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POSTCOLONIAL EUROGAMES?

A Social Semiotic Exploration of the Representations Made In Eurogames

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ABSTRACT

Boardgames are a popular mean of entertainment and are widely enjoyed by people of all ages as a way of getting together as a group, have fun and relax. Even though they are commonly perceived as a medium that provides fun and engagement to its players, boardgames are also cultural texts that can convey underlying assumptions and views on the places, people and cultures that are represented in them. Therefore, boardgames should be examined continuously to uncover and examine the representations made in them. Boardgames belonging to the genre of Eurogames immerse the player into their narrative by providing a theme to the players such as *Arabian*, *Roman* or *Jungle*. In his essay "Postcolonial Catan" (2014), boardgame designer Bruno Faidutti remarked upon a lack of Postcolonial game design, which is taken as a point of departure for this thesis' topic.

This thesis explores the meanings that the two boardgames, *Five Tribes* (2014) and *Cacao* (2015) convey under a Postcolonial perspective. While in *Five Tribes* the Orient is used as a theme, *Cacao* takes place in a jungle setting. Therefore, both games not only present Western target players with perspectives of other places, but they also signify power relations between the player and the perceived *other* and carry underlying assumptions about the people and places represented in them.

Two methods have been used as part of this Master Thesis. First, a social semiotic analysis was carried out on each of the two boardgames to uncover the (hidden) meanings inherent to the Eurogames under analysis. Then, two focus groups were conducted to gain insight into how players of *Cacao* and *Five Tribes* interpret the games´ themes and representations from their perspective. Each group consisted of three players, whereas one group consisted of people playing on a casual basis, while the second group featured participants who play boardgames on a regular basis. Before engaging into a discussion, both groups where presented with the games and played them. A thematic analysis was then carried out on the focus group transcripts to explore the participants´ views towards the games they played.

As a result of both of my analyses, I found that *Cacao* and *Five Tribes* adopt a discourse charged with stereotypical views of the places and people they represent and adopt a colonial

gaze towards these people and places. Moreover, the games that were analysed in this thesis it put the player in a position of power where he or she is in charge of managing labour and life in exotic and faraway places, and act reminiscent of colonial times.

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1. Introduction

The media heavily contributes to the way "ideas about the past are constructed, circulated, and preserved" (Begy 2015, p. 2). Therefore, a wide range of resources apart from formal history can provide further insights into the construction of cultural memory and the ways the past is constructed. (ibid.) Despite the common perception of games as a form of entertainment, board games are "legitimate forms of media, human expression, and cultural importance" (Flanagan 2009, p. 67) and can therefore give further insights into the norms and assumptions of the society they are created and played in. This can especially seen to be the case in modern board games, often referred to as *Designer-* or *Eurogames*, since they commonly use themes for their narrative such as the *Arabian* theme, *city building, historical events* or *exploration* - thereby giving players insights into other cultures, times or life situations. (Mayer & Harris 2009, p. 12f.) This leads to a state in which, even though these games do not necessarily go into historical details and often allow the players to alter and influence the narrative of the game, they still do allow players to reach a "deeper conceptualization of history" (Begy 2015, p. 3).

Bruno Faidutti, a board game designer with a background in history and sociology, was the first, to point to a problematic aspect of modern board games by stating that the industry is still waiting for a postcolonial board and card game designer and that tabletop games are "probably still one of the most typically western cultural forms" (Faidutti 2014). In his essay "Postcolonial Catan" (2014), he points out that there is a prevailing Eurocentric perspective within boardgames. This can be seen as problematic, since the nature of boardgames allows them to "embed racial and cultural bias under the guise of innocent play" (Flanagan 2009, p.84f.), since they are considered to be *only* games. (ibid.) Therefore, it is of importance to examine boardgames and the representations made in them to uncover these possible biases and assumptions, especially since many commonly known themes in boardgames such as *discovery* or *resource extraction*, could be linked to colonial or postcolonial discourses. All the aspects mentioned so far, call for a continuous inquiry of the hidden meanings in boardgames as a resource as well as the experience(s) and representations that they offer to their players.

This thesis therefore aims to shed light into meaning-making mechanisms within board games regarding cultural representations and the perspectives used in them to discuss not only if there is a prevalence of Eurocentrism and a lack of postcolonial game design, but more

importantly, how meaning is created for the players by decisions in game design and gameplay. An in-depth inquiry on these matters can provide new knowledge with regard to research on boardgames, help to further explore the meanin- making mechanisms in such games and can also function as a starting point for the contextualisation of boardgames and the representations made in them from a Postcolonial perspective.

Therefore, I will perform a multimodal social semiotic analysis of two board games belonging in the prevalent category of *Eurogames*: *Five Tribes – The Djinns of* Naqala, designed by the French boardgame designer Bruno Cathala and *Cacao*, designed by the Australian designer Phil Walker-Harding. While the former brings the players to the "fabled Sultanate of Naqala" (Days of Wonder Inc. n.d.), the later puts players into an "exotic world" (ABACUSSPIELE n.d.) with the aim of cocoa extraction. Both games share a narrative placed out of Europe and the gameplay focuses on gaining grounds or influence on the board for power or profit, making them not only exemplary for common themes in the designer game genre but also discussable in the contexts of postcolonialism and eurocentrism.

My main research questions when it comes to inquiry of the issues outlined above are:

1) How are the themes of the games under analysis reflected through signs and actions used in the gameplay?
2) How do theme and gameplay in the two boardgames signify power relations with regard to a Eurocentric or Postcolonial context?
3) How do these meanings convey underlying assumptions about the people and places represented in them?

To answer my questions, I will first give an overview over the concepts of Postcolonialism and Eurocentrism, whereby Edward Said´s theory on Orientalism (1978) will also be outlined. As part of this chapter, Bruno Faidutti´s essay "Postcolonial Catan" (2014) will also be introduced, since his text provides a boardgame-specific perspective with regard to Postcolonial and Eurocentric representations. In further theoretical chapters Michel Foucault's theory of discourse will be outlined as well as Pierre Bourdieu's theory on the habitus.

Before my analysis, I will also take a further look into the meaning of play as a concept to determine the inherent value(s) and activities connected to the act and the experience of play. This will provide me with the knowledge necessary to understand not only why people play, but also how play is connected to their (daily) lives, thereby giving me a better

understanding of the experiences of the possible players. I will then go on to define board games as a specific type of play and introduce aspects of game-design as well as the genre *Eurogames* with its inherent mechanisms and themes. This will provide a further understanding of the mechanisms used in boardgames and is necessary for the analysis of the signs used in the chosen games. By doing so, I will further establish boardgames as a text and a resource with cultural relevance.

For the analysis of the games themselves, a social semiotic analysis was carried out, since it not only aims to reveal the (hidden) meanings of signs, but is also a multimodal approach that takes into account the social context of the resources under analysis. It is therefore appropriate for answering my research questions. However, since games do not only stand for themselves, but are played by players, I will also take into account the perspective of players on the two games under analysis. Therefore, two focus groups were carried out and the data analysed using the approach of a thematic analysis to gain insights into the concepts and meanings players perceive from *Five Tribes* and *Cacao*.

2. Postcolonialism and Eurocentrism

The term *postcolonialism* started out as a historical concept with a temporal definition ascribing the term to countries that have been decolonized, thus making the decolonisation movements of the 20th century the foundation for the concept. (Chowdhry 2016; Lazarus 2016, p. 2) While this definition is still present, other aspects have been added to the concept of postcolonialism ever since.

As a definite academic field, postcolonialism emerged during the 1970s, nevertheless it cannot be said that there is one clear definition of postcolonialism as a concept – it can rather be stated that it covers a wide range of meaning and issues. (Chowdhry 2016) Therefore, it "is not in fact a theory in the scientific sense, that is a coherently elaborated set of principles that can predict the outcome of a given set of phenomena" (Young 2003, p. 6) but it rather consists of "a related set of perspectives" (ibid, p. 7). Nevertheless, there are assumptions that are ascribed to the term such as the importance of the colonial times with regard the current state of the world based on the assumption that colonialism´s and imperialism´s legacy is still present in the modern world, which in return means that "the modern world exemplifies both historical continuities and ruptures with classical colonialism" (Chowdhry 2016).

Emerging European imperialism in the 16th century and the voyages of conquest led to a colonial and imperial rule that was legitimised through anthropological theories and further led to a "division between the rest and the west" (Young 2003, p. 2). This further developed into status in which European as well as European-derived powers had control over approximately nine-tenth of the global land surface in the 19th century. (ibid.) Though there has been resistance against this state, it took until the end of the 19th century for political movements to gain momentum and for the processes of decolonisation to begin. (ibid., p. 3) Yet, political independence and the status of postcolonialism (from a temporal perspective) did not mean the end of dependency, an aspect strengthened by the fact that even after formal decolonization "the major world powers did not change" (ibid.). Due to these dependencies, countries in non-Western continents - Latin America, Asia and Africa - "are largely in a situation of subordination to Europe and North America, and in a position of economic inequality" (ibid., p., 4).

Moreover, postcolonialism is not only concerned with economic aspects, but also cultural ones. It aims to "examine the experiences of peoples and places—colonized and colonizers alike - both during and following the period of formal colonialism" (Downey 2014). This also "means realizing that when western people look at the non-western world what they see is often more a mirror image of themselves" (Young 2003, p. 2), connoting that rather than seeing reality objectively or including perspectives from people outside the west, the view is driven by assumptions about the reality of other people(s) and place(s). (ibid.) Postcolonialism further criticizes the use of "spatial metaphors and the temporal axis employed in 'First World' discourses" (Chambers 1996, p. 209) by constituting that "the 'other' world is 'in here'" (ibid.) rather than using the First World/Third World contrast as a metaphor for 'modern' and 'backwards'. (ibid.)

The term postcolonialism therefore carries assumptions about the connections between knowledge and power with it and implies that so called "expert and universal knowledge in the humanities, social sciences, and other disciplines is deeply embedded in the colonial enterprise and is essentially Eurocentric" (Chowdhry 2016). Eurocentrism can be seen as linked to Postcolonialism in this regard and describes the notion that "European cultural perspectives are privileged […] over others" (Chandler & Munday 2014). This is furthermore linked to the assumption of European superiority and contributes to the construction of the binary opposition outlined in the preceding paragraph. (Asante 2005)

Eurocentrism first started to emerge in the Renaissance when the idea of learning began to centre on the experiences of Roman and Greek civilisations, and continued in the era of Europe´s "voyages of conquest from 1492 to 1600" (ibid.) as well as during the time of European Imperialism starting in the 16th century mentioned earlier. (Altamirano-Jimenez 2010) Eurocentric notions further grew, since conquest and Imperialism brought European religion(s), symbol systems and languages to the regions of conquest. (Asante 2005) Overall, Eurocentrism forms an all-enclosing system "encompassing education, law, science, and knowledge" (ibid.) which leads to a status in which challenging Eurocentrism is synonymous to challenging the universal assumptions on "the way things are" (ibid.).

This again forms a link to postcolonialism, since it focuses on the examination of these prevalent knowledges. This aspect is e.g. stressed by Homi K. Bhabha who illustrates in his book "The Location of Culture" (2004) that post-colonialism also means to challenge the reproduction of knowledge, structures etc. that root in the times of colonialism as well as the inequality with regard to the possibilities to gain authority to shape cultural representations. (p. 245). For from a postcolonial perspective, the binary opposition of First and Third World mentioned earlier, does not hold up as a holistic explanation but additionally, one has to recognise "the more complex cultural and political boundaries" (ibid., p. 248) at play. Bhabha also points out that it is of importance to differentiate "between the semblance and similitude of the symbols across diverse cultural experiences […] and the social specificity of each of these productions of meaning" (ibid., p. 247) because they are always sings in a precise value system and cultural/social context.

The question of what passes for general knowledge, was also examined by Edward Said, who has contributed to the theory of postcolonialism by emphasising "the importance of discursive formations to the imperial project" (Fourchard 2011) through his text "Orientalism" (1978), which is today considered to be a "hallmark text of postcolonial studies as a field" (Schwarz & Ray 2016, p. 7). In the following, I will introduce the main points made by Said.

2.1. Orientalism

In "Orientalism", Said argues that ontologically, the concepts of the *West* and *Orient* do not hold up since each of them is constructed by human beings themselves in a way to identify, confirm and thereby construct the existence of difference and the *other*. (Said 1978) From this viewpoint, the Orient is not a real place, but "almost a European invention" (ibid., p. 1)

filled with "exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (ibid.). Through the creation of these images, the Orient became a contrast to the so called *Western World*, thereby helping said *West* to define itself through contrast. (ibid., p. 1f.) Another important side to Orientalism is that it lives from description from the outside, meaning that the Orient does not speak for itself but is spoken for and described for the Occident leading to a state in which "it is not "truth" but representations" (ibid., p. 21) that circulate – a factor that holds an important position within postcolonial theory as mentioned above.

Said distinguished three different types of Orientalism: academic Orientalism, Orientalism as a style of thought and Orientalism as a mean for dominance and power. While academic Orientalism means is concerned with researching and studying the Orient, the second type is founded in the "ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident."" (ibid., p. 2) leading to a state in which this bipolar distinction is widely accepted and in return to a reproduction of this distinction by e.g. using the contrast through cultural artefacts such as images, novels etc. (ibid., p. 2ff.) This aspect is intertwined with the third type defined by Said, that describes Orientalism as a form of power from European-Atlantic nations over the Orient. (ibid., p. 6) All these factors can then furthermore be perceived as parts of a cultural hegemony and further stabilize Orientalism in its bipolarity. (ibid., p. 6ff.)

Apart from these aspects, Said´s theory also involves questions of knowledge-production that, as outlined previously, are important to postcolonialism and became the focus of Bhabha´s work. For the scholars and producers of resources can hardly be detached from their social background, surroundings, upbringing, predisposition etc. since they are always part of a broader social context (both unconscious and conscious) which in return means that knowledge is hardly unpolitical or uninfluenced by the factors mentioned. (ibid., p. 10f.) With regard to the increasing number of media, Said also expressed concerns towards a reinforcements of stereotypes and observed that information have become increasingly uniform and standardised, e.g. by repeatedly portraying Arabs "as filthy-rich oil sheiks or as terrorists" (Lockman 2004, p. 183). (Said 1978, p. 26). This, in return, lead to an intensification of "the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of "the mysterious Orient"" (ibid).

With regard to boardgames, Orientalism – as well has postcolonialism – have not been the focus of many researchers in game studies or professionals despite the fact that tabletop games have the capacity to provide experiences to the players and as a medium, are a cultural product able to reflect inherent cultural norms and assumptions. (Flanagan 2009; Mayer & Harris 2009) However, a recent essay from Bruno Faidutti, a well-known boardgame designer, started to point to these issues. The main points of his essay will be outlined in the following to illustrate how Postcolonialism and Boardgames can be linked.

2.2. Postcolonialism and Boardgames

The boardgame designer Bruno Faidutti was the first to draw a connection between Boardgames, Orientalism and Postcolonialism in his essay "Postcolonial Catan" (2014) where he starts from his personal realisation that in the popular game "The Settlers of Catan", the natives are absent and the gameplay solely focuses on the settling parties. For Faidutti, it would not be problematic to have a game that openly deals with colonialism and uses the topics of slavery or colonization, in contrast, he sees it as problematic that history gets somewhat euphemised e.g. by presenting these aspects under the disguise of e.g. (economic) competition and using terms such as 'workers'. (Faidutti 2014) This implies that today´s boardgames represent not a grapple with the political or social past and present, but that they are rather perceived and designed to be an "anxiolytic in a western society" (ibid.) providing entertainment and security rather than thought and controversy. (ibid.) When looking at boardgames as an overall medium, he moreover points out that the tendency for the themes of boardgames (which will be looked at more closely in an upcoming chapter) to be at least somewhat "romantic or backward looking" (ibid.).

While postcolonialism helped to uncover inherent knowledges, assumptions and power relations and question them over time, boardgames, according to Faidutti, have not been part of these processes, leading to a state in which the industry is "still waiting for a postcolonial board or card game designer" (ibid.) which also means that the images presented in boardgames can, at times, be read as outright Orientalist. (ibid.) With regard to this and the mentioned romanticism, Faidutti points to some of the most common images and narratives of boardgames in his essay – the Orient has camels, Egypt has pyramids, Japan has Samurai and in China various kingdoms fight against each other etc. (ibid.)

The implications of these representations need to be investigated and this thesis aims to be a starting point by looking closer at the meanings games provide for their players. For people

who play boardgames on a casual or regular basis, the images and narratives mentioned by Faidutti are a common sight, yet there does not seem to be a critical discussion, which in return fortifies the notion of their commonness. Thereby, they could be linked to the category of common assumptions and knowledges outlined previously, making them not only a mere image or narrative, but part of a constructed reality. Interestingly, Faidutti also reflects about the notion of time in his essay, pointing out that the Orient is often a somewhat mysterious timeless place, while other games often make use of specific setting e.g. the French Revolution or medieval times, both with the effect that it evokes the impression that whatever is happening in the game is far away. (ibid.) This leads to the general notion that in games, "[f]ar away times are like far away places – naive, simple, vaguely perverse and, of course, backwards" (ibid.). For my research this means that I will take a look at the way time and place are used as part of the game and it´s design to see what meaning and power relations they convey in the context of the game.

While "Postcolonial Catan" directs attention to the aspects outlined above, the author arguably saw these issues from the perspective of a game designer. For Faidutti, the main problem is general exoticism and romanticism in designs rather than the lack of postcolonial designs and he somewhat justifies common design choices by stating that in game design, time and setting serve only as topoi and references and that there is no room for deep complexity in game designs. (ibid.) He sees it more of a design choice, thereby leaving out social implications and how these representations can become or are already part of reality. This in return, is a factor this thesis aims to investigate further and points to the importance of discourses and the way assumptions and knowledges become part of a social reality.

3. Discourse and Habitus

Postcolonialism, Said´s theory of Orientalism and the points made by Faidutti can be seen in connection to Michel Foucault`s theory on the connection between knowledge and power as well as Pierre Bourdieu´s theory of the *habitus*.

In his 1972 book "The Archeology of Knowledge", Foucault defined discourses as knowledges of aspects of reality that are socially constructed. (p. 193) Therefore, it is not possible to have one objective truth or knowledge of what is real in the sense of the Enlightenment´s understanding, since there can be different knowledges or discourses about the same aspects of reality. (Lockman 2004, p. 185) Moreover, Foucault argued that said discourses are

embedded "in a system of prohibitions and values" (Foucault 1972, 193) that further influence them, since rules, norms and values stand in connection to discursive practices. (ibid.) This can be found in Said´s theory on the unconscious influence of these aspects as part of knowledge-production and can furthermore be linked to Pierre Bourdieu´s theory of the *habitus*.

Bourdieu defines the latter as a "system of dispositions – a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 82) through its presence in practices, leading to the creation of a common sense and consensus reinforced by being experienced and repeated over time. (ibid., p. 80). This implicates that the production of resources such as media outputs has an inherent social power "to make groups by making the common sense, the explicit consensus" (Bourdieu 1985, p. 729). As part of that, communication allows to share certain meanings and in return similar discourses can provide the foundation for a joined construct of a social world consisting of "a shared culture of meanings" (Hall 1997, p. 18).

All this is not only highly connected to the creation of the binary opposition pointed out earlier as well as the importance of questioning prevalent knowledges within postcolonialism, but also points to the way boardgames can be seen as a part of a system and inhibit a power to strengthen or create knowledges and contribute to assumptions on peoples, places and the construction of reality.

For this thesis, the aspects outlined so far mean that I will have to be concerned with the context the games I will analyse are produced in, consider the perspective of the players, as well as the power relations inherent to the boardgames: Who are the target players? Do the games make use of common stereotypes with regard to the people(s)/places represented in them or are they presenting players with new representations? Do the games make meaning through the use of bipolar contrasts? Do players perceive the images used in the games as common?

4. Play

Play can be defined in various ways from various angles. John Huizinga´s text "Homo Ludens. A study of the play element in culture" is today considered a classic and moreover laid out the foundation for game studies as a field that is still more and more emerging. (Nieborg, David, Hermes 2008, p. 135) In his book, Huizinga examined play as a distinct element in the

world and its importance within life´s actions, starting from the notion that the concept of play "presupposes human society" (Huizinga 1980, p. 1) . While many, also today, explain play as an exercise, a laxative or an instinct, Huizinga argued on the one hand for play as a primary category of life itself (ibid., p. 3), but on the other hand as a concept that requires differentiation when it acts as a function of culture: within a social context, play should be seen as a social construction itself (ibid., p. 4). When it comes to the characterisation of play, he established several characteristics that are still valid in current game studies: it is an activity that emerges the player and is not considered part of common life. (ibid., p. 13) Moreover, play does not pursue material interest, takes place in its own set of rules and fosters social gatherings. (ibid.) In addition to these characteristics that place it outside ordinary life, play creates or includes a form of competition (e.g. for winning a game, finishing first etc.) and can have a function of representation (as e.g. in a theatre play). (ibid.) Most importantly however, the effect of contest and representation can also occur simultaneously, which is especially important with regard to this thesis since this implicates that on a deeper level, it is significant to ask *what* games do represent and *how* this is done since the players will be absorbed within these representations while finding themselves in the time and space of play. This is an aspect stressed by contemporary researchers such as in Witherspoon & Manning (2012), who agree that the general concept of play stays the same, yet it is the manner in which people "actually engage in play continues to evolve in their constantly changing societies" (Witherspoon & Manning 2012, p. 465) e.g. through the development of new mechanisms, gameplays or the evolvement of digital games. The constant inquiry of games as cultural artefacts is therefore necessary, to keep track of these changes but also to contextualise them and their representation in the light of changing societies and therefore in changing social contexts.

Because the rules and resources of games shape play experiences it is important to define the genres of play that one is dealing with. (Rodriguez 2006) Since this thesis aims to perform an in-depth inquiry within the genre of board games, I will now introduce board games and Eurogames as specific categories of play. Thereby I will also introduce boardgames as a text Since there has not been previous research on the specific matters this thesis focuses on and recent game studies tend to heavily focus on video games, I will complement scientific resources with information from boardgame designers or experts.

5. From games to boardgames

Since play can be seen as a primal category that is conceptually linked to society itself, the activity of playing is heavily linked to human beings - an aspect assured by the fact that evidence for humans playing boardgames was "uncovered in ancient burial grounds or depicted in ancient drawings and carvings" (Flanagan 2009, p. 63). While ruling classes used elaborate designs and materials highlighting their status, simple games out of easily accessible material existed as folk objects until the development of printing and industrial mass production allowed for more variety and accessibility. (ibid.)

To understand what a game is, not only means understanding the characteristics of games, it also means to understand what is *not* a game. Toys and puzzles for example do not fulfil certain requirements to be considered games. While the former does not provide inherent goals for those who play with them, the latter is not interactional, since the puzzle itself does not react to a player´s action, as boardgame designer Greg Costikyan elaborated in an interview with Tom Vasel. (Phillies, Vasel 2006, p. 42f.). Therefore, it can be said that a game needs goals to be meaningful and give the participants an objective. (ibid., p. 48) This also indicates that games need the players to decide upon certain actions that then change the course of the game, whereby the outcomes of games are not fixed. (ibid., p. 44ff.) Due to that, it can be said that "[g]ames provide a set of rules; but the players use them to create their own consequences" (ibid., p. 45).

While the aforementioned factors sum up important aspects of games, when it comes boardgames, it can be said that it "is a form of art in which participants, termed players, make decisions in order to manage resources through game tokens in the pursuit of a goal" (ibid., p. 45).

While *resources* are given to the player(s) as objects of their decision-making, *tokens* in return, are the "means of managing" (ibid., p. 50) said resources. To illustrate this, one can imagine a board game in which each player uses rabbits (tokens) to collect more carrots (resource) than the other. This example introduces another aspect common to boardgames: *opposition*. Opposition with regard to tabletop games can mean different things. On the one hand, it can mean that players are opponents in the game, on the other hand, from a designer´s perspective, it also means that players should have to work and struggle to achieve the objective of the game. (ibid., p. 48ff.) With regard to the main characteristics apparent in all boardgames, the following can be said: "All involve decision-making, managing resources in

pursuit of a goal […]. It´s a universal, it´s what defines a game" (ibid., p. 61f.). Therefore, the decision-making possibilities for the players and how they affect the course of the game will need to be taken into account in my analysis, since these are main aspects for the player´s play-experience.

However, even though games are commonly understood as a tool to create fun and playful experiences, they can also give the opportunity of social interaction between various players, whereby Eurogames are especially predestined when it comes to creating social experiences for their players, due to the characteristics such as the use of a theme and a mix between strategy and luck. (Mayer & Harris 2009, p. 15) The use of themes in designer boardgames can moreover provide the possibility for *authentic experiences*, meaning that they can give the players insights into certain historical periods or life situations, by making them face decisions in these settings. (ibid., p. 12f.) Players thereby enter "into the shared context of exploration created by the game´s theme" (ibid., p. 13f.). These experiences and insights make Eurogames of interest when looking at the representations, settings and experiences they offer to their players, which is why I decided to focus on boardgames from the genre of Eurogames for my analysis.

Apart from the aspect of player experience in Eurogames, boardgames overall can also be considered to as "forms of media, human expression, and cultural importance" (Flanagan 2009, p. 67), which makes them important on a more general level, since they also "reflect the norms and beliefs of their surrounding cultures" (ibid.). This further calls for ongoing examinations of boardgames because they "can embed racial and cultural bias under the guise innocent play. (Flanagan 2009, p.84f.) This can again be linked to the connections between knowledge and power according to Foucault and Bourdieu´s theory on the habitus and how these factors influence the production and interpretation of semiotic resources, as has been outlined earlier as part of the chapter *Discourse and Habitus*.

In the following, I will provide further information on the genre of Eurogames, which will give further background information necessary before conducting my analyses.

6. Eurogames

Modern board games are currently labelled under various commonly used names such as *Eurogames, Designer Games* or *German Style Games*. This has less to do with the origin of

each of the games in itself but is rather connected to "the game design renaissance in Germany that led to the recent surge in modern games" (Mayer & Harris 2009, p. 3).

What distinguishes them from other game types is that the name of the designer is normally featured on the box, their gameplay overall relies less on luck and they feature characteristics such as an information-rich environment, end-game scoring and balance of theme and mechanics. (Mayer & Harris 2009) In the following, I will elaborate on these points since it is important for my analysis to understand the features of the games under analysis as well as their implications for the gameplay.

One of the reasons why Eurogames enjoy a high popularity amongst a wide range of players is that their level of difficulty lies between strategy games and games of chance – while the former is difficult to master and therefore requires the player to invest a lot of time and commitment, the latter is likely to not engage players for a long time by demanding to little skill or thought. (ibid., p. 4)

A common example for a game of chance is when one roles a dice and players bet on the number the dice will show. The outcome for the players is based on luck and not by intellectually engaging them or providing the opportunity for them to change the course of the game. The commonly known game *chess* on the other hand is less based on chance and requires players to invest more time into learning the game´s rules and possible strategies. Apart from this balance between luck and chance, Eurogames often have a high level of *information richness*, meaning that the current state of the game can be assessed by the players. (ibid., p. 4f.) Here again, *chess* provides a good example, since both players essentially have the same information about the state of the game by looking at the gameboard in front of them. In the dice-roll example used previously, players would have no information available by which to plan their decision, thereby not providing any opportunity for them to asses the state of the game, which does not leave room for strategic considerations. (ibid., p. 4f.) Eurogames put the information-richness of their settings in various stages between those two sides, thereby often allowing for various degrees of strategy and luck. (ibid.) This makes them more accessible to a wider range of potential players and popular among casual gamers who enjoy playing boardgames, but do not want to fully commit to the intensity of strategy games.

The attractiveness of Eurogames however is further strengthened by the mechanism of *end-game scoring*, which means that every player stays in the game and that the winner is only determined at the end of the game e.g. by counting the points gathered by players, which can "engage players in a shared community of play that allows for ongoing development" (ibid., p. 6). This also sets Eurogames apart from traditional American games, where in-game elimination of players is more common. (ibid.) An example this is the American style boardgame *King of Tokyo* (2014)[1] in which the participants play monsters with a designated life total and are fighting each other for victory points. However, once a monster´s life total goes down to zero (e.g. because it was attacked by monsters of other players and could not heal its injuries), the player who controlled said monster is out of the game. The rest of the players still continue until one of them meets the conditions that lead to a win. In Eurogames on the other hand, player elimination processes as seen here, are extremely rare. This also means that players are continuously engaged in the gameplay, which is why games from this genre were chosen for analysis. With regard to the focus groups, this means that if participants play the games before the discussion, all of them will be able to stay in the game, allowing them to all connect to the game while playing it for the same amount of time.

Another component that stands out within Eurogames is the use of themes and the creation of an "intricate interplay between mechanics and theme" (ibid., p. 6). Commonly known themes in boardgames include e.g. exploration, Orient, medieval times, or pirates etc. and the theme overall contributes to the narrative of the gameplay and provides "the setting, characters, and general concept behind a game that establish a purpose for playing" (ibid.), thereby creating a unique game through the specific mix of theme and mechanisms used as part of the gameplay. (ibid.) In general, themes are the "story elements that provide meaning and context for the mechanical actions of the game" (ibid., p.115) that make the game less abstract for players by providing a narrative.

While some games have a higher focus on the theme – e.g. role playing games or story telling games in which the player emerges into the narrative of the game, others might have a stronger focus on the use of mechanics, yet the prevalence of themes is apparent in Eurogames overall. (ibid.) This aspect makes them an important resource for analysis, since the setting and characters represented through themes can be seen as cultural

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[1] Published by IELLO©

representations that can reflect underlying assumptions about these settings and the people and places they depict. For my social semiotic analysis, this also means that I will have to take a closer look at the overall narrative provided in the games under analysis and also on how they interact with their main mechanisms, which are the "set of rules that govern how an aspect of the game is played" (ibid., p. 114). Since these rules vary from game to game, I will outline the actions players can take for the individual games as part of my Social Semiotic analysis and outline the functions and actions that can be taken in the games.

7. Methodology

To answer my research questions and be able to perform an analysis according to my points of interest, my focus lies on the power relations expressed through boardgames from Eurocentric and Postcolonial perspectives. My research therefore focuses on the game itself and how the signs and mechanisms used in it create meaning. In addition, this also means taking into account the player´s perspective since the players engage with the game and make sense of the gameplay. The focus therefore lies on the use of signs and their effects within the games under analysis rather than on a high number of cases or statistics are features of a qualitative approach. (Flick 2007, p. 3) Moreover, this research aims to fill a gap in knowledge and reach an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms at play while uncovering (hidden) assumptions about cultures. These aspects added to my decision for a qualitative approach, since this type of research is more exploratory and can contribute to a better understanding of the subject matter and lay foundations for future research. (Creswell 2002, p. 23) For my analysis, I decided to focus on a sample of two boardgames from the genre of Eurogames due to the characteristics outlined previously. In the following, I will outline the selection process for the games that will be analysed. The games themselves will then be introduced in the beginning of the analyses. Apart from the games, three focus groups were conducted as part of this thesis to gather further data that includes the thoughts and perspectives of players and explore how they perceive the representations made in the games under analysis. The set-up of the focus groups and the approach to the analysis of the focus group data will be outlined in a later chapter of this thesis.

7.1. Data selection - boardgames

I decided for the specific genre of *Eurogames* for my analysis due to various reasons outlined earlier in this thesis. *Eurogames*, amongst other things, strongly incorporate themes in their

design, which also hints at the possibility that they include representations of various people(s), places and times. This can be achieved through various means such as setting the narrative in a place/time differently from the one of the player, by featuring a variety of countries in the gameplay, by placing characters from one area of the world in another through a narrative, or by featuring characters from different backgrounds. Due to these representations of people(s), places and times, it is possible for me to analyse such games under a Postcolonial perspective. Moreover, the genre itself is vastly popular and, as pointed out earlier the rules and gameplay make it accessible, therefore reaching not only avid gamers, but also beginners or casual players. (Mayer & Harris 2009) This in turn points to a high number of potential players which also means that (potentially) many people come in contact with the representations transmitted through these games.

Apart from belonging to the genre of Eurogames, the selected tabletop games should be critically acclaimed and well received by gamers since these aspects point not only to a certain amount of credibility of the games and could make them more attractive to possible players. Critical acclaim is furthermore important, since it implicates that the (hidden) meanings represented by the games are inherently understood and, when uncontested, agreed upon, which can point to the underlying assumptions of the game being largely accepted. To narrow down the possible games for my analysis further, I decided to focus on games with a narrative that takes place on earth (as opposed to e.g. space exploration) and whose main characters are human.

To find games that fit the criteria outlined above, I made use of the lists of winners and nominees of the "Spiel des Jahres" award. The award is given annually since 1979 by "Spiel des Jahres e.V.", an association founded in 1977 by German-speaking boardgame critics. (Ernst 2016) The association views boardgames as a cultural medium and the goal of their award is to guide a broad audience through the large number of boardgames offered, and to hold up quality standards in tabletop games. (ibid.) The award is given in three different categories: "Spiel des Jahres" (for games targeted to a general audience), "Kinderspiel des Jahres" (for games targeted towards children) and "Kennerspiel des Jahres" (for games targeted towards experienced gamers). (Spiel des Jahres e.V. 2016) The criteria for the award in all categories are:

> "1. Spielidee (Originalität, Spielbarkeit, Spielwert)
> 2. Regelgestaltung (Aufbau, Übersichtlichkeit, Verständlichkeit)

3. Spielmaterial (Funktionalität, Verarbeitung)
4. Grafik (Karton, Spielplan, Regel)".[2] (ibid.)

The jury for "Spiel des Jahres" and "Kennerspiel des Jahres" consists of journalists who specialised in writing about boardgames throughout their career and who work independently from game production or distribution companies. (ibid.) For "Kinderspiel des Jahres", the jury consist of a panel of people who employ children´s games within their field of work and do not work in game production or distribution. (ibid.)

For my data selection, I focused on the category "Spiel des Jahres", since a general audience as a target groups also includes casual and unexperienced players. I also made use of the list "Kennerspiel" des Jahres", since the games selected there are more complex, hinting at the possibility of a deeper exploration of the game´s theme and also to gain an overview over less family-friendly games, thereby allowing me to include varying levels of difficulty in my considerations.

I moreover made use of this specific award in my data selection, because its main category focuses on the general audience that is also reached by the genre of Eurogames and its mid-level difficulty (as outlined earlier). The fact that it is given by experts who are familiar with a large number of games and their possible mechanics for gameplay, contributes to the credibility of the games and the award itself is commonly known in the German-speaking area and associated with quality games. Furthermore, casual and unexperienced players commonly use the award as a guideline for which games to play/buy. Furthermore, the award is not only known amongst gamers internationally, but also important to game distributers such as the well-known game publisher *Days of Wonder©* that calls it "the world's most coveted game prize" (Days of Wonder Inc. n.d.).

Apart from "Spiel des Jahres", I also used the website *boardgamegeek.com* to compare boardgames and find games from various themes, since the website is commonly known as the largest internet platform for boardgame-players, offers an overview over a large number of games and allows its members to vote on games, thereby giving an overview over the player perception of the game´s quality but also making the popularity of the games visible by providing the number of voters.

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[2] "1. Idea of the game (originality, playability, play-value)
2. Material (functionality, manufacturing)
3. Rule design (structure, clear arrangement, comprehensibility)
4. Graphics (box, game plan, rules)" (ibid.) (own translation)

Another factor in my data collection process was the time of publication: Since I am not aiming to make claims from a temporal perspective, but explore current representations made in boardgames, I decided not to include games that are older than 10 years. As an additional mechanism to gain an overview over existing boardgames that could fit my criteria, I used the *Bastard Café* in Copenhagen as a game-library. The café essentially focuses on boardgames and has a large selection of them available for play. As part of my research, I familiarized myself with many games (e.g. by reading manuals, setting up games, familiarizing myself with their narratives) and test-played boardgames with friends. Moreover, experts, so called g*ame gurus*, from the café with an in-depth knowledge on games were consulted for suggestions and information on possible games for this research to gain an overview over the variety of existing tabletop games.

Finally, the selection of games was also influenced by practical issues. Since this research is not funded and boardgames can be expensive, the availability of the game in the aforementioned café or public libraries and the costs for purchasing possible games were further factors that influenced my decisions. However, it has also to be mentioned that issues of availability and costs can be seen as contributing factors for to this research, since that also implicates that the games selected are more likely to be (bought and) played by casual gamers who do not want to invest large sums of money or do not have vast financial means, thereby reaching a wider audience.

In addition to that, I also made the decision to select only games with a suggested playing time of maximal 90 minutes, since this can also be seen to ensure a wider accessibility and therefore reach of the game(s). This also stands in relation to the focus groups, since casual or entry-level gamers could be intimidated by the complexity and duration of long games, which would ultimately make the situation of the participants playing such games in "real life" more unrealistic.

At the end of the selection process, the games *Five Tribes – The Djinns of Naqala* (2014) (in the following also referred to as jus *Five Tribe*), published by Days of Wonder© and designed by Bruno Cathala and *Cacao* (2015), published by ABACUSSPIELE©, designed by Philipp Walker Harding were chosen. The games will be further be outlined and introduced as part of their Social Semiotic analysis, outlining their overall narratives and background information such as information and further information on the designers.

Since this thesis will use a social semiotic approach for the analysis of the two boardgames, the following chapters will introduce theory regarding semiotics and social semiotics before conducting the analysis.

8. Semiotics

Semiotics is considered to be the study of signs and is "concerned with the analysis of sign systems" (Silverman 2006, p. 249). As a field of research, it roots in the lectures of Ferdinand de Saussure, a French linguist, who was the first to make the "distinction between *language* and *speech*" (ibid., p. 250). Saussure understood *langue* as the system of language and used the term *parole* to describe the actual speech acts that occur within the rules of *langue*. (Saussure 1959) While the former is the system, with the latter "[e]xecution is always individual, and the individual is always its master" (ibid., p. 13). To illustrate this point, one could see it in an analogy with regard to boardgames, where the rulebook constitutes the *langue*, the system of rules and conventions that the players follow, while the individual moves of the players within the game and its rules function as the *parole*.

Moreover, Saussure noted that the system can only exist in collectivity, since when it comes to language, the sings are given arbitrarily and therefore "every means of expression used in society is based, in principle, on collective behaviour or […] on convention" (ibid., p. 68).

This distinction between system and execution brought with it the understanding that there is a difference between *signs* in a language system and the way people make sense of them – the meaning they make. Saussure saw linguistic signs as "a concept and a sound image" (ibid., p. 13) at the same time and introduced the distinction between the *signifier* and the *signified*. The former describes the sign in its form (e.g. a spoken word), while the latter describes what the sign means in a conceptual sense. (ibid., p. 66ff.) An example would be if somebody says the word *fire* – one would in this case hear the word as a formal sign, but would also associate various meanings with it such as *flames, warmth, danger, heat, burning* etc.

While Saussure focused on signs as constituted by language, the understanding of what could be considered a sign widened and today it is understood that "[a]lmost everything we do or make can be done or made in different ways and therefore allows, at least in principle, the articulation of different social and cultural meanings" (Van Leeuwen 2005, p. 4). This was also an aspect stressed by Saussure himself, who saw *langue* as the focus for linguistics but also

noted "that language is comparable to other social institutions" (Silverman 2006) and that it is "only one particular semiological system"(Saussure 1959, p. 68).

9. Social Semiotics

While the basic understanding of signs in social semiotics is based on Saussure´s accomplishments, it proceeds on the broad understanding of what constitutes a *sign* that was outlined previously and preferably uses the term (semiotic) *resource* instead of *sign*. Moreover, while Saussure was interested in the system, social semiotics assumes that resources are always used in a (social) context that might have "rules or best practices that regulate how specific semiotic resources can be used, or leave the users relatively free in their use of the resource" (van Leeuwen 2005, p. 4). An example for that would be that there are stricter regulations for how to build and interpret traffic signs than there are for how to use semiotic resources to create performance art and that the way one addresses people depending on their social position is based on unwritten societal rules and best practices. Moreover, rules in this case are understood as "socially made and changeable through social interaction" (Jewitt 2014, p. 24).

 For my analysis, this also means taking into account the context of the board games in themselves, making the previous definitions, theories and contextualisations an important backdrop for the analysis itself.

The aim of the social semiotic approach can be summed up as to "uncover the hidden meanings that reside in texts" (Bryman 2012, p. 68), but it also asks the question: "How do we use material resources to produce meaning?" (van Leeuwen 2005, p. 93). Therefore, the approach focuses on "the way people use semiotic 'resources' both to produce communicative artefacts and events and to interpret them" (ibid., p. xi). This means that social semiotics offers me the right tools for my analysis of boardgames with regard to my research questions, since it not only incorporates a broad understanding of what constitutes a *text*, but also allows me to find out how meaning is created in the boardgames under analysis and which meanings are transmitted to the (possible) players of said games.

9.1. Aspects of social semiotic analysis

According to Theo Van Leeuwen (2005), there are four basic components that occur in all communicative acts and are therefore important for social semiotic analyses: genre, style modality and discourse. (p. 91ff.)

Genre is commonly understood as a certain type of text as e.g. in the distinction between horror films and romantic comedies, while **style** refers to the way one expresses oneself within the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1964) Within this thesis Eurogames were introduced as a specific genre of boardgames, with inherent characteristics that contribute to their overall style such as the prevalence of themes. However, since games are developed by boardgame designers, the overall style varies, meaning that for the two games under analysis it can be expected that they will show similarities in general features that are inherent to Eurogames as a genre, but that there will still be differences in the way these characteristics are used in the individual games.

Modality in social semiotics engages with the level of truth of what is represented. Thereby it focuses not on truth or false as a fact, but on "the truth as speakers and writers and other sign producers see it, and with the semiotic resources they use to express it" (van Leeuwen 2005, p. 160). Depending on the semiotic resources used, a high or low modality can be achieved through different means. *Linguistically*, the choice of words can indicate a high or low modality, e.g. using the adjective *certain* indicates a high modality since it expresses that the user of this semiotic resource believes that his/her statement is true. On the other hand, if instead he/she would use the word *unlikely*, that would express a low truth-value and therefore a low modality. Using means of modality therefore connotes expressing "meanings of truth and falsehood, fact and fiction, certainty and doubt, credibility and unreliability" (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, p. 154).

Modality however "is not restricted to language but is a multimodal concept" (van Leeuwen 2005, p. 165) (ibid., p. 165), meaning that all modes of communication raise the question of the truth value they represent and that depending on the mode, there are different ways, to express modality. Furthermore, within social semiotics, cues of modality are considered to "have arisen out of the interest of social groups who interact within the structures of power that define social life" (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006, p. 154). This again indicates that the truth value represented has to be contextualised in a broader context of discourses, as "socially constructed knowledge about the world" (Stöckl 2014, p. 278) and to the aspects outlined regarding Faucault´s theory on discourse in the chapter *Discourse and Habitus*. According to van Leeuwen, the prevalence of a discourse can be seen as evident, when aspects of reality are represented in a similar manner, since that also indicates similarities in the knowledge(s) that is linked to the discourse. (van Leeuwen 2005, p. 95) With my research questions,

discourses of colonialism and postcolonialism in the *Five Tribes* and *Cacao* will be of interest for me as well as discourses of the *exotic* or *foreign*.

Another point of interest with regard to modality is, that there can be different ways *truth* can be understood, resulting in different types of modality: naturalistic, abstract, technological or sensory modality. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, p. 163ff.) To answer my research questions, my analysis will focus on visual and abstract modality.

Visual modality describes "the degree to which certain means of visual expression are used […] express increases or decreases in 'as how real' the image should be taken" (van Leeuwen 2005, p. 165). This can occur through various means such as the ways colors, light or sharpness are used. (ibid.) Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) have outlined the most common markers for visual modality. With regard to the use of colour, they define the ranges of *colour saturation* (full saturation vs black-and-white images), *colour differentiation* (broad range of colours vs monochrome) and *colour modulation* (different shades of a colour vs unmodulated colour) as markers for modality. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, p. 160ff.) The *contextualisation of the background* on the other hand describes the amount of detail included in the background of the image, while the *articulation of detail* refers to the level of abstraction or detail. (ibid., p. 161; van Leeuwen 2005, p. 167) When assessing these aspects, it is important to take into account, that these means mostly do not occur in one extreme, but rather on a range of possible uses. With regard to my analysis, markers of visual modality can help me to examine, as how realistic certain aspects of the games are represented. This can not only influence the perception of the viewer to certain images, but also give certain aspects less priority over others (e.g. by showing certain aspects in a close-up and others from far away), which could further indicate a dominance over some discourses over others.

Abstract modality on the other hand is not concerned with the naturalism of an image, but with said image representing e.g. ideas or value values and thereby "the deeper 'essence' of what it depicts" (ibid., p. 168). Since this thesis also aims to explore how the meaning conveyed in boardgames reflect underlying assumptions on the places represented, the more abstract meaning transmitted to the players is of special interest.

9.2. Means of meaning-making

After having outlined the basic understanding of the social semiotic approach and its aims, I will now introduce specific mechanisms that can create meaning(s) in a semiotic composition.

This will give an overview of the most important factors that I will be taken into account in my analysis. Overall, the different means of meaning-making can be divided into three groups: compositional, representational and interactive means, all of which interact together and will be incorporated in my analysis.

9.2.1. Composition

According to Theo van Leeuwen, "Composition is about arranging elements – people, things, abstract shapes, etc. – in or on a semiotic space – for example, a page, a screen, a canvas, a shelf, a square, a city" (van Leeuwen 2005, p. 198) or as in my case – the Eurogames under analysis. The main assumption hereby is that different arrangements transmit different meanings to the readers of the resource, thus making it an important meaning-making mechanism. (ibid., p. 198ff.) The dimensions of semiotic space I will need to take into account for my analysis are the following: "horizontality, verticality, centrality, and 'the third dimension'"(ibid., p. 201). All of them, create a different information value within a semiotic composition and therefore need to be analysed.

- **Horizontality:** The placement on the left-right axis is used to make a distinction between something *given* or *known* and something *new* as can e.g. be seen in dietary commercials that employ before and after pictures on a left-right axis to highlight contrast. (ibid., p. 201ff.)

- **Verticality :** Placement on the up-down axis contrasts the *ideal* and the *real*, a chasm that is also reflected in social relations by referring to the rich and powerful as "the 'upper' classes, people without power the 'lower' classes" (ibid., p. 204f.).

- **Centre and margin:** Placement in the centre marks a sign as a mediator or core-piece while peripheral placements signifies an outsider-position or minor importance.(ibid., p. 205ff.

- **The 'the third dimension'** refers to placement in a three-dimensional semiotic space, that allows for a placement in the front or back (in front of/behind). (ibid., p. 209f.) According to van Leeuwen, semiological compositions can use this space in three different ways: to polarize front and back (a displaying and a non-displaying side), weakly polarize the two sides (both displaying something), not polarize (both sides function as "the identity of the composition" (ibid., p. 211). (ibid., p. 209ff.)

Moreover foreground/background placement expresses closeness vs distance, with the background often providing context, and the foreground acting as the centre of attention. (ibid., p. 215)

Apart from the aspects summed up above, the use of *salience* and *framing* are also compositional means that I will need to take into account. *Salience* refers to the level of attention an element attracts, thereby creating a hierarchy between what is important/attention-worthy and what is not. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, p. 201) A high salience can e.g. be achieved through means such as extreme focus on an element or the use of outstanding colours. *Framing* in social semiotics describes if elements are presented as belonging together or distanced from each other e.g. by sharing the same colour scheme or being divided by visible lines. (ibid., p. 210)

9.2.2. Representation

Representational means focus on "represented participants" (ibid, p. 114) – e.g. people, objects or places depicted. Representational meaning is thereby created through the use of narrative or conceptual means.

A narrative is mainly created through the use of vectors, e.g. through gaze, gestures etc. that build "a dynamic, 'doing' or 'happening' kind of relation" (Jewitt & Oyama 2004, p. 141) between the participants. This dynamic usually implies and actor-object relationship, with the actor being the source of the vector and the object being its target. (ibid., p. 142f.) With regard to the analysis of boardgames, this means that I will have to take into account the physical movements of parts of the games (e.g. the figures that are used) and the more abstract meaning these movements or actions represent.

Conceptual meaning on the other hand is created through the use of structures and attributes that have a symbolic significance that is identifiably by the reader of the resource. (ibid, p. 143f.) A common symbol is e.g. a dove meaning peace or the cross being connected to Christianity. The use of such attributes gives what is represented a higher, symbolic meaning and offer a deeper definition or (abstract) classification to the reader. (ibid.)

With regard to boardgames it is moreover important to distinguish between the use of iconic and symbolic gamepieces (also called meeples): While the former create meaning by representing similarity (e.g. a figure that resembles the shape of a human being also representing a human being), the latter are more abstract and "arbitrarily relate to their

objects" (ibid.) such as a round meeple (a figure in a boardgame) that is defined by the rules as representing a castle. For my analysis, the representations made through gamepieces are of importance, because they are one of the major tools that creates interaction(s) within the game and can serve various functions, e.g. "representing a player, providing a factor of chance or representing points or money" (Bakker et al. 2007, p.164).

9.2.3. Interactivity
Interactive meaning describes meaning created between the resource and its interactive participants (readers/producers). (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, p. 114) Aspects that create interactivity in semiotic resources are e.g. contact to the viewer (e.g. through gaze directed at him/her), distance/closeness of elements in the semiotic composition, and the point of view (an all seeing perspective vs. a determined point of view). (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006; Jewitt & Oyama 2004, p. 146) For the social semiotic analysis of *Five Tribes* and *Cacao*, this also means taking into account the interactions of players and the gamepieces as mentioned previously

9.2.4. Language
Since Eurogames do not only make images and three-dimensional space as part of their gameplay, but can also feature words, I will have to take into account the relationship between imagery and written text as semiotic resources. According to Roland Barthes, text thereby has two main functions when occurring in combination with images: it acts either as *anchorage* or as *relay*. As an *anchorage*, the text helps the reader to reach certain interpretations, while when acting as *relay*, it complements the image but does not change the meaning of the image per se. (Barthes 1980, p. 156)

After having outlined the various means of meaning making that need to be taken into account when analysing multimodal resources such as boardgames, I will not introduce the two games that were chosen for the analysis, starting with a short introduction for each game before the analysis. Before starting the analyses, I would like to add that the social semiotic approach is an interpretative one, because the means outlined will be used by me, the researcher, to uncover meaning and meaning-making processes. This means, that as a reader, I have to be aware of my own perspective, whereby it can be said that I will analyse the games from the perspective of a Western target player.

10. Introduction: *Five Tribes – The Djinns of Naqala (2014)*

Five Tribes was selected as a game for the analysis since it fulfils the requirements outlined earlier in this thesis. It "builds on a long tradition of German-style games" (BoardGameGeek, LLC, n.d.), has an average playing time under 90 minutes, and was nominated for tabletop game awards such as the *International Gamers Award* in the category *General Strategy Games: Multi-player*, which is given by an international jury consisting of game experts and public figures in gaming. (International Gamers Awards n.d.). It also won *Golden Geek* (2014) in the category *Best Strategy Board Game*, which is voted for by "the user community of the BoardGameGeek.com, RPGGeek.com, and VideoGameGeek.com" (BoardGameGeek LLC n.d.) – popular websites that are commonly known amongst gamers.

On the other side however, there was a backlash against the game as some reviewers and players pointed out that the use of a card labelled *slave* and depicting a dark skinned man in shackles is offensive, which can be illustrated by game reviewer Keith Law writing that *Five Tribes* is "probably the least socially aware game" (Law 2015) he has played. He moreover called this design choice *tasteless* and expressed hope that it will be changed in future editions of the game - Days of Wonder in return received complaints about the card, leading them to the decision to replace *Slave* with *Fakirs* in the second edition, as well as to offer the Fakir-cards to owners of the first edition, which was a well discussed topic amongst gamers. (see e.g. (Martin 2015))

Since I bought the game in 2016, I will be analysing the version of the game that does not include the card in question. However, as part of my analysis, I will also take a look at the card from the first edition, since the complaints and the replacement of the *slave* card could indicate inherent boundaries and norms with regard to the representation of slavery. Moreover, it will need to be questioned as to what extent the replacement of such a card might change meaning within the game. The card was also presented to the focus groups, to see the participants reactions to the cards and gather views on how the change to the *Fakirs*, changes their perception of the game. Before starting the analysis, I will give further background information on the game, since this can provide additional context for the analysis and discussion in later chapters and gives information about the game´s narrative, rules and mechanism.

The publisher of the game is *Days of Wonder©* and the game was designed by the French boardgame designer Bruno Cathala, who has been designing games since 2002 and has a background as an engineer in Material Science. Cathala is currently one of the most known game designers and considered "one of the most prolific authors of the modern game world" (Bombyx n.d.) due to his involvement in many popular boardgames such as *Cyclades* (2009)*, Mr. Jack* (2006) and the cooparative game *Shadows over Camelot* (2005). When it comes to designing a game, his "original idea is coming half from the theme and half from the mechanisms" (Ligabue 2011) and in the design process, he seeks to find a balance between those two aspects which on average takes six to twelve months of deliberation. (ibid.) The final product should have mechanics that are aligned with the theme and players should be able to *feel* the theme and the role they play – an aspect that should be aided to by the artwork. (ibid.)

The artwork for *Five Tribes: The Djinns of Naqala* comes from Clément Masson, a French artist who began to work within the boardgame industry in 2013. (Masson n.d.) Moreover *Days of Wonder* as the main publisher of the game is a well-known company that has produced many popular tabletop games to date, e.g. the well-known games *Smallworld* and *Ticket to Ride* and is an established company.

11. Analysis: Five Tribes – The Djinns of Naqala (2014)

The narrative of the 2014 boardgame *Five Tribes – The Djinns of Naqala*, puts the player in "fabled Sultanate of Naqala" (Days of Wonder Inc. n.d.), a phrase that is also repeated in the manual of the game. The players are strangers to the Sultanate and have the objective to become the new leaders after the sultan´s death. (ibid.) The use of *sultanate* gives the player the impression of the general Orient or Arabic countries as a place for the narrative. Interestingly, in the game itself, no specific time is given for the narrative, making it up to the players to interpret this matter for themselves. This suggests a game that takes place in a timeless atmosphere, with a timeless theme as opposed to a boardgame centred around a specific historical period or event. On the first glance, this might support the image of the *timeless Orient* as outlined earlier in the chapter on Orientalism. This is also strengthened by the description of the sultanate as *fabled*, marking the place as legendary and fantastic as opposed to realistic. The use of the word *tribe* in the title moreover suggests distinct groups of people and is commonly associated with clans or groups that follow old customs, in

addition to that it also evokes association with primitivity. In connection to colonialism and postcolonialism, this suggest to the players that the game is set either back in time or in a fantasy world ruled by old customs, marking it once more timeless. This gets further strengthened by the *Djinns* – commonly known creatures with magical powers that became widely known to a Western audience through tales or films such as the Disney´s *Aladdin*. Representations in popular culture such as that will, for a Western target audience, be the first association when it comes to common knowledge about Djinns, attributing them with power,
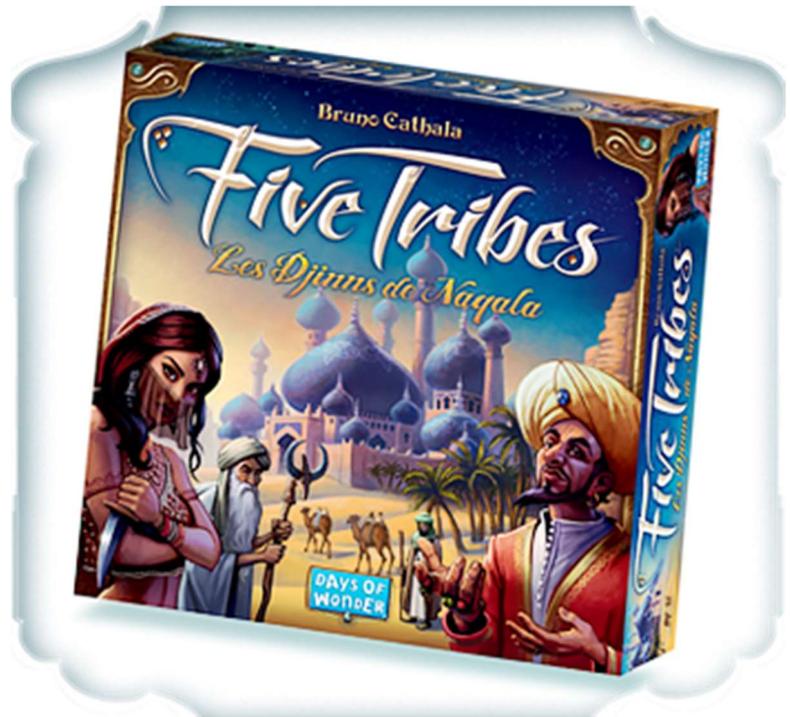
Image 1 Box: Five Tribes – The Djinns of Naqala (Days of Wonder 2014 ©)

magic and good will. While the Djinns contribute to the impression of a timeless fantasy world, *Naqala* as the name of the place gives a Western audience the impression of a far away place, with a name unusual to the city names in their own environment, which could contribute to the feeling of exoticness in the players. In addition to that, Naquala is not a commonly known place, which enhances the vagueness of the setting and adds to an understanding of the setting as timeless. In the following I will analyse the front of the box the game comes in, since this is the first aspect of the game players encounter e.g. when seeing the game in the store or unpacking it for play. This analysis will only include aspects that contribute to answering my research questions, since a complete social semiotic analysis would not be feasible. A short analysis of the cover, serves the purpose of explaining which signs transmit the setting to the player when he/she first encounters the boardgame and serves as an introduction to the game itself.

11.1. The Box

The aforementioned notion of a mystical atmosphere also gets transmitted by the font used for the game´s title on the box, which employs curved letters in sandy and golden colour that also happen to encircle golden dots (e.g. to be seen on the letter *F*), which in return evokes

the impressions of wealth and fable. Moreover, the front can be seen to emulate the look of Arabic writing, and recontextualising it in Latin script. The necessity of this alteration indicates a Western target audience but due to the designer being European, also points to the image of Arabic writing within the European based designer. The font commonly signifies a setting in the Orient due to past media presence such as in the Disney film mentioned earlier and is therefore a pre-existing sign of what Oriental font should look like that is in this now being reproduced in the context of boardgames. It moreover offers the audience the promise of the far away and exciting by going against conventional fonts and straight shapes. A large building is framed as the centre of the box – the incorporation of domes and minarets further hints at the setting taking place in a region where Islam is the main religion, thereby contrasting it from areas commonly connected with Christianity or Christian values as e.g. central or southern Europe. This creates an us-vs-them contrast for a Western target audience in the sense that these signs serve as iconic representations that make regions identifiable by religious signs. The building not only stands for Islam as a religion, but is used to suggest otherness, thereby assuming that Islam is not a part of societies or placer throughout the world but is only found in the exotic and different. In addition to that, the building suggests the understanding of a timeless, imagined Orient in this game. Its style plays with what is commonly associated as Oriental for European or Western players who might connect it to popular landmarks such as the Taj Mahal, thereby once more hinting at the exotic or far away. Furthermore, the background also shows camels and palm trees and depict everything to be located in a desert-like area, which, as pointed out in the chapter on Faidutti´s views on Orientalism in boardgames, are common signifiers game designers use to indicate exotic and Oriental places. (Faidutti 2014) This signification is also evident to the target player, since these aspects do not commonly occur in his/her own environment.

The overall impression outlined so far is supported by the people depicted in the picture. A women and a man are positioned in the foreground and are marked as important through their position and big size, giving them a high salience. Moreover, they look directly at the player(s), establishing a connection. While the man´s hand seems to dare the player to enter his world by holding his right hand out, some fingers extended towards the viewer, the woman´s arms crossed in front of her chest denote a more defensive position. Her eyes are fixed on the viewer, but the veil around her lower face does not allow to see her whole expression, making her seem mysterious. Her outfit reminds of the common image of a belly dancer that commonly connotes mysterious and exotic beauty. Overall, the image of the women can be linked to a colonial discourse on the Orient, by attributing her with mystery and exoticness to the Western viewer, and playing on the stereotypical image of the belly dancer that does not seem to veil her face and parts of her hair due to religious believe or modesty, but to intrigue her audience. In today´s context, this connotes a lack of contextualisation regarding the veil as a symbol and rather points to a one-sided discourse on it that uses it to create an exotic and mysterious picture and is not interested in its wider personal, social or political meaning. Moreover, she is wearing jewellery and her clothes are very ornate, indicating material wealth and possibly a higher position in society or working for the rich and powerful. On the other hand, the dagger she holds symbolises capability of violence, breaking with the image of the beautiful stranger and directly promising mischief and intrigue to the player, adding to the atmosphere of a mysterious Orient. This notion is supported by the image of the man standing in the foreground: The daring hand motion, together with his serious facial expression due to his lips being lightly pursed attributes him with power and manipulation. His pointy beard also makes him seem like he is a villain, since this form of facial hair is commonly associated with Oriental villains due to

Image 2 – Jafar fromDisney´s Aladdin© (1992)

movie villains like *Jafar* from the Disney film *Aladdin* (1992), which is illustrated by the picture provided.

The man´s dress in white, red and gold highlights him in the desert-setting but also points to wealth, not only due to the shiny colours but also due to the cleanness of the bright material. The wealth is also emphasised by him wearing many rings with big diamonds, as well as

earrings and a white turban with a diamond in its centre, marking him as a wealthy and powerful man, possibly a leader.

Due the body language and position outlined, he is the catalyst that emphasises the game´s focus on wealth, power and plotting as well as the sign through which the game introduces the players to a world combining the beauty of the exotic and the intrigue of the game. This is further signified by the curved frame on the top part of the box, that emulates the iconic image of Oriental window frames or arcades, putting the player on the outside, signifying that what he/she is looking at is foreign, different and far away. Moreover, the people in the foreground leave place in the middle, connoting a narrative of letting the player in.

Finally, they both stand in contrast to the two people in the background whose dress is more plain, and whose posture is more crouched, indicating that they are more poor. Besides, both of them go on sticks, which could be interpreted as signifying that they are shepherds. This together with the fact that they are in the background and therefore smaller, signifies that they are less important than the rich, hinting at a power imbalance within the game itself.

After having outlined how player gain a first impression of the general game when the box, the following section will focus on the meaning that gets constructed in the different components of the game, before taking a closer look at the movements and actions that can be taken by the players.

11.2. Components and composition

Image 3 - General setup of the game. (Days of Wonder Inc.©)

With regard to the general composition of the boardgame it can be said that the game is divided into four main areas. The main board, the market, the Djinns and the bidding area. The main board of the game consist of 30 tiles that are arranged in a rectangle in the centre of the game before playing. This arrangement gives each participant (no matter from which side they look at the game) access to the board, thereby forming the centre of the game. With regard to conceptual meaning making, it can be said, that the tiles each show

areas that are surrounded by desert. Settlements, cities or oases form the centre of the tiles and are shown from bird´s-eye view, making the overall area seem distant and evokes association with how places are portrayed on maps. This connotes a more depersonalised feeling from the player towards the area and can be seen to put a focus on strategy within game play, meaning that the players should focus on the general picture. The areas on the tiles seem divided by the desert, making the overall area seem large and splintered by different settlements/places. While some tiles signify oases by depicting a small pond surrounded by grass and palm trees, other areas are surrounded by walls, framing them as separate territory. At this point, I will go into more detail for each tile type, including their special function, since they are not only part of the gameplay, but also contribute to the transmission of the setting to the player. The top-right of each tiles shows the victory points the control of this area brings. It is signified through the number on a blue or red background, being framed by a golden laurel wreath, which commonly signifies victory, which is enhanced by its position as being the ideal to strive towards to (top-right placement) for the player. The bottom-left of each tile contains function as the known and foundation, meaning that the actions achieved through it, might help the players to strive towards their victory. Overall, there are four different tile types.

11.3. The Oasis

Image 4 – The Oasis (source: own photo)

The palm tree gets associated with the desert, signifying rare fertile ground in the desert, but also enhancing associations with the Orient and the exotic due to the climate necessary for them to grow which contributes to the interpretation of the overall setting. The palm trees get placed on the tiles during the game and the rareness of trees in the desert makes them valuable, a connotation that is also transmitted by the players gaining victory points for the palm trees in the areas under their control. Finally, the desert and the palm tree seem like calm zones in comparison due to the fact that they are the only places in which nature is not shown as heavily altered by humans.

11.4. The village

The so called *village tiles* in the game function in a similar way. Instead of a palm tree however, they use a golden palaces that repeat the shapes from the building on the box as well as its connotations. Their golden colour signifies wealth and

Image 5 – The Village (source: own photo)

value, which is supported by the aspect that players get a rather high number of points for the palaces under their control.

Overall, the village tiles are rather plain and pick up the colours of the desert as well as the shape of rocks. Even though the buildings are made out of stone which can be interpreted as a sign for stability, the plainness and use of natural materials connotes that the people there are not rich and live in humble circumstances. This gets especially highlighted by the palaces. In the game, the palaces are only placed on the tiles when the players finish their move on it. This creates the interactive meaning of bringing wealth and value to the village. Moreover, this suggest that the village relies on foreign influence to gain the palace. On a conceptual level, the palace could not only be seen as standing for wealth, but also for development or improvement, thus giving a somewhat colonial attitude to the placement of palaces, which gets strengthened by the fact that the players who place them are introduced as foreigners to the sultanate in the game itself as outlined earlier.

11.5. The market

The third tile type is the *market*. The gold coin gets narratively linked to the iconic card next to it, with the card referring to the market cards that can be used by the players and will be outlined later.

The tiles employing the market signs mostly show smaller buildings or market stands and seem less organised. The stands stand in circles and are not on all tiles surrounded by walls. Overall, this connects the market to mobility and chaos, which in connection to

Image 6 – The Market (own photo)

the Orient could be seen as enhancing the stereotypical image of the Oriental market place, which is commonly associated with a variety of goods such as spices, carpets or jewellery and also with many people on a small place bargaining for money. However, the tiles do not show the goods due to the impersonal top-down perspective leads.

11.6. The resource cards

Image 7 - Resource deck (face down) and the various resources it contains (face up). (Source: own photo)

The resources are located next to the main tiles, thus framed as a separate space. (as can be seen on the picture in the beginning of the analysis) It consist of a deck of resource cards that is placed face down, as well as nine of the resource cards lined up next to it. The deck shows the back of the card, depicting spices on the left side of the centre. The bright colours of the spices (yellow, orange and red), signify spices such as cinnamon, cayenne pepper or turmeric, which are common for the Middle Eastern region and less prevalent in e.g. Europe or the USA and were moreover valuable for trade in colonial times. The choice of colour the absence of spices from other regions thereby connotes the region in which the market is situated but also points to a state in which trade in these commodities is not globalised since the choice of spices is limited. This is aided by them being shown in large quantities and piled up, connoting abundance. The other resources on the left could signify more spices or food such as dried chickpeas. The placement on the left marks the spices as something known and familiar to the player, adding to the common perception of the spices. On the right side, a

man dressed in white and read point to the background of the picture where pottery can be seen. Even though the man´s dress resembles the man from the box, his outfit is more plain and his turban is not decorated, leading to the interpretation of him being a merchant, rather than a noble-man. He too has a pointy beard and his right hand making an inviting motion – demanding the player to take a look at his other goods and to spend money on something more expensive. In addition to his pointy beard, his narrow eyes evoke the impression that he is profit oriented and knows more than the. Overall, it is of interest that the two men in middle-class/wealthy positions are both depicted as somewhat mischievous or controlling, which contributes to the common stereotype of the shady and dubious Oriental tradesman that should not be trusted. The turban again serves as a symbol for the exotic and stands for foreign customs or outfits that are stereotypically represented as Oriental.

In addition to that, the market cards too make use of curved ornamentation to connect it to the rest of the game and its setting and the colour green is used to link the cards to other aspects of the game that involve the market.

When looking at the resources it is striking that they are presented in a somewhat old fashioned way: The products are shown unpacked and unportioned, making it clear to the player that the merchant is situated on a market, which in itself signifies trade, bidding and flexible prices. The resources themselves are a blend between food and luxury products and especially the fish portrayed in baskets indicates a lack of development or modern means of storage, since it is neither cooled not packed while being handled in a desert environment. Other goods such as the diamonds, fabric, papyrus, gold and ivory are commonly connected with the exotic, since they were traded from non-Western countries. The papyrus also serves as an indicator for a setting: The game either takes places in the past, or in a phantasy world, in which all these goods occur in the same place. On the one hand, the luxury products shown evoke connections with colonial times and its extraction and trade of (valuable) resources, on the other hand they also point again to the timeless image of the Orient as a phantasy in which "exotic" elements from various non-European countries coexists. Either way, the resources connote a European perspective rooted in colonial and Eurocentric discourse on the foreign and exotic, as well as romanticism due to the old fashioned way of packing. This is also highlighted by the resources looking drawn and not animated.

The depiction of ivory amongst the good, hints at a past time when it signified luxury and wealth, since it is nowadays commonly considered a controversial due to the poaching of

elephants and issues of illegal trade. This once more evokes a contextualisation of the game to colonial times, where ivory was obtained during the colonisation of Africa and commonly used by Europeans e.g. in the production for piano keys as an expression for exotic wealth. Including this resource therefore not only means a lack of social awareness, but also signifies a Eurocentric perspective based on knowledge and assumptions stemming from colonial times.

Apart from material goods the *Fakir* is included in the resource deck, thereby signifying that he has the same value as material. Overall the Fakir is presented in a stereotypical way by being attributed with certain objects and capabilities: Fakirs are commonly known to be ascetics and spirituals, however the image depicts him as a snake charmer (as signified by the flute and the snake in the basket) sitting on a bed of nails, thereby only representing him as a charmer or magician rather than a spiritual. This again can be seen to draw upon the image of the mysterious, foreign, exotic and magical. The Fakir in this context, is represented less as a human being, and more as an act and as a signifier for the different and foreign for a European target audience, since he visually does not fit into the common stereotypes of Western monk or magicians.

Image 8 - *Fakir card. (source: own photo)*

In the game, the Fakir does not give players victory points and can be used by players when they acquire Djinns, signifying a low value of human life (especially when seen in contrast to the palm trees or palaces) by giving him material-like status. This might lead to associations with slave trade in players. The only distinction between him and the other goods being a difference in colour scheme, indicating a different function or position for him in the game, namely acquiring Djinns. Overall, being able to obtain Fakirs the same way as other goods can be connected to the act of slavery, which further exposes a colonial perspective on the value of human beings in this game.

At this point it has to be noted, that the Fakir is only used since the second edition of this game. Before, there was a slave card, which again highlights the points made previously.

Said cards depicted a dark skinned man who is sparsely dressed and wearing chains. All of these attributes together signify slavery and are enhanced by his body language: He is holding his chained hands together and looks down which signifies submission. With regard to the market context, the card clearly draws on colonialism and symbolically reproduces slavery. After the change from the slave to the Fakir, the rules an effects of the cards stayed the same, (only the image was changed) signifying a shift from an open to a covert representation of

Image 9 - *Left: Pieces of the game including the former Slave cards. Right: Set of Fakir cards. (source: Rael 2015)*

slavery. With regard to a presumably Western target audience, this raises questions regarding the acceptability of covert racism, in which only explicit imagery is perceived as controversial.

11.7. The Djinns

Image 10 - *The Djinn tiles.* (source: own photo)

Finally, the fourth tile type allows players is to call upon the Djinns in exchange for some of their human resources. The magic lamp is used as a symbol for the Djinns, thereby creating direct associations with *Aladdin* (1992) or *The Arabian Nights*. The Djinn symbol is found on tiles showing

a settlement, with big buildings, minarets and domes, which means that both enhance each

other as spiritual. Other tiles depict large sculptures made out of rock showing a tiger´s head or a seated man surrounded by two guards. The buildings signify power to the player, while the geometrically shaped garden and the walls transmit order and security. Some of the tiles also include water, which can also be considered as signifying wealth since it is an otherwise scarce resource in the desert.

The large sculptures on the other hand signify places of worship, since they show a protective posture (the tiger´s paws put on the ground and the guards next to the man holding swords in front of them) and at the same time intimidate those who dare to enter by the tiger´s mouth being open, and the seated man in the middle clasping his hands as if he is ready to listen to those before him. The sculptures consist of rock, signifying past or ancient times. With regard to the Djinns, this connotes power and worship and signifies adventure by resembling the common image of old tombs or caves prevalent in adventure stories. The Djinns add to the atmosphere of a mythical setting, thereby adding to the image of the Orient as a place of the supernatural and mysterious. This is strengthened by the Djinn cards, that are located next to the main board, in the same fashion as the resource cards. Thereby they are framed as a separate area, but the Symbol of the magic lamp on the tiles provides a narrative link for the player since the symbol gets repeated on the cards themselves.

The Djinn Cards
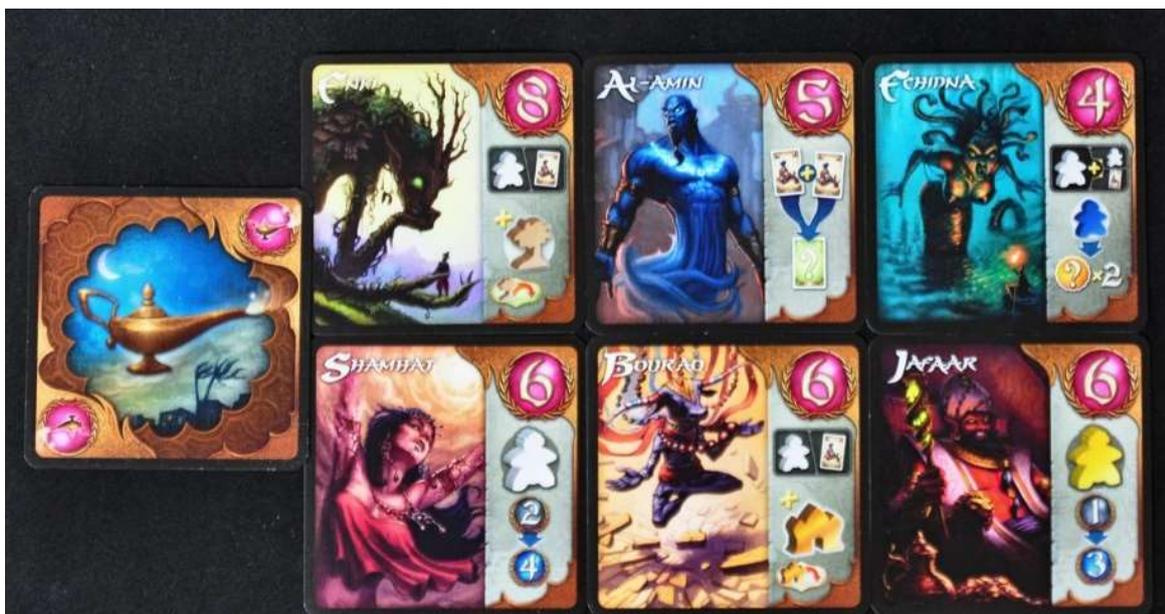
Image 11 - *Sample of Djinn cards. Left: the back of the cards. Right: Various Djinns. (source: own photo)*

The back of the cards repeats the symbol of the magic lamp that is commonly associated with Djinns or Genies. Moreover, the background suggests night-time due to its blue colour and a moon, evoking associations with the tales of the *Arabian Nights* while the light coming out of the front of the lamp signifies the emergence of a Djinn – commonly known as a ghostlike creature that grant its Master wishes. The lamp is framed as the centre of the image, surrounded by a golden frame that is curved and ornamented, signifying a central position of the Djinns. Moreover the card´s backside repeats the shapes and colour schemes outlined earlier, creating a consistency of setting and symbolism for the player.

The front of the Djinn cards show different Djinns, announcing their name (top-right), as well as their cost, powers and victory points (right side). The picture above shows a selection of Djinns and since it is not feasible to analyse all the different cards of the game individually. Therefore, I will analyse the main connotations given by a selection of cards, that can be seen on the image provided. Thereby, I will mainly focus on the representational meaning transmitted by them.

Overall, the cards combine various markers of the mystical and exotic and use signs connected to a variety of cultures, myths and religions. The colour scheme is more dark, attributing them with gloom and somewhat dark powers. While *Al-Amin* resembles the stereotypical image of *Aladdin´s* genie due to his blue colour, *Jafaar* shares the name of the villain of the same film, thus connoting evil or mischief to the player, which is strengthened by his glowing eyes and erratic smile. Moreover, he physically resembles the villain by being attributed a (glowing) sceptre, signifying power and magical abilities. His overweight stature, seated position, turban and beard can be linked to the stereotypical image of a powerful Sultan. Both of the male djinns moreover have black beards which is commonly associated with non-Westernness and they both wear jewellery, thereby repeating common images of the Orient as a mystical and foreign place full of riches.

Echidna on the other hand, is attributed with hair consisting of snakes, which commonly signifies *Medusa* from Greek mythology, whose gaze would turn people into stone. Additionally, her lower body resembles a mermaid or sea monster, attributing her with danger. Another djinn, *Bouraq*, has somewhat of a bull´s head and is depicted sitting cross-legged, which links him to Hinduism, were the cow is commonly known as a holy creature. *Shamhai* in turn is shown as a human female, yet her posture makes her seem big and intimidating since she is wearing a crown and light is shining upon her, attributing her with

greatness and stylizing her as being chosen by a higher power. Finally, *Enki* is a giant tree with eyes and hands. The fact that he is alive, goes against the natural state of trees, thereby connoting the fantastical of supernatural. Moreover, a Western audience could link him to media outputs that contain alive trees such as *Lord of the Rings*, or *Guardians of the Galaxy*, strengthening these connotations.

Overall, while not all the Djinns draw on imagery linked to known stereotypes about the Orient, they all make use of mystical or supernatural elements which signifies them not only as powerful, but also as generally foreign and exotic. The ones not stemming from imagery commonly linked to the Orient are thereby being recontextualised with the Orient, which signifies a perception of the Orient as a phantasy. The impression of an Oriental setting is in such cases solely achieved through the cards backside as well as the curved frame on the front.

11.8. Gameplay: Meeples, Movements and Actions

In the following I will analyse aspects of the gameplay that have not yet been discussed, meaning the main movements and actions that can be performed by the players. As part of this, I will also talk about the meeples as components, since they are used by the players in these processes.

Image 12 - *Sample of the meeples in Five Tribes. Left to right: player marker, camel, palace, palm tree, tribe meeples (source: own photo)*

The game contains five different type of meeples. The player marker can be seen to repeat the shapes of buildings outlined earlier, again symbolising the Orient-setting by using round shapes and domes. The bidding area the markets are places on, also draw on the same imagery, while emulating a skyline by showing the outlines of multiple buildings. At the beginning of each turn, player bid money to determine the order in which they take their turns. This signifies not only that wealth equals power, but recreates the idea of the Oriental market that was discussed earlier. Linking money with influence moreover evokes an atmosphere of

possible corruption or bribery, since positions are symbolically bought by the players, which could be seen as linking the Orient with lower moral standards or social inequality.

The meeples overall employ an iconic way of meaning making through resemblance. Palm tree, camel and palace function as markers for the Orient-setting due to their common association with it as outlined previously. While the camel´s colour depends on the player (each player is presented by a different colour), the palm tree repeats the desert-colour scheme while the palace meeple repeats the golden colour connoting wealth that was analysed earlier. The tribe meeples signify people, while their different colours signify a division into the five tribes the games are named after. The variation in colour also signifies different functions, groups or classes. In the game these are:

Image 13 – Bid and Turn order tracks with meeples (source: own photo)

- White = elders
- Blue = builders
- Red = assassins
- Green = merchants
- Yellow = viziers

Interestingly the chosen colours can be seen to symbolise these differences, since red commonly connotes linked to blood or danger, green is linked to nature (and thereby natural resources and the market area), blue resembles the uniform of craftsmen, white commonly signifies purity and wisdom, while yellow links the viziers to money and power.

As players take their turns, they displace the existing tribe meeples by emptying a tile and placing one meeple after another on adjacent tile. When they reach their last tile, they pick up the meeples of the same colour and can fulfil the actions of the tribe. This displacement connotes a narrative of involuntary movement of people and signifies the power of the players to move others at their command. Moreover, the players use the tribes´ actions to fulfil their own goals, which could be read as a form of exploitation, since the tribes in the game are not gaining anything, but rather serve as the player´s resource. The status of people as resources further gets highlighter e.g. in the act of acquiring djinns: a djinn costs two elders or two elders and a Fakir, making them disposable, while giving the supernatural djinns a higher value than humans and, as outlined earlier, signifies slave trade. The assassins on the

other hand, allow players to dispose other meeples, symbolically killing them for strategic advantage. At this point is also has to be mentioned that whenever meeples are disposed (due to trade, assassination etc.), players return them to the black bag in which they are stored when packing up the game. The return to the bag signifies that they are taken out of the world of the game, connoting the act of dying and signifying that those who are not of use are disposable. This is in line with issues related to the value of human life outlined earlier. Finally, it also has to be mentioned that the viziers (worth one victory point) and the elders (worth two victory points) are the only meeples giving the player victory points when he/she keeps them until the end of the game and that the value of them is lower than the value of a palm tree (three victory points) or the palace (five victory points). This again signifies a low value of human live within the game, which repeats the issues outlined in the paragraph on the Fakir- and slave cards. Since theme and game mechanics form a symbiosis within Eurogames, all the factors mentioned regarding these issues, connote the assumption that this attitude is somewhat fitting for the Orient-setting. On a higher level, this can be seen to reveal underlying assumption on behaviours linked to the Orient and connecting it to actions commonly considered as outdated or primitive, thereby creating a division between morally modern (Western target players) and the morally backwards (the Oriental).

General Impression

Overall the main tiles transmit a patchwork of different zones and functions, held together by the desert and their identical shapes. The aspects outlined above show that the game design does not rely on specific knowledges about real countries or regions e.g. in the Middle East, but it rather relies on a broad image of the Orient outside of time and space due to the combination of mythical elements, desert and market places, which is especially strengthened by the top-down perspective and the symbols used. This timelessness can be seen as affirming with regard to Said´s and Faidutti´s critique of the Orient´s representation in popular culture by relying on simplified and stereotypical signs for the transmission of the setting to the player. Moreover, since the game was designed by a French designer, published by an American company and boardgames can be seen, as outlined earlier, as a predominantly Western medium, this also reveals which knowledges are considered as common amongst this target audience.

12. Analysis: *Cacao (2015)*

Cacao (2015) was nominated for numerous awards, most notably the 2015 awards for "Spiel des Jahres" and was designed by the Australian game designer Phil Walker-Harding, who is most recently known for the card game *Sushi Go!* (2013). Walker-Harding designs games as a hobby and as of 2007 has his own publishing company. (Walker-Harding n.d.) *Cacao* is published by the German company *ABACUSSPIELE©*, as well as by *Z-man Games©* in its English version. can be played by two to four players, its playing time is approximately 45 minutes and it consists of fewer pieces than *Five Tribes*. These were factors that were seen as making the game more accessible to a wider audience and therefore contributed to the decision to analyse it as part of this thesis.
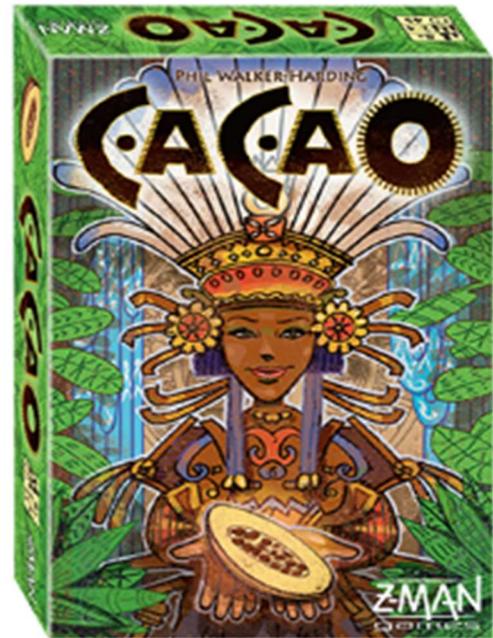
Image 14 - Box: Cacao Z-man Games© (Z-man Games n.d.)

In the game, players act as of chiefs of tribes that, according to the game description (that is also included in the game) aim to bring "prosperity and glory" (Z-man Games n.d.) to their people by harvesting and trading cocoa or using "the mighty power of the Gods" (ibid.). The focus on cocoa trade alludes to a setting in South America, since cocoa is commonly known to grow there. In addition to that, the objective of the game also indicates that the game is set in a place that is economically not advanced, signified by the narrative that prosperity still has to be reached. Moreover, the focus on cocoa signifies a reliance on natural resources to do so, connoting either past times or unindustrialised regions. Apart from that, literal *power* that is given to deities can be seen to signify a time or place in which gods play an important role for society. To a Western audience, this could lead to a perception of the place represented being somewhat *backwards* if this role of religion is associated with the society being unenlightened.

12.1. The box: first impressions

When looking at the box of the game, the first thing to make an impression on the viewer is the use of colour. The box uses a range of earth tones (brown, beige, dark yellow/orange) as well as the colour green, which signifies a setting in or connected to nature. The brown and yellow colour scheme is also repeated in the designers name and game title on the top part,

whereby the title´s letters and the yellow accentuations attribute it with groundedness and a positive attitude. Moreover the rough form of the letters and its decorative lines almost make is seem as if the name is carved in wood or with clay, again signifying a link to nature or naturally occurring materials.

On the left and right side, leaves are sketched and build a frame, signifying the centre as the core of the image while connoting a setting in a forest and also creating a narrative in which the player is walking through the forest, towards the centre. A woman is placed at the core of the composition. She looks directly at the viewer, establishing a direct connection and her facial expression and body language seems friendly, due to her bright eyes and friendly smile. Moreover, she holds a cocoa fruit in her open hands that are stretched towards the viewer, signifying that she is offering the fruit to the players. This could be read as an act of hospitality, creating a positive atmosphere. Together with the title, the offering marks the cocoa fruit as the game´s centre, which is also highlighted by the high salience given to the fruit due to its light colours and the area around it being lighter in colour, creating a radiance.

The woman is of brown skin and her roughly sketched clothes repeat the colours mentioned above, while she is shown to wear many ornaments, both on her body/clothes and in her hair. For a Western audience, this creates a setting located amongst indigenous people, since shape and colour resemble the commonly known imagery of iconic Mayan or Aztecan decorations and can therefore be linked to a setting in South America. This is also highlighted by the big crown on the woman´s head that seems to be made out of naturally occurring materials and the colours red, dark yellow and brown, that point to an overall connection to nature and also create a positive atmosphere due to their brightness. The ornaments next to her eyes moreover resemble images of the sun or flowers, strengthening these aspects. The connotations of nature and indigenousness could mean that viewers might consider the setting presented on the box as exotic to them since it not only might contrasts with their own environment, but also because the woman and her wear signify a link to indigenous people, whose customs and way of living are today commonly seen as different, exotic and rare. Thereby, viewers might subconsciously feel superior to the woman in the picture, since her appearance and way of living might be seen as a sensation or (tourist) attraction, which is strengthened by her being put in the centre of a frame (created by the leaves), signifying her as something to look at from the outside. This aspect raises questions of the Western gaze

on the other, and indicates an unequal power position between the player and the object of his/her gaze which is further strengthened by her offering the cocoa fruit.

The impression of a natural setting also gets transmitted to the viewer by the background, showing light blue lines with white ornamentation that evoke associations with water. Furthermore, the woman seems to stand in front of a ornamented tablet or wall which shows carvings that match the common image of ancient symbols of Mayan or Incan civilisations, which commonly evokes associations with far away times full of old customs as well as far away and mysterious places that could be discovered, giving the player the feeling that maybe there is an element of discovery in the gameplay.

12.2. The Game

Similar to *Five Tribes,* the game does not come with a solid gameboard on which the players move along. Rather, the space of the game gets created by the players. Each player is assigned one tribe and receives meeples (Human shaped tokens in the colours: white, purple, red, yellow) as well as matching deck of *worker tiles*. Throughout the game, players place tiles during their turn, creating somewhat of a patchwork that forms the main area of the game. The area signifies a common centre of attention, since it is placed between the players. As can be seen in the photo below, the tiles all have the same square form, leading to symmetry between the game´s parts, which connotes an interconnectedness or synergy between the pieces, since they all contain the possibility to be linked to each other. When the players place their tiles, they help creating a landscape by interlocking regions. This signifies that players not create their own worlds, but a combined version which could be interpreted as signifying interconnectedness despite the competition in the game. Each player is the leader of a tribe signified through difference in colour (purple, red, white, yellow) with the aim to gain the most coins, bringing prosperity to their people by harvesting and selling cocoa. The word *tribe* connotes not only an older form of group, but also evokes associations with primitive behaviour, thereby signifying the represented as somewhat underdeveloped. With regard to this, the focus on harvesting cocoa for prosperity could be seen as signifying that the game takes place in colonial times. Players can also gain points by finding water sources or take

Image 15 - *Example for a two-player game. Centre: placement of worker and jungle tiles in a patchwork. Top-left/bottom-right: village board of a player with collected cocoa and coins, matching worker decks. Top-right: jungle deck. (source: own photo)*

control over temples. All these resources bring victory points that are calculated when the game ends. The game is finished when the last tiles have been placed.

When looking at the overall setup, it evokes associations with a jungle or forest-area due to the dominance of the colour green on both, the front-side of the tiles and the player´s boards. Moreover, the other colours used also reflect the colour range of natural material or resources: brown and yellow signifying earth, soil or sand, and the blue dots and lines signifying water when looked at from above. Just as *Five Tribes*, *Cacao* uses a bird´s-eye view, making the player symbolically looking down on the area, as if looking onto a map. This not only strengthens the player´s position as a leader who strategically assesses the information lying bare in front of him, but also distances him/her from the surroundings and tribespeople in the game, thereby putting the focus on the game on strategy, not on a personal immersion into the game´s world. In the following, I will go into detail on the main components of the game and allowed player actions (s).

12.3. Components and actions

The game contains two different types of tiles: *worker tiles* and *jungle tiles*. While each player has a deck of worker tiles, the jungle tiles form a common deck that is used to fill gaps in the patchwork based on a system in which worker tiles cannot be placed adjacent to other worker tiles, whereby the jungle tiles are used to fill the gaps between them. This placement puts

distance between the different settlement of workers, signifying small communities, which connotes to the player that the setting takes place in past times or rural areas. The main mechanism in this game is therefore tile-placement, signifying the creation of a common space as outlined previously.

12.3.1. Worker Tiles

Image 16 - Overview: Worker tiles. (source: own photo)

When setting up the game, each player gets his/her own deck of worker tiles from which they then draw three cards that form their starting hand. Throughout the game, players maintain a three-tile hand by drawing tiles at the end of the turn, until not enough tiles are left. The tiles are all structured in the same way and vary only in the colour of the workers and huts with the colour signifying each player´s tribe.

A green area serves as a frame for the centre of the tile and signifies trees due to colour and shape. This puts the player in a rural area and repeats the overall jungle-setting that was mentioned previously. Moreover, the trees not only frame the huts and the depicted people as its centre, but also divide the centre from the other tiles, working as a line of trees, somewhat connoting security or partition. This signifies that despite the possibility of interlocking due to matching shapes, the areas (and players) are not one, but, as part of the game, distinct tribes. This gets further enhanced through the rules for tile placement in this game, that does not allow players to interlock worker tiles with each other, thereby separating them.

The image of a hut forms the centre of the tiles. It stands on a place formed by soil and is surrounded by an iconic image of people (e.g. similar to the icons used to indicate bathrooms) that is commonly known. The people seem on their way out, since their feet touch the line of the forest, signifying movement and providing a narrative in which they are on their way somewhere. The iconic image used for the people does not offer the possibility to distinguish them individually, signifying that they are all the same, making the relation between the

players and them rather impersonal. Therefore, they also cannot be identified as *workers* by the way they look – their role rather gets fixed by the games rules and narrative that labels them as such. However labelling them as workers and the lack of individualism connotes, that they are understood as a group and possible lower class that is expendable, since the term *worker* is commonly associated with a middle- or lower class position. In addition to that, the aspect that the players act as chiefs of a tribe, signifies that the different coloured workers are not only one group, but commonly evokes associations with primitive customs and behaviours.

The huts in the centre signify the village and are represented as being build out of natural materials such as wood or hay, which is indicated by the shape of the thatched roof that serves as an iconic image for huts. This again indicates that the game takes place in a place that players might not consider modern, since the huts are commonly not seen as linked to modern architecture or design as e.g. in buildings made out of concrete, or glass. This signification of a lack of modernity is further enhanced by a lack of infrastructure connecting the villages, showing no streets or pathways.

Moreover, a bonfire can be seen next to the huts, symbolising a lack of electricity, meaning that fire has a vital function for the people in this setting such as giving warmth or for cooking food. Overall, the tiles put the players in an atmosphere of either past times without, or in an area where living such a lifestyle is still possible e.g. spaces of indigenous people in South America as indicated on the box. In connection to this, the factors outlined until here contribute to associations with the jungle or rainforest, so that the jungle could be considered the overall setting or theme of this game. Overall, this evokes creates a feeling for the player that the game takes place in far away times and/or places and coincides with an impression of the different and exotic. In this case, the exotic is not achieved through the accentuation of single elements, but through a synergy between the elements of a game that create a consistent impression (e.g. through use of colour) as mentioned earlier. I will go into more detail with regard to the workers functions in the next part of the analysis, since the tile-placement mechanism of the game is what evokes interlocking actions. In the following, I will take a closer look at the jungle tiles and their functions.

12.3.2. Jungle Tiles

Image 17 - *Types of jungle tiles.*
Top row: Gold mine, temple, market. Bottom row: sun worshipping site, water, plantation. (source: own photo)

The jungle deck provides the players with six different tile-types, each of them having different functions in the game, whereas the word jungle, to a Western player the word *jungle* could promise adventure and an exotic environment shaped by the forces of nature due to common representations of the jungle in adventure films and books. Overall, the tiles repeat the general use of natural colours and material, especially green, as outlined earlier. Just like in the worker-tiles, iconic drawings of trees from the bird-eye´s view build a frame for the centre, putting emphasis on it, while maintaining consistency with the other tiles. When the workers of players are adjacent to jungle tiles, they gain/perform the action of that jungle tile. The number of adjacent workers determines the amount of actions that can be performed, a function that is signified by the moving position of the workers mentioned previously. In the following section, the water tile will not be discussed separately, since it´s main impression was outlined previously.

Overall, the tiles signify different places throughout the jungle as connoted not only by the name of the deck but also by the use of colours that was outlined earlier and prevalence of trees than seem big, leafy and green, which are characteristics commonly associated with

trees located in the jungle. While most of the tiles are easy to make sense of for the viewer by drawing on iconic representations and narrative mechanism, others are less straight forward and only become fully clear when contextualised through the rules of the game.

The plantation area is immediately recognisable to the player: It is presented in the iconic form of the cocoa fruit and uses a mix between the colour brown, signifying soil, and green, signifying plants. Moreover, the shape of the trees that frame the area repeats this form, leading to the player immediately knowing that this is the tile that provides him/her with cacao. For each worker adjacent to it, players get cocoa in relation to the fields shown on the tile (the tile shown above would therefore give players two cacao per worker). In relation to the worker tiles, this creates a narrative of workers harvesting cocoa, while the player as the leader takes in the profit. This not only indicates a setting in places were cocoa is prevalent (e.g. South America), but also raises questions regarding worker exploitation, since cacao and chocolate production are commonly linked with fair trade issues and throughout the game, the player is the one gaining profits, without possibilities to give something back to the people or develop the area further. This in turn can be associated with colonialism, in which colonial powers profited from primary resources, especially since South America was object of colonisation e.g. through Portugal or Spain. In this case, the player´s action can be seen to exploit the workers for profit derived from natural resources.

The market on the other does not rely on the stereotypical image of a market with merchants and goods, but the huts depicted stand in a circle around and iconic image of coins, with a value indicated by a number and linked to a brown shape that resembles the cocoa fruit. This creates a narrative for the players, making it evident that they can sell cocoa for the declared value. Just as on the village tiles, there are no signs of a broader infrastructure and the houses are made out of wood – adding to the impression of and environment shaped by nature and a setting far from civilisation. However, the gold coin in the centre connotes old fashioned currency, since coins made out of gold are commonly connected to past times in which money was still made out of real gold and had a high value, since many people lived off the land. This adds to the overall impression of the game taking place in the past. When looking at the coins themselves, this notion gets supported. All of them are using the colour yellow, signifying them as gold and moreover not only indicate the value through numbers, but have a pattern on them that is similar to the common icon of a compass. With regard to the overall narrative of the game and the jungle-setting, this again suggests a link to colonial times and its

seavoyages in which the compass was commonly used for navigation. The manmade and abstract value of the coins furthermore opposes the natural environment and materials that are heavily focused on wood, indicating the possibility that the currency and focus on wealth was introduced from the outside, thereby signifying a setting in colonial times.

The coin symbol is repeated on two other tiles: the gold mine and the temple. While the gold mine is almost signified in a symbolic fashion showing only a whole in the ground, coin and a ladder, the temple tile makes use of the iconic and commonly known image of Incan or Mayan temples made out of stones, various floors high and standing in the middle of the jungle (signified by a lack of soil around it). Players with the most workers adjacent to the temples receive gold coins for it, symbolising control over the area. This introduces other dimensions to the game, namely area control and spirituality. While area control (signified by the adjacent workers) can be seen as a strategic mean, temples are commonly known as ancient places of worship. The combination of temples and money marks them also as a place of wealth and status, which puts the focus on profit. Moreover, the use of the iconic temple-image also signifies the far away and exotic to Western players, since these are places that not many people have visited personally and are only familiar with through representations. This exoticness is enhanced when seen in contrast to the absence of temples and dominance of churches in Europe or the USA, marking them as unusual to them. Furthermore, temples are commonly associated with ancient civilisations – seen in context with the other tiles this strengthens the feeling of the game being set in the past but also connotes a perspective on the other as exotic by drawing on iconic imagery of past times without providing further contextualisation.

The sun-worshipping tile also picks up on spirituality. While it only shows a grey circle, with a pattern, that could be identified as a carved rock, the given name of the tile suggests religion and the pattern repeats the common image of ancient carvings. However, the word worshipping is commonly connoted with paganism and worshiping the sun signifies a religion based on nature. This again reproduces the spirituality of the temple tile but also connotes a backwardness to the players, since religions cantered around nature are commonly connected with words such as past, pagan or uncivilised. Workers placed adjacent to this tile give the players a matching token that looks identical to the rock on the tile. It allows players place a worker tile on top of one of their already existing tiles towards the end of the game,

allowing them to benefit twice from the same jungle tiles. In the context of worship, this signifies a narrative in which the gods are in favour, pointing again to the notion of backwardness, since faith is often perceived as opposed to fact indicating a conflict between luck and strategy.

This can also be seen in the mines, which are not fully shown in the game but only indicated, and due to the ladder only have a provisional look to them, putting them in a time where technology was not advanced. In context with the other tiles, this further connotes a setting that is to be interpreted as backwards by the players. Similar to cocoa, the mines further raise issues on resource, worker exploitation and colonialism. The area represented is presented to rely on natural resources for their wealth, not only connoting a back-in-time atmosphere to the player, but possibly also the lack of other means of production, linking it to the common image of countries that are less technologically advanced and have to rely on these resources. Moreover this also coincides with a Eurocentric notion of colonial times, creating a binary opposition between modern and backwards for Western players.

12.3.3. The village board

Each Player has a village board in the colour signifying his/her tribe. The board forms their base, by being positioned in front of them. Moreover, the cocoa and sun token acquired by them are placed on them, so that players can keep track of their goods.

Image 18 - *Village board with meeples, tokens, cocoa and coins. (source: own photo)*

Image 19 - Village board. (source: own photo)

Overall, the village board repeats the signs and symbols outlined earlier. Therefore, I will not go into details of aspects that have already been

discussed. The village itself is signified by four huts, as was seen on the village tile and show the same details such as the bonfire. Moreover, animal skin that is out for drying can be seen more clearly as being placed in front of the main hut – again indicating a setting in the past and the reliance on naturally occurring materials. This is also highlighted by the storage area that is located on the bottom: brown striped material connoting thatched roofs. When player acquire cocoa, they put a wooden token on the facilities: shape and colour both signify the cocoa fruit and again highlight that the focus of the game lies on cocoa as the main resource to be traded and make the player physically emerge into the setting since she/he touches and moves the material and also physically trades it in for coins. The sun tokens analysed previously are placed next to the village, signifying that they are connected to each other and are possibly a big part in the communities life, thereby linking the villagers to a nature centred religion.

As outlined earlier in the beginning of the analysis of this game, the blue line encircling the village area signifies water in form of a river. Interestingly, numerated coin symbols are aligned with it. At the start of the game, players put a meeple on the coin on the left side. The meeple follows the same iconic representation as the workers discussed earlier. While this meeple therefore belongs to the class of workers, the rules for the gameplay identify it as a *water carrier*, with the following function: For each worker of a player´s colour adjacent to a water tile, the meeple moves one coin up. By the end of the game, players get and additional amount of victory points according to the coin symbol the meeple stands on. On the one hand, this makes the water-carrier an important asset for the player, on the other hand, the description water carrier again signifies a lack of technology and a certain economic underdevelopment to the player, since the necessity of carrying water is commonly connected with regions that are considered less developed in comparison to industrial countries.

13. Focus groups

In addition to the social semiotic analysis, focus groups were planned and conducted to include the player´s views on the games under analysis and to explore how players interpret the games´ settings and may connect the representations made in them to general assumptions and knowledges in their daily lives.

Focus groups are a common method for research that centres on a group discussion of a small amount of people on a specific topic. (Wilkinson 2011, p. 168) The method allows to study talk from two different perspectives – either as a way of gaining insights into the perspectives of the participants and their opinions, knowledges, assumptions etc., or as "a social context in its own right" (ibid., p. 181). For my research, I will focus on the first way of studying talk, since my focus lies on the substance of what the participants are saying which is set to help me answering my second and third research question.

Overall, focus groups can be considered a type of group interview with at least two participants (the interviewer not included). (Bryman 2012, p. 501) Through focus groups, topics and themes can be explored by group discussion which gives me the opportunity to analyse said discussion in light of the issues and topics my research is concerned with. (ibid.) This is relevant with regard to boardgames, since the Eurogames that are part of this research are usually played and experienced in a group, thereby including multiple participants. The focus groups will allow me to take a look at how the participants "construe the general topics" (ibid., p. 503) of my interest as well as to study the "audience interpretations of cultural and media texts" (ibid.) that boardgames, as pointed out in an earlier chapter of this thesis, can be seen as part of.

My aim is to analyse what the participants think about representations made in the games with regard to the Western vs non-Western contrast outlined in the chapter about Postcolonialism and Eurocentrism and if the participants contextualise the games with regard to their daily life and their general perspectives on other cultures. In this regard, if/how they identify with the game and/or its characters and narrative is of interest, since players could see the places the boardgames as set in as part of a binary distinction mentioned earlier. Moreover, how they view the places and characters depicted is of importance for my analysis, since what they are saying about the boardgames can also uncover assumptions about other cultures and the player´s assumptions about power relations in connection to what they perceive as the "real" world. My focus therefore lies on the thoughts, assumptions and opinions expressed by the participants. The data gained from the conduction of focus groups was chosen not only because boardgames are mostly an activity played in groups (with rare exceptions) but also because it gives me the participants the opportunity to think about the topics in a group and to share and dispute their views which could give me "more realistic accounts of what people think" (ibid., p. 503). Another aspect with this regard is that I also

want to observe how the games might reflect underlying assumptions about other places, people and cultures from a societal viewpoint. The in-group nature of the focus group discussion can help me answer this question since participants might express more socially and culturally expected views and opinions within a group context. (ibid., p. 518) This could give me insight into which assumptions and knowledges have a standing of common sense, thereby marking them as general knowledge for the players as well as an agreed knowledge on reality.

With regard to practical issues such as the time and space for this thesis, the focus group method allows me rapid data gathering by generating "concentrated amounts of data on precisely the topic of interest" (Morgan 1997, p. 10) while other methods as e.g. participant observation would not be able to guarantee that the participants think and converse about the actual topics of the games since they might be preoccupied trying to understand the rules or focus on winning the game without heavily reflecting on the material of the game itself. (ibid.) Furthermore, focus groups are overall less controlled by the researcher than individual interviews, which allows for new topics to emerge, which matches the explorative nature of my research and can provide me with additional information that I did not anticipate.

Transcripts of the focus groups will be used as data in a thematic analysis and the results will then be used in the discussion of my social semiotic analysis, to combine the results of both processes and not only analyse the games, but include the players´ perspectives and reflections. This is of importance, since games involve the actions of players and thereby evoke and interaction between player(s) and game.

Due to the time and resources for this research being limited and the explorative nature of this research, the number of focus groups was set to two. The number of participants was limited by the number of players allowed in the games under analysis, setting it between two and four participants for each group.

13.1. Selection of participants

When it came to the sampling for participants, I decided to have two focus groups with different participants. The first group (Group 1) consisted of casual players and participants who do not play boardgames on a regular basis, while the second group (Group 2) consisted of regular players and was considered an expert group. Moreover, Group 1 consisted of a group of friends, making it a natural group. This focus group was recruited through convenience sampling. I know Tomé, one of the participants in Group 1, and was aware that

he sometimes meets with friends to play boardgames. Convenience sampling was chosen in this instance, since it allowed me to recruit an already existing group of people who play together sometimes. The advantage of having a natural group for my research is that it comes closer to a realistic play experience, since it resembles the situation of a group of friends getting together to have a boardgame evening, which is more likely than meeting with strangers to play. Such a grouping can therefore make the interaction and discussions about the game more realistic. Furthermore, I decided to look at casual gamers, since Eurogames, due to their accessibility, are a common choice for non-expert gamers.

Another reason for the decision of having divided groups with casual and expert players is that the frame of reference could vary between them, meaning that people who do not play games regularly, might interpret them more in connection to their daily lives or personal experiences, allowing to gain insights into what is considered common knowledge as outlined earlier. This stands in contrast to Group 2: since the participants of the second group play games on a more frequent basis, it is possible that they might draw comparisons to other games they have played and see the games under analysis in a broader context boardgames in general, which might lead to discussions about the game industry rather than "common" knowledges or representations and can lead to discussions about typical representations pr themes in boardgames as a genre.

Furthermore, the division into non-experts and experts could help the participants of Group 1 to feel safer in the group environment, since there is a possibility that participants might feel intimidated by experienced players, which could lead to a situation in which experienced group members dominate the discussion.

With regard to the recruiting process for Group 2 it can be said that a mix between snowball and convenience sampling was used to find suitable participants, since the target group was defined by my objectives and because adapt gamers are also likely to engage with each other and be active in somewhat of a boardgame-scene. I contacted game groups on Facebook, as well the Guru´s at the aforementioned boardgame Café where my call for participants was forwarded by group members. In the end, a board- and videogame interested group called *CIWB* proved helpful in the sampling process, helped me finding participants and even allowed me to hold the focus group at one of their events, whereby Group 2 can also be considered to be a natural group, since they meet to play boardgames together.

The participants of the focus groups where between 19 and 42 years old and came from five different countries. As part of this thesis, only participants´ first names will be used with their agreement as part of this process, to ensure a certain degree of anonymity for the participants:

Group 1:

Participant	Age	Nationality:
Jakub	25	Slovakia
Lilin	27	China
Tomé	33	Portugal

Group 2:

Participant:	Age:	Nationality:
Enric	41	Spain
Nikolaj	20	Denmark
Philip	29	Denmark

The age range and different backgrounds of the participants were seen as beneficial, since they could highlight different perspectives on topics. Moreover participants from Spain and Portugal might draw stronger connections to colonialism with regard to the games due to their countries history with regard to colonialism. In addition, Lilin might provide a different perspective due her upbringing in China.

Despite having to different groups, it will not be my aim to compare the groups directly, but rather to explore the perspectives of the participants. However, if notable differences should occur, this will still be outlined.

13.2. Conducting the focus groups

Due to the research being centred around two specific Eurogames, the focus group participants played both games for approximately 30-40 minutes each to familiarize themselves with the games and get engaged in the gameplay. This had the advantage that the participants had time to interact and familiarize themselves before the discussion itself, which might make the participants less nervous to talk in the focus group.

Even though the focus of the thematic analysis will be on what participants were saying in the discussion, I decided to make a video of the discussion. As part of the video, the faces of the participants were not filmed, but rather their hands and the table. I decided that it was useful for the discussion to have the games on the table in front of the participants, so that they can take a closer look, refer to specific aspects of the game and make it easier for them to connect the discussion to their previous play experience. Therefore, it was important to be able to refer to instances when participants were e.g. pointing to game pieces. In addition, a voice recorder was used as a backup in case of technical difficulties with the video camera.

I decided not to film the participant's faces since it is not my aim to analyse their body-language and facial expression and because I did not want participants to be worried about their presentation in front of the camera or feel intimidated by being filmed, which could lead them to hold back in the discussion. What was filmed and why was outlined to the participants during a short introduction before the focus group and the participants signed agreements to be filmed during the focus group to ensure that they know what was going to happen and to give me their consent. A sample consent form is provided in APPENDIX D.

For the conduction of the focus groups, I put together a guide with general topics and questions to ensure that both groups are comparable with regards to the main topics discussed. (Morgan 1997a, p. 47) When constructing the guide, attention was paid to have the topics following each other overlap thematically to ensure a more natural progression through the topics of discussion. (ibid.) Nevertheless, I chose to be flexible with the topics, allowing for the possibility to react to new topics that might arise in discussion. The focus group guide was used as a loose basis for the conduction of the discussion and can be found in APPENDIX E.

Before starting the group discussion, the process of the focus group was outlined and the participants were asked to give their consent to the session being taped. In the following the groups were introduced to the general topic of the focus group and were given time think about the general topic and take notes if they want to. Aim of this was that I wanted the participants to gather their thoughts and get comfortable with the situation prior to engaging in discussions. This process also allowed people who might are not as outgoing or outspoken to gather their thoughts and can strengthen their commitment of sharing their opinions and thoughts. (ibid,. p. 50)

Since I will work with transcripts to analyse the data gathered in the focus groups, the following will outline the transcription process and level of detail.

13.3. Data transcription

Transcripts are at their core descriptions of the events that were recorded, meaning that the event themselves is always mediated as part of reporting. (Rapley 2007, p.51) Due to that, there is no purely objective way of transforming the event to a transcript – for me as a researcher it was therefore important to ask myself which way of transcribing is the most adequate with regard to my research. (Kvale 2007, p. 98; Rapley 2016, p. 51) The details of the transcription are therefore dependant on factors such as the aim of my research as well as practical matters such as time and personnel. (Kvale 2007, p.94)

Since I have already determined the aims of my investigation regarding the transcripts, and decided to conduct a thematic analysis on them, my way of transcribing can be described as closed, meaning that I will transcribe "only those features of talk and interaction that are deemed interesting and relevant" (Jenks 2011, p. 12), not including features that do not contribute to my analytical approach and focus of research.

I decided that the transcripts will be orthographic in the sense that they will provide account of what was said, but apart from that, I decided that they will also feature basic interactionary aspects such as overlaps as well as multimodal descriptions in cases where participants did interact with the boardgames during the discussion. (ibid., p. 43) Moreover, I decided to present what was said in a grammatically correct way whenever possible (e.g. by changing the order of words when necessary) and not include immediate repetitions and utterances used as fillers (e.g. "ahm" or "uhm" or a repeated use of "you know"); when they are used to affirm or neglect a statement however, the agreement with a statement will be noted in brackets. Even though that means that the transcripts will not be true verbatim accounts, I see these alterations as beneficial for my thematic analysis and the presentation of the results in my discussion since it provide the nuances of the content of what was said and the participants´ perspectives. (Kvale 2007, p. 98) This focus also led me to the decision to mark each participant´s full statement as a line, while interruptions will be notes as a new line after said statements.

For the audio aspect of the video, I decided to follow selected aspects from the guidelines established by Blake Poland (2002) since they feature basic markings of pauses, laughter etc.

that can contribute to the overall content of what was said, but do not go into vast linguistic detail such as e.g. in a Jeffersonian-style transcripts. While the latter would be appropriate for a linguistic analysis, the purpose of my research broadly lies on what is expressed. A Jeffersonian-style transcript would therefore include more aspects of spoken language than needed for the purpose of my analysis and might even distract from the core information I am trying to uncover. In conclusion, a highly specialised transcript with a linguistic focus would be "neither feasible, nor necessary, for the meaning analysis" (Kvale 2007, p. 97) as part of my research.

Guidelines that will be incorporated based on Poland (2002):

- *Pauses* will be Indicated by dots in brackets: (…). Three dots will indicate one second and fewer time will be indicated by fewer dots. Longer pauses will be indicated in the following matter: (long pause).
- *Audible actions* such as laughing, coughing etc. will be denoted in parentheses e.g. (laughing).
- *Interruptions* will be indicated through hyphens: -
  (Poland 2002, p.641)

With regards to overlaps I decided to use left brackets [as recommended in Norris (2004). (p. 66) Overlaps will be noted vertically aligned under one participants turn to make them easier to recognize without interrupting one participant´s statements.

The decision for left brackets alters from Poland´s recommendations, but was seen as having a positive effect on the readability of the transcripts since indications in parenthesis will also be used to describe the participant´s body language.

With regard to the visual data, I will include instances in which the participants interact with the boardgames that were on the table during the discussion in cases where it contributes to the understanding of the situation since they might point to certain game pieces and use the game as a point of reference. Such occurrences will be described narratively and will be included in parenthesis within the transcripts e.g. (points to the blue figure in the game), since this is one of the most common options for indication. (Rapley 2007, p.64) Other factors such as the direction of the gaze, the postures of the participants and other movements will not be included in the transcripts since they are not the focus of this research. The final transcripts

are provided in APPENDIX A (for Group 1) and APPENDIX B (for Group 2) and include highlights for the themes found in my analysis as will be outlined in the following section.

13.4. Thematic analysis

To answer my research questions, I decided to employ a thematic analysis with regard to the focus group transcripts. Overall, a thematic analysis focuses on people´s experiences and their subjectivity and is considered to be one of the most common approaches to qualitative data, in line with e.g. grounded theory or interpretative phenomenological analysis. (Rapley 2011, p. 274; Guest et.al. 2012, p. 12)

The thematic analysis is often seen as similar to the method of content analysis and focuses on the detection of "implicit and explicit ideas within the data" (ibid., p. 10) which are defined as themes. (ibid.) In this context, themes are categories that derive inductively from the data under analysis, whereby it has to be noted that they are not necessarily always the categories that occur with the most frequency, but can also be aspects that are deemed as important by the researcher for his/her area of research. (Bryman 2012, p. 580) Due to the approach being qualitative in its nature, the overall style of analysis can be considered as interpretative and descriptive and its aim to be the deeper exploration of the topics under analysis – leading to the discovery of themes and codes being largely content-driven. (Guest et. al. 2012, p. 5ff.) Other reasons for me to decide for thematic analysis as an approach were that it also considers practical issues such as resources, time, "as well as the quality of the data in specifying an analytic research objective" (ibid, p. 28). Considering the fact that my time is limited and that I will be the only researcher working on the data, these practical aspects had to be kept in mind when deciding for an approach. I decided to follow the approach of the applied thematic analysis as outlined in Guest et. al. 2012, since it presents a clear and practice-oriented outline of the approach.

To arrive with a set of themes in the data collected, a mix between structural identification and content-driven identification was used, making the process an iterative one. First of all, it has to be noted that a theme is in this context understood as a section of meaning within the dataset. (Guest et. al. 2012, p. 50) However, since a focus group guide was used in the data gathering process, both, structural and content themes occurred, with the former being imposed on the data by the researcher (e.g. through interview questions), while the latter emerges within the data without that imposition. (ibid.) As part of my analysis, I moreover focused on the content that I deemed relevant with regard to answering my research

questions, since the focus group data will be used to complement the social semiotic analysis that was carried out. This focus also proved to be beneficial given the limited personnel available for the analytical process.

The transcripts will first read multiple times to gain an overview over the data. Following this step, the data will be examined for codes and themes by marking the transcripts using colours and note-taking. All of the steps described so far will be repeated until and the themes and codes refined until no more themes/codes that could be used with regard to the focus of my research can be found. As a final step, a codebook will be assembled containing the definitions of the codes and their content. The codebook will also contain graphics presenting the themes and its subcategories. It will therefore contain the results of my analysis, linking different aspects of the focus group data together to themes.

By employing this approach to my data, it is possible for me to see what assumptions the participants connect to the games under analysis and to illustrate the different ways they may see it as general knowledge/assumptions. Overall approaching the data with a thematic analysis allows me to take the step from reporting what was said during the focus groups to exploring what is underlying it and to get to the essence of what was said as in e.g. uncovering underlying norms, assumptions and meanings. (Rapley 2011, p. 276) In the following, I will outline my analytical process by presenting the steps outlined above for the case of my analysis.

14. Focus Groups: Thematic Analysis

For the analysis I first printed out preliminary versions of the transcripts and read them multiple times to get acquired with the data. As part of the reading processes similar utterances and keywords were marked in the same colour to indicate them as codes that are linked to each other, thereby slowly pointing to specific codes that could comprise a theme. The individual codes were indicated by notes taken next to the text, and also comments were made regarding the relevance of certain utterances or linkages to other topics. This process was repeated multiple times, leading to me breaking up the data in smaller pieces through comments, notes and markings. A scan of all the pages, from this working process is provided in APPENDIX C.

After this process, I went through the pages and started to note down preliminary themes and their subcategories to gain a clearer overview over the more abstract ideas behind the

data and to reflect on which parts of the data are relevant with regard to my research questions. The preliminary themes that were derived in this process were *Interpreting the Setting*, *Exoticism and Romanticism*, *Modern vs Backwards* and *Appropriateness of Representations*.

After having arrived at this point, the steps of reading, and marking the transcripts were repeated. The aim was to arrive at more abstract an overarching themes that would reflect the complexity of the data and to maybe merge themes and codes into broader categories or even to arrive at new themes. Finally, for general overview, digital versions of the transcripts were marked only using one colour for each theme, which will also serve as the final transcripts used when citing focus groups participants. These transcripts are included in APPENDIX A (for Group 1) and APPENDIX B (for Group 2) As part of my final coding process, the theme Eurogames was emerged from my data, since participants were found to point to mechanisms and characteristics of the game in the discussion. Previously, this was not found to be directly relevant with regard to my research questions, but as part of the analytical process, *Eurogames* was found to be a theme that illustrates if/how participants identified certain aspects of the game and also to illustrate the different level of expertise between the groups.

Finally, a short Codebook was put together, containing the themes: *Far Away*, *Modern vs Backwards*, *Value of People* and *Eurogames*, which are the results of my analytical process. Each theme is illustrated through a graphic showing the theme together with its codes and most important subcategories or examples. The main codes are explained through a short description and an example from the focus group data. The Codebook is located in APPENDIX F. In the following, I will give a short overview over the results for each theme and provide the illustrational graphics mentioned. The full size graphics used on the following pages can be found in the Codebook.

14.1. Eurogames

The theme *Eurogames* emerged from participant´s discussions about the gameplay and includes instances were they directly and indirectly refer to them, therefore the main codes coincide with aspects outlined in the chapter on Eurogames in this thesis. It was found that participants in Group 1 found *Five Tribes* more difficult than *Cacao*, while one of them also pointed out that in the long run, the latter might not be as engaging:
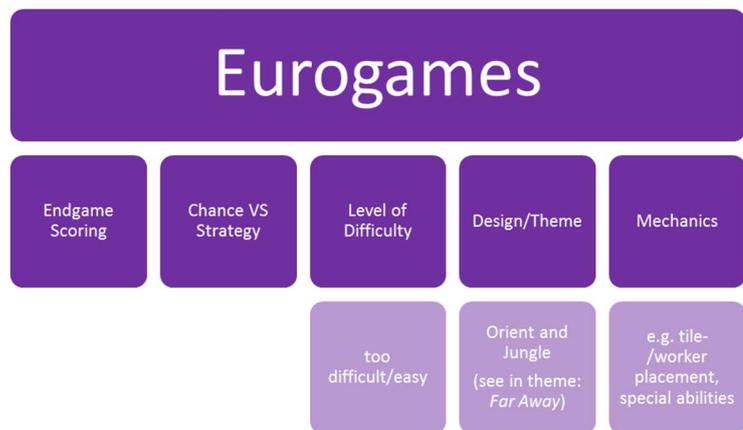
Image 20 – Theme Eurogames

 Lilin: "*I think the first one, the Five Tribes, it was a bit too complicated for me. I don´t know, what do you think? (Jakub and Tomé utter agreement) Maybe I am a bit tired today as well, but there were so many things that I really have to pay attention to.*" (Appendix A, transcript 1, Line 9)

Jakub (referring to *Cacao*): "*Maybe it is simple to learn but after a few games it will just be boring (the others utter agreement) because it is really fast and does not have the same engagement than this one. (points to Five Tribes)*" Appendix A, transcript 1, Line 23)

In Group 2 on the other hand, participant expressed views indicating more intrigue with *Five Tribes*, linking the game mechanics and especially the end-game scoring to making it more intriguing.

Enric: "*And also there´s a feeling in both that you don´t know who´s winning. You know, you have a rough idea, but you can´t count all the points because there are so many variables that you don´t know. (Philip utters agreement) And that is also what makes it, you know, exciting […]*" (Appendix B, transcript 2, line 14)

The views of the participants can be seen as linked to the idea of what makes a game exciting, showing that while all of them played the same games, there is an individual perspective to it that makes different kind of boardgames and Eurogames exciting for them. Part of this, is also the theme of the game that was seen to create an appeal to players.

Nikolaj: "*I do love jungle settings in any kind of boardgame, film or video game or anything.*" (Appendix B, transcript 2, Line 21)

Philip: "*But the setting just spoke so much more to me in the Five Tribes. The Cacao, I was kind of completely disjoined from.*" (Appendix B, transcript 2, Line 22)

This appeal indicates that the theme, in their mind, is a general idea, but also that these ideas are represented in overall media, creating a familiarity for players. This indicates at a dominant representation of certain themes from their view.

Overall, it has to be mentioned that participants from Group 2 showed a higher familiarity with technical terms, reflecting the assumptions the differences in the groups stated in the chapter on focus groups and supported the division between experts and casual players.

Philip: "[…] *the general topics of both games are the worker-placement and, you know, the struggle to acquire more wealth, really." (Appendix B, transcript 2, Line 6)*

14.2. Far Away

Image 21 – Theme Far away

 Participants in both focus groups uttered that to them, the games take place in a somewhat exotic setting and related them to past times and to non-Western countries, whereby especially signs related to natural or architectural environment proved to be major indicators through which participants determined the games´ settings:

Enric *"[…] both are playing in exotic places and with resources that you need to trade. You know, that is common in both."* (Appendix B, transcript 2, Line 7)

Tomé: *"[…] they kind of portray two different exotic places, one is like South America, I guess, Central/South America and Middle East. (Gestures first to Cacao, then to Five Tribes) But very exotic."* (Appendix A, transcript 1, line 203)

- ***Five Tribes:***

Lilin: *"I have Northern Africa for the place, which is like you were saying. (Tomé agrees) And also, because of the desert and the oasis."* (Appendix A, transcript 1, Line 60)

Nikolaj: *"This thing [...] the Djinns of Naquala, I think, medieval times of Arabia."* (transcript 1, Line 45)

- ***Cacao*:**

Enric: *"This (pointing to Cacao) of course in the Mayan/Aztecan times because of the temples, (.) you know maybe just before the Spanish colonisation, of course."* (Appendix B, line 39)

This illustrates that, for the participants, certain images are linked specifically to places and they draw on them, when making sense of the boardgames. Moreover, the hesitation visible in the quotes above and the use of fillers such as *kind of*, indicates a certain insecurity and distance, thus indicating that the setting is somewhat *far away* to them. But it is exactly this distance, that creates an appeal to players as Philip found, thereby hinting at a prevalence and demand for games set in the exotic and distant:

"[...] there are very many boardgames situated in (picks up a tile from Five Tribes) an old Arabian thing (refers to the theme) because [...] I think that´s a setting that appeals to us (.) quite a lot. Especially here in Denmark and the Nordic countries, where anything that is sunny and warm and desert with oases and palm trees and all that is just amazing because we don´t have that here." (Appendix B, transcript 2, line 130)

This could be seen as a perceived perpetuation of the image of the different and distant in boardgames as a genre and also indicates that, in his opinion, those who play or buy them, want these specific settings, which creates a chain between supply and demand of certain representations. Based on his perspective, there could be a habitus with regard to the representations of the far away and different.

With regard to Five Tribes, discussions of the exotic also emerged with regard to the Djinns, with participants using words such as *supernatural* or *demon* to describe them, thereby indicating that they perceive *Five Tribes* to be further from reality. This indicates a perpetuation of the 19th century image of a mystical Orient as presented by Said (1978), which was further highlighted by a statement from Enric: *"[...] and this (refers to Five Tribes) is more fantasy-themed. So, I can´t see that setting, you know, in Arabia. You know, for me it is more a setting in my imagination"* (Appendix B, transcript 2, line 76).

In addition to the aspects outlined so far, it also has to be mentioned, that the two participants from Spain (Enric) and Portugal (Tomé), had a stronger inclination to put the

games in a context with colonial times, which was especially noticeable for *Cacao* as illustrated below:

Tomé: *"And this (refers to Cacao) is kind of like the white man kind of using (.), extracting cacao. It´s very difficult not to draw parallels."* (Appendix A, transcript 1, Line 128)

Enric: *"This (pointing to Cacao) of course in the Mayan/Aztecan times because of the temples, (.) you know maybe just before the Spanish colonisation, of course."* (Appendix B, line 39)

While for both of them, the games take place in the past, Tomé perceives a direct representation of colonialism, whereas Enric puts places the game further in the past. Despite their disagreement on the exact time, their contextualisations with regard to colonialism indicates that they might have been confronted with the concept of colonialism in the past. Jakub hints that this could have to do with national history, thereby pointing to the importance of national histories with regard to what is perceived as relevant knowledge by institutions with a high social power (such as schools) and therefore relevant discourses:

"I don´t know, in Portugal (points to Tomé) you were studying colonisation. (Tome utters agreement) In Slovakia, we didn´t study much about it because it was not our part of the history that much as for you. So I wasn´t thinking about colonialism. So it was interesting to hear your view." (Jakub, Appendix A, line 127)

14.3. Modern vs Backwards
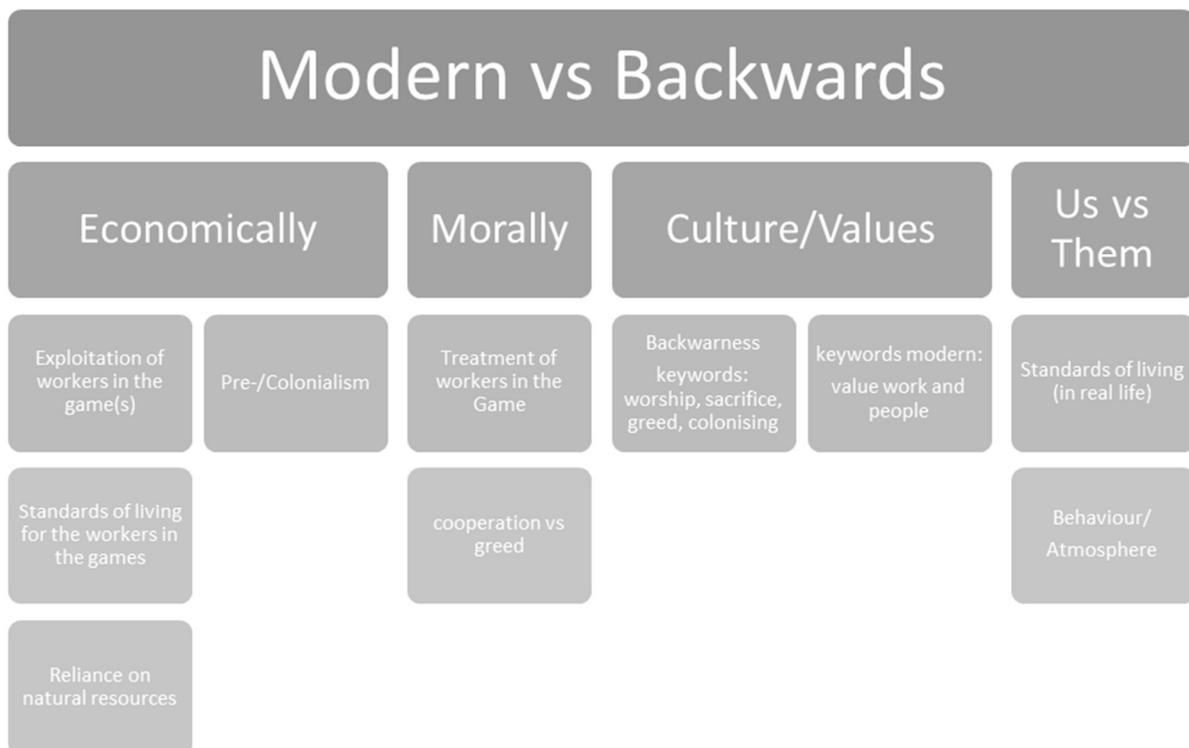
Image 22 – Theme Modern vs Backwards

The theme *Modern vs Backwards* was derived from different aspects in the focus group data in which participants noted the modernity or backwardness of aspects in the games under analysis. The main subcategories include economic factors, morals/values as well as culture. Since the games were also linked to real geographical places, contrasts between places denoting modernity or outdatedness are also included.

With regard to the boardgames under analysis, focus groups participants indicated that for them, the games transmit an image of the represented settings as *backwards*. While *Cacao* was perceived to represent a form of economic backwardness due the living conditions represented in it, *Five Tribes* showed stronger associations with a somewhat moral backwardness:

Lilin: *"Actually for me this one has more civilisation (points to Cacao) because you have to work, then you get products, then you can sell them. But that one (points to Five Tribes) is like getting products and money [by (..)], yeah by selling people or (..)." (Appedix A, transcript 1, line 114)*

Enric: *"I find this (pointing to Five Tribes) morally a bit more further in time than this one (points to Cacao) because this one, you know looks very primitive, you know, selling all this cacao with the water and the temples and (.), I feel it´s more before time."* (Appendix B, transcript 2, line 54)

The occurrence of these issues in the focus groups indicates backward representations made in the game themselves that are then perceived by the participants. This can be seen as problematic because in the games, *far away* places are seen to be linked to underdevelopment or uncivilised behaviour by the participants. This should be seen as critical, since it indicates a colonial view in the games they played, linking the other with moral/economic backwardness. The perception of backwardness in *Five Tribes* will moreover be included in the section on the theme *Value of People*, since the issues discussed on that matter, overlap between the themes.

Interestingly, the issue of economic and moral subordination was also a topic with regard to real existing places, since some participants expressed views indicating that for them, the aspects mentioned above, might show part of a real picture:

- *Cacao:*

Philip: *"[…] I mean most harvesting facilities like there, both bananas and cocoa (Enric expresses doubt) are actually these thatched roof buildings with no real, you know, stone or anything that looks advanced. Usually it is pretty primitive and out farming nowadays that, (.) I don´t know, I´m just having a hard time picturing that being ages ago […]"* (Appendix A, transcript 1, line 58)

- Five Tribes:

Jakub: *"This one (points to Five Tribes) can still happen in this age. And I think so, we know about it that in some countries, in the Middle East and that part, people as well are being killed or (.) fighting for territory all the time (the other utter agreement) just to get, you know because of better resources or better (..) I don´t know, better places around."* (Appendix A, transcript 1, Line 131)

The use of words such as *some countries*, *them* and *there*, highlight the persistence of a view, in which the *other* is found to be inferior as well as distant, which led to *Us vs Them* as a code, that illustrates the blurred lines between boardgames and the perception of real places expressed by participants.

Finally, Lilin took a different perspective on the notion of backwardness by shifting the focus to the question who creates notions of backwardness and why, which can be seen in her following statement regarding the past use of a slave card in *Five Tribes*:

"[…] I don´t know where this company comes from, but for me this game (Jakub picks up a Fakir card, looks at it and puts it back again) is trying to show us that maybe now in Islamic countries they are still like before or (Tomé utters agreement) I don´t know, a bit terrifying pictures and then slaves maybe trying to show you that these countries are still in bad conditions and that there are still a lot of these things happening. I think, yes, maybe that is happening there but I mean, we know the situation of these countries through the media, right? […]" (Lilin, Appedix A, transcript 1, line 144)

Her statement indicates a critical position, towards the truth value of the images she is confronted with and also points out that she perceives a general continuation of a contrast between *modern* and *backward* countries, that reproduces the binary opposition between the *West and the rest* prevalent in colonial times. Therefore, the statement not only illustrates Faidutti´s claim of a lack of postcolonialism in boardgames, but moreover points to a continuous existence of colonial discourses in the overall media as perceived by Lilin.

14.4. Value of people

Image 23 – Theme Value of People

Lastly, participants were also found to discuss the treatment of human beings in the two games. In combination, these aspects were seen as all dealing with the *Value of People* on a more abstract level and therefore comprise the theme of the same name. This theme is overall a structural theme, due to the researcher providing the groups with a printout of the slave card from *Five Tribes*, and asking questions about the treatment of people as can be seen in the focus group guide and transcripts. Moreover, the themes *Modern vs Backwards* and *Value of People* can be seen as intertwined, since they touch on overlapping thematic areas and the perception of what a person is worth was also prevalent in views moral/cultural backwardness.

Regarding the treatment of the workers in the games, issues of exploitation and forced labour were discussed by the participants, whereby some of them expressed the impression that the workers are not treated appropriately and are given a low value in the boardgames:

Philip: *"[…] I guess in the Cacao-thing you basically just keep placing out work camps that are horrible-living adjacent to wherever they actually need to do stuff. I mean. […]"* (Appendix B, transcript 2, line 80)

Tomé: *"The palm tree has more value than one of these. (picks on a meeple from Five Tribes) (Lilin utters agreement) I think the yellows are worth one (referring to victory points) and the palm trees are worth three."* (Appendix A, transcript 1, line 76)

Referring to the Fakir cards:

74	Tomé:		[And actually you are selling
		people to buy] Djinns.	
75	Lilin:	So, they are slaves.	

Image 24 Dialogue: Fakirs = slaves (Appendix A, Transcript 1, line 74f.)

The extracts above thereby show that those participants felt that they were in a position of power while playing the game since they had control over the workers actions and even their death. This can be seen as linked to a perceived imbalance of power, which the players are being given by the game and its rules. With regard to the aforementioned aspects of the setting being *far away* and issues related to the theme *Modern vs* Backwards, this emphasized that the games somewhat reproduce the colonial gaze and its power relations by giving players power over a perceived *other*. Moreover, the act of slavery was linked to the mechanism of trading the Fakir card for Djinns by Lilin, thereby indicating not only a colonial gaze, but also that she perceives a symbolic reproduction of slavery disguised in the gameplay. On the other hand, Philip and Enric were seen to find it more difficult to identify with the meeples on a personal level, when being asked about their views on the treatment of people in the game. This can be seen as linked to coincide with their familiarity to boardgames and use of technical terms: By using the term *meeple*, Enric distances them from the concept of human beings, while for Philip, the actions taken in the games seem more abstract.

Enric: *"So, people are meeples. They are, you know (points towards meeples from Cacao) they are commanded, you know, to do one thing: to collect cacao (points towards Cacao) or to (.), I don´t know, just sell something, to collect resources."* (Appendix B, transcript 2, line 79)

Philip: *"I guess either game doesn´t really treat its people well but it´s in a (..). I mean, since there is no real fighting involved at all, it doesn´t feel like we´re really abusing or misusing them as much as just moving them around a lot according to their job."* (Appendix B, transcript 2, line 80)

Their statements indicate that how true and realistic aspects of the games are represented has an impact for their interpretations of the games. Moreover this hints at the issue, that more abstract representations can make actions taken in boardgames seem less controverse to players.

Finally, participants were also presented with the slave card outlined in the social semiotic analysis. Overall, they were surprised when first seeing the image (see e.g. transcript 1, line 138ff. and transcript 2, line 92ff.), which points to such an open representation of slavery being uncommon for the participants. The card was deemed inappropriate by the majority of

focus group members and especially Enric and Tomé found that it reproduces iconic imagery of colonial times.

Enric: *"Really!? How can they do that!? And, you know, they painted him, you know, brown. (points on the printout)"* (transcript 2, line 98)

Tomé: *"This is like, this is real, like (points on printout again) slavery (..). This could be a real image from back then. It´s very, I think it´s very graphic in my opinion. Very (..), I don´t know. (.) Maybe their intention was to be educational. But I don´t think it gives you much education [besides] portraying these places as still backwards, maybe. (the others utter agreement)"* (Appendix A, transcript 1, line 164)

While Tomé discards the idea that the slave card could be educational, thereby expressing concern over a lack of contextualisation and critical awareness in the game, Philip and Nikolaj had a different perspective on the matter and had the impression that such a change impairs the historical accuracy in the game. This can e.g. be seen in Philip asking: *"[…] why does it offend people to be historically accurate?"* (Appendix B, transcript 2, line 101). Both perspective point to historical representations being important for players, while the understanding of what an appropriate context for such a card would be, varies.

Furthermore, participants found that the exchange to the Fakir makes the card more mystical and romantic, which can be linked to a shift from open to covert representations of slavery, since, as Lilin pointed out previously, he is still treated like a slave.

120	Svenia:	Earlier, you were talking about how the setting of the game is somehow between fantasy and medieval times, so how would this card (pointing to printouts on the table) change the image of the game, whether it´s fantasy or realistic?
121	Philip:	I would say it would shift quite a bit towards the realism-thing.
122	Enric:	Yeah, of course.
123	Nikolaj	Yeah.
124	Enric:	Yeah, because of (.) Fakir is more (.) you can see (.) I´ve never seen someone, you know, doing this with the snake and the thing, but it´s more fantasy.
125	Philip:	I guess it might the place filled with Fakir, we had this line-up once where it was like eight Fakirs available at the same time and I understand what you are saying, that´s more of a romantic picture (Enric utters agreement) of the market places, but-

Image 25 – (Appendix B, transcript 2, line 120ff.)

15. Findings and Discussion

After having performed social semiotic analyses on the Eurogames *Five Tribes – The Djinns of Naqala* (2015) and *Cacao* (2015), as well as a thematic analysis on data gathered in two focus groups part of which players played and discussed the games under analysis, the following section will outline and discuss the main findings of my analyses.

Five Tribes – The Djinns of Naqala

The signs and semiotic resources used in the design and gameplay of *Five Tribes – The Djinns of Naqala*, revealed a colonial representation of the Orient as a timeless, mystical, backwards and exotic place.

Signs stereotypically used in connection to the geographic location such as camels or palm trees were used to signify a broad setting to the player. However, these significations are problematic, since they can be seen as part of a reproduction of exotic stereotypes relating simple images to complex regions and places, which is also an issue raised by Bruno Faidutti (2014) when he states that in boardgames, "[t]he Arab world has camels, sand dunes, silk or spice merchants, sometimes a djinn" (ibid.) - all of which were found in my analysis of *Five Tribes*. This was also a prevalence noted by one of the members of the expert focus group, who indicated a prevalence of the Arabic theme and also admitted to the appeal of such setting for players. From a broader perspective, *Five Tribes* therefore not only reproduces stereotypical imagery, but perpetuates it into the future in a chain of supply and demand of themes, thereby helping to create a habitus that established such imagery as common sense. In addition, the analysis of the cover for *Five Tribes* revealed a colonial gaze on the other as the exotic, not only by depicting a stereotypical image of a mysterious belly dancer that connotes *exotic beauty* to a western audience, but also by depicting a rich man who is attributed with wealth and manipulation. With regard to the colonial gaze on the exotic, it is also necessary to point out, that the gaze was reinforced by the use of perspective, through which the player is put in a position in which he/she is an outsider looking in. The aspects outlined show the prevalence of a colonial discourse about the other as well as a contrast of Us vs Them in *Five Tribes*, in which also qualities and atmospheres are represented as belonging to the Orient, namely: mystery, intrigue and the power of the wealthy. In continuation of my argument on the perpetuation of stereotypes, it has therefore to be added

that the stereotypes not only affect imagery in itself, but also assumptions on behaviours and values of other people and cultures. This is problematic, since a repetition of this gaze in the game also contributes to the knowledges of players who interact with it and could become part of players´ understanding of what is real.

Apart from representing exoticness, the colonial gaze on the other was also prevalent in notions of backwardness presented in *Five Tribes*. The game was found to make players symbolically engage into slavery by including Fakirs in the market area and let players trade or kill people (as signified through meeples) to perform actions or gain points.

This was also matter of discussion in the focus groups, where *Modern vs backwards* and *Value of People* emerged as themes and the use of the Fakir card identified by Lilin as reproducing slavery. (see p. 71) Representations such as this can be interpreted as reproducing a colonial discourse on the value of human life by assigning material value to people. This is problematic since one of the qualities of games is that they have the capacity to provide their players with experiences by immersing them through actions into the narrative. (Mayer & Harris 2009, p. 12f.) Players therefore get immersed into a symbolic reproduction of slave trade, thereby subconsciously emerging themselves into the action, which shows a non-existence of a postcolonial perspectives in this regard.

This is especially relevant when taking into account the exchange of the Slave for the Fakir card, since this change indicates that it was solely *open* imagery that was considered problematic by the publishers after they received complaints. Since the functions of the card stayed the same after the change to the Fakir, it can be argued that the producers did not reconsider the overall implications of the card and its function within the game. This indicates a sole concern about an obvious depiction of colonial imagery, not covert representations. In relation to my chapter on Postcolonialism and boardgames, it can therefore be said that Faidutti´s claim of a prevalence of hidden colonial actions was found in *Five Tribes*. (Faidutti 2014)

Apart from the aspects discussed above, the boardgame also included further representation of the mystical and supernatural: The Djinn cards and their related tiles were found to connote "power and worship" (p. 38) and represent the Orient as a place strongly connected to the supernatural and mysterious, which was further signified by recurring image of the *magic lamp*. It can be argued that these signs contribute to a lower visual modality for the overall game-actions, since the setting might become less *real* in the players minds, whereby

symbolic actions such as the slave trade could become even more covert to the players. Furthermore, these significations can contribute to a perception of the Orient as a setting of the imagination, shaped by mystery and intrigue and thereby to a strengthening of stereotypes rooted in Orientalism as a style of thought, that amplifies a contrast between Orient and Occident through boardgames as a cultural resource. In the focus groups, this was especially to be seen when Enric pointed out that for him, the Oriental setting is rather something imaginary than a depiction of a real existing place.

Cacao

In *Cacao,* a perspective on the other as exotic and underdeveloped was found. The game reproduces a gaze rooted in Eurocentric perspectives while not examining the experiences of the depicted people and places.

The notion of exoticness is thereby especially conveyed by the use of stereotypical imagery (e.g. temples and cocoa) that also incorporate notions of indigenousness, as was seen in the representation of the woman on the game´s box. These aspects perpetuate an image of the jungle and its habitants as a place of old customs and ancient civilisations, therefore reproducing stereotypical notions of the jungle as exotic and underdeveloped. Furthermore, these significations also evoke associations with South America, which transmits a romanticised image of the region and the people who live in it.

The game represents the overall setting as economically underdeveloped and as in need for reaching prosperity through the extraction of natural resources – an action that evokes a colonial perspective. Moreover, it puts the player in charge of reaching said prosperity which symbolically reproduces a colonial imbalance of power: players "help" the underdeveloped *other*, while in fact they are engaging in a symbolic act of labour exploitation. This was also touched upon in the focus groups, where *Cacao* was perceived as putting the workers in *horrible* living situations ,. Moreover, participants expressed to perceive themselves in a position of power over the workers, who are placed at their will. This power imbalance is imposed on the players as a result of a game design apparently influenced by a colonial gaze. By conveying these imbalances, *Cacao* becomes part of a wider discourse on notions of economic inequality, transmitting to the players the concept of worker exploitation, but at the same time making them the ones profiting from it.

Furthermore, worker exploitation for the purpose of resource extraction is linked to a representation of colonialism, which was, e.g. further highlighted by the mine tile.

Finally, it is also relevant to note that one person in each of the focus groups expressed uncertainty regarding the time in which the symbolic actions in the game take place. As consequence time becomes blurred and players can make wrongful judgements of backwardness of the people in places represented.

The results of the analytical steps taken as part of this thesis, revealed that both games show a lack of Postcolonial representations. *Five Tribes* and *Cacao* make use of a colonial gaze representing other places as exotic and underdeveloped to Western players, thereby taking a Eurocentric view on the places they represent and creating a dichotomy of Us Vs Them where the western player is placed in a position of superiority by managing the destiny of people in far away exotic places. Moreover, while *Cacao* showed stronger inclination towards a portrayal on economic underdevelopment, *Five Tribes* symbolically engages players into slave trade and was found to present a low value of human life.

16. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore how meaning about places and cultures is created in the Eurogames *Five Tribes* and *Cacao* with regard to a postcolonial perspective. Therefore I set out to examine the meaning-making mechanisms used in said games to uncover the hidden meanings and assumptions that these games signify to their players.

To do so, I conducted a social semiotic analysis on these games, as well as two focus groups. This allowed me to not only take a critical look at the meaning conveyed in the games under analysis, but also to take into account the players perspective with regard to the issues of my interest.

Regarding my first research question, it can be said that the social semiotic analyses of *Five Tribes* and *Cacao* revealed that the two boardgames employ a variety of signs to reflect the themes and setting of their narratives. Especially the use of iconic imagery as well as actions that are taken by the players can be seen as major mechanism through with the games transmit representations especially. While *Five Tribes* emerges the players in an Oriental

setting by using stereotypical imagery depicting the Orient as a timeless, mystical and exotic place, imagery used in *Cacao* reflects the jungle theme by pointing to iconic images referring to Incan or Aztecan civilisations, and incorporates imagery and player-actions that portray the setting as exotic and underdeveloped to Western players.

Both games were found to show a lack of Postcolonial perspective, by using a colonial gaze that represents the *other* as exotic for Western target players. Both games were moreover found to give representations of the *other* as being primitive, underdeveloped or backwards: While in *Cacao* representations of economic underdevelopment are dominant, *Five Tribes* portrays the Orient as a place with a low value on human life and symbolically immerses players into the act of slave trade.

By doing so, both games take a Eurocentric perspective rooted on a colonialist view of the places they represent and perpetuate stereotypical images. Thereby, no contextualisation of the games´ themes in a postcolonial context takes place. Instead, the meanings conveyed in the two games that were analysed carry underlying assumptions about the other as the exotic and inferior in them.

Overall, the social semiotic approach and the conduction of focus groups were found to be a commendable mix of methods with regard to this specific topic of research, since both approaches together helped to reach a more complete insight into the issues under analysis.

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APPENDIX A: Transcript and Themes Group 1

Transcript 1

Marked Themes (Overview)

Colours:

Pink: Eurogames as a Genre

Green: Far Away

Grey: Modern vs Backwards

Yellow: Value of people

Focus group: Group 1

Date: 25.04.2016

Place: Copenhagen

Participants: Jakub, Lilin, Tomé

Interviewer: Svenia

Playing boardgames: casually

Other information: The participants know each other and met at university.

1	Svenia:	Okay, so the first question will just be a more general warm-up question. Maybe you can just talk a little bit about if you play boardgames in your free time and what kind of boardgames?
2	Jakub:	(pointing to Tomé) Yeah, you play the most. [(chuckling)]
3	Tomé:	[No, I don´t play that many boardgames. I play some card games (.) but boardgames I play with my friends (..) like with you (Linin utters affirmation) but I don´t own any boardgames but I enjoy playing them.
4	Jakub:	Yeah, me neither. I don´t have any boardgames but, yeah there are plenty of possibilities in Copenhagen (..) (other participants utter affirmation) to play, so if

		I want to have e.g. a calm evening [just to] (..) yeah, more casually (Lilin utters affirmation) or something with quite a lot of people.
5	Tomé:	[yeah]
6	Lilin:	I have some at home because I live with quite a lot of people at home. So sometimes (.) if we all have free time we just get all together and play some Chinese game because I am Chinese and also on the weekend, with my friends and we would play somewhere in Copenhagen, but I like really relaxing boardgames where I don´t need to think too much.
7	Tomé:	Ja, ja.
8	Svenia:	With regard to the games that you just played: You said you prefer to play more relaxing boardgames (Lilin utters agreement). How would you describe your experience of playing these two games?
9	Lilin:	I think the first one, the Five Tribes, it was a bit too complicated for me. I don´t know, what do you think? (Jakub and Tomé utter agreement) Maybe I am a bit tired today as well, but there were so many things that I really have to pay attention to. (..)
10	Tome:	Yeah.
11	Lilin:	It was a bit complicated and you have to think a lot because you need to know which will be the best move (.) (Tomé utters agreement) for you because you have to consider the next person´s move as well. This one (pointing to Cacao) is actually kind of similar because you have to place the tiles (the others utter agreement) but it is more relaxing.
12	Tomé:	Yeah, more [basic.]
13	Jakub:	[Simpler.]
14	Lilin:	Because basically you just sell things and then get cause and then [you have to think about] [how many] things you will get in the end, how many coins you will get with the cards that you have and (..).
15	Jakub:	[it is much faster to (cannot be understood)]
16	Tomé:	[buying cards]
17	Tomé:	There are many different parts
18	Lilin:	It is more intense, this one. (pointing to Five Tribes) Than this one. (pointing to Cacao) (the others utter affirmation)
19	Jakub:	And it takes much more time as well to understand each small step (.) in this one. (pointing to Five Tribes)
20	Lilin:	I think we spent about half an hour understanding [(inaudible)]
21	Jakub:	[at least]

22	Tomé	I think this (pointing to five Tribes) gives you long-term reward once you know the rules and with this one (points to Cacao) it is more easy to have fun in the beginning.
23	Jakub:	Yeah, but I don´t know, maybe after this. I don´t know. Maybe it is simple to learn but after a few games it will just be boring (the others utter agreement) because it is really fast and does not have the same engagement than this one. (points to Five Tribes) (the others utter agreement) Because in this one you can have more strategies to play and this (points to Cacao) is like a play-kit.
24	Tomé:	Yeah.
25	Lilin:	But maybe this one (points to Cacao) will maybe be the game I would play with my friends in a café (other utter agreement) because I would like to try different games in one evening (Jakub utters agreement), but this one is more like (.), if I am spending, I don´t know, a long evening playing games. (Tomé utters agreement)
26	Jakub:	And everybody knows the rules already.
27	Tomé:	And with people who are more, (..) who already know the game or [(..)] usually (..). Because it can take a while until (.). Actually, the first game, I think, is like. It´s just practicing and that can take up to one hour playing the first game (Jakub and Lilin utter agreement). And then the second game is when you really start having fun in terms of knowing what, [how to move, yeah.]
28	Lilin:	[exactly]
29	Jakub:	[what is really. How to move yourself]
30	Svenia:	You were asked before to think a bit about which places these games take you or what they remind you of. Maybe you can talk about which times and places these games try to transport you to with the gameplay.
31	Tomé:	Shall we go one by one, maybe?
32	Jakub:	Yes, I can start, since you started the last one. (check again)
33	Tomé:	To me, I wrote some (..). I don´t know, it reminds me because of the camels (..) and the overall (points to the tiles of *Five Tribes*) art, like there are markets (.). It reminds me kind of kind of a biblical slash Egyptian kind of thing. (Lilin utters agreement) Because it is all in the desert, there are some oases and there are the camels, obviously, which is very Egyptian or kind of Oriental. (other participants utter agreement) (..) It also reminds me of (..) (trails off). Yeah, you also have the assassin which is kind of a bit (..), (takes the red assassin figure in his hands) I don´t know how to characterise it, maybe a bit barbaric. Kind of the barbarians (puts down the red figure) and you have the wise men (takes a white figure up and puts it down) and the blue ones (takes a blue figure and puts it down again) (.) it´s (.) yeah (Jakub and him start laughing) it´s a lot of things.

		So it´s a lot to consider and the Djinns, who are very (.). But you can also pitch in whenever you want.
34	Jakub:	For me there is like (.). I don´t know, because I will be going to Morocco, so I feel it is like Marrakesh (him and Lilin laugh), kind of in the old times. Yeah, for me it was just kind of the rush of each tile having people and you are moving them and it is everybody moving and trying, so it is kind of a rushed situation (others utter agreement). You need to plan and you need to know what your next move will be before you go somewhere and you need, as well, to predict what will happen. (.)
35	Tomé:	Yeah.
36	Jakub:	And yeah. It is just the market place and the whole area and as well a kind of spirituality (Tomé utters agreement and takes up one of the Djinn cards) because of the Djinns.
37	Tomé:	Yeah but these Djinns are very supernatural.
38	Lilin:	Supernatural. (laughing)
39	Tomé:	They are very (.). There is this guy who looks like Groot. This is Groot (puts down one Djinn card, takes up another, shows it to Lilin and Jakub)
40	Lilin:	Ah!
41	Tomé:	From Guardians of the Galaxy. (Jakub utters something inaudible) Basically this is a giant Groot. This is very Fantasy, kind of Lord of the Rings almost (Jakub utters agreement), almost, I don´t know. And of course you have the [Geenie (turn around one of the Djinn cards to show the back)which reminds me of] the Aladdin story. (Lilin utters agreement)
42	Jakub:	[the old-school kind of (trails off)]
43	Jakub:	Yeah, like the Geenie that kind of came from Aladdin.
44	Tomé:	Geenie in the bottle.
45	Jakub:	Yeah, yeah. And this one (picks up another Djinn card) is more like [something] than something that came up from the Geenie (points to the card that they discussed earlier) but it´s still spiritually, magical stuff.
46	Tomé:	[Ghost.]
47	Tomé:	Yeah, it´s supernatural.
48	Jakub:	Yeah, yeah.
49	Tomé:	And Fantasy.
50	Jakub:	Yeah. (sighs) But yeah, this place (points to the tiles from Cacao and picks up some of them) it´s more older, not now because it is kind of different but it is still maybe actual time. Like in these Oriental places it is still happening, you know.
51	Tomé:	Yeah.

52	Lilin:	Also, they are trading stuff for camels and (chuckles) (trails off)
53	Tomé:	It´s kind of a competition as well.
54	Jakub:	Ja.
55	Tomé:	Who has the most camels, who owns the most lands (the others utter agreement). It is kind of like (.), kind of like colonizing, yeah. (Lilin utters agreement)
56	Jakub:	Yeah, fighting for territory and your [(…)] (.) values.
57	Tomé:	[yeah]
58	Lilin:	Well, I have (refers to her notes) twelfth century and Islamic golden age. (the others chuckle in agreement)
59	Tomé:	Ah yeah!
60	Lilin:	Because of all the (inaudible) and the palace and (..) (Tomé utters agreement and points to the palace meeple on the table) I have Northern Africa for the place, which is like you were saying. (Tomé agrees) And also, because of the desert and the oasis. But for me, the game gave me the feeling of being, I don´t know, like being part of a kingdom like (the others utter agreement) the leader of them and you have to (..). It´s kind of like an invasion because all the tiles, they were on the board already and so you have to move all the people and get the control and you can kill people as well, so it´s as well barbarian of course. (Tomé utters agreement)
61	Tomé:	It´s tribal. It´s tribes. It´s weird that they are all in different colours as well. Not weird, but I guess that symbolises different kinds of (.). (picks up one of the meeples)
62	Jakub:	Value?
63	Tomé:	Value, I guess, yeah. (.) But the fact that we are grabbing people and moving them (hovers with his hand over the board) around, it is like we are very powerful (illustrates movement with the meeple). We have the power to (..) (trails off)
64	Jakub:	You are moving the territories and try to fight the territories then you set [them in other places]
65	Tomé	[We grab people and lay] them wherever we want.
66	Jakub:	It´s just like it is really political.
67	Tomé:	Yeah, yeah. (.)
68	Jakub:	In the way.

69	Lilin:	It´s more like that to (.), you know in that time all the countries are moving around and [(inaudible)] It´s not super peaceful and there are no boarders between nations.
70	Jakub:	[Nomadic style.]
71	Jakub:	And you always move. If you kill somebody then you know what your next move will be after that.
72	Lilin:	And you are always moving people to the most valuable tile or to the resources.
73	Jakub:	And after that you are bribing somebody if you [want to go first, if you want to go in the que]
74	Tomé:	[And actually you are selling people to buy] Djinns.
75	Lilin:	So, they are slaves.
76	Tomé:	So basically they are kind of like (.), their value is low. I think the value of the people is much lower than for example the palm tree. (plays around with game pieces) The palm tree has more value than one of these. (picks on a meeple from *Five Tribes*) (Lilin utters agreement) I think the yellows are worth one (referring to victory points) and the palm trees are worth three. I don´t know.
77	Jakub:	I think it depends on what you value with the Djinns. (chuckles)
78	Tomé:	(chuckles) Yayaya.
79	Jakub:	But yeah, what are your believes?
80	Tomé:	Exactly, yeah. It depends on from which perspective you look at it.
81	Jakub:	That is how I won: Because I was believing in people. (laughing)
82	Tomé:	Ya, ya, you got a lot of people. You saved a lot of people (Lilin chuckles), otherwise they would all go into the bag. (everybody chuckles) The black bag. (more chuckling) But yeah.
83	Jakub:	But yeah, the other one. (referring to Cacao)
84	Lilin:	(inaudible)
85	Tomé:	Ah, yeah.
86	Jakub:	There is plenty.
87	Tomé:	Also people. Coincidentally it is very similar that it is also yellow, white and red. (points onto one of the player boards) They just don´t have the green I guess. (Jakub utters agreement) The symbolise kind of races as well.
88	Jakub:	Yeah I don´t think it is races but yeah that is [how we learn how to distinguish people]
89	Tomé:	[Yeah, tribes, tribes, tribes, yeah.]

90	Jakub:	And yeah, for me (Lilin picks on the gold pieces from Cacao) it came kind of to untouched areas. Fair trade as I said.
91	Tomé:	Yeah, I am not sure about the fair. (him and Lilin start laughing)
92	Jakub:	For me, you know it is because everything is here (hovers with his hand over the tiles to illustrate the area) and everybody is like, you know, tribes so there is nothing artificial or anything here. You just. Cacaos. You build the cacao, you have (.). (points to the tiles again) Everything is jungle, you have water, you don´t have anything which one could (.)-
93	Tomé:	Yeah, there is very little civilisation.
94	Jakub:	Yeah, exactly. And you only have the people who live the simple life of people who focus on three things: Get the cacao, sell it [(..)], temples, simple life.
95	Tomé:	[And get to the temples]
96	Tomé:	So, worship the gods in the temples I guess.
97	Jakub:	And go to the water so that you can get better rewards in the end.
98	Tomé:	Yeah, if you get to the water, you live longer.
99	Jakub:	Yeah, so it is a really simple life. People are just trying to do what they can do with the resources and that´s it.
100	Tomé:	I wrote that it reminds me a lot of e.g. Incas. (the others utter agreement) Its more (.). It´s a lot (.). The temple is very Inca (points to a temple tile) and from the Peruvian kind of thing.
101	Jakub:	Well, the symbols as well. (points to a sun tile)
102	Tomé:	The symbols, even the (Picks up a sun token). It´s similar to the art. It feels like it. Yeah, that´s my impression.
103	Lilin:	I don´t know, for me this game (points to Cacao) is more about people. The important thing is you should have more people in the tribe, on the tile and that one (points to Five Tribes) is more like: you should get rid of all the people. (the others chuckle) And this one (points to Cacao) is like putting more people together, all of your people. (Jakub utters agreement) So it´s like [(…)] leading them to the place, but that one (points to Five Tribes) is like getting rid of, killing everybody (the others utter agreement) and moving them, putting them into the bag.
104	Jakub:	[Then you have more value.]
105	Tomé:	Ya, ya, ya, ya. This is (points to Cacao) using them to collect resources.
106	Jakub:	More people working [at something.]

107	Lilin:	[This one] (points to Cacao) is more like expanding your own (.)-
108	Jakub:	Kingdom?
109	Lilin:	Exactly. And that one (points to Five Tribes) is more like: I occupy, then (..) invading.
110	Tomé:	This is more like synergy. (pointing to Cacao)
111	Lilin:	Exactly.
112	Tomé:	They (pointing to Cacao) have to work together because you have to (..).
113	Jakub:	And you can help other persons as well when putting the tile (the others utter agreement), so you can get something good from it.
114	Lilin:	Actually for me this one has more civilisation (points to *Cacao*) because you have to work, then you get products, then you can sell them. But that one (points to *Five Tribes*) is like getting products and money [by (..)], yeah by selling people or (..).
115	Jakub:	[If you get rid of somebody.]
116	Jakub:	Killing.
117	Tomé:	Killing, yeah, you also have the (.). (touches one of the assassin meeples)
118	Lilin:	Or getting palm trees or building a building.
119	Tomé:	Slightly more aggressive.
120	Jakub:	And you don´t want to help other people. Like moving like this (takes up some meeples from a tile) [and] putting them here so that you leave it and he (referring to another player) can take the place easily. Like here (pointing to Cacao), if you want to put the tile, I don´t know which one for yours (.).
121	Tomé:	[No.]
122	Tomé:	Here you have no option but to concede and to know that [your opponent will] have some advantage when you place something] and here (pointing to Five Tribes) it is like.
123	Jakub:	[coexist with the]
124	Jakub:	You can take advantage of it so you need more planning. Here (points to Cacao) it is more simpler: you won the money for the cacao, you collect the (not understandable), you want to sell it. (not audible)
125	Tomé:	Yeah, yeah.
126	Svenia:	So you were saying that this one (pointing to Cacao) is more about working together and this one (pointing to Five Tribes) is more about taking control, getting rid of people and you mentioned that this one (pointing to cacao) seems

		more natural and has more nature (participants utter agreement) than the other one. Are these aspects common when you think about the countries that these games could play in? Are these images common to you or is it something different from what you know or have seen?
127	Jakub:	For me as well (.) I don´t know, in Portugal (points to Tomé) you were studying colonisation. (Tome utters agreement) In Slovakia, we didn´t study much about it because it was not our part of the history that much as for you. So I wasn´t thinking about colonialism. So it was interesting to hear your view.
128	Tomé:	I honestly would think that this game (refers to *Five Tribes*) would be (.). It touches upon a very sensitive topic. Maybe more so in places where people are more sensible towards these kind of things. But yeah, I´m not sure how this game would work out in (..) one of these African countries where it wasn´t that long ago. It was some time ago but it wasn´t that long ago that slavery was over. (the others utter agreement) And this (refers to *Cacao*) is kind of like the white man kind of using (.), extracting cacao. It´s very difficult not to draw parallels. But yeah, today, you were asking about if (.)? If we think if these (points to the games) represent those times and eras today, those places?
129	Svenia	If you think about these places today, are these (pointing to the games) things that come to your mind or would you describe them in a different way? (long pause)
130	Tome:	Well. (…)
131	Jakub:	This one (points to Five Tribes) can still happen in this age. And I think so, we know about it that in some countries, in the Middle East and that part, people as well are being killed or (.) fighting for territory all the time (the other utter agreement) just to get, you know because of better resources or better (..) I don´t know, better places around. Like now as well Israel fighting with (..). It has been there for so many years, centuries and it is still because of the lands and fighting for territory and also beliefs. Most of it. So, this (points to Five Tribes) is more actual for me as well. This one (points to Cacao) is happening as well but (..).
132	Tomé:	This one is more like a (breathes heavily). Obviously this one (points on a temple tile of Cacao) reminds me of Peru (the others utter agreement) even today because it´s like an iconic [(.)], and iconic, the Inca temples as a tourist place, I guess.
133	Jakub:	[Jungle as well]
134	Jakub:	But yeah, I don´t know, you maybe have more about this because you studied colonialism but for me it was just like yeah. (.)
135	Tomé:	No, today I think, of course some of these things that I said, of course that doesn´t happen anymore, well, at least not at the scale it happened before. But (..) I am not informed enough as well, because there is still a lot of slavery

		nowadays, I´m sure. Especially in countries with less economic power were big companies take advantage of poor people. I´m not sure. (..)
136	Jakub:	There are also no options for them to do anything else. They have (inaudible) not just cacao but coffee or, I don´t know pepper or (the others utter agreement) cinnamon. This is what they know from their grandparents and they will know this is just (trails off).
137	Tomé:	It also reminds me of a lot (..). This is a lot about (points to Five Tribes) buying and selling. It´s competition about buying and selling things by using people. I don´t know, I think it´s a thing that you can (.) I don´t know, it´s very capitalistic (the others utter agreement) as well. Both of them involve in the end of the game: Who has the most resources wins. It´s kind of, maybe you need to be a bit greedy. It calls upon those people, you need to plan in order to get more than others as a way of taking advantage. So, I don´t know.
138	Svenia:	When it comes to taking advantage of people, and you were also talking about slaves: In the first edition of "Five Tribes", you had a different card instead of the Fakirs. (giving them printouts showing the card depicting a slave)
139	Tomé:	A slave!
140	Lilin:	A slave.
141	Tomé:	So you could discard a slave. Mmmh, that is interesting. That´s very offensive. (chuckles)
142	Svenia:	People were complaining and in the end the company decided to make a reprint and they exchanged the slaves [for the Fakirs] but the rest of the game still stayed exactly the same. So you still discard them. How would you feel having a card like this (points to the printout) in the game instead of having the Fakirs?
143	Jakub:	[For the Fakir.]
144	Lilin:	For me, this question actually reminds me of the last question because, I don´t know where this company comes from, but for me this game (Jakub picks up a Fakir card, looks at it and puts it back again) is trying to show us that maybe now in Islamic countries there are still like before or (Tomé utters agreement) I don´t know, a bit terrifying pictures and then slaves maybe trying to show you that these countries are still in bad conditions and that there are still a lot of these things happening. I think, yes, maybe that is happening there but I mean, we know the situation of these countries through the media, right? (the others utter agreement) And there is always like bad things happening there. But, for example me, I really want to go to Israel this summer.
145	Tomé:	To where?
146	Lilin:	To Israel.

147	Tomé:	Ya, ya.
148	Lilin:	And then I saw so many articles online where people are saying things like: "Yes, it could be dangerous.", but (makes weighing gesture with her hands) (..) (the others utter understanding/recognition) everywhere like, (…).
149	Jakub:	It´s dangerous everywhere.
150	Lilin:	Exactly, right? Even e.g. Paris or Brussels. [It´s the same (..) exactly.]
151	Jakub:	[We are in more danger in Europe] than somewhere else.
152	Tomé:	You can get bitten by a dog and get rabies. (Lilin utters agreement) (Tomé chuckles)
153	Jakub:	Or you can cross a red light and get hit by a car.
154	Tomé:	Yes. You can fall on your face.
155	Jakub:	But back to the topic.
156	Tomé:	Sorry.
157	Jakub:	But why the Fakir? Why specifically the Fakir?
158	Tome:	Honestly. (..)
159	Jakub:	He can take the pain or (..) sacrifices, or (..). Why Fakirs and not something else.
160	Lilin:	I don't know. The depiction (inaudible).
161	Tomé:	I think this is the first. (.) I think this image in particular (points on the slave card on the printout) is very strong because he has chains on his arms (Jakub utters agreement) [this is very], this is very (.).
162	Jakub:	[So they want to-]
163	Jakub:	So they want to sacrifice to the god, like to the Djinn, so they can take the-
164	Tomé:	This is like, this is real, like (points on printout again) slavery (..). This could be a real image from back then. It´s very, I think it´s very graphic in my opinion. Very (..), I don´t know. (.) Maybe their intention was to be educational. But I don´t think it gives you much education [besides] portraying these places as still backwards, maybe. (the others utter agreement) Like the fakir. The fakir reminds me of e.g. these Indian guys with the turbans who (.). Because the fakir has a snake or (picks up a fakir card) whatever. Yeah, he is enchanting a snake. It´s this exotic and he is sitting on the (.).
165	Lilin:	[No.]
166	Lilin:	What is he sitting on?

167	Tomé:	Yeah, the, the, those Indian. It reminds me of the Indian guys who sit on the nails. He sits on the nails like those meditators that do amazing things. I don´t know it´s just, yeah.
168	Jakub:	But I don´t know. Why couldn´t they just not put a person or something but something like the Djinn card: I don´t know. What is the connection between the slave and the Fakir?
169	Tomé:	I think if they changed it, it´s because they had a lot of backlash. Like people started saying "What the fuck!". Oh, sorry. (Everybody chuckles) But, because nowadays there´s a lot of sensitivity towards these kind of things. (Jakub utters agreement) People are becoming more (.). You should be aware of how you portray people and places (Lilin utters agreement) because (..) anyone in the world can buy this game. (Jakub utters agreement) But it also shows that it also might not sold in Africa or in countries where these things are happening or happened. (Jakub picks up the box of Five Tribes to look at it)
170	Jakub:	I don´t know, for what kind of reason. (puts down the box again) I was just checking who was the (.).
171	Tomé:	Bruno Cathala.
172	Svenia:	The designer is actually French and the company is a European company. (…) So what would you think made the designer and the company decide to use these topics and images? I think this will be the last question.
173	Lilin:	Well it depends which things they decided first when making the game. Like, they decided to make a competitive game where people have to compete with each other a lot. Or maybe if they want to make a game, like, a bit intense and more competitive and devoted to the background that it´s kind of like in chaos as well, then you have to fight a lot to become the winner. (…) I don´t understand the concept, (picks at the Djinn cards on the table) why does everybody have to look like monsters? And a bit (.) barbarian.
174	Tomé:	I don´t know. Yeah.
175	Lilin:	They could smile, right? Because they are giving the supernatural powers. They could be fairies or, you know. (.)
176	Tomé:	They are a bit over the top, these ones. (picks up the deck with the Djinn cards and goes through it)
177	Lilin:	And this (picks up a Djinn card), when I say Aladdin [at least in the cartoon, they are really cute and they are nice persons.
178	Jakub:	[Yeah this one (picks a card from the deck in Tomé´s hands)]
179	Tomé:	[This is the sacred cow.]

180	Tomé:	(continues going through the cards together with Jakub) The woman with the snakes on her head. It´s like a monster, I guess. Oh, this is a Djinn. (Jakub utters agreement)
181	Jakub:	This looks like and org-guy.
182	Tomé:	An org (.) with a sword. (keeps on going through the cards) There´s another kind of Djinn, a female Djinn. This is like a fire one. (the others utter agreement) Another, something. Another Djinn.
183	Jakub:	This is more Djinn.
184	Tomé:	I guess they are supposed to be all Djinns. The sea Djinn, whatever (.) (puts away the cards)
185	Lilin:	Yeah. But they are not cute.
186	Tomé:	No.
187	Jakub:	Because they are giving you a bonus. Not like fighting, but that depends on how you take the game because if you put [(inaudible)]
188	Lilin:	[But also the colour] that they chose (picks on the Djinn cards) for these ones is really dark.
189	Tomé:	Yeah, it doesn´t match the (.).
190	Lilin:	And this one is so bright, (points onto Cacao) cheerful and (.). (the others utter agreement) It´s a bit depressing. (points to Five Tribes)
191	Tomé:	This is very cheerful, I would say as well (the others utter agreement) because it has so many colours and it´s very green. It reminds me a lot of tropical stuff.
192	Jakub:	Ya, ya and personally, it makes me feel more happy than this one. (points to Five Tribes) Because this one was more about competing (referring to Five Tribes) and this one (pointing to Cacao) is more about expanding. (the others utter agreement) And this (referring to Cacao), I noticed too that it was more bright, while this one (pointing to Five Tribes) is using more cold colours. (The others utter agreement)
193	Tomé:	(picks up a red meeple from Cacao) But it´s funny how these are actually very similar. (picks up a white meeple from Five Tribes and holds them next to each other believing they are from the same game) They are basically the same but just different kind of (.)-
194	Jakub:	Shapes.
195	Tomé:	Small head. One has a small head and the other one has a big head. (everybody chuckles) It´s true.
196	Lilin:	So detailed. And I think in this game, you have to fight for being and playing with others you have to beat. (Lilin points to Five Tribes; Tomé puts back the meeples)

197	Tomé:	It´s like Wall Street. (Jakub laughs) You have to (.) [make the biggest bids] to get the biggest rewards, I guess, to be the first one. But (..)
198	Jakub:	[The Oriental Wall Street]
199	Tomé:	But overall, this one is similar. (referring to Cacao) Because you have the coins, you have a well. (the others utter agreement) (.) Yeah.
200	Tomé:	Yeah, and it´s also about collecting resources. (Jakub and Lilin utter agreement)
201	Jakub:	Yeah, the goals are similar.
202	Lilin:	You know that´s funny, the goals of the games are the same, kind of the same. (.) But these two games just give really different impressions.
203	Tomé:	Even though they kind of portray two different exotic places, one is like South America, I guess, Central/South America and Middle East. (Gestures first to Cacao, then to Five Tribes) But very exotic. Especially this one. (points to Five Tribes) [This one has all the, yeah.]
204	Jakub:	[Especially for us, maybe for somebody who is] Middle Eastern and can exactly feel, it depends on what kind of country you come from] but for us, definitely.
205	Tomé:	It draws a lot on, I don´t know, I also thought a lot about "Indiana Jones" movies. I don´t know, the temples and the markets, you have all these "Indiana Jones" (.). Where he is also in these kind of places where the villain is always the Muslim guy with the sword who is coming after him on the horse in the middle of the desert and then they go and hide in the temple.
206	Jakub:	Well, you just know straight away where you are from the design point of view. There is no confusion, everybody is on the same position. There is no confusion.
207	Tomé:	There is no doubt that this is very (..).
208	Jakub:	Yeah, because if it would be something fantastic from our world, everybody would take the image differently.
209	Tomé:	Exactly.
210	Jakub:	Maybe some TV show as well, but this one (points to Five Tribes) is specific in the point of view, like "Prince of Persia" for example.
211	Tomé:	Yeah, it´s something every (.).
212	Jakub:	(points to Cacao) And this one is more Maya or Inca. (..) So you have a specific image just from the design.
213	Tomé:	Yeah, amazon, tropes.
214	Jakub:	(plays with some tiles from Cacao) Though this one helps a lot with imagining yourself in the situation. (…)
215	Svenia:	Okay, that is it.

Appendix B: Transcript and Themes Group 2

Transcript 2

<u>Marked Themes (Overview)</u>

Colours:

Pink: Eurogames as a Genre

Green: Far Away

Grey: Modern vs Backwards

Yellow: Value of people

Focus Group 2

Date: 30.04.2016

Participants: Enric, Nikolaj, Philip

Interviewer: Svenia

Playing boardgames: Regularly

Other information: The participants know each other and also played together before. None of them
has played *Five Tribes* or *Cacao* before.

1	Svenia:	Alright. Maybe, before we start the discussion, each of you can just say their first name and how often you play boardgames.
2	Philip:	My name is Philip. I roughly play boardgames once a week with my boardgame club and it´s just about any kind.
3	Nikolaj:	Hello, my name is Nikolaj and I roughly play boardgames every week, also in my spare time sometimes with Philip´s boardgame club every Wednesday.
4	Enric:	Hello, my name is Enric. I play minimum once a week, sometimes twice at home with other friends or alone.
5	Svenia:	In the beginning, maybe you can discuss the general topics of the games that you just played.
6	Philip:	Well, I guess the general topics of both games are the <mark>worker-placement</mark> and, you know, the struggle to acquire more wealth, really. (.) And beat the others at exactly that.
7	Enric:	Yeah, it´s also, you know, <mark>both are playing in exotic places and with resources that you need to trade. You know, that is common in both.</mark> But, it´s also <mark>a little bit of thinking were you place</mark>, what you do and sometimes when you have done

		something: "Oh no I did not want to place that.", but you did it and so you can´t go back.
8	Nikolaj:	Yeah, as Enric says, there is a bit of a tactic and it´s not just a random hand of faith. You get to choose like (.), every decision you make determines if you will win the game or not. There´s some tactic in it. (.) I like that. (plays around with meeples from Five Tribes)
9	Philip:	True, but there´s still some level of randomness too in the setup. The Cacao (points to Cacao), where you first shuffle your deck of tiles [and] (points to Five Tribes) the amount of meeples, well not the amount, but the colours of each that you place on the different tiles. (inaudible)
10	Nikolaj:	[Still.]
11	Nikolaj:	There is still a tactic in which order you do place your cards.
12	Philip:	Well [true], in Cacao you´ve got two tiles that have three workers on it and the rest with those split in two-one-one. I got both of my threes early, so I couldn´t really benefit from the stronger tiles later in the game. (the others utter agreement)
13	Nikolaj:	[Yeah.]
14	Enric:	And also there´s a feeling in both that you don´t know who´s winning. You know, you have a rough idea, but you can´t count all the points because there are so many variables that you don´t know. (Philip utters agreement) And that is also what makes it, you know, exciting because: "Okay, I can still win.", you know. Even I´m not sure if I´m winning.
15	Svenia:	I think you mentioned earlier that these games kind of take the player to exotic places. Maybe you can describe a bit how or (..) what evokes this feeling of exoticness. Maybe you can discuss if you agree or which parts (..) (trails off)
16	Philip:	I actually feel very strongly related to this Five Tribes game (points to the game) because of the Arabic setting. That´s how I interpreted it, you know the Arabic thing with the golden palaces and the camels and all that. I remembered my childhood. I watched Aladdin the Disney movie a lot. (Nikolaj chuckles) No, really, a lot. And this (points to the game) just really takes me straight back there and half the scenes here I kind of compare in my mind to all the things in Aladdin. The Cacao thing, I´m a little more distanced from. I don´t really have any nostalgic memories or anything of the African setting. I don´t know, I think African but I guess rainforest could be applicable.
17	Nikolaj:	Although cacao was only found in South America, but that´s alright. (Enric chuckles)

18	Philip:	That´s okay. That´s for my geography lessons.
19	Nikolaj:	Yeah, yeah.
20	Enric:	Well, I kind of agree with him (points to Philip) that this really (points to Five Tribes), you know, reminds of Aladdin. And this one (points to Cacao), I don´t know, it kind of reminds me of (..). Because it is South America and when I was a child, I was playing a game that was about trying to find a cobra or something like that and it was in the jungle and (chuckles) (inaudible) because it was really simple. I don´t recall because I was really little, but you know, it was interesting.
21	Nikolaj:	(plays with pieces from Five Tribes while talking) This thing with the cacao takes me straight to the jungle. And I just, (.) I am kind of hooked on it. Actually, after this I´ll probably just go out and find it and buy it.
22	Philip:	That is interesting because I was actually a lot more interested in the Five Tribes. [It´s not] even difficulty setting or complexity of the game because either was actually pretty fun. But the setting just spoke so much more to me in the Five Tribes. The Cacao, I was kind of completely disjoined from.
23	Enric:	[Me too.]
24	Nikolaj	If it´s got a jungle in it, I love it, I´ll just admit it.
25	Philip:	So you´re basically our Tarzan. (Enric chuckles)
26	Nikolaj:	I am basically Tarzan. (Philip chuckles)
27	Svenia:	Which parts of the games spoke to you?
28	Nikolaj:	The part where I won. (the others chuckle) In Cacao.
29	Philip:	That´s a very good point. No, I really enjoyed the one where you had to be tactical. The tile-placement of the Cacao (points to the game) I actually enjoyed a lot because you both had to plan ahead and make smart choices in which tiles to, both, pick for yourself and remove from the other players to use. (.) The tactical aspect of it, you know, that really intrigued me. Actually, a bit more than the Five Tribes.
30	Enric:	For me, I don´t know, I like to collect cards, so for me, I just wanted to collect all this (points over the area with the market-cards from Five Tribes), these different types of resources. I really liked that you could do that and I also really like the Djinns, they are so cool, you know, imaginary.
31	Nikolaj:	I really like the designs. I really do love these designs. (holds two Djinn cards towards the camera) I think the deities are really cool, especially this guy: Munkir,

		pretty badass. (the others chuckle) No, look at him, he´s like a buff demon, it´s really cool. I didn´t get to use him very much but he´s pretty cool.
32	Philip:	Yeah, but we didn´t get that far in the game. I think there would be a lot more Djinns appearing somewhere mid/late game.
33	Nikolaj:	I like the thing that you could buy special abilities.
34	Philip:	It´s interesting.
35	Nikolaj:	That makes it a little more advanced than Cacao. (continues looking at the Djinn cards)
36	Philip:	Actually that´s also a thing about the Five Tribes that I liked a lot. The fact that you don´t just get to shuffle through the entire deck. You get presented with a few choices and until that choice is actually used, no new options come up. So you kind of have to go with what is presented and then just hope that something better comes up and, you know, that you have a chance of snatching that.
37	Svenia:	From what is presented, in what kind of time would you place these games?
38	Nikolaj:	It´s pretty obvious.
39	Enric:	This (pointing to Cacao) of course in the Mayan/Aztecan times because of the temples, (.) you know maybe just before the Spanish colonisation, of course.
40	Philip:	Really?
41	Nikolaj:	Yeah, yeah, actually I thought.
42	Enric:	Just before, yeah a little bit before.
43	Nikolaj:	At first I thought Spanish colonisation but then you (pointing to Enric) say this and then I´m thinking about it and yeah, it fits more the (.). I mean, there is nothing that indicates that the Spanish have arrived really. So, yeah.
44	Philip:	To be honest, I was kind of more like, present time. (Enric chuckles) I imagine it´s still like that down there. I mean, maybe 50 years back when it wasn´t racist to, you know, assume that black people were harvesting cocoa (.), but I never really got the sense of time that that was supposed to be ancient or far back or something like that. If I got any time sense, it is more like present rather than a long time back.
45	Nikolaj:	This thing (examines a summary of the rules from Five Tribes) the Djinns of Naquala I think, medieval times of Arabia.
46	Philip:	I´m pretty sure the game was just called Five Tribes.

47	Nikolaj:	No, that´s the (picks up the rule summary) (.). Oh no, I´m sorry. (laughing) This is the Djinn list. So I thought that was the title.
48	Svenia:	But actually it is the subtible of the game.
49	Nikolaj:	Five Tribes, but yeah, medieval Arabic times.
50	Philip:	Again, I go straight back to Aladdin, so I´m thinking, I don´t know, year 1200 or something.
51	Nikolaj:	Yeah. Medieval times.
52	Enric:	Yeah, but [I [found this one more-]
53	Philip:	[Or even before. The Arabians] were pretty advanced for that time, so that could be even before our medieval times.
54	Enric:	I find this (pointing to Five Tribes) morally a bit more further in time than this one (points to Cacao) because this one, you know looks very primitive, you know, selling all this cacao with the water and the temples and (.), I feel it´s more before time.
55	Svenia:	You (referring to Enric) were mentioning that for you, this (points to Cacao) is before the Spanish colonisation. Which aspects led you to this impression?
56	Enric:	I think, first, because of the temples, you know? And then because of the sun, you know (..), the sun symbol that was for the (inaudible) of the sun. And also because where they are living looks like (.), it´s a shag, it´s not (.). It looks like they have built it themselves with what they found in the jungle.
57	Nikolaj:	It does not look as advanced, so yeah. (.)
58	Philip:	True, but I mean most harvesting facilities like there, both bananas and cocoa (Enric expresses doubt) are actually these thatched roof buildings with no real, you know, stone or anything that looks advanced. Usually it is pretty primitive and out farming nowadays that, (.) I don´t know, I´m just having a hard time picturing that being ages ago, I mean we still go out there hunting for temples and sun temples, I mean you should see and archaeologist grow a pair of Christmas lights in his eyes when he finds a temple like that. And probably six million study grand, (Enric chuckles) something like that.
59	Enric:	And it´s also if you look closer (points to Cacao), you can see that, you know, they have the bonfire and they kind of make sticks. (.) I don´t know, it looks like they are kind of trying to build something or make weapons and, you know, the way they have the animals and that's really, you know [(inaudible)]

60	Nikolaj:	[Do they have an animal there?] (reaches for a village board of Cacao)
61	Enric:	Yes, that´s an animal there. I looks like an animal.
62	Nikolaj:	That´s not an animal. [that´s (inaudible)] (hands the player board he took to Philip)
63	Enric:	[It looks like a] boar or something like that.
64	Philip:	That´s their cousin. (the others laugh) It´s just the way you said "That´s not an animal."
65	Nikolaj:	Yeah, it is an animal.
66	Philip:	Yeah, I know. (hands the village board back to Nikolaj)
67	Nikolaj:	That´s a funny thing, I´m funny sometimes. (puts the player board back on the table)
68	Svenia:	So if you think about the areas where these games play in, can you relate the games to how these places might look today or is it just completely back in [time or]
69	Nikolaj:	[This (points to Five Tribes) is] bombed and this (points to Cacao) is cut down.
70	Philip:	Wait, that´s very accurate, but (Enric laughs) I want to say
71	Nikolaj:	(Points onto one of the player boards) This is cut down (highlights the trees), this (points to the area with the huts) this is [just]
72	Philip:	[Again.] I´m straight back to, I see Cacao happening, you know, pretty much the same imagery nowadays.
73	Nikilaj:	It´s just (inaudible)
74	Philip:	Sure, it may be 400 kilometres further in because everything [is cut down, yeah]. I mean, I imagine it looks much, much the same really. The Arabic thing, I was actually in Turkey recently and while it´s not exactly desert environment where I was, the inner, you know, the old inner market thing actually had some resemblance. You know, with the whole cloth-overhangs and people standing around yelling and stuff. I actually (.), if you find one of those Arabic cities far out in the deserts, I think this is actually historical and culturally (technical difficulties with the camera. The following has been transcribed from the backup recording) significant enough that most of these sights can actually still be seen. Maybe not the oasis, but (inaudible). (video recording ended abruptly, the following is transcribed from the backup file)

75	Nikolaj:	[You just (inaudible)]
76	Enric:	For me it´s like this one (refers to Cacao) is kind of more realistic and this (refers to Five Tribes) is more fantasy-themed. So, I can´t see that setting, you know, in Arabia. You know, for me it is more a setting in my imagination. Of the tales of Sharizade and, I don´t know, Alibaba and all this stuff. So it´s more unreal, but you know as appealing as the other one of course.
77	Nikolaj:	Alibaba. (Philip chuckles)
78	Svenia:	If you think about the way people are treated in the game, maybe you can talk a bit about the role of humans in the games.
79	Enric:	Well this is kind of really, you know meeples. People are like, you know, just a pawn. (the camera makes a clicking noise. Short pause while it is turned on again, from now on transcription from the video) So, people are meeples. They are, you know (points towards meeples from Cacao) they are commanded, you know, to do one thing: to collect cacao (points towards Cacao) or to (.), I don´t know, just sell something, to collect resources. It´s really, you know (..). And we are kind of the overlord that is ruling all of them, the king or I don´t know.
80	Philip:	Well I mean, yeah it´s a little hard to get up close and personal (picks up a blue meeple from Five Tribes) with this little blue guy and really feel for his situation, but I guess especially in the Cacao-thing you basically just keep placing out work camps that are horrible-living adjacent to wherever they actually need to do stuff. I mean. (..) I guess either game doesn´t really treat its people well but it´s in a (..). I mean, since there is no real fighting involved at all, it doesn´t feel like we´re really abusing or misusing them as much as just moving them around a lot according to their job.
81	Nikolaj:	(playing around with the figures from Cacao) There is one thing though, like, you sacrifice two people (holds up two elder meeples in his hand) to get a blessing from a god, that´s kind of sacrificing. And you get your assassins to kill other people, that´s the only thing really. (the others chuckle)
82	Philip:	Yeah, I guess the assassins.
83	Nikolaj:	Killed my guys, you horrible bastard. (jokingly)
84	Philip:	Yes, and you deserved every bit of it. (jokingly) (everybody laughs) No, but I get what you´re saying. Actually, I never really considered how, you know, you spend two elders to get the Djinns favour, but (.).
85	Nikolaj:	You kill two old guys.

86	Philip:	Well, you put them back in the bag, they could just be gone to their retirement home, I mean do prayer and live good.
87	Nikolaj:	That´s what your parents tell you.
88	Enric:	For me, you know, to sacrifice these two people it would make more sense in this area. (points to Cacao) Because here, actually in the Mayan/Aztecan civilisation they used to sacrifice people to the gods. But, I didn´t get the meaning here (points to Five Tribes) to sacrifice for the Djinns. I don´t know.
89	Nikolaj:	True, man.
90	Enric:	Because for me, it´s like the Djinns are trapped somewhere in this kind of vase and you just (inaudible) and they just come out.
91	Philip:	You have the symbol of the magic lamp here (points to a tile in Five Tribes that allows to call a Djinn) associated with the Djinns, so I guess what it´s really about is setting two old people on permanent duty to rub the lamp every day (Enric starts laughing) to keep summoning the Djinns. (chuckles) No, I don´t know, I never got, except for the assassins (picks up an assassin meeple) which we only had like what, twice in the entire game, I didn´t really get much feeling of fight in any of these. So, I mean I guess you would move your people (pointing to Five tribes) around here, but since it´s so close to each other, I mean this is basically like city districts (points over the tiles of Five Tribes) or something like that. It felt more like, you know, I move them around where I need them to work rather than actually, you know outrooting and taking their families with them, treating them like slaves. I didn´t feel like that at all. At least not in Five Tribes.
92	Svenia:	Well, you mentioned the slaves and actually this is not the first edition of the game, because the first edition had a different card instead of the Fakir. (hands out printouts)
93	Enric:	Ah, okay. (surprised) That was a slave.
94	Nikolaj:	There was a slave guy.
95	Svenia:	It was actually a slave card and the company received complaints and then later decided to, in the future editions, exchange this card for the Fakirs.
96	Enric:	I´m surprised. How old is the first edition?
97	Svenia:	A couple of years ago. It´s quite a new game, maybe two years ago.
98	Enric:	Really!? How can they do that!? And, you know, they painted him, you know, brown. (points on the printout)
99	Philip:	I don´t know, I mean (..)

100	Nikolaj:	(holds the printout to the camera) Here, you can see. (puts it back down)
101	Philip:	I don´t know, I understand that they made the slave-card and use that instead of the Fakir, which honestly, for everything that you use it for in the game it makes more sense. To me at least. I personally think it´s silly. I mean, slavery is a bad thing and all that but, I mean, we can´t really go back in time and say "uups, that just never happened". I mean, if we´re supposed to play a game in a specific time setting, why does it offend people to be historically accurate? (long pause) I don´t see that.
102	Nikolaj:	(putting together meeples of Five Tribes during the conversation) Some people just don´t want to be reminded of what happened yesterday. (.)
103	Philip:	Well, that´s me, but (.)
104	Nikolaj:	That´s them as well, their yesterday is our history. Think about it, like (..)
105	Philip:	I don´t know, I just don´t think that is something to be upset about, I mean even in Denmark we had slavery and it´s not like we are really sore about that subject [but the only real] sore people about slavery in the world at this point are the black people in the U.S.A., who – admittedly that lasted for quite a while longer. But still, I feel it´s silly to reprimand a game like this for being accurate. (…) Even if slavery itself is a horribly thing.
106	Nikolaj:	[No we´re not, but-]
107	Nikolaj:	Even though (.). Even if I was a black person, I´d still not have anything against it. (continues putting together meeples)
108	Philip:	You can´t say that.
109	Nikolaj:	No, look, because I would have the same mind-set but I would, yeah I would have grown up differently. (continues putting together meeples)
110	Philip:	Why is there a migration going on these? (reacts to the group of meeples on the tiles)
111	Nikolaj:	It´s Copenhagen. There´s a party.
112	Philip:	Ah, okay.
113	Enric:	Sakura Festival.
114	Nikolaj:	It´s a Sakura Festival. (Enric chuckles)
115	Philip:	But yeah, until you pulled that out (points to the printouts), I never really got that vibe from this game at all and honestly, I still don´t think I would have seen it that way even with the slavery card.

116	Enric:	No, I think if you didn´t tell me that it was a slave, I would have seen it as a worker, but then, you know, if you look closer, you have the chains. You know, it couldn´t be a worker from that time because who would like to do all the stuff they have to do if they weren´t slaves? (…)
117	Philip:	At least they wouldn´t want to do it at the pay.
118	Enric:	Yes, of course.
119	Philip:	(referring to Nikolaj moving meeples) You´ve just completely ruined the game, haven´t you?
120	Svenia:	Earlier, you were talking about how the setting of the game is somehow between fantasy and medieval times, so how would this card (pointing to printouts on the table) change the image of the game, whether it´s fantasy or realistic?
121	Philip:	I would say it would shift quite a bit towards the realism-thing.
122	Enric:	Yeah, of course.
123	Nikolay:	Yeah.
124	Enric:	Yeah, because of (.) Fakir is more (.) you can see (.) I´ve never seen someone, you know, doing this with the snake and the thing, but it´s more fantasy.
125	Philip:	I guess it might the place filled with Fakir, we had this line-up once where it was like eight Fakirs available at the same time and I understand what you are saying, that´s more of a romantic picture (Enric utters agreement) of the market places, but-
126	Nikolay:	(Chuckles) Fakirs are not romantic. (Enric chuckles)
127	Philip:	(inaudible) But yeah, you know, the phantasy, imagined setting rather than a fictional thing.
128	Svenia:	The images presented in these games (pointing to the games), do they remind you of other games? Do you think it´s common to use this kind of imagery in boardgames in general?
129	Enric:	I think, you know the Middle Eastern setting (points to Five Tribes) is really used in a lot of games, you know. Not only the one we have here, also *Istanbul*, but I have seen it in others that I cannot recall now, but (chuckles and breaks off). And, the other one (pointing to Cacao), I think this one is also used a lot, like I don´t know in *Tobago*, or, I don´t know, there´s another one in which you have to find gems in the jungle, that is also quite used. So, I think these two settings appeal to people because they make them, you know, go to those places.

		Because, I think if this was, (.) I don´t know, in another place, maybe it wouldn´t be as interesting.
130	Philip:	There´s the interesting thing, but I also think that there´s a large drive to actually make the games in a setting that´s fitting. I mean, you could probably do this (point to Five Tribes) in a modern-day New York where you have to send your colleagues around town to scoop up news-stories for your magazine (Enric utters agreement) and stuff like that. You could have, I don´t know editors (lifts up a white meeple and puts it back) and journalists (lifts up a red meeple and puts it back) and paparazzi (lifts up a blue meeple and puts it back). But that would be a completely different setting. (Enric utters agreement) I think people get an idea about an area when they hear about an area and then they make it into a board game and not the other way around. I do know (pointing to Five Tribes) that there are very many boardgames situated in (picks up a tile from Five Tribes) an old Arabian thing (refers to the theme) because I think that´s (.), I think that´s a setting that appeals to us (.) quite a lot. Especially here in Denmark and the Nordic countries, where anything that is sunny and warm and desert with oases and palm trees and all that is just amazing because we don´t have that here. I think if you go to Arabia and you present this game and the New York times thing, they might actually be more interested in the New York thing because again you´re imagining yourself being elsewhere, you know, experiencing new things.
131	Svenia:	Alright, thank you very much.

Transcript
Focus group: Group 1
Date: 25.04.2016
Place: Copenhagen
Participants: Jakub, Lilin, Tomé
Playing boardgames: casually
Other information: The participants know each other and met at university.

#	Speaker	
1	Svenia:	Okay, so the first question will just be a more general warm-up question. Maybe you can just talk a little bit about if you play boardgames in your free time and what kind of boardgames?
2	Jakub:	(pointing to Tomé) Yeah, you play the most?
3	Tomé:	boardgames. I play some card games. (.) But boardgames I play with my friends (..) like with you (Lilin utters affirmation), but I don't own any boardgames but I enjoy playing them. [No, I don't play that many boardgames I play with my]
4	Jakub:	Yeah, me neither. I don't have any boardgames but, yeah there are plenty of possibilities in Copenhagen (..) (other participants utter affirmation) to play, so if I want to have e.g. a calm evening [just to] (..) yeah, more casually (Lilin utters affirmation) or something with quite a lot of people.
5	Tomé:	[yeah]
6	Lilin:	I have some at home because I live with quite a lot of people at home. So sometimes (.) if we all have free time we just get all together and play some Chinese game because I am Chinese and also on the weekend, with my friends and we would play somewhere in Copenhagen, but I like really relaxing boardgames where I don't need to think too much.
7	Tomé:	Ja, ja.
8	Svenia:	With regard to the games that you just played: You said you prefer to play more relaxing boardgames (Lilin utters agreement). How would you describe your experience of playing these two games?
9	Lilin:	I think the first one, the Five Tribes, it was a bit too complicated for me. I don't know, what do you think? (Jakub and Tomé utter agreement) Maybe I am a bit tired today as well, but there were so many things that I really have to pay attention to. (..)
10	Tomé:	Yeah.
11	Lilin:	It was a bit complicated and you have to think a lot because you need to know which will be the best move (.) (Tomé utters agreement) for you because you have to consider the next person's move as well. This one (pointing to Cacao)

#	Speaker	
		is actually kind of similar because you have to place the tiles (the others utter agreement) but it is more relaxing.
12	Tomé:	Yeah, more [basic].
13	Jakub:	[simpler]
14	Lilin:	Because basically you just sell things and then get cause and then [you have to think about] [how many] things you will get in the end, how many coins you will get with the cards that you have and (..)
15	Jakub:	[it is much faster to] (cannot be understood)
16	Tomé:	[buying cards]
17	Tomé:	There are many different parts.
18	Lilin:	It is more intense, this one. (pointing to Five Tribes) Than this one. (pointing to Cacao) (the other utter affirmation)
19	Jakub:	And it takes much more time as well to understand each small step (.) in this one. (pointing to Five Tribes)
20	Lilin:	I think we spent about half an hour understanding [(inaudible)]
21	Jakub:	[at least]
22	Tomé	I think this (pointing to five Tribes) gives you long-term reward once you know the rules and with this one (points to Cacao) It is more easy to have fun in the beginning.
23	Jakub:	Yeah, but I don't know, maybe after this, I don't know. Maybe it is simple to learn but after a few games it will just be boring (the others utter agreement) because it is really fast and does not have the same engagement than this one. (points to five tribes) (the others utter agreement) Because in this one you can have more strategies to play and this (points to Cacao) is like a play-kit.
24	Tomé:	Yeah.
25	Lilin:	But maybe this one (points to Cacao) will maybe be the game I would play with my friends in a café (other utter agreement) because I would like to try different games in one evening (Jakub utters agreement), but this one is more like(..) If I am spending, I don't know, a long evening playing games, (Tomé utters agreement)
26	Jakub:	And everybody knows the rules already.
27	Tomé:	And with people who are more, (..) who already know the game or [(?) usually (..) Because it can take a while until(..). Actually, the first game, I think, is like it's just practicing and that can take up to one hour playing the first game (Jakub and Lilin utter agreement). And then the second game is when you really start having fun in terms of knowing what, [how to move, yeah.]
28	Lilin:	[exactly]
29	Jakub:	[what is really. How to move yourself].

30	Svenja:	You were asked before to think a bit about which places these games take you or what they remind you of. Maybe you can talk about which times and places these games try to transport you to with the gameplay.
31	Tomé:	Shall we go one by one, maybe?
32	Jakub:	Yes, I can start, since you started the last one. (check again) Time: 4:40.
33	Tomé:	To me, I wrote some(-.), I don't know. It reminds me, because of the camels (-) and the overall (points to the tiles of the gameboard) art, like there argues Asia (Lilin utters agreement) (.). It reminds me kind of kind of a biblical slash Egyptian kind of thing. (Lilin utters agreement) Because of like in the desert, there are some camels and there are the camels (?) (Lilin utters agreement) which is very Egyptian kind of Orientalist. Other participants utter agreement) (.) it also reminds me of (-.) (trails off). Yeah, you also have the assassin, which is kind of a bit (.) (takes the red assassin figure in his hands) I don't know how to characterise it, maybe a bit orientalistic. Kind of the barbarians (puts down the red figure) and you have the wise men (takes a white figure up and puts it down) and the blue ones (takes a blue figure and puts it down again) (.) it s (.) yeah (Jakub and him start laughing) it s a lot of things. So it s a lot to consider and the Djinns, who are very (.). But you can also pitch in whenever you want.
34	Jakub:	For me there is like (.). I don't know, because I will be going to (Morocco so.) I feel it is like Marrakesh (him and Lilin laugh) (Tomé utters agreement) kind of in the old times. Yeah, for me it was just kind of the ruins of each the havens, people and you are moving them and is everybody moving and trying so it is kind of a rushed situation (others utter agreement). You need to plan and you need to know what will be your next move (check again, time 6:26) (Tomé agrees) before you go somewhere and you need, as well to predict what will happen. (.)
35	Tomé:	Yeah.
36	Jakub:	And yeah, it is just the medievil place and it s a whole area not as well a kind of spirituality (Tomé utters agreement and takes up one of the Djinn cards) because of the Djinns.
37	Tomé:	Yeah but these Djinns are very supernatural.
38	Lilin:	Supernatural (laughing).
39	Tomé:	They are very (.). There is this guy who looks like Groot. This is Groot (puts down one Djinn card, takes up another, shows it to Lilin and Jakub) (ca. 6.46)
40	Lilin:	Ah!
41	Tomé:	From Guardians of the Galaxy (Jakub utters something inaudible) Basically this is a giant Groot. This is very fantasy. Kind of Lord of the Rings almost (Jakub utters agreement), almost, I don't know? And of course you have the

42	Jakub:	(the of old-school kind of (trails off))
43	Jakub:	Yeah, like the Geenie that kind of came from Aladdin.
44	Tomé:	Geenie in the bottle.
45	Jakub:	Yeah, yeah. And this one (picks up another Djinn card) is more like [something] than-something-that came up from the Geenie (points to the card that they discussed earlier) but it s all spiritual/magical stuff.
46	Tomé:	(phone)
47	Tomé:	Yeah, it is agreement.
48	Jakub:	Yeah, yeah.
49	Tomé:	And Fantasy.
50	Jakub:	Yeah, (sighs). But yeah, this place (points to the tiles from Cécilo and picks up some of them) (is more older but now became?) is kind of different but it is still maybe actual time. (Lilin utters agreement) Like in (those) Oriental places (Tomé utters agreement) it is still happening, you know.
51	Tomé:	Yeah.
52	Lilin:	Also they are trading stuff for camels and (chuckles) (trails off)
53	Tomé:	It s kind of competition as well.
54	Jakub:	Ja.
55	Tomé:	Who has the most camels, who owns the most lands (the others utter agreement). It is kind of like colonizing, yeah. (Lilin utters agreement)
56	Jakub:	Yeah, fighting for territory and your [(...)] [(.)values.
57	Tomé:	[yeah]
58	Lilin:	Well, I have (refers to her notes) [(with century, and Islamic golden age / the others chuckle in agreement)
59	Tomé:	Ah yeah!
60	Lilin:	Because of all the (can not be understood. Time: 06.06) and the (palace and (.) (Tomé utters agreement and points to the palace meeple on the table) I have Northern Africa for the place, which is like you were saying. (Tomé agrees) And also, because of the (desert and the oasis). But for me, the game gave me the feeling of being. I don't know, like being part of a kingdom like (the others utter agreement) the leader of them and you have to(.) (trails off) it s kind of like an invasion because all the tiles, they were on the board already and so you have to remove all the people and get the control and you can kill people as well, so it s as well before... for course. (Tomé utters agreement)

61	Tomé:	It is (tribal) it's tribes. (Lilin utters agreement), between that they are all in different colours as well. Not weird, but I guess that symbolises different kinds of (.) (picks up one of the meeples)
62	Jakub:	Value?
63	Tomé:	Value. I guess, yeah. (.) (Lilin utters agreement) But the fact that we are grabbing people and moving them (hovers with his hand over the board) around, it is like we are very powerful illustrates movement with the meeple). We have the power to (.) (trails off)
64	Jakub:	You are moving the territories and try to fight the territories then you set [them in other pieces)
65	Tomé	[We
66	Jakub:	grab people and lay) them wherever we want.
	Jakub:	it is just like (it is really political)
67	Tomé:	Yeah, yeah, (.)
68	Jakub:	In the way.
69	Lilin:	It's more like, that,to (.), you know in that time all the countries are moving around and ((cannot be understood)) It's not super peaceful and there are no boarders between nations. (Tomé utters agreement)
	Jakub:	(romantic style)
71	Jakub:	And you always move. If you kill somebody then you know what your next move will be after that.
72	Lilin:	And you are always moving people to the most (valuable tile) or, to the resources.
73	Jakub:	And after that you are (bribing somebody) you (want to go first, if you want to go in the que)
74	Tomé:	[And actually you are selling people to buy) Djinns. (Lilin utters agreement)
75	Lilin:	So they are slaves.
76	Tomé:	So basically they are kind of like (.). Their value is low; I think the value of the people is much lower than for example the palm tree. (plays around with game pieces) The palm tree has more value than one of these. (plays on a meeple) (Lilin utters agreement) I think the yellows are worth one (referring to victory points) and the palm trees are worth tree. I don't know.
77	Jakub:	I think it depends on what you value with the Djinns. (chuckles)
78	Tomé:	(chuckles) Ya-ya-ya.
79	Jakub:	But yeah, what are your believes?

80	Tomé:	Exactly, yeah. It depends on from which perspective you look at it.
81	Jakub:	That is how I won. Because I was believing in people. (laughing)
82	Tomé:	Ya, ya, you got a lot of people (You saved a lot of people (Lilin chuckles), otherwise they would all go into the bag (everybody chuckles) The black bag. (more chuckling) But yeah.
83	Jakub:	But yeah, the other one. (referring to Cacao)
84	Lilin:	(inaudible) time: 10:50
85	Tomé:	Ah, yeah.
86	Jakub:	There is plenty.
87	Tomé:	Also people. Coincidentally it is very similar that it is also yellow, white and red. (points onto one of the player boards) They just don't have the green I guess. (Jakub utters agreement) They symbolise kind of (faces/as well. (Lilin utters agreement)
88	Jakub:	Yeah I don't think it is races but yeah that is (how we learn (how to distinguish people)
89	Tomé:	(Yeah, tribes, tribes, tribes, yeah]
90	Jakub:	And yeah, for me (Lilin picks on the gold pieces from Cacao) it came kind of to unbuched areas. Fair trade as I said.
91	Tomé:	Yeah, I am not sure about the (fair (then and Lilin start laughing)
92	Jakub:	For me, you know it is because everything is here (hovers with his hand over the tiles to to illustrate the area) and everybody is like; you know, tribes of their is trading artificial. (Tomé utters agreement) or anything here. You just Cacao. You build the cacao, you have (.). (points to the tiles again) Everything is simple, you have water, you don't have anything which one could (.)
93	Tomé:	Yeah, there is very (like civilisation.
94	Jakub:	Yeah, exactly. And you only have the people who live the simple life of people who focus on three things; Get the cacao, sell it ((.)), temples, simple life.
95	Tomé:	[And get to the temples]
96	Tomé:	So, worship the gods in the temples/ I guess .
97	Jakub:	And go to the water go that you can get better rewards in the end.
98	Tomé:	Yeah, if you get to the water, you live longer.
99	Jakub:	Yeah, so it is a really simple life. People are just trying to do what they can do with the resources. (Tomé utters agreement) and that's it.
100	Tomé:	I wrote that it reminds me a lot of e.g (home.) like others utter agreement) and that's it more.), it's a soft(.). The temple is very (no. (points to a temple tile) and from

#	Speaker	Utterance
101	Jakub:	the (Peruvian) kind of thing.
102	Tomáš:	Well, the symbols as we (points to a sun tile)
103	Lilic:	The symbols, even the (Picks up a sun token). It is similar to the art (it feels like it. Yeah, that's my impression.
104	Lilic:	I don't know, for me this game (points to Cacao) is more about people. The important thing is you should have more people in the tribe, on the tile and that one (points to Five Tribes) is more like you should get rid of all the people, (the others chuckle) And this one (points to Cacao) is like putting more people together as of your people, (Jakub utters agreement) So it's like it...it leading them to the place, but that one (points to Five Tribes) is like getting rid of, killing everybody (the others utter agreement) and moving them, putting them into the bag.
105	Jakub:	have more value.]
106	Tomáš:	Ye, ya, ya, ya. This is (points to Cacao) using them to collect resources.
107	Jakub:	More people working [at something].
108	Lilic:	own(-.) [This one] (points to Cacao) is more like expanding your
109	Jakub:	Kingdom?
110	Lilic:	Exactly. And that one (points to Five Tribes) is more like (I occupy , then (.) invading.
111	Tomáš:	This is more like (synergy) (pointing to Cacao)
112	Lilic:	Exactly.
113	Tomáš:	They (pointing to Cacao) have to work together because you have to(-.)
114	Jakub:	And you can help other persons as well when putting the tile (the others utter agreement), so you can get something good from it.
115	Lilic:	Actually for me, this one has more civilisation (pointing to Cacao) because you have to work, then you get products; then you can sell it. But that one (points to Five Tribes) is like getting products and moving (by (.)it, yeah by killing people or (-.)
116	Jakub:	[If you get rid of somebody]
117	Jakub:	Killing.
118	Tomáš:	Killing, yeah, you also have the (.) (touches one of the assassin meeples)
119	Lilic:	Or getting palm trees or building a building.
120	Tomáš:	Slightly more aggressive.
121	Jakub:	And you don't want to help other people. Like moving like this (takes up some meeples from a tile) [and] putting them here so that you leave it and he (referring to another player) can take the place easily. Like here (pointing to Cacao), if you want to put the tile, I don't know which one for yours(-.)
122	Tomáš:	[No.]
123	Tomáš:	Here you have no option but to concede and to know that [your opponent will] have some advantage when you place something] and here (pointing to Five Tribes) it is like—.
124	Jakub:	[coexist with the]
125	Jakub:	You can take advantage of it so you need more planning. Here (points to Cacao) it is (more simple) you won the money for the cacao, you collect the (not understandable), you want to sell it. (not understandable)
126	Tomáš:	Yeah, yeah.
127	Svenia:	So you were saying that this one (pointing to Cacao) is more about working together and this one (pointing to Five Tribes) is more about taking control, getting rid of people and you mentioned that this one (pointing to cacao) seems more natural and has more nature (participants utter agreement) than the other one. Are these aspects common when you think about the countries that these games could play in? Are these images common to you or is it something different from what you know or have seen?
128	Jakub:	For me as well (.) I don't know, in Portugal (points to Tomáš) you were studying colonisation. (Tomáš utters agreement) In Slovakia, we didn't study much about it because I was not the part of the (history that much. (the others utter agreement) as for you. So I wasn't thinking about colonisation. So it was interesting to hear your view.
129	Tomáš:	I honestly would think that this game would be(-.) It touches upon a very sensitive topic. Maybe more in places where people are more sensible towards these kind of things. But yeah, I'm not sure how this game would work out in (.) one of these African countries where (it wasn't that long ago.) I was some time ago but it wasn't that long ago that slavery was over. (the others utter agreement) And this is kind of like the entire main and of using (.), extracting cacao. It's very difficult not to draw parallels. But yeah, today, you were asking about it (.)? If we think if these (points to the games) represent those times and eras today, those places?
130	Svenia:	If you think about these places today, are these (pointing to the games) things that come to your mind or would you describe them in a different way? (long pause)
131	Tomáš:	Well, (...)

#	Speaker	Utterance
132	Jakub:	I don't know that one (points to Five Tribes) can still happen in this age. (Tomé utters agreement.) And I think so, we know about it that is in some countries. In the Middle East and that part, people [...] as well are being killed or (.) fighting for territory all the time (the others utter agreement) just to get, you know because of better resources or better (.) I don't know, better places around. Like now as well Israel fighting with (.) (Tomé utters agreement.) It has been there for so many years, centuries, and it is still because of the lands and fighting for territory and also believes. (Lilin utters agreement) Most of it. So, this (points to Five Tribes) is more actual for me as well but(-:)
133	Tomé:	This one is more like a-(breathes heavily). Obviously, this one-(points on a temple like of Cacao) reminds me of-Peru (the others utter agreement) even today because it's like an icon-[(-:)], and iconic; the (Inca temples)as a tourist place, I guess.
134	Jakub:	[Jungle as well]
135	Jakub:	But yeah, I don't know, you maybe have more about this because you studied colonialism but for me it was just like yeah(-)
136	Tomé:	No, today I think, of course some of these things that I said, of course that doesn't happen anymore, well, at least not at the scale it happened before. But (.) I am not informed enough as well, because there is still a lot of slavery nowadays, I'm sure. Especially in countries with less economical power were big companies (take advantage of poor people) I'm not sure. (.)
137	Jakub:	There are also no options for them to do anything else. They have a (can't understand, time: 05:47) not just cacao but coffee or, I don't know pepper or (the others utter agreement) cinnamon. This is what they know from their grandparents and they will know this is just (trails off)
138	Tomé:	It also reminds me of a lot (.). This is a lot about (points to Five Tribes) buying and selling. It's competition about buying and selling things by using people. I don't know, I think it's a thing that you can (.) I don't know, it's very capitalistic (the others utter agreement) as well. Both of them involve in the end of the game: Who has the most resources wins. It's kind of, maybe you need to be a bit greedy. It calls upon those people, you need to plan in order to get more than others as a way of taking advantage. So, I don't know.
139	Svenia:	When it comes to taking advantage of people, and you were also talking about slaves: In the first edition of "Five Tribes", you had a different card instead of the Fakirs. (giving them printouts showing the card depicting a slave)
140	Tomé:	A slave!
141	Lilin:	A slave.
142	Tomé:	So you could (discard a (slave). Mmmh, that is interesting. That's very (offensive). (chuckles) (Jakub utters agreement)
143	Svenia:	People were complaining and in the end the company decided to make a reprint and they exchanged the slaves (for the Fakirs) but the rest of the game still stayed exactly the same. So you still discard them. How would you feel having a card like this (points to the printout) in the game instead of having the Fakirs?
144	Jakub:	[For the Fakir.]
145	Lilin:	For me, this question actually reminds me of the last question because, I don't know where this company comes from, but for me this game (Jakub picks up a Fakir card, looks at it and puts it back again) is trying to show us, that maybe now in Islamic countries there are still like before or (Tomé utters agreement) don't know, a bit terrifying pictures and then slaves maybe trying to show you that these columns are still in bad conditions and that there are still a lot of these things happening. I think, yes, maybe that is happening there but I mean, we know the situation of these countries through the media, right? (the others utter agreement) And there is always like bad things happening there. But, for example me, I really want to go to Israel this summer.
146	Tomé:	To where?
147	Lilin:	To Israel.
148	Tomé:	Ye, ya.
149	Lilin:	And then I saw so many articles online where people are saying things like: "Yes, it could be dangerous.", but (makes weighting gesture with her hands) (.) (the others utter understanding/recognition) everywhere like, (.) Exactly. Even in Europe or Paris: it's the same.)
150	Jakub:	It's dangerous everywhere.
151	Lilin:	Exactly, right? Even e.g. Paris or Brussels, [It's the same (.) exactly.]
152	Jakub:	[We are in more danger in Europe] than somewhere else.
153	Tomé:	You can get bitten by a dog and get rabies. (Lilin utters agreement) (Tomé chuckles)
154	Jakub:	Or you can cross a red light and get hit by a car.
155	Tomé:	Yes. You can fall on your face.
156	Jakub:	But back to the topic.
157	Tomé:	Sorry.

158	Jakub:	But why the Fakir? Why specifically the Fakir?
159	Tomé:	Honestly, (.)
160	Jakub:	He can take the pain or (.) sacrifice, or (.) Why Fakirs and not something else.
161	Lilin:	I don't know. The depiction [(inaudible)]
162	Tomé:	I think this is the first. (.) I think this image in particular (points on the slave card on the printout) is very strong because he has chains on his arms (Jakub utters agreement) [this is very], this is very (.)
163	Jakub:	[So they want to]
164	Jakub:	So they want to sacrifice to the god, like to the Djinn, so they can take the —
165	Tomé:	This is like, this is real, like (points on printout again) slavery (.). This could be very (.), I don't know. (.) Maybe their intention was to be educational. But I don't think it gives you much education. [Besides] portraying these places as still backwards, maybe...[the others utter agreement] Like the fakir. This fakir reminds me of e.g. these Indian guys with the turbans who[.]. Because the fakir has a snake or (picks up a fakir card) whatever. Yeah, he is enchanting a snake. It's this except and he is sitting on the (.)
166	Lilin:	[No.]
167	Lilin:	What is he sitting on?
168	Tomé:	Yeah, the, the, those Indian. It reminds me of the Indian guys who sit on the nails. He sits on the nails like those meditations that do amazing things. I don't know it's just, yeah.
169	Jakub:	But I don't know. Why couldn't they just not put a person or something but something like the Djinn card: I don't know. What is the connection between the slave and the Fakir?
170	Tomé:	I think if they changed it, it's because they had a lot of backlash Like people started saying "What the fuck". Oh, sorry. (Everybody chuckles) But because nowadays there's a lot of sensitivity towards these kind of things. (Jakub utters agreement) People are becoming more (.). You should be aware of how you portray people and places (Lilin utters agreement) Because (.) anyone in the world can buy this game. (Jakub utters agreement) But it also means that also might not sold to Africa or in countries where these things are happening or happened. (Jakub picks up the box of Five Tribes to look at it)
171	Jakub:	I don't know, for what kind of reason. (puts down the box again) I was just checking who was the (.)

172	Tomé:	Bruno Cathala
173	Svenja:	The designer is actually French and the company is a European (American actually – what shall I do with that?) company. (...) So what would you think made the designer and the company decide to use these topics and images? I think this will be the last question.
174	Lilin:	Well it depends which things they decided first when making the game. Like, they decided to make a competitive game where people have to compete with each other a lot. Or maybe if they want to make a game, like, a bit phrase and more competitive and devoted to the background that it's kind of like it chaos as well, then you have to fight a lot to become the winner. (check this part table) why does everybody have to look like monsters? And a bit (.) barbarian.
175	Tomé:	I don't know. Yeah.
176		
177	Lilin:	They could smile, right? Because they are giving the supernatural powers. They could be faster or, you know. (.)
178	Tomé:	They are a bit over the top, these ones. (picks up the deck with the Djinn cards and goes through it)
179	Lilin:	And this (picks up a Djinn card), when I say Aladin [at least in the cartoon, they are really cute and they are nice persons
180	Jakub:	[Yeah this one (picks a card from the deck in Tomé's hands)]
181	Tomé:	card from the deck in Tomé's hands)]
182	Tomé:	(continues going through the cards together with Jakub) The woman with the snakes on her head. It's like a monster..I guess. Oh, this is a Djinn; (Jakub utters agreement)
183	Jakub:	This looks like and (ing-gory)
184	Tomé:	An org (.) with a sword. (keeps on going through the cards) There's another kind, of Djinn, a female Djinn. This is like a fire one. (the others' utter agreement) Another, something, Another Djinn.
185	Jakub:	This is more Djinn.
186	Tomé:	I guess they are supposed to be all Djinns. The sea Djinn, whatever (.) (puts away the cards)

187	Lilit:	Yeah. But they are not cute.
188	Tomá:	No.
189	Jakub:	Because they are giving you a bonus. Not like fighting, but that depends on how you take the game because if you put [[inaudible]]
190	Lilit:	[But also the colour] that they chose (picks on the Djinn cards) for these ones is really dark.
191	Tomá:	Yeah, it doesn't match the (.)
192	Lilit:	And this one is so bright (points onto Cacao) cheerful and (.). (the others utter agreement) It's a lot depressing (points to Five Tribes)
193	Tomá:	This is very cheerful. I would say as well (the others utter agreement) because it has so many colours and it's very green. (Lilit utters agreement) It reminds me a lot of tropical stuff.
194	Jakub:	Ya, ya and personally, it makes me feel more happy than this one. (points to Five Tribes) Because this one was more about competing. (referring to Five Tribes) and this one (pointing to Cacao) is more about exploring. (the others utter agreement) And this (referring to Cacao), I noticed too that it was more bright, while this one (pointing to Five Tribes) is using more cold colours. (The others utter agreement)
195	Tomá:	(picks up a red meeple from Cacao) But it's funny how these are actually very similar. (picks up a white meeple from Five Tribes and holds them next to each other) They are basically the same but just different kind of ( )
196	Jakub:	Shapes.
197	Tomá:	Small head. One has a small head and the other one has a big head. (everybody chuckles) It's true.
198	Lilit:	So detailed. And I think in this game, you have to fight for being and playing with others you have to beat. (Lilit points to Five Tribes; Tomá puts back the meeples and utters agreement)
199	Tomá:	It's like Wall Street. (Jakub laughs) You have to (.) [make the biggest bids] to get the biggest rewards, I guess, to be the first one. But (..)
200	Jakub:	[The Oriental Wall Street]
201	Tomá:	But overall, this one is similar. (referring to Cacao) Because you have the colour, you have a [peak.](the others utter agreement) (.) Yeah.
202	Tomá:	Yeah, and it's also about collecting resources. (Jakub and Lilit utter agreement)
203	Jakub:	Yeah, the goals are similar.
204	Lilit:	You know that's funny, the goals of the games are the same. Kind of the same. (Tomá utters agreement) (.) But these two games just give really different

205	Tomá:	Impressions.
206	Jakub:	[Especially for us, maybe for somebody who is] Middle Eastern and can exactly feel? It depends on what kind of country you come from] but for us, definitely.
207	Tomá:	Even though they kind of portray two different exotic places, one is like South America, I guess, Central/South America and Middle East. (Gestures first to Cacao, then to Five Tribes) But very exotic. Especially this one. (points to Five Tribes) [This one has all the, yeah.] It draws a lot on (.). I don't know, the temples and the markets, you have all these "Indiana Jones" (.). Where he is also in these kind of places where the villain is always the Middle guy with the sword who is coming after him on the horse in the middle of the desert and then they go and hide in the temple.
208	Jakub:	Well, you just know straight away where you are from the design point of view. There is no confusion, everybody is on the same position. There is no confusion.
209	Tomá:	There is no doubt that this is very (.)
210	Jakub:	Yeah, because if I would be something fantastic from our world, everybody would take the image differently.
211	Tomá:	Exactly.
212	Jakub:	Maybe some TV show as well, but this one (points to Five Tribes) is specific in the point of view, like "Prince of Persia" for example.
213	Tomá:	Yeah, it's something every (.)
214	Jakub:	(points to Cacao and this one is more Maya or Inca.) So you have a specific image just from the design.
215	Tomá:	Yeah, amazon, tropes.
216	Jakub:	(plays with some tiles from Cacao) Though this one helps a lot with imagining yourself in the situation. (...)
217	Sven:	Okay, that is it.

Focus Group 2

Date: 30.04.2016

Participants: Enric, Nikolaj, Philip

Playing boardgames: Regularly

Other information: The participants know each other and also played together before. None of them has played *Five Tribes* or *Cacao* before.

#		
1	Svenia:	Alright. Maybe, before we start the discussion, each of you can just say their first name and how often you play boardgames.
2	Philip:	My name is Philip. I roughly play boardgames once a week with my boardgame club and it's just about any kind.
3	Nikolaj:	Hello, my name is Nikolaj and I roughly play boardgames every week, also in my spare time sometimes with Philip's boardgame club every Wednesday.
4	Enric:	Hello, my name is Enric. I play minimum once a week, sometimes twice at home with other friends or alone.
5	Svenia:	In the beginning, maybe you can discuss the general topics of the games that you just played.
6	Philip:	Well, I guess the general topics of both games are the worker-placement and, you know, the struggle to acquire more (inaudible) really. (.) And beat the others at exactly that.
7	Enric:	Yeah, it's also, you know, both are playing in exotic places and with resources that you need in (place). You know, that is common in both. But, it's also a little bit of thinking were you, place, what you do and sometimes when you have done something: "Oh no I did not want to place that.", but you did it and so you can't go back.
8	Nikolaj:	Yeah, as Enric says, there is a bit of a tactic and it's not just a random hand of teith. You get to choose like (.), every decision you make determines if you will win the game or not. There's some tactic in it. (.) I like that. (plays around with meeples from Five Tribes)
9	Philip:	True, but there's still some level of randomness too in the setup. The Cacao (points to Cacao), where you first shuffle your deck of tiles (and) (points to Five Tribes) the amount of meeples, well not the amount, but the colours of each that you place on the different tiles. Can I understand? time: 02:10
10	Nikolaj:	[Still.]
11	Nikolaj:	There is still a tactic in which order you do place your cards.
12	Philip:	Well [live], in Cacao you've got two tiles that have three workers on it and the rest with those split in two-one-one. I got both of my threes early, so I couldn't really benefit from the stronger tiles later in the game. (the others utter agreement)
13	Nikolaj:	[Yeah.]
14	Enric:	And also there's a feeling in both that you don't know who's winning. You know, you have a rough idea, but you can't count all the point because there are so many variables that you don't know. (Philip utters agreement) And each is also the makes it, you know, exciting because: "Okay, I can still win.", you know. Even if I'm not sure if I'm winning.
15	Svenia:	I think you mentioned earlier that these games kind of take the player to exotic places. Maybe you can describe a bit how or (..) what evokes this feeling of exoticness. Maybe you can discuss if you agree or which parts (.) (trails off)
16	Philip:	I actually feel very strongly related to this Five Tribes game (points to the game) because of the Arabic setting. That's how I interpreted it, you know the Arabic thing with the golden palaces and the camels and all that. I remembered my childhood. I watched Aladin the Disney movie a lot. (Nikolaj chuckles) No, really, a lot. And this (points to the game) just really takes me straight back there and half the scenes here, I kind of compin in my mind to all the things in Aladin.
17	Nikolaj:	The Cacao thing, I'm a little more distanced from. I don't really have any (nostalgic) memories or anything of the African setting. I don't know, I think African but I guess rainforest could be applicable. Although cacao was-only found in South America, but that's alright. (Enric chuckles)
18	Philip:	That's okay. That's for my geography lesson.
19	Nikolaj:	Yeah, yeah.
20	Enric:	Well, I kind of agree with him (points to Philip) that this really (points to Five Tribes), you know, reminds me of (.). Because it is South America and when I was a child was playing a game that was about trying to find cocoa or something like that and it was in the jungle and (chuckles) (inaudible) time: 04:32 because it was really simple. I don't recall because I was really little, but you know, it was interesting.

#	Speaker	
21	Nikolaj:	(plays with pieces from Five Tribes while talking) This thing with the (Cacao) takes me... straight to the (jungle). I do love jungle (settings) in any kind of boardgame, film or (video game) or anything. And I just, (.) I am kind of hooked on it. Actually, after like I'll probably just go out and find it and buy it.
22	Philip:	That is interesting because I was actually a lot more interested in the Five Tribes. [It's so] even difficulty setting or complexity of the game because either was actually pretty fun. But the (setting) just spoke so much more to me the Five Tribes. The Cacao, I was kind of completely disjoined from.
23	Enric:	[Me too.]
24	Nikolaj:	If it's got a jungle in it, I love it, I'll just admit it.
25	Philip:	So you're basically on (Tarzan) (Enric chuckles)
26	Nikolaj:	I am basically (Tarzan) [Philip chuckles]
27	Svein:	Which parts of the games spoke to you?
28	Nikolaj:	The part where I won. (the others chuckle) In Cacao.
29	Philip:	That's a very good point. No, I really enjoyed the one where you had to be tactical. The tile-placement of the Cacao (points to the game) I actually enjoyed a lot because you both had to plan ahead and make smart choices in which tiles to, both, pick for yourself and remove from the other player because, (.) The tactical aspect of it, you know, that really intrigued me. Actually, a bit more than the Five Tribes.
30	Enric:	For me, I don't know, I (like to collect cards, so for me, I just wanted to collect all this (points over the area with the market-cards from Five Tribes), these different types of resources. I really liked that you could do that and I also really like the Djinn. They are so cool, you know. (seriously).
31	Nikolaj:	I really like the (design). I really do love these (designs). (holds two Djinn cards towards the camera) I think the deities are really cool, especially this guy- Munkir (look up the name) - pretty badass. (the deities are really cool, look at him, he's like a buff demon, it's really cool. I didn't get to use him very much but he's pretty cool.
32	Philip:	Yeah, but we didn't get that far in the game. I think there would be a lot more Djinns appearing somewhere midlate game.
33	Nikolaj:	I like the thing that you could buy special abilities.
34	Philip:	It's interesting.
35	Nikolaj:	That makes it a little more advanced that Cacao. (continues looking at the

#	Speaker	
36	Philip:	Djinn cards) Actually that's also a thing about the Five Tribes that I liked a lot. The fact that you don't just get to shuffle through the entire deck. You get presented with a few choices and until that choice is actually used, no new options come up. So you kind of have to go with what is presented and then just hope that something better comes up and, you know, that you have a chance of snatching that.
37	Svein:	From what is presented, in what kind of time would you place these games?
38	Nikolaj:	It is pretty obvious (time: 7.37)
39	Enric:	This (pointing to Cacao) of course in the (Mayan/Aztec) times because of the (temples). (.) you know maybe just before the (Spanish colonisation) of course.
40	Philip:	Really?
41	Nikolaj:	Yeah, yeah, actually I thought—
42	Enric:	Just before, yeah a little bit before.
43	Nikolaj:	At first I thought Spanish colonisation but then you (pointing to Enric) say this and then I'm thinking about it and, yeah, it fits more the (.). I mean, there is nothing that indicates that the Spanish have arrived really. So, yeah.
44	Philip:	To be honest, I was kind of more like (present time) (Enric chuckles) I imagine it's still like that down there. I mean, maybe 50 years back when it wasn't I imagine, so, you know, assuming that black people were harvesting cocoa (.) but I never really got the sense of time that it was supposed to be ancient or the back or something like that. If I got any time sense, it is more like present rather than a long time back.
45	Nikolaj:	This thing (examines the player information thing from Five Tribes) the Djinns of Naqaala, I think (medieval times of Arabia)
46	Philip:	I'm pretty sure the game was just called Five Tribes.
47	Nikolaj:	No, that is the (picks up the player information) (.) Oh no, I'm sorry. (laughing) This is the Djinn list. So I thought that was the title.
48	Svein:	But actually it is the subtitle of the game.
49	Nikolaj:	Five Tribes, but yeah, (medieval Arabic times)
50	Philip:	Again, I go straight back to 2005, so I'm thinking, I don't know, year 1200 or something.
51	Nikolaj:	Yeah, Medieval times.

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#	Speaker	Utterance
52	Enric:	Yeah, but [I found this one more]
53	Philip:	[Or even before, [That Arabian] were pretty advanced [at that time] so that could be even before our medieval times.
54	Enric:	I find this (pointing to Five Tribes) [maybe] a bit more further in time than this one (points to Cacao) because this one, you know, [looks, you confirm] you know, setting all this cacao with the water and the temples and (.). I feel it's more before time. Check again, appr 9:21
55	Sverka:	You (referring to Enric) were mentioning that for you, this (points to Cacao) is before the Spanish colonisation. Which aspects led you to this impression?
56	Enric:	I think, first, because of the temples, you know? And then because of the [sun], you know (.), the sun [symbol] that it was for the (.) (check again) of the sun. And also because when they are living looks like (.), it's a [temple], it is not (.). It looks like they have built a [temple] where what they found in the jungle.
57	Nikolaj:	It does [not look as] advanced [so] yeah, (.)
58	Philip:	True, but I mean [most harvesting facilities like these], both bananas and cocoa (Enric expresses doubt) are actually, these [thatched roof buildings with no real] you know, stone or anything that looks advanced. Usually it is pretty primitive and out farming nowadays [still] (.) I don't know, I'm just having a hard time picturing that being ages ago...I mean you should not get there hunting for temples and sun temples...and an archaeologist grow a pair of Christmas lights in his eyes where he finds a temple that [And probably six million study grand] (Enric chuckles) something like that.
59	Enric:	And it's also if you look closer (points to Cacao), you can see that, you know, they have the bonfire and they kind of make sticks, (.) I don't know, it looks like they are kind of trying to build something or make weapons and, you know, the way they have the animals and that's really, you know [could not be understood]
60	Nikolaj:	an animal there?] (reaches for a player board of Cacao) [Do they have
61	Enric:	Yes, that's an animal there, I looks like an animal.
62	Nikolaj:	That's not an animal [that's (could not be understood)] (hands the player board he took to Philip)
63	Enric:	[It looks like a] pork/boar or something like that.
64	Philip:	[That's their cousin, (the others laugh)] It's just the way you said "That's not an animal".
65	Nikolaj:	Yeah, it is an animal.
66	Philip:	Yeah, I know. (hands the player board back to Nikolaj)
67	Nikolaj:	That's a funny thing, I'm funny sometimes. (puts the player board back on the table)
68	Sverka:	So if you think about the areas where these games play in, can you relate the games to how these places might look today, or is it just completely back in [time or]
69	Nikolaj:	[This (points to Five Tribes) is] bombed and this (points to Cacao) is cut down
70	Philip:	Well, that's very accurate, but (Enric laughs) I want to say—
71	Nikolaj:	(Points onto one of the player boards) This is cut down (highlights the trees), this (points to the area with the huts) this is [just]
72	Philip:	[Again, I'm straight back to, I see]
73	Nikolaj:	Cacao happening, you know, pretty much the same [happening nowadays]
74	Philip:	It's just (mumbles sth. inaudibly) Sure, it may be 400 kilometres further in because everything [is cut down, yeah), I mean [imagine] looks much, much the same really. The Arabic thing, where I was, the inner, you know, the old inner market thing actually had some resemblance. You know, with the whole cloth-overhangs and people standing around yelling and stuff, I actually (.). If you find one of those Arabic cities far out in the deserts, I think this is actually [historical and culturally] [significant enough that most of these sights can actually still be seen]. Maybe not the oasis, but recording ended, 12:47, check audio tape for rest of the sentence
75	Nikolaj:	(could not be understood) [You just
76	Enric:	For me it is like this one (refers to Cacao) is kind of [more realistic] and this is more [fantasy-themed]. So, I can't see that setting, you know, in Arabia. You know, for me it is more a setting [of my imagination]. Of the tales of [imagination] and, I don't know, [Alibaba] and all this stuff. So it is more unreal, but you know as appealing as the other one of course.
77	Nikolaj:	Alibaba. (Philip chuckles)
78	Sverka:	If you think about the way people are treated in the game, maybe you can talk a bit about the role of humans in the games.

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#	Speaker	Text
79	Enric:	Well this is kind of really, you know meeples. People are like, you know, just a pawn, (the camera makes a clicking noise. Short pause while it is turned on again) So, people are meeples. They are, you know (points towards meeples from Cacao) So, people are commanded. ___ to do one thing: to collect cacao (points towards Cacao) or to (.). I don't know, just sell something, to collect resources. It's really, you know (.). And we have kind of the overlord that is ruling all of them, the king or I don't know.
80	Philip:	Well I mean, yeah it's a little hard to get up close and personal (picks up a blue meeple from Five Tribes) with this little blue guy and really feel for his situation, but I guess especially in the Cacao-thing you basically just keep placing out work camps that are horrible-living adjacent to wherever they actually need to do stuff. I mean, (..) I guess either game doesn't really treat its people without it is in a (.). I mean, since there is no real fighting involved at all, it doesn't feel like we're really abusing or measuring them as much as just moving them around a lot according to their job.
81	Nikolaj:	(playing around with the figures from Cacao) There is one thing though, like you sacrifice two people (holds up two elder meeples in his hand) to get a blessing from a god, that's kind of sacrificing. And you get your assassin to kill other people, that's the only thing really, (the others chuckle)
82	Philip:	Yeah, I guess the assassins –
83	Nikolaj:	Killed my parents, you horrible bastard. (jokingly)
84	Philip:	Yes, and you deserved every bit of it. (jokingly) (everybody laughs) No, but I get what you're saying. Actually, I never really considered how, you know, you spend two elders to get the Djinns favour, but (.)
85	Nikolaj:	You kill two old guys.
86	Philip:	Well, you put them back in the bag, they could just be gone to their retirement home, I mean do prayer and live good.
87	Nikolaj:	That's what your parents tell you.
88	Enric:	For me, you know, to sacrifice these two people it would make a more sense in this area, (points to Cacao) Because here, actually in the Mayen/Aztecan civilisation they used to sacrifice people to the gods. But, I didn't get the meaning here (points to Five Tribes) to sacrifice for the Djinns; I don't know.
89	Nikolaj:	True, man.
90	Enric:	Because for me, it's like the Djinns are trapped somewhere in this kind of vase and you just? listen again, time 02:07 and they just come out.
91	Philip:	You have the symbol of the magic lamp here (points to a tile in Five Tribes that allows to call a Djinn) associated with the Djinns, so I guess what it's really about is setting two old people on permanent duty to rub the temp/every day (enrich starts laughing) to keep summoning (the Djinns. (chuckles) No, I don't know. However, except for the assassins (picks up an assassin meeple) which we only had like what, twice in the entire game, I didn't really get much feeling of fight in any of these. So, I mean I guess you would move your people (pointing to Five Tribe) around here, but since it is so close to each other;-I mean this is basically like city districts (twists over the tiles of Five Tribes) or something like that, it felt more like, you know, I move them around where I need them to work rather than actually, you know, outrooting? Time 02:57 and taking their families with them/treating them like slaves, I didn't feel like that at all. At least not in Five Tribes.
92	Sven(a):	Well, you mentioned the slaves and actually this is not the first edition of the game, because the first edition had a different card instead of the Fakir. (hands out printouts)
93	Enric:	Ah, okay, (surprised) That was a slave.
94	Nikolaj:	There was a slave guy.
95	Sven(a):	It was actually a slave card and the company received complaints and then later decided to, in the future editions, exchange this card for the Fakirs.
96	Enric:	I'm surprised (How come it's the first edition?
97	Sven(a):	A couple of years ago. It's quite a new game, maybe two years ago.
98	Enric:	Really? How can they do that?? And, you know, they painted ?, you know, brown, (points on the printout) ? (time 04:02)
99	Philip:	I don't know, I mean (..)
100	Nikolaj:	(holds the printout to the camera) Here, you can see. (pulls it back down)
101	Philip:	I don't know, I understand that they made the slave-card and use that instead of the Fakir, which honestly, for everything that you used it for in the game is a bad thing and all that but, I mean, we can't really go back in time and say "oops, that just never happened". I mean, if we're supposed to play a game and say a specific time setting, why does it offend people to be historically accurate? (long pause) I don't see that.
102	N.kolaj:	(putting together meeples of Five Tribes during the conversation. Some people just don't want to be reminded of what happened yesterday ...

103	Philip:	Well, that's me, but (.)
104	Nikolaj:	That's there as well (lectr yesterday...our history) think about it like (.)
105	Philip:	I don't know, I just don't think that is something to be upset about, I mean even in Denmark, we had slavery and it's not like we are really sore about that subject [but the only real] sore people about slavery in the world at this point are the black people in the U.S.A, who – admittedly that lasted for quite a while longer. But still, I feel it's silly to reprimand a game like this for being [accurate...]. Even if slavery itself is a horrible thing.
106	Nikolaj:	[No we're not, but] (breaks off)]
107	Nikolaj:	Even though (.). Even if I was a black person, I'd still not have anything against it. (continues potting together meeples)
108	Philip:	You can't say that.
109	Nikolaj:	No, look, because I would have the same mind-set but I would, yeah I would have grown up differently. (continues putting together meeples)
110	Philip:	Why is there a migration going on these? (reacts to the group of meeples on the tiles)
111	Nikolaj:	It's a Copenhagen. There's a party.
112	Philip:	Ah, okay.
113	Enric:	Sakura Festival.
114	Nikolaj:	It's a Sakura Festival. (Enric chuckles)
115	Philip:	But, yeah, until you pulled that out (points to the printouts), I never really got that vibe from this game at all and honestly, I still don't think I would have seen it that way even with the slavery card.
116	Enric:	No, I think if you didn't tell me that it was a slave, I would have seen it as a worker, but then, you know, if you look closer, you have the chains. You know, it couldn't be a worker from that time because who would like to do all the stuff they have to do if they weren't slaves? (...)
117	Philip:	At least they wouldn't want to do it at the pay.
118	Enric:	Yes, of course.
119	Philip:	(referring to Nikolaj moving meeples) You've just completely ruined the game, haven't you?
120	Sveinic:	Earlier, you were talking about how the setting of the game is somehow between fantasy and medieval times, so how would this card (pointing to

		printouts on the table) change the image of the game, whether it's fantasy or realistic?
121	Philip:	I would say it would shift quite a bit towards the realism-thing.
122	Enric:	Yeah, of course.
123	Nikolaj:	Yeah.
124	Enric:	Yeah, because of (.) [Fakir is more (.) you can see (.) I've never seen someone you know, doing this with the snake and the thing, but it's more fantasy.
125	Philip:	I guess it might the place filled 7 time: 07:17 with Fakir, where it was like eight Fakirs available at the same time and I understand what you are saying, that's more of a romantic picture) (Enric utters agreement) of the market place, but –
126	Nikolaj:	(Chuckles) Fakirs are not romantic. (Enric chuckles)
127	Philip:	(can't be understood) But, yeah, you know, the phantasy, imagined setting, rather than a fictional thing.
128	Sveinic:	The images presented in these games (pointing to the games), do they remind you of other games? Do you think it's common to use this kind of imagery in boardgames in general?
129	Enric:	I think, you know the Middle Eastern setting (points to Five Tribes) is really used in a lot of games, you know. Not only this one we have here, also Istanbul (boardgame), but I have seen it in others that I cannot recall now, but (chuckles and breaks off). And, the other one (pointing to Cacao), I think this one is also used a lot, like I don't know in Trabajo, or, I don't know, there's (another) one in which you have to find gems in the jungle, that is also quite used. So, I think because these two settings I think appeal to people because they make that you know, go to those places, because, I think if this was, (.) I don't know, in another place, maybe it wouldn't be as interesting.
130	Philip:	There's the interesting thing, but I also think that there's a large drive to actually make the games in a setting that's fitting. I mean, you could probably do this (point to Five Tribes) in a modern-day New York, where you have to send your colleagues around town to scoop up news-stories for your magazine (Enric utters agreement) and stuff like that. You could have, I don't know editors (tilts up a white meeple and puts it back) and journalists (tilts up a red meeple and puts it back) and paparazzi (tilts up a blue meeple and puts it back). But, that would be a completely different setting. (Enric utters agreement)[I] think people get an idea about an [item] when they hear about an (...) and then they make it into a board game and not the other way around.

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	Sveile:	do know (pointing to Five Tribes) that there are very many boardgames situated in (picks up a tile from Five Tribes) an old Arabian thing (refers to the theme) because I think that's (...) I think that's a setting that appeals to us (...) quite a lot. Especially, here in Denmark; and the Nordic countries, where anything that is sunny and warm and desert with oases and palm trees and all that is just amazing because we don't have that here. I think if you go to Arabia and you present this game and the New York times thing, they might actually be more interested in the New York thing because again you're imagining yourself being elsewhere, you know, experiencing new things.
		Alright, thank you very much.

appeal built up throu past use of the home, leading to the manifestation of romanticised ideas of the (other) places through repetition, (cultural) memories, media outputs, lack of e.g. education on certain area, e.g. GRA -> is ...city tought in schools or not etc.

differently design environment

APPENDIX D: Focus Group Sample Consent Form

Sample: Consent form for the participation in a focus group

<u>Researcher:</u>

<u>Topic of Research:</u>

The information gathered in this focus group will be used to gain an understanding of how players perceive the representations made in the boardgames *Five Tribes: The Djinns of Naquala* and *Cacao* and potentially connect these representations to their daily lives or views on the world. The data gathered will be used in a research project exploring Postcolonialism and Eurocentrism in these boardgames. The results of my research will be published in a Master´s thesis as part of a M.A. in *Culture, Communication and Globalisation* at Aalborg University.

There are no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions and topics. I want to hear everybody´s viewpoints and opinions on the topics discussed. I hope that you will share your views openly whether you agree with other participants or not. Everybody´s contribution is important. I encourage you to let everybody speak and ask that only one person speaks at a time. Moreover, I ask that other participants' answers and opinions are kept confidential.

<u>Procedure:</u>

The following will happen as part of the focus group research procedure:

- An overview of the topic and schedule of the focus group will be given.
- You will be asked to sign this consent form before starting the focus group session.
- You and the other participants will play two boardgames (*Cacao* and *Five Tribes*) for approximately 30-40 minutes each. This process will not be filmed or documented.
- After having played both games, a group discussion will take place. I will provide some ground rules and topics for the discussion and act as a moderator in the discussion process.
- The discussion will be recorded. A video camera will be used to capture what was said during the discussion, as well as to film the table with the two boardgames that were played. Moreover an audio recording will be taped as a backup recording (e.g. for cases of technical difficulties with the video camera). Your body language may be filmed in the process to record cases in which you physically refer to the game (e.g. by pointing on game pieces). The data gathered will be transcribed and the transcripts will be used for analysis.
- After the discussion ends, you will be asked to provide further contact information. This information will be kept confidential and will not be in the thesis.

<u>Costs/Payments for the participation in the focus group:</u>

There will be no costs and no payment for the participation. However, there will be complimentary snacks and drinks available during the focus group.

<u>Questions:</u>

Any questions regarding the research and the focus groups can be directed towards the researcher. Participants can call 50341365 or send an e-mail to svenia.nowak@gmail.com.

The audio/video recordings gathered during the focus group will remain confidential. The recordings will be available me as a researcher and may be watched for by my supervisor or Aalborg University's employees if requested for examination.

The audio/video recordings will be transcribed by me and the transcripts will be used for analysis. These transcripts will be included in the appendix and may be quoted in the resulting thesis. Stills may be included in the thesis for illustrational purposes. The participant´s identity will be kept confidential, meaning that no faces will be shown on said stills.

The results of the research will be published in form of a Master Thesis at Aalborg University as part of the Master Programme *Culture, Communication and Globalisation* and will be uploaded to the project library of the university where it is accessible to the public.

Participants will not be identified by their full name in the resulting thesis. Only first names will be used, so that participants may not be identified.

After the completion and grading of the resulting thesis, the recordings of the focus group will be destroyed.

Withdrawal from the focus group:

The participation in this focus group is voluntary. Each participant is free to discontinue their participation and to withdraw their consent at any time.

I understand the information provided and agree to participate under the conditions stated above:

Name:

Date/Place:

Signature:

APPENDIX E: Focus Group Guide

How often do you play boardgames and what kind of games do you usually play?

1. How would you describe you experience playing *Five Tribes* and *Cacao*?

➔ While playing the games, what did you pay most attention to? – e.g. the rules, narrative, your own strategy, the design?

2. How would you describe the topics of the games?

3. Can you describe which times and places do these games remind you of? (why?)

➔ What influence do you think that these representations have on the way you/and other people see these places today? (what do you know about them)

Five Tribes

4. How do you feel about the way people represented in the game are treated?

➔ Might connect to 1st *Cacao question here*

Optional:

5. With regard to the game *Five Tribes*, how would you react if instead of using the *Fakirs*, another card depicting a slave was used? (showing the group printouts of the card)

6. How do you think that changing the card makes a difference?

Cacao

7. How would you describe are people treated in the gameplay?

8. How would you see the situation of the game in a real context – who are the people in the game and what happens to the cocoa? (Where does is go? Who gets it?)

APPENDIX F: Codebook

Theme- and Codebook

With regard to the transcript:

The transcript for Group 1 (casual players) is referred to as *transcript 1*.

The transcript for Group 2 (expert players) is referred to as *transcript 2*.

Theme: Far Away

About the theme: *Far Away* focuses on the participant´s perspectives on distant places and times, including both the imaginary setting in the boardgames under analysis and real geographical places or past times.

Colour of this theme and its codes in the marked transcript: Green

The following graphic shows shows the theme and its main codes as well as minor categories including keywords.

Far away				
Exotic setting	**Mythical/Fantasy**	**Far away places:**	**Far way times**	**Far away = attractive setting**
Five Tribes: Orient / Cacao: Jungle, tropical	Five Tribes: Djinns / Cacao: Gods/Temple	Five Tribes: Midlle East, Turkey, Northern Africa, Morocco	Past	different, more apealing
Signs: camel, desert, golden palace, palm tree, Djinns, magic lamp, more dark / Signs: green, Jungle, Cocoa/Cacao, temple, sun worship, bright colours		Cacao: /Central South America, Africa, tropes, amazon	Five Tribes: Medieval Times	Prevalence in other media = used to the setting
Childhood memories: Aladdin / Childhood memory: game with a cobra			Cacao: Pre-Colonial/Colonial	
the rushed atmosphere of Marrakesh (Group 1)				
Prevalence in other media				

Short description of the codes:

Exotic setting: This code includes the main aspects that participants used when interpreting the overall setting of the game. *Orient* and *Jungle* are subthemes that were used to describe the setting and linked to specific signs and images in the game.

Enric *"[…] both are playing in exotic places and with resources that you need to trade. You know, that is common in both."* (Appendix B, transcript 2, Line 7)

Childhood memories were also used by some of the participants to interpret and relate to a setting the setting to connect to the setting that they considered "far away" or exotic.

Enric: *"Well, I kind of agree with him (points to Philip) that this really (points to Five Tribes), you know, reminds of Aladdin. And this one (points to Cacao), I don´t know, it kind of reminds me of (..). Because it is South America and when I was a child, I was playing a game that was about trying to find a cobra or something like that and it was in the jungle and (chuckles) (inaudible) because it was really simple. I don´t recall because I was really little, but you know, it was interesting."* (transcript 2, line 20)

Mythical/Fantasy: Includes instances in which aspects of the game are considered unrealistic or fantastic by the participants and are therefore far from reality.

Jakub: *"And yeah. It is just the market place and the whole area and as well a kind of spirituality (Tomé utters agreement and takes up one of the Djinn cards) because of the Djinns."*
Tomé: *" Yeah but these Djinns are very supernatural."*
(transcript 1, line 36-37)

Far away places: Instances in which participants referred to real geographical places in connection to *Five Tribes* and *Cacao*.

Tomé: *"[…] they kind of portray two different exotic places, one is like South America, I guess, Central/South America and Middle East. (Gestures first to Cacao, then to Five Tribes) But very exotic."*
(Appendix A, transcript 1, line 203)

Far away times: Instances in which places or the setting were considered to be far away from a temporal viewpoint.

Nikolaj: *"Five Tribes, but yeah, medieval Arabic times."* (transcript 2, line 49)

Theme: Modern vs Backwards

About the theme: *Modern vs Backwards* focuses on the participants´ views of the represented places and its people as modern or backwards from various viewpoint such as economically or morally. It also includes instances in which participants relate to real times/places from these viewpoints. Modern vs Backwards therefore also draws on notions of superiority/developed (= modern) and ancient and primitive (backwards) expressed by the participants.

Colour of this theme and its codes in the marked transcript: Grey

The following graphic shows the codes belonging to this theme, as well as it´s sub-codes.

Modern vs Backwards

Economically	Morally	Culture/Values	Us vs Them
Exploitation of workers in the game(s)	Treatment of workers in the Game	Backwarness keywords: worship, sacrifice, greed, colonising	Standards of living (in real life)
Pre-/Colonialism		keywords modern: value work and people	
Standards of living for the workers in the games	cooperation vs greed		Behaviour/ Atmosphere
Reliance on natural resources			

Economically: Instances in which participants referred to the economic situation presented in the games under analysis e.g. by discussing the situation of the workers and classified it as modern or outdated/backwards.

Philip: *"[…] I mean most harvesting facilities like there, both bananas and cocoa (Enric expresses doubt) are actually these thatched roof buildings with no real, you know, stone or anything that looks advanced. Usually it is pretty primitive and out farming nowadays that, (.) I don´t know, I´m just having a hard time picturing that being ages ago […]"* (transcript 1, line 58

Morally: Instances in which participants discussed moral aspects, classifying some as more appropriate than others.

Lilin: *"Actually for me this one has more civilisation (points to Cacao) because you have to work, then you get products, then you can sell them. But that one (points to Five Tribes) is like getting products and money [by (..)], yeah by selling people or (..)."* (transcript 1, line 114)

Culture/Values: Participants labelling certain behaviours/customs represented as less modern than others.

Nikolaj: *"There is one thing though, like you sacrifice two people (holds up two elder meeples in his hand) to get a blessing from a god, that´s kind of sacrificing. And you get your assassins to kill other people, that´s the only thing really."* (transcript 2, line 81)

Us vs Them: Instances in which participants compared the situation of the game to real places in a binary contrast in which one is modern/developed and the other is less developed/backwards.

Jakub: *"This one (points to Five Tribes) can still happen in this age. And I think so, we know about it that in some countries, in the Middle East and that part, people as well are being killed or (.) fighting for territory all the time (the other utter agreement) just to get, you know because of better*

resources or better (..) I don´t know, better places around. Like now as well Israel fighting with (..). It has been there for so many years, centuries and it is still because of the lands and fighting for territory and also beliefs. Most of it. So, this (points to Five Tribes) is more actual for me as well. This one (points to Cacao) is happening as well but (..).” (transcript 1, line 131)

Theme: Value Of People

About the theme: *Value Of People* focuses on the participants´ views of the value of human life in the games under analysis. This includes moral views on issues in relation to this topic as well as questions of appropriateness of the slave card that existed in the first edition of *Five* Tribes.

Colour of this theme: **Yellow**

The following graphic shows the codes belonging to this theme, as well as its major sub-codes:
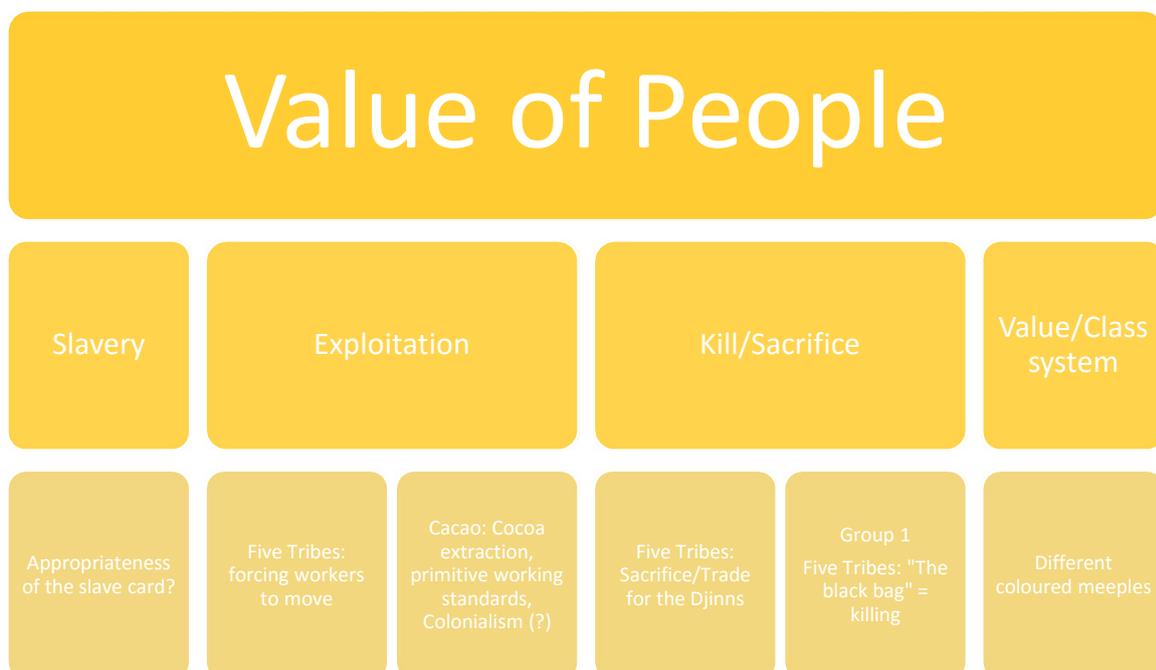
Slavery: Includes discussions about slavery as a broad topic, as well as the slave card from *Five Tribes*. As part of this topic, participants were also found to address the appropriateness of certain representations (such as said card).

Enric: *“No, I think if you didn´t tell me that it was a slave, I would have seen it as a worker, but then, you know, if you look closer, you have the chains. You know, it couldn´t be a worker from that time because who would like to do all the stuff they have to do if they weren´t slaves? (…)”* (transcript 2, line 116)

Exploitation: Instances in which participants discussed the situation of the workers in the games with regard to their value as human beings in their working situation. This includes e.g. working conditions and the movement/placement of workers.

Philip: *"[…] I guess especially in the Cacao-thing you basically just keep placing out work camps that are horrible-living adjacent to wherever they actually need to do stuff. I mean. […]"* (transcript 2, line 80)

Kill/Sacrifice: Instances in which the removal of game pieces were put in context of killing or sacrificing people.

Lilin: *"[…] And this one (points to Cacao) is like putting more people together, all of your people. (Jakub utters agreement) So it´s like [(…)] leading them to the place, but that one (points to Five Tribes) is like getting rid of, killing everybody (the others utter agreement) and moving them, putting them into the bag."* (transcript 1, line 103)

Nikolaj: *"There is one thing though, like you sacrifice two people (holds up two elder meeples in his hand) to get a blessing from a god, that´s kind of sacrificing. And you get your assassins to kill other people, that´s the only thing really."* (transcript 2, line 81)

Class system: Instances in which the different colours used in the games on the workers and meeples were seen as an act of classifying people and giving them different value.

Tomé: *"So basically they are kind of like (.), their value is low. I think the value of the people is much lower than for example the palm tree. (plays around with game pieces) The palm tree has more value than one of these. (picks on a meeple from Five Tribes) (Lilin utters agreement) I think the yellows are worth one (referring to victory points) and the palm trees are worth tree. I don´t know. […]"* (transcript 1, line 76)

Theme: Eurogames

About the theme: The theme focuses on how participant related to/felt about the games under analysis due to its inherent features (such as mechanics or endgame-scroring) as well as descriptions of the gameplay with regard to Eurogames as a genre. (as outlined in the thesis)

Colour of this theme: **Purple**

The following graphic shows the codes belonging to this theme, as well as it´s sub-codes.

Eurogames

Endgame Scoring	Chance VS Strategy	Level of Difficulty	Design/Theme	Mechanics
		too difficult/easy	Orient and Jungle (see in theme: *Far Away*)	e.g. tile-/worker placement, special abilities
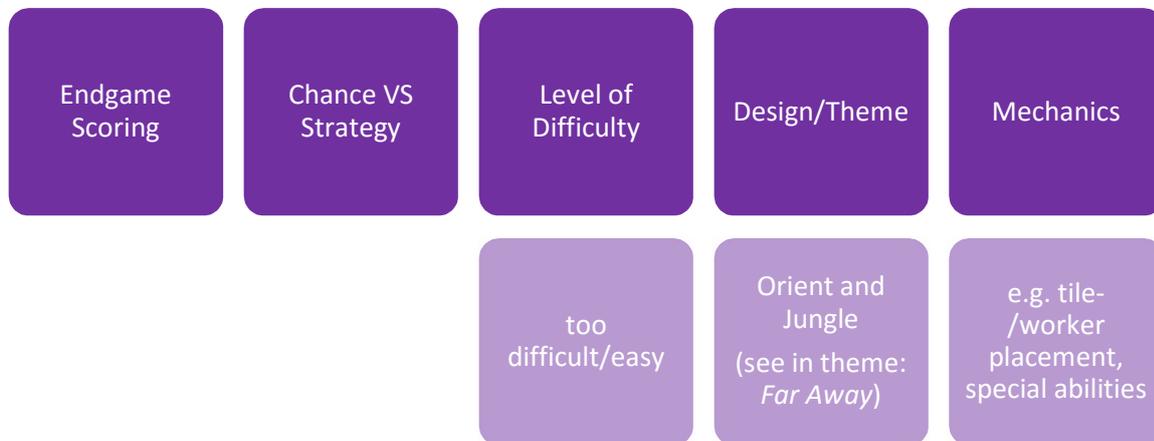
Endgame Scoring: Instances in which the determination of the winner at the end of the game was of topic.

Enric: *"And also there´s a feeling in both that you don´t know who´s winning. You know, you have a rough idea, but you can´t count all the point because there are so many variables that you don´t know. (Philip utters agreement) And that is also what makes it, you know, exciting because: "Okay, I can still win.", you know. Even I´m not sure if I´m winning."* (transcript 2, line 14)

Chance vs Strategy: Includes the balance between strategy and chance in the games presented and how players perceived this balance.

Nikolaj: *"Yeah, as Enric says, there is a bit of a tactic and it´s not just a random hand of faith. You get to choose like (.), every decision you make determines if you will win the game or not. There´s some tactic in it. I like that"* (transcript 2, line 8).

Level of Difficulty: Instances referring to the overall difficulty of the game, including whether players felt overwhelmed or intrigued by it.

Lilin: *"I think the first one, the Five Tribes, it was a bit too complicated for me. I don´t know, what do you think? (Jakub and Tomé utter agreement) Maybe I am a bit tired today as well, but there were so many things that I really have to pay attention to. (..)"* (transcript 1, line 9)

Design/Theme: Instances where the overall theme and how it is perceived were discussed, including on what makes designs and settings appealing and the commonness certain of themes overall.

Enric: *"I think, you know the Middle Eastern setting (points to Five Tribes) is really used in a lot of games, you know. Not only the one we have here, also Istanbul, but I have seen it in others that I cannot recall now […]"* (transcript 2, line 129)

Mechanics: Participants putting emphasis on specific game mechanics.

Philip: *"Well, I guess the general topics of both games are the worker-placement and, you know, the struggle to acquire more wealth, really. (.) And beat the others at exactly that."* (transcript 2, line 6)