

BOOK REVIEWS

Kristina Graaf and Noa Ha (eds). 2015. *Street Vending in the Neoliberal City: A Global Perspective on the Practices and Policies of a Marginalized Economy*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.

The latest UN-HABITAT (2016) global report shows that urban informality is exponentially spreading, and socially disadvantaged groups and individuals find it increasingly hard to experience the urban public space, especially the city centre, as a resource and an opportunity. This is the main background against which *Street Vending in the Neoliberal City* appears as timely and unique. While the overall aim of the work is to ‘demonstrate the ongoing importance of the practice [of street vending] in the Southern hemisphere and the growing relevance of informalized labour in the North’ (p. 12), the impression I had after reading it was that of a much more comprehensive accomplishment — a way richer variety of arguments, reasonings, new data and global connections than the relevance of street vending across the world resonated in my thoughts.

Street vending, while being the key phenomenon under scrutiny, ultimately emerged from my reading as a heuristic angle from which to approach numerous social phenomena, including a) the various and variable, but always present, intersections between racialisation and the making of gender hierarchies in (informal) labour; b) the meanings and significance of urban public space, structured and produced around the dialectic between repressive strategies and resisting tactics; c) key 21st-century transformations in urban

governance in the very city centre; d) the connections between gentrification, racialization and gender inequalities within and across families and groups, and finally e) the value of ethnography as a uniquely positioned optic and practice for investigating global urban phenomena, and a critical correction to generalizing claims. How can an edited collection cover such a wide range of intersecting issues? This question was haunting me while I was reading each chapter, and in what follows I would like to propose an answer in the form of critical appraisal.

The four parts in which the volume is organized already give a sense of this variety: Responses to neoliberal policies; Street vending and ethnicity; Spatial mobility; and Historical perspectives. And yet, the impressive variety of themes and topics deceives any short title. Chapter 1, for example, by Dunn, traces not only the ways in which family organization in Brooklyn becomes a handy tool for resisting exclusionary policies on the urban space, but also the pivotal role of women in the informalized economy of street vending. The informal economy scholarship, as the author points out, has overall overlooked the large proportion of women in the sector — 30 to 90 per cent, according to the ILO (2002; quoted in Dunn: 23). Indeed, for instance, Harvey’s (1989) highly influential essay on urban entrepreneurialism left gender and race out of the picture.

The second part of the volume foregrounds and unpacks the relevance of multidimensional analyses. Ha’s essay on Berlin’s city centre, for example, discusses racial inequalities between sausage sellers, typically white German, and souvenir and jewels sellers, typically people of colour.

Under the recent law prohibiting portable trays to lay on the ground, this division of labour becomes racially unequal as souvenir trays are on average heavier than sausage trays, and police checks occur way more frequently on souvenir vendors. Munoz's essay on Los Angeles and Graaf's work on New York City complete the section by showing how selling books in the street articulates a 'sense of place' and engenders 'Latino cultural citizenship' (Los Angeles) and how West African and African American book sellers inhabits separate circles and networks (NY City).

Space and mobility is the focus of the subsequent section, in which Cupers' sharp analysis of how both Los Angeles vendors' strategic use of mobility and the state regulation of mobility articulate two different and antagonistic conceptions of urbanism. Etzold's documented analysis of how most food vendors in Dhaka live constantly under threat of eviction accounts for everyday violence and insecurity. And Bandyopadhyay's engaging analysis of street vending in Calcutta 'beyond the optic of the "informal economy"' (p. 191) proposes to foreground the concept of 'pedestrianism' (borrowed from Blomley 2011) as a post-human normative ideology according to which the sidewalk should only serve the orderly movement of pedestrians. This last section closes the entire volume, and no closing chapter is proposed. This appears as a limitation, as a conclusion would have allowed the reader to pull all different and precious strings together and see the whole picture in its variable and multiple dimensions.

To answer my question about what makes it possible to have such a variety of dimensions and phenomena, it is probably

the value of focusing on urban phenomena across the world — not on 'the city', but *obliquely* on cities — i.e. on urban issues such as street vending. How many studies have shown from a global urban perspective the multiple ways in which urban life, politics, class, space, race and gender come together? To my knowledge, very few have even tried. I can only think of Nightingale (2012) on racial segregation, Bowser (1995) on racism and anti-racist movements, and Davis (2006), partially, on class and race. There certainly are works which I ignore, but the relevance and uniqueness of Graff and Ha's edited volume makes it a must read for anyone interested in the complex intersections of social dimensions and phenomena in the study of cities from a global perspective.

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Shahram Khosravi. 2017. *Precarious Lives: Waiting and Hope in Iran*. Pennsylvania, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Being young in an Islamic Republic may appear a destiny exception compared from that of the global youth. Restrictions on the public code of conduct, prohibitions on consumption (such as alcohol) and impulses (such as premarital and homosexual sex), precariousness of economic life and unsettledness of social conditions produce the perception, among Iranians themselves, of living *differently* from the rest of the world. Their way out of this condition is none but mixing the stoic endeavour of waiting with the disingenuous task of hoping. Starting from this assumption, that of hope and patience, play the part of topical elements of Shahram Khosravi's latest work *Precarious Lives: Waiting and Hope in Iran* published by University of Pennsylvania Press (2017). The book is, in the words of the author, about 'the temporal aspects of Iranians' everyday life: waiting, queuing, imaging a futureless tomorrow, feeling nostalgia, hoping, replication and repletion, and transiting from youth to adulthood' (p. 18). It is a book about the *desperation* (from the Latin, *desperatio*, 'lack of hope') — and not hope — of being young in a country for no young.

This is a meaningful task at a time when global politics has been tagged with rise of detachment, hopelessness and regressive trends, embodied in the election of Donald Trump (2017), the UK referendum rejecting EU membership (2016) and the failure of popular revolts in the Arab world (2012-16) (Brownlee and Ghiabi 2016). In Iran, hope and patience had become political motives too, but of

another type. The negotiations between Tehran and world powers regarding the Iranian nuclear programme were experienced by most Iranians as a test for their hope and a challenge to the country's capacity to wait for change. Rouhani's election campaigns in 2013 and 2017 centred on the promise of hope of Iran's reconnection with the international community and the request of patience for fruitful outcomes. This came to result with the signing of the nuclear agreement (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, 2015), which fuelled Iranians' hope of economic prosperity and political reform (with no real avail so far).

Khosravi's book, on the other hand, dwells on the years that preceded these events, under the presidency of Mahmud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013). In this regard, the book is amongst the few ethnographic contributions pertaining to this period, characterised by a great transformation of Iranian society and Iran's place in the world. It is made of seven chapters, three of which are promised to be of the urban ethnographic kind. The book travels across the most up-to-date debates in social theory and anthropological inquiries; it brings in useful comparisons between the circumstances of Iranian, Japanese, African and Latin American youth through a careful reading of anthropological scholarship. The latitude of the author's knowledge, in this field, is truly remarkable.

The author makes also ample use of local terms, indigenising the theory in the Iranian situation while progressively allowing the reader to experience through the ethnographic narration. The mole of details is impressive: thoughtful analysis of changing family-society relations; situating

the category of deviance and youth; description of street life and political manoeuvrings to counter it; historical contextualisation from the initial revolutionary period (1980s); and, finally, the potential of political transformation of young people's presence in the city. These and other themes are recurrently discussed in the book, which rather than an *ad hoc* study of precariousness in Iran, works well as a compelling analysis of contemporary Iranian society and the way it can be located within global anthropological debates.

In this also stands its major deficit. The book, says the author, is 'the outcome of a long conversation and ethnographic engagement with Iran' (p. 17). It follows Khosravi's other major publication, *Young and Defiant*, which focused on youth's practices of resistance to the Islamising state under the reformist presidency of Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005). While the author's ethnographic sensitivity is central to the flow of the narration, ethnography remains on the margin of the analytic fulcrum. For instance, the author diligently discusses urban poverty and state-led class war against the *arazel va awbash* (the social scum in today's Persian parlance), but it does so almost exclusively via discourse analysis and media sources (pp. 166-8). There are ethnographic details and observations, but no systematic engagement with the field stands out of the volume. Characters succeed one another through the author's momentary though meaningful encounters in the cityscape. Their stories, for how telling and useful in the formulation of the argument, remain stand-alone or, rather, a series of disconnected voices seconding the book's powerful argument. This is also proved by

the massive use of secondary materials in the guise of newspaper articles, online data (with an over-reliance on the internet-based media) and reports. If one looks for weak points, the author's promise for urban ethnography remains a crucial one. One questions that what might have been worth exploring is how the author has been able to carry out an ethnography inside Iran, with all the obstacles of the case.

The author also attempts at creating a new vocabulary. This is generally based on scholarly references and justified, but, at times, it results in oddities. 'Urban citizenship' (p. 155), among others, is an expression that could have been thought otherwise because it is redundant: *citizenship* implies the condition of belonging to the urban space (even when rural areas are involved); moreover, the 'new forms of urban citizenship' which the author pledges to investigate have more to do with urban practices than with new ways of being citizen. Another expression that remains vague is 'moral geography' (p. 137). Heir to E. P. Thompson's moral economy (1971), one struggles to get full sense of it in the author's narration. *In nuce*, these examples capture a general tendency of the volume. In its attempt at theorising precariousness in Iran, the argument spans too many phenomena, which risk missing connections other than that of belonging to our unsettled times. Its capacity to bring back Iran into global anthropological and sociological studies is also tempered by the lack of a coherent comparative frame, which may result in the reader's eye as the odd reference thrown out in the page.

Nonetheless, the book remains rich in original material, especially in terms of analytical formulations and, for this reason,

it deserves serious consideration for scholars interested in the study of urban ethnography. After all it is a cutting-edge work, with few equals, on a country that has been absent from academic investigations of this kind. Instead, for those interested in the study of the Middle East and Iran in particular, the volume could not be timelier, for it describes salient social and political dynamics with ample empirical material.

The book invites the reader to reflect beyond borders. One result is to see the patient hopefulness demanded by governments, East and West, amidst the everyday emergencies of terrorism and economic downturn as nothing more than an invention of capitalist times (to which Iranians fully belong): the hope of betterment through the status quo.

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Jerome Krase and **Zdeněk Uherek** (eds) 2017. *Diversity and Local Contexts. Urban Space, Borders, and Migration*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

In the introductory chapter the two editors, Krase and Uherek, lay the foundation of their edited volume: ‘This volume provides a contemporary “worm’s eye” and “ground

level”, i.e. “ethnographic look at the interdependence of world markets and local cultures’ (p. 1). They cite the expressions, ‘glocalization’ and ‘glocal’ to describe ‘how the homogenizing and universalizing forces of globalization interact with the heterogeneity and particularity of local forces to create hybrid cultures’ (p. 1). While this is not a novel departure, most chapters adequately build on a growing scholarly literature on the themes of diversity, migration, borders and alterations of urban life. As with most edited collections, in *Diversity and Local Contexts* there is less interest in theoretical arguments about these concepts, more attention is placed on providing local data. The European focus is dominant; out of the ten chapters seven discuss European urban issues.

Giuliana Prato’s chapter, ‘Changing Urban Landscape in Albania,’ places paramount importance on eliciting historical contextualization on the transformation of the urban landscape in the Tirana–Durrës metropolitan region. In particular, she analyses the ‘impact of post-communist policies and European programmes on the development of this area’ (p. 17). Her ethnographic discussion is informative and structured with an important proviso: Albanian government may be democratic promoting political and civil participation, yet — as is the case with many former Soviet bloc countries these days — governance is an entirely different matter. Problems of urban Tirana — unemployment, corruption, poverty, urban expansion, poor housing construction — are multifarious and, as the author suggests, they will be hard to fathom in the future.

In the next chapter, Giovanni Picker gives a critical consideration to what is a 'post-Socialist Europe' in relation to a 'socialist Europe' from an 'external and comparative synchronic perspective' (p. 39). He briefly compares social transformation of the Italian city of Florence and the Romanian city of Cluj by looking at the situation of the dispossessed Romani people. Despite the East-West divide, that is the socialist and post-socialist rhetoric concerning mutual 'socialist' past, the Roma in both urban enclaves have faced marginalization, prejudice and forced sedentarization. Notwithstanding the original comparison of the two urban populations, Picker's 'postsocialist' theorizing remains somewhat haphazard and I can only lament the missed earlier anthropological analyses on this important topic (Hann 2002, Kürti and Skalnik 2009). I have a similar reservation with regard to his description of socialist/post-socialist Romania — in particular, interethnic relations, nationalism, and the case of the Roma — for major works that are just too numerous to cite here are missing in his analysis (K. Verdery, C. M. Hann, R. Brubaker, M. Feischmidt and J.Fox, L. Fosztó, V. Achim).

The chapter by Ivana Bašić and Petrija Jovičić, analysing the 1970 novel *The Pilgrimage of Arsenije Njegovan* by Borislav Pekić is an excellent chapter that should have been placed in some literary collection rather than in *Diversity and Local Context*. While the chapter is certainly interesting in itself — it is a description of changing Belgrade through the eyes of one narrator — the sources used, the theoretical framing and the authors' sense of

scholarship adds little to urban anthropology.

Hana Cervinkova and Juliet Golden offer a fresh view of the Polish city of Wrocław (known previously by its German name as Breslau), a welcome addition to urban anthropology of Poland, where the discipline that has long been hampered by a rural focus. The chapter's main focus is on memory politics, how the Polish presence in Wrocław has been re-evaluated by local leaders in accordance of the neoliberal turn in politics and economy. Wrocław is a success-story: it has experienced generous EU funding, major international investment, an exciting urban renewal programme and, to top all that, has managed the well-nigh impossible: to eliminate previous (that is socialist) urban heritage. Cervinkova and Golden, however, carefully examine Wrocław's memory politics and come to the conclusion that not everything is so neat and perfect. Introducing the city's Centennial Hall (recently added to the UNESCO World Heritage list) and the Monument of Shared Memory (testament to the many German cemeteries in the city destroyed after WWII), as sites where historical memory politics can be witnessed by students and visitors alike, the chapter offers rare anthropological insights into how Polishness and Polish multiculturalism can be distorted. By so doing, the authors provide a finely tuned ethnography on memory politics. This is one of the absorbing chapters in this volume.

Karolina Koziura and Zdenek Uherek both provide their excellent ethnographies: the former investigates the urban renewal of the Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi bordering Romania and Moldova; Uherek deals with the Czech capital, Prague, his long-term

fieldwork site. Koziura rightly asks: what kind of history is embedded in this new urban renewal as Chernivtsi's rulers attempted to forge a nationalist Westernized and de-Sovietized image of the city that seems to be far from the daily realities as experienced by citizens. For Chernivtsi, a city in the Northern Bukovina region of Western Ukraine, has a much more complex history to show, and Koziura manages to tell us about it in a cogent and coherent fashion. Uherek, similarly to the chapter on Naples by Italo Pardo, analyses the uses and politics of public space in Prague, a city that 'has become almost a model laboratory of neoliberal transformation of a post-socialist city' (p. 84). This is a well-written chapter on Prague's internal politicking about the use (and abuse) of public space, especially as it relates to foreign tourists.

Marianna Mészárosová also focuses on Prague and discusses the distinct language use among Hungarians and Slovaks in that city. Her material is based on her earlier fieldwork, when she too was a student in Prague, and only part of that original analysis has been included, which explains why her chapter is short on detailed ethnographic material. For example, Mészárosová spends considerable time discussing the pre-1990 period while describing her research method in detail, yet the results of her fieldwork are mentioned in passing. Regrettably, there are no informants who speak, neither Slovaks nor Hungarians express in their own words what their native language use really means to them, or why and in what contexts they decide to use that instead of the majority national Czech language.

Italo Pardo deals with his long-time familiar Italian city, Naples, interrogating the very essence of democracy in the face of growing distrust of government and politicians by local citizens and migrants as well. Peddlers, shop-keepers and ordinary citizens are locked in a continual battle with the government and law enforcement because of corruption, mismanagement and carelessness on the part of the 'rulers'. Migrants, both legal and illegal, only contribute to this escalating mayhem as the police, instead of keeping up the law, are closing a blind-eye and through their inaction contribute to even more corruption. It is obviously, as Pardo rightly states, that the principles of legitimacy and governance are seriously undermined in Naples, a situation that seems to continue despite the changes brought by the 'orange revolution'.

With the obvious heavy emphasis on European data and Europeanist urban anthropology, two chapters discuss non-European contexts: Jerome Krase uses Italian-Americans in New York City, specifically the boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn; the other is a contribution on South Africa. The major purpose of Krase's chapter is to correct some of the 'characterological distortion of Italian Americans as categorical bigots' and by doing so to 'document the positive activities of Italian American organizations with African Americans, and Chinese Americans over the period in question.' To support the latter point, Krase provides an email correspondence (p. 203); as far as the 'characterological distortion' of Italian-Americans is concerned Krase has plenty to offer on African American and Italian American racial relations yet nothing to say for example about the anthropology of

Italian Americans (Di Leonardo, 1988), or — more importantly — the Pizza connection and the crime families (Gambino, Gotti) that controlled the troubled ethnic enclaves of the period he describes. Obviously, there is an overemphasis on the mob in US popular culture, and anthropologists have been trying to counter such slanted view but to remain silent of this aspect of ‘seven decades’ of Italian American presence in New York City is a major omission. Anyone wishing to read another interpretation of these racially motivated urban crimes should consult Vicky Munro’s chapter (Munro 2007).

The chapter on South-Africa, written by Henk Pauw, Carla Collins and Stephanie Gouws, all from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, aptly titled ‘African Migrants and European Expatriates in Port Elizabeth, South Africa’, somehow misses the original purpose of the collection. Full with data and numbers, we learn more about African migrants than German expatriates. Actual data are from two studies by MA students from 2008-2010, but still there is only a page on German expatriates. Here too, I encountered the same dilemma that hampers Mészárosóvá’s contribution: there are no individual voices and perspectives, we do not learn what African migrants or German expatriates think or feel; the ‘worm’s eye’ view or the ‘glocal’ espoused by the volume’s editors are nowhere to be found here.

Apropos glocal, I have two comments. First, in an earlier similar collection we utilized ‘glocal’ to refer to the clashing and blending of cultures following the collapse of the Iron Curtain (Kürti and

Langman 1997:2-3). Thus, with so much emphasis in this volume on Eastern Europe, some of the authors have missed the opportunity for a more thorough survey of previous anthropological studies on this issue in East-Central Europe. My second quandary is actually a question: why is it that only the editors mention glocal and glocalization but nobody in the volume picked up on these terms?

I enjoyed reading this volume, especially its breath and diversity, but kept feeling that careful editing should have dealt with the outdated sources and scholarly references in some of the chapters. ‘Recent’ sources in most chapters are from 2013. In Jerome Krase’s chapter the latest scholarly work cited (not counting some newspaper-clippings) dates from 2004. While many of the original contributions of the 2012 Prague conference gave birth to this volume, the five-year hiatus between that meeting and the published volume should have been bridged by scrupulous updating. All in all, I stress that from the ethnographic standpoint, the volume edited by Krase and Uherek has merit. The real value of this collection lay precisely in the diversity of the intriguing urban experiences and in some of the complex civic and political problems presented. There are not many anthropological analyses where we can read about Wroclaw memory politics, intricate local conflicts in Naples, the connection of seemingly different and distant Florence and Cluj, African migrants in South Africa, Albanian urban development, or inner-city transformation of Chernivtsi in western Ukraine. I hope that many more volumes like this one will be soon forthcoming in the Palgrave Studies of Urban Anthropology.

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Pardo, I. and G. B. Prato (eds). 2018. *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography edited by Italo Pardo and Giuliana B. Prato and published in 2018 is an impressive collection of original works of an ethnographic nature in more than fifteen countries over five continents.

The introduction and the 30 chapters provide multicultural examples of holistic analysis taking into account the triggering features of urban settings: social diversity, unique physical landscape, particular demographic conditions. It is not organized by spatial criteria or theoretical debates, but by aspects of city life: everyday activities,

economic performances, urban planning, grassroots movements, transnationalities and urbanity. Some overall topics emerge, such as deindustrialization, work and employment, gentrification, heritage conservation, family, kinship, identity and religion. Issues in the urban studies of recent interests also come to the fore in this Handbook, such as the value of mid-sized or secondary cities, the stability of communities in times of change, the rural/city divide in spatial terms and in practices.

The chapters in the Handbook prove that robust urban ethnographies can (and have to) shed light on the ways the macro processes affect urban settings and people's lives all over the world. The authors of the chapters quote abundantly the editors' previous works on the need to analyse cultural and economic structures in order to enrich our perspectives on the micro observations made in the context of ethnographic research. Urban anthropologists may sometimes go astray from traditional ethnographic work, but the commensurability of the Handbook chapters and their excellent bridging the micro-macro contexts confirms the profound relevance and solidity of the ethnographic method.

However, questions about the ethnographer/outsider viewpoint and the differences among the traditional local academic traditions are barely covered. These questions, and the usual dilemmas and challenges of ethnography as a methodology, only transpire in the texts. This Handbook is not on ethnography as a strategy for data collection in specific cultural contexts — except for the first

chapters in the Part 1. It is a corpus of ethnographic work in cities, and a great demonstration of the range of its methodological and analytical achievements.

I cannot think of a better way to review the Handbook than through its seven sections, as the papers in Part 1 to 7 cover a great range of urban dimensions yet talk to each other in a very substantial way. This testify to the significant work done by the editors in their quest for contributions of quality that truly ‘avoid abstractions and generalities’, as rightfully claimed in the abstract, and in arranging them meaningfully.

The introduction presents the Handbook as rooted in the will to promote ethnographic work in urban settings, on lifestyles and organizations. Pardo and Prato underline the placing of the Handbook in the classical debates. They define ethnography as an empirically based long-term in-depth holistic analysis. Ethnographic work in Western cities came late, yet major theories and concepts come from the Western scientific tradition, with additions from emic definitions of the city and urban life. In introducing the 30 chapters, the editors acknowledge influences from sociology and history in the essays and refuse to think of the discussions that follow along the lines of the anthropology of/in the city debate.

In Part 1, Paradigmatic Reflections, the chapters work around commonplace notions and demonstrate, with impressive field knowledge, how the ethnographer’s work is a thoughtful patchwork of diverse data collection suited and adapted, through

time, to specific cultural, economic, social and working contexts. In this section, the authors report on their many decades of ethnographic research to discuss the importance of understanding the macro and micro contexts in the strategic deployment of methodological tools. Those tools comprise participant observation, in-depth case studies, discussions with key informants, and the systematic collection of field notes from visual observation and participation and on auto-, virtual, digital and public events. The papers also underline and demonstrate that the qualities of ethnography (flexibility and adaptability) bring out the biggest intellectual and practical challenges. Shokeid (Chapter 2) reflects on his fieldwork sites in Jaffa and New York City to unveil the relationship between his research in urban settings and classical anthropology. Pardo (Chapter 3) highlights the strategic deployment of methodological tools over time as his fieldworks in Naples, Italy, unfolded deeper complexities. Prato (Chapter 4) illustrates the importance of economic and social processes for a greater understanding of good urban governance with examples from South Italy and Albania. Krase (Chapter 5) challenges the assumptions of the requirements of classic ethnography by putting them to the test in the light of his 40 years of fieldworks in Brooklyn, New York.

Part 2 brings together texts on the everyday practices and challenges faced by citizens in terms of inclusivity, social mix, traditional social identities and conflict. Through ethnographic methods such as the interviews, observations and *dérives*, the authors explore the direct relationship

between spatial materialities in Indian, British, French, American and Israeli cities, and the social reproduction of identities and communities. The authors describe the cultures of specific neighbourhoods and their dynamic inter-affecting components, such as social control, production of gender and social mix, and their influence on education, employment, housing and violence. Abraham (Chapter 6) analyses proximity in two middle-class neighbourhoods of Indian towns. Rosbrook-Thompson and Armstrong (Chapter 7) explore the superdiversity of a London estate shaped over the last 50 years by direct and indirect housing legislation and international geopolitics. Shortell (Chapter 8) explores how everyday slow mobility can foster — or not — inclusions, prejudices and racism in three immigrant neighbourhoods in Brooklyn, London and Paris. Markowitz (Chapter 9) writes about Beer-Sheva in the Negev Desert of Israel and the power of representations in coping with fear and violence.

Part 3 offers ethnographic works that demonstrate how small-grain observations, interviews and informal discussions with citizens can account for richer and more complex descriptions of the fall of the industrial economy and the rise of neoliberalism and all its forms. These texts illustrate that ethnography is essential to our understanding of the profound and long-lasting consequences of economic changes on social and economic polarization and urban forms. Spyridakis (Chapter 10) explores the complex articulations of forces at all levels and their destructive effects on social and economic polarization in the

Greek shipping industry. Arnold (Chapter 11) questions the United States national unemployment statistics demonstrating the variety of unemployment forms. De Sena (Chapter 12) sheds light on the positive but mostly negative experiences of gentrification in a Brooklyn neighbourhood. Kürti (Chapter 13) documents the complex transition from a socialist system to a global economy in a Budapest neighbourhood. Védrine (Chapter 14) writes on how the ideology of neoliberalism has affected the urban form and the social and economic fabric of Clermont-Ferrand, France.

Part 4 is where the contributions talk to each other the most. They focus on how residents, bureaucrats, officials and experts react, cope, reorganize their lives and relationships with their environment in the midst of urban physical change. From the ethnographies of small and large cities of China, West Africa and Europe discussed here, one can theorize on the processes of community resilience and cultural adaptation to physical changes. Graezer Bideau (Chapter 15) analyses a rapidly changing neighbourhood in Beijing and the activists', residents' and officials' relationships to historic urban forms. Koenig (Chapter 16) writes about the ways in which West Africa countries' urbanists try to create, manage or sustain changes regarding governance, climate changes and demography. Rautenberg (Chapter 17) illustrates his concept of weak heritage in French cities. Lindsay (Chapter 18) documents at the micro level the outcomes of the 2012 London Olympics. Labdouni (Chapter 19) writes on urban housing

renovation in a medium-sized Chinese city and how the community evolved around the new physical environment while maintaining a continuity.

Part 5 focuses on grassroots dynamics but mostly offers a thorough critic of larger structures — urban planning, international and national legislation and politics, economics, and science — that foster local social practices, community organizations, urban representations and decolonization processes. The Chapters testify to the variety of views and actions among individual activists and grassroots organizations. Koechlin and Förster (Chapter 20) illustrate how local social practices and mundane experiences in middle size cities in West and East Africa shape political spaces, despite national legislation and politics. Matsuda (Chapter 21) writes on the potential and limitations of local and global community organizations in Nairobi. Gonzalez (Chapter 22), following the decolonization processes of sciences, applies a critical urban anthropology to ethnographic work in Watts, Los Angeles. Tsibiridou (Chapter 23) discusses how politics, daily activities and aesthetics contribute to create perspectives and representations of urban spaces in Turkey.

Part 6, on transnational urbanities, explores various facets of the ways in which international immigrants express, desire and represent citizenship and the tools (national and state policies, associations and community and religious groups) that are offered to them to do so. The underlying issue is the negotiation of complex and unique identities rooted in multiple

territories facing positive and negative prejudices and ideologies. Andrews (Chapter 24) analyses how Anglo-Indians in India realize their citizenship considering their exceptional wealth, yet distant cultural backgrounds. Ciubrinskas (Chapter 25) looks into the multiple sense of belonging of Lithuanians immigrants living in Chicago. Da Silva (Chapter 26) writes on Haitians' social integration in a Brazilian town and examines the discrepancies among policies, associations and community groups. Giordano (Chapter 27) looks at the ideologies and political *mise-en-scène* in the management of diversity and the promotion of social cohesion in a Malaysian town.

Part 7 discusses urbanity beyond and above the spatial boundaries of the contemporary metropolises, looking at the intricacies of traditional practices in the urban environment and the urbanites' behaviours and perceptions in rural/town settings. The authors unpack the city/rural, centre/periphery, tradition/urbanity divides and classic notions and events such as religious practices, gentrification, economic change and sense of belonging. Sarfati (Chapter 28) explores traditional religious beliefs in the city of Seoul and how they become manifest in the urban landscape. Boscoboinik (Chapter 29) proposes a reflection on lifestyle and tourist gentrification in an urbanized rural setting in Switzerland. Fernandes (Chapter 30) is concerned with the views that the inhabitants of Lisbon with a rural or urban background have of demographic and economic changes. Rogers (Chapter 31) writes on the lack of a sense of belonging in

a community of African Americans in a Tennessee town.

Because of its prohibitive price, the Handbook is obviously meant for institutions and libraries. But it is a necessary instrument. No other book, or anthropology handbook, offers such extensive and strong original works, which will prove to be long-lasting contributions to the study of urban issues and to regional studies.

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Lakshmi Srivinas. 2016. *House Full: Indian Cinema and the Active Audience*. University of Chicago Press.

There have been many excellent reviews of *House Full*, so in this analytic autoethnographic review, I will try to do something different. Lakshmi Srivinas provides the reader with a well-written, detailed, and comprehensive description and analysis of what I would term the ‘glocal’ culture of India cinema. Although its table of contents could never convey the richness of its historical, theoretical and ethnographic contents, a brief listing of the topics is necessary to provide a guide for deeper explorations: ‘Participatory Filmmaking and the Anticipation of the Audience’, ‘Cinema Halls, Audiences, and the Importance of Place’, ‘Audiences Negotiate Tickets and Seating’, ‘Families, Friendship Groups, and Cinema as Social Experience’, ‘Active Audiences and the Constitution of Film Experience’ and ‘“First Day, First Show”: A Paroxysm of Cinema’. I must also issue a caveat in this regard since this review will focus primarily

on the value of Srivinas’ work for urban ethnographic theory and practice. Thankfully, she provides the reader, unfamiliar with the Indian scene, with a comprehensive overview of the industry’s production and distribution practices. More importantly for ethnographers, she bravely ventures into the heart of the nation’s mass media culture by joining with the, sometimes-rabid, and occasionally massive, crowds of fans. Fans who parade through the streets to celebrate the openings of their own stars and pour into theatres of all types where the performances on the screen are sometimes secondary to those in the audience. To gather her wealth of data, she visited many theatres, and spent hundreds of hours in the field speaking with the widest range of subjects in the widest range of venues; from ordinary audience members to high level members of the film industry itself, and from autorickshaw drivers to film cast members; on the streets, in shops and, of course, in higher and lower status theatres.

Although the American and European film industries effectively dominate the world market, at most as to reputation and global impact, Indian filmmakers, distributors and theatre owners occupy a more enviable place than Hollywood. Many, if not most films, in the United States, for example, seem to lose money or barely make a profit for their producers and investors. Relatedly, neighbourhood theatres in American cities have been in rapid decline for decades. On the other hand, in India, where they release many more films, Indians at all levels of society flock to higher and lower-class theatres to pay to watch them or be present with them as a backdrop for socializing. This is only

partly explained by the fact that in India 71% of its over 167 million households have television sets, while of the 126 million American households the proportion is 97%, and the majority of these have more than one. The sheer size of the growing Indian population of 1.4 billion potential ticket buyers provides incentive to try to satisfy their growing filmic appetites. More to the point, as Srivinas explains, standing in long lines to buy tickets in order to watch movies in jam-packed theatre with more than a thousand seats continues to be a much more important part of Indian mass culture than in America's perhaps more media sophisticated and already video-saturated western counterparts. As opposed to Hollywood, in India, not only is the *House Full*, but it is enormous.

As to her innovative, critical, ethnography she explains:

'As I sought to address cinema and its reception in public settings, I encountered the challenges associated with access in these settings. The problems posed by mobile and dispersed audiences, they're shifting terrain, and the transients of film screenings contributed in no small measure. Crowded public spaces in the volatility of fans and movie enthusiasts affect in fieldwork. ... Rather than a "sitting" exercise in front of the screen, mine was a "mobile ethnography", I roamed around the streets in the cantonment and in the Gandhinagar-Kempegowda Road area where theaters were clustered. I also traveled across the city to interview people, attend a film shooting, or go to any of the many sites at which cinema was elaborated in the city.' (p. 25)

As to her comparative cultural approach to the subject, Srivinas explains that in contrast to the Western norm of audiences passively consuming screen images, Indian audiences actively and loudly mimic them. In a sense they enter into the projected scenes by talking with each other, and the screen characters. They shout, whistle, cheer and boo their heroes and villains. During musical segments, they sing and dance. Hindu dominant audiences might also engage in ritual blessings of their favourite screen stars. These last practices heightened my sense that at least Hindu Indian's cinematic culture parallels that of its solemn yet colourful religious practices. In so many ways, she is successful in placing the reader in the picture, so to speak. Reading *House Full* led me to interrogate one of my Indian-born neighbours who had similar fond memories of consuming movies in her native country.

Although it was not always this way, most Americas now view 'films' on small screens at multiplex theatres, flat screen home theatres, or on personal devices. These viewings are individual or in small intimate groups.

'In the West, Cinema growing has become progressively segmented and home on June eyes following Hollywood's aggressive niche marketing to age, gender, ethnic city, and other demographic categories. Silent and wrapped viewing by an audience of individuals, maybe seen to be the product of concerted efforts by the film industry to elevate the film, standardize its experience, and make it the centre of the audiences experienced. This style of viewing is also rooted in

broad societal shifts in entertainment culture and Public life.’ (p. 226)

As to analytic autoethnography, I was a participant, or rather I have ‘performed’, with Srivinas as an ‘Author Meets Critic’ panellist at the Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. Other critics were Sofya Aptekar, UMass Boston, David Grazian, University of Pennsylvania, and Jonathan Wynn, UMass Amherst. During our unrehearsed yet, as Erving Goffman would call it, ‘team’ performance a number of different insights were discovered. As we made our prepared comments and intensively conversed with each other and the author it was clear that we all benefited from the reading but in very different ways, as per our academically varied disciplines and especially our biographies.

The greatest value of ethnography is making the unfamiliar familiar and demanding comparisons. In this way, Srivinas provided the basis for understanding the cinema-going cultures of both India and America. For example, she discussed some of the reasons Indians go to the cinema. The heyday of American cinema ended during its post-war peak, in 1950, as numbers of televisions and television viewers began to soar. At the time, movie chains and urban movie palaces abounded. As an adolescent in the 1950s, many of my Saturdays were spent in local movie houses. Until the age of ten, my mother sent us to the movies on Saturday mornings with paper bag lunches, to watch ten cartoons, film shorts, and a main feature. When we came out into the afternoon the daylight temporarily blinded us. Our mother’s reason for sending us was not our

entertainment or edification but to have time to clean the apartment. She told us that her Sicilian-born mother ran to the nearby movie in her apron during the day to take a break from housework. When I was a teen, my neighbourhood ‘gang’ went to the movies on weekends as a group and spent much of the time in the theatre chatting, throwing things at each other, loudly commenting on the film, and otherwise disturbing the non-teenage audience. If another gang was there, the verbal exchanges were intolerable and often resulted in ejection from the theatre. The movies I remember that minimally approached the activity and decibel levels in Bangalore described by Srivinas were action movies, especially westerns and ‘war’ movies, during which the good guys were loudly cheered.

In late teenage years the farthest reaches of the theatre, especially the last rows in the balcony were places where we took our girlfriends and what was on the screen was of little important. As in Bangalore, in Brooklyn, too, there were different ‘classes’ of theatres, audiences, and behaviours in them. In my mixed-income neighbourhood a low-ticket price, rundown ‘fleabag’ theatre called ‘the itch’, showed third and fourth-run movies. On the other hand, there were several luxurious chain theatres at which first-run movies were shown. Most middle-class people would not be seen dead in ‘the itch’. Another very small local theatre showed foreign and what were called ‘art films’, which were frequented by the neighbourhood intellectual and cultural elites.

House Full also connects behaviour in and about cinema with religious practice

and the emergent spectacle when locals become part of the scene in the theatre as house of worship. The interaction of the audience with the film creates a new thing — the audience as a performance. Indian cinema mimics the religious experience of Indian ticket buyers. In the United States, not only do passive audiences dominate theatres, they also dominate houses of worship. Compared to those in India, it appears that the religious practices of major religious denominations in America are demure. However, some American churches and smaller denominations such as Evangelicals, are more performative. With singing, shouting, and animated worshippers. Even in Roman Catholic and ‘high’ Christian churches where there is

considerable ‘spectacle’ and performance, it is among the clergy, and music ministries, and not the collected followers.

There is so much more that I can discuss about Lakshmi Srivinas’ *House Full: Indian Cinema and the Active Audience*. I have only touched upon those aspects I believe are of most value to comparative and ethnographic approaches, not only as to the study of the cinematic industry but the wider society of which it is an integral part. However, I must leave that larger more demanding task to other readers, whom I believe will be many.

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