen, Oslo and Tromsø, to life in the small Northern Norwegian community of Stonglandseidet. Those experiences made it clear for him that quiet, intimate places are where he finds himself most comfortable. After working in a few towns, he settled in Bindalseidet in Nordland municipality. The place is a similar size to Stonglandseidet. Despite spending most of his life away, ten years ago, he came back to Senja after retiring. He has moved into his old father's house that he himself renovated. He is an avid hobby carpenter and motorcycle enthusiast. On top of that, Eivind remains involved in community life by organizing quizzes and bingo for locals in the community house.

Dyrk

Berit is a 40-year-old architect from Tromsø and one of the founders of *Dyrk*. She initiated the project together with her friend, who now lives outside of Tromsø. They took their idea to meeting with the municipality and gained the necessary funding and equipment. For the first years, she was a clear leader of the project. Berit has extensive knowledge about the urban gardening movement, and the political dimension of *Dyrk* is central for her.

Linnea is a young woman who grew up partly in Finland and partly in the USA. She moved to Tromsø in 2009 to study, where she met her husband and, because of that, decided to stay. Linnea has been familiar with the food movement for a long time, as her father was strongly involved in it back in Seattle. He coordinated one of the largest community gardens called Picardo Farm, located in the middle of the city. Longing for gardening activities while not having any garden around her house, brought Linnea to *Dyrk*. She has been part of the project almost from the beginning and currently is, together with Berit, the person in charge. Thanks to her past, Linnea has comprehensive knowledge about growing vegetables and happily shares it with less experienced gardeners.

Karen is a 28-year-old woman from Trondheim doing her Ph.D. in chemistry at the University in Tromsø. She joined *Dyrk* the previous season, so this is the second summer she spends in the garden. Gardening was always present in her family, along with activities such as mushroom and berry picking, but before, she found it boring. Living in a small apartment with no balcony or at least a small piece of land made her miss it a bit. She discovered *Dyrk* while walking in the neighborhood and came across boxes full of plants.

Olsgård III

I did not get a chance to make closer acquaintances with many people during the *dugnad* in Olsgård. My main informant was Odd Arne, pensioner and chairman of the board in the housing cooperative for the past five years, and one of the main organizers of *dugnad*. He moved into Olsgård twenty years ago and shares the apartment with his partner. Like many people in Tromsø, he did not grow up there. He was born in Vardø, small fishing town in Eastern Finnmark (the northern-most county in Norway). From there, he first moved to Alta and later to Tromsø to attend the University. He spent most of his life working as a teacher and a headmaster of a school in Balsfjord. After moving to Tromsø, he worked as a leisure time assistant in a psychiatric hospital.

3 THEORETICAL APPROACH

3.1 Social institution

Institution is a word with a blurred meaning because it exists both as a term within social sciences and in colloquial language. As defined by Jonathan Turner, social institution is "a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organizing relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment." (1997: 6) In 'Political Order of Changing Societies', Huntington proposes a definition that accentuates the importance of shared values and needs that are essential for an institution to emerge. He defines it as "the behavioral manifestations of the moral consensus and mutual interest", adding that they are "stable, valued, recurring patterns of behavior" (Huntington 1970: 10-12). Social institutions, 'according to Parsons', writing, are meant to connect cultural and social systems, as they "systematize culture within social interactions and roles" (Münch 1994 in: Calhoun et al., 2007). I claim that *dugnad* fulfills the criteria of those definitions. It is a stable institution with a long history; it is a human behavior that manifests shared values and the belief that it is the right and valuable thing to do that serves society.

Social institutions are meant to serve specific societal needs. There would be no point in maintaining them if they were not beneficial or productive. In other words, in order to prevail, social institutions need to have functions and fulfill them. (Parsons 1948: 409; Durkheim, 1885: 151). A social institution is seen as harmful when not profitable. Maintaining it requires effort, and that is damaging if there is nothing to gain from it. Such considerations were the subject of functionalists attention. Functionalism is a theory that perceives society as a set of interdependent systems. Society is compared to a living organism, in which each organ cannot exist nor function detached from other organs, and the whole organism cannot flourish when one of the organs fails (Macdonis and Plummer, 2005). "An animal organism is an agglomeration of cells and interstitial fluids arranged in relation to one another not as an

aggregate but as an integrated living whole." Hence, 'function' "is the contribution which a partial activity makes to the total activity of which is a part" (Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 178-181). Durkheim claims that understanding function is essential to truly understand a social phenomenon (1885: 150-151). He defines function of a social institution as a "correspondence between it [social system] and the needs of the social organism" (Durkheim 1885).

Merton (1957) develops a theoretical frame of analyzing function with a distinction between manifest and latent functions. That dichotomy is supposed to prevent social scientists from confusing or identifying motives with functions. Particular human behavior or an institution has its manifest function (an effect that is supposed to be achieved by it), but at the same time, it may serve another purpose, which is a side effect. In Merton's words, manifest function is "referring to those objective consequences for a special unit (person, subgroup, social or cultural system) which contribute to its adjustment or adaptation and were so intended," while latent function is "referring to unintended and unrecognized consequences of the same order." (ibid.: 441).

The last element relevant to the theory of social institutions is adaptability. The longer an institution exists, the more adaptable it is. The more challenges and changes in the environment it overcomes, the more it is likely to survive in the future. In its essence, adaptability is an organization's capacity to adjust to a different situation or conditions, and a measure of the organization's level of institutionalization. It is measured by generational age and functionality. First refers to the ability to pass the leadership to next generations and, in that, assuring continuity. As long as it is just the first generation of individuals who are in charge, there is a risk that the institution will not survive after they are no longer able to hold responsibility for it. Functionality is institutions' ability to adapt in two situations: when the initial purpose has been achieved, or when the outside, dynamic environment changed in a way that the problem it was meant to solve is no longer relevant. In those cases, the institution may collapse or adjust. It can find a new function or be valued for its own sake and "develop life of its own quite apart from the specific function it may perform any given time." (Huntington 1970:15) In the last case, as Huntington sums it up, "the organization triumphs over its function" (ibid. 13-15).

3.2 Reciprocity

Dugnad can be considered an institution based on reciprocity. Marcel Mauss was a French sociologist whose essay on gift exchange in archaic societies (1954) is a fundament of the modern theory of reciprocity. He analyzes the various forms of exchange between groups from different corners of the world and draws comparisons.

"To appreciate fully the institution of total prestation and the potlatch, we must seek to explain two complementary factors. Total prestation not only carries with it the obligation to repay gifts received, but it implies two others equally important: the obligation to give presents and receive them. To appreciate the institution of total prestation and the potlatch fully, we must seek to explain two complementary factors. Total prestation not only carries with it the obligation to repay gifts received, but it implies two others equally important: the obligation to give present and receive them" (1954:10).

He distinguishes three kinds of obligations. The obligation to give "the gift," the obligation to receive it, and most importantly, the obligation to reciprocate. Exchange is the oldest economic system known. He claims that we, as society "(...) are still far from frigid utilitarian calculation" (ibid.: 74). A gift-giving economy challenges utilitarianism and the rules of the free market. But exchange slips away from the logic of calculated transaction and economic rationality. It is a moral and cultural practice. It is not about the balance of how much was given and received. The exchange of goods was not a mechanical but moral transaction, bringing about and maintaining human, personal relationships between individuals and groups (Evans-Pritchard 1954: ix).

Reciprocity is a form of exchange. Interaction involves two actors (or a collective actor), A and B, and the good that is being transferred between them. What differentiates it from a market exchange is the involvement of social constraints like the importance of the relationship between A and B; it is socially charged. It is considered more as a "gift", "favor" or "benefit", than "goods" or "service." Exchange is seen as "giving" and "receiving" rather than labeled with market terms like "buying" and "selling." The X has social value and influences the relationship between A and B (Lebra 1975: 550). Reciprocity is based on two basic demands: (a) people should help those who previously helped them, and (b) people shouldn't harm those who offered the help (Gouldner 1960:171). The norm of reciprocity is vital for harmonious social life. As

Gouldner explains (1960:175), it stabilizes human relations and provides a moral duty to conform with specific status obligations.

Sahlins sees reciprocity as a continuum (1965: 147-149). Each interaction falls somewhere between generalized and negative reciprocity.

1. Generalized reciprocity is characterized by altruism. Obligation to reciprocate is vague, and it is not required to occur in any given timeframe. The expectation of a direct and immediate reciprocation is inappropriate. It is expected, however, when the actor giving help needs it and if the person receiving before is capable of reciprocating it. More significant than the economic value of the exchange is the social aspect of it. It is based on social relations and the mutual trust that assistance will come when it is needed.
2. At the midpoint of the spectrum, we find balanced reciprocity. Unlike generalized reciprocity, in this scenario, a direct exchange is expected. Goods given and received are supposed to be of similar value and come without delay. The material aspect of interaction is at least equally important as the social aspect, if not more. Balanced reciprocity is a social compact where both participants have self-interest on each side and is mutual (ibid.: 175).
3. At the end of the spectrum, we have an unsociable extreme. Negative reciprocity occurs when actors in a transaction have opposed interests. It is "an attempt to get something for nothing with impunity." One person is seeking to take advantage of the other.

Sahlins links variations in reciprocity patterns with kinship distance (ibid.: 149). Social distance between the sides involved in the exchange help shape the mode. Generalized reciprocity is usually a norm in close kinship. The bigger the distance, the bigger are expectations of direct and immediate reciprocation and the higher the risk of negative reciprocation.

Another way of looking at the concept of reciprocity is categorizing it as direct and indirect. Direct reciprocity always happens between two parties, both give and receive. Giver expects to be a receiver at some point in time. Help exchanged should be of comparable value and balance (Moody 2008:133). Indirect reciprocity (by some called generalized reciprocity) is an exchange where the person receiving the gift from a person is not the same one as the person reciprocating to the original giver. The exchange may go in a circle and reaches the original giver eventually. "The giver does not know who will be making a return (or how or when) but is inclined to choose recipients who are themselves, givers, thereby enhancing the possibility

that a return will eventually come back around and generalized exchange will emerge" (Moody 2008:133).

Moody proposes widening of the categorization and proposes including in it serial reciprocity as a separate kind of relation (ibid.: 132). In short, it is a form of reciprocity where one reciprocates for what they received before, but to a third party, not the person from whom goods were received. It is a form of generalized reciprocity (ibid.:135). Serial reciprocity is giving help in one direction and expecting it to come back from another. "Serial reciprocity exists when people respond to being beneficiaries of something good by "passing it on" in turn to someone else. In many cases, this someone else is seen as meaningfully similar to the original giver, or the nature or purpose of the serial return is similar to the nature or purpose of the original gift" (ibid.:132). Serial reciprocity is based on meaning, not a balanced exchange between two parties (ibid.:136). People are involved in exchange not because they are motivated by what they can gain in return and because they expect repayment, but because of social obligation (ibid.:142). Lack of repayment can give an impression that it is, in fact, negative reciprocity, but Moody disagrees. The giver is motivated by the social obligation of reciprocity and is centered in the feeling that "giving back" is the morally right thing to do.

According to Klepp (1982) and Norddølun (1980), reciprocity is a foundation of *dugnad* institution. In old rural communities, reciprocity was an economic necessity (Norddølun 1980). Neighborhood help was the only way in which societies could live on. As technology was labor-intensive, and it was rare to hire help, tasks requiring intense physical work could only be accomplished with help from others. Klepp places *dugnad* between generalized and balanced reciprocity on the spectrum (1980: 89). People involved in help rarely expected immediate reciprocation (generalized reciprocity), but in the long run, it was coming and expected when needed, and in the end, it was balanced (ibid.:89). As the peasant society was integrating into the market economy, *dugnad* was becoming less of an absolute necessity; despite that, it prevailed. The social institution of *dugnad* survived as a custom, even though problems that it was supposed to solve initially, could be solved in other ways or were no longer existing (ibid.:89-90).

3.3 Sense of belonging

I draw on the concept of belonging as a determinant of peoples' involvement in *dugnad*, as well as the character of the event. Sense of belonging is "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of this system on the environment" (Hagerty et al. 1992: 173 in Bonnie et al. 1995: 9). The need to belong is seen as the "pervasive human drive to form positive, close attachments (Lambert et al., 2013:1418). Ann Game describes belonging as the feeling of 'coming home' that one gets in relation to specific places (Jørgensen 2010: 7). As stated by Anthony Cohen:

"Belonging' implies very much more than merely having been born in the place. It suggests that one is an integral piece of marvelously complicated fabric that constitutes the community; that one is recipient of its proudly distinctive and consciously preserved culture – a repository of its traditions and values, a performer of its hallowed skills, an expert in its idioms and idiosyncrasies". (1993: 21)

Cohen captures the complexity and multi-componentence of a sense of belonging. It is the physical space and people that we share this space with; the consciousness of being distinct because of shared culture and values, finally ease in navigating through meanings.

Sense of belonging relates to both physical space and social relations. As a spatial dimension, it manifests as place attachment. Place attachment is an emotional bond with a specific place, "the emotional link formed by an individual to a setting that has been given meaning through interaction, comprised with two interwoven: the interactional past and the interactional potential of the setting" (Miligan 1998 in Inalhan 2004:123). It is based on memories tied to a place that evoke emotional reactions; it is a history of what activities have happened in relation to a particular space. Potential means expected interactions that may occur in this setting in the future. As Stokols and Shumaker suggested, "the degree to which a particular setting satisfies the needs and goals of an individual determines his or her judgment

of its quality." (1981 in Inalhan 2004: 123). The more responsive a particular setting is to one's needs, the stronger the bond. Speller (1996) reflects on how the attachment to the place is being created, pointing out that it happens through the appropriation of space. "Appropriation is making something part of oneself, often through the processes of doing" (ibid. in Inalhan 2004: 124). Through active involvement, people in the community have the power to increase the place congruence. Place attachment is both an outcome (feeling of belonging) and a process (active involvement in claiming the space) (Giuliani 2002 in Inalhan 2004: 126).

Another aspect of belonging is relationships within a community or neighborhood. Strong social relationships are considered to be a source of meaning in life. Jørgensen (2010) refers to the works of Schultz and Coleman, who claim that the number and intensity of face-to-face interactions facilitate a feeling of belonging to the community, seeing others as distinct individuals rather than 'a type'. Satisfaction from relationships in the neighborhood results in attachment to the community, increased interactions within it, and a feeling of safety (Young et al. 2005: 2628). Some consequences of a feeling of belonging are "(a) psychological, spiritual, social, or physical involvement; (b) attribution of meaningfulness to that involvement; (c) establishment or fortification of a fundamental foundation for emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses" (Sargent et al. 2002:121). Strong community ties mean higher collective efficacy, more will to be involved in social organizations, and participation in collective efforts. This positively influences one's self-esteem, mutual respect, and social trust (Kitchen et al. 2012: 123). Active participation in a community's life gives people feelings of being valued, needed, accepted, and appreciated (Sargent et al. 2002:121, Hagerty et al. 1995:10). Strong community bonds also have been proven to positively influence mental health (Kitchen et al., 2012:1).

3.4 Identity

Identity is a key concept in analyzing *dugnad*, for several reasons. *Dugnad* is by many seen and presented as something that is typically Norwegian. Although that is arguable, and similar practices certainly can be observed in other countries, *dugnad* is being recognized strictly as part of national culture and identity. Secondly, since I have done my fieldwork in northern Norway, it is substantial to discuss strong regional identity and sensed distinctiveness from southern Norway.

The notion of identity is in many ways intertwined with a feeling of belonging. Both are often connected to place attachment, and both are based on cultural boundaries. As explained by Jenkins, "Social identity is our understanding of who we are and who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people's understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us)." (2004: 5). On one side, identity is a mean of establishing similarity, recognizing those who are inside of your group; on the other side, it institutes difference from those who are outside of it (Jenkins, 2004, 3-4). The foundation of one's identity lies in culture. Awareness of culture is expressed through identity. By being aware of cultural variety and realizing that specific culture is what distinguishes some people from others, it becomes a source of identity (Cohen 1982). Jenkins sees identity as rooted in and requiring reflexivity. It "works" or "is worked" (Jenkins 2004). He points out its processual character: identity is "being" or "becoming" (ibid.: 4). Gullestad adds notion of identity-management "as a part of the communicative aspect of behavior, how people seek self-respect and confirmation from others. Self-respect in my view is ultimately linked to confirmation from others." ([1984] 2001: 33)

There is a division between collective identity and individual identity. The first places emphasis on similarity, whilst the latter emphasizes difference. Both, however, are inherently social. Selfhood is constructed through socialization and social interactions. Without relation to others, it is not meaningful (Jenkins 2004: 20).

Identities are rooted in the past. The individual is based on memory, and one's particular experiences. The collective is entrenched in history, myth and storytelling that constitutes who we are as a group and how we see ourselves. Part of it is a belief in common origin and belief of continuity. Another dimension is space. For national or regional identity, the territory is a vital component and point of reference (Jenkins 2004). As real as identity is for an individual,

it is in a way imagined (though not imaginary). Benedict Anderson (2006) introduced the term "imagined communities." In his work, he reflects upon the roots of nationalism and "inventing" the nations. Every community is seen as imagined, even small-scale ones with face-to-face interactions. "It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 2006: 6). Identity is based on perceived commonality and is shared among members of (imagined) communities. Even though they have no way of verifying whether others experience it the same way, it governs their actions and influences perception of the world and self. Belonging or identifying oneself with a certain regional, national, or ethnic group provides what Siikala call, "structure of expectations" that people recognize and which provide guidance to "how things *normally, usually* and *typically* are in the world." (1992: 205, in Olsen 2008: 313). This idea is supported by Cohen, who claims that "if people in one milieu perceive fundamental differences between themselves and the members of another, then their behavior is bound to reflect that sense of difference." (1982: 3). People not only recognize their cultural distinctiveness but also assign value to it. When certain aspects of it are deemed positive and nurturing, it makes the community likely to make an effort to maintain it by encouraging social behavior that is in accordance with its principles and supports how people are aware of their own culture. "It is not usually experienced as a coherent system of ideas, as like the highly idealized, abstracted, and, therefore, somewhat unreal accounts which anthropologists so often present. Rather, people know *their* way of doing things; they know a customary mode of thought and performance" (Cohen 1982:5). Culture is not being kept for the sake of the tradition; it serves its purpose and has pragmatic value (Cohen, 1982).

In the following paragraph, I will discuss literature on Norwegian identity, with a focus on northern Norwegian identity. As pointed out, northern Norway is economically, socially, and culturally distinct from other parts of the country (Jones 2008: 283).

Search for qualities of Norwegian identity has been a big concern in intellectual life throughout the last century (Eriksen 1993: 26). Once Norway gained national independence in 1814, politicians and intellectuals recognized the need to define "Norwegian identity" and establish its distinctiveness. Eriksen claims two main reasons why the construction of shared identity is important for a nation: it provides a ground for boundaries against the outside world as a community recognizes its own uniqueness; And secondly, that national identity can be a

self-fulfilling prophecy. People will act and recognize values accordingly to what is claimed to be valued and desired in their culture (ibid.: 25).

Norwegian identity is primarily rural rather than urban. "Agrarian mountain communities in the inland valleys of Norway and hardworking Norwegian farmers making their living in harsh environments became emblematic for the new nation" (Daugstad 2013). In contrary to other European countries, Norwegian nationalism emphasized the rural and egalitarian character of the nation. Simple life in the countryside was (and by many still is) seen as idyllic and honorable (Eriksen 1993: 12). Rural and small-town life was, and by many still is romanticized (Gullestad [1984] 2001: 43). The image of a diligent farmer or fisherman working in a rough climate, dependent on unpredicted nature, is still present in the collective national consciousness, perhaps more particularly in northern Norway. However, it is becoming gradually less relevant due to urbanization and shifts in employment patterns. Another hallmark is appreciation and close connection to nature. Outstanding Norwegian nature and landscape, an uncontaminated environment, is a source of national pride (Eriksen 1993: 19).

National television and increasing access to mass media are said to have had a pivotal role in the process of cultural homogenization of Norway. TV was a mean of spreading national ideology to people in every corner of the country. The role of media was so important that some argue, Norway had become an integrated nation in the 60s when TV access became widespread (Eriksen 1993: 26).

Regarding northern Norway specifically, some doubt that there is such thing as a *common* Northern Norwegian identity, or rather, its "soul" is hard to capture (Storå 1996: 151 in Olsen 2008: 305). Perceived lack of commonality was attributed to the fact that northern Norway is extended in length (Winge 1995: 64 in Olsen 2008). Yet, there has been a successful attempt to catch the spirit and uniqueness of northern Norway. "Cultural History of North Norway" is a work that encapsulates regional identity traits and tries to build a characteristic of how northern Norway is. "The "Cultural History of North Norway" is an example of "origin stories," where ethnicity and landscape identity are only two components of what is explained as a person's *cluster* of social identities, including gender, age group, religion, nationality, class, profession, and so on." (Olsen 2008: 312). Part of Northern Norwegian distinctiveness is the language. As Norway as a whole has various dialects of the language, the same applies to the North, where a multitude of variations of the language is spoken (Olsen 2008: 312). The role of nature in the feeling of belonging and identity is particularly important in the North. People

living here experience its harshness much harder than in other parts of the country. Storms, cold, massive snowfalls, and months of darkness during the winter period pose an enormous challenge on fisherman and reindeer herders whose livelihoods are inevitably intertwined with the environment (Jones 2008: 283).

"Stubbornness" and "diversity" are two qualities that are said to be hallmarks of Northern Norwegian culture (Jones 2008: 283). Two metaphors that are seeking to epitomize the character of the region are evoked in the Cultural History of North Norway. "The Rebellious Land" is "a metaphor for a population that does not always conform to national pattern of thought or action" and points out the peripheral position of the North. "The diverse people" stresses plurality as an element of the characteristic of northern Norway. It refers to northern Norway being a multiethnic place, or "meeting of three tribes," meaning Norwegian, Saami, and Finnish people (Olsen 2008: 302).

Due to its difference and peripheral position, northern Norway is in stark contrast to the South. The consciousness of being distinct from people in the South is an important quality of Northern regional identity. Central authorities have met resistance while trying to gain control over the resources in the North (Jones 2008: 291).

3.5 *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* – social relations within the communities

Tönnies is a German sociologist that proposed a dichotomist model of social organization. On one end, there is *Gemeinschaft*, roughly translated to a community; on the other, *Gesellschaft*, meaning society. Before I elaborate on the characteristics of these two concepts, it is important to acknowledge that those are ideal types (or pure types) and should be treated as a methodological tool that helps to classify social entities, rather than an objective reflection of reality. An ideal type provides a researcher with a list of qualities or characteristics that a certain phenomenon has, but in the real world, analyzed objects do not fulfill all of them.

It should be treated as a spectrum; as researchers, we can distinguish to which end of this spectrum (ideal type) object of our interest is closest to (Weber 1949: 90).

Gemeinschaft and *Gesellschaft* are, in their essence, two different forms of the social bond. "All kinds of social co-existence that are familiar, comfortable and exclusive are to be understood as belonging to *Gemeinschaft*. *Gesellschaft* means life in the public sphere, in the outside world. In *Gemeinschaft* we are united from the moment of our birth with our own folk for better or for worse. We go out into *Gesellschaft* as if into a foreign land" (Tönnies 2001:10).

Relations in *Gemeinschaft* are all-embracing. People within the community are connected through personal ties, often such as a family bond, kinship, friendship, or neighborhood (which Tönnies perceives as a village). In *Gemeinschaft*, "unity of will" is experienced (ibid.). Belonging to a community is predominantly given. Even separation is not supposed to cut the tie that one has to *Gemeinschaft* (ibid.: 22). Community is defined by place, kinship or blood, and residing in the same space. These connect members of a society, leading to necessary cooperation, wherein members share work and solve problems together, that are ultimately common challenges. Kinship and living in close proximity facilitate close, intimate interactions (ibid.). Social relations in *Gemeinschaft* are based on love and closeness; society is being governed by religion, morals, and tradition (Mellow 2005).

On the contrary, in *Gesellschaft*, people are detached from each other and exist separately. "Society we understand simply as individuals living alongside but independently of one another" (Tönnies 2001:19). Interactions are impersonal, formal, governed by rules, and not necessarily face-to-face. Social relations are treated as a means to an end; society is run by rationality and pragmatism (Mellow 2005). Rather than "common good," members act in self-interest, which may lead to competition. Tönnies compares people in *Gesellschaft* to atoms, which are independent of one another. Each individual works for themselves, but in the end, through division of labor and fulfilling their roles, they each make a contribution on behalf of society (Tönnies 2001:57). In *Gemeinschaft*, members have a moral obligation towards other members; in *Gesellschaft*, they have a moral obligation towards the system or the state (Tönnies 2001:66).

Finally, Tönnies makes a distinction between two kinds of will: natural and rational. "Both of these very different concepts of will have this in common – they are seen as causing or predisposing a person to act. Their very existence and distinctive attributes in a particular

person make it possible to infer how that person is likely to act, or how, in certain circumstances, he necessarily must act" (ibid.:96). The first is oriented towards the past: how things have worked, who has had a moral obligation to whom, and what was the tradition. The latter is facing the future; the rational calculation is employed to foresee the results of ones' actions.

Gullestad sees Norwegian culture shaping dynamics in social relations as characterized by dilemmas between independence and community.

“The way autonomy is fundamental cultural premise in Norway makes Norwegian neighborhoods very different from for instance, Italian neighborhoods. Being autonomous and able to close the entrance door seems to be a fundamental premise for social contact and cooperation. Pursuing autonomy to extremes, however, makes one completely isolated, and that’s no good either. One has to be autonomous and sociable in the ways defined by this culture.” ([1984] 2001: 333)

Relating that to Tönnies distinction: independence would be a trait in *Gesellschaft*, while orientation towards community would characterize *Gemeinschaft*. She also goes deeper into forms of interactions in urban society. She distinguishes several forms that exist simultaneously. Face-to-face interactions “may be divided into traffic relations (physical presence with little more contact than avoiding bumping into each other), greetings in more distant relationships, personal and formal face-to-face relations, and systems of indirect relations” ([1984] 2001: 30).

4 METHODOLOGY

In this part of my work, I will give an overview of my access to the field and what kind of challenges I faced when establishing relationships with participants. Furthermore, I reflect upon my position in the field as a person who is an outsider but also has a relatively strong connection to the field. Finally, research methods employed over the course of my work are discussed.

4.1 Access to the field

Information about *dugnad* is, in most cases, only shared between those who belong in the community and are invited to participate. That meant that they are not publicly announced, and I had been struggling with finding information about where and when I could go or who I can ask for permission to participate. In the end, I visited four *dugnads*, and I gained access to each one of them in different ways. In the beginning, I had no ideas other than to ask people I know who live in Tromsø to have their eyes open and to let me know if there is a *dugnad* organized in their neighborhood or workplace. Additionally, I looked up several Facebook groups intended for inhabitants of Tromsø and posted a brief note about my project, asking them to contact me if they know about any *dugnad* being organized somewhere in the city or around. It was not a particularly successful strategy; I got only one response from a Polish woman who knew about *dugnad* being organized soon in a housing cooperative where she lives (Tomasjordnes). She put me in touch with Rigmor, the main organizer, who happily allowed me to come to an event with the camera. While being there, I talked to many participants, who, after hearing about my troubles with getting access to other *dugnads*, suggested that I contact other *borettslags*. *Borettslag* is a specific legal entity for housing cooperatives in Norway owned by those who live in cooperatives and is run by a board of directors. The board is responsible for a myriad of tasks, among which is organizing *dugnads*. It turned out that contact information to numerous *borettslags* is publicly available online, either on their website or on Facebook. My next step in gaining access to more *dugnads* was emailing or messaging *borettslags* in the Tromsø area that I found online. Despite sending countless requests, I only

got invited to one *dugnad* in Olsgård III *borettslag*. The next *dugnad* I visited took place in the village Stonglandseidet on Senja island. Access to this event I gained through a personal connection. I spent nearly two months working a summer job in a village and happened to work in the canteen with Ann Karine as my boss. She is the head of the board and the main organizer of *dugnad* in the community. Finally, I found the last *dugnad* I visited through advertisement on Facebook. It was organized by the association Dyrk Tromsø, an urban gardening cooperative. Unlike other *dugnads* that are dedicated to people who already are a part of the community (because of living somewhere, being part of a sports team, school, or kindergarten), Dyrk was proactively trying to attract more people to contribute to the project and reached out on social media. I contacted the organizers of the so-called ‘*oppstartsdugnad*’ (meaning ‘starting *dugnad*’). They allowed me to join them with the camera and were happy that they would gain more publicity through my fieldwork.

4.2 Arriving in the field

Dugnads are traditionally held before the Norwegian National Holiday on the 17th of May. However, this year all of them were delayed, partly because of the constantly unfolding pandemic and the uncertainty of whether it is safe to gather people together, and mostly because of the weather. This past winter, Tromsø experienced record snowfall till at least late May, and massive snowdrifts were still covering the town. By the time the snow melted, the pandemic in northern Norway was generally under control. Because of all the delays and uncertainty, *dugnads* were announced with rather short notice. I did not manage to meet any of the organizers I was in contact with before actually arriving to the field. Each time over the phone or through online conversation, I asked them to try to inform other participants that I was attending with a camera with the intention to involve some of them in the film. Despite their attempts, only a handful of participants were aware of my attendance in advance. I had no opportunity of getting to know participants, not to mention no time to establish a relationship with them before showing up at the *dugnad*, already with a camera. However, since I studied the phenomenon rather than individual people, I gathered sufficient material. My objective was to explore various perspectives people have on *dugnad* and make comparisons.

Dugnads are onetime events and last for only a few hours. In this short time, I had to not only get the footage, but also familiarize myself with a place and people participating. In most cases, it was not possible for me to introduce myself and explain why I was there with a camera to everyone at once. People were arriving at different times, so in most cases, there was no gathering before starting work, and tasks were assigned and explained to people as they were arriving at the place. I had to approach one group of people after another and introduce myself several times. Some of them obviously did not want to be filmed, but some reacted with honest curiosity and were relatively open. Thus I followed those who were enthusiastic about what I was doing. At the same time, I had to be very cautious not to film them, for example, when interacting with people who gave me a hard 'no' and make sure that I did not interrupt others' participation in the *dugnad*.

Overall, this dynamic was far from ideal; my first encounter with participants was when I already had the camera with me, and it was the only opportunity to film what I needed to film. However, I managed to collect the material despite those inconveniences. People usually got comfortable after a relatively short time and, in some cases, were joking or fooling around in front of the camera. Dyrk was a different case altogether because people meeting the garden every week. Even though a normal *hageonsdag* (gardening Wednesday) is not labeled as *dugnad*, I went there whenever the weather allowed for gardening. I also got involved in urban gardening myself and joined the association.

Unfortunately, the language barrier played a significant role during my fieldwork, especially in conversation with older people who speak with a strong Tromsø or Senja dialect. That limited my access to participants to those who can speak English. Some informants were insecure about their English skills, some at *dugnads* did not speak English at all, which meant that even when I tried to approach them with my broken Norwegian, they were rather reluctant to talk with me and involve themselves in the project. Once, I got a helping hand from a Norwegian-speaking friend.

4.3 Reflexivity

My relation to the field is complex, and as a researcher, I am required to address it. I was both foreign and local simultaneously.

"Reflexivity, broadly defined, means turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference. [...] Not only the personal history of ethnographers but also the disciplinary and broader socio-cultural circumstances under which they work to have a profound effect on which topics and peoples are selected to study. [...] Ethnographers must seek to develop forms of research that fully acknowledge and utilize subjective experience and reflection on intrinsic part of research. Furthermore, given the contribution of the ethnographer's socio-cultural context to the research, these contexts too must be considered" (Davies 2008: 4-5).

I come from Poland, where traditions equivalent to *dugnad* are a story of the past. At the same time, when I was starting my fieldwork, I had already lived in Tromsø for nearly a year, and lived in Oslo prior to moving to the North to pursue my master's degree. I did not leave my place of residence – my apartment – to depart for the fieldwork. To the same extent, this could be considered 'anthropology at home', or more precisely anthropology at an adopted home, as I do not come from the same culture. What I feel plays an important role is the fact that I deliberately chose to live in Norway, and did not move here for a short period of time with the sole purpose of studying. It surely influenced my choice of the study topic, as *dugnad* is the representation of cultural qualities that I wish were not eradicated in my home country. My insider-outsider position triggered mutual curiosity. Not only was I asking about *dugnad* and Norwegian culture, but I was asking about my perception of them. Participants wanted to know how I feel about Norwegians, how they are perceived as a nation by others, and whether I have similar traditions in Poland. Finally, they were curious as to how neighbor relations typically look, and why I perceive them as distanced compared to Poles.

4.4 Participant observation and ethnographic interviews

The main method employed over the course of my study was participant observation. When referring to participant observation in its traditional sense, it classically means that the researcher spends an extended period of time in the field. It is expected to live among the people who are subjects of the study, being involved in their daily lives as it is necessary for acquiring an in-depth understanding of social structures (Davies 2008: 77). This was not the case during my fieldwork because I did not spend weeks living amongst one community. At the same time, living in both places where I conducted my study, over a year in Tromsø and two months in Stonglandseidet, gave me an insight into the pace of life and social dynamics in both places. The time I spent in the four communities varied. As mentioned before, I lived in a small village on Senja for a longer time. One of my two informants (Ann Karine) was the boss of the canteen I was working in over the course of the summer. I got a broader understanding of who she is as a person, what her daily life looks like, and how she relates to the social reality surrounding her. In Dyrk, I also had a chance to make closer and long-lasting relationships, as I joined the project and visited the garden a couple of times during a month. As *dugnads* are onetime events, observing the course of it lasted only a few hours.

As Davies says, "In participant observation the ethnographer will normally interact with many different individuals. Like most human interactions some of these will be very brief, superficial or highly focused on a particular type of relationship or activity. Others will be much more defuse, covering a broad range of interests and activities" (2008: 89). Her words accurately sum up encounters during my fieldwork. I was approaching many people, and with some I had only brief interactions; others ended up being my main informants. As she later points out, selecting main informants is a bilateral experience. I was choosing the informants and being chosen by them. "They are often as much selected by their informants as the reverse" (ibid.: 89). I was choosing my main informants based on their role in organizing *dugnad* (I always asked my contact person to be involved in the study), but the rest I chose based on their willingness, enthusiasm, and intrigue.

Just participating and observing *dugnads* was not enough to get a whole picture of its role and meaning. Neither did conversations I had with people participating during events.

Those I had in the field can be considered as interviews as I had in mind "topics I wish to explore and questions I would like to pose" (ibid.: 105). Those were not structured interviews but more natural conversations in big part guided by what I am researching. I was following participants, filming and talking, but could not get involved in in-depth conversations, as they were occupied with work or interacting with neighbors. Therefore, participant observation is complemented by semi-structured interviews. "Researchers conducting semi-structured interviews will normally make special arrangements to do so – that is, the interviews are formally bracketed, and set off in time and space as something different from usual social interaction between ethnographer and informant [...]." (ibid.: 106). The list of questions asked varied from person to person, depending on their life story, role in the community, and the community itself. Overall, I was addressing topics like: a personal story and life experiences, life and condition of the neighborhood or community, life in Norway, cultural values in Norway, memories of *dugnads*, associations with *dugnads*, and the motivation to participate in *dugnads*.

4.5 Use of a camera

The presence of the camera in the field brought me some benefits and was challenging at the same time. As I wrote earlier when describing my arrival to the field, many of the people gathered on *dugnads* were not aware beforehand that I would be participating and filming, and I didn't have the opportunity to introduce myself to everyone at once. Many of them came to me to ask what I was doing there and what was the reason I had a camera. Their taking the initiative was making the whole situation much easier for me. Often, I was already filming someone else, and it could possibly create a situation when I had to turn away from a person I am interacting with to ask another one for participation later, which could come off as rude. This felt more natural; as I was explaining to one person who I am and what my project is about, others joined, encouraged by the fact that someone asked about something they were curious about too. I was, of course, initiating contact as well, but to approach ten or fifty people spread around the whole area was simply impossible. I would have to choose between actually getting some footage and making relations, or running from person to person to clarify the same thing

countless times. I also liked this dynamic because it gave me an idea of who was a potential informant. As aforementioned, the relation was mutual: I was chosen and approached by informants, and I was choosing them too.

When it comes to challenges, the main one was filming in a way that does not interrupt the course of the *dugnad*, and so that people did not feel uncomfortable. That required a huge attentiveness from me.

Employing visual material in my research certainly brings many advantages. First of all, the camera provided me a role in the environment, made me noticeable, and made people approach me. Secondly, it helped me immensely in collecting information in new territory. I believe I encapsulated this aspect well in one of my essays written during this degree:

“[...] surrounding reality is extremely complex, too complex to consciously notice every single detail of specific place, behavior, sounds. To navigate the social world efficiently, we are forced to be excluded from conscious awareness information we do not necessarily need. Putting equal attention to every aspect of the scene would lead to overload. However, as a participatory observant, we need to overcome selective inattention and notice elements that we would normally tune out (Spradley 1980:54). [...] The camera is not selective. It gives the same attention to every detail that is positioned within the frame. Visual record saves all the information that I was not able to give attention to. [...] Following the principles of observational cinema, taking long, uninterrupted shots and following the subject, results in gathering rich data (Young 1995:99-113 in Henley, 2004:112-113).” (Lugowska 2019: 3)

As Henley points out, revision and reclassification allow a researcher to access advanced observations (2004:118). Continuous returning to my visual material allow me to build new interpretations and got better insight into social reality of *dugnads*. I think it was advantageous given the situation I found myself in. At each *dugnad*, I was entering a new environment and had limited time to familiarize myself with people and surroundings. Throughout my fieldwork I was getting the better idea of what *dugnad* is. As I got more comprehensive understanding, I could come back to raw data and reevaluate from more informed position (Lugowska 2019).

Spradley describes this process as moving from descriptive, through focused, to selective observations (1980: 33). I consider the camera significantly valuable for those two steps of ethnographic research.

“Data collected when we still do not have a comprehensive understanding are relevant and provide details that we might not have had considered important in the beginning. Taking notes on paper and

writing down our thoughts and observations is limited by our initial understanding of the meanings that we have when we enter the community for the first time. You are able only to write down information that you are capable of noticing. As we press a record button, the camera notes everything that is within the frame. Observations that we might not have written down are accessible for use later in an interpretation process” (Lugowska 2019: 4-5).

Finally, through visual material, I could achieve something impossible to achieve in academic writing, allowing me to convey the atmosphere of the places I visited and the emotional expressions of my participants.

5 Four *dugnads*

Dugnads in housing cooperatives were focused on cleaning the common outdoor space. In Tomasjordnes, the main organizer was Rigmor. Activities took place between 5 PM and 7 PM. Some hours before, Rigmor and two men were setting up the event. They gathered to organize the cleaning equipment, tables for snacks, and help people who were throwing away furniture and home equipment into huge remix containers. Part of the things brought by tenants was available to take for free as a neighbors' exchange. After 5 PM, more and more people arrived. Rigmor helped with assigning tasks and handing out equipment. The main goal of the *dugnad* was to clean the area after winter. People were involved in picking trash from the playground, lawns, and nearby beach, sweeping pavements, removing the grass from concrete, and throwing away tree branches scattered on the ground. Around 50 people attended the *dugnad*. There were rather few social interactions throughout the event as people were spread around the whole area of the neighborhood.

Olsgård 3 is a housing cooperative in the central part of Tromsøya. It consists of three blocks of flats. The event was relatively short. I only had a long conversation with Odd Arne, who is one of the organizers. He is a tenant there for 20 years and is very involved in community life. Because the outside area cleaned during the *dugnad* is rather small, the work did not take much time, and everyone was done within an hour. Tasks included sweeping pavements, cleaning the facade of blocks, collecting trash and tree branches. After the area was tidied up, neighbors had a barbeque together. During the gathering, one of the board members gave a speech to thank all the people who came, and to express the importance of community work. Next, he asked the new tenants to introduce themselves to the rest of the community.

Stonglandseidet is a village with a population of nearly 250 located in the southern part of Senja island. *Dugnad* took place at the cemetery. The aim was to clean the area after winter. The majority of the participants have members of their families resting in this cemetery. People were involved in removing grass from the pavements, cutting tree branches, and decorating graves. Typically, *dugnad* was followed by a social gathering with coffee and sweets, but this part was canceled due to the pandemic. The social aspect was still visible regardless; it was clear that everyone knows each other there, and common work was an opportunity to talk to neighbors and integrate.

In Dyrk, the first weekend of the gardening was announced as *oppstartsdugnad*, which is an event that initiates a new season. This first event requires the most effort compared to the rest of the season. Everyone started with digging in boxes of soil to fertilize them and dig out any unwanted weeds, then adding fresh soil. Many people brought plants and herbs which they had grown at home beforehand, and which were not ready to be placed outside. Others only brought seeds. Linnea and Berit were sharing their techniques and taught everyone the most efficient ways of planting vegetables. Finally, everything had to be watered.

Overall, a *dugnad* is a very social, educational, and fun event. This year, Dyrk gained quite a few new participants. All of them quickly found a way to interact with others. Because the social aspect is very important for many involved, and because people's knowledge differs a lot, they decided to have a fixed day every week to work altogether. I was participating in a few so-called *hageonsdags* (gardening Wednesdays). Turnout on weekly meetings is much smaller than on *dugnad* weekend, but so is the workload. Watering the plants when no rain has fallen, as well as fertilizing, weed removal, and of course harvesting, were all done regularly.

5.1 Use of term *dugnad* in light of interviews

During interviews, I was asking participants what they think about *dugnad* and compare it with what I have discussed about changing the use of the concept. The most common *dugnad* and probably the first association people usually have with *dugnad* is the after-winter cleaning, traditionally done before the Norwegian National Day in May. Three *dugnads* I visited had exactly this character; two organized to clean outdoor space in a housing cooperative, and the one held in Stonglandseidet which focused on cleaning the cemetery. However, *dugnad* is much more. My informants provided plenty of different examples that I was not necessarily familiar with. *Dugnad* is a vital part of school and kindergarten, or sports-club life. They talked about events organized at schools and kindergartens, such as building, fixing facilities for children, or maintenance work. Raising money that is then used collectively is also referred to as *dugnad*. Parents or students collect funds for school trips, sports tournaments, and equipment, instruments for marching bands by selling waffles and coffee on picnics, doing small jobs like inventory in markets, or collecting and returning 'pant' (a bottle and can recycling system in which individuals are incentivized by profit to return their recyclables). High school students

often partly fund their Russ celebration (parties that high schoolers have before the final exams) by selling toilet paper or washing cars. These are examples of how the idea of *dugnad* is most often used. Some of my informants treated the category of *dugnad* broader and perceived more individual acts as *dugnad* too. They mentioned visiting and providing care for elderly and lonely people, volunteering for animal shelters, or the custom of women visiting a woman in labor to give her care and support. That triggers the question: what is *dugnad* and what is volunteering? Inferring from how they approach and explain this concept, the boundary between volunteering and *dugnad* is blurred. *Dugnad* is a flexible term nowadays used for any sort of effort made for others.

The notion of *dugnad* is also utilized on a national level; authorities refer to *dugnad* as a means to mobilize society to take certain specific action, or to gain a desired behavior from individuals. Of course, the most recent example of it is fighting the spread of the pandemic (VG, 2020). When Norway went into the first lockdown on March 11, 2020, health minister Bent Høie gave an eminent speech in which he called everyone to a national *dugnad*. “We are good at *dugnad* in Norway. Many of us have been involved in the work that the neighborhood and the sports team do together every spring and every fall. (...) Now we need a *dugnad* in Norwegian society. In the health sector, we take the measures needed to prevent the spread of infection and ensure that the seriously ill receive the health care they need. (...) But it is not only in the health sector that we have an important job to do in the time to come. All sectors must contribute to the *dugnad*.” (Høie, VG, 2020). The use of *dugnad* in his rhetoric was supposed to mobilize society to respect health authorities’ advice and act accordingly, as well as strengthen the sense that “we are all in this together” and keep spirits high by filling cities with drawn rainbows saying “Alt blir bra” (‘Everything will be fine’). This strategic move was seen as very positive by my informants, and all said that they expect it to be effective, as not participating in *dugnad* is frowned upon.

CORONAVIRUSET Tall Tiltak Vaksiner Siste Spør oss Artikler



STÅ SAMMEN: – Jeg opplever at viljen til å bidra er stor, både i privat sektor og frivillig sektor. Det er jeg veldig glad for. For vi trenger alle i denne dugnaden, skriver helse- og omsorgsminister Bent Høie. Foto: Hallgeir Vågenes

Debatt

Innkalling til dugnad

Vi tar grep for å hindre smittespredning og sørge for at alvorlig syke får helsehjelp. Men hele samfunnet må delta i dugnaden mot coronaviruset. Hver og en av oss har en viktig oppgave.

Oppdatert 11. mars 2020



Figure 3News article: Call for dugnad, VG, 11 March 2020

Another example is the annual fundraising action held by NRK. Each year the national broadcasting company collects money for a selected humanitarian organization, such as the Red Cross. Ann Karine, who organized *dugnad* in Stonglandseidet, raises money by going door-to-door and asking for donations in the village. Some of the participants reflected upon the tragic events of 22nd June, 2011 when Anders Breivik inflicted his act of political terrorism, killing 77 people by use of a bomb in a government building in Oslo, and the shooting of teenagers on the island of Utøya. One in four Norwegians knew someone affected by these tragic events. Helping and caring for those who have lost their loved ones was seen as duty and *dugnad* (Ann Karine, Stonglandseidet). Other of my informants also referred to the terrorist attack but linking it to the national response. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister at the time, said in his famous speech that the proper answer to the violence was "more democracy, more openness, but not

naivety." "Showing no fear" (Ronja, Tomasjordnes) while facing national tragedy was called *dugnad*.

Going back in time, the first use of *dugnad* at a national level was the re-building of houses after the Second World War. As Norway was facing an extreme housing shortage and post-war damages, Prime Minister Einar Gerhardsen, from the Labor Party, called on Norwegians to contribute to the reconstruction. To encourage the state in offering loans for favorable conditions, municipalities offered land at a reasonable cost, and people volunteered the manual labor (Simon, Mobekk 2019:821). Another example of national *dugnad* from older days is an oil crisis in 1973. As mentioned by Eivind, one of my participants, access to fuel was limited, and people were encouraged to resign from using a car. Everyone complied, and Eivind classifies this as *dugnad* and a feeling of shared responsibility. Even the most prominent members of the society were not excluded from it. A picture of King Olav taking a tram for his Sunday ski trip circulated in Norwegian and international newspapers. He was praised for not buying his way out, resigning from his privileges, and standing in solidarity with all citizens (Haugestad 2003: 11).

Haugestad links the idea of *dugnad* with the global struggle for sustainability (2003). She sees Norway as a *dugnad* leader that sets the goals and lights the way for other countries. Norwegians, as wealthy consumers, are expected to give up certain privileges in the name of the common good. Participate in the global *dugnad*, in which they put some work for worldwide understood good. "From a *dugnad* perspective the global struggle for sustainable development is a global *dugnad* where all countries have a moral obligation to participate. Norwegian NGOs – and researchers – have argued that Norway's privileged situation increases the moral obligation to take national measures and act as a forerunner" (Lafferty & Nordskog 2002:181 in Haugestad 2003:12). This approach strongly resonates with how people involved in Dyrk utilize the concept of *dugnad*. From a broader perspective, Dyrk can be considered a part of the global urban gardening movement.

Sustainability, ethical consumption, food security, farmers' rights, workers, and land abuse issues were addressed by people involved in the projects during *dugnads* I attended. All the women I conducted interviews with discussed in-depth the problems of sustainability and the aim to be more conscious consumers. What exactly they understand as 'environmentally responsible' varies. Linnea focuses on buying local products, fish from the Arctic, reindeer meat instead of meat from factory farming, vegetables and dairy from local farmers. Karen gave

up eating meat as meat production hugely contributes to CO2 emissions, and in consequence, individuals' carbon footprint is much higher. She also avoids plastic wrapping and tries to reduce her single packaging use. They are all aware of their privileged position and admit that giving up some conveniences is hard, such as flying; when you live in the Arctic, it is nearly impossible to get anywhere using other means of transport. They threat Dyrk as both a project that brings benefits regionally, and as part of the global change. In a local sense, the project makes the neighborhood more attractive and serves educational purposes. As Linnea says, "people are more and more detached from where their food comes from, they lost a sense of seasonality". Dyrk is supposed to educate children and adults on those issues and, as an outcome, make them reflect on their consumer choices and strive to make more environmentally friendly decisions.

Dyrk is also a political *dugnad*. The last conversation I wish to mention was one I had with Berit at Dyrk. She relates to *dugnad* when talking about claiming ownership of common spaces. She addresses progressive privatization in Norway that opposes social democratic values on which the country is built. Berit is one of the people resisting this process. "But it's also changing; we are living in a world where capitalistic forces are also strong; maybe projects like this can show that we want to own this. We have to claim places in the city that are partly common in cities. If not, it can be taken by other forces." (Berit, Dyrk).

5.2 *Dugnad* as a social institution

Looking at the *dugnad* as a social institution and incorporating functionalist theory and framework is a fruitful perspective. In this section, I would like to consider *dugnad's* functions from a diachronic perspective to answer whether they have changed. Another goal is to examine *dugnad's* adaptability level.

As I have pointed out when discussing it within a historical framework, *dugnad* was an economic necessity in peasant society. Agriculture work was labor-intensive and impossible to handle without the joint efforts of the community. In the previous section, I referred to parts of interviews, where my participants described *dugnads* they were part of in earlier decades, like road-building, financing the kindergarten, building facilities for children to play (Eivind), or

summer work on the farm (Berit). I would classify that as an economical and practical function of *dugnad*. As I stated before, institutions that are not being productive and beneficial for society cease (Parsons 1948: 409; Durkheim, 1885: 151). I will argue that the institution of *dugnad* has maintained those functions despite changed socioeconomic constraints. Modernization and automatization of work on the farm have made it much less labor-intensive, and building necessary infrastructure became the state's responsibility. However, spring cleaning or school/kindergarten *dugnads* (such as fixing or painting, mentioned by some of my respondents) serve the same practical purpose, and the economic function has been retained as well. Work done as *dugnad* would have to be otherwise outsourced and paid for. *Dugnad* is a way of saving money. In Tomasjordnes, those who do not join the work have to pay. As mentioned by Ronja, one of the motivations to participate in *dugnad* is saving. Fundraising events are a widespread form of *dugnad*. That is how sports clubs, marching bands, hobby groups, schools, and kindergartens collect money for equipment or maintenance. School trips are often partially funded this way. Besides lowering the financial cost that an individual would have to pay, it also has the equalizing effect, as possibly some of the parents could struggle to cover all the necessary expenses.

Later in my thesis, I will discuss in depth another vital function of *dugnad*: integration. The social aspect of *dugnad* is critical. Working together and eating together after finishing work is an opportunity to create new relationships (in disintegrated neighborhoods) or celebrate those already existing (in communities with close social ties). That aspect is relevant for both contemporary *dugnads* as well as *dugnads* back in the old days.

Because *dugnad* is such a recognizable term, the scope of its functions has expanded. It has gained symbolic value. It is something easy to refer to, as everybody recognizes which expectations it carries. More recently and relevantly, pandemic *dugnads* are a perfect example of that function put into practice. The term is detached from its original meaning, as it does not require gathering and working together but stays applicable to the situation and is instinctively understood by the public. The same applies to many other national *dugnads* I have mentioned in previous sections. As *dugnad* became a symbol that is so easy to refer to, it is used on many occasions whenever something requires unpaid work. That leads to a situation when it is hard to determine the difference between the *dugnad* and volunteering.

Finally, *dugnad* is an expression of Norwegian identity and values that it entails. *Dugnadsånd* (spirit of *dugnad*) is an expression of social trust and solidarity. Outdoor spring

cleaning or beach cleaning (another common form) can be interpreted as a behavioral manifestation of caring about the natural environment. As I have stated before, Norwegians were searching for their national identity, and *dugnad* has been used in identity creation and became a hallmark. Perhaps a good example of that is electing *dugnad* a "National Word of a year" in the program "Typisk Norsk" (Typically Norwegian) (Simon and Mobekk 2019: 818). It is used to amplify Norwegian uniqueness and is something to be proud of.

When applying Merton's distinction between manifest and latent function, I would argue that *dugnad's* practical, economic and social function fulfill definitional criteria of manifest function while expressing identity is a latent function (1957). That assumption is based on my experience from the conversations I had with people participating in *dugnads*. The first three aspects were realized and consciously brought up. The last one was expressed very indirectly.

Functions that *dugnad* had in past agricultural societies, and those it has today, are not necessarily altered. *Dugnad* is an institution that has adapted very well as society has undergone modernization. Socioeconomic settings have changed tremendously, but at its core, *dugnad* responds to the exact needs of solving local problems efficiently, and, of course, is a means of community creation and integration. Additionally, the functions of *dugnad* have expanded as the term now has a broader sense and is being used in political rhetoric. *Dugnad* is not only a practice, but it is a symbol or a commonly understood code. Another aspect that supports the claim of *dugnad* being an institution with a very high adaptation level is its age and generational age. Age is self-explanatory; *dugnad* is, simply, a very old institution. The generational aspect was evident during *dugnads* I visited. Each event included a generation cross-section from senior members of communities to very young children. Passing the tradition and values to the younger generations was brought up repeatedly in conversations. *Dugnad* is seen as a learning experience for children. They are supposed to keep the tradition alive and grasp a sense of highly regarded values in society. All that demonstrates that *dugnad* is highly institutionalized and adaptable.

5.3 Reciprocity and opting out

Dugnad was once a means of survival in peasant society, but it is not like that today. People are not as dependent on other people in the community, village, or neighborhood. As I wrote before, referring to Klepp's and Norddølum's analysis of *dugnad* in peasant communities, reciprocity was the fundament of *dugnad* and was strongly expected (1982; 1980). It is a question of whether the theory of reciprocity can be applied to modern *dugnad* as it was used to explain *dugnad* in the old days. The *dugnads* I visited were a specific type of exchange. Help was needed to achieve a common goal, not offered from one actor to another for individual benefits. The benefits for actors involved in exchange are then shrinking the time and labor necessary to accomplish certain tasks. The more participants involved, the lower cost for an individual is.

In light of the conversations I had with my informants, it seems that the rule of reciprocity strongly applies and governs their actions. However, it differs from place to place. This was the clearest distinction I noticed between the *dugnad* in Tomasjordnes and the one in Stonglandseidet.

The community in Stonglandseidet is closely connected, and the social distance is small. Just the turnout shows that people felt a strong obligation to attend *dugnad*. Almost everyone who has a family member in the cemetery and lives nearby showed up and contributed to the common goal. When explaining the importance of *dugnad*, Eivind was stressing the central role of the community: *dugnad* is a sort of obligation towards other people living in the same village. *Dugnad* in Stonglandseidet is closest to what Sahlins calls generalized reciprocity (1965). Reciprocated help is not necessarily expected to come at a specific time, but it is expected to come when needed eventually and from people within the community. A great example of it is the practice from years before that Eivind refers to in the conversation. Women were visiting each other after giving birth, ensuring that the new mother has everything she needed, and to provide support. Members of the community trusted they would receive assistance once they are the ones needing it. History and long tradition of *dugnad* and obligation of reciprocity were the foundation of this social trust.

Nearly 3000 people inhabit Tomasjordnes. Only a tiny portion of them is coming to the *dugnad*. Usually, the number oscillates between 50 and 60 people. Tenants who are opting out

of *dugnad* still benefit from the efforts of others and enjoy the effects of their work. Neighbor's relations are vague or almost not existing; people are socially distanced. In line with Sahlins's theory, a lack of personal ties hinders the obligation of reciprocity (1965). As the majority of people belonging to the housing cooperative are free-riders, it seems as an exchange is not fair. My informants notice it, but it does not discourage them from participating in the *dugnad*, nor is it a reason for seeing *dugnad* as an outdated or inefficient institution. They still seem to be driven by the rule of reciprocity but do not link it to their direct community. Their reasoning is closest to what Moody calls serial reciprocity (2008). *Dugnad* is seen as a general, widespread norm that one has a responsibility to adhere to, but they do not expect a direct, immediate reward for their contribution. The fundamental aspect of taking part in *dugnad* is growing up in '*dugnad* culture.' "Mom and Dad taught us that, we will teach her, it is part of the culture in Norway. It is normal that you are doing it" (Ronja, Tomasjordnes). It is internalized as an essential part of social life that needs to be passed on and preserved. "Exchange" means the passing of something to someone else. "It makes you feel good in your heart. (...) If one all the time expects something back, wait to get something in return, it is a bad thing. It is better to give and take. When you are a good person and help your local environment, you will get something back. You shouldn't wait for it, but it will come eventually" (Ronja, Tomasjordnes). In these words, Ronja expresses her motivation to work for the common good, despite not receiving the same in return immediately. She rationalizes it with the conception that it will come back, from somewhere, at some point in time. "If you have a strong *dugnad* community in a *borettslag* or a sports club, they get really lifted up, and they can get places, and things are happening, but then everybody has to come in and give a little bit. If you give, you get something back. It's like a karma law. If you give, you get something bigger back. I'm thinking, all the little things you do, puff, make a big picture and stuff" (Mette, Tomasjordnes).

Some, however, opt-out from *dugnad* and break the rule of reciprocity. As I was in contact only with active participants, not with people not showing up at *dugnads*, I do not know their reasoning. Yet judgments and "sanctions" placed on the absent ones are additional input in understanding the reasons to participate. Some express feelings of owing something to the community and creating debt when not contributing. "It's like, if you don't go to *dugnad*, you always think that you have to do something else, other time, for the team or the place where you live. It's like you feel that you have gotten some debt. If you don't show up or do less, you feel like you have to pay back and do more to fill up" (Mette, Tomasjordnes). Awareness of credit yet again proves that *dugnad* is established in the deeply rooted idea of reciprocity.

Shame is also a feeling felt as a consequence of not participating. In many conversations, participants brought up “the look” that you can expect from others. As *dugnad* is voluntary, “the look” expressing dissatisfaction in a person breaking the rule is a form of a social sanction.

“You don’t want these angry eyes on you” (Karen, Dyrk). “That’s the typical thing, if you don’t show up on *dugnad*, some people are going to look at you like this [imitates angry look], and they are going to have it in their memory forever that she didn’t come for that *dugnad*” (Mette, Tomasjordnes). They are well aware and influenced by social control. Ronja tells me about people who avoid *dugnads* by pretending they are not home. “It’s very easy just to close the curtains, I am not here. [...] but when someone sees you after, oh, you don’t want to feel like that”. As she speaks about meeting neighbors after opting out from community work, she imitates hiding and covers her face with an expression of shame behind her hands. Your absence will be noticed, and to avoid angry eyes, you need to show up.

In Tomasjordnes, tenants need to pay a certain sum of money to the housing cooperative to mitigate unfairness. Once they carry out a certain amount of work, they get it back. It is not a significant amount. Therefore, it is wrong to assume that saving is the motivation for an individual to come to the *dugnad*. However, in such a populated cooperative, where the majority do not involve themselves in common work, it is enough to cover many expenses. The financial penalty serves both collecting money necessary for spending and making it fairer for those doing the work.

The rule of reciprocity strongly applies to national *dugnads* too. It came out very strongly in the conversations as I conducted fieldwork during the pandemic. Protecting the health of others by social distancing or avoiding traveling was labeled as *dugnad*. Interviewees who claimed to be taking these measurements with great seriousness expressed anger and frustration towards those who do not act in the same way and take it equally seriously. “During the pandemic, it [*dugnad*] was used all the time. It was a big part of political rhetoric to create a sense that we are in it together. The word has been very loaded. Now you see people complaining because someone is going abroad. You can also use it to point out that someone is not participating, doing something for society. There are different degrees of social control in *dugnad*” (Berit).

5.4 *Dugnad* and belonging

Dugnad is both an effect of a strong sense of belonging, a means to strengthen already existing bonds, and a way to establish them. The four places I visited varied in terms of a sense of belonging. Residents of Stonglandseidet, as it is a small, rural area, seemed to have the most substantial ties to place as well as community. Dyrk, due to its different character like voluntary membership in a community and relatively big amount of work that needs to be put into the project, also had characteristics of the well-established bond to the place and between volunteers. The weakest belonging occurred in Olsgård and Tomasjordnes.

Strong place attachment and sense of belonging to the community on Senja is an effect of several conditions. Firstly, people who came to *dugnad* spent a significant part of their lives in the community. Both participants show a strong emotional bond and that is one of the traits characterizing strong sense of belonging (Miligan 1998 in Inalhan 2004:123). In Eivind's case, it is an effect of growing up there, and having memories of the place from decades ago. "En gang Senjaværing, alltid Senjaværing" (Once from Senja, always from Senja) he says during our conversation. Place attachment also concerns the cemetery, which was being cleaned during *dugnad* as this is where his mother's and sister's graves are. The same is relevant to Ann Karine. However, her story is, in fact, tragic. Soon after I arrived at the cemetery, she started showing me around. In a brief second, her expression changed rapidly, and she switched from telling me about how they cut trees and clean pavement to showing me a grave of her son, who, as a young adult, took his own life. Ann Karine is in charge of the cemetery *dugnad*, and I feel her involvement may be a consequence of grief that ties her to the place where her son rests. Unlike Eivind, she does not originally come from Senja, yet she has spent the majority of her life in the village – forty years, in fact.

In Dyrk, place attachment is built on an entirely different fundament. Space was claimed and the place was created by people themselves. As Speller claims, appropriation of space can be the base of attachment to it (1996 in Inhelhan 2004). It was appropriated as unused land by people who had an idea of using it and honor the place's history by turning it into a vegetable garden – arguably, the creation of the place brought its history back to life, literally and figuratively. Berit explained to me her attachment: "If you put hours of work in something, it's a way of claiming ownership; if you don't want to do anything about your surroundings, maybe

it's because you don't feel like it's yours". She expresses her bond to Tromsø, as she devotes herself to a project that the city will benefit from, and her bond to the garden where she stresses the value and significance of the amount of effort put into reclaiming it.

Other dynamics can be noticed in the housing cooperatives I visited. Many residents live in the apartments for a short time. Some of them only rent the apartment or, even if they own it, do not necessarily plan to live there for decades. Homeownership is strongly influencing the sense of place attachment (Young et al. 2004:2628). Block tenants also tend to have a lower sense of belonging when it comes to the community aspect. Savage explains it with 'elective belonging' (et al. 2005). People purposely chose where to live, thus were focused on the location rather than integrating with the local community.

Sense of belonging to the community is relatively strong in *Dyrk*. Members are meeting the whole summer, so the frequency of interactions is much higher. Unlike spring cleaning *dugnad* that lasts one day, gardeners meet every Wednesday. The workload is much bigger, and it requires consistency and responsibility for the project to succeed. They create the community. Face-to-face interactions and gardening together are excellent opportunities to talk and make relations. Additionally, *Dyrk* is a completely voluntary project. Involvement is not expected because you live in a specific place; one deliberately chooses to be part of the project. "We are doing it together. Not like usually that you belong to the community and have to do the work, here you want to do something and find a community to do it together (Karen)".

The next aspect worth considering is collective efficacy, understood as the ability to solve local problems as a community (Kitchen et al. 2012: 123). As Eivind recalls *dugnads* decades ago, he tells me about projects as road-making done by people living in the village. He remembers building infrastructure for local children like ice-skating rinks. Ann Karine tells me about how the community fundraised building the kindergarten. Those kinds of tasks and the cleaning of public cemeteries are usually handled by the municipality, not by residents. In most places, these spheres were overtaken by the government and businesses (Mobekk et al., 2019: 820). Rigmor, who now lives in Tomasjordnes, but originally comes from Kåfjord, confirms this tendency. "I think when you are living in a smaller community, you are even more dependent on others. If anything happens, you depend on someone to help you, and you understand that better than people who live in the city and have everything they can have from the municipality and not from the neighbor but the public services". In *Dyrk*'s case, collective efficacy is high too. Keeping vegetables alive and growing requires regular work that also needs

to be planned ahead and reasonably shared. People have to rely on each other's support when for some reason, they cannot come to the garden themselves. *Dugnads* in Olsgård and Tomasjordnes were just one-time events and consisted of relatively simple work.

Sargent points out that involvement in community's life makes one feel valued, needed and appreciated (et al. 2002:121, Hagerty et al. 1995:10). Sense of belonging and its meaning to an individual strongly resonated in interviews with Ann Karine and Eivind. As he says, "*dugnad* is a way of making people happier. Showing respect to the community. When you do something for people you make them happy". "People want to have *dugnad*, it gives you feeling of belonging, you get a feeling that you matter in the community" (Ann Karine). Active participation gives them a feeling of doing something good and meaningful, and is nurturing.

In Tomasjordnes's case, tenants who participate in *dugnad* do it because of attachment to tradition, not the community itself. "Everyone who comes from Norway or lives in Norway knows what *dugnad* is. Our parents taught us to do that, we will teach her to do that. It's part of the culture and it's normal that we do that" (Ronja). *Dugnad* is part of what Siikala calls "structure of expectations" and is "how things *normally, usually* and *typically*" are done (1992: 205, in Olsen 2008: 313).

Having said that, organizers of *dugnad*, in housing cooperatives, seem to have a strong sense of belonging. Just their strong involvement in organizing *dugnad* is a sign of that. "I think that everybody has a need to have a relation to someone. You can live in a block of flats like that and never ever say hello to your neighbor; people can't live like that. We have seen, you know, with the corona, when everybody has to stay in a flat, I can't go to my neighbor if I want to and we don't like that, because normally it doesn't work like that. I always say hello to everybody, even if I don't know them, but I meet them in a garage or something, I say hello" (Rigmor, Tomasjordnes).

A sense of belonging can also be applied to national *dugnads*. As Norwegians tend to think highly about their country and life satisfaction, as well as show high trust in authorities and system, it makes them more willing to partake in joint actions (Potthoff et al. 2013; Dølvik 2013). "Norwegians love their country, think very highly of their leaders and politicians, proud of our health system" (Eivind). Rigmor (Tomasjordnes) described being born in Norway as "a golden ticket." She highly values the Norwegian welfare state, healthcare system, low crime

rate, and overall sense of social and public trust. She also reflects on privilege; she knows that Norwegians are lucky in comparison to less-wealthy nations.

5.5 *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*

Only one of the *dugnads* I visited took place in a rural setting. But since many of my participants were born and lived in small Northern Norwegian villages before they moved to Tromsø, I will refer to their experiences as well. Stonglandseidet is a community, where everyone knows everyone, and this was very obvious to me once I arrived in the field. On the spectrum between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, the place definitely has more characteristics of the first one (Tönnies 2001). Ann Karine was referring to everyone by their name and knew people coming to *dugnad* for years. Interactions were informal, direct, and filled with jokes and laughs. She has solid ties to the place as she has spent most of her life there. Before she retired, she was working in healthcare as a home assistant. For that reason, she visited most of the households in the village. Closeness in neighbor relations can be illustrated by the story of her son's suicide. As soon as she realized that he took his own life and she notified the ambulance, she also called his friends and their parents. As she said, she knew it was not only her loss, but also theirs as they lost a friend. She wanted to be surrounded by other people from the community, and this is where she turned to seek comfort and support. Eivind spends most of his adult life in the village in mid-Norway but is strongly attached to Senja, where he grew up and decided to come back to live after his wife passed away. What characterizes social relations in places like Stonglandseidet is being linked to one another through multiple roles. People gathered at *dugnads* are not only neighbors but parents of children going to the same school, friends for years, coworkers, family, and they interact and meet in various character in different social roles, while in cities those arenas tend to be separate. When it comes to *dugnad*, all of my informants with a rural background share the belief that *dugnad* is stronger in smaller communities. People have limited access to services, live in closer relationships with each other, and therefore tend to depend on each other more.

Dugnad in Stonglandseidet was the occasion for catching up with people you know, not to make new relationships. On every *dugnad* I visited in Tromsø, most of the participants did not know one another, and relationships were made as they were involved in work together.

They do not share a commonality apart from living in the same building or being involved in the same project; they are linked by just one role, which is also a very peripheral role. Interactions, on the daily basis, are mostly in form of traffic-relations, or distant greetings (Gullestad [1984] 2001). I witnessed some warm and promising interactions between persons that met at *dugnad* for the first time; all of them expressed joy and satisfaction over improving their relationship with neighbors and making new friends. However, when I saw them another time a couple of weeks later, they admitted that they have never seen each other again and probably the next occasion will be another *dugnad*. That shows that people living there, or as Gullestad claims Norwegians in general, tend to compartmentalize different social domains. Domains Gullestad understands as “elementary contexts, foci for activities, fora and relationships, that informants themselves compartmentalize and categorize as separate and distinct from each other.” (Gullestad [1984] 2001) That shows how participants of *dugnads* navigate within independence – community dilemma. They tend to have very limited neighbors’ relations, yet many chooses to socialize during *dugnad* as it is expected from them. Linnea (Dyrk) confirms that observation. She has an outsider perspective, as she is not Norwegian and notices this apparent contradiction. “You can live in apartment building and not say ‘hi’ to any of your neighbor, but when it’s a *dugnad* day then suddenly. It’s curious. Norwegians are good in compartmentalizing. They have their family time, private time and *dugnad* is one section. This is the day I am going to talk to everybody and I am going to be social. *This day, this time.*”

5.6 *Dugnad* and integration

The social aspect of *dugnad* is crucial; whether you are catching up with people you have known for years (Stonglandseidet), seeing and talking to people from a block nearby for the first time (Tomasjordnes, Olsgård III), or making acquaintance with fellow gardeners who share your enthusiasm about sustainable life (Dyrk).

In Tomasjordnes, which is a huge, populated housing cooperative, *dugnad* is the only occasion to talk to other tenants from the area. As Ronja says, she does not know who lives next to her or above her, despite living in the same apartment for over two years. Neighbors come back, go to their place and lock the door without any interactions. Living for most of her

life in Hammerfest, a town much smaller than Tromsø, she misses having friendships with her neighbors. *Dugnad* was an opportunity to build some new relationships with those living nearby. Gathering to do something together is also seen as an easier, more natural way of getting to know others. It has a relatively low entry threshold; all one has to do is show up and get to work, and conversation occurs naturally. It is easier than approaching someone in a bar or at a party (Linnea, Dyrk).

Olsgård III is not as anonymous as Tomasjordnes, as it is much smaller. However, inhabitants are only connected through one-dimensional neighbor relations. They know each other by sight but do not necessarily know anything more. Odd Arne as a leader of the *dugnad*, used it as an opportunity to reduce this anonymity. During the barbeque, he stood up and invited all the tenants who recently moved in to introduce themselves to the community.

As Norway's population is gradually getting more diversified due to immigrants settling here, this topic came up in conversations. The only place where the presence of non-Norwegians was noticeable is Dyrk. The project attracts expats from various places and provides the possibility of finding friends in a foreign country or practice the Norwegian language. Dyrk is also a space of cultural exchange as people are introducing each other to their culinary traditions and how they use certain vegetables grown in the garden in their cuisine. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that more could be done in this department and are willing to work on that. As an example, Linnea mentions another, much larger urban garden project in Tromsø, Holt, which has a part specifically dedicated to refugees and international students living there.

Stonglandseidet is home to a fairly large number of refugees of African origin. However, none of them was present during the *dugnad*. Part of the reason may be the character of the event; it took place in the cemetery, and most of those who attended have family members buried there. When asked about it, village residents say that they are very welcome here, but they know how difficult it can be for them to come if they are not familiar with *dugnad* tradition.

5.7 *Ildsjel* as a social role

Cohen describes the concept of a role in social sciences as “the view that what counts *sociologically* is not who the person *is* but, rather, what he *does* socially.” (1982: 10). *Ildsjel* is a Norwegian word that can be translated as ‘fiery soul’ and describes a person with a strong initiative, and a passion that is particularly important in the community. Upon arriving at each event, it was obvious that behind every *dugnad* stands a committed person holding primary responsibility for everything going smoothly. “The leader of the *dugnad* is an extremely important person. He can, in fact, be seen as the solution to the most common dilemma in collective action: Everybody will benefit if the job is done, but no one wants to do more than any other. The *dugnad* leader is willing to do more than any other. He prepares the *dugnad*, he is the first to come and the last to leave, and during the *dugnad*, he usually does more than the average *dugnad* worker – while at the same time supervising and encouraging the others” (Haugestad 2003:11).

In three places, it was older community members, people who retired from their professional life and now channel their energy into voluntary work. They are responsible for spreading information about *dugnad*, setting the goal, organizing work, often creating a welcoming atmosphere, and initiating interactions with people new to the community.

But the importance of *ildsjels* does not end with ensuring that the common yard will be cleaned this year; they have, in fact, an essential role in protecting the tradition of *dugnad* from disappearing. It was impossible not to notice this threat while visiting Stonglandseidet, that experiences the outflow of young people raised there and who initially have an emotional connection with the place. As much as it is hard to believe that Ann Karine, the main organizer of *dugnad* (among other things), as an incredibly vigorous woman will ever withdraw from the role, she is aware that in some years it will happen and shared with me what she aspires to finish before someone else takes over her role.

As this role comes with vast responsibilities, one can experience tiredness and burnouts. This happened in Dyrk, and the future of the project was under question. Berit, the initiator of an urban garden, was the main and only person in charge for six years and found combining this role with her professional and family life too time-consuming. Berit is a woman who came up with the idea, went through all the formalities with the municipality, found and encouraged

people to join the urban garden, set it up with them, was a clear leader throughout most of Dyrk's existence. This year Linnea took over a giant part of Berit's responsibilities, as she knew that otherwise, the project might fall apart. Berit reflects upon the experience of taking a step back, coming out of the leader's role, and giving away control over something she created and is strongly committed to and describes it as a hard experience. As difficult as it was, it allowed her to continue participation under new conditions with less pressure and more enjoyment.

5.8 Northern Norwegian identity

While entering the field, I was briefly familiar with the history of discrimination that Northern Norwegian experienced and tensions between far North and South. Yet, being convinced those are stories from the past, I was not expecting it to be an essential topic of conversations with older participants I have met.

Northern Norwegians feel culturally distinctive from Norwegians living in the south (Jones 2008). Many believe that a harsh climate is what shaped Northern Norwegians (Eriksen 1993). Struggling against natural forces while often living in rather isolated communities made people more dependent on each other, willing to help, less hostile, and strong at the same time (Eivind, Stonglandseidet). "It is almost another country," people from Oslo don't understand northern Norway (Eivind, Stonglandseidet). They see themselves as more friendly, open, easy to talk to, not bothered by unimportant stuff, truly connected, and appreciative of nature.

An important aspect of Northern identity is the opposition to the South. There is tension between northern Norway as a periphery and the central authorities in the South (Eriksen 1993). Some of my informants complain about neglected regions by politicians; they claim that salaries are not as good, much more money is invested in infrastructure in the South while local needs are being ignored (Ronja, Tomasjordnes). Underneath currently perceived disregard, is a grudge for how people from the North were treated decades ago. When leaving Oslo to start studying at the University, Eivind faced countless obstacles to rent himself a place to live. Back then, it was common for landlords to refrain from renting a room to Northerners. To illustrate a scale of hatred, he told me a story of his boss ranting in worry that his son will fall in love with a girl from northern Norway while serving in the military in Finnmark. This would be an

enormous disgrace to the family. Ann Karine says that not so long ago, people from northern Norway were seen as having no education or culture, and merely as fishermen and –women. The image of the region was also heavily distorted. Eivind and Ann Karine mention people who believed that people living here have lice, polar bears are walking in the streets of Tromsø, and that there are no underwear stores.

Another aspect worth discussing is language. As in other parts of the country, northern Norway has its own dialects. Melody and the dynamic of speech vary vastly; there are many differences in used words and pronunciation. In times when hostility towards Northern Norwegians was still a serious matter, some tried to hide it. ‘Å knote’ means to desperately try to change the original dialect to fit in in Southern Norway, and therefore be regarded as someone with a higher social status than a person from northern Norway. Eivind stressed that dialect is an essential part of one’s identity and takes pride in his friends complimenting him for speaking the same way he was speaking before leaving Stonglandseidet.

As for the “stubbornness” and opposition to central authorities (Jones 2008; Olsen 2008), the study of community in Bleik provides a great example. Trond Waage and Anniken Førde have researched this small Northern Norwegian fishing village (2018). From their study emerges a portrait of a strong, cooperative, and efficient community that resists when faced with the decision of closing the local school. Strong local identity and place attachment researchers ascribe to storytelling practice. Bleik is the first village in northern Norway that had its own power station, even though there was no waterfall in the village, and that was an indispensable part for building the station. The community found a solution to this problem. They called a *dugnad* and made a waterfall themselves.

The tale of inhabitants joining forces and building a waterfall is passed down generations. It creates a sense of uniqueness, resilience, and collective identity. “(...) it also constructs a strong sense of what it means to be from Bleik.” (Waage and Førde, 2018). As researchers claim, that is a basis of mobilizing resistance. When inhabitants of Bleik faced the municipality's decision to close the local school, once again, they solved the problem by themselves. Since it was not possible to overturn the decision, despite petitions and protests, they have found a way around. A school association was founded, the school building was restored, and they have established a private Montessori school. All that accomplished through voluntary work.

As I have mentioned repeatedly, *dugnad* is something that Norwegians take a lot of pride in. *Dugnad* being part of the national identity, may be something what Eriksen calls self-fulfilling prophecy (1993). *Dugnad* is recognized as admired part of Norwegianness, and because of that people continue doing it. By that strengthening its importance as a part of national identity. *Dugnad* serves both as an element of identity that establishes similarity (with other Norwegians), but in the North it is also a means of establishing difference (ref. Jenkins 2004). Some of my informants also use it to distinguish northern Norway from the South. Ann Karine mentions the tourist that stayed in one of the houses she is taking care of, “he was so surprised when I told him I’m going to the *dugnad*. He said that where he lives, it is gone, that they don’t do it anymore. I think here; we take better care about it, we still help each other”. Eivind and Rigmor express the same belief. They claim that it is caused by a combination of living in small communities, the harsh climate that forces people to help each other, and character qualities shared by Northern Norwegians. Of course, I have no sufficient knowledge to determine how accurate those statements are, but that is neither here nor there. What those statements indicate is the perceived difference in devotion to keeping the tradition of *dugnad* alive. What is more, through the tone of their voice and non-verbal messages, they indirectly express disappointment in “the Southerners”.

Lastly, I want to address the significance of humor in Northern Norwegian identity and as an important characteristic of interactions during *dugnad*. “Humor is conspicuous part of Northern Norwegian culture. It is an integrated part of daily life of the region and should be analyzed in its socio-cultural context. (...) Most people in northern Norway believe that their humor is something special and differs from the humor from the other parts of the country (...) Some professionals’ humorists point out that madness is inherited in much of their humor. (...) they claim that the dramatic landscape is mirrored in the tendency of the storytellers to dramatize and exaggerate, and that the stormy weather leads to loudness and use of powerful words, not to mention swearing and obscenities.” (Hertzberg Johnsen, 1999)

One of my informants, Ronja, gives a very illustrating example of the use of the phrase “hæstkuk” (literally translated as horse cock). It is considered funny and provocative in northern Norway, and sometimes used to refer to policemen, but it would be extremely offensive and unacceptable to say in Oslo. “They don’t understand what we consider humor, it is not humor for them, and we use it a lot” (Ronja, Tomasjordnes).

Situational humor may be found during *dugnad* in Stonglandseidet, where participants are playfully “mean” towards each other: imitating hitting with a broom, complaining over someone’s work when they don’t actually mean to criticize them. I think that clip with Mette making fun of the poor artistic value of a painting depicting a black woman with a cigar can be called here too. She pretends to sit on the toilet with a painting over here; even such a mild ‘toilet humor’ could be read by some as a lack of taste. Exaggeration is used by Mette and Ronja when they are fooling around in front of the camera, saying that they want to make it to Hollywood by participating in my student film. Situational humor is, therefore, not only situational, but geographical in Norway.

6 CONCLUSION

The main objective of my study was understanding the complexity of *dugnad* and the reasons why it has prevailed. I believe I have achieved this goal and provided sufficient and reasonable answers to the stated research questions.

By presenting the plethora of ways *dugnad* as a term is used, I have shown it is an extremely fruitful concept with high adaptability. It did not lose its relevance, despite Norway undergoing substantial social, political and economic changes. What was once a system of help and reciprocation amongst agricultural societies, has clearly survived as a concept and as an act of obligation in today's modern society. During the twentieth century, it was a means of providing necessary infrastructure. Now, when these needs are met by the state, *dugnad* is utilized for other activities in housing cooperatives, clubs, teams, or schools and kindergartens. *Dugnad* shifted from being a necessity, to a cultural practice – in other words, it is chosen by society because it is highly valued as a practice. The economic and practical functions of *dugnad* have also endured. Perhaps most importantly, *dugnad* rose to the rank of a symbol. It not only maintained its functions, but broadened its scope. It serves as a cultural code, to which national authorities and volunteer-based organizations refer to. It can serve as a cultural code because it has been integrated as a part of national identity. *Dugnad* is perceived as a creditable element of Norwegian-ness. Additionally, to its practical usefulness, it is an expression of Norwegian's appreciated values. People do *dugnad* because it is engraved in culture, and will do *dugnad* because it expresses qualities they want to see in themselves.

That leads to *dugnad* being based on reciprocity. The obligation to give back something precious one has received, is a moral duty and has been observed in societies and groups across the globe and for centuries (Gouldner 1960; Mauss 1954). Whether you give back directly to the community (generalized reciprocity in Stonglandseidet) or to “the world” (serial reciprocity in Tomasjordnes), it is at its core the same felt obligation to repay. Abiding by the rule of reciprocity makes people feel good about themselves and is seen as a personal benefit. This personal benefit is, by all measures of *dugnad*, not only for the good of the individual, but consequently for the good of everyone else too. That motivates them to make an effort and come to the *dugnad*.

Dugnad maintained its social aspect and integrational function. It presents differently depending on the type of social bonds existing within the particular community. It is a means of integration (Tomasjordnes, Olsgård and Dyrk), or the result of the community being highly integrated (Stonglandseidet). Either way, the social aspect of *dugnad* is appreciated and is one of the main motives for participation. Given the growing diversity of Norwegian society, it can be an easy way of introducing foreigners to Norwegian culture.

When it comes to differences and comparisons between *dugnads*, the main is the type of reciprocity to which participants refer to and turnout. That is a consequence of variations between communities itself. In those falling closer to what Tönnies calls *Gemeinschaft*, the requirement to participate is stronger (Tönnies 2001). In *Gesellschaft* it is easier to choose opting out from *dugnad*, hence it is more likely that only small portion of residents show up and contribute (ibid.). The same applies to a feeling of belonging and place attachment. The stronger it is, the more likely it is that people get involved. In Stonglandseidet people share years of common history, and in Dyrk with the amount of work put into the project, are bases for strong relationships with both the community and the place – this is what facilitates active participation. The weaker attachment is, the lower the turnout (like in Tomasjordnes).

I have titled my film ‘Here to Stay’. While starting my research, I did not attempt to try and predict whether or for how much longer *dugnad* will be continued. Such an attempt seemed overly ambitious. Yet, after what I have written in throughout this thesis, it feels safe to assume that *dugnad*, in some form, will be around for much longer. *Dugnad* is beneficial on many levels. It is useful for a society or a nation (as a symbol and identity expression), for a particular group (integration, solving local problems), and for an individual (personal benefits, feeling good about oneself). It is highly adaptable to changing environments. Most importantly, it is valued. That makes current *dugnad* leaders, or using the Norwegian term *ildsjels*, motivated to pass it to the next generations and ensure the practice of *dugnad* will not be neglected.

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