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Urban Ethnographers Debate Legitimacy

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Introduction:
The Ethnography of Legitimacy and its Theoretical Ramifications

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In this Special Issue, published as Supplement to Volume 8 of *Urbanities* under the auspices of the International Urban Symposium-IUS, a strong international field of 14 mid-career and senior anthropologists and qualitative sociologists from different parts of the globe who are engaged in empirical research debate the thorny issue of legitimacy drawing on their diverse ethnographic knowledge and wide range of perspectives. They participated in a full-time 6-day workshop in Sicily, Italy, on *Erosions of Legitimacy and Urban Futures: Ethnographic Research Matters*.¹ On the evening of Sunday 10th September, the invited participants met for an ice-breaking reception followed by dinner.² Work started at 9.30 on the 11th and continued for full 5 days, ending at 19.30 of Friday 15th September. The meeting closed that night with a farewell dinner.

The reflections in this Special Issue benefit from the intense debate that animated that meeting to reflect on processes of legitimacy and legitimation in urban settings and engage with the attendant theoretical insights. The principal aim is to take stock of the current state of the art on this issue and point to potentially significant developments. Almost a century after the publication of Weber's work, current debate continues to focus on Weber's theory of different forms of authority and the attendant sources of legitimacy (1978 [1922]). Most notably, Beetham (2013 [1991]) has elaborated a reformulation of the Weberian analysis arguing that a social-scientific study of legitimacy should recognise the distinction between the normative and empirical aspects and provide an account not only of the formal rules and prescribed laws but, most important, a descriptive analysis of the social construction of legitimacy; that is, why people accept or reject a particular form of government and governance. In-depth ethnographic fieldwork has the power do precisely this.

This collective effort raises especially pressing questions that long-term field research needs to address in depth. The discussions identify a theoretical framework that contributes to clarify the empirical significance of the complex ramifications of legitimacy and the processes of legitimation in the political, economic and moral life of today's urban world. The complex, highly problematic and often rocky dynamics that mark these processes and their ramifications are central in anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, history and law. It is hoped that the summarized reflections offered here on topics ranging from banking to neighbourhoods, from poverty and unemployment to policy and governance, from

¹ This workshop was held in September 2017. We wish to express our gratitude to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research for a generous grant (Gr. CONF-751) that allowed us to organize this international meeting and to the International Urban Symposium-IUS for the clockwork organization.

² Some participants had previously met and interacted intellectually, others had not.

conflicting identities and interests to political action and grassroots organizing will foster scholarly contributions to this topical debate, for publication in future issues of *Urbanities*.

What follows is an integral part of a broad project rooted in long-term anthropological work (Pardo ed. 2000 and 2004; Pardo and Prato eds 2010) on the empirical and theoretical complexities of categories and processes of legitimacy and legitimation of morality and action; of the morality, production and application of the law; of politics and governance. Its principal aim is to trace the significance of knowledge gained through ethnographic research and to apply new theory related to legitimacy and legitimation to our understanding of changing urban settings. A most important subsequent objective is for adult debate on this topic to reach out, more broadly, to non-academics — professionals and decision makers who have an interest in the research findings — and to the wider public through comments and interviews in the media. To put it briefly, in the near future, this Special Issue will be followed by a series of publications and activities. A volume on *Legitimacy: Ethnographic and Theoretical Insights* (edited by I. Pardo and G. B. Prato) is to be published in the Series Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology. International seminars, round-tables, conferences and seasonal Schools will aim to encourage debate and originate publications in the form of individual articles, edited volumes, journal special issues and comments in the media.

Of course, philosophers have addressed legitimacy and legitimation since the beginning of time. The empirically-based discussion of these issues is, instead, comparatively new. As emphasized by the Sicily workshop, now perhaps more than ever much more ethnographic knowledge from across the world is needed. In the early 1990s, a small group of ethnographers endeavoured to develop an informed view, which has gradually grown into a sophisticated international debate.³ They have studied the processes and ramifications of conflicting moralities, the corresponding ideas of legitimacy and the attendant dynamics of legitimation at the micro level. They have done so moving well beyond a Weberian perspectivism (1978 [1922]) and addressing the attendant ambiguities (Pardo 2000a). They have examined in depth the socio-economic impact on urban life of policies, rules and regulations that are received in the broader society as unfair, slanted or punitive. Aware, with Weber (1978 [1922]), that the authority to rule depends on recognition of rulers' legitimacy across society (Pardo 2000b, 2018), they have asked: How much more governance failure before legitimacy is withdrawn and, consequently, democracy is jeopardised? The need to address this question is now more urgent than ever; particularly in democratic systems across the world, for there governance and the law are broadly seen to fail the democratic contract as they fail to meet the challenge posed by the implications of this phenomenon. Urban futures are at stake (Prato 2009, Prato and Pardo 2013, Hannerz 2015, Pardo et al. eds 2015, Krase and DeSena 2016). Combined with contextual pressures — of national and international origin — these failures undermine the very foundations of democratic society. They generate malignant changes that corrupt individual and associated life. As poverty increase and multiplies, 'natural' solidarity turns into egotism; the morality of reciprocity and help gives

³ See Pardo 1995, 2000a, 2004; contributions in Pardo ed. 2000 and 2004 and in Pardo and Prato eds 2010.

ground to the ‘every man for himself’ instinct; as predatory values spread, so do abuse and corruption; as rulers lose trust and legitimacy, their power loses authority and authoritative leadership turns into authoritarianism; as immigration grows out of any semblance of control, tolerance turns into toleration and toleration into intolerance; as the establishment loses legitimacy, democratic participation shrivels, to the delight of power lobbies and select élite groups. And so, dangerously, on.

It should go without saying that as a moral and ethical category legitimacy is not necessarily a hallmark of the official world, including bureaucracy, government and the law. Across society, actors often separate the legal from the legitimate. Not always, it has emerged, what is legal is received as legitimate and not always what is not legal is seen as illegitimate: much is often worked out at local social and cultural level, regardless of official views. Ethnographic research has repeatedly found that ordinary people’s view of what is legitimate and what is not legitimate defy — explicitly or implicitly, overtly or covertly — policies and changes in the law that meet the interest of élite groups at the expense of the rest of society. It has shown that no legitimacy is attached, at grassroots level, to rulers’ choices dictated by ideological bias, cronyism, clientelism and various forms of corruption that do not break the law. It has brought out significant ways in which ordinary people question — in practice and more or less explicitly — the criminalization of actions and behaviours that are seen as moral and legitimate at the grassroots and legislation that claims to uphold widely held views of legitimacy but is ambiguous or difficult to implement, is not implemented, or is implemented by double standards. At a greater level of complexity, the empirical analysis of legitimacy and legitimation has exposed the (often damaging) kind of strong perspectivism about morality and rational choice that undergirds dominant definitions of membership of society, non-membership or ‘undeserving membership’.⁴

In short, graphically stressing the importance of processes of legitimacy and legitimation, today governance and the law are generally seen to fail to meet constructively the challenge posed by the complexities and implications, ultimately the messiness of life on the ground. Raising critical issues, misplaced or instrumentally selective moralities in policy and in the production and enforcement of the law (Fuller 1969, Pardo 2000a and 2000b) play a significant role in such a failure. Today, rulers — including democratic rulers — are seen to be caught in a visibly delegitimizing path, as they prove unwilling or, at best, incapable of taking on board the concerns, needs and expectations expressed by increasingly disaffected ordinary people. Today, all too often policy is seen to be inspired by ideological bias, to serve the interests of a few at the expense of the many; whatever its (ever flimsier) ‘democratic’ disguises, it is seen for what it is: slanted, morally biased and conveniently ineffectual or tyrannical.

As Pardo has observed (1995, 2000), in order to address legitimacy beyond a strictly legalistic approach we must first distinguish between the philosophical concept of legitimacy — intended as the basis of authority, founded on ruling by consent rather than by coercive power — and a sociological analysis of its diverse sources; that is, of ideological views and

⁴ See contributions in Prato ed. 2009 and in Prato and Pardo eds 2010.

everyday-life apperceptions (in the sense of critical consciousness, and recognition and valuation) of legitimacy. Paraphrasing Norbert Elias (1982 [1939]), it could be said that the legitimacy of the political (and social) order is in constant transformation. Similarly, and most importantly, apperceptions of legitimacy are not static, but are subject to constant change, too, due to changes in the values, norms and needs within a specific socioeconomic and cultural context at a specific historical juncture.

The conceptualization of legitimacy as an object of study raises key questions:

- How should we understand the moral concepts of legitimacy by which rulers motivate their choices and actions?
- What are the culturally specific practices by which people make the categories of the legitimate and illegitimate shift across the domains of the moral, the economic, the legal and the civic?
- What legitimacy or illegitimacy is attached to the law and to policy at the grassroots?
- What are the everyday practices in which individual and groups engage and through which they potentially transform the idea of legitimate behaviour, of legitimate law and of legitimate policy?
- Through what processes the legal and the illegal are legitimated or de-legitimated?

From an ethnographer's viewpoint, these questions are crosscut by a concern with how we should deal with ideas of legitimacy across the social spectrum. So far, the in-depth analysis of diverse ethnographies has brought to light behaviours that are firmly rooted in the morality and ramifications, in practical life, of a *strong continuous interaction* between the material and the non-material aspects of life (Pardo 1995 and 1996: iv). An important condition is to stay committed to eschewing confusion between legitimacy and legality and engaging analytically with important aspects of action that demonstrate the moral and cultural complexity of people's managing the messiness of real life. If our understanding of human beings in society is to share the responsibility of a complex view, we must take very seriously the interplay between personal morality and civic responsibility, and between value and action. In the first place, we have argued (Pardo and Prato 2010), this requires an informed awareness of the vanity of the monist approach to the complex ways in which people merge social morality and personal choice into practices that observably recognize more than the self and may contradict, de facto, the legitimacy of the law and policy (Pardo 1996: Chap. 2 and Chap. 7).

World-wide discontent with how the dominant élite manage power is generating grassroots opposition, which is powerfully contributing to the growing gap between the rulers and the ruled — critically, between ideas and recognitions of legitimacy at the grassroots level as opposed to among élite groups. In recent times, democratic society has experienced particularly disruptive effects of this gap. Conflicting moralities across the social, cultural, economic and political spectra are increasingly coming the fore across the world, corresponding to a progressive erosion of the law and of the legitimacy of governance.

In spite of scholarly warnings on the impact of these problems on good governance, the political élite express, at best, lukewarm acknowledgement, while doing little of any

consequence. On the other hand, citizens increasingly question the legitimacy of local, national and supra-national bureaucracy, administration, decision-making, policy and the law. These problems are particularly evident in the urban field, from secondary cities to metropolitan areas (Pardo and Prato eds 2012 and 2017, Krase and DeSena 2016). Every day there are reports of grassroots protests of assorted types that expose both the obnoxious ways (obnoxious, that is, to reason and citizenship rights) in which dominant élite manage power and the growing opposition in the wider society to their rhetoric and actual behaviours.⁵ The list of recent occurrences that point to the acute crisis of citizens' trust in their rulers is long, and growing. One case is given by the Italian rough treatment of the fundamental division of power and of the democratic process that, since 2010, has allowed a succession of unelected governments to rule the country. Another example lies in the acrimonious subtext of the 2017 US Presidential election and the grassroots motivations of the American voter that are reflected in many ways in those that animated the British public to vote to leave the EU, and large proportions of the electorate in France, Austria, Germany, The Netherlands, Hungary, Italy and so on to give strength to 'anti-establishment' parties that may well be controversial but cannot be simply dismissed as populist. The consequences are dire, though largely anticipated in the cited publications.

As a fitting corollary of the conflict between the élite and the rest, the question, 'What will happen to us?' is being cogently asked in our ethnographies, mirroring similar concerns around the world. Legalistic and formalist views definitely aside, the foregoing brings powerfully to a head the need to address the problematic of legitimacy on the ground, which, we suggest, of course involves taking stock of the ethnography of legitimacy and the attendant theoretical insights but also requires us to move urgently ahead through strong scholarship that addresses this controversial realm and the attendant problematic ramifications.⁶

If it is the duty of anthropologists and fellow social scientists to study humankind to improve humankind, it is also their responsibility to help answer this question with particular attention to the morality of what is right, of what is doable, fair and can be lived with, as opposed to what is legal. In 2016 we thought that it would be timely to take stock of the past debate and push on, moving the discussion beyond what has been to what will be. Given the current global scenario, we hoped that the application of the ideas offered by the cited literature on morality, action, law, politics and governance would help to stimulate engaged scholarship and robust exchange of ideas to bring out the epistemological significance of charting new theoretical directions on 'legitimacy' and 'legitimation' as loci of ethnographic knowledge gained through long-term field research. We worked out an intellectual programme, applied for funding and invited a group of colleagues at different stages in their

⁵ See, on this, Bekkers et al. 2007, Gupta 1995, Morris ed. 2000, Pardo and Prato eds 2010, Riberio Hoffman and van der Vleuten eds 2007, Sarduski 2008, Sharma and Gupta eds 2006.

⁶ See, for instance, Breitmeier 2008; Camargo Sierra and Hurtado Tarazona 2013; Coicau 2002; Fassin 2014; Pardo ed. 2000; Pardo 1995, 2000b, 2004; Prato 1993, 2000, 2006, 2010; Peters et al. 2009; Pardo and Prato eds 2010; Spyridakis 2010.

careers who share a strong commitment to ethnographic research in urban settings and to empirically-based analysis to join us in developing this debate. They provided different experiences and skill sets to the overall discussion that took place one year later throughout the workshop that we held in Sicily.

In organizing the meeting, we benefited from the intellectual and organizational know-how, network and local knowledge of the International Urban Symposium-IUS. The contributors were asked to draw on their research in urban settings to prepare ethnographically-based papers that addressed the complex interactions among morality, ethics and legitimacy that emerge from the empirical study of the relationship among the legal, the not-strictly legal and the illegal. We invited analyses that took into account the aforementioned perspectivism in addressing actions — legal and not-strictly legal — that are regarded as legitimate at the grassroots and of policies and rulers' actions that do not break the law but are regarded as illegitimate in the broader society. We asked that particular attention should be paid to the impact — economic, social and political — of these actions, of the criminalization of behaviours that are regarded as legitimate at the grassroots and of the legalization of actions that are regarded as reprehensible and illegitimate at the grassroots. Throughout the meeting engaged debate based on comparative reflection benefited from regionally diversified ethnographic knowledge from East Africa, Canada, Europe, the Far East, India, Latin America, the Middle East and the USA, and amply demonstrated the epistemological significance of charting new theoretical directions on 'legitimacy and urban governance' as a locus of ethnographic research that matters to our urban futures.

The general atmosphere of informality and the participants' dogged engagement with the topic and the organizational set up contributed to making this workshop successful and highly promising for the development of reflection and debate on this critical theme. Over the week that we spent together, we became a truly engaged and close-knit group of human beings, which bodes well both intellectually and in terms of academic network: many promising ideas and a number of projects were seeded during the informal meetings in the evenings and during the excursions. It was a bonus that this meeting was welcomed by the local municipal authorities, who treated the group to a wine-tasting cum archaeological excursion and that we should enjoy perfect late summer weather in a beautiful Sicilian setting.

As the papers were circulated in June among the participants, they were not read during the workshop. There, participants brought out the major points in their papers, stimulating round-table discussion. Throughout, we debated how an ethnographically-informed knowledge about legitimacy should both avoid taking this category for granted and bring out its empirical complexity and socio-political significance. Thematic Discussion Groups focused on the 5 key questions that we have listed earlier. A final Round Robin, titled 'Where we are, where we want to go', offered all participants an opportunity to outline how they intended to use the workshop to revise the papers; specifically, they clarified how the workshop had contributed to their perspective and what revisions might appear in their articles. Ideas for future developments were also discussed.

The early results of our collective efforts and the growing interest among the international community suggest that the future for this topic is very promising, that the attendant ethnographically-based analysis is likely to contribute to scholarship with the ongoing production of social theory. We reiterate our hope that the publication of the findings will stimulate further debate, new topical research and collaboration with non-academics who operate in society and are interested in our empirical knowledge, and in making use of it.

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Dynamics of Legitimacy: Formal and Informal Contexts

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Since the late-1980s I have carried out ethnographic research on processes of political change. My initial interest was stimulated by the increasing opposition against the centralizing role of political parties in Italy, which extended well beyond the political sphere to almost every aspect of social life. This form of corruption of the Italian political system became widely known as *partitocrazia* (party-ocracy). In some cases, the overwhelming power of the political parties led to individual resistance to the system from within. Above all, however, this system of party rule was opposed by protest groups that had initially organized outside the institutional political arena. These groups raised central issues on the relationship of political representation, also questioning the legitimacy of the politicians' decision-making. In response to widespread grassroots discontent and in the context of broader Europe-wide changes, some traditional parties engaged in self-restructuring and re-branding, changing their name and logo, and attempted new styles of local governance.

In Brindisi, where I carried out my fieldwork, the activity of protest groups against *partitocrazia* culminated in the opposition to the construction of a new power-station (Prato 1995). The events around the construction of the plant provided more than an ethnography of local political processes; they brought out key aspects of the relationship between local politics and central government, and of the effects of political ideologies on economic policies (Prato 2018).

Ethnographic research addressed three major questions: 1) How political parties have exercised and abused their power beyond their democratic mandate; 2) the ethics of responsibility demanded by different political and administrative roles and the attendant moralities, loyalties and potential conflicts; 3) the relevance and actual impact of 'new forms' of political action in influencing change in the system. These three questions emerged as crucially significant in a situation in which people's distrust of the traditional parties and their values was increasingly expressed in seeking alternative forms of representation.

What I observed in Brindisi in the late-1980s and early-1990s was much more than an expression of discontent of local significance. The new, initially informal, political organizations that emerged there were not locally isolated phenomena; most significantly, they advocated a new approach to politics and were harbingers of revolutionary changes to come both a local and national level (Prato 1995, 2017). The opposition embodied by the kind of political formations that I observed in Brindisi has triggered legislative changes on administrative decentralization; the significance of these new laws to local governance and to politics more generally has been the object of detailed analysis (Prato 2000).

Throughout the fieldwork my aim was to clarify how the moralities and attitudes to politics of people in public office are affected by the role played by political parties. Ethnographic analysis brought out a conflict between an 'impartial', bureaucratic sense of

responsibility and a ‘committed’, political one, which in turn might as well serve a partisan cause or be directed towards the common good. This Italian case has highlighted how in contemporary democracy the power of political parties may extend well beyond formal and, at times, legally recognised boundaries. In Italy, traditional parties have used this power through hidden practices of government — known as *sottogoverno* (sub-government). As a researcher, I was faced with a situation where the political system, the legitimacy and stability of which should have been safeguarded by law, was in fact self-legitimising, and then reproducing, itself on the basis of actions, choices and moralities that may have been licit to the actors involved, but were not regarded as legitimate by ‘ordinary’ citizens, nor were they always legal.

This Italian ethnography has pointed directly and problematically to the legitimacy of the political order and representation in contemporary democracy. In democracy, such legitimacy should be a given, for the authority of the elected representatives is supposed to stem ‘from the people’; it should take the form of ‘centripetal’ power (Weber 1947), radiating from the periphery (the constituency of electors) to the centre (the elected leaders). However critically one wishes to engage with the work of Max Weber, it is indisputable that in addressing legitimacy in liberal democracies most social scientists have taken as a starting reference the Weberian tripartite classification of authority. In all three cases, their legitimacy comes across as the ‘recognized right’ to rule and to exercise power; that is, a power that should enjoy authority (Weber 1947). Much confusion has been generated by the difficulty in providing a precise English translation of the German word *herrschaft*, which has been variably rendered as ‘power’, ‘rule’, ‘domination’. Noteworthy, Weber describes *herrschaft* as ‘the chance of a specific (or, of all) command(s) being obeyed by a specified group of people’ (1978: 122). Obedience can be voluntary or imposed by force. In both instances, the power to command is linked to the exercise of social control. However, the power ‘to exercise’ does not automatically ‘enjoy legitimacy’, for a power that comes from acts of coercion (whether by brute force or ideological imposition) is, as Pardo notes (2000: 7), a power without authority.

In analysing contemporary liberal democracies, most social scientists have focused on the legal-rational aspects of legitimacy, grossly overlooking the fact that Weber’s classification addresses three ‘pure’ ideal-types and that elements of each type may coexist in any given context, often leading to competing claims of legitimate authority. Thus, Weber’s argument that under bureaucratic principles ‘formal’ rationality supersedes ‘substantive’ rationality has been rigidly embraced, reducing legitimacy to a set of technical rules — to be applied according to impersonal principles — while ignoring the values and ethical norms that might influence both rulers’ decision-making and people’s acceptance of such decisions.

Moving beyond the purely legalistic approach, Pardo (1996) has addressed some ambiguities in parts of Weber’s work; in particular, a certain measure of perspectivism in his theory of legitimacy, which is probably traceable to a broader tension in the Weberian definitions of morality and rational conduct (Pardo 1996: Ch. 7 and 2000a: 4). In his seminal work on ‘morals of legitimacy’ (1995, 1996, 2000), Pardo argues that people do not

automatically accept as legitimate what is officially legal, nor do they necessarily regard as morally illegitimate actions that, by definition, fall outside the strictly-defined boundaries of the law (Pardo 2000a). Interestingly, Mosca (1923) challenged the legal positivistic approach to legitimacy suggesting that in a modern liberal democracy rulers cannot justify their power merely through domination; of course, power has to have a legal basis, but in order to be accepted as legitimate it must also have moral consent.

The social construction, and deconstruction, of legitimacy has, thus, to do more with shared values than with a technical application of specific bounding procedures, such as, among others, political elections. This argument is implicit in Weber's discussion of rational bureaucratic authority when he says that in a democratic government a person elected to office becomes the 'servant of those under his authority' (1947: 389). He also notes, however, that with the historical transformation of the liberal State power has increasingly shifted from the representative body (Parliament) to political parties; that is, to the institutions that should democratically regulate the election of such representative body. MPs have thus *de facto* ceased to be the representatives of the citizens who elect them, becoming instead the delegates of party factions or selected interests. This raises issues of accountability and trust between citizens and their elected representatives. I have argued that lack of accountability (which may or may not be constitutionally prescribed) erodes people's trust in their elected representatives. Furthermore, breaches of trust weaken the legitimacy of the rulers, posing serious challenges to the social and political order (Pardo 2010: 27) as they run counter a key task of governance; that is, to nurture the connection with citizens' values, needs and expectations (Pardo and Prato 2010).

In my study of political representation, I sought to provide answers to the long-debated and difficult relation of theory to practice. My study of the relationship between political philosophies and actual (and effective) policies in Italy has addressed two main questions. First, I have asked to what extent an ethnographic study of politics can contribute to our understanding of broader processes while steering clear of abstract speculation. Second, I have contended that an informed study of contemporary politics must go beyond the dichotomy between a political philosophical study of the situation as 'it ought to be' and an anthropological study of the situation 'as it is'. From this perspective, I have investigated 'intersubjective' meanings alongside the meanings that individuals give to the social and political contexts in which they operate and have sought to understand the 'ethics of responsibility' that informs people's actions. I have sought to understand what ideal of society and political system individuals aim to accomplish when they, for instance, bring to life a new political organization or advocate new forms of political action. Significantly, a major aim of the new political formations that I observed in Brindisi was to bring 'integrity' back into local administration, which became a fundamental aspect of a new law on local autonomies (Law 14-6-1990 No. 142). According to this law, people who have been legally prosecuted and found guilty of crimes of corruption and of actions against the interests of the state and its citizens cannot be elected to public office. It also states that elected politicians who commit such crimes while in office should be immediately suspended — alas, this Law

has been often changed and selectively applied. For analytical purposes, we need a conceptual definition of ‘integrity’ beyond political rhetoric. Integrity implies adherence to the moral and ethical principles on the basis of which people evaluate the ‘soundness’ of a person’s moral character and, ultimately, their honesty, accountability and responsibility. As such, integrity carries expectations of other people’s actions. While the view of a person’s integrity is a significant element in all social relations, it becomes particularly relevant for people who have decision-making power. The challenges raised by the opposition to *partitocrazia* did produce changes in the system. Over time, however, such changes have paradoxically brought about the ‘institutionalization’ of *sottogoverno*. As new lines of conduct threatened the survival of *sottogoverno*, some established parties preached ‘revolutionary changes’ that, when acted upon, de facto enforced its rules by law. As Pardo (2000b, 2004) has pointed out, in the post-*tangentopoli* situation, appropriate legislative changes have decriminalized actions that had been previously instrumental in bringing down most political parties, but not, I reiterate, the old party-system.¹

Earlier I mentioned that in the 1990s some traditional Italian parties began a re-branding process also in view of broader changes that were occurring in Europe, specifically in the countries of real socialism. In 1991, during the last phase of my first extended fieldwork in Brindisi, I witnessed the arrival of thousands of illegal Albanian immigrants who wanted to settle in Italy. This was intriguing for many reasons. One was that, at the time, while in many Western European democracies the majority of the population was clearly dissatisfied with what they regarded as a ‘corrupt’ system of governance, several European Communist countries like Albania were experiencing more or less vociferous movements that demanded democratization. So, almost naturally, my ethnographic interest extended to Albania.

In 1999, I began fieldwork in Albania mainly to study regime change and legal reforms, and their implications for democratic governance (Prato 2004, 2010). Allegations — and proved cases — of corruption and illegality were among the major concerns of foreign observers. Corruption, it was argued, was *the* major obstacle to the Albania’s transition to democracy. So, the country’s interest in gaining international credibility spurred substantial anti-corruption investigations. Successive governments have implemented various policies in fulfilment of their pledge to fight corruption. Today, foreign commentators seem to take a positive view of what appears to be a decrease of corruption in many institutional sectors. Significantly, however, while the praise of the international community has clearly granted the kind of institutional credibility and legitimacy demanded by supranational organizations, they do not seem to have led to citizens’ recognition of such credibility and legitimacy.

My ethnography suggests that the empirical situation in today’s Albania is far more complex and articulated than a narrow focus on corruption could reveal. To begin with, I have addressed critically the concept of transition, arguing that an informed analysis should

¹ Pardo (2018) and Sarfati (2018) discuss a similar impact of legislative changes, respectively with reference to Naples and Seoul.

take into account the gradual adjustments, adaptations, negotiations and redefinitions of social identities that are inevitable and necessary in implementing democratic institutions based on the rule of law. In particular, I wanted to know to what extent the new written democratic constitution would guarantee citizens' political participation and full inclusion in society. True, the Preamble of the new Albanian Constitution (1998) emphasizes the aim of building a 'social and democratic state' based on the rule of law and of guaranteeing human rights and equality of opportunity in the framework of a market economy. On paper all this is Constitutionally guaranteed, real life is much diversified.

The majority of Albanians do not feel that they are in control of, or have any influence on, what happens in their country, let alone in their life. My field notes bring out how many feel that some rights are, in fact, denied to them. Furthermore, malpractice, allegations of corruption and abuses of office continue to make the headlines and to be experienced at the grassroots. There is a widespread view of the political élite 'as people who', as an informant put it, 'are just interested in signing international agreements and devising procedures and pursuing personal power, while ostensibly ignoring citizens' needs'. As the partially accomplished economic and judicial reforms have fostered people's discontent, opposition parties have turned what had the making of a serious breakdown of the 'social contract' into an opportunity to gather electoral support, while continuing to be observably unable, or unwilling, to manage the economic and political crises. As another informant recently said, this seems to be a never-ending story in a continuously changing scenario. On the one hand, as in the case of informal urban areas, new approaches to citizens' needs raised among many ordinary Albanians hope for significant change in local governance. On the other hand, this informant remarked, 'national political leaders continue to rely on international "powers", especially the EU and the US, to affirm their legitimacy; meanwhile, they delegate to those powers the task of fulfilling responsibilities that we would expect to be met by our national leaders'. This last observation brings to the fore another important aspect of legitimacy in contemporary society; that is, the role of the international community in legitimizing national affairs (see Koechlin 2018, Mollica 2018 and Spyridakis 2018). As the Albanian case shows, external interventions, can indeed undermine the legitimacy of national rulers and contribute to alienate people further from the formal state's institutions.

Let me offer some concluding remarks on what I learned from these two ethnographic studies. The Italian and Albanian cases suggest that political institutions may be examples of rational-legal formal legitimation (*à la* Weber) but their legitimacy in society is significantly influenced by *how* rulers exercise their *personal* responsibility beyond institutional power and the attendant social prestige. Both cases suggest that the relationship between government and citizens needs to be conceived — and acted upon — as one of reciprocity, in the sense that political legitimacy and citizens' loyalty, or obedience, cannot be separated from the belief that the state and its governing institutions will protect their rights and will efficiently respond to their needs. The analysis of both cases has highlighted the important fact that citizens grant — or do not grant — legitimacy by constantly assessing the actions and motivations of their rulers. Both cases ultimately show that the legitimacy of political and

social order is not static; it is complex and changes over time. They show that different sources and competing claims of legitimacy may coexist in a given context. I argue that ethnographic research may help to unravel the complexity and ramification of these competing claims by addressing the aspects of legitimacy that spring from people's shared beliefs and values and how these play out in different contexts, beyond the observance of legal, technical rules.

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‘Legal’, Obnoxious and Unfair: Eroded Legitimacy of Governance in Naples

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The increasing gap between rulers and the ruled is, of course, especially resented in democratic systems. Its very serious ramifications stand on a conundrum that may not be easy to solve but can and should be addressed, with urgency. And yet, to complicate this vexed problem, few rulers seem interested in recognizing its nature, which combines with a dearth of empirical knowledge on the legitimacy of dominant groups’ management of power.

My interest in legitimacy and processes of legitimation and de-legitimation (Pardo 1995, 2000) arose in the early 1990s, as I reflected on the sharp contrast between my ethnography of ordinary Neapolitans and the combination of their misrepresentation in the literature and their corresponding mistreatment by their distrusting rulers, who, in turn, enjoyed no trust or legitimacy among most of my informants (Pardo 1995; 2017: 37-43). Then, as now (Pardo 2006: 26-28; 2017), a large proportion of Neapolitans were treated *de facto* as second-class citizens oppressed by adverse policies that impacted heavily on their lives and informed their growing distance from what they described as ‘predatory powers-that-be’ who ‘ruled by double-standards’ (Pardo 2012: 68-73). A committed ethnographer (Pardo 2017: 35-36), I believed that an in-depth understanding of the moral complexity and social value of individual action would help to gain a better view of key dynamics of legitimacy and legality in the relationship between citizenship and governance in the fields of social policy, legislation, integration and access to rights (Pardo 2018). Hence my decision to conduct an anthropological study of how power operates; meaning, in short, that I went to live in Naples and engaged in long-term participant observation among the élite and the construction of case-studies of significant individuals and events. While updating regularly my ethnography on ordinary Neapolitans and extending my empirical interest to immigrants, over the past 28 years I have researched in this fashion key élite groups’ management of power and authority (Pardo 2012: 61-65; 2017: 44-47).¹

As this long-term research programme progressed, my sense of the relationship between rulers and the ruled slowly became clearer, contributing to an understanding of the forces that are shaping contemporary Italy. Over time, I have grown aware that ‘the establishment’ is no longer coherent or collective or competent. Its failings are causing more than schisms, inequalities and precariousness; they threaten the very foundations of democracy. Many years ago, I worried about the danger that the combination of legally established powers that failed to achieve legitimacy in the broader society and ordinary people’s informed distrust of those who manned the institutions of the state and, locally, of governance could coalesce in the de-

¹ For more detailed information on these fieldworks and the methods and methodology, see Pardo (1996: Ch1, 2012 and 2017) and Prato and Pardo (2013).

legitimation of those institutions (Pardo 2000). In Italy and very clearly elsewhere this is now a reality, as is graphically brought out by the Greek case (Spyridakis 2018), and perhaps less painfully but equally problematically across the democratic world.

Italy is, of course, an established democracy. But here democracy is not healthy, weakened as it is by broken trust *between* rulers and the ruled and a deep crisis of legitimacy in public life. The democratic contract has been substantially harmed by an entrenched commitment to the grubby trade of legitimacy for power that has left rulers' actions exposed to a demeaning lack of authority. To magnify the problem, this distortion of political responsibility in the exercise of power, in many cases the slanted wielding of official power, has marked political action across the board. There is more.

Critical anomalies have progressively disfigured democracy as a succession of unelected prime ministers and governments have been appointed through a procedure that may be constitutionally correct, therefore entirely legal, but has made Italians feel that they have no say in the matter of who rules them, that they are not citizens but subjects, of barely disguised authoritarianism. Adding scorn to injury, a *cross-party* majority of MPs have repeatedly appeased these choices. As 'the establishment' has consequently lost credibility among the public, a large proportion of Italians have withdrawn from the democratic process. This is significant in a country where, in the past, turnout at the polls was over 80%. When at the last general election (March 2018) electors did exercise their democratic right (the turnout was 73%), they voted overwhelmingly (50% nationally, up to 75% in the South) for protest parties of the left and the right that are not associated with 'the establishment' and whose rhetoric addresses key popular instances. It is unhelpful that, in Italy as elsewhere, these 'alternative' parties have been simplistically — some argue, conveniently — labelled populist.

In Naples, the turnout at the last local election (June 2016) was 50.37%. Against weak traditional parties (of the centre-right *and* the centre-left), the mayor was elected by 65% of those who voted, accounting for 33% of the local electorate. The genesis of this anomaly is seeded in another anomaly, whereby since the *tangentopoli* scandals of the 1990s politically-committed sections of the judiciary have repeatedly taken over a key aspect of the political process, selectively emasculating political competition. Notoriously, while judicial inquiries encourage scandal but often fail to deliver the convictions of accused, many 'new brooms' become involved in abuse of power, bribery and corruption (Pardo 2018). Some avoid jail on technicalities. In Naples I have been asked to note that 'while in office the mayor received a 15-month suspended jail sentence for abuse of office and a hefty fine for libel. He was subsequently suspended from office, appealed and one month later was reinstated on a technicality'. Similarly, his deputy received a 1-year suspended jail sentence for having assaulted a policewoman. He, too, is still in office.

Leading intellectuals and most of the media hailed the 1990s as an age of enlightenment for Naples, the third largest city in Italy. Ethnographic investigation revealed, instead, a problematic relationship between ideology, policy, civil society and the law. I have discussed that unfortunate time for Naples' inhabitants, culminating in the infamous rubbish crisis and

the consequent pulmonary and infective diseases and deaths (Pardo 2010). Today, as throughout the past 30 years (Pardo 2012), a legal style of governance meets the interests of select groups linked to who is in power. This at once engenders and thrives on a blurring of the dividing line between what is legal and legitimate and what is legal and not legitimate in public life (Pardo 2018);² particularly, as actions that are conveniently made to be legal through ad hoc municipal decrees and legislation deeply affect local life.

It may be useful to summarize some ramifications of a governance that my informants from all walks of life who live and operate in central Naples, describe as legal but obnoxious, unfair and illegitimate.

For a while, local rulers' ideological fantasy of a largely unspecified 'orange revolution' was electorally convenient. In time, however, their inefficiency and pandering to the interests of extremists have given the game away. Under their watch, urban life has become notable for three, connected, reasons. It is dangerous; polluted by administrative double-standards, rubbish and vermin; and marred by a bread, circus and gallows approach to rule (Pardo 2012, 2018).

Municipal finances and patrimonial resources continue to be mismanaged as close to financial insolvency as it can possibly be without actually going bankrupt (Lo Cicero 2017, Pollice 2018). Much of what is under municipal responsibility, I have been repeatedly asked to note, is in critical conditions. The City Council is responsible for the upkeep of roads, pavements and public buildings, and for most of the local public transport system. The urban road surface is hazardous, pocked with potholes (many very large and deep) that are procuring huge business opportunities for local garages and headaches to insurance companies. Public health is hazardous. Local ER departments report daily occurrences of broken bones and other serious injuries resulting from accidents in badly maintained public property — broken or uneven walkways; large and deep potholes; pieces of public buildings that fall on pedestrians, and so on. Public space continues to yield medieval visions of filth, rubbish strewn across roads and pavements, rats, cockroaches, stray cats and feral packs of dogs. The public transport system not only is marred by inefficiency, redundancies and strikes; it is perilously near total collapse (Del Tufo 2018). As the local leader of the Centre-left Democratic Party recently noted, 'in 1997 there were 800 buses, now there are 300 and they are 17-years-old, and often out of action'.³ Interestingly, in this situation EU funds meant to contribute to the development of an 'integrated urban transport system' have been used to draw bicycle pictograms on unlikely roads, walk-sides, under outdoors restaurant and bar tables and even on stairs across the city.

There is more. For instance, one thinks of the rich ethnography of mismanagement of power that fosters difficult relationships between the autochthonous population and the ever-

² For lack of space, I cannot discuss actions that take place at the grassroots and that are officially illegal but are seen as legitimate by the actors and their significant others. I refer the interested reader to my separate works (for example, Pardo 1995, 1996, 2009, 2017).

³ See *Il Mattino*, 2 April 2016. https://www.ilmattino.it/napoli/politica/nuovo_item-1643478.html

growing number of immigrants,⁴ which strongly contributes to turning the autochthonous population's natural *tolerance* into *toleration* and, then, as citizens' instances remain unaddressed and problems unsolved, into *intolerance* (Pardo 2009: 122-14; Prato 2009). Take the case of local authorities turning a blind eye over the scavenging and sale of rubbish that has been going on in Naples for many years. Residents must put their rubbish in plastic bags and then deposit these bags overnight in dumpsters permanently placed by the walk-side; the dumpsters are emptied early in the morning. Immigrants are regularly seen extracting from these dumpsters objects (mainly shoes and clothes) that they then proceed to display and sell from rugs thrown on the pavement. This phenomenon takes place daily across central Naples. Local residents and traders resent that 'despite the legal and health issues involved, this kind of trade goes on unchallenged, including in the very hot Summer time'. Shopkeepers and their associations have lodged detailed complains. Exemplifying their grievances, one of them said, 'since these people started doing this, sales have dropped by 50% because the street is always dirty and unhealthy'. In the face of the authorities' failure to act, extremist groups have mounted organized attacks against the rubbish traders and, on some occasions, have been joined by local residents. Eventually, in a show of action, the local administration decreed that anyone caught rummaging in dumpsters would be fined €500.00 on the spot.⁵ For a few days this new decree was zealously enforced. Within 24 hours from its publication, fines were issued (*La Repubblica Napoli*, 27 November 2014) and left unpaid, because the transgressors were officially destitute or could not be identified because they had no documents. As this phenomenon continues, the protests and violence have evolved into a semi-permanent vigilantism that makes more unfriendly a city that, in the experience of my informants and, as noted by the radical leftist regional governor,⁶ is marred by increasing street violence and inefficiency.

These dynamics tally with illegal immigrant dealers being allowed, by default, literally to monopolise walk-sides, gardens and squares, while the autochthonous licensed traders are heavily fined for exceeding the space allocated on their trading licenses. They are identified and must pay — 'unlike', as one of them noted, 'the illegal peddlers who operate here, run from the police just to reappear when it is safe, and if caught cannot be made to pay because officially they've no income and often no identity documents'. A young man who was forced by the municipal police to close his stall because he could not pay the fine was, 'sorely aware that unlicensed illegal immigrants can sell what they want where they want'. He remarked, 'why I can't sell my wares but they can sell my rubbish?'

Analytically, the violent actions of local extremist groups and their ideology of the state as the enemy make an interesting contrast with the kind of lawful protest enjoying legitimacy

⁴ Officially, in 2015 there were 48.565 foreign residents in Naples, accounting for 5% of the population. They were Sri Lankans 25.4%; Ukrainians 16.9%; Africans 11.4%; Chinese 10.2%. (Comune di Napoli 2014 and 2015).

⁵ See *NapoliTime*, 28/11/2014, <http://www.napolitime.it/59631-mercato-abusivo-dei-rifiuti-napoli-il-sindaco-ferma-questa-pratica.html>

⁶ See *Il Mattino*, 16/03/ 2018, http://ilmattino.it/napoli/politica/de_luca_liberare_napoli_da_violenza-3610897.html

at the grassroots in the Canadian (Boucher 2018), South Korean (Sarfati 2018) and US (Krase and Krase 2018) cases discussed in this Special Issue. Local commentators denounce today's governance as deeply embroiled with these groups. Antonio Polito (2018), the deputy editor of an authoritative centre-left newspaper, describes how these malcontents 'have become his [the mayor's] party' and 'his militant guardians'. They, he adds, operate in the name and on behalf of the mayor, often engaging in violent clashes with the police. In turn, they have been allowed to settle in publicly owned buildings, as in the case of the Asilo Filangieri. This building of important historical value was restored at public expense to be used as a venue for international cultural events. Like several similar buildings in the city, it was illegally occupied by radical groups, who were later turned into legal occupants through *ad hoc* Municipal Decrees (of 25/05/2012, 29/12/2015 and 01/06/2016); now local rulers are under investigation for abuse of office and damage to the public purse (Postiglione 2017). Adding to this political and legal chaos, as noted by Polito and other commentators, Naples councilors in power, who argue a Venezuela-style future for the city, have recently led protest marches to block the visit of a prime minister and several leading politicians whom they do not like. Local leftist intellectuals point out that the season of violent demonstrations geared up in 2017 (Macry 2018), when the mayor proclaimed that the leader of a centre-right party committed to prosecuting and expelling illegal immigrants from the country must not speak in Naples. Macry goes on to remind us of the furious urban guerrilla that ensued, as iron-bar-armed demonstrators, their faces covered, threw Molotov cocktails, stones and other missiles at the police, badly injuring thirty policemen. Similar actions continue to take place.

From Naples, as from the rest of Italy, the view is dire:

The gulf between the ruling élite and the rest widens.

Authoritative governance appears ever more chimerical.

The crisis of legitimacy in public life deepens.

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Legitimacy at Stake: A Short Comment

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After the ‘golden era’ of welfare capitalism, contemporary western societies experience a steady tendency related with the passage from an ‘ex-affluent’ society to a qualitatively different one, where the dominant characteristics are increasing insecurity and employment deprivation. No matter how one names this uneasy time, the fact is that it induces changes in the social world of work, in the social welfare state and the related policies, and it often does so in brutal and violent ways, as the current European recession shows. It is in this context that the notion of legitimacy should be read, since power holders must convince ‘power subjects’ that the command-obedience relation is ‘rightful’ and legitimate, no matter whether there is a ‘reward’ for compliance (Matheson 1987). This relation rests upon a kind of ‘social contract’ whereby mutual rights and obligations apply to both sides. As Pardo has indicated (2000: 7-8, 13), the cornerstone of this contract is trust, which, he stresses, must work both ways in order to work at all. Hence, we are reminded that trust, in one way or another, determines the level of moral and political legitimacy of any kind of authority.

Be that as it may, it seems that contemporary European societies question significantly the bonds of this contract as people gradually came to believe that the rulers whom they elect lack credibility and exert ‘power without responsibility’ (Pardo 2000: 7). In social terms this means that to the extent that legitimacy is highly contested ordinary people worry about both the status of their citizenship and the condition of their social reproduction. This is more than obvious in the case of the Greek economic recession. Greek governments made the strategic choice to deal with the crisis by implementing a policy of internal devaluation. At the same time, with the support of the majority of the mass media, they tried to convince the public that their choice was correct. So, they undertook to turn the narrative about the economic crisis into a dominant one that legitimated the successive memoranda representing the policy of internal devaluation as effective, necessary and fair. In essence, they attempted to present the recession measures as unavoidable on the basis of two main arguments. It was maintained that, a) these measures would correct the ‘bad habits’ and the ‘pathogens’ that had brought the country to the edge of destruction; and, b) these measures were necessary and fair because all Greek citizens were responsible for the crisis since they kept demanding personal favours from the political system and, consequently, supported the exercise of a populist policy based on money borrowing that made it possible to consume more than the country produced. However, as recent evidence shows (INE-GSEE 2014), this strategy seems to have failed.

According to this evidence, the majority of the people are by no means convinced that the memoranda are some kind of blessing. This is particularly evident in the Athens region, the most populated area in Greece. The magnitude of this strategic failure is significant among those who have suffered most from the crisis; that is, pensioners and housewives. The vast majority of the Greek public opinion has not accepted the view that, thanks to the

memoranda, the crisis offers an opportunity to modernize Greek society and thus improve the lives of Greek citizens.

There is no optimistic climate among citizens living in the Athens region. Significantly, 38% hold a feeling of insecurity and 31% of anger. In other words, it has become clear that most Greek citizens are predominantly animated by ‘negative’ feelings, such as insecurity and anger; they, therefore, approach life negatively, which is not surprising considering that they are far away from exiting the crisis. In addition, one of the symptoms of the current recession is related to the almost universal decline in the value attached to state and political institutions. More specifically, according to the survey, the trade unions, the state, parliament and the political parties have lost citizens’ trust at levels ranging from 84% to 88%. On the contrary, trust in ‘non-political’ institutions (in the strict sense of the term) such as the church and, above all, the family, is growing significantly. This is related also to the fact that the economic crisis has led to a reconsideration of citizens’ values and attitudes. 68% say that they now attach more value to family (16%), friendship (11%), solidarity (9%) and social relations (9%). Citizens therefore put more emphasis and invest more emotionally in interpersonal relations. There is, however, also a shift towards zeroing values, as is suggested by the fact that 32% answered ‘none’ when asked to indicate ‘values that you estimate most after the crisis’.

The narrative produced by the political élite does not seem to have prevailed. At the same time, one cannot say that another coherent, alternative and comprehensive narrative has prevailed. This makes it possible for the economic crisis to turn into a social crisis of trust, thus undermining an element that is essential to social interaction (Pardo 2000, INE-GSEE 2014). Echoing Pardo and Prato (2010), Muro and Vidal (2014) note that in the countries of southern Europe, the economic crisis has turned into a social crisis of trust because political institutions could not bridge, or even manage, the gap between what their citizens were asking them to do and what they are forced to do; a gap that is due both to the country’s participation in the complex institutional system of the European Union (henceforth, EU) and to globalization. According to the World Bank, although people’s economic performance has improved in those countries, they do not believe that they can achieve what they want.

During the crisis, the trust of Greek people did not decrease only in respect to the domestic institutions, but also to the EU. Undoubtedly, most Greeks still trust the European institutions more than the domestic ones. However, it cannot be denied that because of the crisis the relationship of trust that had been built between the Greek public opinion and European institutions since the country’s accession to the then EEC has been severely wounded. According to the Eurobarometer (European Commission 2014), while in November 2009 56% of Greeks had a positive image of the EU, today the proportion of Greeks who say they trust the EU is only 23% — the lowest in Europe. This is directly linked to the fact that: a) 78% of Greek citizens consider the EU as the main responsible for the austerity policy that has existed since 2009; b) more than other Europeans, the Greeks are pessimistic about the future of Europe. This is, however, not a Greek peculiarity. According to Eurofound (2013), since 2009 fewer Europeans trust the EU, domestic governments and domestic parliaments. In

other words, the crisis period, along with the reduction in support for domestic political institutions, has also brought about lower trust in the EU.

This process of de-legitimation goes hand-in-hand with pauperization. According to the aforementioned survey (INE-GSEE 2014), the economic crisis has negatively affected 92% of respondents. The most negative effects concern women, people over 55 and domestic workers. The negative impact of the crisis is on income (95%), consumer spending (94%), entertainment (86%), healthcare (73%) and labour rights (60%). The dominant sentiments are insecurity (especially among women) and anger (especially among men) whereas, as I have said earlier, trust in institutions (the state, the parties, parliament, the trade unions) has fallen greatly. These data seem to be consistent with those produced in the latest OECD survey for Greece (OECD 2014). According to this survey, the average Greek household has been severely hit by the crisis, with repercussions that are particularly evident in the household income, jobs, life satisfaction and participation in public affairs. Especially unemployment has had a significant impact on the level of life satisfaction. Between 2007 and 2013, the proportion of Greeks who said that they were very satisfied with their lives declined from 59% to 23%, the lowest percentage in OECD countries. Citizens' trust in the institutions and the way democracy works has also fallen during the crisis. The proportion of Greeks who say they trust the government declined from 38% to 14% between 2007 and 2013 (OECD 2014).

Taken as a whole, the evidence shows that the crisis has been transferred also to social reproduction, dramatically affecting the biological reproduction potential of the population, adding a greater burden of informal social welfare to the family and to the unpaid work of women and driving a large proportion of the population to question seriously some aspects of the social welfare institutions. Three in four households cannot meet their current needs and find recourse either to borrowing or to using their savings in attempting to do so. One can observe a similar situation elsewhere in Southern Europe, for example in Italy and Spain. There, too, the austerity measures imposed by governments in the wake of the economic crisis have burdened families with added economic and social costs, particularly in terms of social reproduction.

In this context, the level of people's recognition of the legitimacy of institutions and processes that were traditionally unquestioned is clearly at stake. The rise of extreme fascist and populist political powers seems to warn us that a historically catastrophic crisis of legitimacy is *ante portas*. Both political institutions and society at large should heed this warning and take action. First, they should abandon the dominant model that identifies structural changes with fiscal discipline, privatization and the degradation of labour relations and the welfare state. Second, they need to work out a new development strategy that promotes not only fiscal consolidation but also an overall productive restructuring of the European economy.

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Legitimacy Crisis: Commonalities and Differences

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Today there is growing world-wide discontent about the way liberal democracy operates. The representation of this discontent varies from support given to authoritarian tendencies to increasing support for far-right parties, from decreasing tolerance of various social groups like refugees or women to discussions on limiting voting rights. When we look closer into this discontent, we might argue that there is a growing crisis of legitimacy. Legitimacy is a crucial concept for us to understand the foundations of modern society. It refers both to acceptance and to sharing of morality and belief. It allows for the possibility of both trust and recognition to inform social relations. Yet, these features may generate ambiguity as well as contradiction. We could identify these ambiguities and growing discontent in each ethnographic study discussed at the workshop on *Erosions of Legitimacy and Urban Futures: Ethnographic Research Matters* that was held in Sicily in 2017 under the auspices of the International Urban Symposium.

In this short contribution, I reflect on this discontent drawing on my Turkish ethnography. I also try to highlight how this links to the common themes that emerged from the discussions and consider some possible future scenarios. My ethnography on financialization in Turkey centres on the changing dynamics of citizenship, the analysis of which brings out complex three-party relationships among citizens, banks and the state. I examine the contradictory relationship between legitimacy and legality in this context focusing on the case study of actors and institutions that operate in the financial field. A key point is that ‘predatory acts’ by the banks are made legal through state regulation but are considered to be illegitimate by ordinary citizens.

In the modern democratic state, legality is supposed to be the main official source of legitimacy. However, the relationship between law and legitimacy appears to be ambiguous for two important reasons.

First, legality may well not be the only source of legitimacy. As discussed by several contributors to the workshop on the basis of their ethnographies, different moralities may inform ideas of what is legitimate and what is not legitimate. Anthropologists have highlighted these different moralities in their field (Pardo 1995, 2000, and contributions in Pardo ed. 2000 and 2004). Formally, when different moralities confront each other, the legal structure is the final decision maker. In practice, things may well be different. In my ethnography, as there was no regulation on credit card membership fees, the courts have decided in favour of citizens and against the banks. Then, the state produced rules on this issue which favour the banks. As a consequence, legal routes were closed for ordinary citizens. In this case, meeting a key argument on the morality of the law (Pardo 2000), the basic question to ask is, Who writes the law and in whose interest? The role of power relations in modern society becomes the key problematic, as the partnership between the state

and capital becomes more visible. This is important, especially considering that in this context citizens' ability to change, manipulate or question the powers-that-be is decreasing gradually. Power differences among the people and groups involved in these processes become observable in relation to the implementation of the law. In the Turkish case, as elsewhere (see contributions in Pardo and Prato 2010), the gap between the powerful and the less powerful has brought about a crisis of legitimacy.

Second, the borders of legality are not confined to the borders of the nation state, as various international and supranational powers have a say on legal issues. In the age of the global economy, international capital has a certain amount of influence on national decision-making processes. Sometimes, this influence can be observed directly as in the Greek case discussed by Spyridakis (2018). To stay on the Turkish case, I note that the share of foreign capital in the banking sector is relatively high. This also influences the way in which ordinary citizens see legitimacy. People are aware that as far as finance capital is concerned the main components of legitimacy, particularly accountability and control mechanisms do not function. They believe that, through voting, they have a certain amount of control over the actions of the government. There are however no control mechanisms over power groups, who, on the other hand, exert a strong influence on the country's affairs, and especially on its legislation.

These two processes can be clearly observed in the process of financialization in Turkey. Firstly, financialization has weakened the borders of nation state, which is significant, considering the Weberian concept (1978) that in democratic societies the idea of legitimacy is linked directly to the nation state and the rule of law. Secondly, the coalition between the state and capital has become more visible; in particular, when considering one fraction of capital, namely finance capital (Streeck 2014). Thirdly, the relationship between legality and legitimacy is seen as particularly questionable in a financial field where the law is interpreted and applied in the interest of finance capital. The visibility of financial capital and its links with the state have brought out a double problem for citizenship, as this has added an important feature to the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and of full citizenship for those who have access and those who do not (Leyshon and Thrift 1995, Pardo and Prato 2010, Kear 2012). This has also contributed to a process of financialization that has increased the gap between rulers and the ruled (Pardo and Prato 2010). This combination of adverse processes has brought a crisis of democracy (Walby 2013) and the end of democratic citizenship (Streeck 2014).

A common theme that emerged from the workshop was that urban settings provide an opportunity to observe better the interaction between micro and macro processes, which is crucial for us to understand the empirical negotiations on legitimacy. Legitimacy, we agreed, not only needs to be earned; it must also be sustained through time and various circumstances. Urban settings offer opportunities to ordinary citizens with different moralities to interact and become actively involved in the dynamic process of legitimization. Hurtado-Tarazona (2018) shows that in Colombia this means becoming an integrated dweller in new housing complexes, while Boucher (2018) brings out ordinary people's engaging in discussions and

actions on the meaning of public space in Canada. In Turkey, becoming engaged in the process of legitimation means defending rights collectively through civil society associations.

Ordinary citizens, I have found, are most critical about the credit card membership fees. Why are they against these fees? Contrary to other cases, the credit card membership fee was introduced lately in Turkey (Aysan 2012). Since its introduction, it became a source of dispute among customers, banks and state. There was no specific regulation and both individual strategies and special deals with banks allow exceptions to take place. Citizens are trying to find a way to deal with this situation. Through NGOs and customer protection associations, they are calling for the state to take action against the ‘illegitimate behaviour’ of banks. In this case, ‘illegitimate behaviour’ refers to extra costs, including annual credit card membership fees and other payments and hidden fees. Individuals usually fight this ‘illegitimacy’ through the judicial system. The aforementioned court decisions in favour of citizens started to create an extra financial burden for the banks, which they try to avoid by appealing to the judicial system. The state did not intervene; it just watched what was going on. This dispute continued until 2014, when new regulation was introduced and the ‘illegitimate behaviour’ of banks was made ‘legal’, closing the way for associations and individuals to take legal action. In spite of these new regulations, people continue to ask for regulatory reform in favour of citizens, not the banks. It is, I note, precisely because in a modern democratic system it is the state that provides legitimacy through the rule of law that, despite all, Turkish citizens are still asking for state intervention into this controversial field.

The globally linked economy also emerged as a common theme among several contributions to the workshop. In particular, I found interesting that the effects of financial flows could be observed in various ethnographies. Although the relationship between the urban construction sector and the financial capital was not explicitly discussed, this relation is one of the forces behind the high rates of urbanization and rapid transformation, as in the case of Kenya (Koechlin 2018), Colombia (Hurtado-Tarazona 2018) and the U.S.A. (Krase and Krase 2018). The effects of the globally linked economy are clearly observable in the financialization in Turkey. There are 21 foreign capital banks in the country, accounting for around half of the total number of 47; they offer the kind of global banking products, like credit cards and all kinds of consumer credit, that are available in every country but they do so in accordance with the conditions in Turkey that I have outlined.

A key issue is, I reiterate, the relationship between citizenship and legitimacy. The widening gap between governors and citizens has been identified as one of the reasons behind the erosion legitimacy in democratic society (Pardo and Prato eds 2010). Citizens are widely resentful of their legally limited ability to control rulers, as discussed in the ethnographies from Italy (Pardo 2018), Albania (Prato 2018), Greece (Spyridakis 2018) and Turkey. They are cognizant of the interaction among local, national and international processes and they also question rulers’ right to make decisions that adversely affect their lives. As I have mentioned, the asymmetric relations between national governments and international powers such as the European Union and the centres of financial capital have increased the discontent among ordinary citizens. This kind of asymmetric relations also mars relations among

unequal citizens, businesses and, notably, also cities within a nation state. As power differences become observable in policy areas and are experienced in daily life, citizens lose trust in the establishment and its legitimacy. The legislation that has been passed in this field has generated a serious crisis, increasing ‘the gap between the ruled and the rulers’ (Pardo and Prato 2010).

As a result of this growing discontent, possible future scenarios are not optimistic. In my empirical experience, many ordinary people hold a pessimistic view of the future and it is from such a viewpoint that they tend to develop alternative frames of reference for what they regard as legitimate, as well as new value systems and practices. So, the relationship between the legality and legitimacy is turned on its head; here, being legally grounded does not grant legitimacy to the new regulation.

What would be the possible outcomes of these developments? Do we expect that legitimacy crisis to deepen? Do we need to talk about different ‘legitimacy’ claims? Do we need to recognize, investigate and understand the different dynamics that inform the processes of legitimation in specific contexts? As discussed in the workshop, people tend to search for possible sources of legitimacy. They turn to neighbourhood (Abraham 2018), or to civic/grassroots organizations (Boucher 2018, Krase and Krase 2018), or refer to different loyalties (Mollica 2018), or form ‘pirate’ alternatives to public services (Hurtado-Tarazona 2018). Overall, people at the grassroots create ‘different repertoires’ (Koechlin 2018), either to modify the dynamics of legitimation (Pardo 2018, Prato 2018, Uherek 2018) or to attempt for the redefinition of the border between legality and legitimacy as in the case of Italy (Pardo 2018) and Turkey. Therefore, the researcher has to consider different sources of legitimacy and different mechanisms of legitimation. Given the crisis of legitimacy generated by the processes that I have briefly discussed, a point of reference is probably needed for people to stay together as citizens of any particular state. Inevitably, in modern democratic capitalist societies, this point of reference is the legitimacy of the state; serious problems arise when this is questioned (Pardo 2010, 2018). I suggest that, in order to understand different ‘claims’ of legitimacy, we need to study in depth these processes and their impact on people’s view of what is legitimate and what is not legitimate. In this endeavour the ethnographic approach has a critical role to play.

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Exploring the Contours of Legitimacy in Neighbourhoods in North Kerala, India

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During fieldwork in Thalassery in North Kerala I was struck by how neighbourhood spaces were strong sites of legitimacy and social control, while also being spaces of friendship and support. In Thalassery, a neighbour's presence at the event meant to finalise a marriage was crucial and a local elder (*nattu makkyastan*) would officiate at a wedding when there was no priest. *Natakar enna parayum?* (What will the neighbours say?) was a constant refrain and indicated the importance given to what the neighbours considered legitimate. Social control also seemed to be exercised partly through gossip, although in varying degrees in different kinds of neighbourhood. In my field work carried out both in Kerala and later in the northern state of Rajasthan has emerged a strong influence of the neighbourhood in everyday life; for example, in consumer choices, girls and women's education, clothing conventions¹ or employment.

While the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, geography and urban planning have long traditions of neighbourhood studies that go back to the late nineteenth century,² a great deal of the literature has been preoccupied with what Pardo and Prato call a 'problem-centred approach' (2013: 85) coupled with a focus on poverty and poor neighbourhoods.³ In contrast, I am interested in understanding the space of neighbourhoods, their influence on everyday life and the ways in which the neighbourhood is a site of legitimacy in everyday life and its transformations.

Drawing predominantly on the ethnographic contexts of two neighbourhoods in Thalassery in North Kerala, India, in this short contribution to the debate on legitimacy I seek to explore the contours of legitimacy in neighbourhoods. In addressing these questions, I am influenced by Pardo's call for a 'more comprehensive view of the dynamics of legitimacy, and its relations to authority and power' (2000: 4). I also draw on the rich discussions held during the IUS workshop *Erosions of Legitimacy and Urban Futures: Ethnographic Research Matters* held in September 2017.

¹ See Abraham 2010 for the influence of a neighbourhood on veiling practices.

² A perfect example is the famous study by Whyte (1955 [1943]). For a good discussion of this production, see Sanjek (1999).

³ See Sampson, Morenoff and Gannon-Rowley (2002). One exception was Massey's study in which he discussed urban concentrations in which the poor would be exposed to crime, disease and violence and concentrations of affluence which 'enhance the benefits and privilege of the rich' (1996: 395).

Two Neighbourhoods in Thalassery, North Kerala

Neighbourhoods are a strong influence in everyday life, not least because of the sensorial intimacy that a neighbourhood brings to it. The sights, sounds and smells mean that neighbours often know intimate details about those who live near them — they hear quarrels, smell what is being cooked, see who visits and when, and so on. It is both this sensorial intimacy and a shared sensorial landscape in everyday life that make the neighbourhood such a powerful influence in people's lives.

As I discuss below, neighbourhoods are constituted through a variety of practices: reciprocity, friendship, worship, control or violence. The circle of who one considers a neighbour varies, pointing to the fact that while neighbourhoods need to be seen as entities that are constituted through proximity and friendship, caste, or political ideology, it is important to recognize that they are also shaped through particular non-everyday events — such as a political killing, or communal violence.

Between 1996 and 1998 I did an intensive fieldwork for over 18 months in two neighbourhoods in Thalassery. Since then, over these twenty years, I have visited these neighbourhoods for shorter periods. One neighbourhood is located in the municipality area of Thalassery, the other is located in the neighbouring village area. Both neighbourhoods are heterogeneous in terms of class and religion. However, there are significant differences between the two which I will detail briefly below.

The neighbourhood in the town has, on average, larger house plots and includes several large houses which used to be matrilineal joint family (*tharavad*) homes. Most houses have compound walls that divide one house compound from another. There is a mix of Hindu households of different castes, Muslims and some Christians, including a provincial house for nuns where I lived while I did field work in the area. I call this neighbourhood Pattamkunnu (*kunnu* in Malayalam means hill and the neighbourhood is on a little hill that slopes down to the shore of the Arabian sea).

The other neighbourhood, Devaloor, is centred on a place of worship — a *kavu*, or forest shrine, which is now large and is famous for a temple festival in which the epic Ramayana is performed. As is common of neighbourhoods centred around a place of worship, Devaloor is predominantly inhabited by Thiyyas, the caste that manages the temple. The Thiyyas are an in-between caste, who suffered untouchability and are known by their traditional occupation of toddy tapping⁴ and coconut tree climbing. The neighbourhood has a mix of households based on class and strong kinship networks, as a result of the partition of property among kin over several generations. Another significant difference between the two neighbourhoods was that in 1996 houses in Devaloor were closer to each other, very few had compound walls and paths often passed the front of houses, resulting in a greater visibility and interaction.

⁴ Toddy is coconut tree sap.

The Contours of Legitimacy in the Two Neighbourhoods

In both neighbourhoods, neighbours were considered very important. At weddings, in the event of a death or in other significant events, neighbours help a lot. At these events, young men from the neighbourhood help construct the tent, arrange the chairs and tables that have been hired, and serve food. In addition, a few women from the neighbourhood would come to help grate and grind coconut and other ingredients. Over the years, however, one change that has come about is that a number of tasks that used to be done by neighbours — such as constructing a tent — are now done by professionals. However, neighbours continue to help out at important events. This is particularly the case in Devaloor where even if neighbours do not construct the tent themselves, they will supervise the construction. The support of neighbours at these events and in moments of crisis makes people see the neighbourhood as an important place in which to live together according to relations of reciprocity.

On occasions such as a marriage or a house warming, neighbours not only help in kind but also contribute towards the expenses by gifting money. People would describe how neighbours gave money at a wedding, or a housewarming; or how they did so at gatherings organised to raise money from neighbours on behalf of a needy person. The latter has been replaced by bank loans. Thus, loans and professional services have to some extent undermined the constitution of the neighbourhood as an interdependent moral community in the Durkheimian sense. This changing context is important in our understanding the neighbourhood as a site of legitimacy.

The importance of the neighbourhood as a site of legitimacy is underlined by the aforementioned practice by which the local elder may officiate at the wedding instead of a priest. Furthermore, while it is considered important to obtain the approval of different relatives before a marriage is fixed, it is also important to obtain the approval of neighbours. The presence of the local elder, the articulation of local custom and the importance of neighbours as witnesses point to the importance of the neighbourhood as a site in which legitimacy is sought.

While neighbours are a source of legitimacy and of support they also exercise considerable social control. Meeting relevant findings in the literature (Besnier 2009, Nakassis 2010, Ong 1987), the recurrent comment, ‘What will the neighbours say?’ and the stories that I collected in which neighbours are mentioned as ‘talking’ ‘gossiping’, ‘advising’ point to the fact that in the neighbourhood social behaviour is controlled by the fear of ‘comments’, gossip or rumours. Neighbours have emerged as important players not only in the dynamics of social and economic support but also as a group that exerted control, a group that was the guardian of the norms and rules. The neighbourhood was, then, the site in which people exercised control, censured and upheld dominant ideas of morality.

Dispute Resolution, Political Rivalry and Competing Claims of Legitimacy

The neighbourhood as a space in which legitimacy is established or garnered changed dramatically over the twentieth century. Until the 1930s or 1940s, there were caste groupings in clusters of administrative units in which the eldest male from a large and prestigious

matrilineal joint family *tharavads* (houses or kin groups) would hear civil and criminal cases (Murkoth Kumaran quoted in Kunyappa 1975). Depending on the nature of the offence, people were fined, punished or in some cases excommunicated. In this sense, as I have mentioned, the local level was the effective unit of the caste and of caste control; the geographic size of the unit deciding the case seems to have depended on the nature of the case (Mayer 1960). It is unclear when exactly this system disappeared but several people have suggested that it dwindled in influence and then ceased as the influence grew of the secular law courts in colonial India. It has been replaced by other institutions and players, most notably government run courts.

However, in some cases there is an attempt to resolve problems at the local level. Party leaders play an important role in this. In Kerala the neighbourhood has been an important unit for political organisation and this has been strengthened by the fact that Kerala has one of the best-established systems of local government in the country. Political parties have local organising committees that play a key role in dispute settlement — most often in a way that privileges the party loyalist. How much authority these committees are able to wield depends on who is in power at the state government level and who is in power at central government level. This form of dispute resolution indicates the existence of competing claims of legitimacy and processes of legitimation at the level of the neighbourhood, which is most evident in disputes over providing land for a road. With a dramatic increase in the number of personal cars, in the last twenty years there has been an attempt to expand the number of roads and make them broad enough for a car. The local *panchayat* is petitioned to build a road or money is pooled to build a private road. In these cases, the party may be approached and local party members or loyalists may be called upon to ‘persuade’ someone to part with part of their land.

‘Big men’ in the neighbourhood units of political parties create competing circles of legitimacy.⁵ In areas dominated by one political party, members make a greater use of strong-arm tactics. Writing about clashes between party cadres of opposing parties in North Kerala Ruchi Chaturvedi says:

‘...[L]ocal politics ...is also about which group appears to be a major force in an area, which group has greater visibility and say in people’s everyday lives, whose name is displayed during neighbourhood commemorations and festivities, who are people compelled to turn to in times of need, and who becomes their means of accessing different structures of power. In this terrain of the local, alliances are made, friendships are forged, loyalties are produced, rivalries are generated and young men from various political parties become a force trying to steer residents in the direction of one group or another’ (Chaturvedi 2017).

This brings out well the way in which the workings of a political party intersect with local youth cultures and produce neighbourhoods in distinct ways (Chaturvedi 2015).

⁵ See Pardo (1996) on the working of ‘big men’ in a neighbourhood in Naples.

In recent months, north Kerala has been in the news for political killings across party lines — primarily between cadres of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI (M)] and of the Hindu nationalist parties RSS-BJP. Chaturvedi argues that the political culture is one driven by a majoritarian impulse — an ‘impulse to become major and make minor’ (2017). I would argue that revenge and a drive for masculine possession (of power, people or goods) seems to fuel this cycle of brutal violence, which is not restricted to killings between political rivals. These killings are illegitimate in the eyes of the constitution and are a violation of the right to life; in different cases, the law courts have found people on both sides of the political spectrum guilty of these murders. On the other hand, the language of martyrdom sets a parallel code of legitimacy at different levels of the political circles; that is, the local level, the state level, the national level and the international level.

The precarious nature of the neighbourhood was brought home to me during my visit to Devaloor in 2010, when I was documenting the World Cup fever there. In interviews with men in the neighbourhood library and the football club, they all spoke in veiled ways about how the football teams had gone and how young people stopped playing in the football club after the 2002 murder of a young adult who played in the neighbourhood football club. The murder is believed to have been carried out by party opponents. The football club has remained inactive for years, and for these young men the neighbourhood was not what it used to be.

Competing Circles of Legitimacy: Towards a Conclusion

At the level of the neighbourhood, legitimacy can be understood to be part of a woven fabric comprising strands of reciprocity, support and social control in everyday life. All these strands are intermeshed and form one complex picture. Furthermore, a look at legitimacy at neighbourhood level brings out not only shifts in centres of power and authority, but also competing claims of legitimacy and competing processes of legitimation. This is further made evident by the recognition that legitimacy at the local level is influenced by dynamics at different levels — local, trans-local, national and global. Moving away from the view of the state as the carrier of authority helps us to look at the dynamics of legitimacy among people in everyday life and the multiple directions in which legitimacy may flow. In contrast to Andrews’ findings (2018), then legitimacy does not emerge as a zero-sum game; instead, power is conceptualised as having multiple centres depending on the context. Looking at the dynamics in the space of neighbourhoods dramatically demonstrates how there are multiple circles of legitimacy (organised by caste, associations such as Resident Welfare Associations, political affiliation or muscle and money power, including the power of the gun) that intersect and may be in conflict with each other or with the state (see, for example, Pardo 2018, Boucher 2018).

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Issues of Legitimacy among Social Housing Residents in Soacha, Colombia

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Having carried out a three-year fieldwork among social housing residents in Soacha, a municipality in the southern outskirts of Bogotá, Colombia, I thought that discussing legitimacy might sound like a far-fetched task. How to reflect on legitimacy from a city in a country that has never experienced it? If I had told my interlocutors that I would attend a workshop to discuss ‘erosions of legitimacy’, they would probably have asked, Erosion of what legitimacy? What has never existed cannot be eroded.

This is the context in which my ethnographic analysis takes place. Soacha is a municipality whose government has historically been conceived as failed, in a country that is experiencing a crisis of legitimacy on a macro scale. In Colombia the consequence of the kind of systematic failure of governance that Pardo and Prato warn to be dangerous for the democratic order has already taken place; a country where the risk that ‘people’s distrust in those who staff the relevant institutions may extend to the institutions themselves’ (Pardo and Prato 2010: 2-3) has become a reality. In Soacha, lack of trust in the local government and ordinary people’s low expectations about the actions of their rulers has caused citizens to resort to private governance schemes to manage their daily lives. In terms of local law, one thinks, for example, of the Horizontal Property Regime that regulates residential condominiums. This is how Ciudad Verde emerged as a privately built and managed ‘new city’, where middle- and lower-middle income households live and where most are first-time homeowners.

However, the perspective offered by the concept of legitimacy allowed me to see aspects of the lives of Ciudad Verde’s inhabitants in a new light. Specifically, it allowed me to identify the link between people’s subjective experiences and broader processes. Ordinary people experience legitimacy by contrasting their trajectories and social practices with the available economic, political, legal and material ‘matrix’ of their environment. In this process, some aspects are seen to fit into the matrix and others do not. The ways in which people manage those aspects tell us about the relationship between agency and structure, between individual and society, between social reproduction and social change, and between the possibilities and constraints of exercising citizenship in urban settings that, in Colombia, are increasingly becoming the dominant way of housing the ‘emerging middle classes’.

Three interlinked processes coexist in the residents of Ciudad Verde’s experience of legitimacy. The first concerns the ways in which some practices that are legal — such as hanging clothes on windows — become illegitimate through the acceptance and promotion of aesthetic and behavioural restrictions marking the horizontal property regime. Here, the ‘criminalization of actions that are widely regarded as legitimate’ (Pardo and Prato 2010: 2) is carried out not by ‘the rulers’ but by residents themselves. The second process concerns illegal practices — such as pirate transportation and commercial activities inside the

apartments — that become legitimate in order to overcome structural limitations. The third process involves moral disputes among residents when there is no consensus about the legitimacy of certain practices, such as street vending. In these processes, the (thin) dividing line between legitimate and illegitimate modes of production of livelihoods (Comaroff and Comaroff 2016), and the disputes in defining this boundary, have less to do with what is legal or illegal than with an interplay between the moral aspirations and the material needs of the residents of Ciudad Verde.

Graeber (2015) argues from a feminist and race theories perspective that those at the bottom of any unequal social arrangement — in terms of gender, race, or class — must do most of the interpretive work to understand the social dynamics of the context in which they live. They invest much time imagining the perspective of those who are ‘on the top’ and empathizing with it, which is not mirrored from ‘the top’. In this ‘lopsided structures of imagination [...] the powerless not only end up doing most of the actual, physical labour required to keep society running, they also do most of the interpretive labour as well’ (Graeber 2015: 80). This is clear in my ethnography, where the hyper-regulated environment that residents embrace and reinforce restricts their possibilities of sociality and citizenship. Thus, residents who come from popular neighbourhoods must invest much of their material and symbolic resources to understand the vision of a middle-class citizen and to interact with their material environment and with their neighbours and the institutions in the same way they imagine a middle-class citizen would do. So, ordinary people deal with the failures of the municipality and the unfulfilled promises of real estate developers by filling the gaps of legitimacy with their own material and symbolic resources, without challenging governance. They are doing a great share of material and interpretive work in their efforts to ‘manage existence’ (Pardo 1995).

This leads us to highlight some theoretical and methodological aspects about how an ethnographic analysis in an urban context can contribute to the study of legitimacy, and beyond that to our understanding of how broad processes are linked to the life of ordinary people. Pardo states that power is lost because the dominant élite ‘fail to link to the broader society’ (Pardo 2000: 22). Therefore, ‘a key task of governance is to establish and nurture the connection with citizens’ values, needs and expectations, the strength of which depends upon the observable quality of the link between political responsibility and trust and authority in the exercise of power’ (Pardo and Prato 2010: 1). In this light, a crisis of legitimacy could be seen as an issue of unequal distribution of interpretive work. If the problem is that rulers lose connection with the citizens, that they are unable or unwilling to understand the worldviews of ordinary people, ethnographic knowledge has an important role to play because it can help to bring out the way in which ordinary people imagine and face the structural conditions they live in; it can help us to understand their motivations and expectations; it can help to clarify whether, and to what extent, the latter are met with specific reference to the question, who delivers what and to whom?

In my specific case, people ‘from the top’ — local government officials and employees of the construction companies — take for granted that the problems of coexistence in the

residential compounds are due to people not knowing the rules or being unwilling to follow them. On the contrary, from the bottom up we see that knowing and enforcing the rules is the main way for people to ascend socially and to exercise citizenship from their social and spatial position. Residents are indeed keen on rule-enforcing and mutual and self-regulation. In practice, however, sometimes reality makes it difficult to follow the rules. Structural deficiencies, caused precisely by governments' failure to deliver to the citizens, force the latter to turn away from the normative regime, reminding us that 'people may choose to operate regardless of if their actions are strictly legal; what is not legal may, thus, acquire an aura of moral justification and become accepted as legitimate' (Pardo and Prato 2010: 2). This translates into confrontations between people who at all costs want the image of the 'good citizen' dictated from above to prevail and those who act by other moral principles to get ahead. In this context, the challenge for urban governance does not lie in promoting citizens' rule-compliance but in creating new possibilities of urban citizenship that provide solutions to the residents' material and moral needs and address the limitations that ordinary people face in their daily lives.

Another aspect that emerged from the analysis of my empirical material in the light of the theoretical discussions on legitimacy is ordinary people's efforts to reconcile the different deficits of legitimacy at different levels. In my work, as in that of other participants in the workshop (Abraham 2018a and 2018b; Koechlin 2018a and 2018b), the neighbourhood exerts agency either in terms of social control or as a place that offers new possibilities of citizenship to those who are marginalised. In the neighbourhood of Ciudad Verde, people clearly process their (ambiguous) relations with the law by generating normative frameworks that, on the one hand, exceed what is legal and, on the other, tolerate practices that are not legal but are necessary to cope with daily life. Here, the neighbourhood is the sphere where legitimacy arrangements at various levels take place which generate opportunities and constraints for social life and citizenship. Through neighbourly relations and emerging moralities, residents engage with legitimacy and try to secure the upward mobility promised by the 'dream of homeownership', conditional to the enforcement of strict aesthetic and behavioural regulations that involve limitations on one's own freedom and socialization. At the same time, they try to overcome contextual limitations — the crisis of metropolitan governance, socio-spatial segregation and accessibility problems, unemployment and limitations in the design of the megaproject — by legitimizing some illegal practices. Symbolically, local residents endeavour for Ciudad Verde to become a middle-class neighbourhood despite its peripheral location in a segregated urban area. Materially, they connect with Bogotá through public and 'pirate' transportation and secure their livelihoods through formal jobs and informal home businesses and street stalls.

Reflecting on my ethnography from the perspective of legitimacy made me realise that the dynamics of legitimacy among the inhabitants of Ciudad Verde respond to the failure of rulers, but also to the prevailing local notions of social mobility and middle-class citizenship. Thus, by analysing how ordinary people engage with gaps in legitimacy at different levels of governance in their daily lives and by tracing the emergent moralities that result from this

engagement we can gain a better understanding of contemporary configurations of citizenship and social life. As stated by Comaroff and Comaroff ‘ours, after all, is an epoch –if not the first, then certainly the latest– in which law-making, law-breaking, and law-enforcement are especially critical registers in which societies construct, contest and confront truths about themselves’ (Comaroff and Comaroff 2016: xii).

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Undermining Governmental Legitimacy: Failed Expectations of Community Accountability

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Introduction

The rise of right and left-wing populism both in the United States and globally seems to have taken many political analysts both in and out of academe by surprise. One of the major reasons for this lack of vision is due to what might be called ‘ivory tower myopia,’ or the lack of attention to what takes place at the ground level. Historically, populism has risen in electoral democracies when the people’s expectations of accountability to them and attention to their needs are unmet. It is not an individual phenomenon dependent on a charismatic leader, but a collective one based on social conditions. Theoretically and historically-informed ethnography makes it possible to observe how governmental legitimacy is undermined at the grassroots level. We, the authors, have been community activists, and at times vision is due to what might be called ‘ivory tower myopia’, or the lack of attention to what takes place at the ground level, deeply engaged in New York City partisan politics, which provided us with access to local decision-making processes. In this regard, Jerome Krase discussed how notions of the ‘ideal’ community serves as a practical guide for local organizations to best present themselves, their goals, and needs to authorities, and how authorities claim legitimacy by demonstrating responsiveness to community demands (Krase 1977, 1979). New York City’s Community Planning Districts use the same community paradigm to present themselves as being responsible to the public. Theoretically, for this legitimacy they rely on what Max Weber termed ‘Legal-Rational Authority’ (1978: 215). Paradoxically, that legitimacy, bestowed by the public, actually rests on what Weber called ‘Traditional Rationality’ (Weber 1978).

For Italo Pardo and Giuliana B. Prato, ‘A key task of governance is to establish and nurture the connection with citizens’ values, needs and expectations, the strength of which depends upon the observable quality of the link between political responsibility and trust and authority in the exercise of power’ (2010: 1). Therefore, what citizens expect from government is a key variable. The 1960s was a turbulent decade for American cities. New York was no exception as it was punctuated by mass anti-government demonstrations and several riots in alienated African-American neighbourhoods. Concomitantly, citizen demands for increased accountability and even community control of city services such as education and development increased. In 1969, during the mayoralty of John V. Lindsay, the New York City Planning Commission decentralized some governmental authority. As noted by the Commission’s Chair, Donald H. Elliot (1966-73), ‘Mayor Lindsay was very interested in having a community participation component as part of the development process. Following the Robert Moses era that mostly ignored public opinion, Lindsay wanted local communities to have an impact on government decisions.’ (Center for New York City Law, 2017) The city

was divided into 62 (currently 59) Community Districts, each with its own Community Board. Each Board consists of up to 50 unsalaried members appointed by the Borough President, with half nominated by the City Council members who are elected to represent residents in that district. Board members must reside, work in, or have some other significant interest in the community.

Jerome Krase and Charles La Cerra explained that, although seemingly progressive on the surface, Lindsay, at first a Republican Party reformer, employed the decentralization rubric to get around the almost total control of the city by Democratic Party bosses. In addition, community associations in poverty areas provided residents with alternative methods for local problem-solving. In more middle-class neighbourhoods, educated and sophisticated voters used them to pressure political clubs to become more democratic. The Community Boards also created opportunities for political entrepreneurs by fostering competition for limited resources. Individuals, groups, and local social service providers became constituency seeking ‘favours.’ The ‘Great Society’, ‘Community Action’, ‘Model Cities’, and other Federal programs were also ripe with patronage and provided new jobs and spoils for urban political machines to distribute. Consequently, nominally independent local agencies quickly came under the control of local bosses (Krase and LaCerra 1992, also Krase 1997). Even groups elected by the community, such as Community School Boards, slowly gravitated toward the usual politics as teachers’ unions and suppliers saw the need to control Board decisions and joined with regular political clubs to elect sympathetic elect board members. City newspapers often exposed the corruption created by these new opportunities. Despite these scandals, the ideal of accountability to the local community maintained its ideological appeal. By the turn of the 21th century much of the power decentralized in the 1970s was re-centralized and Community Districts lost much of their potency.

What follows is a comparison between reactions of local residents to controversial decisions in two Brooklyn Community Districts that, although they concern very different constituencies, share the same problem of establishing and maintaining their legitimacy. In both cases, actions by the respective Community Boards raised doubts as to whether the concerns and indeed the welfare of many local residents were given sufficient weight in the decision-making process.

SELECTED POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS 2010		
Source NYCDP (https://communityprofiles.planning.nyc.gov)		
	Community District 6	Community District 9
Total Population	104,709	98,400
White Non-Hispanics	63.8%,	18.4%
Black (Non-Hispanic)	6.9%	67.6%
Hispanic	18.6%	9.7%
Foreign Born	17.5%	41.8%
Unemployment	6.5%	13.4%
NYC Poverty Measure	9.0%	23.1%
Education (Bachelor Degree or higher)	70%	26.7%

Community Board 9 - Rezoning (by Jerome Krase)

I have been an activist-scholar in Community District 9 since the 1960s, and I continue to serve on one the District's committees. The current fight against upscale residential development was spurred by a city-wide re-zoning plan devised during the Mayoral administration of Michael Bloomberg. In predominantly non-white areas like Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant, it has a distinctly racial tone as described by Shannyce Lashley, a reporter who covered a public meeting, 'Bed-Stuy in Crisis', at which I spoke.

"New York City has a housing policy, it's very simple, black people live where white people don't wanna live until white people decide to live there again," said a resident of Bed-Stuy at the forum. "That policy is racist. Is it class based? Yes, but it's racist, and the battle for Bed-Stuy is going to be fought in the streets." (Lashley 2014)

Although much of the battle continues to be face-to-face, increasingly today it takes place in, and through, various forms of mass and electronic media such as web blogs, list servers, websites, e-mail, Twitter, and platforms such as *Facebook*. The movement that garnered the greatest amount of attention in Brooklyn as a whole was 'Develop, Don't Destroy Brooklyn' which unsuccessfully fought against development at the Atlantic Yards and the Barclay's Center (http://www.dddb.net/php/latestnews_ArchiveDate.php). In Crown Heights, the organization that has the highest, somewhat controversial, profile is MTOPP — The Movement to Protect the People (<http://www.mtopp.org/>). Its fiery leader is Alicia Boyd, a middle-class African American home owner, whose goal was preventing approval by CD 9 of the City-wide rezoning program. MTOPP's mission statement declares: 'We must organize! We must meet with our representatives! Stage demonstrations! Call in our favors! File lawsuits! Expose the back room deals that are taking away our rights! We must use every resource at our disposal, to let these developers know that... Our Community is not for sale!!!' (<http://www.mtopp.org/mission.html>). MTOPP also engaged activist urban planner Tom Angotti to devise a grass roots plan to counter the City's rezoning plan. (Angotti 2015)

Alicia Boyd and other MTOPP activists vehemently complained about the unethical and perhaps illegal conduct of Community Board 9. Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests were filed and board members have also been accused of conflicts of interest. She and other activists were arrested at protests. In anticipation of disruption, in the autumn of 2014 the October meeting date and venue was changed. More police were added to deal with anticipated disruptions from MTOPP and others. At this meeting, which I attended, a motion for adjournment was made by a board member in the audience, approved by board members, and the meeting ended quickly before the public comment period on the agenda. This caused a loud protest from MTOPP members (wearing MTOPP t-shirts) standing at the back of the auditorium who had been handing out literature to attendees, and who were prepared to speak at the public comments period that was on the agenda.

In addition to being a prolific blogger whose site attracts a great deal of comment, Tim Thomas chaired the Transportation Committee of Community Board 9. His support of proposals to develop affordable housing in Crown Heights and Prospect Lefferts Gardens

drew the wrath of the MTOPP. However, even those in favour of development were wary of the government plan. In reference to the plan, his blog, ‘The Q at Parkside’ circulated a petition that stated in part:

We, the undersigned, implore Community Board 9 and the NYC Department of City Planning to immediately begin a Planning Study of Community District 9, specifically the western portion of CB9’s boundaries. The current zoning map dates to 1961. While other parts of NYC have been contextually zoned and updated to reflect a modern reality, we continue to live with decisions that were made for our neighborhood more than 50 years ago...We would prefer to undergo this process collaboratively, rather than have outside forces develop our neighborhood FOR us. We’ve seen the future — in certain buildings, like 626 Flatbush and another 23-story tower on Nostrand to our south, plus dozens of new ‘as of right’ projects throughout Central Brooklyn. We’d like to temper the urge of developers to build without an understanding of the consequences to our historic and tight-knit community. (Please Sign Petition For Zoning Study To Begin).¹

Other disputes among competing activists and neighbourhood spokespersons have revolved around the real and imagined racial biases of protagonists and antagonists on various local issues. For example, MTOPP has been accused by some of making racially divisive comments about pro-development advocates. However, the less radical, Prospect Park East Network (PPEN) also sees these and related future projects as reducing the ethnic and class diversity of the area, as well as causing divisions in the community (<http://www.ppen.org/>).

Community Board 6 — Controversial Bike Lanes (by Kathryn Krase)

In contrast to the residential rezoning of portions of Crown Heights, which threatened the affordability of housing for thousands of poor and working-class Non-white renters, the construction of bike lanes in an affluent neighbourhood might seem to lack gravitas, but for many residents such as myself, it was both an affront to aesthetic sensibilities and a demonstration of insensitivity to our real concerns about safety and convenience. The bike lane would destroy the streetscape of the historically landmarked thoroughfare. Parking spaces were lost, bikers flaunted traffic laws, and according to Seniors for Safety, created unsafe conditions especially for less agile elderly pedestrians. When the protected bike lanes were originally proposed for Prospect Park West in 2010, I honestly thought it was a joke. Why would any policymaker think it was a good idea to take away a lane of traffic on a busy roadway integral to inter-neighbourhood travel in Brooklyn? Prior to presenting the plan for the bike lanes there was significant community engagement in efforts to address ‘traffic calming’ there. Ironically, calming was needed because of the increased traffic created by earlier ‘pro-bike, anti-car’ decisions.

¹ See <http://theqatparkside.blogspot.com/2015/01/please-sign-petition-for-zoning-study.html>

Community Board 6 conducted a survey, allegedly to ascertain support for the measures. To anti-bike lane groups, however, it was more of a fabrication. For example, the initial survey did not ask respondents, many of whom were canvassed along the route, for approval of what became an extensive and costly construction of bicycle lanes. The unfortunate, but timely, death of a child on the street gave the greatest impetus for the plan's approval, which claimed to be the honest result of wide consultation with 'the community'. After the lanes were finished, another pseudo-social scientific survey was conducted to demonstrate further community support for the plan after it was challenged in court by 'Neighbors for Better Bike Lanes and Seniors for Safety'. In the court papers, the group claimed that the proponents of the bike lane project misrepresented their studies as well as the project itself. Ironically, the announcement of the survey results included cautions that the survey was not very 'scientific'. *The New York Times* coverage of the survey noted: 'Polling experts caution, however, that online surveys, like any surveys in which the respondents are self-selected rather than contacted at random, are of limited value' (Goodman 2010). The survey was conducted using a relatively unsophisticated internet platform *Survey Monkey*, and on the report website itself was the Caveat: 'Not intended as a referendum or a randomly-sampled public opinion poll.' Despite these particular advisements, this and the other surveys were widely used in the sympathetic press and by proponents of the project, as evidence of broad community support for their view.

Observations made by several informants of community meetings at which pro and anti-bike lane speakers made their cases before Community Board 6 meetings and the Park Slope Civic Council revealed a similar pattern. In all cases, it appeared that the pro-bike lane supporters were in the majority. Speakers for each side were loudly, but not raucously, applauded by their supports. As to civility, however, one anti-bike lane informant reported that after being quoted in a newspaper story, online comments were 'incredibly abusive'. As a result, the informant has 'not Googled my name from then onwards because it was too upsetting'. As many others, this informant was not against a bike lane *per se* but was disturbed by how residents who expressed contrary opinions were being steamrolled by the city-wide pro-bike lane group Transportation Alternatives and their allies on Community Board 6, the Civic Council, and in Councilman Brad Lander's office. Those 'who didn't agree with them or had valid points in opposition were vindictively labelled as rich and old. And the DOT and Jeannette Sadik Khan lied throughout'.

Long after the dust had settled, Bloomberg era Transportation Commissioner, Janette Sadik-Kahn (2007-2013) and Seth Solomonow penned *Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution* in which she wrote: 'the strife over Prospect Park West represented a perverse version of the historical battles between Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses.' (2017: 8), and repeated widely shared comments in the media about her opponents such as Iris Weinshall '... who lived in a *well-appointed* (my emphasis) high-rise along Prospect Park West with her husband, *influential* (my emphasis) United States Senator Charles Schumer' (168). More critical for our thesis, she mistakenly claimed 'the truth is that the community has been asking for traffic calming on Prospect Park West, including a protected bike path, for at least four

years' (171). In contrast, praise and thanks were given to Transportation Alternatives members '... who pulled together spoke out at community meetings, drafted op-eds and letters to the editor, and always made themselves available' (177). Incidentally, a prominent Transportation Alternatives member was Co-Chair of the Community Board 6 Transportation Committee.

Discussion and Notes on Methods

Obviously, the tactics for the more privileged opposition groups in Park Slope such as Neighbors for Better Bike Lanes and Seniors for Safety are different from MTOPP in Crown Heights. Due to their higher status, they used quieter, more legalistic methods, and relied on the unrequited respect of their higher social status by elected officials and employees of city agencies who claimed to represent them. But the outcomes, despite the fact that both groups were eventually vindicated as to their claims, were the same as to the government's loss of legitimacy in their eyes. A crucial issue is how the city government, via its local arms, such as Community Planning Districts, presented themselves as being accountable to the public, and how they can lose their legitimacy by failing in their, sometimes cynical, efforts.

To accomplish this complex task, we employed a number of ethnographic methods and techniques. In addition to the usual ethnographic methods such as direct observation, participant observation, interviews, informants, we employed various more and less digital (Pink et al. 2015) and virtual (Dominguez et al. 2007) methods to explore on-line discussions, websites, and on-line newspapers. Both researchers also engaged in analytic auto-ethnography (Ellis et al. 2011) as a way to explore personally the issues and processes from the inside out. Finally, comparative or multi-sited ethnographic (Marcus 1995) sensibilities made it possible to isolate commonalities between very different neighbourhoods and issues.

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Legitimacy and Symbolic Politics in a Neoliberal City

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A task of governance is to ‘establish and nurture the connection with citizens’ values, needs and expectations’ (Pardo and Prato 2010: 1). One way this connection demonstrates itself is through direct communication. This includes the structures and means required by communication, such as staff, bureaucratic support, coherent governance, money and data analytics. Meyer (1999) rightfully addresses this dimension of legitimacy processes at the European Union level and explains how the structures and means of communication are obstructed or not fully functional. As a counter example, Bimber (2014) demonstrates how the mastering of digital media in the Obama campaigns of 2008 and 2012 was innovative and partly secured his (re)elections.

Birdwhistell (Lohisse 2001) defines communication not as the content per se, but as a system, as the structure that allows the communication to take place. From a political economy perspective, communication, when in the hand of people in power, refers to the ‘capacity to influence people’s mind’ through the mass media (Castells 2007: 240). More broadly, this is known as symbolic politics, which defines a strategic use of signs and symbols for political purposes (Donsbach 2008). Symbolic politics suppose the control of symbolic dynamics, ideological beliefs, normative values and codes which are part of the cultural realm where the communication processes occur (Lohisse 2001, Sears et al. 1980).

This short discussion explores the ramifications of legitimacy into symbolic communication in a neoliberal urban structure, by relying on selected indicators of neoliberalism, urban entrepreneurialism and communication. The matter deserves a full-length analysis, and a crossing with its relation to different moral communities (Pardo 2000) despite difficulties such as those experimented on similar urban issues (for instance, Colombo 2016).

In a forthcoming book edited by Pardo and Prato (2018), I explore the demolition of Square Viger by the City of Montreal. My discussion focuses on an informal group of public figures engaged in heritage, public art and urban redevelopment that I joined in 2013 and that lobbied in favour of saving the Square (Boucher 2018, forthcoming). Here, I attempt to describe how delicate it was to advocate for the Square without losing our legitimacy (individually and as a group), because municipal authorities and the general public have complained about the Square since its redesign in the 1970s (Doyon 2013). The admitted reason? The then-innovative design that replaced the Victorian-style park includes a predominance of concrete, great isolation from the street, walls and covered walkways which do not allow for a peripheral view (Fiset 2011). Another reason, politically incorrect, is that the new version came to life in one of the worst demographic periods in the borough; the number of residents in the vicinity declined and some groups of homeless found a home in the Square. Homelessness has a negative connotation in the urban landscape, and it creates a

great deal of discomfort amongst citizens (Boucher 2017, Classen 1993, Whyte 1988). By letting homeless people make the Square their home, the City nourished the idea that it was illegitimate; the symbolic aspects of homelessness (danger, unhealthy, instability) were transferred to the Square by the inaction of the City to support a positive image and the legitimacy of the Square.

In this dossier, the City discredited the Square by not fully implementing the plans proposed by the artist who designed it, by doing nothing to improve its state and reputation since the redesign. The disinvestment in public infrastructure and services is a well-known collateral effect of the neoliberalisation of the economy. In Canada, this is dated in the mid-1990s when the main fiscal priority became the deficit reduction rather than social safety (Stern and Hall 2015). One of the reasons why the deficit reduction has become a legitimate financial measure is the development of an analogy with household debts — an analogy that sparked (unlikely) comparisons between a responsible government and a strong father figure (the *Bonus Pater Familias* of the Roman Law and the ‘Reasonable Man’ in the Common Law) (Shaviro 1997, Zhou 2001). One famous illustration of this is the shoe polish brought by the finance minister of the province of Québec to the press conference announcing the 2017 budget. Building on the analogy that there is no need to buy a new pair of shoes if you can refurbish the one that is already paid for, he claimed forcefully that a responsible dad, like his government, does not spend family money before clearing the debts (Croteau 2017). With such strong images, which call to the North American values of noble sacrifice and hard work, the neoliberal strategy of deficit reduction over public services was well received by most people and thus made legitimate.

Meanwhile, as a reaction to the 1980s crash and economic erosion, cities came out as major players to pull the population out of the financial slump. An entrepreneurialism regime, then seen as the best option, was adopted by most cities across the globe (Harvey 2014). Among other strategies, entrepreneurialism encourages the political economy of places rather than of territories; economic projects meant to improve the living and working conditions are limited to specific buildings or places (or sectors, like technologies) rather than to geographical and political (and social) territories (Harvey 2014). These actions are in line with neoliberalism, notably because they mainly benefit private sectors (Söderström et al. 2014). Sporadic but impressive and visual investments — for example, in large parks — are generally well received because they contribute to enhance the image of the city. The symbolism of a great, fun and innovative city is powerful. The expected influx of tourists and investors is seen as economic dynamism. Furthermore, investing in specific sectors, such as parks, is a classic strategy to display political and economic power and establish or secure legitimacy (Stark 2014) for the rulers and, consequently, for the city that they rule.

In 2010, major changes in the vicinity of Viger Square raised a renewed interest in the place: a mega hospital was constructed on three lots west of the Square and the abandoned Viger train station (on the south side) was revived with office spaces. Unsurprisingly, four years later, a \$3 million investment specifically targeted for the Square’s renewal was approved, admittedly in time for the forthcoming celebrations of the 375th anniversary of

Montreal in 2017 (Normandin 2015). Although Montrealers were sceptical of the celebrations and doubted the need to celebrate a 375th anniversary, this urban surgical intervention was welcomed by most citizens.

In light of these examples, we see how communication of symbols is essential in the establishment of legitimacy — of people, places, regimes. This has to be done at the right time, by the right people, for the right cause. In the forthcoming volume, Hurtado-Tarazona (2018b, see also 2018a) illustrates well how certain practices are deemed illegitimate because they do not contribute to enhance the image of an urban Colombian housing megaproject, while other illegal activities are tolerated because of their positive impact. Another powerful example is provided by Sarfati (2018), who explains how the South Korean president was impeached due to political corruption and misconduct, but also in the wave of massive public dissent around the sinking of the Sewöl Ferry in 2016. To impeach, to suspend, to fire or to expect the resignation of elected politicians or officials is a not-so-exceptional practice in politics and in business. But the South Korean tragedy is a poignant example of the symbolic aspect of rule. Even when no laws are broken, if there is social discontent, heads must fall. It gives relief to the people, stabilizes the stock exchange and can save political parties and administrations, which can be seen as active, empathetic and accountable.

At the same time, ‘distrust of the system does not equate depoliticization’ (Castells 2007: 245). Dissidence against policies and politics does not mean that governance is failing at communicating or that it is lacking legitimacy. The symbols used to exert influence may not be efficient as surrogates; or there may be a discrepancy among the moral community regarding the values of the symbols displayed; the symbols themselves can be seen as illegitimate. The aforementioned metaphor of the shoe polish made by the minister of finance was seen as risible in progressive circles, because of what it hid, not because they did not understand it (Anonym 2016). To argue the illegitimacy of symbols in political communication is to understand their meaning but disagree on how they are used.

The idea of the redesign of Viger Square was not well received by the group I worked with, which was formed by irreducible professionals in the fields of visual arts, heritage and urban planning. The group’s argument focused on the importance of this unique modern artwork and on the view that it was hypocritical to blame the design to explain the lack of desirable users of the Square. Within the scope of our respective fields (with their very own languages, norms and codes), we used all the means available and relevant to make our claim known to municipal authorities, who had their own agenda and people who worked on building their legitimacy. The context of Montreal is far from other cities, such as Naples, where democracy is strongly put to the test (Pardo 2018b, 2018a). By lobbying within the limits of the law, we acknowledged the rules that bound us to them (and them to us); therefore, we recognized their legitimacy.

From the Viger Square experience, the governing body, the group of irreducible professionals against the redesign and Montrealers, appear as different communities in the same moral and cultural landscape who came together at a specific time. A strong hold on symbolism is important for rulers to deal with the complexity of various communities in their

society. In spite of being adopted by some and challenged by others, symbols are understood by all. This is how communication binds us all in the same mega-culture (Ipsen 2005, Park 1938) and enables legitimacy to take place or to be challenged.

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Claims and Practices of Legitimacy in Urban East Africa

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African cities are transforming rapidly, with high rates of urbanisation changing urban compositions, new infrastructure facilitating domestic and regional mobility, and global networks opening up communicative and financial flows (UN Habitat 2014). This is certainly the case for Kenya; not only for the capital city, Nairobi, but also for mid-sized cities such as Nakuru, Eldoret or Kisumu. The changes affecting Kenyan cities are compounded by the constitutional reform of 2010, which introduced far-reaching devolution, granting provinces and municipalities new powers and authority. Up to the new constitution, Kenya was a highly centralised state, with both formal and patrimonial powers concentrated in Nairobi. Many of the constitutional reforms are still in the process of being negotiated, with uneven knowledge and consensus on the details of implementation on a provincial and local level (Cheeseman et al. 2016, Chitere and Ngundo 2017). This juddering process is not surprising, given the fundamental shift in political culture that underpins it. In addition, the complexity of translating constitutional provisions into institutional, procedural and legal reality on a provincial and by-law level is daunting. Arguably, there is not only an institutional disjunction, but also a normative and cultural one — a disjunction, however, that simultaneously opens up new spaces of political claim-making and practices of legitimacy.

A decade ago Kisumu was mainly a town of informal settlements and slums, busy jumbles of corrugated iron, small stalls, and people; and, on the other side of the spectrum, a few middle-to upper class neighbourhoods, with leafy streets laid out in an orderly fashion, semi-detached or detached houses nestling in well-tended gardens, and hardly a person in sight. But today it is a rapidly growing city of lower- to middle-class estates with modern apartment buildings that are changing not only the face, but also the social body of Kisumu, for the material transformations are demarcating changing social, economic and political relations. In particular, the Kenyan constitutional reform of 2013 has opened up dramatically new relations between central government and the newly devolved authorities, with far-reaching fiscal, legal and administrative powers shifted to the county and municipal level. Not surprisingly, given the fundamental change in political culture and the huge complexity of adjusting the legal, institutional and administrative realities, this process of devolution is far from complete.

But whereas devolution may be the most obvious force re-structuring relations between social actors, it is but one dimension of the re-articulation of practices and discourses of urban citizens. As will be argued in this paper, the transformations in the urbanity of Kisumu are subtler than the large-scale structural changes; a more fine-grained, ethnographic approach reveals the nuanced transformations of political spaces, and the articulation of specific forms of urbanity. It is these less obvious processes which may allow for a more insightful understanding into the emergence of a specifically urban citizenship; processes that are

methodologically more accessible in the less overwhelming sensory context of a mid-sized, secondary city such as Kisumu (Koechlin and Förster 2018).

A recent survey shows that urban dwellers in Kisumu were very clear in what they hoped and expected from their county government; namely the provision of electricity, better infrastructure and services, the creation of employment, and improved education (Chitere and Ngundo 2017: 142). For Kisumu, this is particularly salient, as it is the centre of a province that has been the seat of the ethnic and political opposition since independence, with the ensuing ‘calculated violence of neglect’ (Chabal 2009: 153) by successive governmental regimes leaving deep emotional and developmental scars. It is no surprise that the Luo, the ethnic group linked to this region, were outstandingly in favour of devolution, unlike the Kikuyu, the ethnic group close to the ruling coalition.¹ The survey quotes a citizen of Kisumu in this very sense: ‘Initially [this province] was an opposition zone and most development activities never reached here. Now things are devolved and we are seeing change. The national government has been forced to distribute resources to counties’ (Chitere and Ngundo 2017: 142). Another respondent underlined that ‘Leaders are near [...] They will listen to your *shida* [problem]’ (Chitere and Ngundo 2017: 142).

However, devolution has been a juddering and imperfect process at best. Partly this is due to the overwhelming complexity of a fundamental transformation in the institutional, legal, and political framework of a country.² Whereas the constitution defined the overarching principles, the nuts and bolts of devolution still needed to be spelled out on a local, regional and national level. Institutions had to be abolished and created, laws and by-laws written and passed, new fiscal and political procedures established, to name but a few challenges. To add to the difficulties, the whole political culture of a country was turned on its head; from citizens to technocrats to politicians, everyone had to adapt to the newly decentralised system, of which they frequently had uneven understanding and divergent expectations and interests (Cheeseman et al. 2016, D’Arcy and Cornell 2016, Steeves 2016).³ Lastly, but certainly not least, recent research suggests that a less idealistic intention than democratic empowerment underpinned a powerful momentum for devolution, namely the intention ‘to increase rent-seeking opportunities for losing elites and patronage opportunities for traditionally marginalized groups’ (D’Arcy and Cornell 2016: 256). Indeed, D’Arcy and Cornell conclude that ‘[d]ecentralization has not changed the way in which politics is practiced in Kenya, but rather the levels on which it operates, bringing it closer to ordinary people. In most counties it seems to have entrenched at the local level the practices that have been so problematic at the national level: rent seeking by politicians and ethnic patronage politics’ (D’Arcy and Cornell

¹ Nic Cheeseman and his colleagues undertook an analysis of the impact of party politics on attitudes to devolution in Kenya; according to the results of their survey, ‘while 85% of Kikuyu rejected the idea of [devolution] following the lead of their co-ethnic Uhuru Kenyatta [the current president of Kenya], 72% of Luo respondents backed the proposal’ (Cheeseman et al. 2016: 31).

² For a discussion of similarly fundamental regime changes in Albania, see Prato (2018a and 2018b).

³ These practical and cultural difficulties were underlined in personal communications with informants working in civil society, administration as well as the business sector in Kisumu, Kenya, in June 2014.

2016: 273). This “‘mirroring effect” in personal accumulation’ (Steeves 2016: 494) on a county level resonates with frequently uttered sentiments on the street, where people will exclaim ‘the only thing that has been devolved is corruption’.⁴

Corruption, however, is a many-headed creature; it can both serve to *include* actors in redistributive networks through patronage and clientelism, as well as *exclude* actors who do not have the right connections, identities or means (Koechlin 2015, 2013). Within the discourse of political tribalism, the inclusion of ethnic leaders in government coupled with the decentralisation of public resources promised political emancipation as well as immediate material benefits. Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, respondents in Kisumu complained most about the lack of political and economic spaces that devolution had failed to open up. Asked to name the main problems of their county governments, ‘corruption (23.1%), selfish and inaccessible leaders (17.2%), inadequate health and sanitation services (7.8%), tribalism and nepotism in employment and award of tenders (7.8%), empty promises/incomplete projects (6.2%) [...] and lack of involvement in people in planning (6.2%) were mentioned’ by residents of Kisumu (Chitere and Ngundo 2017: 143). These findings are in line with the findings on a broader level discussed above: political practices on a national level, characterised by corruption and patronage, have been ‘localised’ through devolution. Disenchantment and disillusionment with the — now local — political élite is, at least partly, a result of the ‘wrong’ kind of corruption. Devolution had carried the hope of including formerly excluded citizens; indeed, making them full citizens where ‘formal aspects of citizenship, such as political rights, must coincide and be seen to coincide with economic and civil rights and the right to justice’ (Pardo and Prato 2010: 10).⁵ This has not occurred to the extent that citizens had hoped for, as the following quotes from Kisumu respondents illustrate: ‘[The county government] has not helped me. [...] I have not been helped’, or ‘County *haisaidi kitu chochote* [county does not help in any way]... It is the cause of our problems... [There is] corruption which makes everything hard... has made it difficult for jobs to be got. You have to bribe to get a job’ (Chitere and Ngundo 2017: 142).

Summing up, devolution has dashed the hopes of many people in Kisumu and elsewhere with regard to greater political, economic and legal citizenship — although, as the responses by urban dwellers indicate, it would merit a separate discussion on specific meanings attached to ‘citizenship’ by local actors, and the transformations that these meanings are undergoing.⁶ With regard to the structural effects of devolution, it is early days yet, and findings are very much illustrative of a process, rather than a product. And yet it is safe to say that evidence from the ground points to the localisation of national practices of exclusion. Whereas before devolution whole ethnic groups and regions were excluded from enjoying the fruits of citizenship, now localised, more specific forms of differentiation have

⁴ Most recently heard in several conversations during a field visit to Nairobi and Kisumu in January and February 2017.

⁵ See also Pardo (2000), Pardo and Prato (2018), Pardo (2018a and 2018b) and Prato (2018a and 2018b).

⁶ For an interesting case-study of changing practices of citizenship, see Atalay (2018a and 2018b); and of seemingly conflicting forms of citizenship, see Mollica (2018a and 2018b).

taken hold on a county level. However, I would like to suggest that this is but one dimension of novel political and social formations. Especially in mid-sized urban areas such as Kisumu (see Koechlin and Förster 2017), new spaces are emerging that are both being shaped by as well as shape the practices, imaginations and aspirations of urban citizens.

The aim of the full discussion (Koechlin 2018) is to explore these changing relations, material as well as social spaces, and provide a better understanding of their structuring both by and of urban actors, practices and broader articulations of citizenship. What repertoires and regimes do urban actors draw on seeking to establish normative and moral dominance? Who is included, who is excluded on which grounds? Of particular interest are the diverging meanings given to ‘legitimacy’, and the ways in which established claims and practices of legitimacy and connected meanings and practices of urban citizenship may be changing. In the first section, a brief synthesis of the background to devolution and its effects on the political and administrative landscape on a county level in Kisumu is provided, paying special attention to hopes and aspirations of citizens of Kisumu. In the second section, I take a closer look at novel urban spaces, and the ways in which urban actors make and shape new spaces of social and political agency, which I discuss in more general terms in the third section. Lastly, I conclude with some conceptual reflections on urban futures and more specifically possible meanings of legitimacy and urban citizenship that can be gleaned from the shores of Lake Victoria.

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Reflections on Anglo-Indian Experiences of Citizenship and Legitimacy

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The September 2017 IUS workshop *Erosions of Legitimacy and Urban Futures: Ethnographic Research Matters*, as outlined in the Introduction to this Special Issue (Pardo and Prato 2018), gave participants the opportunity to explore ideas around legitimacy, drawing on their own ethnographically sourced material to do so. The organisation of five full days of critique and discussion of each other's work and the central concerns, including how issues of legitimacy might be investigated, effectively stimulated our ideas and thoughts about our own projects in ways that would not otherwise have happened, or at least not as quickly. My contribution focused on legitimacy around citizenship for a minority Indian-resident community, the Anglo-Indians. It drew attention to what is required to be an Indian citizen and described the distinctly Indian version of secularism. It looked at the ways in which a sense of citizenship is currently threatened for some sections of the population — as secularism itself is — and explored potential means by which members of the community might maintain a sense of legitimacy, and for some a measure of power, within their own community and the nation. An aspect I had not considered prior to the workshop is that legitimacy is something that in certain circumstances is competed for, that is, it has a zero-sum game quality; so, when one group gains, another loses. I now briefly review the arguments I made, drawing on ethnographic material, beginning by introducing the community I focus upon.

Anglo-Indians are a minority community of mixed Indian and European descent. The community is the result of various European groups making their home in India from the very late 15th century onwards. From the liaisons that ensued, a culturally distinct minority community was established in India. They are defined in the Constitution which states that:

‘An Anglo-Indian is a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only’ (Section 366-2).

Socially and culturally Anglo-Indians are habitually more western than Indian in their practices and world views, for example, they are Christians, mostly have English as their mother tongue, and they have European names. They have a background of attachment to Britain so it is understandable that Indian Independence in 1947 appeared to pose a potentially serious threat to them and Anglo-Indians were fearful of reprisals once India gained its independence. These retaliations did not, in fact, eventuate; rather, the community was accorded a number of benefits written into the Constitution of the newly appointed Congress government. The benefits included political representation, employment reservations (referred

to by Anglo-Indians as ‘quotas’) in certain occupation sectors, and an allocation of grants for Anglo-Indian schools. For all that, from 1947 many Anglo-Indians migrated, mainly to English-speaking Commonwealth countries.

Their sense of having a legitimate place in India has at times been threatened, such as during the period of transition from Britain to Indian rule, and then again in the 1960s coinciding with a move in India to replace English as the national language which they mostly did not speak well enough for employment and other purposes. Other reasons for the insecurity at this time are attributed to the closure of large international companies in the main centres where many Anglo-Indians had employment and the end of employment quotas (Blunt 2005).

As I describe next, through the constitutional definition of who qualifies as an Indian citizen, and India’s particular version of secularism, Anglo-Indians should have the freedom to enact their religious and cultural practices in India, that is, they should be able to freely and legitimately practice being Anglo-Indian.

The constitution of India requires that a citizen of India meets ‘birth’ criteria (Mitra 2010: 46) with the 5th Article of the Constitution stating:

At the commencement of this Constitution, every person who has his domicile in the territory of India and—

- (a) who was born in the territory of India; or
- (b) either of whose parents was born in the territory of India; or
- (c) who has been ordinarily resident in the territory of India for not less than five years immediately preceding such commencement, shall be a citizen of India.

Secularism is the other protection offered to Anglo-Indians and other minorities in India. This means that the state acts as a patron to all religions equally, unlike in other nations where secularism is understood to mean there is a separation of the state from religion (Chatterjee 1995, McNamara 2015). The Congress party safeguarded this ideal of multi-religious state support by enshrining it in the constitution.

Let us now look at threats eroding Anglo-Indians’ sense of being legitimate Indian citizens. In May 2014, after more than 60 years of mostly Congress-led central governments, the Bharatiya Janata Party (translated as The People’s Party, and abbreviated to BJP) was elected in what has been described as a landslide victory.¹ This party is described by many commentators as right wing. Others describe it as Hindu-chauvinist, known for its commitment to Hindutva (that is, an ideology seeking to establish the hegemony of Hindus and the Hindu way of life), with its policy historically reflecting Hindu nationalist positions. The BJP promotes the idea of ‘India for Hindus’, and has implemented Hindu ideals in a number of states where it is also the ruling party. In some states the BJP has implemented sanctions on those who contravene Hindu ideals, for example, in Maharashtra where it is now

¹ Prior to this, they had been part of a coalition government in 1998 for a year, then again in coalition for a full term until 2004.

forbidden to eat beef. Such actions go against the idea of secularism with its requirement of religious freedom, and support for minority religious practices. Not surprisingly, this has the effect of eroding a sense of security for minorities such as Anglo-Indians. This changed political situation represents for many Anglo-Indians a moment of increased concern on a par with that of independence, and then reemphasised in the 1960s.

So, what can Anglo-Indians do to ameliorate this sense of insecurity? I draw on ethnographic examples from my research in Kolkata which illustrate strategies that may be employed in carving out a legitimate place in the nation.² One example lies within the being of a person; the current president-in-chief of the All India Anglo-Indian Association (AIAIA) whose home is Kolkata, and the other is an organisation called, Calcutta Anglo-Indian Service Society (CAISS). The former demonstrates the conditions that allow for a position of legitimacy and power within the community and the nation. The latter illustrates how an organisation can work with and for their community to make a space for community members to feel at home and cared for, with access to some power.

Let us look briefly at relevant details of the two examples. A person has had an élite upbringing in a Bengali area of the city and attended prestigious (Anglo-Indian run) schools, and a well-regarded university.³ He attributes his successes to early assimilation into a mostly Hindu Bengali neighbourhood, which contributed to a sense of belonging to the nation through language and cultural ability and literacy/s. He also displays a strong sense of who he is as an Anglo-Indian, coupled with a secure personal identity through his family's and his own achievements. He recently joined the current ruling national political party which gives him capacity for political action which he may not otherwise have had access to. While this may not be a common scenario, some aspects are achievable for Anglo-Indians who learn the local language well, understand the cultural practices of neighbours, achieve a sound education and take employment opportunities.

I now turn to the second example, that of an organisation working to empower a community to feel legitimised: The Calcutta Anglo-Indian Service Society (CAISS). This organisation is very effective in the care it provides and the social networks it contributes to, both inside and outside India. The society was established in 1976 and has a reputation of humanity and integrity. Its constitution makes it clear that the aims are more than community-centric; it proposes to prepare community members, especially the youth, to be part of the nation. It takes care of those who are less able to care for themselves.

The institutional and personalised strategies employed by CAISS ameliorate many Anglo-Indians' feeling of being alienated by the nation. CAISS provides its members and beneficiaries with a sense of belonging to something that they identify with culturally, and of which they feel they are a legitimate member.

² At the IUS workshop, a participant made the germane point that Kolkata's Anglo-Indian might be more sheltered from BJP policies than other Anglo-Indians might. Their numbers, and more prominent positioning, in combination with the city's cosmopolitanism were all thought to play a part in this situation.

³ For his self-narrated life story see Andrews (2014).

To summarise, in the case of the individual, he has the political wherewithal and accumulated capitals (in the Bourdieuan sense; Bourdieu 1984, 1986) and cosmopolitanism to negotiate his own way. The organisation, on the other hand, works outside the broader political system and offers a unique and invaluable service to Kolkata's Anglo-Indians. These two ethnographic examples draw out different aspects of what legitimacy looks like, or what it lacks, in this socio-political space.

As I have indicated, the type of legitimacy that I addressed was concerned with citizenship, and the consensus about whose worldviews and practices are endorsed and recognised by the nation as acceptable — socially and individually. It was also about who has power, and how tactics and strategies can be activated to achieve influence in particular situations. Pardo and Prato write about the nation's responsibility to offer citizens a sense of legitimate belonging, stating that the key task of governance is, 'to establish and nurture the connection with citizens' values, needs and expectations, the strength of which depends upon the observable quality of the link between political responsibility and trust and authority in the exercise of power' (Pardo and Prato 2010: 1). This addresses the concerns of my work and the reliance of citizens on their government to provide a secure socio-political environment. But what happens when that is not provided?

India has been known for its accommodation of diverse worldviews and practices; that is, for a tolerance of difference leading to relative lack of conflict or competition over the legitimacy of different socio-cultural and religious practices. This appears to have altered over the past few years, however, with the current government demonstrating that some ways of being are more acceptably 'Indian' than others. A Hindu nationalist agenda sets up a structure entailing one set of practices being seen and felt as more legitimate than another. As Hindu members of the BJP feel emboldened, and encouraged, by having their actions endorsed by the government, other minority groups are losing their sense of legitimacy. Abraham's work in villages in Kerala (2018a, 2018b), Boucher's in a central square in Montreal (2018a, 2018b) and Pardo's analysis of the Naples ethnography (2018a, 2018b), which were presented at the workshop, provide ethnographic examples illustrating that in *certain situations*, as in this case, there is not the same access to a legitimate position for all; rather, a zero-sum game operates. That is, legitimacy can be seen as being finite; so, when one group gains, another loses. Conflicting claims to or views of legitimacy, with different agents competing for the same space, may result in one being deemed more legitimate, while another's claim to legitimacy is eroded.

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***Fearing the Intrusion:
Illegal but Legitimate Ethno-religious Dynamics in Lebanon***

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Colonel Charles Henry Churchill, British consul in Ottoman Syria, reports that in 1850 a group of American Christian (Protestant) missionaries and their families living in Tripoli (a Sunni Muslim city, in northern Lebanon) decided to spend a few months in the Christian Maronite town of Ehden (today, a famous touristic mountain location), northwest of the Cedar Forest. Once in the village, they entered the houses they had rented. But that same night, suddenly, the village bells began to ring and armed Ehden inhabitants gathered around the houses of the missionaries. Maronite priests led the protest with crosses in their hands. The roofs were climbed, the doors and windows broken and screams rang through the streets: ‘We do not want men of the Bible’, people cried, and, ‘There is no place here for heretics’. The missionaries had to flee in the middle of the night. However, although the outrage could not go unpunished, it was difficult to persuade the Maronites of the town to act because in such matters they were under the jurisdiction of the Ottoman Sultan, Abdülmecid I. This was so because the ecclesiastical hierarchy had always played a decisive role in transmitting the Maronite identity sense, including a community feeling with reference to the homogeneity of both territory (especially on Mount Lebanon) and religion, which in the case of Ehden discriminated within Christianity (Churchill 1985: 56-59).

The Ehden story was what came to my mind when I first read Italo Pardo and Giuliana B. Prato’s paper on ‘Erosions of Legitimacy and Urban Futures: Ethnographic Research Matters’ on which their Introduction to this Special Issue is based (Pardo and Prato 2018); especially when they treat the *vexata quaestio*, ‘What are the culturally specific practices by which people make the categories of the legitimate and illegitimate shift across the domains of the moral, the economic, the legal and the civic?’. However, the above should also be read in light of Pardo’s Introduction to his *Morals of Legitimacy* (2000), where he articulates the concept that, issues of ‘obedience’ and ‘compliance’ aside, the use of power cannot be justified only by relations of mere domination.

In contemporary Lebanon, the (illegal) use of power by Hezbollah (Shi’a Muslims), which is a political legal entity but also a paramilitary illegal entity, has never been seriously challenged by the other two (legal) entities that manage power in Lebanon; namely, the Lebanese Army, acting as legitimate force in Lebanon as a whole, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil), acting as a peacekeeping force in the South of the country at the Israeli border. Indeed, over the last decades, Hezbollah’s relationships with both entities have been of coexistence, not of conflict or serious tension. However, a number of contemporary events in Lebanon — including the dramatic spill over of the ongoing Iraqi and Syrian conflicts and the connected huge influx of refugees clustering into ethno-religious homogeneous areas — cannot be disjointed from the well-established, long-standing history

of sectarianism and violence (Makdisi 2000, Mollica 2016), both without and within Lebanon, as shown by the case of Ehden. This has strongly marked the historical memory of every religious denomination in Lebanon, as well as that of the nearly half a million Palestinian refugees living in twelve camps all around the country.

In my ten-year long fieldwork, conducted between 2006 and 2016 mostly in the South Lebanese city of Tyre, I have often looked at conflicting loyalties and the subsequent legitimate illegality proper of a pluri-ethnic and multi-religious society. Here, moralities may be in conflict with each other, while overlapping with specific loyalties that may lie outside of the nation state, in which case they are mostly religiously-driven. Thus, when these loyalties clash the clash is about the very essence of the state.

However, in a consociational model like the Lebanese ‘confessional’ system, this kind of conflict is institutionally mitigated by a (multi-religious) share of power (Kerr 2005). I submit that it is precisely in the representation of the tension between a democratic system and a consociational one that the ethnographer’s contribution must lie, since he must academically contextualize the borders of this often-overlooked tension. This is a main concern in the way he constructs his detachment from what is happening on the ground and in his narrative, which is proportional to his involvement in the events. It is precisely here that Colonel Churchill’s narrative intersects my ethnography.

In contemporary Lebanon, from the national electoral body down to municipal-level representatives, members are elected in order to defend specific ethno-religious interests and the electorate itself acts according to ethno-religious interests (Mollica and Dingley 2015). These interests, however, are mediated by the presence of an ethno-religiously defined *zaim*; these are political leaders who belong to an ethno-religious group and whose political legitimacy as well as morality may change according to each ethno-religious group.

Here, it is worth mentioning another point developed by Pardo on the kind of immorality identifiable in the government. Pardo mentions, on the one hand, the ‘immorality of dishonesty’ (2000: 5) and, on the other, the immorality ‘of neglect of duty and of the failure to punish this’ (ibid.). When contrasting this conceptual framework with my South Lebanese ethnography, the issue of dishonesty comes paradoxically to the fore with reference to the legal legitimate authority, which is represented as inherently corrupted by the non-legal legitimate authority (Mollica 2014).

Ethical concerns are not univocal, they are, instead, part of a communal frame which is articulated in different ways, making these concerns not just competing but irreconcilable. This is a common occurrence (even an institutionalized one) in consociational models, which often leave it to each ethno-religious community to self-regulate communities-based matters. The state has no role to play in these matters. So, what is morally appropriate or legitimated is relegated to what is moral or legitimate according to each ethno-religious group.

The dominant Hezbollah rhetoric would portray the Lebanese State as incapable of managing resources, as the post-2006 War reconstruction proved (Mollica 2014). This is quite visible in the urban context of Tyre, where religious separation penetrates each realm of human life starting with the economic dimension.

Pardo and Prato (2010) identify a difficult coexistence between different cultures, referring to ways of exclusion and inclusion that implicitly inhibit participation and integration. In Lebanon this difficulty became even more complex as sections of the Lebanese population felt closer to co-ethno-religious population dwelling outside Lebanon than to co-citizens living in Lebanon. In recent years this dynamic has gained further input from the rapid radicalization of the Syrian conflict along religious lines (Fawaz 2016). In Lebanon, this has brought about an increase in distrust towards co-national Lebanese belonging to other ethno-religious groups.

Hezbollah (informal) forces and activities in the city of Tyre were not just well known; they were tacitly overlapping (formal) forces and activities of the legal and legitimate (Lebanese state) authority. Members' citizenship was fully submerged by individuals' religious belonging and affiliation. Moreover, the illegitimate force is territorially and militarily so strong that it is inconceivable for the State (the Lebanese Army and the Lebanese Police Forces) to contrast it, let alone clash with it.

My point is that the (religiously defined) target audience might consider those actions necessary for the very stability of the (religiously defined) community. Given the need to maintain cohesion among members of the community for security reasons, there is no room left for ethical concerns or for respect for the official state structure. Here, it is precisely what are officially deemed to be 'illegal' actions that are needed in reality to guarantee the protection of the (religious) community. This happens because the legal 'legitimate' authority is regarded as incapable of guaranteeing security through 'legal' means, which is what happened in Ehden in 1850.

Power, as Pardo and Prato argue, '*must be seen to be legitimate*' (2010: 2). In my case study on Tyre, power is indeed legitimate, as no one would challenge what Hezbollah men are doing. They carry out blatant patrol and checks, for instance, on people walking on the most important local roads, in the process literally closing these roads to all traffic; and they do so with no need to display any weaponry. The repetition of these events has made them more than just legitimated within the local community and beyond; it has made them embedded in customary rules that in Tyre are now as strong as state rules.

In this context, belonging must be conceptualized with reference to specific (religiously-defined) groups, acting in (ethno-religiously defined) areas in order to pursue (ethno-religiously defined) interests. Nevertheless, what is in question here is the definition and applicability of 'citizenship', and whether the inherent sense of belonging specific to the status of citizen is to be associated with the nation-state, meaning the consociational multi-ethnic entity called Lebanon, which is, in turn, made up of a number of homogeneous ethno-religious, territorially-based entities. In dealing with this issue I would rely on the framework articulated by Heater (1990: 163), which suggests that the maintenance of the *status* of citizen may well be associated with small geographic units; in other words, local communities.

The legitimacy that Hezbollah had gained within and beyond its target (religious) population was manifest in the substantial, tacit acceptance of what were otherwise illicit practices. This ongoing social process based on communal (religious) cohesion has reached a

level where, according to my informants, the local population approaches Hezbollah for a number of services for which the Lebanese legitimate authority is technically responsible. The local population often approaches not only Hezbollah affiliated-groups working in the social and economic realms but also Hezbollah units that work on the suppression of illegal activities, including activities that should be prosecuted by the Lebanese police and security forces, such as criminality, drugs and prostitution. This goes on regardless of Hezbollah's claims that they do not deal with these issues. Clearly, some sections of the Lebanese religious communities trust more the reliability of Hezbollah than that of the legal structures of the Lebanese state. It is at this local level that the communally, religiously-based construction of defence may be more manifest. This may work through a local leader who liaises with a religious, and often a political-religious national authority that operates as a legitimate ethno-religious militia.

These dynamics seem particularly significant when we consider the issue of accountability for the potential illegal activities carried out by illegal organizations; for instance, the aforementioned check points operated by Hezbollah. Such is the identification with 'illegal' organizations that are regarded as being an integral part of the wider (religious) community that the issue of 'punishing' their members — with whom the religious community empathizes — never arises. Instead, should the legal 'legitimate' authority (the Lebanese state) interfere with an activity that is represented by the 'illegal' legitimate organization (Hezbollah) as necessary for security reasons, it could be accused of interfering with a legitimate activity; a legitimacy that, as I have mentioned, prescinds that granted by the official authority.

As for the story told by the British consul Churchill, the American (Protestant) missionaries were driven out of that Christian (Maronite) village because for those local (Maronite) Christians 'the [Maronite] Patriarch was their Sultan'. This was the very essence of the Maronite religion, where every authority was absorbed by that of the Parish priest. In Ehden, the community (defined as such in religious terms) was both a religious guide and an extension of the political leadership. It was therefore the Maronite priests who had to lead the protest when the Maronite community of Ehden felt threatened by American Protestant missionaries.

For both Shi'a Hezbollah (Muslim) and Maronite (Christians) the dominant rhetoric is community-driven and the potential alien components are seen as elements that jeopardize the religiously defined solidarity of the community. The main consequence is that alternative (community-legitimated) enforcers of the law are needed, for the state enforcers seem (or are represented as) incapable of guaranteeing the security of a local (religiously-defined) community that does not trust the State legitimate forces.

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Morality and Legitimacy in the Sewöl Protest in South Korea

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When the Sewöl Ferry sank in 2014, leaving 304 dead and 9 missing passengers, South Korea was shocked and grieving. The mass mourning soon turned into extensive anti-government protests. First, the activists focused on collecting 10,000,000 signatures on petitions to change the law in order to enable proper investigation, punishment of those found guilty, and redrafting of safety and rescue regulations. Later, in the winter of 2016 the protests extended and called for the impeachment of the former president, Pak Kün-hye (Park Geun-hye). She was eventually impeached in March 2017, in what came to be called the ‘bittersweet victory for families of Sewol ferry victims’ (Griffiths and Han 2017). Mourning the death of so many youths has created a momentum of civic action along enduring debates over governance transparency, morality and policy. Moreover, this protest showed that democratic actions could overcome even the authority of Pak, which stemmed from both tradition — she was the daughter of a legendary (albeit disputed) president — and the law, as a democratically chosen leader. She, however, lacked charisma, a main trait of the authority types categorized by Max Weber (1947). Much of Pak’s blame in relation to the Sewöl Ferry’s sinking can indeed be discussed in terms of lack of charisma. She did not act as the trustworthy leader that Korea wanted to see during such a national crisis.

While South Korea has often been described a homogeneous nation, I argue that complex relationships between social classes create urban clashes. In the Sewöl movement, multitudes of individuals joined forces to demand justice over government actions that they deemed illegitimate. The prevailing assumption, that ruling and economic élites cooperated to silence the reasons for the tragic sinking, created multiple conspiracy theories about corruption. These rumours empowered the protesters and resulted in the formation of a broad social legitimacy and participation in their struggle. The protest camp allowed strangers to build a sense of mutual understanding and attachment of the kind that Yael Navaro calls serendipitous (2017: 212) even while living in a metropolis like Seoul. The Sewöl protesters were aware of the legal system’s power and limited their dissent to legal actions with hopes of changing some existing laws in order to bring about the desired societal changes.

The Sewöl sank in April 16, 2014. It soon became clear that the ferry was not handled, maintained, or supervised properly. The media accused different government ministries for that situation, and many blamed the president personally for not supervising the rescue operation well. The spontaneous demonstrations became a semi-permanent protest camp that since 2014 the mayor of Seoul has allowed to stay in Kwanghwamun Square. Two years later, in 2016, when the alleged corruption of the president were exposed by the media, the demonstrations became massive, and their impact stronger. The public dissent in Seoul reached its height in the winter of 2016-7. At that time, more than one million people attended every Saturday the night’s candle vigil protest in Kwanghwamun Square. Many protesters felt

that the impeachment of Pak would not have materialized had they ceased to attract the public's attention and exert pressure on policy makers through demonstrations and social media campaigns. In the impeachment motion, the president's misconduct pertaining to the Sewöl Ferry's sinking was discussed in detail, although she was not specifically blamed for breaking the disobeying law.

In an extended forthcoming work (Sarfati 2018), I analyse the events and public opinion shifts that led to these mass protests. There, after a brief discussion of the history of protests in downtown Seoul, I discuss three cases that demonstrate how questions of morality and legitimacy became central to the rage against former president Pak and her government. The development of the protests and their outcome emerges from these cases in their chronological order of occurrence, beginning with summer 2014, when, as testified by the first case-study, volunteers dedicated immense efforts to collect signatures on a petition to change the law in order to enable a proper investigation of the Ferry's sinking. The second case-study brings out the distress of the bereaved families and their supporters when the ministry of education decided to clear both the drowned students' classrooms of their personal effects and many commemorative installations. The third case details the impeachment demonstrations; here the power of this dissent movement is revealed through vivid instances of criticism and anger, as well as verbal iterations of the perceived immorality of former president Pak Kŭn-hye's behaviour.

The ethnography documents the strong tendency to construct public opinions in urban Korea on assessments of morality, humanity, and responsibility, rather than on legality and formal conduct codes. It shows how the former president failed in a key task of governance; that is, 'to establish and nurture the connection with citizens' values, needs and expectations, the strength of which depends upon the observable quality of the link between political responsibility and trust and authority in the exercise of power' (Pardo and Prato 2010: 1). When I recorded some of the protesters' narratives, the speakers would ask me to conceal their identities, fearing persecution by the authorities. While they spoke freely in front of people who they met a short while before in the camp, their trust of the world outside the dissent movement was dropping. Their mistrust in their president and government often stemmed from the poor treatment of the bereaved families. The president did not meet them individually to express condolences, nor was there enough official support for the families' commemoration projects.

The empty classrooms of the 250 high-school students that were among the victims of this tragedy have turned into spontaneous community commemoration spaces when acquaintances created small altars for each student's spirit by placing food items, flowers, photographs and personal notes on the deserted desks. In 2016, the local education ministry decided to begin reusing these classrooms. Dismantling the desk-altars, while lawful, was received as immoral by the bereaved families and their supporters, and reignited the civil unrest around the Sewöl issue. The dissent was dominated by the feeling that these tragic deaths would be less painful had significant changes in society occurred as a result. Therefore, the commemoration venues are deemed to be crucial not only as sites for individual mourning

but also as a constant reminder of the harm that negligence and lack of proper safety laws can cause.

Conflicting moralities often mark the relationship between economic goals and personal safety. In the Korean case, the president was viewed as responsible for these two goals. As a leader, she should have managed the demands of large business conglomerates for the country's economic prosperity, while at the same time taking care of laws and regulations that would allow personal safety for all. These two issues are in conflict because safety regulations are financially costly and are, therefore, often objected to by business owners. In the Sewöl ferry's case, had the state made sure that every ferry must pass a real inspection before leaving port, the cargo in the ferry would probably not have been allowed to travel unfastened, which caused the disaster. Moreover, the hired staff would not have been allowed to sail without proper emergency training, and the rescue operation would not have been fully handed over to a private, unsupervised company (You and Park 2017). President Pak was personally accused to be responsible for these fatal shortcomings, and she did little to appease the public in the few public speeches she gave on the topic. The protesters have been well aware of the power of law. They have used lawyer advisors and have worked mostly within the boundaries of the law to advance their cause. However, much of the discourse around the Sewöl affair has regarded morality as more important than simply a matter of obeying the law.

As the political life of Korea continued, the recent elections demonstrated the power of the Sewöl protests in forming a new era of South Korea's ruling élite. On 9 May 2017 Mun Jae-In, a liberal candidate who was not related to the right-wing president Pak, won the elections. In one of the latest election speeches, he declared that he would be 'the president who never forgets Sewöl as long as there is spring and as long as April comes every year'. He promised he would work to reveal the whole truth about the sinking and make Korea a safer country. Symbolically, right before the elections he chose Kwanghwamun Square for his last president election campaign speech.

The Sewöl protests and the subsequent impeachment offer a fertile ethnographic field to examine how urban environments host public dissent and how democratic governance handles such situations. Moreover, it demonstrates how the way in which the public perceive the boundaries of their leaders' responsibilities do not necessarily overlap with those set by formal law. Therefore, anti-corruption protests can start even in the absence of proven law breaking. Indeed, the accumulated emotions of various individuals can affect the ruling élite and generate significant social change, as has happened in Seoul during the past three years.

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Political Participation and Legitimization of Power. The State and the Family: A Romani Case

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Modern democracies include a number of political systems that intertwine with each other. State policies encapsulate the local and regional ones, employers' policies towards employees and vice versa, policies of particular minorities, age groups, genders, and diaspora policies. The political cultures of individual political systems interact with each other but adopt specific ethics, values and norms that, in turn, influence views of legitimacy and processes of legitimation (Pardo and Prato 2010). Family policies always have a significant influence on the state, parliamentary policies, because family policies are as universal in state systems as state policies since almost all state citizens are at the same time family members. In Western democracies, as in other forms of state, politicians must legitimise the right to state power by the quality of family, and the responsibility towards their family is understood as political capital. The dynasties of the state officials, politicians and diplomats are well-known from the present-day United States, India, China and North Korea; family partners accompany politicians on state visits and participate in important decision-making processes. However, the intermingling of the state and family policies is limited, and both systems significantly differ, inter alia by the setting of power relations and legitimizing of power. States firmly set boundaries between family and public interests.

Interrelations between the state and family political systems are crucial, but scholars do not study them in the contemporary world systematically. However, anthropological knowledge provides a basis to grasp these processes. Different policy strategies and practices applied to lineage systems and state systems were described on African cases in the first half of 20th century by Meyer Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940). Later, Edmund Leach showed that both approaches to politics can exist simultaneously in one society and that one can transmute into the other and vice versa (Leach 1954). Edmund Leach's and Van Velsen's concepts (Van Velsen 1964), that of Fredrik Barth on flexible boundaries between societies based on the lineage system and that of centralised authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions (Barth 1969, Verdery 1994) can help to explain the situational metamorphosis of both.

The conceptualisation of the metamorphoses of both systems and their intermingling is well visible in cases where people are not well skilled in shifting from one system to another, where the state political system is weak or underdeveloped, or the two systems are significantly different and hardly compatible. This was frequently the case of the Romani politicians in the 1990s in the then Czechoslovakia and now in the contemporary Czech Republic.

The Roma are a large minority in the Czech Republic predominantly made up of the mass of unskilled and poor people living on the margins of society (Uherek 2007, Bodewik

2008, Davidová and Uherek 2014). After 1989, with the onset of democratic changes, it seemed that the Roma would improve their social status. They were officially recognized by the government as a national minority and were allowed to report their nationality in the census, and the state authorities ceased to exert pressure on them to assimilate. After the turnover in 1989, the Roma successfully entered political life and were often smoothly engaged in the new political structures (Pečínka 2009). In November 1989, a preparatory committee for the creation of a Roma political party was established, and in 1990 the party was registered under the name Roma Civic Initiative (ROI). The newly born political party immediately created a coalition with Václav Havel's Civic Forum and became popular also among the non-Roma population. In the early 1990s, this party received mass support from the voters. It was successful in elections and became represented in all three then Czechoslovak Parliamentary Chambers (Pečínka 2009). The way had been opened to create a self-confident national minority represented in parliament and involved in the Czechoslovakian governing bodies. However, the situation soon changed.

In the census of 1991, where the Roma could first declare themselves as a minority, only a small proportion of the population expected to be Roma claimed their minority status. Of the estimated 250,000 inhabitants of Romani origin in the Czech Republic, only approximately 33 thousand declared a Roma nationality. The assumption that on the occasion of the first census many Roma did not realize what the census meant, or were afraid to claim their nationality found no confirmation. In the 2001 census, 6,149 people declared a Romani nationality and in 2011 only 5,135 persons did so.¹ In the 1990s, the questions arose as to how to conceptualise the Romani minority and who are Roma and who are not. Also, Roma politicians could not use electoral support and failed to succeed in the next election. The party leaders soon lost their positions, and the Romani party never returned to high-level politics.

The Roma political movement has broken into many factions, and many organisations have withdrawn from political activities (Pečínka 2009). Romani politicians have been repeatedly accused of having no right to speak about the Roma as a whole because they have no support among the Romani voters. On the other hand, most of the 250,000 Romani people are identifiable, often know about themselves and occasionally call themselves Roma or Gypsies, but use this label deliberately only on some occasions. What is essential for the present reflection is that they predominantly think about themselves in terms of extended families. While the number of Roma in the Czech Republic is large, there are only several dozens of extended families. A Roma individual usually knows without need of assistance to which family another Roma individual belongs to and operates on the basis of this notion.

For politicians who were used to making general family policies, it is difficult to operate on an ethnic level precisely because at this level family policy requires different political strategies. At this level family policy needs to deal with family uniqueness, frequently even separation. It needs to deal with strong identification with family members and the occasional linking of family-friendly clusters into joint action. The head of an extended Romani family does not allow the more generally defined whole to compromise his hierarchal place. His

¹ The census data were published by the Czech Statistical Office.

authority in the family is most important to him; subordinating himself to the head of another family would mark the loss of authority within his own family. In my experience, it is sometimes easier for a Roma to accept subordination to a non-Roma than to a Roma from another family, as the ‘Gaje’ [non-Roma] are outside the field of their competition. On the other hand, ethnic or national policy requires openness, a talent for negotiations, ability to compromise and the will to subordinate one’s interests or family interests to the interests of higher units.

The issue of succession is also significant. The superior position of a lineage political leader can only be replaced by someone from the family circle or by a relative close to the family. Otherwise, the succession in wider than a family political circle usually turns into a duel with another family — and thus families cannot cooperate. The result may be the splitting of parties or movements. The Vlax Romani in the area of sub-ethnic politics are sometimes able to cooperate in their own excluded political networks to elect their own ‘kings’ and to follow their ethical rules in broader coalitions. They can, however, hardly practice such policies with other sub-ethnicities, especially with the Rumungri or Servike who are the majority among the Roma in the Czech Republic (Davidová 1995, Davidová and Uherek 2014). The Vlax Romani consider the Rumungri and Servike as inferior, and unsuitable for serious dialogue.

Roma concepts of ritual purity, which are derived from the kind of family a person is born into, how he or she lives and what his or her diet is, also make communication between the Roma difficult. The ranking of families according to their ritual purity refers to the Indian concept of ‘jati’ and, thus, to Romani past (Hübschmannová 1998, 1999). Non-communication for reasons of ritual purity and the social status of the family cannot usually be bridged, not even when it comes to political life. It is not possible to negotiate freely with a person with different social status, sit with him or her at a meeting table or have a working lunch. Families of different status could, in the short term, support the same party, but they would be unable to negotiate anything. Serious difficulties arose when party problems needed to be solved collectively, not just a cluster of party members.

Another complication is that the Roma can hardly imagine non-utilitarian actions beyond family hospitality. Romani families provide a guest with food but they rarely share their work, skills, ideas or money with the outside world without prospects of immediate profit. If someone does so, other Romani families become suspicious and usually look for hidden benefit for such voluntary actions, or assume deception. Many examples document this claim. In a conversation with one acquaintance in 2016, I noted, for example, the following statement: ‘We would organise something for children — a summer camp or summer school. But parents do not want it much. They mostly look what profit you can have from it’. That is also one of the reasons why the Roma activists and politicians are not supported by the wider Romani public. The notion that Romani politicians earn money on other Roma and exploit their poor status is widespread. On the contrary, the Romani politicians and employees in public service are constantly urged from their own families to get benefits for their own use. Irena Kašparová, in her book on Romani politicians, expressed

the opinion that the Roma who remain on the political scene are usually either Roma from mixed marriages or live with a non-Romani partner (Kašparová 2014).

Apart from the Romani movement along the boundaries of individual families, fragmentation was also caused by political views. In addition to the ROI supporting Václav Havel's Civic Forum, the Roma Democratic Party was co-operating with the Communists. The range of political interests of the Roma gradually increased and their political attitudes copied the spectrum of interests of the majority population. As the position of the Roma in broader society deteriorated, a number of the left-leaning Roma gradually developed nostalgia for the paternalistically-oriented state before November 1989.

Roma politicians, as well as people engaged in various social services, are in a state of permanent tension. They are engaged as representatives of local or Roma communities, and sometimes they are legitimated to work for the Roma, the municipality or the State. But often the primary social control that they perceive comes from the family, and their preferred social relationships are embedded in the family. They create unity — one body (Strathern 2005) — with their family. This tension has consequences that are found in many societies: misused subsidies, nepotism and protectionism. However, what is characteristic of the Roma society is that it counts on it. Roma families that do not have representatives in power circles assume that the Roma in power will primarily support their own families; therefore, often they do not support representatives of other families politically.

While the present comment focus on a specific group — the 'Romani' — it touches on more general questions that speak to the debate on legitimacy (Pardo 2000, Pardo and Prato 2010) and its current developments, as pointed out by Italo Pardo and Giuliana B. Prato's paper on 'Erosions of Legitimacy and Urban Futures: Ethnographic Research Matters' that initiated the discussions held in the workshop of the International Urban Symposium in Sicily in 2017, and on which their Introduction to this Special Issue is based (Pardo and Prato 2018). In a forthcoming essay (2018), I expand on the present discussion to address in ethnographic detail the legitimacy of power and the balance between family and public interests. In their essay on *Disconnected Governance and the Crisis of Legitimacy*, Italo Pardo and Giuliana Prato discuss citizens' needs, values and expectations, on the one hand, and governing bodies' political responsibility and ability to impose power, on the other (Pardo & Prato 2010). In every society, people strive to harmonise family and kin network interests with a professional career and broad societal claims. For an individual, harmonizing the requirements and expectations of different social networks is a question both of professional responsibility and of trust that the people to whom one delegates powers will adequately use these powers. The art of being a member of several social structures and appropriately implementing the plurality of social roles is the result of years of social training.

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