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EDITORIAL

As this issue of *Urbanities* see publication, the new Editors, their Editorial team of committed younger scholars and the members of the Scientific Committee are actively engaged in taking on board the extensive feedback that they have received from the international academic community. As this newish Journal evolves, it will include a Section that brings together standard (up to 8000 words) length articles and a Section dedicated to shorter articles, comments and interviews intended for a wider audience, alongside conference and research reports, review articles, book reviews and abstracts of recently awarded PhDs. We also plan to expand the visual side of this Journal by attention to products such as ethnographic and urban-focused documentaries via announcements and reviews. Finally, while remaining firmly committed to the practice of urban ethnography, the Editors of *Urbanities* recognize the increasingly critical importance of interdisciplinary debate and of the intercourse between academic research and non-academic practitioners; therefore, in forthcoming issues we will endeavour to bring such cross-fertilization to fruition through our publication.

***Segregation Begins at Home:
Gentrification and the Accomplishment of Boundary-work***

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Studies on social segregation typically focus on groups separated according to a particular social characteristic. A major part of the discourse on social segregation analyses residential segregation by race and/or ethnicity. Social class is also a residential separator. This paper argues that gentrification creates segregation by social class through the development and operation of 'parallel cultures' within a community. This paper analyses these processes between working class/lower income residents and newer gentrifiers in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, a community in New York City. Through these separate networks based on social class, boundary-work is accomplished. This occurs primarily through the everyday lives of children. The research presented here is part of a larger study on gentrification. It was carried out mainly through participant observation.

Keywords: segregation, gentrification, social class, social values, boundary-work

Studies on social segregation typically focus on groups separated according to a particular social characteristic. Sociologists view segregation as occurring either voluntarily or involuntarily. A major part of the discourse on social segregation analyses residential segregation by race and/or ethnicity. Investigations examine the various ways that racial groups are institutionally and informally segregated in neighbourhoods. Studies in the U.S. have focused primarily on black-white and white-Hispanic separation (Tauber and Tauber 1965, Farley 1987, Massey and Denton 1993, Charles 2003). Although the U.S. is racially and culturally diverse, an examination of U.S. cities and neighbourhoods up close indicates the continued prevalence of residential segregation by race. On a neighbourhood level, segregation has been accomplished through the work of local institutions (Pearce 1979, Yinger 1995), and has also been conceptualized through informal strategies such as ordered segmentation (Suttles 1968) and the defended neighbourhood (Suttles 1972), and has been maintained by the use of restrictive covenants (Krase 1982), violence (Rieder 1985), and local networks (DeSena 2005). Through these approaches, inequality in America is reproduced and sustained.

Social class is also a residential separator. Increases in income inequality result in greater spatial separation among those affluent and poor (Massey and Fischer 2000: 670). Thus, those wealthy, affluent and poor occupy different social and physical spaces. Neighbourhoods once avoided because of their ethnic flavour or lower socio-economic statuses of residents have become

attractive to gentrifiers. Residential segregation by social class within neighbourhoods occurs as the process of gentrification progresses.

Framing the Study

The concept of gentrification is being defined as ‘the conversion of socially marginal and working class areas of the central city to middle-class [and élite] residential use’ (Zukin 1987: 129). Although the literature refers to gentrifiers as middle class, this analysis considers them upper middle class with more money and job security than the traditional middle class. Research on gentrification focuses primarily on the causes and consequences of this urban process. Analyses fall into two major theoretical perspectives, ecological theory and critical theory (Wittberg 1992). The ecologists examine the needs, tastes, and desires of populations, which are responsible for precipitating neighbourhood change in the form of gentrification (Laska and Spain 1980; Friedenfels 1992, Bourdieu 1984). Included are studies that examine the strategies used by the middle class to create and produce gentrification in specific neighbourhoods (Kasinitz 1988, Kruse 1982). Moreover research studies are focusing on gentrification and school choice. LeGates and Hartman (1986) discuss the preference of gentry parents for private schools in city neighbourhoods, and point to the poor quality of city schools as an explanation for this preference. Gentry families either move to the suburbs or pay for private education for their children. Robson and Butler’s study of London (2001) contends that ‘the significance and role of education in gentrification processes cannot be generalized. What is crucial is the examination of cases, in particular the interaction between local educational infrastructures and the varying middle-class strategies designed to exploit them’ (p. 72). Critical theorists, on the other hand, view the causes of gentrification as manufactured by actions taken by the political economy, namely the investments of capital and the policies of the state (Abu-Lughod 1994; Fitch 1993; Smith 1996; Zukin 1982, 1987).

Some scholars discuss a change in the process of gentrification in the 1990s. Smith (1996) contends that due to the 1987 stock market crash and ensuing recession, degentrification has occurred. For Smith, upper middle class and élite gentrifiers found themselves with lowered property values and forced interactions with minority groups, immigrants, and women as they competed for the urban terrain. Hackworth’s study of three gentrifying neighbourhoods in New York City (2002) argues that a major change in gentrification is that the state is investing in the process more directly than in the past. In addition, corporate developers are the initial migrants prior

to gentrifiers more so than before when they followed pioneers. Moreover, the actions by ordinary people against gentrification have been marginalized in that their concerns are dismissed by those in power.

The discourse on gentrification documents the benefits and costs of this process on the local community. The literature profiles most gentrifiers as affluent, young, single, urban professionals, and young, married couples who are both wage earners and have no children, or small families. This segment of the population is credited with revitalizing older, city neighbourhoods, and by extension, the city itself through housing improvements and loft conversions, service upgrades, and an expansion of the local economy with the introduction of new restaurants and retail establishments. Studies dealing with the consequences of gentrification on neighbourhoods examine primarily housing, and present increasing housing costs and displacement of existing populations as outcomes (Cybriwsky 1978, Marcuse 1986, LeGates and Hartman 1986). Thus, in general, the major consequence of gentrification documented in the literature is the displacement or ‘replacement’ (Freeman and Braconi 2004) of ordinary people and small businesses to more affluent groups, sometimes élites, as well as the transition of ‘mom and pop’ businesses to retail chains and boutiques.

There is a debate in the literature regarding the extent and effect of displacement. Some scholars minimize dislocation as a ‘natural’ consequence of competition over residential space (Ellen and O’ Regan 2011, Freeman 2006, Freeman and Braconi 2004, Hamnet 2003). In addition, policy makers who promote gentrification, argue that the process creates social mixing among various classes, perhaps leading to social integration. This article and additional empirical evidence (Lees 2008) suggest otherwise. The result of gentrification is not increased social mixing or diversity. In fact, another outcome is that ordinary people have fewer choices regarding places of residence and industrial work, since affordable neighbourhoods with viable industry are diminished by gentrification. Moreover, classic market protections, such as public housing and rental housing with regulations are diminished by proponents of gentrification through condominium developments and altered social policy (Newman and Wyly 2006).

The literature on gentrification analyses both, the gentrifiers and those residents most directly affected by gentrification. Of this last type, most investigate low income, black neighbourhoods experiencing gentrification by whites. In some cases, tensions and disagreements between established residents and newcomers are presented (DeSena 2009); however, this is

balanced by some of the positive benefits brought by gentrifiers, such as the use of their social and human capital to bring about local improvements (Freeman 2006). In other cases, renters and longtime black residents are less likely to have a positive view of gentrification (Sullivan 2007). Additional studies examine white gentrification to mostly ethnic and immigrant neighbourhoods (Betancur 2011, Martinez 2010, Murdie and Teixeira 2010). For these groups, gentrification created not only spatial displacement, but also the dissolution of the ethnic community.

Gentrification is a process of neighbourhood change which is presently occurring globally. World cities, such as London, New York and Toronto have been a focus of research. More recent studies have examined and compared other cities as well. Krase (2005, 2012) compared gentrification in neighbourhoods in Krakow, Poland and Greenpoint, Brooklyn, indicating many historical similarities and visual connections. His analysis suggests that gentrification stems from global forces. In Paris, the focus is on ‘bobo’ (bohemian-bourgeois) areas (‘Shop by Shop, Paris Reclaims Bagnolet’ 2012) and increasing gentrification in neighbourhoods in various *arrondissement* of the city (Keramitas 2010, Santucci 2012).

This paper argues that gentrification creates segregation by social class through the creation and maintenance of ‘parallel cultures’ (DeSena 2009) within a community. This concept is used to suggest that the working class and gentry operate in their own social groups within the neighbourhood, while co-existing with the other. They experience physical proximity as well as social distance (Simmel 1950). Within each local culture, residents live by a series of social values, some of which are revealed in this paper. These values are acted upon and played out by residents in the course of their everyday lives. This paper analyses these processes in Greenpoint, Brooklyn between working class/lower income/immigrant residents and newer gentrifiers. Through these separate networks based on social class, boundary-work is accomplished. Boundary-work refers to the maintenance of social distance between groups. This occurs primarily through the everyday lives of children indicating the different social values embraced by each group.

Doing the Study

This is a qualitative study of gentrification in Greenpoint, which means that years have been spent engaged in various community settings with both gentrifiers and working class residents. This investigation was carried out through participant observation. An urban, ethnographic investigation allows this researcher to analyse the everyday dynamics among and between groups

of residents. The methodology applies classic anthropological methods (Pardo and Prato 2012) which are shared by some urban sociologists. Gentrification has been this researcher's focus since 1996 and was investigated by moving around playgrounds and playgroups within the neighbourhood with my children, and meeting many (mostly) mothers and children who were relatively new residents, and lacked the social ties and attachments of long-term residents. Unlike working class residents, the professional and technical status of gentrifiers surfaced as discussions ensued regarding work, experiences in college and graduate school, residential history, and aspirations for our children's education. The research style was unobtrusive and employed listening closely to daily conversations among parents, and asking questions of them as a neighbour and 'new' mother. The same technique was used with working class/lower income/immigrant residents. This was accomplished by moving in and out of various local settings which allowed opportunities to engage with each group for comparison. For example, my children played both soccer and basketball. As will be discussed later in this paper, in Greenpoint, each sport league is primarily comprised of gentry and working class families, respectively. Field notes were assembled immediately following interactions.

The Neighbourhood

Greenpoint is a peninsula at the northernmost tip of Brooklyn. Greenpoint lies across the river from Manhattan. The Empire State building and the Chrysler building are visible from Greenpoint, looming far above the low scale buildings in the community. Greenpoint is also connected to neighbourhoods in Queens (Long Island City, Sunnyside, and Maspeth) by the Pulaski, the Greenpoint Avenue and the Kosciusko Bridges. The Kosciusko Bridge also links the Brooklyn—Queens Expressway with the Long Island Expressway.

Adjacent to Greenpoint in Brooklyn, lying just across its southern boundary is Williamsburg. Greenpoint and Williamsburg share the administration of many municipal services, and together, they make up Brooklyn's Community Board 1, an extension of New York City government in the community.

Gentrifying Greenpoint

Greenpoint is also home to people of a variety of social classes. Residents are poor, working class, middle class, and upper middle class. Among the higher socioeconomic status groups are gentrifiers.

Greenpoint has been a working class community for most of its history. Greenpoint's poor and working classes are being displaced by a very expensive housing market driven by gentrification.

In 2010, the total population of Greenpoint was 33,863 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Tract Data, 2010). Like New York City as a whole, the population exhibited small increases since 2000. There were few changes in the racial profile of the neighbourhood in that a majority of the neighbourhood remained white. However, in 2010 there was a decline of Hispanic residents. This is in contrast to a decrease of non-Hispanic whites and an increase of Hispanics citywide. The formal education of Greenpoint's residents has increased from 2000 to 2010. By 2010, the largest group of residents held Bachelor's degrees. This is a dramatic change since 1980. By 2010, the median household income in Greenpoint also increased. In terms of occupation, in 2010, management and business professionals constituted the largest group, followed by service occupations. This is in contrast to 1980 when the largest occupational group was in technical and sales followed by operators and labourers. The persistence and growth of a mostly white community, coupled with an increase of formal education and income among the population, and a shift to significantly more professionals and less labourers than in the past are indicators supporting the growth of a gentrifying neighbourhood (Mason 2011).

In terms of housing in 2000, 81 per cent of households in Greenpoint are renters, and about a quarter of these are not rent regulated (Scott 2003). Furthermore, 'The percentage of affordable housing in Greenpoint is dropping faster than it is in New York City as a whole. The percentage of rental units in the most expensive category is skyrocketing' (Scott 2003: 7). The notion of affordability is defined as being no more than 30 per cent of a household's income going toward rental costs. In Greenpoint in 2000, 'about 40% of households paid more than 30% of their income on rent' (Scott 2003: 9). Market rate rents for a two bedroom apartment in Greenpoint in 2002 ranged from \$1500 to \$1900 (Scott 2003: 16). This represents a 50 per cent increase since 1997. Additional indicators of gentrification within the housing sector are featured in articles in the local newspapers discussing 'skyrocketing rents', and 'loft regulations urged' (Greenline 2001). Houses are selling for \$600,000 (for a two family) and upwards, especially in the historic district (Mooney 2009).

Greenpoint has been a community envied. It was historically white, stable, affordable, physically well kept, with high occupancy rates, low crime, high levels of social capital, and a

high degree of neighbouring relative to other neighbourhoods in Brooklyn. Its low scale, small town charm, and relative affordability were appealing to gentrifiers as a place of residence.

There are clear social class differences between gentrifiers and long-term residents of Greenpoint. Long-term residents are relatively less educated and occupy relatively lower paying jobs than the gentry. Many life-long renters are experiencing great difficulty in the housing market. Rents are too expensive and the demand for housing is great. They are looking in other communities.

In Greenpoint, there are a couple of ways that segregation by social class is done. One is through school selection for children (DeSena 2006). In general, there is division between local public education and Catholic school education (since these are the only private schools in the community). Working class and relatively low income families choose among them. Often, the outcome of this public-private school division in local communities is racially segregated schools in which the children of affluent families, who are primarily white, attend private schools, while those from relatively low income backgrounds, who are ethnically and racially mixed, enrol in public schools. Social class differences are often translated into racial differences. Currently in Greenpoint, the Catholic schools are experiencing declining enrolments forcing the closing of one school and discussions of consolidating others. The local public elementary schools are highly regarded from the standpoint of safety, and City and State testing. Families are taking advantage of them. One observes racial diversity in the local public schools. Another level to the segregation of children in schools involves gentrifying families. To a large extent, gentry families remove their children from educational institutions within the community. They do not select either Catholic schools or public schools in Greenpoint. Instead, they select among public schools within the entire City of New York. Thus, this paper indicates how gentry families in Greenpoint negotiate the public school system city-wide and search for public schools for their children that they deem acceptable.

Ordinary Residents and Ordinary Schools

I use the concept of ‘ordinary’ to refer to the quotidian, that which is the typical, everyday life of working class and low-income residents of Greenpoint. These are the people who attempt to work on a regular basis, have little if any disposable income, and maintain a cohesive neighbourhood through high levels of neighbouring and active participation in community organizations and neighbourhood institutions. They lived in Greenpoint and were active in the community prior to

gentrification. As mentioned earlier, working class and low-income residents of Greenpoint, for the most part, choose between both local Catholic and local public schools for their children. They do not consider any other options.

For some working class families, Catholic schools are selected because of the teaching of religious values and perceptions of superior quality, more discipline, and safety when compared to public schools. As one mother said about choosing a Catholic school for her son, ‘the kids are nicer, better behaved [in a Catholic school]’. In some instances, the decision is based on where other children in one’s immediate geographic area attend school. ‘We chose [St. Mary’s] because that’s where all the kids in the neighbourhood would go. It was a communal thing for us’.

The selection of local public schools is based on perceived quality, more resources in the form of free books and computers, and no required tuition payment. Some residents see value with no additional cost. Having three children enrolled in a local public school, one woman said, ‘Why should we pay? Mrs.[Kelly] said that St.[Susana’s] School is terrible now, and she use to teach there!’ Another woman, who presently teaches at a public school, but whose four children attended Catholic school, recommended that her sister select public education for her young children. She contended, ‘I think the public schools are better’.

Interestingly, for working class and low-income families, there was no consideration of enrolling children in schools outside the neighbourhood. In some cases, residents may be unaware of available alternatives within the public school system. As one immigrant woman said, ‘God will find the right middle school for him [as she pointed to her son]’. For ‘ordinary’ families who know that they can apply, on behalf of their children, to schools outside Greenpoint, the sentiment expressed is, ‘It’s hard to go to Manhattan’. These families want to school their children locally.

Gentry Families and Gentry Schools

A major issue for gentry families is their dissatisfaction with local schools. Although a few of the local elementary schools are highly rated based on City-wide and State test scores, and others are academically average, gentry families are critical of them. The local schools are negatively judged because of their traditional approach including ‘teaching to the tests’. In fact, in 2003, two elementary schools in Greenpoint scored between 90% and 95% on State tests for fourth graders. If one only considers test scores, some gentrifiers select relatively inferior schools for their children. When asked why a school outside the community where only 45% of fourth graders met or

exceeded State standards was selected, one mother replied, 'we wouldn't even consider that Shaw shank place [a public school in Greenpoint]. I went to a PTA meeting because they don't hold a tour. I snuck in. It was like a prison'. This mother viewed her son's assigned local school to be too rigid. As this woman indicated, the fact that the schools in Greenpoint do not readily allow resident families to tour them was a concern.

Prior research indicates the tendency by the gentry, upon having families, to leave city neighbourhoods because of the poor quality of public schools (LeGates and Hartman 1986). In Greenpoint, however, the gentry prefer public education over private education. Catholic schools are not an option because as a group, gentrifiers are more secular than their lower income neighbours who support the local religious institutions. Furthermore, tuition in private, non religious elementary schools in New York City can cost upwards of \$20,000 annually. The move away from private, secular schools and toward public schools suggests that Greenpoint's gentry with families have acquired a relatively affluent lifestyle, but they are not wealthy.

A major strategy developed by the gentry in Greenpoint to remedy their displeasure with local schools is enrolling their children in talented and gifted (TAG) programs and alternative education programs in public schools primarily in Manhattan and, to a lesser extent, other parts of the City. They have learned to 'work the system' to their advantage. Groups of small children and parents crowd subway platforms headed for Manhattan. Car pools of parents and numerous children attending the same school leave various blocks every morning from Greenpoint en route to the Queens-Midtown Tunnel, the Williamsburg Bridge, or the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and return in the afternoon in possibly a different car or minivan driven by a different parent. To a much lesser extent, another strategy for children's education is home schooling. Parents who select this option believe that they can do a better job educating their children than local schools because a lot of time is wasted in school, and they can teach the curriculum in creative ways. For the most part, these are professional families who attempt to function in a traditional way in which a parent stays at home or has the flexibility to work at home or report to work later than is customary, or leave work early, to be available to tend to children's schedules.

The majority of gentry children are admitted to schools outside of their residential district in a number of ways, including a lottery system. Alternative education programs, which take a progressive approach to elementary education (such as Montessori and Waldorf), admit students by lottery. There is a preference for this type of schooling by gentrifiers in Greenpoint. If a child is not

accepted, they remain on waiting lists and mothers call the schools on a regular basis to keep abreast of their status, and express their deep interest in the school. They behave like the proverbial ‘squeaky wheel’, promising to be an ‘involved parent’, and hope their child gets admitted. Another type of admission policy involves testing for a TAG program for a kindergarten class within a particular school. Although kindergarten is not mandatory in New York State, once a child is accepted, he/she is guaranteed a place for the next 6-8 years. Thus, many children from Greenpoint were admitted to TAG programs in schools in Manhattan on the proverbial ‘ground floor’. Siblings of children in attendance are given admission priority. If they are not admitted to the school’s TAG program, they are accepted into the regular program in the same school. Another tactic developed to insure admission is best described by one parent who said, ‘We’ll rent an apartment for a few months in that school’s area. Once she [my daughter] is accepted, we’ll give it up’.

One of the first generations of children from Greenpoint attending elementary school in Manhattan has advanced to middle school and high school. They are attending some of the ‘best’ (Hemphill 1999) public middle schools and high schools in New York City. One questioned how these children were admitted to middle school in Manhattan, since one school official stated that ‘they had not accepted students from outside their Manhattan district in years’. It seems that because the children attended elementary school in the Manhattan district, they were given priority for applying to middle schools and then high schools in the same district. Thus, one finds that gentry families are quite clever in their approach to schooling their children. In this case, they were ‘tracking’ their children to highly rated schools with their initial kindergarten placement (DeSena and Ansalone 2009). Ultimately, gentrifiers use schools to assert the boundary between themselves and their working class and poor neighbours (see Martin 2008 for similar findings).

Kids Activities

Another area of segregation by social class focuses on the activities of children and teens in the neighbourhood of Greenpoint. Presently in Greenpoint, one observes both informal play among school-age children ‘on the street’, as well as adult organized, supervised, and structured recreation in the form of play dates, team sports, and birthday celebrations in ‘party places’. Implicit in a discussion of children’s play is the intention of parents relative to their social values, who direct that play (either by design, routine, or tradition). In the end, this discussion is about

parental boundary-work regarding their children's peer group and activities in which social class plays a part.

Ordinary Kids

Greenpoint's ordinary kids are from working class and lower income families, some of whom are relatively recent immigrants. Most of the American born children are from families with multiple generations living in the community. They experience generational continuity, inheriting a legacy of Greenpoint as their 'home'.

Children old enough to be outside on their own roam the streets, visiting local establishments like parks, the library, and pizzerias, using the neighbourhood as their playground. They ride bicycles, skateboards, and scooters, play basketball, stickball, handball and more sophisticated versions of games like tag and hide and seek. Some observers think that these children, who wander the local streets, have nothing to do, but while they are doing 'nothing', they engage in verbal exchanges, decision making, problem solving, and endless negotiation. They create, maintain, and participate in the community.

To an unwitting onlooker, children wandering the streets, changing locales and activities, appear to be unsupervised. For ordinary kids in Greenpoint, that is seldom the case. There are multiple social networks operating in which adults, sweeping sidewalks, hanging or gazing out of windows, or simply passing by, keep an eye on children. As one resident said, 'I know that [my son's friend] climbs the fences into the abandoned factories. My son knows he better not go there. I tell him, "We're watching"'. Interestingly, in this family, both parents work full-time. So the idea of 'we're watching' is actually a reference to an assorted collection of local family, friends, and neighbours.

Residents will also utilize their relationships when warranted. Children are sometimes confronted directly or their parents are contacted when an incident occurs. One resident explained, 'we were out for a walk and noticed these kids sitting in my wife's car. It was parked near the factory. My brother happened to be approaching us. I signalled to him and we ran toward the car. They saw us coming and got out and started running, but I recognized one of the kids. I went to his house and spoke to his father. They paid us for the broken window'.

Ordinary children in Greenpoint have the freedom to explore the neighbourhood terrain, while subject to the scrutiny of adults. With the emergence and widespread use of cell phones, there is more ongoing contact with parents. One mother said, ‘we have him [her son] call in’.

Ordinary children in Greenpoint are given the same allowances as their parents were given growing up in the community. They are following the established tradition. One mother remarked, ‘Groups of us would go camping for days. You want your kids to have experiences in life’.

Organized Sports

Another type of activity for ordinary children in Greenpoint is organized sports. Adults and children have mainly participated in two athletic traditions in the community, baseball and basketball.

Baseball

Baseball instruction and play are offered through three community organizations, namely the YMCA, Little League, and Police Athletic League (PAL). The Greenpoint YMCA presents a ‘Junior Mets’ program which is sponsored by the YMCA of Greater New York and the New York Mets. It is free to boys and girls ages 5 to 14 during July and August (Greenpoint YMCA, Summer, Fall I, Fall II 2006 Catalogue).

Greenpoint Little League is a major outlet for baseball. This local organization is part of the National Little League Association. In Greenpoint, it is mostly boys who participate.

The Police Athletic League (PAL) also sponsors a baseball league in Greenpoint. Parents who opted for this league over Little League said that ‘it was less competitive and more instructive’.

Basketball

Basketball is offered through two neighbourhood institutions. The local YMCA forms teams of ‘Junior Knicks’, which stems from a collaboration between the YMCA of Greater New York and the New York Knickerbockers. Boys and girls ages 7 to 18 can participate in instructional and league play from January to May. It costs \$25.00, but is free of charge to those 12 to 18 years old because of a special grant (Greenpoint YMCA, Summer, Fall I, Fall II 2006 Catalogue).

Basketball is also offered through Catholic Charities, sponsored by the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and organized through Catholic parishes within the Brooklyn-Queens Diocese. Parishes within Greenpoint and some elsewhere would compete in basketball. Play takes place in gymnasiums belonging to each church, and some teams travel, constituting 'home' and 'away' games. Adults volunteer to serve as the parish athletic representative to CYO, coach teams, as well as set-up, work as time keepers designating play time, and sell refreshments during games. Officials, such as referees, are paid.

One major participant in basketball, St. Anthony/ St. Alphonsus Church, ended its more than half a century of play. One mother, whose children played for St. Anthony's explained, CYO basketball at St. Anthony's is no longer in existence. The Parish Athletic Representative resigned after years of service, and no one came forward to volunteer to take his place. CYO basketball still exists at St. Cecilia's and St. Stan's. Kids can join those teams.

The end of youth basketball at this parish may symbolize the current state of the local Catholic Church in gentrifying neighbourhoods. About a year later, St. Anthony/ St. Alphonsus School was closed because of dramatically declining enrolment. Gentry newcomers used neither the school nor the basketball league for their children.

Gentry Kids

Like ordinary children in Greenpoint, the children of gentry families are also seen roaming the streets of Greenpoint, visiting the video store, the library, riding skateboards, and playing kickball. However, local children are segregated by social class. Gentry children play with other gentry children, and ordinary children play with peers like them. On the streets, in the parks, and engaged in more formal arrangements like a local swim club, the children are not integrated with each other in the community. In fact, one gentry mother commented about the children of her working class neighbours, 'They are boys in need of supervision!' As was indicated earlier also holds regarding play, grouping by social class remains intact, and there is no outreach outside of one's in-group.

The children of gentry families also participate in organized sports, but they have not joined a community sponsored baseball league, or basketball team. Instead, their parents have formed the Greenpoint/Williamsburg Youth Soccer League (GWYSL). GWYSL was established in 1999. It originated with a group of gentry families whose children attended the YMCA

preschool. These families organized ‘pick-up games’, informal soccer games among the children. From there they researched various leagues and joined the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO). AYSO was chosen because of their guiding principles: everyone plays, balanced teams, open registration, positive coaching, good sportsmanship (GWYSL Newsletter, November 2005). On Saturday mornings from September to December, a multitude of children ages 4-14, wearing various coloured uniforms designating different teams, engage in playing their game of the week at McCarren Park in Greenpoint. For the most part, these are the children of gentrifiers. One mother expressed, ‘It’s nice after 6 years; the kids are off in different middle schools but get to see each other in soccer’. In terms of both play and organized sports, gentry children are segregated from their ordinary neighbours.

Compared to ordinary children, the lives of gentry children take them outside of the neighbourhood. In addition to schools, there are other activities which remove them from the neighbourhood, one of which is enrichment classes. In some cases it is to learn a musical instrument, various types of dance, gymnastics, and language and culture. Many of these classes are outside of Greenpoint.

Some gentry families leave the community for leisure on a regular basis and even for extended periods of time. One example includes families who own second homes outside of the City and use them on weekends and vacation periods. In an attempt to schedule time for two preteen boys to ‘hang out’, a gentry mother remarked, ‘We’re away every weekend and holidays and vacations. And he takes lessons at our other place. He’s quite good!’

Time for the boys was not scheduled since one was away a lot. Some gentry families pack up in June and leave for the entire summer, returning for the start of school. One woman explained, ‘we’re leaving tomorrow for this [place]. We go every summer. I [work] there and my children are able to attend free’. Thus, through second homes and summers away, gentry families disinvest in Greenpoint and participate in the activities of other communities.

Conclusions

This paper suggests some of the social values at work for working class and gentry residents of Greenpoint. Like the popolino and bourgeois residents of the *quartiere* in Naples, Italy (Pardo 1992), differences placed on the meaning of ‘the home’ point to dissimilar social values. In this paper, the social values of residents are revealed through the everyday lives of children. Working

class residents emphasize community, while the gentry stress enhancement. The working class highlight for their children participation in the community life of Greenpoint through schooling, and traditional social institutions. As adults, they ‘keep an eye on’ local children as part of maintaining community. Gentry residents, on the other hand, convey that Greenpoint is the place in which they reside, but look outside to satisfy their desire for their perception of quality education and enrichment for their children, and to nourish their social status by schooling their children in more upscale places like Manhattan. This contrast is reminiscent of Lareau’s (2003) notions of natural growth and concerted cultivation in her analysis of class, race, and family life.

There is also a contradiction between the ideology that gentry families publicly present and the ways in which they guide their children. For example, a youth soccer league with values of fair and equal play was selected, but those values seem to pertain to their group. In general, separation and divisions are maintained and boundary-work is accomplished. The clear segregation of children by social class in Greenpoint explains why most gentry children are not playing other organized sports, or engaged in activity spots, such as the local public library. They have simply not socially integrated into the larger community of Greenpoint.

The actions presented here have consequences for community life. One major consequence is the segregation of children by social class within schools, which locally, are seemingly reserved for working class and immigrant families. This outcome is similar to neighbourhoods in which private schools are patronized by the gentry. In both cases, a consequence of gentrification is that the local public schools in Greenpoint experience a segregated student body by social class and possibly ethnicity and race by extension. In the aftermath of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, this analysis indicates how the segregation of schools continues, and how ultimately, social class privilege is reproduced. The gentry are more accustomed to relative privilege and have made a judgment about what constitutes quality education. Their focus is on formal education and not community. As a group, they are more opportunistic than their working class neighbours. Working class residents are more accepting of local public schools, and believe that their only other choice is to pay tuition at a local Catholic school. To an extent, they are unaware of and possibly not interested in the options within the public school system, such as entrance by lottery or applying to specialized schools for music, science, performing arts, etc., and the additional strategies used by their gentry neighbours. Working class families are more committed to community than the gentry. They want their children schooled with other local children to form friendships and perpetuate community. Through these

practices, boundary-work is realized and parallel cultures ensue. In the final analysis, the outcome is social segregation.

One must ask why gentry residents with children stay in Greenpoint given their dissatisfaction with children's recreation and local schools? Many gentry took up residence as singles and childless couples. Children's needs were not a consideration. They stay because 'the lifestyle for sale is defined by a place- the city' (Mills 1993: 154), in this case, New York City. Residential choices were made based on housing options in which more space could be acquired for a relatively affordable price. These findings raise a question, why do gentry families choose other public schools outside of the community instead of using their many resources, such as their human and social capital (like in the creation of a soccer league), to gain control of local schools and change them to better represent their wishes and lifestyle? A simple explanation is that it is probably easier to commute children to and from school and 'work the system' to their advantage, than it is to mobilize change within the New York City public school system. A more meaningful explanation, however, is that school selection is a reflection of the gentry's social status. Their social status as artists and professionals, with more affluence and formal education than their working class neighbours, gets expressed by sending their children to schools in more upscale places, like areas of Manhattan. In this way, the gentry are 'doing' social class and social status. They also live in a trendy, changing neighbourhood in which they 'do cultural work with symbols of working class culture... stigma and status' (Mills 1993: 158). The stigma is living in a working class place; the status is creating a lifestyle and community within that place thus, making it trendy.

This article also represents one way that social stratification is reproduced by the process of gentrification. Through strategies for acquiring a relatively privileged, segregated life, social class and social status are maintained. Butler (2003) noted in his work on London, 'Gentrification in Barnsbury (and probably London) is therefore apparently playing a rather dangerous game. It values the presence of others—that much has been seen from the quotations from respondents—but chooses not to interact with them. They are, as it were, much valued as a kind of social wallpaper, but no more' (p. 2484).

Similarly, by attending activities and school outside of Greenpoint, the children of gentrifiers are removed from the community. They are separated from their working class and immigrant peers with whom they live. Both operate within parallel cultures. This practice accomplishes boundary maintenance and diminishes social integration and the subsequent formation of social networks

outside of one's social class-group within the community. The preschool network of gentrifiers remains intact in that the children of the gentry socialize in the community with other children who are just like them. In addition, the local community of gentry (parents and children) form friendship networks because children attending specific schools often travel together, have established a youth soccer league and annual parades, caroling troupe at Christmas, planting events at McCarren Park, and have formed new community organizations. They maintain a cohesive community with each other, but are not participants in the larger, more ethnically and economically diverse community. They experience homogenization. In these ways, gentry parents articulate and convey their social status, desire for upward mobility, and power in a global city that is increasingly white and affluent. Thus, gentry children are taught that they are privileged relative to their working class and poor neighbours. Gentrification, through boundary-work and the formation and maintenance of parallel cultures, contributes to increasing social segregation ultimately producing greater social inequality.

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Social Mixing: A Life of Fear

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Neoliberal trickle-down gentrification policies profess to have the bipartite ability to regenerate areas of urban decay for an affluent incoming populace, whilst concurrently benefiting the lower classes. These policies have attracted scepticism from some sections of academia as to the reality of such claims. However, few have conducted ethnographic research into the experiential outcomes of such policies, which posit that urban decay is remedied through the reclamation of valuable land, leading to regeneration and wealth and prosperity for the benefit of all. Those who inhabit *realms of decay* are vilified during this process, and it is assumed that their *wayward* lifestyles will be redirected through inter-mixing with a more *productive* class of citizen. This scheme perpetuates the belief that the brave urban pioneers that take up residence in previously deprived locales must be protected from the perceived instigators of urban decay via highly securitised colonies. It is argued here that the outcome of these policies creates a fear that affects both sides of the class divide in vastly different ways, via the implementation of a security-obsessed environment that perpetuates anxiety. This paper aims to give a voice to those who experience such policy outcomes with the overriding objective of illustrating the realities of social mixing through a ‘reversal of the spectacle’. The discussion addresses everyday life in a socially mixed London housing estate with statistically higher than average levels of crime where the majority of residents from both sides of the demographic divide lived in daily fear of each other.

Keywords: ethnographic research, gentrification policies, socially mixed urban areas, fear

Introduction

‘Nearly 30 years ago, Holcomb and Beauregard were critical of the way that it was assumed the benefits of gentrification would “trickle down” to the lower classes in a manner similar to that hypothesised in the housing market. Despite fierce academic debate about whether or not gentrification leads to displacement, segregation and social polarisation, it is increasingly promoted in policy circles both in Europe and North America on the assumption that it will lead to less segregated and more sustainable communities’ (Lees 2008: 2449).

This paper provides a contemporary example of gentrification and social mixing, that supports the above statement that such policies can lead to greater segregation. These policies are built upon the premise that to reclaim valuable inner city real estate there is an initial requirement to *civilise* these urban contexts (Atkinson & Helms 2007). This mantra advocates overly simplistic solutions to highly complex sociological issues, such as the belief that an injection of wealth into locales of high crime and deprivation will remedy the underlying causes. We shall see that such a regeneration policy facilitated a complex re-negotiation of place in a recently socially mixed London housing estate. The communities living there (private and socially housed) came from both sides of the class divide and populated a shared post-regeneration landscape. Observations of the everyday-life on this estate supported the argument that such regeneration,

oriented towards creating ‘sustainable communities’, is underpinned by the safety and security concerns of the private residents (Raco 2003), the outcomes of which held significant consequences for the estate’s residents and has applicability to the wider gentrification discourse.

I shall explore the belief that instances of crime and anti-social behaviour intimated a re-emergence of urban decay that threatened the hegemony of the private residents’ way of life. Such instances increased the private residents’ desire to secure the locale from a conceptual criminal *other*, which created what Sibley called geographies of exclusion (1995). The findings resonate with wider processes where residents of deprived neighbourhoods become vilified as undeserving lazy minorities who have been given too much public assistance (Omi and Winant 1994), and the valuable space they inhabit becomes characterised as misused and abused (Smith 1996). We rarely hear from those who suffer this vilification, we know little of their fears or their concerns. The analysis offered here seeks to redress this balance by providing an ethnography¹ of everyday life in a socially mixed ‘urban village’ from the perspective of both the socially and the privately housed.

What follows is an ethnographically-based consideration of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus in a housing estate in East London, hereafter referred to as Newham Village (NV). In this context, habitus is defined as the means through which the individual makes sense of their identity in relation to the physical and social particularities of their lived environment. It is both an embodied and cognitive sense of place that guides expectations of behaviour, action and sociological intercourse. I explore the role of symbolic capital² in NV, as ‘a form of power that is not necessarily perceived as power as such, but as legitimate demands for recognition, deference, obedience or the service of others’ (Schwartz 1997: 90). The analysis begins with a demographic overview of the location.

¹ The ethnographic research, which underpins the findings of this paper, formed part of a larger research project that explored urban regeneration within the London borough of Newham. This ethnography occurred between 2007 – 2012 (see Armstrong, Hobbs & Lindsay, 2011; Lindsay 2011, 2012a, 2012b).

² Bourdieu recognizes the importance of the symbolic dimensions of capital. His term, symbolic capital, incorporates three forms of capital (economic, social and cultural capital) and represents ‘the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate’ (Bourdieu, 1989: 17).

Welcome to the Village

An ‘urban village’ has very specific characteristics, as succinctly defined by Aldous (1992 1995). These include housing 3,000-5,000 residents inside a well-defined urban space. Urban villages have a focal village square and are small enough for everything in ‘the village’ to be within walking distance of everything else. They include a mix of housing tenures, ages and social groups, and host a primary school. Perhaps most crucially, they are assumed by bureaucrats to be sites capable of being used for social mixing. Despite being written over 30 years previously, Pitt’s study of *Gentrification in Islington* continues to resonate in the contemporary socially mixed ‘urban village’. Pitt argued that social mixing rests upon the belief that there is an ideal composition of social and income groups which, when achieved, produce optimum individual and community well-being (Pitt 1977: 16). The objectives behind the modification of NV’s urban geography offered a compelling illustration of Pitt’s argument, whereas the outcomes may be referred to as a splintering post-metropolitan landscape. The NV landscape had ‘become filled with many kinds of protected and fortified spaces, islands of enclosure and anticipated protection against the real and imagined dangers of daily life. Borrowing from Foucault, postmetropolis is represented as . . . an archipelago of “normalised enclosures” and fortified spaces that both voluntarily and involuntarily barricade individuals and communities in visible and not-so-visible urban islands, overseen by restructured forms of public and private power and authority’ (Soja 2000: 299).

To understand the resonance of protected and fortified space in this urban location it is important to consider the demographics of the surrounding area. NV was located within the London borough of Newham, a highly deprived part of London, as demonstrated by the official statistics released in October 2010³. The population of Newham is rising and is projected to continue to rise significantly. Compared to London as a whole, the borough has a very young and highly diverse population and high levels of population churn.⁴ Newham is a highly deprived

³ <http://www.newham.info/Custom/LEA/Demographics.pdf>

⁴ The word ‘churn’ refers to the movement of residents in and out of the borough. In 2007/2008 almost one fifth of the Newham population (19.5%) either left or entered the area. Such churn is evidenced in National Insurance (NI) registrations, which are necessary for legal employment in the UK. In 2007/2008 more foreign nationals registered for NI numbers in Newham than anywhere else in the UK. Of these 15% were Indian, 14% Polish, 11% Romanian, 9% Lithuanian, 7% Bangladeshi and 4% Bulgarian. A

borough with especially high rates of deprivation affecting children and older people. Poverty is high and life expectancy is lower than the London average.

Accurate population figures for Newham are illusive, due to large numbers of unregistered residents living in the borough, with estimates varying between 265,688⁵ and 320,000 (Bagehot 2012). The link between crime and poverty is well documented and statistics prove that those living in the poorest estates in Britain are the most likely to be victims of crime (Hope & Hough 1988), making parts of Newham particularly tough places to live. Clearly, the borough had many endemic social issues that needed to be addressed. One way that Newham attempted to remedy its deprivation was to try to attract more affluent residents. Gentrification is clearly not synonymous with socialism but urban policy plans for this Labour-led London borough clearly resonated with this scheme. The introduction of ‘urban villages’ was to provide better-quality luxury properties for a new generation of Newham resident. I contend that the primary outcome can be seen a means of redressing the ‘Rent Gap’⁶ of this deprived but potentially valuable location. Simply put, gentrifying Newham ensured that the area would yield higher returns in the form of rents and property value, and that as a result it has and will continue to attract new residents to the area.

NV was constructed between 1995 and 2004 and was a prime example of what Hackworth and Smith (2001) define as third-wave gentrification (Davidson & Lees 2005). The Village was conceived as a waterside development comprising 991 flats and houses with an even

2007/2008 Mayhew report estimated that 12,000 people entered the borough from outside the UK with an average stay of 14 months. Furthermore, the Greater London Authority predicted in 2008 (GLA Round Low Population Projections (2008)) that Newham was forecast to see a population increase of 46.6% between 2006 and 2031 as a result of regeneration, which translated into an increase two and a half times that of the London average.

⁵ GLA Round Low Population Projections (2008).

⁶ The term ‘Rent Gap’ refers to the shortfall between the actual economic return taken from an area of land given its present land use (capitalised ground rent) and the potential return it would yield if it were put to its optimal, highest and best use (potential ground rent). As a rent gap increases, it creates lucrative opportunities for developers, investors, home-buyers and local governments to orchestrate a shift in land use — for instance, from working-class residential to middle or upper-class residential or high-end commercial (Smith, 1979; Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2008: 52).

mix of socially and privately housed residents. A solitary road — Wesley Avenue — ran horizontally through the village segregating the private and social housing sectors within. This road divided the estate literally and symbolically. From the very first research visit, right up until the last, it was readily apparent that many NV inhabitants were fearful of dangers — the local environment was saturated by fear. For the private residents it was generically the fear of disorder; more specifically, it was the fear of those that were deemed to be the producers of disorder. These were the, predominantly black, local youths or ‘*the poor*’. It appeared that even in the diversity of 21st Century Newham,⁷ ‘the sight of a young black man evoked an image of someone dangerous, destructive, or deviant’ (Monroe and Goldman 1989: 27). The discourse of those that comprised the social housing was also permeated with fear; it was generically a fear of vilification, more specifically, it was the fear of those who were deemed to be its perpetrators — the predominantly white city workers, or ‘*the rich*’.

Arguably, NV was the embodiment of regeneration programmes that target mobile, high-income, professional groups or the ‘creative classes’ (Florida 2002, 2005). Such ‘creative classes’ require high-quality secure environments, free from the threat of intrusion and from violent crime (Raco 2007: 41). However, as research conducted by Robson and Butler (2004) has demonstrated, these requirements promised to prove problematic within socially mixed locations, finding that spaces that make inequality manifest result in greater incidences of crime, particularly that of robbery and burglary. NV’s social mixing did little to separate the stigma of a *lawless problem estate* from the socially housed tenants that occupied the hinterlands surrounding the highly securitised, gated private enclaves. This led to an uneasy *détente* between the two NV communities that was saturated with the perception of criminality and occasionally broken by instances of such criminality. The uneasy negotiation of place ownership and identity that ensued between NV’s two distinct groups evoked a bipartite regime of socio-spatial relegation and exclusionary closure (in the Weberian sense).⁸ This begs the questions, where does the cycle of

⁷ Newham is consistently referred to as one of the most ethnically diverse places on the planet, with over 300 languages spoken in the borough (Newham Language Shop 2005).

⁸ By closure, Weber (1968: 32-33) designated a set of processes whereby a specific collective restricts ‘access to the opportunities (social or economic) that exist in a given domain’. Its members ‘draw on certain characteristics of their real or virtual adversaries to try and exclude them from competition. These characteristics may be race, language, confession, place of origin or social background, descent, place of

crime and security in socially mixed locales begin and end and what are the implications of this perceptibly unending cycle?

Habitus governed perceptions of urban decay in this location and, indeed, perceptions of the social role therein, be that of *fully functioning citizen* or *vilified product of and / or producer of decay*. In NV, where two vastly different social groups with vastly different habitus were forced to live alongside each other in a confined location, conflict was inevitable. As a result, fear of the *other* permeated everyday NV life, which produced a dichotomy of the social and physical structure of the estate. Following Wacquant (2008: 25), one of the outcomes of social marginality prevalent amongst the socially housed could be the heightened stigmatisation related to degradation of place and class. This conspired to generate fear and distrust between these two NV communities, which increased the likelihood of conflict. Thus, private residents became increasingly concerned about crime and how such perceptions would influence property prices. Although in this case fear of crime was legitimate, it was linked to a larger scheme of anxiety perceived in relation to habitus. This was considered a core component of NV, where life was evaluated through the prism of class.

Who Owns the Village?

Place and identity played a key role in NV, where the quest for place-related identity encompassed many levels, including the political, the economic and the social. As we will see, both communities sought to assert dominance and legitimise their place-related identity in different ways. The socially housed tended to be longer-term residents that used community facilities, such as the community centre, most frequently. The private residents tended to be more transient and reluctant to engage socially. According to the community centre manager, whose role it was to provide a space accessible for both community groups, ‘the private residents tend not to get involved in the community because they don’t stay here long. They are often only here for 6 months or a year. There is no community “involvement” or “ownership”. Once, they have finished their contracts they move away. Those that own their homes stay a bit longer but ultimately move away when they have kids’ (Fieldwork Notes, Community Centre Manager, May 2012).

domicile, etc’. See Wacquant (2008) for more.

This perception intimated that the private residents considered NV a temporary home and were reluctant to engage with the ‘community’. This generalised perception of the private residents can be considered in relation to Berry’s (1985) ‘residential choice theory’, which presumed that those with the ability to choose where they wish to live evaluate prospective locales in relation to a number of key criteria, such as value for money and local amenities, and will have specific expectations of what life will entail there. This theory suggests that the introduction of children necessitates a re-evaluation of the criteria leading to an inevitable prioritising of safety and education. Such re-evaluation often results in private residents moving from recently gentrified areas to locales with a more highly regarded education system (Berry 1985). Research also suggests a direct correlation between a school’s proximity to social disadvantage and lower school performance, and provides barriers to children’s improvement (Woods and Levacic 2002; Levacic and Woods 2002; Clark, Dyson and Millward 1999). These facts ensured that many of NV’s private residents were unwilling to *risk* their child’s education by continuing to live in NV, as is exemplified by the case of Blair, a 27-year-old white Scotsman married to Vic, a white 26-year-old East Londoner. Blair was a Lawyer working for a Fleet Street Law firm; Vic worked in London as a freelance decorator. In 2009 they were looking to buy their first property. They wished to remain in Lambeth, where they rented their house, but eventually moved to a two-bedroom flat in NV because they ‘got more for our money and it was just as quick to get to work from there’. Blair remembers that when they moved to NV many friends questioned why they would move to such an ‘unsafe’ place that was ‘full of foreigners’. Vic’s family were particularly opposed to the idea because she had been brought up in Newham until, when she was 10, they moved to Essex because the area was ‘getting run down and full of immigrants’. Undeterred, Blair and Vic bought their flat and moved in late July 2009. The couple predominantly used their flat as a hub from which to travel outside their local environs; they rarely spent time in and around NV. They commented that when walking home from the DLR station they walked past Wesley Avenue and could not help but rue the fact that on one side it had ‘nice homes’ and on the other there were run-down homes that ‘were council’. The couple commented that they would ‘hate to live there and have to look out their windows at homes that aren’t taken care of, the people living there are just Chavy’.⁹ Their life in NV was one of

⁹ The term CHAV is a term of denigration that stands for Council Housed And Violent.

seclusion and isolation from the socially housed. Those that they shared their block of flats with were ‘people like us, young professionals from outside the local area’. Their perspective of NV life changed in 2011 when Vic fell pregnant. They decided that NV was not the place to bring up their daughter and planned to move to Essex. Blair stated that NV had become ‘more attractive’ as a result of regeneration ‘it’s not a shit-hole anymore’. However, the modifications had not, in his opinion, fixed the fundamental problems of the area and he wanted a ‘cleaner and safer area’ to bring up his daughter where English was the predominant language heard and the schools were much better. He added that, in this regard, ‘suburban life was much more appealing’ (Fieldwork notes, July 2012).

This case-study emphasises Berry’s (1985) consideration that parenthood is a key factor regarding continued occupancy of post-gentrified areas that have low-quality schools. This assumption is in congruence with the findings of Butler and Robson (2001), whose gentrification-related research of another London borough (Lambeth) demonstrated that middle-class families left the area after having children, due to the poor standards of its schools. This intimates that private residents with children are unlikely to ever consider socially mixed locations long-term homes if the schools cannot compete with those in the suburbia. However, the private residents’ ‘reluctance to engage’ is a complex issue that speaks to more than a lack of schools. The very acknowledgement of such issue raises questions as to who determines what is community ‘involvement’ and ‘ownership’ of place in socially mixed communities. It seems feasible that the perceptions and demands of the privately housed, young, child-free professional would be vastly different from those of socially housed single-parent families and that perceptions of what constitutes ‘community involvement’ will differ accordingly. In this regard, it is crucial to explore other pertinent examples of the dichotomy of socially mixed NV life to see whether consensus on any level was ever a possibility in this location.

The Voice of the Vilified

According to my research, those socially housed in NV confirmed many stereotypes used to signify urban decay. This community was extremely diverse ethnically and culturally and included a large proportion of single mothers, some working, many not. Drug use and alcoholism were common, as was domestic abuse. Large extended families were frequent (one youth commented that he {literally} had 80 brothers and sisters, although these included siblings from

other mothers). Education levels were low and unemployment high. Crime levels were comparatively high and in the evenings groups of youths were a common sight on the streets of the estate. These statistics were signifiers of fear for those that lived in the private residences and threatened their perceptions of propriety. My research sought to study the realities behind these statistics in line with Bourdieu's argument that 'one cannot grasp the most profound logic of the social world unless one becomes immersed in the specificity of an empirical reality' (Bourdieu 1993: 271). I engaged in investigating the reality behind these stereotypes by spending time with the relevant groups.

The following case study is indicative of my ethnographic findings, as brings out the realities of life for many socially housed young men growing up in this location. One common narrative was the quest for personal discovery through socialisation, which is exemplified by the account given by a 21-year-old black man who claimed he had been involved in the *road life*, as he phrased it, for many years. He described *road life* as the life that young people become involved in when they opt out of society for a myriad of reasons. Traditionally, entry into this way of life is facilitated in childhood and those involved are referred to as *youngers*. These *youngers* establish themselves through a variety of means, including drug dealing and violence. The *road life* is hierarchical with the *youngers* at the lower end of the scale. At the other end of the hierarchy are the *olders*. The *olders* are comparable to C.E.O.s in business organisations, who maintain hegemonic order within their group and profit accordingly. 'Life for kids is hard, man', my informant said. 'No-one looks after the kids round here, not their parents, no-one. So when they need food or something it's the olders that look after them. They are nice to them. The olders treat everyone well. If kids are homeless they give them shelter, a job, it's a nice life. They feel accepted, protected. Some kids are kicked out of their homes when their mums move in a new man and they don't get on with them. The mums chose the man over the son. So they enter the road life. In the road life the young kids look up to the older ones, they see the clothes they wear and the respect they get. They look up to them, so they go robbing to get money and buy clothes to be like them. People think they spend it on drugs but they don't. The crews¹⁰ treat the communities well. They help people out, you'll hear Mr. X, oh he gave money to so and so, he's a good guy, because really, they want to be good. That's the reason why they get away with so

¹⁰ The term Crew was a colloquialism that, in this context, represented a group of young men that formed a collective that socialised and 'worked' together.

much; when something happens, no-one talks to the police. Not because of fear, because of loyalty' (Private Interview, February 2012).

It is important to avoid categorising all socially housed as criminal and to emphasise that not all socially housed young men enter the *road life*. However, this demographic does play a role in NV life wherein there exists a consistent re-negotiation of place among all residents. The following example indicates that, although all residents believe in the legitimacy of authority figures and in the power they wield, fundamentally, authority in this locale is situation specific and transferable. In NV 'the person of real practical wisdom is marked out less by the ability to formulate rules than by knowing how to act in each particular situation' (Taylor 1999: 41). The following remarks highlight the complexities of living in socially mixed locales. An informant said, 'What would you do if you were walking down a street and you saw 20 hoodies? Would you keep walking towards them? . . . No? . . . Then you're a victim. We know that just by looking. We're like dogs, we can sense it. Your body language: your walk quickens, don't know what to do with your hands, you pat your pockets, walk in zig-zags, cross the road. You're a victim . . . That's good. We do it (mugging) because we're bullies. Imagine you've been bullied all your life. You feel bad about yourself. You want to make others feel bad to make yourself feel better. It doesn't really help though. The media create this image that it's all unsafe, of knife crime but it's not all like that. The truth is the road way is a nice life. You get treated well, you get money. Every-one understands you, they know what you're going through. You get respect' (Private interview, March 2012).

The outcome of this reality was fear, particularly among the private residents, who generally lacked practical NV wisdom. To apply Sparks's (1992) perspective to this situation, fear is the product of uncertainty, which is itself the product of moral and political intuition. This point is crucial to understanding the importance of habitus in a socially mixed location. Habitus is understood as the internalised generative and durable dispositions that guide perception, representation and action in human beings. This is in large part the product of how social positions structure the individual's earliest experiences. It follows that similar conditions of existence result in common habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1999) and oppositional conditions of existence result in conflicting habitus. The private residents specifically feared the habitus of those engaged in the *road life*, which generally extended to the socially housed, who appeared to them to share such a habitus; socialisation was, thus, limited by fear. This limitation, however,

paradoxically perpetuated the cycle of fear and crime, which may have been otherwise reduced through relationality and a concomitant evolution of habitus. In this regard, the negotiation of ownership of NV became hierarchical; such negotiation was grounded in fear, both between the social and private residents and within the groups themselves. As the above example indicates, those engaged in the *road life* feared feeling insecure and insignificant and appeared to have an innate desire for belonging and acceptance. They believed they would never attain acceptance from private residents and so became ambivalent about the private residents' fears and concerns and engaged in behaviour that they felt would facilitate acceptance within their own social structures — namely, criminality. The *victims*, both real and imagined, feared crime and condemned criminality, they also vilified those whom they perceived *likely to commit a crime*, an action that led to many socially housed to become guilty by association, which further perpetuated this cycle of fear.

Why Can't Everyone Just Be Like Us?

The interplay that follows represents life in this NV cycle. Within the estate, the route that linked the private residences to the closest train station (DLR) cut through the heart of the estate and the 'village green'. This meant that the private residents needed to walk through the social housing to get to and from work. This path that cut through both communities could be considered 'micro-public' (Amin 2003); that is, a social space in which individuals regularly come into contact. This micro-public space was highly contested because, in accordance with Amin's definition, both communities used this communal land for their own purposes. The socially housed predominantly used the space socially, whereas the privately housed used it as a route to work. As instances of opportunistic crime on this route through the estate, such as robberies for highly visible items including mobile phones and laptops, were common, this space became a symbolic and literal confrontational locale. Consequently, the private residents saw this route as representative of the physical and moral decay that existed outside their private enclaves. Such a perception instigated an ever-increasing demand for *protection* in the *criminally inclined* spaces between the DLR and the *safety* of their securitised homes. This was exemplified by the following exchange taken from the estate's on-line forum that was used, almost exclusively, by the private residents. Mark, a member of the Community Forum, said, 'Just passing through NV and there has been another mugging. I was walking along Wesley Road and heard some

screaming. My initial thought was “it’s kids” but I stopped to see if I could work out where it was coming from. A young woman ahead of me turned and walked back to me and I asked her if she too had heard screaming. She said she had, and that she was the woman who was mugged three weeks ago. We had a look around. At the front of the surgery, we found a young woman who had been mugged by two black guys. They grabbed her from behind and made off with her handbag. They apparently ran back down towards the green. She called the police who were on their way. I went to find the OMNI security guards (private security hired by private residents) but could not find them — just their empty vehicles parked up on the dockside (the vans are usually parked there, empty!). Obviously they cannot be everywhere at the same time, but they never seem to be in the right place’ (Mark, Community forum, May 2011).

The quote given above illustrates how the private residents considered security guards and CCTV cameras as precursors to *safety* within the areas surrounding their gated enclaves and the fact that these crimes were not being prevented was believed to be due to the deficiency of these methods. The ironic reality of social mixing appeared to be that this policy, intent on increasing social interaction and breaking down social divides, seemed to produce ever-increasing isolation and segregation in NV. As Robert Ezra Park argued (1967), the fundamental cause of prejudice can be inferred to be insecurity originated by *unfamiliarity*; we fear the *other* simply because they are *unknown*. This view was validated in NV during my research, from both sides of the social divide. The language used in response to the aforementioned mugging was saturated with the kind of highly emotive discourse that exemplified the vilification of the *other* and the belief that security was the only way to keep safe from such an *unknown* and *unknowable* threat (Stenson 2001, Wilkins 1991). Tom, a member of the Community Forum, remarked, ‘Gosh, aren’t we sitting ducks around here? Given the recession, it does not surprise me that these incidents are becoming more frequent. Mark quite rightly said that the OMNI guys cannot be everywhere at the same time but the fact that there has now been a number of muggings in the past month strongly indicates that OMNI is not doing their job properly. They need to increase their numbers (my ex-flatmate saw these guys being attacked back in April, which proves that they lack manpower or are not an effective deterrent), their strategy of keeping the area safe is clearly not working. There needs to be an urgent review of the situation. We are sitting ducks...’ (Tom, Community forum, May 2011).

Tom's remarks are indicative of the generic findings of this research, which, I stress, indicates that the private residents' perception of security depended upon the ability of private security measures to protect them from the dangerous *other*. Instances of criminality were perceived by the private tenants as pathologies of the lower classes and signifiers of societal breakdown (Banfield 1970). The intimation was that greater securitisation was required in order to increase perceptions of safety in this 'urban village'. The above interchange suggests that on a day-to-day basis affluent groups sought protection via the private market in security (Hope 1999, 2001). As Young (2001: pp. 30-31) has illustrated, ontological insecurity is a primary means of creating a sense of self and outlining 'acceptable' community principles. In NV, this became evident through the denigration of the socially housed and a generalisation of their behaviour and of their tendency to engage in crime. The private residents of NV formed pockets of intolerance and prejudice. They were intrinsically exclusive in their views and inward looking in their perspective of how life should be lived in NV (Johnstone 2004, Herbert 2005). The realities of NV life exemplify dualisms that consign those socially housed to economic redundancy and social marginality (Sassen 1991; Mollenkopf and Castells 1991; Fainstein, Gordon and Harloe 1992; Wacquant 2008).

Looking at NV in the wider urban renaissance context, it appears that 'normality' is emphatically middle-class in its norms and values (Lees 2003, Jones and Wilks-Heeg 2004; Mooney 2004). It seems cogent to suggest that, although NV identity was imagined, it was an imaginary that was embodied in the context of everyday life and perceived through the prism of class. NV identity was relational and formed, negotiated and renegotiated in the houses, streets, communal spaces and, indeed, the cyber-space of this estate. It appeared that both communities aimed to fulfil the fundamental human need for belonging, which in this location seemed mutually exclusive.

Conclusion

The proposition for the implementation of social mixing was that the urban poor were isolated from the wider society and were unable to exist within mainstream value systems. Consequently, mainstream value systems needed to be brought to the urban poor through the colonisation of their lands by urban pioneers; a project that has unmistakable paternalistic and neo-colonial overtones. The perceived necessity to modify the habitus of these urban areas through

gentrification was the product of the narrative of fear. This was seen to be an outcome of too little law and order in urban ghettos, a belief that led Zukin to define such schema as the ‘institutionalisation of fear’ and as a defining principle of urbanism (1995: 35). The dispositions that incline society towards complicity in social mixing policies are lodged deeply inside wider notions of socialisation. In NV, the socially housed were symbolically and literally vilified as a result of their habitus and inability to rapidly conform to a *foreign* way of being. The privately housed feared the consequences of their logic of order and identity failing to be implemented to its fullest and expected degree; not to mention that they also feared being mugged. These competing narratives raised tension and anxiety throughout the local everyday life, with significant social consequences. Reminiscent of contestations between native people and immigrants in other contexts (See Pardo 2009), this was less a diplomatic evolution of habitus and more a battle for place ownership and ideological dominance.

NV segregation emphasises the importance of acknowledging the divergent habitus of those living in social mixed locales. NV’s social mixing polarised rather than united the disparate NV communities; life therein was one of an incredible, inescapable contrast that led to significant ramifications for those that resided there. On one side of the road there was a two bedroom flat for sale for £425,000;¹¹ on the other, was a smiling young black girl proudly talking about how she had managed to get a job serving food for £8.25 an hour, double what other socially housed residents may earn per hour. On one side of the road a 4 bedroom flat was available for rent at £555 per week;¹² on the other, 15 people recently over from Nigeria illegally slept in a one-bedroom flat. These were the rhythms of NV life and they resonated to the beat of inequality, division and distrust. The paradoxes of poverty and affluence that co-existed in this urban location ignited contestations of identity, place and lifestyle. The underlying logic of this estate can be succinctly delineated by applying Beck’s perception to both NV groups; that is; ‘we’ must secure our centrality and ‘they’, those that disrupt our homely place, must be pushed out from the centre. Difference is an attribute of ‘them’. They are not ‘like us’ and therefore they are threatening (1998: 130).

¹¹[http://www.nestoria.co.uk/britannia-](http://www.nestoria.co.uk/britannia-village/flat/sale#dyn:coord_51.506799,0.025438,51.504128,0.017971/flat/sale/sortby-price_highlow)

[village/flat/sale#dyn:coord_51.506799,0.025438,51.504128,0.017971/flat/sale/sortby-price_highlow](http://www.nestoria.co.uk/britannia-village/flat/sale#dyn:coord_51.506799,0.025438,51.504128,0.017971/flat/sale/sortby-price_highlow)

¹²http://homes.trovit.co.uk/index.php/cod.ad/type.2/what_d.house%20britannia%20village/id.71691h1yxTt/pos.1/pop.0/

It appeared that those on both sides of the NV class divide were concerned with similar issues — fear, safety and belonging. The private residents lived together, thought similarly, shared history, territory, interests, ambitions, customs and, perhaps most importantly, they feared the same *other*. Fundamentally, this shared fear of the *criminal other* created an accessible shared identity whose defining characteristic was the desire to be protected from such a threat. Those who constituted this *other*, the urban poor, lived together too, thought similarly, shared history, territory, interests, ambitions, customs and the fear of the same *other* — this time, the private residents. For them, life was a struggle for opportunity, resources and identity. In spite of the assertion that living cheek-to-jowl with affluence would increase opportunity, in NV, such a policy appeared to have done little more than to re-enforce the belief that opportunity was not something one could earn.

The analysis given here suggests that within NV social mixing was not a cure for urban decay; instead, it was a re-configuration of the generic class struggle and all that that entails. This conceptualisation is in agreement with the contention that such considerations on class in contemporary research are ‘especially significant at a time when “the death of class” is announced across a range of academic and political sites. However, as I (we) argue, class divisions, class distinctions and class inequalities have not “died”: neither has class ceased to be a meaningful category of analysis’ (Lawler 2004: 110).

To summarise, this article aimed to illustrate the outcomes of social mixing from the perspectives of both sides of the housing divide within a specific estate. Empirical research found that NV’s social mixing produced a kind of urban community that failed in the objective to stitch together the fabric of a *damaged* society. Consequently, to generalise these findings, it seems appropriate to suggest that social mixing brings about segregation by exposing middle class residents to the habitus of poor inner-urban areas, which ensures a retreat to the *safety* of highly securitised colonies. It seems logical that, as I witnessed in NV, placing two diverse communities in one small area of land, geographically segregating both communities from each other and then leaving them to compete for place dominance will inevitably result in conflict, both ideological and very real. It is ironic that a process that claims to challenge segregation not only perpetuates the problem, but exasperates it. I would, therefore, argue that the policy of social mixing requires further scrutiny and evolution, particularly in relation to the claims that it will address the causes of urban decay in a positive, inclusive, unifying manner for all communities involved.

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***Going Down to the Place of Three Shadows:
Journeys to and from Downtown Los Angeles' Public Spaces***

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This paper aims to offer a reflection on the micro-dynamics of public spaces and their place in the movements of the city. It is inspired by the experience of David, a sociable homeless man whom I met while doing fieldwork on Downtown Los Angeles' public spaces. David was spending his days under the quiet and peaceful shade offered by the trees in Angels Knoll. By the end of the summer in 2010, he had been thrown out of the park. Because of his limited mobility and the place where he sleeps, he was condemned to spend his days in Pershing Square, a place he disliked and had managed to avoid thus far. This journey from one place to another underlines, unsurprisingly, the fact that public spaces, their users and the activities they host are not alike. Considering their heterogeneity and the relative implementation of city rules, the parks are also supervised and controlled in various ways. This variety enables people to choose the place where they want to go, or at least to have some preferences. I understand this act of choosing one place over another as a social statement. Furthermore, David's journey underlines the multiple mobilities used to go to a park and their role when it comes to presence in public space. Being able to reach the park you want to go to, then, is a question of ability; ability in terms of movements and choices, which some authors refer to as motility. I then conclude that the public space issue - especially in the case of Los Angeles, the city of cars - is not only related to a greater supply of public spaces, but also to the improvement of the motility of every citizen, including David.

Keywords: mobility, motility, public spaces, homeless, diversity, planning, Los Angeles

Starting Line

Los Angeles is sometimes known as the City of cars or even Smogtown (Jacobs 2008). It is a metropolis that '[...] never existed as a large walking city' (Bottles 1987). Since the turn of the 20th century, the automobile and automobile infrastructure, urban sprawl, the development of suburbs, and the decentralization of the center have grown and expanded together. As a result, in 1970, one third of the city was covered with streets, parking lots and highways (Davis, 1999: 80). Forty years later, two-thirds of urban space in all of Southern California is devoted to transportation (Los Angeles Almanac 2010).

Concrete and road signs have been emphasized at the expense of public space. Indeed, throughout its history, Los Angeles has never made a priority of spaces where real flesh and blood contacts happen. In 1928, parks covered 0.6% of the metropolis' territory, which is less than in the medium-sized American city, according to a report by the Citizens' Committee on Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches published in 1930 (Davis 1999: 62, 65).

In 2010, parklands covered 5% of the territory (Mia Lehrer & Associates 2010). That amounts to 3.4 acres of park per 1,000 residents; the average nationwide is 6 to 10 acres. Put

differently, only 33% of Angelinos live within a quarter-mile of a park. This figure is 97% for Boston and 91% for New York (Watanabe 2008).

This deplorable situation can be explained by the City's tendency to transfer power to the private sector, especially in times of economic crisis, and, as noted, its emphasis on the automobile. Additional explanations may lie in the fact that in New York and Boston, the reformist movement at the turn of the 20th century saw in parks and public facilities a way to improve the living conditions of the poorer population trapped in sunless apartment buildings. In Los Angeles, the same movement had encouraged the building of single-family houses with a garage and a lawn. There is apparently no need for a public park when you have a private yard. Over the last few decades, implementation of neoliberal urban management strategies affected the public spaces in a particular way; promoting the idea of urban parks and squares as sites where only higher social and economic classes (or at least, their behaviors and activities) should be visible. This notion, developed during the 18th century, was combined with modern technologies of surveillance (Low 2006). The result, reinforced since September 11, 2001, has been the intensification of the division of social groups in public spaces, as well as increased control over them.

As a result, real public spaces are rare in Los Angeles. Those that exist are characteristically poorly maintained and equipped, or privately owned and over controlled, and thus lacking of a real social diversity in their users (Flusty 1994; Davis 1992 [1990]). Many have criticized the unwelcoming design and the lack of public amenities that make public spaces uncomfortable for many of their potential users (Cosulich-Schwartz 2009, Loukaitou-Sideris 1998, Malone s.d., Page, 2009, Scott 2009).

Los Angeles urban planning policies, or lack thereof, in terms of public spaces have been harshly criticized, especially by members of the Los Angeles School. This group was formed in the 1990s and is composed of geographers, historians and urban planners working on the City of Angels. Together with many others who share the same opposition to the strangulation of public spaces in the neo-liberalized world, the Los Angeles School challenges their lack of public space, their closure to social diversity, and their general orientation towards consumption. In Los Angeles more than elsewhere, along with Disneyland and Hollywood, the reconstruction of Bunker Hill and the dominance of private interests, public spaces are considered by many to be dead.

Despite the diagnosis of the death of Los Angeles' public spaces and criticism of the cities' negligence in maintaining its unique and essential urban places, this diagnosis was scarcely researched and documented.

Therefore, in 2008-2009, I engaged in an ethnographic study to evaluate the social and cultural vitality of five downtown public spaces, observing presence, activities and interactions. The parks I studied were Plaza Olvera, Pershing Square, the Watercourt at California Plaza, Grand Hope Park, and Vista Hermosa Natural Park, each of which fell within a five miles radius of Downtown. I sought to observe whether there was a variety of users in the parks, and whether they interacted with each other. Other research questions were 'How did security mechanisms and rules, as well as the orientation toward consumption, affect their attendance and the exchanges that took place?' I found that each space is used by a (limited) variety of people that engage in a small range of activities while informal contacts, based on the respect of shared norms, nourished numerous representations and contestations of public spaces. In other words, each space presented a unique combination of limited heterogeneity and dynamic social life.

This paper¹ aims to offer a reflection at the convergence of mobility and public space in Los Angeles. Mobility is at the heart of relationships to the urban environment. As Rémy puts it: 'The city relies on the capacity of movement and of encounters in places of convergence that are spatially scattered. The city is a kinetic space because mobility is constituent to living in a city' (my translation of Rémy 2001: 27). The uniqueness of each public space should reflect different patterns of movements to reach them in terms of distances and means of transportation. In light of the emphasis on automobiles in the City of Cars, are people keener to drive to go to a specific park, rather than walk to their neighbourhood park?

To explore the mobility around public spaces in Los Angeles, I introduce the case of David, a sociable homeless man whom I met while doing fieldwork in Downtown Los Angeles' public spaces. I will first present Los Angeles in terms of travel and public space, on the basis of

¹ This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in 2011. I thank Adonia Lugo for putting together the Redefining the Urban Space panel, as well as Julie-Anne Boudreau and Zach Furness for their comments on this paper. The fieldwork supporting this reflection was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Fondation Desjardins, the Canada Research Chair in the City and Issues of Insecurity, and the Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Centre Urbanisation, Culture et Société.

my observations in five of the public spaces of Downtown L.A. in 2008 and 2009, and then I will introduce the term motility, which will be illustrated by David's motility. My main objective here is to underline the importance of motility for the vitality of Los Angeles public spaces.

Users and Their Origins

Given that this paper focuses on mobility and park access, I will briefly present some data about the users I interviewed and their commute to the parks where I spoke with them. My main methodology was observation, but I did conduct brief semi-structured interviews with 10 people in each park.

Among other things, I asked the interviewees how far they travelled to reach the park where we were, and how they got there. I considered the park as being the main goal of their journey. If they came to work that day by car, travelling more than 20 miles, but were in the park to have lunch (within a five minute walk), I would enter this as 'by foot, less than 1 mile.' On the opposite end of the spectrum, tourists from out of town visiting a specific park would fall into the long distance category. This categorization can be considered as relying on my own subjectivity, and as reflecting my personal agenda. But, firstly, it is the best way to quantify qualitative information about the users, that is, their geographical origins, their purpose for visiting a specific public park, and their social representation.

The results show that most of the users came to the parks by car, a quarter took a bus and/or the metro, and very few walked. This, of course, reflects regular usage of the parks rather than their usage during occasional special events.

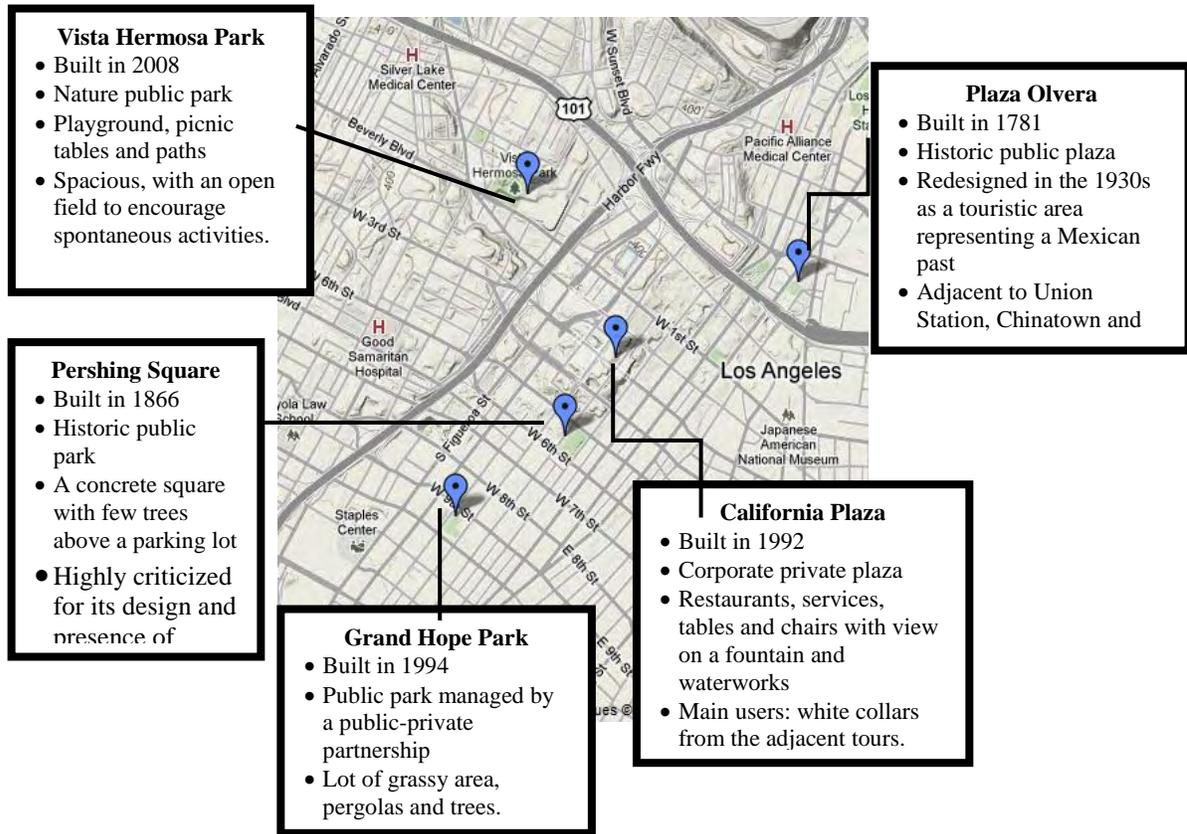


Fig. 1 - Parks, squares and plaza studied (Google and Sanborn 2011)

Some places have a strong power of attraction. The Plaza Olvera, a historic site, is highly promoted as the Mexican Los Angeles and aims to present to tourists the historic core (although commodified through the marketing of the Mexican identity) of Los Angeles (Krase 2012, Estrada 2008, Ryan 2006). People I spoke with came from as far as New Orleans, Montana (both by train) and Las Vegas (by car); and the Old Pueblo, located across the street from Union Station, was on their list of places to visit. Pershing Square and Vista Hermosa Natural can be understood, in terms of travel time to reach them, as a neighbourhood square and park. Pershing Square is situated right in the middle of Downtown, which is not highly residential (Los Angeles Times 2009) but well served in terms of public transit (the main means of transportation to reach it). Vista Hermosa Natural Park is in a residential neighbourhood, and has a large but underutilized parking lot. Most of the users I met came by foot, although the people who came by

car and public transit came from far away (up to 30 miles!). The park — planned and used as a natural park with walking paths and plant interpretation signs — is unique in the city and, for at least one person out of ten, seems to deserve a long-distance ride.

This is not the case of Grand Hope Park. People did not travel long distances to reach it. It is used as a neighbourhood park and a school lawn, which is exactly what it is. The Watercourt, the place less travelled to, is widely used by white-collar workers employed in the office tower surrounding it, or by people living in the adjacent residential towers. It is hidden from the street, not well known, and empty on evenings and weekends, with no people-watching to do and few trees to lie under.

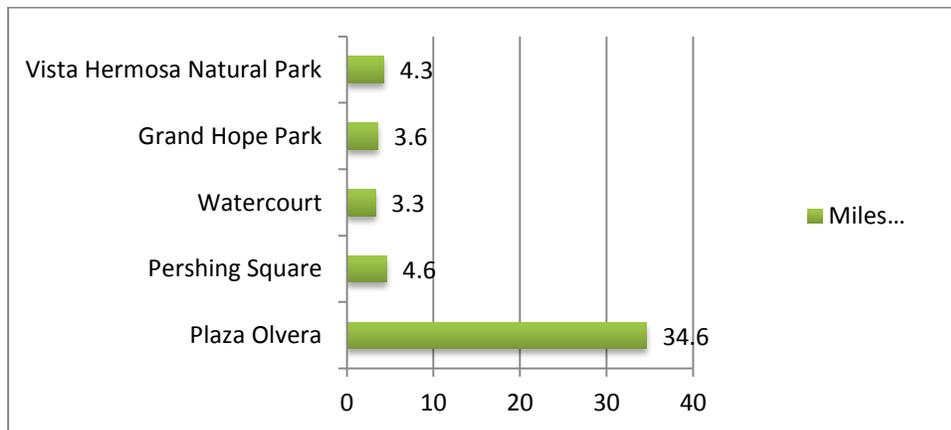
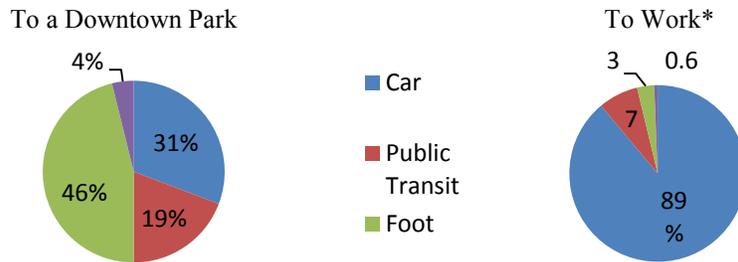


Chart 1 - *Miles (Average) Travelled to Downtown L.A. Parks*

Although my sample was not based on a scientific representation of the Los Angeles population, or even the American population, these mobility experiences among my informants are quite different from what people in the County would do to go to work. Statistics from the 2000 Census reveal that at County level, unsurprisingly, a larger proportion of people use their car to go to work (Los Angeles Almanac 2010). In my data, more people go to the park by foot than by car. This is unexpected, considering the fact that in Los Angeles parks are rare, which would make them barely accessible within a walking distance from home or work.



*Workers 16 years and older

Chart 2 - *Principal Means of Transportation to a Downtown Park and to Work* (Los Angeles Almanac 2010)

This data brought my attention to the fact that some of the people I interviewed were able to choose the park they would go to, and how they would reach it; indeed, some parks like Plaza Olvera and, to a lesser extent, Pershing Square and Vista Hermosa Natural Park, attract people from far away. Among the deciding factors about which park to go to and how to get there, there is the type of park (does it have a playground for my kids?) and its accessibility (is it too far for my lunch hour?). I wish to explore here other factors that are less explored: the social representations of public space and motility.

Towards the Social Signification of Park Attendance through Motility

The anthropology of space offers concepts to explain how certain places are known to belong symbolically to some individuals, even when they are not present. Lévy and Segaud (1983) call this identification. Because the people identified with a place are part of the atmosphere that radiates from it, the space becomes the bearer of the characteristics of that group. Low (2000: 156) noticed such identification in two different plazas in San José, Costa Rica, which were appropriated by different groups in terms of class, gender and age. The different atmospheres maintained by symbolic boundaries were so strong that people would not go from one plaza to the other, some users would avoid crossing them, and their representations of cultural life were seen as competing and mutually exclusive. Even though they are close to each other, these two plazas represent, in Low's view, two different dimensions of the culture of Costa Rica: one is traditional, Spanish, hierarchical, very masculine and oriented towards a catholic past; the other represents modern culture, youth, masculinity and femininity, and North America.

A space used by a group associated with violent behaviour will more often than not be seen as dangerous. Some parks in Los Angeles where a high number of homeless people gather are considered to be dirty and dangerous. This is what Low calls spatialization, that is, the physical, historical or conceptual localization of relationships and social practices in space (Low 2000). This affects not only the behaviours of the persons in the space, but also their attendance (Taylor 1988).

Indeed, such identified space has an impact on urban mobility. Because the space bears the characteristics of the people attached to it, to appropriate a space is to appropriate its characteristics. According to Duranti, to choose to go to a particular place is an interaction performance. ‘Being seen by others while approaching a particular place, being publicly recognized, and in some cases being invited to occupy a high-status position are all highly interactional activities through which social identities are negotiated ...’ (Duranti 1992: 659). Based on the representations of villagers in Northern France, Bozon’s research reveals that the social classes perform in public spaces through an appropriation of these same places. Ideally, one is able to choose where one ‘hangs out’, when and with whom.

Mobility associated with the appropriation of space is therefore linked to power. ‘The power is the ability to move. The power is to have control over a reality, to really have the means to change it, to move it’ (Cresswell 1975: 177). Many times in history, urban space has been used by the élites as a space for self-assertion and class reproduction. Furthermore, data show that the wealthiest Americans do more mileage daily in their cities (38 miles per day per person in households with an annual revenue of \$40,000) than the average person (29 miles per day per inhabitant) (Ascher and Godard 1999: 179).

Not being able to go to a place because we cannot — owing to insufficient financial means (Low 2005: 197), for example, or because we are kept from doing so, or because we do not want to (in uncomfortable places for example) — corresponds to what Rémy calls a non-urbanized situation. This means a situation where mobility is reduced, maybe restrained (Rémy 1972). In the city, movements in space are often a way for underprivileged groups to ensure a minimum of well-being (Casey 2008). Indeed, mobility is defined as a mean to transgress power structures (Cresswell 2001), and as such it has an emancipatory power (Cresswell 1997, Adey 2006), hence the ambition in the Western world to control mobility (Cresswell 2006).

The work presented here does not focus on politics of movement, nor on the ‘deterritorialisation’ process in the ‘liquid modernity’ (Bauman 2000, Sheller 2004). It is also to be distinguished from the ‘cooperative motility’ proposed by Lofland (1998), which is about decoding the intentions of others while in movement as a principle of social life. The main objective here is to explore the survival conditions of neoliberal public spaces that are related to the capacity of their users to reach them physically (as in the empirical observable reality of movement) (Cresswell 2006). I will then turn to the concept of motility proposed by Kauffmann (2006) to illustrate the potential of mobility. It is not the movement so much as the physical ability, the aspiration to move, the technical system of transportation and access to it, and the knowledge related to this movement (such as a driver’s license). Factors related to Kauffmann’s motility are the general conditions for using the offers of movement, the competences required by the offers, and the appropriation of the offers within one’s own plans.

In the case of public spaces, motility then refers to the information given to the general public about what types of parks exist, where and what they offer, how and when to reach them, and whether or not they can be used as one wishes. It also underlines the individual capacity to call upon the best competences and the social net and infrastructure that will allow this enterprise to succeed. Furthermore, the concept of motility puts forward the very unique value of each space within the offer of public space and other activities at large.

Motility acts within the city, as well as within public spaces. During my observations in Los Angeles public spaces, I noted that the motility related to the public spaces is expressed as a dynamic use of space. Pershing Square can be visited simultaneously by various groups of people (white collars, families, and homeless people), but each of them will use a different area within the square. Whyte also observed this in Central Park (Whyte 1980: 198). Uses may also overlap when a group leaves and another replaces it, or while the first group stays. Teenagers hanging around Vista Hermosa Natural Park after school hours flee the park when parents arrive with little ones. Some users are subject to schedules that prevent them from attending public spaces at any time. This is the case for white collars, who are rarely present in the Downtown public spaces in the mornings and afternoons. Finally, some people may orient their public space use according to events and activities they host. The Farmers’ Market on Wednesdays in Pershing Square attracts an important number of locals and white collars, among others, who impose their presence over homeless regulars. In those cases, motility is the ability to position oneself within

the physical limits of a public space and at certain hours, according to the presence of other groups (whom one may recognize as strangers or familiars, people with whom one may or may not want to identify) and activities.

David's Journey

While in the field, on July 16, 2009, I met David (a pseudonym, of course). Actually, a friend of mine visiting Los Angeles met him before I did. While taking a walking tour of downtown by herself, she got lost and came upon this homeless man in a park, who quickly introduced himself and struck up a conversation. A few weeks later, I was exploring the Watercourt of the California Plaza and its surroundings, trying to get a sense of the place. I took the stairs on the East side of the Plaza, below the Angel's Flight, the then non-operational funicular. Midway between the Plaza and South Hill Street, my attention was caught by this very green, quiet, shady space on the south side of the stairs. Half of a lot was levelled to the height of Olive Street, planted with grass and trees, equipped with benches and a fence that separates the park from the rest of the lot, left in a steep hill diving into Fourth and Hill Street. This discreet park, which made an appearance in the movie *(500) Days of Summer* (Webb 2009), is known to some as Angels Knoll.

There was David, in deep conversation with a woman, in her thirties, probably a white-collar worker. David was going on about life, the city, trees, the buildings, travels, etc. There were only a few people in the park: a security guard, two people sleeping in the grass (their goats feasting on the dry grass across the fence), and the occasional passerby. When the woman left, David came to me and asked me for the time. He recognized my accent, and started talking for nearly 40 minutes! His monologue was mainly the same he had shared with the woman, with a few questions about where I was from and what I was doing. He kept on saying what a gem this place was in the Downtown Los Angeles landscape, a green luxury in the area, which he knew well. He talked about the buildings, their owners, their history and the people he saw. I understood that he spent his nights in the Olive tunnel, so Angels Knoll was a stone's throw from his night place. When I asked what he thought of Pershing Square, a park a few steps to the south (0.2 miles / 300 m. / 4 minute walk) with a great number of homeless people among its users, David said he disliked the place. Too much concrete, barely any trees; Pershing Square made him uncomfortable. Because of the sunlight reflecting on the adjacent glass buildings, it is the kind of place where you can suddenly have three of your own shadows following you around. How crazy

is that? This was not something David could bear, and Pershing Square was certainly not a place where he could hang out. In a way, in Angels Knoll, David radiated an undisturbed happiness.

My fieldwork continued. I chose the Watercourt as the place from which I would study the California Plaza. As I sat there, two or three times a week, observing who was in the Watercourt and what they were doing, I quite often saw David coming up from the Angels Knoll to get something from the upper-end convenience store. He would always greet me with some French salutations from across the Plaza. Sometimes, he was just sitting in the amphitheatre, eyes closed, listening to the fountains whose rhythm he knew by heart.

On November 4, 2009, I was walking around Pershing Square, noting the users and their activities, when I heard this now-familiar voice calling my name with all the French nuances from the South West corner of the Square. I was quite surprised to see him there, knowing how much he hated the Square. When I asked him the reason, he explained to me that he had been kicked out of Angels Knoll.

It was a few days before September 11. A few nights in a row, some people had drawn graffiti on the park's rules sign with warnings of new attacks. Each morning, David would find the security agent erasing the paint with growing anger. At some point, the guard accused David of doing the damage, which he denied given all the love he had for the place. The accusations were made based on footage caught by some cameras on the site, apparently showing David's mischief. Since the graffiti kept on coming back, threats of expulsion followed the accusations. Feeling harassed and unfairly accused by a guard who was 'sleeping or washing his car on the job and lying about cameras that didn't exist,' David decided to leave Angels Knoll and headed for Pershing Square, the place of the three shadows, down the hill.

David carried with him a lot of anger towards the guard and this frustrating situation. He did have some friends and acquaintances in Pershing Square, and I saw him at first hang with other homeless users of the park, but it was not a place where he felt at peace. As time went by, I could see the effects of this unwanted situation. Each time I saw him in the square, what he called a 'rat hole,' he was more and more distant from the group, at some point even being totally separated (although on the same long bench), saying then that he hated their company. His physical appearance, surely reflecting his physical health, declined: his nails became black, his clothing dirtier, and his face older. His discourse became chaotic, and it was harder to have a proper conversation with him. He still recognized me and I spoke with him as much as I could.

During our conversations, and seeing his physical and mental health declining, I asked him if he would consider going to Grand Hope Park. As one of the greenest parks downtown, I saw it fit for his taste and disposition. He knew the place, of course, and told me it was too far (0.7 miles / 1.1 km / 13 minute walk) to go and he could not imagine himself walking up there with all his belongings on his sore legs. It was also too far from his night spot to make the daily commute (0.9 miles / 1.5 km / 18 minute walk). On my last visit to Pershing Square, the day before I flew back home, I brought him a leaflet of the Skid Row Photography Club I came upon during an exhibition. Located in Skid Row, this Club was working with homeless people through photography. They lent cameras, printed the pictures when the cameras were brought back, and put together some exhibitions as a way to reach out to and raise awareness on homeless conditions. I thought this would please David, who seemed to have some knowledge about photography and had a very interesting way of seeing his environment. At first disappointed by the limits of the material that was lent, he grew more interested when thinking of the potential of what he saw every day in the Square. And a hop to Skid Row was possible. I left him on this happy note, and we wished each other good luck, him in the sun, me in the snow.

Reaching the Destination?

This part of David's story illustrates the very limits of his motility. Although he was a knowledgeable man, he saw his movement ability restrained by physical (weak legs) and material (many bags and luggage) conditions. Some spaces were prohibited to him, some too far away. What were left were spaces he disliked and found undesirable. He certainly manifested some ability in calling upon social institutions like the Skid Row Photography Club, but he was vulnerable to others (like the security guard at Angels Knoll).

When talking about lively public space, we are not only talking about a design that is welcoming to all groups and free of charge. We are talking about a range of different spaces that attract different people for different reasons. As a result, the vitality of public spaces should be evaluated in terms of the city's supply of public space. Because each space bears signification and emotions on top of having specific amenities, although a park is near to you, you may travel further to another place. An example of this is provided by David Kennedy, who shared his appreciation of Grand Hope Park on a blog: 'I remember when Grand Hope Park opened back in the early 90s. I lived on the westside [sic] and didn't really know downtown. I read an article

about a new park downtown. I was intrigued. So I loaded up the car with some kids and headed downtown for a picnic. I vividly recall the thrilled look on the six year old's face as clock tower tolled on the hour. We'd never heard anything like it. (Sadly, the clock tower is no longer working.) It was the beginning of a long and happy relationship' (Kennedy 2006).

The ability of a public space to host substantial social heterogeneity is, among other things, a matter of being accessible and desirable to many different people. When considering its public space supply, a city should not only think in terms of acres and percentages of total land. It should pay attention to the general motility of its citizens in terms of their knowing about, and being able to reach, the parks they wish to go to. The mobility and the motility of all citizens should be enhanced so that public spaces (and many more things) are easy to access.

Many people would not appreciate seeing the homeless population's mobility enhanced, and feel safe in Grand Hope Park precisely because 'Unlike Pershing (which I live across the street from) there are no residentially challenged individuals making comments about how I look that morning while I try to eat. It's not that I'm anti-homeless people; it just gets exhausting after a while' (Yelp, 2009 #1535). But as David's story shows, not all homeless people enjoy Pershing Square either, and if more possibilities were offered to them, they might not all concentrate in such high numbers in Pershing Square. As Welch, Rahimian and Koegel (1993) show, parks are among the facilities that 'often act as substitutes for points of return in a daily routine' (Welch and Rahimian 1993: 161). In Skid Row, there are two parks: Gladys Park and San Julian. The former is known for its small basketball court—a recent investment by Nike, the Recreation and Parks and the LA84 Foundation — and chess game table (Richardson 2008). The latter, sometimes called Sober Park, is a tiny park where drugs, if not consumed inside the park, are everywhere around it. These neighbourhood parks have an atmosphere completely different than that of Pershing Square, the other nearest place, and other parks in the city like Vista Hermosa Natural Park. Do they know about those places and how to reach them?

Of course, the potential for mobility depends on not only motility, but also the urban environment. It has been said elsewhere that in Los Angeles, mobility and environment are structured unequally according to ethnicity, class, and gender (especially by Byrne, 2007, on parks). As the Bus Riders Union of Los Angeles has been claiming for many years, mobility is related to spatial justice, political rights and citizenship. 'No longer an individuated autonomous body, the mobile body presented by the Bus Riders Union is marked as different – as transit

dependent, and as a connected to both the humanly created world of things (buses, roads, train tracks, etc.) and the environment' (Cresswell, 2006 #1301: 173).

In terms of reviving public spaces, I wanted to bring back to our attention the depth and complexity of public space attendance. Los Angeles public spaces are certainly not well known. How many people know that Griffith Park is one of the largest urban parks in North America? How many Angelinos know where to go for a walk, at the playground, for a historical atmosphere or for a breath full of oxygen?

Many Angelinos judge the city from their cars and are not able to evaluate the distances that are walkable, the proximity services offered to them, and the extent of the natural environment encompassed within the city limits (Vista Hermosa Natural Park is an unknown treasure). Working on better outreach and improved access to and inclusion of public spaces in people's personal plans, which would improve Angelinos' motility, should be considered as much as building and investing in new parks and river banks. At stake are the survival and revival of public spaces, which depend on making sure all Angelinos know what is available to them and how to access it. The public space issue — especially in the case of Los Angeles, the city of cars — is not related only to a greater supply of public spaces, but also to the improvement of the motility of every citizen, including people like David.

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*Places of Vulnerability or Vulnerability of Places?
Considerations on Reconstruction after a 'Natural' Disaster¹*

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Disasters have moved from the periphery to the centre of attention of anthropologists, especially those interested in urban settings. Urban areas are considered to be the most affected by the impact of a natural hazard. This article argues that disasters are not just natural phenomena but result from a natural hazard affecting people under a constructed condition of vulnerability. Reconstruction, then, should avoid reproducing vulnerability. However, as the examples in this paper will show, there is no common understanding of what is a 'safe' place and what 'vulnerability' means to the different actors involved in the reconstruction process.

Key words: disaster, vulnerability, reconstruction, relocation, anthropology of disaster.

Introduction

Disasters are often the outcome of natural hazards that affect vulnerable groups and reveal the relationship between urban structure, vulnerabilities and risks. Hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are environmental events that can become disasters when the community they affect is unable to cope with them. Thus, for a hazard to become a disaster it has to affect vulnerable people. As Terry Cannon puts it: 'hazards are natural, but in general disasters are not, and should not be seen as the inevitable outcome of a hazard's impact' (1994: 13). Therefore, a disaster is not just a 'natural' event; it is the result of the combination of a human population and potentially destructive agents, such as natural hazards. This combination, however, does not necessarily lead to a disaster, which becomes unavoidable in a context of vulnerability. Oliver-Smith and Hoffman define a disaster 'as a process leading to an event that involves a combination of a potentially destructive agent from the natural or technological sphere and a population in a socially produced condition of vulnerability' (Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 1999: 4). In order to understand a disaster situation, it is therefore necessary to focus more on human vulnerability than on natural phenomena.

Past experiences have shown that urban settings are more vulnerable than rural settings. Thus, after a disaster urban reconstruction should be concerned with the reduction of vulnerability. While most donor guidelines emphasize this fact, other important considerations

¹ I would like to thank Peter Heath for putting right the English.

may be missing. As a result, discourses are not translated into practice. Moreover, political decisions and corruption often jeopardize reconstruction practices.

This article focuses on a specific aspect of urban reconstruction. Beyond the obviously technical feature of physical reconstruction, it looks at political, symbolic and cultural issues. Answers must be found to some key questions: where to build, what to build, how to build and for whom to build. The question of place is a crucial aspect of reconstruction that influences the cultural dimension more than the material one. The notion of reconstruction involves restructuring, reorganizing and reshaping. Reconstruction is not only about 'rebuilding', for it must take into account issues of vulnerability in order to reduce future risks. The following section will deal briefly with this notion.

Avoiding the Reconstruction of Vulnerability

Vulnerability is fundamental in the study of disaster: where there is no vulnerability, there is no disaster. Vulnerability also plays a key role in the reconstruction process, which should attempt to overcome the very vulnerability that has caused the disaster. If the reconstruction is not correctly done, the victims of a natural hazard can expect to experience the same situation again. In other words, if the reconstruction does not improve the social and material conditions of vulnerability, it will 'reconstruct vulnerability'.

Vulnerability as a key notion in understanding why a natural hazard triggers a disaster is a relatively recent development, particularly among social anthropologists and geographers who have addressed the social dimension of disasters (See Oliver-Smith 1996; Hewitt 1983; Blaikie et al. 1994; McEntire 2001; García Acosta 2002, 2005). It has been observed that hazards of similar severity can produce dramatically different outcomes in social and economic contexts as different as California and Nicaragua. This suggests that the degree of destruction is as much a function of the human context as the hazard itself (Varley 1994: 2). What kills people in an earthquake is not always the violent movement of the earth; often it is the destruction of buildings. Focusing more on human vulnerability than on natural phenomena as such suggests that, particularly in urban settings, disasters are more a feature of society than the result of an isolated natural hazard or of the physical environment.

It follows that, in order to reduce the effects of natural phenomena, we must understand what causes vulnerability. This is not an easy task because vulnerability is a very complex notion.

The most common definition is that proposed by Blaikie et al.: ‘By “vulnerability” we mean the characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impact of a natural hazard. It involves a combination of factors that determine the degree to which someone’s life and livelihood is put at risk by a discrete and identifiable event in nature or in society’ (1994: 9). This definition does not specify, however, that vulnerability is a dynamic process and not a static condition. Moreover, ‘vulnerability’ does not stand only for vulnerability to hazards; it also involves a series of resultant social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, physical and technological processes that take place before, during and after a disaster (McEntire 2001; Palliyaguru and Amaratunga 2011: 272). It is, therefore, essential to emphasize the overarching nature of vulnerability, which integrates physical or environmental vulnerability and social vulnerability. Physical vulnerability concerns the material aspect, building patterns and models of land occupation. Research that focuses on physical vulnerability attempts to identify the resistance of various materials and structures in different locations. Social vulnerability, in turn, is shaped by social, political and economic factors and is the result of social inequalities. More precisely, socio-economic factors generate the exposure of certain groups to damage and affect their ability to respond and recover from a disaster situation. Moreover, there is a cultural vulnerability linked to the influence of disasters on identity, fear, loss of reference points and feeling of belonging to a land and to a particular community. Vulnerability should therefore be seen to include not only physical risk but also the degree to which individuals are exposed to the risks raised by their social, economic and cultural condition (see Garcia Acosta 2002).

Where to Build after a Disaster? Contrasted Logics

After destruction, there is an important choice to make: stay and rebuild *in situ* or build in a new place. Despite the hazards, human groups usually avoid moving; they tend to refuse to abandon some places or, if they have left such places, they later return to them. At best, relocation is considered with suspicion; at worst, it is rejected altogether. Victims often wish reconstruction to be done in the original place or as close as possible to it, even if this involves risks. While reconstruction-promoters generally give priority to geographically stable and safe places in order to reduce physical vulnerability, research has shown that people want to stay in risky places

despite the dangers and sad memories (Signorelli 1992; Oliver-Smith 1982; Revet 2007; Boscoboinik 2009, among others).

In the following section, I will try to explain this choice drawing on different case studies of resistance to relocation after a disaster and in the aftermath of relocation. For now, I will point out that, while the victims' wish to remain at the scene of the disaster generally seems 'irrational' and 'illogical' to relief actors, from a cultural point of view, such a choice appears to be rational and logical, particularly if it is understood in terms of the opposition between nature and culture. The destructive phenomenon puts into question man's confidence in nature and in his ability to master it. A disaster can be viewed as a most serious crisis faced by man, as it sweeps away the cultural and organized space created by groups over long periods of time. What becomes important for survivors is that the area is reborn and, in particular, that the place does not become a kind of 'sanctuary of catastrophe': if physical death could not be avoided, cultural death will be!; by their presence, people show that 'culture' has won over 'nature' (Signorelli 1992). Salvation lies, then, not in flight but in continuity. Monuments that have resisted destruction have an essential role to play when, as elements of material culture, they continue to exist through the ages and uncertainties.

Several case studies show that plans to relocate a population that has suffered a disaster are met with strong resistance. Three examples will help to illustrate this point. The first one was observed during my fieldwork in Honduras, after Hurricane Mitch in 1998 (Boscoboinik 2009). The second example is the case study of a neighbourhood in Venezuela after the 1999 disaster studied by Sandrine Revet (2007). The last one is an analysis carried out by Anthony Oliver-Smith (1982) following the earthquake-avalanche of May 1970 in Peru.²

In the Department of Olancho, in the North of Honduras, relocation was problematic. The organizations responsible for reconstruction had proposed the construction of houses in the city of Catacamas for the peasant and indigenous communities affected by hurricane Mitch. Such proposed forced migration was not appreciated by the members of the community, despite the appeal the city may have had. Peasants had their sources of work, although scarce, in the fields. In addition, some belonged to cooperatives and to networks and other community and religious

² Housing reconstruction after a disaster is discussed in the context of the long-term effects of the reconstruction. The reconstruction of villages and cities, whether *in situ* or relocated, usually takes several years. It is only in the long term that we can analyze and evaluate the results of the reconstruction projects.

structures on which they felt they could rely. Indigenous communities owned the land on which they lived and did not want to leave it. They knew that if they left, their homes would be destroyed to prevent them from returning there to live.

In spite of important migrations from rural to urban settlements, these two communities saw transfer to the city as a loss and as a general weakening of their living conditions. Their predicament is a clear illustration of the *top-down* approach usually applied after disaster situations. Far too often relocation and prevention programmes are devised in this way, as they are usually run by highly centralized organizations with little participation by the people affected by the disaster. In this case, the organizations that proposed building houses in the city took it for granted that it was the best option to reduce vulnerability. They had not, however, assessed the situation on the ground and the consequences that such migration could have on the displaced population, nor did they seek the advice of the main interested parties. Their logic of ‘breakdown’ and ‘secure land’ made no allowance for other key considerations.

Promoters and victims usually follow two contrasting logics, which have been analysed by Sandrine Revet (2007). The victims’ logic is that of continuity, of ‘living with’; the promoters’ logic is one of breakdown. In the logic of breakdown, there has to be a break with the pre-existing frameworks that have allowed or facilitated the disaster. Consequently, it is important to rebuild ‘elsewhere’ and ‘otherwise’. Palliyaguru and Amaratunga also explain clearly these two logics: ‘It is common for affected communities to demand a return to normalcy almost immediately, although experts often recognize that disaster is an opportunity to “build back better”. There is a choice between whether reconstruction is just for restoration to the status quo or for enhancing development’ (2011: 270-271). Restoration to the status quo involves the replacement of damaged or destroyed assets, often called ‘replacement-reconstruction’, whereas enhancing development involves adjusting the reconstruction efforts towards the future, often called ‘development-reconstruction’. Nevertheless, the needs of the population frequently differ from the priorities of the authorities and of the agencies involved in the reconstruction process. Moreover, there is a temporality problem. While experts are planning what and how to build in ways that encourage development (a process that could take several years), the people who need reconstruction sometimes find other solutions, following the logic of ‘living with’. Thus, by the time the planned reconstruction of the infrastructure officially starts, the population involved have already rebuilt, for after the destruction caused by the disaster, material reconstruction is a

great concern. For the victims, material reconstruction implies a return to normality, understood as a return to routine: reopening schools and shops, restarting the usual community life, and so on. Their priority is to solve the housing problem in order to be able to organize themselves and make plans again. They long to feel that the disaster is over and that life can continue mostly as it was.

The 'continuity logic' is adopted by most residents in the affected areas. It implies an adaptation to changes dynamically in the sense of continuity. Specifically, people get together, rebuild their homes and repair the infrastructure (electricity, sewerage, and so on) as best as they can. *La Veguita*, a neighbourhood in the Venezuelan city of Macuto studied by Sandrine Revet (2007), is a good example of the logic of 'living with'. In 1999, torrential rains fell on the north coast of Venezuela causing rivers to break their banks with consequent mudslides. Vargas, a region between the mountains and the sea, was the most exposed. In total, 80% of the population was affected and material damage was very severe (Revet 2007: 13). Crucial questions needed to be answered concerning either the complete destruction or the reconstruction of the neighbourhood. As early as January 2000, the inhabitants of *La Veguita* returned to their homes to assess the extent of the damage. An informal association promptly came into being with the purpose of rehabilitating the neighbourhood. First, water and electricity were restored so that people could come back to live there. Each member of the informal association provided help in the form of skills and expertise, and families soon began to move back to the neighbourhood. The inhabitants had, therefore, created order out of the chaos left by the mudslides. While rebuilding their neighbourhood, they also built new relationships and created a social community. Together they defeated the moods of nature, in the process rebuilding part of their shared history (Revet 2007: 237-239). Their attitude clearly shows that physical reconstruction goes hand-in-hand with social reconstruction, an important aspect that is usually neglected in the top-down approach mentioned earlier (for more details, see Boscoboinik 2009). In addition to this, it is worth noting that the alliance and solidarity of the inhabitants could be seen as 'revenge' against the destructive episode.

However, things were not so simple. The situation before the disaster was problematic and reconstruction was meant to change the established patterns. So, the will of the residents was opposed to that of the donors, government institutions and NGOs. The latter aimed to transform, clean and make safe the physical infrastructure, and to educate the inhabitants to the perception

of risk (Revet 2007: 242-243). The way to achieve this aim, it was thought, was to rebuild in a secure location elsewhere. Indeed, in some cases rebuilding in the place of the disaster exposes people to great danger and relocation helps to limit the physical vulnerability of the affected groups. In other cases, however, it increases the social and cultural vulnerability of the affected groups. As Revet points out, while for the institutions security is linked to geographical space, the inhabitants express a feeling of 'security' when talking about social links and community solidarity (Revet 2007: 219).

For the survivors, rebuilding the place that existed before the disaster is a re-appropriation of that place. *La Veguita*, like other places, bears the deep scars of the mudslides but also testifies to the continuation of life, despite the destruction. The conversion of scars into places of life marks the logic attitude of 'continuity', of 'living with', as opposed to the logic of 'breakdown' favoured by government institutions and NGOs.

During the process of destruction and reconstruction, the area has experienced a true transformation, which is material with significant new construction (buildings, a community centre and a dam) but is also social because the neighbourhood, as a place of identification and reference, strengthens its inhabitants' identity. (Revet 2007: 262-263).

Oliver-Smith (1982) discusses a case of successful resistance to a government-organized resettlement project following the Peruvian earthquake-avalanche disaster of May 1970. Almost all the urban areas in this traditional highland zone were reduced to piles of rubble. The city of Yungay was completely buried by an immense avalanche. Eventually, the authorities decided that the new capital of Yungay would be located in the Tingua camp some 15 kilometres to the south of its original location. The survivors, who were living in another camp called Yungay Norte, immediately and definitely rejected this decision.

The aid personnel tried to explain the need for such a step and assured that all services and institutions of the old Yungay would be fully reconstituted in the new capital in Tingua. They, however, argued in vain because the Tingua resettlement project represented further disruption and greater stress for the survivors of the tragedy, who gave practical reasons for their opposition to the move to Tingua and mostly psychological and cultural reasons for remaining in a place close to the buried city. From a sociocultural and psycho-cultural perspective, the community in Yungay Norte, the settlement closest to the site of the old city and the place where most survivors had chosen to live, carried old Yungay and the disaster at its cultural core. Oliver-

Smith states, 'Continuity of tradition, a sense of the past, was a central theme in the emotional investment that the survivors had in the Yungay Norte location' (1982: 98). The place, the climate and the hills are all very much part of the Yungainos sociocultural identity. The will to remain near the familiar dead was also a strong motivation to stay near the old city, to keep an unbroken line of continuity with the past. Leaving the place would have meant betraying their dead. The scar left by the avalanche became an important ceremonial location for the renewal of the ties that the survivors maintained with their lost families; it became a national monument. Oliver-Smith concludes that 'the significance of the resettlement conflict lay in the fact that Yungaino leaders resisted with all their might a project that threatened their socioeconomic structure as well as their much assaulted sense of cultural and personal identity' (1982: 99). The Yungainos felt that if the capital was relocated, the entire structure of rural-urban relationships would have to be redefined, and urban life radically restructured. The Tinguá site for the new capital would have disrupted traditional social, economic and political patterns of interrelationships both in the capital and between the rural and urban sectors of society. When, during his research in Yungay, Oliver-Smith asked a peasant why he would not consider moving, he swept his arm over the scar left by the avalanche and exclaimed 'Here there is life!' (1982: 103).

Regardless of the preferences of the future inhabitants, however, key decisions are generally taken by governmental authorities or by those who support the costs of reconstruction. Such decisions tend to follow a 'rational' logic that responds to specific interests. The next section illustrates two examples of relocation.

Two Cases of Relocation: Gibellina (Italy) and Luz (Portugal)

The earthquake on 14th and 15th January 1968 reduced the Sicilian village of Gibellina to ruins. From the ruins, the then mayor, Ludovico Corrao, decided to create some sort of outdoor museum. The artist Alberto Burri, who was in charge of this work in the late 1980s, covered most of the old town with white concrete and called it *Il Grande Cretto* (The Great Cretto). As Cantavella (2012) suggests in her description of this place, the result is both amazing and macabre: one walks the streets of old Gibellina among huge concrete cubes that hide the destroyed houses. Its position, its size and the contrast between the concrete and the green surroundings has a striking effect on the visitor. The life and memory of Gibellina remain fixed

forever under white concrete. Today, Gibellina Vecchia is a tourist destination and a place of interest for architects and artists as a form of contemporary land art. Its location on top of a hill has hampered economic development but has allowed the villagers to keep alive their identity, tradition and culture. Unfortunately, these aspects were not considered at the time of reconstruction.

Gibellina Nuova (New Gibellina) is what comes after a disaster, a naïve and misguided attempt to reproduce a village by moving it to another place. The idea was to duplicate the Gibellina destroyed by the earthquake. The result, Gibellina Nuova, is an illusion, a utopia. This new village was built 18 kilometres away from Gibellina Vecchia (Old Gibellina). According to some Italian journalists (see, for example, the archive of the *Corriere della Sera*), the village was rebuilt in that location purely for political and economic reasons. It was built on land owned by Ignazio and Nino Salvo, also known as the ‘Salvo cousins’, who were not entirely unfamiliar with the workings of Cosa Nostra (the Sicilian Mafia). Moreover, companies that also had connections with Cosa Nostra carried out the construction work. When, after years spent in temporary housing, the inhabitants of the destroyed Gibellina Vecchia saw the new city, they saw their hopes fade. Some decided to emigrate and never returned. Gibellina Nuova is a garden in the desert; it is the pride of Mayor Ludovico Corrao, who argued that an earthquake not only destroys but also gives an opportunity to create. He made of Gibellina Nuova a symbol of modernity, of architecture and of intellectuality. The Mayor had indeed asked the most important contemporary artists to offer their input in creating the new Gibellina. Works of art are found in every corner of Gibellina Nuova: the Church by Ludovico Quaroni, the square by Vittorio Gregotti and Giuseppe Samonà and the star-shaped sculpture by Pietro Consagra at the entrance of the city. The buildings, the theatre, sculptures, gardens and everything else in Gibellina Nuova is signed by a known artist. It is a ‘city museum’ with contemporary works of art that give this Sicilian village a strange and unusual atmosphere. The feeling of sadness and desolation experienced by most visitors (just look, for example, at the comments on www.tripadvisor.fr) is due to the new city being no more than an ‘Open Museum’ devoid of people. The monuments of the reconstruction seem to embody the absence or the neglect of the people’s memories. The reconstruction did not respect Gibellina’s past, its culture or its people. Apparently, during the construction process, it was forgotten that a village is made not only of houses: it has a history, it encapsulates a cultural community and has links with the environment. Thus, Gibellina represents

the failure of a reconstruction that made no allowance for the fact that a village is formed by the soul of its people. As Cantavella says, the reconstruction shows a significant distance between the conception of a given place and the actual life that unfolds within it. She quotes a Gibellina inhabitant who clearly express this distance, ‘*Queste cose* che noi vediamo sono delle *cose* che vengono dal cielo non dalla vita della gente (...) Quindi la gente ha ricevuto tutte *queste cose* come *cose* assolutamente estranee alle proprie sensibilità, al proprio interesse, in un’epoca in cui la gente aveva tanti problemi, mmm, concreti (...) Non si é pensato minimamente ad avere degli incontri con gli abitanti, sulla cultura, sulla mentalità, sulle abitudini... é come se tu avevi un pacchetto già pre-selezionato e lo hai installato in un posto’³ (Cantavella 2012: 18).

Articles in the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* tell the stories of people from Gibellina Vecchia living in Gibellina Nuova, who say that the new village is beautiful and modern but is empty, which does not make sense to them. For instance, there is no coffee bar for them to meet, play cards or chat (<http://archiviostorico.corriere.it>). Cantavella quotes: ‘non c’è nessuna piazza che sia un luogo di vita collettiva’⁴ (2012: 17).

The village of Luz, in Portugal, offers another illustrative example. As Luz was to be submerged following the building of the huge Alqueva dam, the village had to be moved to another location. Nova Luz, a copy of the original village, was built two kilometres away: the distribution and the names of the streets were maintained, the neighbours were the same, the houses were replicated and the surfaces were respected. Spatially, Nova Luz is a good imitation of the original village. The streets are, however, empty. Although the new houses are more comfortable than the old ones, the inhabitants have the feeling of having lost with the change. This stresses the point that, even when villages are completely ‘transplanted’, the soul is never there. Clara Saraiva (2003, 2007), who studied this case, states: ‘a aldeia nova não é aldeia – não tem alma’⁵ (Saraiva 2003: 129).

³ ‘*These things* that we see are *things* that come from the sky, not from the life of the people (...) So, people have received all *these things* as *things* entirely foreign to their sensibilities, to their interests, at a time when people had so many, mmm, real problems (...) There wasn’t the slightest intention to meet with the people, to discuss their culture, their mentality, their customs ... it is as if you had a pre-selected package that you had installed in a place’ (Italics in the original).

⁴ ‘There is no piazza as a place for collective life’.

⁵ ‘The new village is not a village – it has no soul’.

The case of Nova Luz is very similar to that of Gibellina Nuova, despite the fact that what caused relocation was not a ‘natural’ disaster but a man-made event; the decision, that is, to construct a dam. The slow and difficult appropriation of public spaces reflects a project of urbanization that ignored the way of living and the experiences of the people of Luz (Saraiva 2007: 96); it did not take into account the places where men or women usually met, the collective spaces of sociability. The new core of the village is a wide-open space, without intimacy; a place too big and unwelcoming that is made worse by the absence of trees and shadows – the single olive tree transplanted there, it is noted, cannot meet on its own the function of establishing a friendly and inviting space (Saraiva 2007: 97). After rebuilding the village, the local identity has to be rebuilt. Giving a voice to the people of Luz, Amendoeira, Aguiar and Alfenim quote: ‘Village life has been completely transformed, although people are the same. Relations between the people of the village have changed, they have nothing to do with what happened before. In our old village, the gardens were separate from houses, often in different streets, and this facilitated contact between people, especially women. Now the gardens are at the back of the houses, so people are not encouraged to go out’ (2008: 6, personal translation from French).

The Meaning of ‘Place’

Resistance to relocation and what can happen when relocation takes places can be best understood by considering the notion of ‘place’. The opposition between reconstruction promoters (authorities and aid agencies) on one side and victims on the other is based on their different understanding of what *place* means, and consequently what vulnerability implies. For the promoters, a *place* is only a geographical location that can be dangerous. They focus exclusively on physical vulnerability. For the victims, a *place* is a symbolic and identity space where relationships are built, a space which is anchored in the past and gives meaning to the future. Their preferences show a concern for social and cultural vulnerability. To stay, despite the danger, follows a rational logic even though for the authorities, and in terms of common sense, such a decision may seem irrational. They desire a continuity of their past and of their identity. They feel more vulnerable if they lose their identity and their link to the land.

A city, a village or a neighbourhood are more than just a conglomeration of alleyways and houses. They are shaped by human relationships, by the people who inhabit them and by the attendant power struggles. They are, I stress, primarily a set of relationships, of people, of

networks, of friendships and of conflicts. They are, then, *places*, in the anthropological sense of the term; that is, as Marc Augé (1992) would say, relational and historical spaces, concerned with identity. Accordingly, the specificity of a space makes it a reference point and a source of identification for citizens living in the area. Augé's concept of place is clearly charged with emotion and memory. If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be thus defined will be a non-place⁶. The concept of a non-place, as opposed to a place, is devoid of emotion and memory⁷.

Let me expand on this issue. Augé maintains that as super-modernity constructs places anew without incorporating their former identity, these places become non-places. He gives, as examples, supermarkets and highways that are devoid of local identity and might be constructed anywhere in the world. In this sense, the relocated villages described above are non-places. Gibellina Nuova is more like a museum than a village. Both Gibellina Nuova and Nova Luz have no link to a past or to a memory; their inhabitants have not appropriated them. Both villages have lost the 'spirit of place' that could be defined as 'all tangible and intangible elements that give meaning, value and emotion to the place' (Amendoeira, Aguiar and Alfenim 2008: 1). On the other hand, 'places' of relations, and history, make identity possible; both, that is, the identity of the group and the identity of the individual. It follows that, as I have argued, resistance to relocation is usually an affirmation of the community identity. We have seen how recent research emphasizes the importance of place in the construction of individual and community identities, as well as in the politics of interpersonal, community and intercultural relations. Such attachment to place means that the loss or removal of a community from its 'ground' as a consequence of a disaster may be profoundly traumatic (Oliver-Smith 1996: 308).

Conclusion

The stated goal of reconstruction is always to avoid reproducing vulnerability. Unfortunately, this praiseworthy attempt is difficult to achieve. In practice, reconstruction and recovery interventions

⁶ 'Si un lieu peut se définir comme identitaire, relationnel et historique, un espace qui ne peut se définir ni comme identitaire, ni comme relationnel, ni comme historique définira un non-lieu' (Augé 1992: 100).

⁷ 'L'espace du non-lieu ne crée ni identité singulière, ni relation, mais solitude et similitude' (Augé 1992: 130).

usually increase and reinforce not only existing inequalities but also vulnerability. Reconstruction sometimes constitutes a socio-cultural disaster after a natural disaster.

Many reconstruction projects focus on reducing the region's vulnerability to natural disasters; that is, to physical vulnerability. This means that reconstruction should be done in 'safe' geographical spaces. However, we have seen that vulnerability is not only physical but also social, cultural and economic, suggesting that vulnerability ought to be considered in its complex meaning when there is the need to rebuild.

A 'safe' space has different meanings for different actors. We have seen that the feeling of 'safety' for the population of Yungay was not only geographical, but drew on the structural pillars of their traditional social order. Their resistance to resettlement was a defence of their threatened identity. Moreover, such resistance enabled the survivors to begin re-establishing a positive image of themselves, as significant actors in their own lives and in society.

The traumatic experience of a disaster also involves a cultural crisis for the group, in that such an experience may challenge the very existence of a society. This is probably why survivors are mostly conservative. The resistance to relocation after a disaster reflects an essentially conservative tendency. The Yungainos and the inhabitants of *La Veguita* wanted to rebuild and return to things as they were, to normalcy. The inhabitants' resistance to relocation and their reconstruction *in situ* has allowed *La Veguita* to strengthen its existence as a *place* of community. The unity, solidarity, and tenacity shown during all the stages of the reconstruction formed the basis for a community strengthened by adversity (Revet 2007: 263). In all likelihood, relocation and resettlement would have ultimately destroyed their cultural identity. Therefore, while resistance constituted an affirmation of their identity and a defence against cultural collapse, relocation would have meant further change, further disruption, further risk and further vulnerability.

All cases of resistance reveal the victims' efforts to cope with their loss and grief, to reconstruct their lives and their community, to re-establish a social order similar to that which they have lost and to strengthen personal identities. To conclude, people prefer to recreate the social interactions and community-based models as they were before the destruction. People's attachment to the place and their sense of belonging strongly motivate reconstruction, which points to the fact that reconstruction stands for more than rebuilding the physical environment; instead, I reiterate, it encompasses all social, economic, political and physical aspects. In

particular, rebuilding of trust and social networks is more difficult than rebuilding houses. As it is clearly shown by the relocation examples of Gibellina and Luz, relocation and resettlement is thought to undermine efforts to rebuild the community and to re-establish and strengthen the cultural identity of the victims.

To put it briefly, the question of physical reconstruction must meet various criteria and provide answers to different problems. Solutions must be found in a process that includes the persons concerned. Nonetheless, foreign aid sometimes imposes criteria that are inappropriate to the social reality of the region concerned, not always taking into account the culture and local way of life. This shows the weaknesses of a technocratic governance that ignores identity, social cohesion and social vulnerability. Those who are responsible for resettlement programs should be sensitive to the cultural and ethnic roots of the people who are to be relocated. It is not often recognized that local people know the place better than the specialists, that they have proposals to make and that their needs can differ from those imposed from outside. The fundamental issue is that it is usually not just a problem of ignoring the local culture or of neglecting the victims in matters that are important to them. In most cases, political and economic decisions guide the reconstruction process; that is, what to rebuild, for whom to build and where to build. As I have tried to show, the crucial problem lies in the different meaning given to 'place' and to 'vulnerability'.

In short, these considerations suggest that if a disaster brings about more than physical destruction, reconstruction is about more than just rebuilding what was physically destroyed. Other issues, far beyond the realm of material survival and security should be taken into account. The spirit and the soul of a place cannot be relocated. What made the space a 'place' has disappeared and new 'places' have to be built, which will be the task of the new generations.

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***Being an Ex-worker:
The Experience of Job Loss in a Tobacco Factory in Piraeus***

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In this ethnographic study I discuss the ways by which dismissed tobacco workers from the city of Piraeus experience their job loss in a context of labour market deregulation and dwindling social protection. I demonstrate how they struggle to preserve their working identity and to make ends meet while being gradually downgraded, in material and social terms. Coming from a significant employment background, these workers still rely on their strong work ethic forged by their employment history and their participation in the local social networks. Trapped between their own inability to move on with their lives and the influence of remote market forces, they are forced to settle for unrewarding, low paid, non-standard forms of employment, thus becoming a vulnerable reserve labour army exploited under flexible work arrangements. Finally, I show that anthropologically informed ethnography can be of great value for understanding the realities of current post-industrial labour relations from the perspective of those 'below'.

Keywords: job loss, working identity, labour market, social networks, social mobility, welfare state.

Introduction

In this article, I focus on how former tobacco workers experience the process and the significance of job deprivation. These workers were employed in a thriving tobacco industry called Keranis, which operated in the centre of Piraeus for about ninety years, employing many workers from the local labour market and representing for them the attainment of secure employment. Over the last decade, the company, due to mismanagement, experienced a financial downturn that resulted in bankruptcy in 2007. Today, the remaining 145 workers are still unpaid.¹

Anthropological research has addressed the complex relationship between unemployment, precariousness and making a living. Ethnographic evidence has indicated that, in order to understand how people experience situations and processes which render them redundant, one should look beyond impersonal statistical data (Procoli 2004: 3) and delve into their daily lives as they find alternative employment, either formal or informal. Depending on the economic and political context, anthropological research has focused on a variety of factors crucial for people's social reproduction. To mention but a few, Pappas' ethnography (1989) of the Seiberling plant in Ohio, U.S.A., underlined the job-seeking process from the view of the former rubber workers

¹ Research findings are based on in-depth open ethnographic interviews with 22 informants of various specialties carried out using the snowball technique. The average age ranged between 40 and 55 years old. The research was conducted in the first half of 2011.

who became redundant after the plant's shut-down. The study also addressed the management of their economic needs in the face of their declining income and their lack of trust in government employment services and retraining programmes. Nash's study (1989) of the General Electric plant in Pittsfield, U.S.A., analysed the significance and the structural repercussions of the factory on the lives of workers as they provided employment opportunities and steered the labour market toward corporate hegemony. Pardo's study of the *popolino* in Naples (1996) analysed the complex relationship between work ethic, family and neighbourhood in the context of strong continuous interaction between material and non-material pursuits in the entrepreneurial actions of ordinary Neapolitans. Pardo's detailed ethnography shows how they manage their lives by relying on different moral systems and abiding to their spiritual obligations. Gill's ethnography on *yoseba* workers (2001) — day labourers in construction and stevedoring — brought out the experience of precarious work in relation to making a living in the contemporary post-industrial city of Yokohama, Japan. Gill explored their informal work activities and their response to street-level realities. Mollona's research (2009) on two steel factories in Sheffield, U.K., discussed the work experience of local steelworkers, demonstrating how their daily struggle for survival challenges the normalising system within which they are embedded and highlights the practical philosophy they follow in order to make a living in a de-industrialized, post-Keynesian Britain.

Of utmost importance in all these cases is the relationship between employment trajectories and the formation of a working identity, which in turn leads to a strong work ethic and entrepreneurial morality while the actors struggle to make ends meet. In addition, other issues come to the fore, such as the relation between structure and action, political decision-making and reactionary practices, forms of work and identity, conventional economic processes and survival strategies, and especially the relation between making a living and the inadequacy of state intervention. These issues are hotly debated, pointing out that workers follow diverse paths in order to increase their employment opportunities and that they produce narratives of survival which enable them to cope with the impact of extreme situations, as Procoli would put it (2004: 4).

With the economic recession in full bloom, the ethnographic material that I discuss here, alongside other sociological data, can help us understand how Keranis workers are embedded in a generalised trend of increasing momentum marking the transition from a condition of relative affluence to one dominated by increasing employment insecurity. Former Keranis workers are

forced to earn their living in a neo-liberal context of acute labour market deregulation and diminishing social protections. From this point of view they experience a kind of ‘revolving door’ situation: being unemployed, they have no real choice but to settle for unsatisfactory, non-standard jobs. They run a considerable risk of being underemployed and getting low earnings for long periods of time.²

The sociological significance of employment deprivation continues to be best informed by the comprehensive study of Marienthal community carried out by Marie Jahoda et al. in 1933. Briefly put, according to this study, unemployed people also suffer from the loss of time structure, social contacts outside their families, a sense of collective purpose, self-esteem, and regular activity (see Jahoda et al. 2010). A very important indirect finding of the study was that unemployment is not a ‘natural’ effect of an ‘invisible hand’ but the outcome of specific economic and political processes over which workers had little influence. Unemployed people, however, became desperate and apathetic only after they failed in attempts to preserve their working identity by finding another job. Additionally, this study showed that employment is one of the main links between people and the wider society (Edgell 2009: 107).

Likewise, former tobacco workers struggle to make ends meet by relying on an identity formed throughout their working careers, and attempt to found their future on their own means of survival within a precarious and uncertain context. After many years of employment in the tobacco factory, and having programmed their lives on the basis of its market prosperity, these workers experienced an unexpected, though not sudden, shut-down which downgraded them in material and social terms. The case study that follows demonstrates that although personal characteristics do play an important role in one’s working career, they cannot by themselves justify either the level or the qualitative dimensions of unemployment. In line with relevant sociological findings (see Gallie and Vogler 1994: 124; Gallie and Paugam 2000: 357; Edgell 2009:105) it also offers qualitative evidence of unemployed people’s significant commitment to the work ethic as, at the same time, they struggle to improve and manipulate the harsh conditions of their existence.

² For a social policy perspective on this EU-wide trend, see Gray 2004.

Work and Community

Anthropological analysis has demonstrated the central role that work plays in the lives of people as members of local working class communities (see Howe 1990; Blim 1992). Belonging to a local community involves disadvantages and advantages, as workers tied to their locality cannot be as mobile as capital. On the other hand, community ties involve socially significant networks affecting people's working trajectories and identities (see Grieco 1987). These social relations personalize labour relations and situate what the symbolic interactionist tradition calls 'perceived environment'; that is, the way in which agents construct their views and experience the context within which they act (Scott 2000: 11).

Yiannis had been working at Keranis since 1979 as a chemical foreman. He graduated from a private training school in Piraeus and is one of the lucky workers to have reached retirement by buying off his military service time. The process which led to Yiannis' employment in the company was not much different from that of his co-workers. In his own words, 'I used to pass by Keranis when I worked in another factory; I would see the building and say "Right. How can they stand to work in here? This place is like a prison". Who would have thought that one day I, too, would pass the same gate — blame it on our family problems. Anyway, I got in; an uncle of my wife knew someone in the company, so I met with him, we talked things over and they took me in. After four years or so, I was promoted as a quality control supervisor'.

Like the vast majority of Keranis workers, Yiannis exploited the extensive local social networks to find a job. This customary practice, especially from the employer's side (see Carrier 1997), reveals the company's core economic and social importance for the city of Piraeus, as well as the organizational culture governing the factory. As another informant, Maria, puts it, after having worked for 26 years in quality control department since 1982, 'I got into the company with the help of my uncle. He used to work in the administration office, as the head of external economic affairs. Most of the workers there had been hired through their acquaintances — we're talking whole families and generations here, and this was the rule, especially in good times. Just imagine, the whole street was buzzing at the end of our shift — so many were the workers'.

This industry did not merely produce cigarettes. It also contributed, along with the rest of the local industrial activity (see Spyridakis 2011), to the formation of the local social working identity. Most of its workers lived in the neighbourhoods of Piraeus. The social network that

provided the company's workforce almost geographically mirrored the central urban tissue of Piraeus, indicating that the workplace shaped a specific community of urban labourers that extended beyond the factory's premises.

Mihalis had been 'receiving his insurance stamps' after having worked at Keranis for 24 years since 1983, with his last wages dating back to 2005. He is now 55-years-old. Before joining the company, he had had several jobs, for at the start of his working life, in 1972, Piraeus bristled with industrial activity. In his words, 'I finished an economics training school. I liked accounting but my peers led me off course, so I enrolled in a technical school where I graduated as an engineering foreman. My friends told me that in this way I would earn more money. Indeed, I would walk down the main street and it would be full of machine shops. My specialization was popular back then, especially in the 70s and 80s. I used to work when I was a student, since I was 17, in small machinery shops, eventually ending up in the cable making industry. You wouldn't go out of job back then; it wasn't like now, that everything's closing down — and this is because my specialty is dead. Back then there was always work; after technical school, you were employed right away, and on good terms. I have been receiving insurance stamps since then, although, to be honest, back then I didn't value them that much. After that, with a friend of mine, we opened a garage. It was going well, until car recycling began and business went slack for a year and a half because everyone bought new cars. We got into debt and went bankrupt. Thankfully, my father worked at Keranis — he had just left a smithy, which had also closed down. A friend of his invited him to work at Keranis and since the guy also knew me, when I came into hard times he said "Why don't you come, there's a lot of people retiring all the time". And so it was that I joined the company: there were one thousand workers, 15-20 of them retiring each month. Most of them had been taken in after the war and many got their own children in there — lots of people down in Piraeus made a living working for the factory. I joined in 1983. In 1987, seven hundred people left the company, but there were few intakes as after 1985 they kept cutting down on people'.

Clearly, the tobacco industry contributed to the preservation and refreshment of the existing social networks. Their inflow was regulated by the needs and the extension of the company's economic activity cycle, as it was standard practice to recruit workers mainly through the aforementioned networks. Maria explains, 'I came from a poor agricultural family in Epirus. I moved to Athens because the production up north wasn't going that well. At first, I stayed at my

aunt's in Drapetsona. Her daughter worked at Keranis, but quit her job after she became pregnant. So I took over her post. There were several vacancies. Back then lots of people were hired but few of them stayed because it was a heavy work, steeped in tobacco and its smell all day long — it was hard to bear, especially when you're pregnant. Just imagine, work was so heavy that, of the 40 people that were employed in 1980 only ten remained — the others were not sacked, they just walked away, seeking jobs elsewhere. I thought I'd stay. I was happy, although my father objected to it; I also met my husband, who worked at the Piraeus mills, so I stayed. I was twenty years old when I started; it was my first and only job — a whole life in it'.

From these informants' accounts, it is obvious that Keranis industry was not an impersonal workplace; it was a meeting hub for the employment trajectories of daily labourers; that is, the most numerous rank on the company's payroll. Georgia, who worked in the company since the age of 14, in cigarette packaging, recounts: 'I lived a whole life in there. I saw many things. I've never been to University and such. I'm just elementary school level but I know how to tell people apart, what's their blend. Well, no matter how many supervisors we had, no matter what, if the common labourer doesn't work, the production isn't going to get through. The worker is the engine, if it wasn't for us, if we didn't know the whims of every machine in there, there was no way the production would ever get through, even with the best will in the world — us workers, being the most in there, we knew this kind of things'.

Working in the tobacco factory played a central ideological and cultural role in the workers' everyday life. It outlined the symbolic vehicle of their very existence and working consciousness, as it guaranteed them employment security and provided the grounds for the social aspects of labour relations. This view was systematically encouraged by the employers, who aimed to cultivate an environment of trust combined with a family-based organizational model, thus ensuring a smooth operational capacity, while subtly grooming their future workforce, which was mostly hand-picked from the networked labour pool of Piraeus. In this regard, anthropological research has demonstrated and underlined the symbolic centrality of working places and processes in the everyday life of the agents, who tend to associate their identity and life with them (see Cohen 1979; Doukas 2003, Mollona 2009). On the other hand, this condition is even more prominently highlighted when industrial activity, emblematic for a whole city and working trajectories, 'dies out', as Maria put it.

Downward Social Mobility

After 2007, Keranis workers were gradually phased into a regime of continuous job insecurity and persistent degradation of paid labour, resulting for most of them into a process of downward social mobility. According to Newman, who researched former Singer workers in Elizabeth, U.S.A (1999), the plant's shut-down was associated with the town's changing identity and with the abandonment of core values, such as the faith in steady, well-paid work as a moral reward for hard working people who viewed themselves as being at the mercy of remote decision makers. One of the main findings was that as soon as economic displacement struck, it did not only shock the individual's sense of position but also weakened his own sense of progress and sociability (Newman 1999: 231).

Forty five year old Loukas, had been a production operator at Keranis for twenty three years. 'I prefer the factory' he remarked, 'you know what's what, come hell or high water, you get there, you leave, you do your shift and you're alright. But it's not just that, when the money rolls, you're made, you make plans, you're OK, you feel safe and that's important. Production will get through, no question about it, no matter what's going on in the factory, but you'll get through too. And let me tell you, back in '84, when I started, there wasn't only Keranis; there were machinery shops, there were other industries as well, that offered jobs to people. Try looking for a job now, children and bills to take care of, this whole thing has dried up, Piraeus is in serious trouble.'

The gradual decline of industrial activity in Piraeus, and particularly the demise of Keranis, signals the end of a certain kind of working life and the consequent dissolution of social bonds that had been forged on the basis of community residence and employment. As Loukas explains, 'I could find my way to the factory blind-folded, go in and start working. It wasn't just that. We made friends there, we went out, we watched the footie and we went to field trips together; the mood was good. Before my friend that I was telling you about got me in, most people in the neighbourhood had already been working at Keranis, and I had heard nothing bad about it; they all said it was like working in a bank. It's a twenty minute walk from here. Now we still stay in contact, mostly on the phone; we are all on our own now'.

Loukas is considered one of the lucky few, as he managed to find a job as an engineer at the Bic factory, in razor production. However he is one of a small minority, just one of the few who made it — one of a 'handful of people', as he says. The majority of his former co-workers

continue to experience the hardship of unemployment, for they did not merely lose their jobs but also a crucial part of their identity, founded on their labour activity and their place of residence. Sociological and anthropological research on industrial areas (see Jahoda et al. 2010; Newman 1999, Doukas 2003; Mollona 2009) suggests that where the place of residence is formally tied to the workplace, the economic shut-down has cruel implications for the life of the local community. Possibly the worst among those implications, Newman suggests, is after being deprived of several privileges, like insurance and pension, ex-workers are faced with the realization that their lives are now equated with those of poor working-class people rather than those of the middle-class. Although they do have the means to survive, they realize that mere survival is not enough (Newman 1999: 238). In a similar vein, Mollona pointed out that the workers he studied in Sheffield were alienated because they failed to take into account the broader capitalist forces behind their social reproduction and only became aware of such forces in traumatic personal moments (Mollona 2009: 175). In this regard, Loukas explains: ‘For a working man like me, at my age, the worst thing that can happen is staying out of work. You grow accustomed to a different way of life. I hadn’t been living glamorously, but I had it pretty well, no problems at all. I had a car and a motorbike, I also had a child – all these because I had a job. As soon as they cut you off, the speed counter resets to zero. You have to do it all over again and that’s the worst part. You would take jobs with lower wages, never mentioning your previous one when haggling with the boss. When talking with a guy just down the street, I was told something I hadn’t really thought about – that I’m too young to lose my job and too old to find another. I really had a hard time finding one; I’ve done three different jobs so far. Of course, I could manage with lower wages. As for the rest of us, they will take any odd job, in supermarkets, in the street-market, in security companies, wherever they can, just to make sure they will get through the week — not the whole month, mind you; as they live their lives in portions . . .’

On the other hand, the experience of being jobless is not the same for everybody, since it is crucially influenced by one’s employment record, age, gender, as well as each individual’s existing social capital. For example, Yiannis made it to retirement age after wisely managing his finances — as he had ‘stashed some money’ — and called upon his mother-in-law for help when ‘supplies ran dry’. His recovery was aided by the fact that he already owned a house — part of his wife’s dowry — while his children, having graduated from university, had been working as

private tutors, thus contributing to the household income. This was also the case with Mihalis, who currently is patiently waiting to reach retirement age and get his pension. However, many of Loukas' acquaintances still have a long way to go. As he says, 'I'm lucky to have found a job. Most people I know will take cash-in-hand jobs, like I told you, but such jobs won't do you any good if you don't have some other kind of financial support. I know some co-workers with bills outstanding since they bought their house, who also suffer from heart problems. My best buddy, despite his non-smoking life, got cancer — what do you expect, it's not that simple, it does you in'.

The implications of unemployment for physical and psychological health have already been noted by some researchers (see Ashton 1986: 137), and these effects extend to the perception of time as well as of roles in the family. Anastasia, who had been employed since 1982 in the company's quality control department, explained, 'I managed to raise my children in time; I had a schedule, both in my life and my work. I worked in shifts, but I was used to it, everything worked like a charm. Of course, I did the housework too. Would you now believe that I am totally unable to sleep? I wake up at the time when I used to go to work, experiencing a void. I still do the housework, but now it is even more tiring than before because it is an endless routine. I am trying to reorganize myself but I have a hard time doing it. As the time goes by, I only want to forget. I don't want to contact any co-worker of mine, I simply want to forget'.

Employment deprivation disorganizes the concept of time along with all the activities that the individual no longer regards as rewarding. As for established social roles, they seem to remain unchanged in the condition of unemployment; indeed, as sociological research has shown (see Morris 1985), they become even more prominent. Giorgos, who had been working in the company since 1980 as a chemical foreman, says, 'In the private sector, you can never be certain that you will work at the same place forever. I, for one, never believed so. I just found myself trapped in here because I wouldn't want to give away so many years of work — I wanted my compensation. Now, that things are difficult, I have waded in the market to find something else. But it's not that easy; now, at the age of 55, no one will hire me. The worst part is when I go back home; I don't like being supported by my wife — thankfully she has a job. This is not what I was used to. I made money and brought it home. She won't complain, but I don't feel right about it. Alright, I could go and work somewhere else, do something different, but it is not easy to work

the way that many others do, without insurance stamps, and doing unregistered labour for 600 Euro or less – I do deserve a decent retirement’.

Giorgios’ account reveals that the main difficulty that the unemployed face is financial confinement as well as the forced choice of underemployment. Former Keranis workers broadly fall into three categories: those that are just a step from retirement or are already enjoying their pension; those that have already found a standard employment; and, the most numerous, those who are underemployed. The concept of underemployment encompasses some forms of non-standard work which do not usually require special skills and are low-paid. In many cases, they are marked by unregistered employment and involve exceptionally vulnerable work groups, such as women, the young and the unemployed. In the current economic scenario, these forms of work are constantly increasing, due to the instability of the job market, and business-imposed policies. Both of these factors decrease available options for workers and sharply conflict with their interests (Edgell 2009: 117). The case of the Keranis unemployed is typical, as the vast majority of workers see their efforts to re-enter standard employment frustrated by the combination of their age and extended unemployment. Tasos, who had been working at Keranis as an electrician for 32 years, explains, ‘As soon as I realized, after the lock-out, that there was no hope with the factory, I started looking for a job. You know, things are very tough, not only because I am now considered too old, but also because they don’t want experienced labourers any more. They prefer younger people, because they can pay them less and are easier to sack. So I freaked out and started sending CVs everywhere. In the meanwhile I started working with a friend of mine in construction — you know, I was doing all the electrical installations — no social security, no nothing, informally, just to get myself through. I lasted for six months, there’s no comparison with the factory, being out in the cold. As construction business also took a fall, I joined a limestone processing company. Just before the end of my six-month contract, I got the “calling card” for my discharge. When I asked for an explanation, they told me I was too costly, because of my working record and my children. I replied “what you want me to do with them, kill them?” So I got the boot there too. Now, just to get through, I will take cash-in-hand jobs in shipbuilding; anything really, a general duties person, so to speak. As of late, for a week I haven’t been summoned and I’m worried about it. I feel tremendous insecurity, again I tried sending CVs and again I was invited to interviews, but my age and my experience are always a deal-breaker. If we ever get our money from the forced sale, I’m thinking of doing something on my own. But until

then... Not to mention that all jobs in Greece are fixed. If you don't know someone, your chances are slim, this is how it works here, from politics to jobs — everything's fixed'.

What this informant makes perfectly clear, in agreement with social policy research findings (see Cremer-Schäfer 2007), is that despite the effort to find a job by trying to fit the requirements of the local labour market and showing a great deal of flexibility in changing short time jobs, he has failed to regain permanent employment. It seems that in a fluctuating labour market the willingness to work hard for a better life is not enough to protect individuals from redundancy. The point, I stress, is that unemployed people are forced to experience a 'revolving door' process and are driven to learn how to deal with constant failure, despite their adherence to the work ethic and their attempt to sustain an image of being needed and fulfilling social expectations. Thus they join a 'reserve army' of skilled and flexible labour hands whose value, however, is devalued in the context of a deregulated labour market. As Newman puts it (1999: 239), the supporters of Adam Smith's *laissez-faire* principles would conclude that the situation described above is the natural outcome of the market society. It can ensure life-long comfort and stability to no one. Of course the question remains open as to the cost that downward social mobility imposes on the families of workers as well as the rest of the society.

Social Protection

Exploring the degree of marginalization of the unemployed by the labour market, Gallie and Paugam (2000) argued that even when social welfare benefits appear to be quite generous to them workers do not abandon their work ethic, and show a strong tendency to seek employment. This is true for Keranis workers, who are currently facing the risk of poverty because social protection in the current Greek social policy context is minimal (Edgell 2009: 114). This condition results in involuntary non-standard and informal forms of work; that is, disguised unemployment. On the other hand, as we have seen, active labour market policies — which are viewed by the dominant discourse in the E.U. as panaceas for re-employment — do not seem to be effective (see Gray 2004). Emphasizing this point, Takis, a machinist that had been working at Keranis for sixteen years as a packaging machine operator, explains: 'Look, few of us have managed to get a good job. Most are in my shoes; we will take any job available to get through and somewhat fill in our income. The State can do little to help, they cannot – do what exactly? Make the bosses take us in? Out of the question, such things – let alone we wouldn't want that. But we would have

expected from them a more solid support, instead of their big words. They had been duping us, spreading word of an investor, then some other; so we got sick of it and went into lock-out. What the State did was to offer us a one-time benefit of three thousand Euro and Vocational Training seminars. Those things are just rubbish; everybody knows it, even our teachers there. And let me tell you, what would I do with computers and such in my age? Who's going to take me in? We all went in, got the dough and left'.

Takis' experience confirms the dubious effectiveness of Vocational Training programs, which in theory aim to rehabilitate the unemployed. Their very rationale conflicts with the reality of the labour market (see Pappas 1989: 53). On the other hand, it is noteworthy to mention that the workers themselves undertook these initiatives through their own union in an attempt to overcome, even marginally, the conditions to which they had been subjected, while at the same time viewing state protection mechanisms as bureaucratic and unreliable. The predominant opinion among workers on the services for the unemployed provided by the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (O.A.E.D.) is revealing. Giorgos attests: 'I went down to OAED for an unemployment card because I had to. I sat down in the office of one of those employment consultants, and you know what he said? "I don't trust you expect finding a job here!" He was on a fixed term contract, why should he care about me or the rest of us? If he could find a better place, he would just take off! He had me fill in my CV so he could forward it. What can I say, I know I have a good CV, and he agreed on that. What use is this, I can find no job. The way those people work, they're just useless'.

During their talks with the relevant authorities, the Ministry of Labour and OAED, former 'Keranis' workers made a series of suggestions aimed at obtaining temporary financial support until they could get their legal compensations and the wages due to them — which, in most cases, tally up to four years-worth of wages —³ from the forced sale of the company's assets. They obtained financial support worth 1,000 Euros over the years between 2005 and 2007, payable thrice per six months, from the Special Fund for Employment and Vocational Training (L.A.E.K.). Also, they requested a 500-hour paid program of Vocational Training during the years 2006 and 2007 concerning training in accounting, electrical work, natural gas and computers. Since 2007, the union initiated a new cycle of negotiations with the Ministry of

³ The financial demands of the employees range between 60,000 and 180,000 Euro, depending on their longevity in the company.

Labour, in the light of the special liquidation status, which identifies the former workers as discharged. The union requested a full intervention in favour of those who had not yet been able to find a job consisting of the following: first, a special benefit for the employers that would employ former ‘Keranis’ workers; second, an increased benefit for those ex-workers who wished to start their own business; third, a repetition of the Vocational Training courses for those who were still unemployed; fourth, awarding of points for the A.S.E.P. (Supreme Council for Civil *Personnel* Selection) exams; and fifth, admission into the Special Fund of Social Solidarity.⁴ Regarding the first two requests, there was no special treatment of the unemployed, hence they were granted the standard benefit that is provided to every unemployed person, with the special bonus that, even in case of redundancy of those eligible, the Keranis workers would be fully covered. The Ministry decided to put aside the fourth request because a special legislative regulation would be needed. Regarding their fifth request, the Ministry of Labour assured the workers that they would be included in the Fund’s provisions, which would offer an essential relief to a considerable number of them. According to those provisions, those who had completed 7,500 insurance stamps and were over the age of 50 could make their way towards retirement enjoying a 5-year benefit of 900 Euro gross. These provisions are applied in areas with high unemployment levels and declining economic activity. Although Piraeus has high unemployment levels and tobacco industrial activities in Greece are declining, the former Keranis workers never obtained the aforementioned benefit, due to the lack of state funds. Finally, regarding their request for the repetition of Vocational Training, the OAED argued that, since it had already taken place, they would have to find jobs in order to accrue a benefit for their employment, not their unemployment. However, as the labour market in Piraeus area is rather adverse, most employers would not risk committing themselves to programs for the employment of benefited labourers, since they would be obliged to abstain from any reduction in their personnel for two years. Therefore, this argument is useless from the employers’ point of view.

⁴ Under the law 3552/2007 (OGG 77 A’), within the Greek Manpower Employment Organization, an independent organization has been established under the name ‘Special Fund of Social Solidarity’, with the aim of providing financial support and social protection for the long-term unemployed and for those discharged following restructuration of the businesses that employed them, conditional to them facing considerable difficulty to re-enter the job market and to them being close to retirement age.

Thus, apart from the potential benefits from the forced sale procedure, the former Keranis workers do not have much to hope for. Marooned in the vicious circle of underemployment, they grudgingly accept signing waivers of their employment record in order to ensure meagre financial support. From dire necessity, they submit to the whims of employers' and thereby remain unemployed, or without a steady job, for long periods of time. Moreover, as we have seen, most of their skills are no longer sought after by the local labour market (notably, packaging and cigarette-making machine operators). The problem is even more acute for the female workforce. Very few of the female technicians have managed to find even casual jobs in the local shipbuilding and repairing industry and are considered to be unskilled workers in terms of labour market requirements. The main problem is that the vast majority of former Keranis workers have already completed the number of insurance stamps required for a pension, but they still are not eligible for retirement. Consequently, their main concern is how they can meet the terms of their social reproduction until then.

Conclusions

The ethnographic case of the former Keranis workers could be seen as an example of the way social disadvantage emerges and operates in the context of a permanently waning welfare state. Job loss affects the actors' subsistence system as a whole, as it is defined by the combination of vocational activity, family and local community. As informants' accounts have shown, the loss of employment has forced them to experience downward social mobility in these social fields. At the same time, restrictive labour market conditions have redefined the perception of labour as well as the concept of vocational skills. In this light, the 'invisible hand' does not distribute social disadvantage and inequality in a socially fair way (Cremer-Schäfer 2007: 146); instead, it coerces agents to enter into vulnerable social groups.

The Keranis case also indicates that agents do not passively accept the conditions created by market forces. It testifies to the ways in which they struggle to ensure the terms of their social reproduction, either by demanding what they believe they are entitled to or, *ex necessitas*, by submitting to various forms of non-standard work acting both realistically while trying to preserve their work ethic and identity.

The post-industrial welfare policy seems incapable of facing the problem that, well beyond mere statistics, finds an increasing number of labourers at risk of finding themselves at

the threshold of poverty and social exclusion. As this ethnography shows, neither non-standard employment nor the market itself can protect workers from uncertainty and precariousness unless a relevant comprehensive public policy is devised (Durrenberger and Martí 2006: 16). To put it bluntly, cases such as the failure of Keranis tobacco industry directly call into question the Western cultural model's fundamental faith in progress, its rhetoric of success as well as claims of meritocracy. As research has shown (Yates 2003; Gray 2004), the increasing number of people being driven out of steady paid employment and benefits tells us that these people are not the dispensable collateral damage of this model; they and their conditions are its inherent structural effect.

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Networks among Retired British Women in the Costa Blanca: Insiders, Outsiders, ‘Club Capital’ and ‘Limited Liability’

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Much has been written on the subject of Intra-European retirement migration spanning a range of disciplines including social policy, sociology, geography, migration studies, tourism, social gerontology, sociology and anthropology. Such movement — predominantly from northern to southern Europe — has largely been attributed to increased life expectancy, early retirement, greater affluence and previous tourism experiences. Historically, migration to Spain centred on the Costa del Sol and more recently the Costa Blanca; the Spanish Costas remain popular destinations for British retirees. This area is populated by large numbers of migrants who have retired, often early, and bought ‘a place in the sun’. Focusing on retired British migrants in new social and cultural contexts, I explore how a degree of superficiality or ‘sense of belonging’ to networks is sufficient to enable retirees to thrive in their new country. Although bonding social capital is often associated with migrant populations, I highlight how retired British women utilize ‘club capital’ — denoting looser, superficial linkages — and how their social networks are characterized by ‘limited liability’. Adopting a structural narrative approach, I examine how retired migrants from the UK to Spain pursue their interests and on what premises belonging to networks is constructed.

Keywords: networks, retirement migration, Costa Blanca.

Retirement, migration and the formation of new networks

Much has been written on the subject of Intra-European retirement migration (King et al 2000; Ackers and Dwyer 2002, Warnes et al 2004, Casado Diaz 2009, Gustafson 2001 2009; Ahmed 2010, 2011). In this article I focus on migration to the Costa Blanca on the South East coast of Spain, which has a relatively short history compared to migration to the Costa del Sol (see O’Reilly 2000, 2003, 2007a, 2007b). British people move to Southern Europe to benefit from a better climate, a slower pace of life and a lower cost of living, and to take advantage of social and practical opportunities, primarily the presence of compatriots and the fact that English is widely spoken (King et al 2000). Retirees born in the mid-20th century in affluent Western countries benefited from the increased opportunities associated with growing up in a time of post-war affluence and being in good health.¹ They also experienced a mass consumer revolution; accrued capital from owner-occupation and had the opportunity to retire early. People born at this time were the first generation to take advantage of foreign travel opportunities and cheap air fares. As Spain was a popular holiday destination from the 1960s, previous experiences of tourism shaped retirement options in later life (O’Reilly 2000). The private development of *urbanizaciones*

¹ For the purpose of this study, ‘retirement’ is used to describe the end of career or paid work after the age of 50 (Yang 2012).

particulares de turistica — purpose built residential areas for northern European migrants or ‘residential tourists’ — has also facilitated migration to the Spanish Costas (O’Reilly 2003).

Over the last twenty years, the Costa Blanca has become ‘home’ to large numbers of British retirees (Hardill 2006, Casado Diaz 2009, Ahmed 2011). In the Costa Blanca, *urbanizaciones* are often located on the outskirts of established settlements and are marketed by international estate agents in different European countries, which creates concentrations of nationalities in particular areas. Many retired British migrants to the Costa Blanca live in segregated residential areas, away from the host population, and this influences the kind of networks that they form and belong to (Ahmed 2011). Although my informants migrated relatively late in life (Warnes et al 2004), they share with migrants who migrated in early adulthood ‘the focus on the creation of continuity in their lives’ (George and Fitzgerald 2012: 241). Networks can be understood as representing an important example of such continuity.

Networks can be understood as ‘relations of social bonding’ (Sherlock 2002:7.2) and refer to contacts, ties, connections or attachments² (Cant 2004). However, although the significance of networks in the post-modern era has received a good deal of attention across a range of disciplines (including anthropology and sociology), there is no consensus on what a network approach embodies, or indeed on what a network is. Here, I focus on social (rather than non-social) networks which differ from technological or biological networks in terms of belonging between community members (Newman and Park 2003).

Although social networks are often considered as ‘social structures’ (Wasserman & Faust 1994) and social network analysis have emerged as a set of methods for analysing this aspect (Scott 1988,1992), here I am not concerned with the structural properties of women’s networks (see White and Johansen 2005 and Braha and Bar-Yam 2007).³ Instead, I focus analytically (Gubrium and Holstein 1998) on women’s agency (Scott 2000). Retired British women in Spain construct belonging through being linked to the dynamics of a complex social system of relationships and interactions (Gilchrist and Taylor 1997). Within this ‘social context’, influenced

² I use belonging rather than attachment since attachment tends to be associated with psychological perspectives of understanding human relationships and agency. Attachment theory was formulated by John Bowlby (Mercer 2006), a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who focused on the emotional development of children.

³ That is whether they are, for example, broken, single scale or scale free, broad, regular or random.

by the actors' location on the margins of Spanish society (Ahmed 2011), women's experience of belonging is based on, and limited to, their interaction and engagement with compatriots. A central focus of my discussion is on women's agency and the resources they employ in constructing belonging (and non-belonging) to networks.

When discussing networks, the concept of 'social capital' is often employed to describe the resources binding people together (Bourdieu 1986, Putnam 2000), or to represent links between individuals (Li et al. 2002). Simply put, social capital encompasses obligations, expectations and norms and sanctions (Zontini 2004) and refers to people's values and to the resources that they can access, which both amount to and are a result of collective and socially negotiated ties and relationships (Edwards et al. 2004). Although bonding social capital (Putnam 2000) is often associated with migrant populations (Casado Diaz 2009), I highlight how retired British women utilize 'club capital' (Winter 2000) — denoting looser, superficial linkages — and how their social networks are marked by 'limited liability' (Suttles 1972: 59). Using a structural narrative approach, I examine how retired migrants from the UK to Spain pursue their interests, and on what premises belonging to networks is constructed.

In summary, I examine the circumstances of retired British migrants in new social and cultural contexts and explore how they construct and experience belonging to networks in Spain. I use a narrative inquiry to elicit, examine, interpret and analyse how British retirees are simultaneously insiders and outsiders and to look at their agency and motives in forming networks and at how, though such networks are founded on pragmatic necessity, they are constructed through 'club capital' and are marked by limited liability (Suttles 1972) or 'limited reciprocity' (Crow et al. 2002). Thus, a 'sense of belonging' to networks is sufficient to allow retirees to enjoy Spain rather than simply survive in adverse circumstances (O'Reilly 2000).

The discussion is structured in the following way. First, I outline the methodology and methods that underpin this study; that is, establishing the study context, introducing the participants and explaining how a narrative approach is useful to understanding networks. Second, I look at how retired British women in Spain are motivated to form networks and how they do so. Third, I explore the characteristics on which being 'an insider' is predicated. Fourth, I examine how women in Spain manage the superficial nature of social networks and keep friendly distance from their compatriots. Finally, I consider how some people are 'outsiders', due to their

transgressing acceptable forms of behaviour. The concluding section brings together the issues raised.

Methodology and Methods

I carried out my research in an area five kilometres from the Town of Torrevieja on the southeast coast of Spain.⁴ Over a four year period, from 2001 to 2004, I spent a total of eleven months there and conducted in-depth narrative interviews as part of seventeen case studies. Initially, my access to the field was facilitated by my pre-existing contacts in the area; this ‘snowballed’ as people became aware of my study. The table below lists the research participants.

Research participant ⁵	Lives in Spain permanently (P) or part time (PT)	Intends to remain in Spain	Marital status	Age	Speaks Spanish
Celia	P	Yes	Married	58	No
Cynthia	P	Yes	Married	54	Yes
Vera	P	No – wants to return to the UK	In a couple with Deidre	59	No
Deidre	P	No – wants to return to the UK	In a couple With Vera	62	No
Phyllis	P	Yes	Married	77	No
Mabel	P	Yes	Widowed	83	No
Agnes	P	No – wants to return to the UK	Married	69	No
Agatha	P	Yes	Married	60	No
Olive	P	Yes	Divorced	57	No
Myra	P	Yes	Divorced	60	No
Margot	P	Yes	Divorced	60	No
Lillian	P	Yes	Married	61	No
Joy	P	Yes	Married	54	No
Jenny	P	No – wants to return to the UK	Married	56	No
Viv	PT	Intends to retain home in Spain	Married	54	No
Bernice	PT	Intends to retain home in Spain	Married	62	No
Enid	PT	No – wants to buy a second home elsewhere	Married	57	No

⁴ This was based on a study undertaken for a doctoral thesis in 2010.

⁵ These are pseudonyms.

For the purposes of this study, the women can be classified as falling into four related but different residential categories: those living in Spain permanently — that is, without a home in the UK — and who wish to remain there (Celia, Cynthia, Mable, Agatha, Joy, Myra, Margot, Olive, Lillian and Phyllis); those living in Spain permanently, who wish to return to the UK (Jenny, Agnes, Vera and Deirdre); those who live in Spain for part of the year and are happy with this arrangement (Bernice and Viv); finally, those who live in Spain for part of the year but do not wish to retain their home there (Enid). Although the research was undertaken with women, the focus of this paper is not on their gender or on the role of gender in migration.

A Narrative Approach to Understanding Networks

People construct belonging to networks in order to provide a social context to their lives. A narrative approach is useful in analysing *how* such belonging is constructed and how people position themselves in relation to their networks. Narratives can be understood as recorded, transcribed stories which have become structured units for interpretation, and narrative analysis can be understood as the systematic study of such replayed strips of activity. Narrative analysis also has a meaning-making function in that it can offer insight into the meaning of the narrator as well as structuring their experiences. My approach to narrative analysis focuses on the substantive aspect or content and also on structure, or the way the stories are told. Influenced by Derrida and deconstruction,⁶ this involves considering the use of language as both representing and constructing belonging to networks in relation to linguistic choice and to the devices employed. Looking at thematic and structural analysis together enables an identification and analysis of common themes across (and within) cases and also an exploration of variation in meaning.

I adopt an interpretive approach to narrative analysis, which means that I do not treat narratives as mirrors of experience — they need to be analysed and interpreted. They are subjective, rooted in time, place and experience, are perspective ridden and are linked to culture and history. The contextual rootedness of narratives is important and highlights the ethnographic role of narrative analysis. Drawing on Gubrium and Holstein and their approach to narrative ethnography focusing on the ‘myriad layers of context’ (2009: 24), my approach holds that

⁶ Deconstruction describes an approach to textual analysis whereby the text is dismantled into components through multiple interpretations.

narratives illuminate the circumstances that shape people's lives and experiences. I now turn to discussing experiences of networks among retired British women migrants in the Costa Blanca in Spain.

Agency, Motive and Pragmatism

As I have mentioned, retirement or lifestyle migration (Benson and O'Reilly 2009) has been mainly for leisure opportunities and an improved quality of life. Many women felt that their social life in Spain was far superior to that in the UK and that they had more inclination and time to socialize. Whether or not they planned to stay influenced how they discussed this aspect of their experience. Importantly, since the women in the study were retired, they had much more time and opportunity to be part of networks, as Celia's quote illustrates. 'Socially', she said, 'it's much better ... but I suppose I'm not working, in England I worked, we both worked, so you don't have that freedom, do you, when you work ... here it's different ... people that you meet one time only you could find yourselves going back to their homes. People are so different out here'.

Since retired migrants from the UK were a kind of 'diasporic group' (Temple 1999) in Spain, living separately from their hosts, the motivation to belong to networks was heightened. For example, Cynthia cast herself as active in creating social networks, which required effort. Along with Celia, she was instrumental in establishing a 'ladies club' for British women. The club was popular and all but two of the women interviewed regularly attended the weekly meetings and engaged with the club's social activities and excursions. Cynthia emphasised the communal ('*communus*') element of belonging to social networks and demonstrated her agency through her engagement with other people. She remarked, 'I think it was really just that I needed something to do, something to fill time — and it was bringing people together. A community is a joint effort to get along with each other. Community is the mix of people, the joining together of people'.

When she mentioned 'the mix of people', Cynthia was not referring to ethnic diversity; rather, she was talking about 'mix' — as a verb — in terms of people's agency. She emphasised that networks were something brought about by people's will, actions and interactions. This view of community as social networks was echoed by Vera, for whom community did not need to be tied to place and who, like Cynthia, saw it as an active form of belonging. Vera said, 'I suppose

community to me is not a geographical thing. It's having a kind of — I don't know — a safety net if you like, a kind of back up'. Vera's metaphorical use of the expression 'safety net' encapsulates the support and security that belonging to a network can provide and also the symbolic nature of networks. Others, like Myra, took a 'no nonsense' approach to belonging to networks, suggesting that people sensibly gravitated towards one another to help each other if needed. For Myra, there was nothing ephemeral or elusive about belonging to networks as the following quote illustrates. 'I just think it's practical', she said, 'I haven't got any of that pie-in-the-sky attitude. I just got a practical attitude and it is: it is more, it's different. The community spirit is better, much better'.

In diasporic circumstances, it is pragmatic to seek out and create social networks (Ahmed 2011). Since women in Spain were away from family and networks in the UK, there was a shared experience of being out of context, as they were away from established support and social networks. Moreover, everybody was in the same situation; because they were without family and long-standing friends, migrants were newcomers and therefore 'outsiders' of sorts. However, they were also 'insiders', due to their shared migrant status.

Some women who wanted to return to the UK told a very different story regarding social contact in Spain. Increased social contact was not always perceived to be positive, with several women expressing feelings of intrusiveness and invasions of their privacy. It appeared that these women had social contact with other migrants from the UK by default. Deidre's narrative, in particular, contrasted sharply with that of Myra. Deidre felt rather oppressed by the high level of social contact, with the implication that it was difficult to exercise choice and that contact was an imposition. She found this intrusive but recognized that it derived from a shared sense of 'belonging' and a need for networks which related to being from the UK, speaking English and living in an isolated, 'diasporic' community. In Deidre's own words, 'A lot of it's quite helpful. A lot of it is quite sort of intrusive ... It's massively different here because you're drawn into things without sometimes wanting to be...at times I couldn't care tuppence whether I kept these things up or not'.

Other women took a different view, suggesting that the British in Spain had an air of desperation about them in that they demonstrated an acute need to bond with other people. This is illustrated by Enid's use of 'running around' in her statement quoted below. In this sense, it was panic and isolation, as well as pragmatism, that were seen to motivate the behaviour of migrants.

According to Enid, ‘They’re running around really, trying to make friends and therefore I would say you possibly might make friends with people you wouldn’t otherwise do. I mean, I don’t think I’d ever have made friends with Phoebe and Ken, never, but we were friends with them the whole first year’. Enid, although living in Spain part-time, was disenchanted with the whole experience and wanted to sell her house and buy a holiday home elsewhere. She did not feel much affinity with other migrants from the UK and cast herself as being distanced from them in her talk.

Being an Insider: ‘People Like Us’

Significantly, although British migrants do not always live separately from their hosts and to varying degrees are integrated with the host population (see O’Reilly 2000 and Benson 2011), the women in this study were residentially segregated and did not speak Spanish. With their compatriots they shared language, cultural norms and country of origin, and this influenced the kind of networks they were able to form. Those who were married talked about marriage as embodying some kind of social norm, with the implication that not being married was somehow deviant or unusual. Talk of women without husbands generally positioned them as ‘other’. Lillian for example, was less keen than the others to socialise on a large scale and she and her husband resisted en masse socialising with other British migrants, preferring instead to spend time with other married people. She stated, ‘our friends seem to be couples with different interests; just for one reason or another that we like them, we do different things with them’. Margot, however, found it valuable to meet other women who lived alone either through widowhood or divorce; so, as with the married women, there was a sense of shared identification also among single women. Margot said: ‘We go to the ladies’ club once a week. If it’s not running one week we’ll go to a friend of ours, Mabel’s. We’ve all met up, there’s about six of us, half dozen that live here on our own’.

Forming and belonging to networks allowed these women to enjoy Spain rather than simply survive in adverse circumstances. Often this was achieved through membership of British-run social clubs which are independent from Spanish structures (O’Reilly 2000). Most people had chosen to live in the area where I did research because of previous tourism experiences and some of their comments about living stress-free echoed feelings associated with holidays. However, the women whom I interviewed were very keen to distance themselves from

‘holiday people’. They appeared to be hostile to holidaymakers, particularly those from the UK. This hostility did not apply to those who owned holiday homes and visited for part of the year. It was directed towards those who rented houses for short periods and behaved like holidaymakers; that is, in a more boisterous manner than was felt to be acceptable. Women who had moved to Spain, either permanently or part-time, preferred to be surrounded by others like them, who were seen to behave in a more appropriate manner and to have an investment in the area.

For example, while Mabel was disgruntled with holidaymakers ‘letting their hair down’ and not being sufficiently reserved, she was generally much less concerned and more tolerant. Mabel loved Spain and planned to stay there and she de-emphasised problems saying, ‘They’re even less reserved and I’m sure you know that. They really let their hair down when they come for a holiday. I mean it’s just, it’s sunshine and sangria and bonhomie’.

Here, holidaymakers were positioned as ‘other’, while those that had made their home in Spain had a higher status. O’Reilly found similar distinctions in her research, noting that migrants from the UK ‘Put a lot of effort into identifying not as tourists by sharing jokes about and constructing stereotypes of tourists that symbolize the boundaries between them’ (2003: 307). Therefore, although the women shared an ethnic background with British holidaymakers, the latter were seen as ‘outsiders’.

Although traditional studies of networks suggest that belonging is predicated on residing in a particular area for a long period of time (Elias and Scotson 1994, Crow et al 2001), in this new development in the Costa Blanca ‘locals’ are people who have been there for a relatively short time. Belonging to networks has therefore not resulted from relationships that have been built up over generations; instead, social networks are recent constructions that have to withstand a relatively transient status (Sherlock 2002). On first examination, women in Spain could be said to use bonding social capital since they were limited by their language skills (Casado Diaz 2009) and social contact was almost exclusively with other migrants from the UK. However, the links between the women in this study suggest that they are bound by looser, more superficial ties, as I now discuss in terms of how they maintain ‘friendly distance’ (Crow et al 200) and, later, in relation to how networks are characterized by limited liability (Suttles 1972).

Maintaining ‘Friendly Distance’

Women who wished to remain in Spain described themselves as fortunate to have escaped Britain and to find themselves at the hub of social networks. Those who wanted to tell a positive story of their lives in Spain were effusive about the opportunities for increased social contact. There was however, some evidence of slippage in discussions of the depth of these relationships. For example, Mabel was among those who were enthusiastic about life in Spain. She was happy about her widened social circle, though realistic about the numerous contacts at her disposal. Earlier in her account, she talked about making lots of new friends over the year that she had been there. However, in the following excerpt she said that contact was casual and unstructured, implying that it was superficial: ‘Well only café contact. Social contact it’s something you, you stop somebody and speak’. Pragmatically, Vera made a distinction between kinds of friends; that is, between acquaintances and people with whom there was a shared deep sense of community. In these circumstances, community intended as networks was something to satisfy basic safety and security needs, and ‘a sense’ or ‘a feeling’ appeared to suffice. ‘I’m not quite certain that it needs to be anything other than superficial’, she said, ‘we’re not necessarily talking about deep friendships. You’re talking about a sense of community and a sense of belonging that just gives you that feeling of safety’. Members of a community do not necessarily need to embrace one another’s views or share the same values; they just needed to pull together if necessary to foster the sentiment which brings the imagined into the realm of the real.

Therefore, on the whole, for these women a feeling of belonging seemed to suffice, and this could apparently be switched on and off at will for pragmatic purposes. As I have indicated, here, belonging to social networks was more about lifestyle than duty and obligation; such belonging could, thus, be viewed as marked by bonds with limited liability (Suttles 1972).

Neighbourliness or belonging to social networks does not need to be related to shared hardship (Crow et al 2002); instead, there can be limited reciprocity among network members. Networks among retired British women in the Costa Blanca did not involve obligation (Sherlock 2002); instead, they were lifestyle-based, pursued through social clubs and shared cultural based gatherings (O’Reilly 2000). Such networks needed not encompass duty or reciprocity and were founded on hedonism (Sherlock 2002). In these circumstances, it is more appropriate to talk of ‘club capital’ (Winter 2002), in terms of the social scene centring on the ‘ladies’ club’ rather than on social capital. ‘Club capital’ denotes a more superficial kind of engagement with social

networks which lack commitment and social responsibility. This characterized women's networks in Spain, since 'social networks can be created through ... lifestyle-based gatherings, they lack the commitment to collective good that accompanies theories of social capital and voluntary organizations' (Sherlock 2002: 5.6). In modern society, neighbourliness need not be a reaction to common hardship (Crow et al 2002) and people manage to keep a 'friendly distance': 'A good neighbour can be described in general terms as someone who respects others' rights to privacy but who at the same time makes herself or himself available to be called upon if necessary' (Crow et al 2002: 129). However, among my informants, to call upon neighbours for help is also contingent on what is deemed 'acceptable behaviour', as Celia's account given below illustrates.

Being an 'Outsider': Transgressing Acceptable Behaviour

Although being an 'insider' appeared to be predicated on common migrant status, shared country of origin and language, being from the UK and speaking English were not enough to guarantee belonging to social networks. Belonging to networks was also premised on acceptable behaviour. Moreover, as I discuss later, being part of a 'diaspora' could be used to exclude as well as include people on the basis of their behaviour and compliance with certain 'norms' (Temple 1999). If people were perceived to behave in an inappropriate manner, they were not 'insiders'. Celia's account of a neighbour, another migrant from the UK, given below illustrates this point, exemplifying dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and the way in which not everybody benefited from the help and support assumed to be associated with being part of a group.

Celia's anonymous neighbour, a British woman, was found seriously ill, alone in her home, by another resident of the urbanization settlement. This resident was alerted to the woman's situation by her dog barking over a period of several days. The woman was taken to hospital but nobody knew who she was, nor did anybody particularly want to become involved in helping her. Apparently, Celia felt that the woman in question was to blame for her situation. This woman was known to be an alcoholic, which had caused her health to break down; this seemed to excuse Celia from feeling obliged to assist her. Celia had not seen this woman for six months although she lived close by, which might suggest that she had avoided any contact and that this woman was considered to be an outsider. Stressing that insider status to this network was contingent on 'good' or acceptable behaviour, Celia said: 'We've never seen the lady; I've heard

she's alcoholic. We had to call the police and an ambulance and in six months it's the first time I'd seen her. Basically her liver had gone, but now we had a problem, because he has gone, the husband. We don't know where he's gone. She's going to hospital and nobody knows her second name which is really sad'. It was acknowledged that this woman needed help and Celia expressed regret that she did not receive it but when she said that 'somebody' could have helped — a 'neighbour' — she was actually saying, albeit implicitly, that although she was a neighbour she was in fact disassociating herself. 'Well', she remarked, 'I would hope that they'll have got in touch with her relatives really. I'm sure, I don't think, I'm not sure that the law, the Spaniard, somebody could have gone into the house and cleaned it; a neighbour, you'd have thought?'

Celia portrayed herself as well-meaning but deterred by a number of obstacles. The dissonance in her account can be understood to be an acknowledgement of what should happen and the recognition that the reality was often different. Celia talked at length about this incident as it had clearly bothered her but, in order to present and maintain an identity that she was comfortable with, she did not want to acknowledge that she could have done more for this neighbour. Instead, she focused again on the legal obstacles and took a passive, obedient role whereby she could not flout the law. Celia conveyed a sense that this neighbour had been failed by the other residents and felt that this was a partial reflection on her, but still she was unwilling to act. When she said that she felt 'totally bad' about her failure to help, she suggested a consciousness that her inaction was at odds with positioning herself as keen to engage with others, and her remark, 'that's awful', was a more general criticism of the inaction of others and her own. Celia mentioned that people were saying that they did not want to get involved and she was critical of this, though this did reflect her position and behaviour as she too was saying that she did not want to become involved. Celia distanced herself from the situation again by referring to other (anonymous) people who did not want to become involved, like her. Perhaps she was asking me, or herself, the question at the end of the statement reported below; or the question it could simply be rhetorical. 'I feel totally bad', she said, 'that I've lived there six months and never seen this lady and I think that's awful that she went to hospital with nobody and people were saying I don't want to get involved, but I wondered if we could ring the Help charity and say there's a lady in hospital, but at this stage we didn't even know her name, it isn't how you anticipate you come to live this life is it?'

While Celia repositioned herself as civic-minded despite her lack of action regarding the neighbour, she was much more comfortable talking about the ‘ladies’ club’, as this was the kind of network involvement that she preferred. She needed to re-establish her social conscience in order to feel at ease with the situation and with herself, which was achieved through her talk about encouraging Lou to attend. In her own words, ‘I suppose starting the Ladies’ Club was my way of trying to make a start and get into it, and that’s it. It’s wonderful really. In fact I met a lady yesterday, Lou, she came the first week and when she was leaving she said “I won’t be coming again because my friend’s going back to England”. I said “you must come Lou, it’s for people to come on their own to meet other people, so that they can have different conversation”, and Lou came.’

Celia’s encouraging Lou to attend the club represented the kind of civic engagement that she preferred. For some women, talk about the nature of their social contact and the extent of their mutual reciprocity was therefore at odds with their claims of being part of networks, which suggested that they operated on a number of levels. For them, belonging to networks was exclusive in that it did not include everybody — some were in and some were out — and this could be contingent upon behaviour rather than just being part of a group (Suttles, 1972, Sherlock 2002, Crow et al 2001). Belonging to networks could be pragmatic; it could be superficial and limited, and often a ‘feeling’ or a ‘sense of’ belonging was sufficient. The term ‘club capital’ (Winter 2002) reflects the more superficial type of network revolving around a social scene rather than being underpinned by duty or obligation.

Conclusion

As we have seen, for retired UK women migrants in the Costa Blanca, networks are predicated on country of origin, shared background, language, location and acceptable behaviour (Ahmed 2011). Significantly though, the women in this study were constructing networks founded on hedonism in older age. In other words, networks revolved around a social scene rather than around collective social action. In such a context, ‘club capital’ (Winter 2000), rather than social capital, is useful to describe looser network ties because it denotes the superficiality and pragmatism of such networks. Different from longer-established networks (Elias and Scotson 1974, Crow et al 2001), in the Costa Blanca an individual could become a ‘local’ very quickly provided that English was spoken and that their behaviour was acceptable; being an ‘insider’ was

not premised on long-established social networks (Sherlock 2002). As Celia's story has illustrated, behaviour that complied with a group 'norm' or acceptable forms of behaviour could also determine whether people were 'in' or 'out'.

Women's experiences, motives and agency regarding networks could be examined through their narratives for it was through these narratives that women made sense of their actions and their lives. All of the women in this study felt that the opportunities for 'networking' were greater, although some felt intruded upon at times. The findings suggest that 'network' can be conceived of as both a noun and a verb since it represents the outcome and the processes of human agency, although there are difficulties in determining the levels of agency among network members (Clark 2007). While people living in the same place do not have to have the same values (Sherlock 2002), networks can be constructed as a strategy to thrive; thus, it was common sense and pragmatic to be a part of networks.

These networks were discussed in different ways by women who wished to remain in Spain and by those who wanted to return to the UK. Social contact or belonging meant more to the women who wanted to be there. Local networks were talked about as being multiple, spontaneous, relaxed and informal for those who wished to remain there. Those who planned to remain in Spain tended to focus on the opportunities for making new friends and on how much more sociable British people were in Spain. For the women who wished to return to the UK, things were different. Some found such increased social contact intrusive, and they resented their lack of control in their social relationships. When women moved to Spain, they found that they were living on the margins, among other retired expatriates — who were usually their compatriots — with minimal contact with Spanish people. Although they were not experiencing hardship as a persecuted minority group, under these circumstances social contact was presented as a necessity — to survive and to thrive.

Belonging to networks was fluid and multiple, through lifestyle migration (O'Reilly 2007a), and where someone originated from influenced the kind of networks they engaged in. It is possible for a person to claim insider status on other grounds than length of residence (Crow et al 2001), and this is also open to negotiation. A shared country of origin, common language and propinquity in the new environment all predicated insiderness for women living in the Costa

Blanca. This means that holidaymakers and other nationalities (and the host population)⁷ were not insiders or part of women's social networks. Moreover, as the case of the woman in Celia's story illustrates, failure to conform to unspoken rules could lead to exclusion and outsidership.

⁷ For a discussion of integration and exclusion among host and immigrant populations see Pardo (2008).

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COMMENTS

*Seeing Naples**

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As the new Co-editor of Urbanities I would like to take this opportunity to inaugurate a variation on the usual ‘commentary’ we are likely to come across in academic journals. Since our academic business is urban ethnography, why not take the opportunity of our global journeys to publish brief observations by CUA members on the fascinating places at which we periodically gather to deliberate? Contributions such as disciplinary conversations, academic biographies or even more contested debates between members, it is hoped, would demonstrate to our readers that our scholarly pursuits have a lighter side that is no less valuable for the promotion of our craft. I should first note the excellence of the plenary and more focused sessions that I attended and in which I participated. To have so many informed and articulate colleagues assembled in such as fascinating venue as Naples, Italy for us academics is a gift of sizable proportion.

‘See Naples and Die’ (*Vedi Napoli e poi Muori*) is a cryptic aphorism attributed to Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe he is said to have uttered regarding the overwhelming panoramic beauty of Naples in the late 18th Century. Much of what he saw was still there during my recent trip to Naples for the Commission on Urban Anthropology’s Conference on ‘Entrepreneurial Culture, Corporate Responsibility and Urban Development’, at the *Mostra d’Oltremare* in *Fuorigrotta*. The lively meeting provided the opportunity to observe and photographically survey much of Naples’, now more distressed, urban labyrinth. As I moved around the city during rush hours on the overcrowded trains and buses, as well on leisurely strolls through broad and narrow passages, I looked for, and found, an eye-pleasing magnificent shabbiness and more surprisingly — a degree of taken-for-granted local ethnic diversity all around me. This observation of the streets of Naples as somewhat multicultural is a major contradiction to the common view of exclusively

* An extended version of this article was published in my ‘Traces Blog’ at I-Italy.org.

bad blood between new and old *Napoletani*. Unfortunately, I also often learned the difference between *tempo italiano* and *tempo napoletano* One hour later (*un'ora piú tardi*).

In Naples, a town with somewhat of a bad reputation, even the most sinister-looking places were colorfully filled with lively and friendly people into the evening hours. For example, within two days of walking to the *Montesanto* train station from my central city hotel through *Quartieri Spagnoli* I became for all intents and purposes a neighborhood regular and began to ignore the fact that the city is neither clean nor particularly efficient. In one instance, at my regular stop at the *Campi Flegrei* station where I disembarked for the conference I, and the rest of the regular commuters, scampered back and forth as three consecutive track change announcements (*cambio di binario*) for the same departing train were made within a span of five minutes. I had been warned about the Neapolitan dialect but found that the locals had no problem understanding my Italian. In one toy store I searched for figurines of ancient Roman soldiers (*Cerco statuette di antichi soldati Romani*) and, although I seldom understood their response, we still managed to get along with a smile. As to a San Gennaro miracle of the trip, in Anacapri I found an expensive digital camera under a tree in a small piazza and gave it to a traffic cop along with my business card, just in case... A week later I received an e-mail from a grateful French visitor. I saw Naples and survived (*Vidi Napoli e sopravvissi*) to tell about it.

BOOK REVIEWS

Leslie J. Bank (2011). *Home Spaces, Street Styles. Contesting Power and Identity in a South African City*.

London: Pluto Press and Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

This book consists of nine chapters (some of which are reworked from previously published material) and a conclusion. A number of older and more recent photographs are included depicting the area as well as life styles of the inhabitants.

Bank states that ‘This book revisits and updates the classic urban anthropological work of Philip and Iona Mayer and their colleagues in the South African city of East London in the 1950s.’ (p.viii), known as the ‘Xhosa in Town’ project. Three monographs were published: Reader, D. 1960. *The Black Man’s Portion*; Mayer, P. (with contributions from Iona Mayer). 1971 (1961). *Townsmen or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanisation in a South African City*; and Pauw, B.A. 1973 (1963). *The Second Generation: A Study of the Family among Urbanised Bantu in East London*. This project concentrated on what was known as the East Bank location which was later demolished and Duncan village was built in its place. Bank used the ‘Xhosa in Town’ project as the baseline and followed up on

key themes and topics discussed by the project but, at the same time also taking cognisance of new areas of social and cultural change through the apartheid and into the post-apartheid era. Thus, the continuities and change in social identities, power and everyday life, before and after apartheid, are also explored. The approach is an historical anthropology of urbanism rather than the older approach of the anthropology of urbanisation. A central theme addressed by especially the book by the Mayers was the so-called Red (‘traditionalist’) – School (‘modernist’) divide found in the city but also in the hinterland. Bank, however, avoided that dichotomy and focused on the continuous changes taking place in the city but, at the same time, approaching the townships (term used in South Africa for suburbs occupied predominantly by Africans) as entities with their own creativity, social formation and struggles. Through life histories and newspapers a fairly different picture of the life in the area during the 1940s and 1950s emerged as compared to the findings of the Mayers and Bank ascribes this to the Mayers being too focused on domestic life and ignoring what happens on the streets and other public spaces. However, Bank does

not discard the role of Redness as a cultural style of adapting to city life during that time.

Bank went further and tried to ascertain whether 'migrant cultures' as described by the Mayers have changed due to the relocation to Duncan Village. The migrants were housed in single sex hostels and as a result the processes of social separation and encapsulation deepened among hostel migrants after the 1960s. Due to the political circumstances older migrants became isolated from the rural youth (many of whom joined the Comrades) as well as the countryside. However, identity wise they regarded themselves as 'rural men in the city' with individualised ideas of responsibility not linked to obligations in the rural areas. Thus, migrant consciousness should be seen as free-floating and imaginative narrative contrasts between urban and rural life worlds. Bank rightfully states that the relationship between rural and urban identities is far more complex than a mere 'linear rise and fall' as the migrants' rural identities did not disappear when they were relocated or during the political upheavals of the 1980s. In fact, they were remade and reconstituted.. The apartheid government's development of Duncan Village is described as 'racial modernism' also referred to as 'middling modernism'

(domestic social engineering). The socio-spatial model used was to control the Africans and to contain unrest. Houses were preferably given to males and thereby the government tried to develop a notion of the nuclear family as the preferred family unit but at the same time reconstituted patriarchy. The numerous matrifocal families found in the area were thus disbanded with an accompanying lowering of the status of women as women up to that point played a key role in the political life of the area. Women reacted in their roles of housewives through their own decorative styles in their houses. During the political turmoil of the 1980s the African councillors were chased out of the area and the so-called 'Comrades' took over control. They allowed people to move into the area and to settle as squatters. The many fires in the squatter area lead to women even being accused of causing the fires by means of witchcraft – a further indication of their lowered status. However, in the post-apartheid era, women regained their independence of males through the control of housing space and participation in the informal economy but many of them, due to welfare grants and foster care money, have now become 'married to the state'.

The Comrades originated as a political formation against the apartheid

government but Bank refers to the rise of the Comrades as more a cultural style than a political formation. 'Living together' as a domestic form in the squatter areas became the characteristic of what was regarded as generational freedom and social independence for young males. Through this the demand for patriarchal power and control became part of the politics of liberation.

Bank concludes that the situation Duncan Village can best be described as 'fractured urbanism' where the infrastructure of the apartheid era still operates and through new state investment is periodically extended and upgraded. However, in spite of that, the area is still hopelessly over-extended in places due to the social life and economic need being more than what is provided. So much so that Duncan Village can be regarded as a 'hyper-ghetto' with poverty crime and violence escalating.

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Jerome Krase (2012) *Seeing Cities Change: Local Culture and Class*.
Farnham: Ashgate,

Seeing Cities Change analyzes social change in various neighborhoods in cities in the U.S. and Europe. It focuses specifically on transitions of ethnicity and social class

among residents. The uniqueness of this book is that it uses a visual approach; thus, there is an emphasis on 'seeing'. Vernacular landscapes are investigated in this way as empirical evidence of urban change brought about by ordinary people. Throughout the book are photographs taken by Krase personally, which serve as both documents and documentation of his findings. He states that he attempts to capture that which an ordinary person would see as one passes through. These photographs are interpreted in the same way as a social scientist would examine data from interviews, observations and demographic data. Krase also combines scholarly and media sources in each chapter's discussion.

In the Introduction, Krase presents various scholarly explanations of the visual approach in social science and cultural studies, as well as his own. For Krase, 'We can photograph, film, or video ethnic enclaves to both document and illustrate how their new occupants change particular spaces' (p. 10). A visual approach is appropriate and beneficial to urbanists attempting to study rapidly changing cities. It assists in noticing the power of ordinary people in creating change in the course of their everyday lives. This, Krase notes, involves observing cultural (vernacular)

landscapes, cultural productions, practices, and influences that are always evolving as a result of urbanization, immigration, and globalization. The commodification of these landscapes creates urban spectacles which are a subject of Krase's later chapters. He also integrates 'new and old' urban theory, but recasts it within the context of a visual approach to urban studies. 'Visual sociology and attention to vernacular landscapes in the inner city allow us to see conflict, competition, and dominance at a level not usually noticed and that can easily be related to the theories and descriptions of Lefebvre and Bourdieu' (p. 22). Furthermore, a visual approach allows for triangulation with census data, as well as other quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The rest of the book focuses on realizing local culture and class in neighborhoods in cities in the U.S. and Europe. Throughout the book Krase weaves together relevant social theory with the particular place under discussion. Chapter 1 addresses 'Seeing Diversity in New York City'. Although New York has never been an urban model for scholars, it represents the world in the U.S.. Krase devotes a chapter to this diversity. He pays special attention to Brooklyn with photographs and analyses of the multi-layers of ethnic groups that have

lived there leaving their story through artifacts. The spaces and places, sometimes contested, are inhabited by an ongoing series of ethnic groups. Krase states, 'Visual and semiotic approaches can help in building bridges between various theoretical and applied disciplines that focus on the form and function of Brooklyn whose neighborhoods have been a virtual Roman fountain of ethnic transitions' (p. 55).

Chapter 2 deals with 'Seeing Little Italy Change'. Again, the focus is on New York which is used to illustrate the role of Little Italies in conveying the history of immigration and ethnicity. The chapter includes photographs of streetscapes and establishments of New York's many Little Italies. New York Italians, as an ethnic group created spaces with many social networks, and remained in places longer than other ethnic groups. In Manhattan, Little Italy was threatened by an increase of Asians in neighboring Chinatown and gentrification in SoHo. Manhattan's Little Italy continues as an ethnic theme park. Krase contends, 'Little Italies continue to be important places to study not only because they are venues for assimilation and acculturation, but also because they help us to understand America's ethnic past, present, and indeed, its future' (p. 83).

The reader is then brought to 'Chinatown: A Visual Approach to Ethnic Spectacles' the focus of Chapter 3. Krase considers the ethnic spectacle 'another genre of ethnic theme park' (p. 28). Chinatowns 'appear' to be created for the tourist. This is visualized through the architecture as well as the use of colors, symbols and letters that are associated with Chinese culture. Krase's photographs include images from Australia, Canada, and the U.S. Chinatowns represent a leisure activity for the purpose of consumption.

'Visualizing American Cities' is the central point of Chapter 4. Here Krase analyzes the impact of ordinary people on places. For Krase, post 1965 immigration has had a tremendous effect on ethnic and class diversity in U.S. cities. He asserts, 'From a distance, it might appear that the new elements thrown into the assimilation cauldron of the American "melting pot" are blending together, but up close at the street level they appear more as pieces of a complex and rapidly changing multicultural mosaic' (p. 116). This is an outcome of globalization, the movement of people around the world. By their very presence, newer ethnic groups embark on creating communities and changing the social and physical landscape of neighborhoods in

cities. At the same time, they co-exist and compete with relatively more established ethnic groups. Krase's photographs point to these dynamics.

The visual exploration of ethnicity continues in Chapter 5 in which Krase compares Little Polands and Little Italies in Brooklyn. He notes some differences in cultural values which explain that which is seen as part of the vernacular landscape. He specifies, 'They prefer the looks of certain things, like certain colors, visual patterns, or designs more than others. These artifacts of ethnicity are most easily seen when they successfully clash with the cultural values of the dominant society' (p.154).

Krase then explores 'Seeing Ethnic Succession in Big Italy' in Chapter 6. Here he shows the increasing immigration and attendant multiculturalism of Rome. Most of his photographs are taken in the neighborhood of Esquilino.

In Chapter 7, Krase shifts to a discussion of social class by investigating 'Gentrification in Poland and Polonia'. Here he compares the gentrification process in Greenpoint, Brooklyn and Krakow, Poland. Krase is interested in gentrification as a 'visible vernacular style or perhaps as an aesthetic taste' (p. 188). His analysis is informed by Bourdieu's notion of tastes of

necessity and luxury. Krase asserts that the 'look' of gentrification is similar globally, which further suggests that the underlying forces of gentrification are the same.

The book then investigates 'Seeing Community in a Multicultural Society' in Chapter 8. This chapter brings together the concepts of community and multiculturalism. For Krase, 'community is presented, re-presented and represented' (p. 213). His photographs accomplish just that. In addition, according to Krase, most social processes are expressed in vernacular landscapes. Scholars need to take notice. Visual artifacts also offer teaching and learning moments in which various communities can learn about each other thereby supporting multiculturalism.

Seeing Cities Change ends with an extremely significant point for urban scholars. As we embark on our research studies, it is commonplace to look to census data and other demographics to learn about a space and place. Krase argues that these data are either out of date, missing populations and/or crucial social characteristics of residents. Krase brilliantly demonstrates throughout the book that 'seeing is the only way of knowing' (p. 249). It is clear from this book that the life's work of a scholar,

through its many versions and revisions spanning some forty years, culminates here. *Seeing Cities Change* is a major contribution to urban and visual studies. It is a must read for urban social scientists or anyone interested in cities and a visual approach to studying them.

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Italo Pardo and Giuliana B. Prato eds.,
(2012) *Anthropology in the City. Methodology and Theory*. Farnham: Ashgate.

It is as an attempt to answer some of the key questions arising in anthropology at the beginning of the twenty-first century that Italo Pardo and Giuliana Prato have released this collection of essays called *Anthropology in the city. Methodology and theory*. Here, they have enlisted senior as well as junior anthropologists in a bid to address a few of the most explosive and emotive issues facing the discipline today. Familiar names such as the editors, Pardo and Prato, established anthropologists trained in the British tradition, together with Jonathan Parry, Christian Giordano, Linda Seligman, Ilka Thiessen, Fernando Monge, Marcello Mollica, Henrike Donner, and Elizabeth Lund Engebretsen, tackle subjects including

political management, death and dying, élites, gender and femininity, street vendors, and fieldwork methods. At the outset, I must note *Anthropology in the city* is an apt name for this book. For as the editors argue in the Introduction, the concept urban anthropology should be simply understood – and the contributors of this edited collection share this view – as anthropology in the city. And they mean classical empirical observation and long-term participant observation in urban settings. At the same time, there is no ‘fetishism’ of the fieldwork here. The editors lament the fact that there have been few urban ethnographies from southern Europe, and that up to the 1980s there was almost none in eastern Europe save the only cited early work by Steven Sampson on Romania’ (*Planners and the peasants*, 1982). While it is true that most anthropologist studying Europe preferred village studies, they still do, the one-sided orientation has changed dramatically since the 1990s. A few anthropological ‘classics’ will prove: A. Lemon studied the Roma in Moscow (*Between two fires*, 2000), E. Ten Dyke wrote a marvellous monograph on families in Dresden (*Dresden, paradoxes of memory in history*, 2001), E. Dunn worked on Polish factory town (*Privatizing Poland*, 2004), B. Müller published on privatization

in East Berlin (*Disenchantment with market economics*, 2007), and A. Lipphardt studied Jewish life in Vilnius (*Vilna*, 2010). Even my own ethnographic fieldwork focused on young workers in an industrial suburb of Budapest (*Youth and the state*, 2002). I do see the point stressed by Pardo and Prato, however: there is still not enough attention being paid by anthropologists to the cultural diversities *within* the European urban landscape. This is one more reason why I praise them for attempting to balance the picture with the regional and gender difference manifested by the authors and their chapters in *Anthropology in the city*.

The stage is set to *Anthropology in the city* by two chapters in the book written by two senior colleagues. The first of these is from Jonathan Parry, revisiting the themes of his landmark books *Caste and Kinship in Kangra* (Routledge, 1979), and *Death in Banaras* (Cambridge, 1994). Here Parry focuses on different aspects of conducting fieldwork in three different communities in India since the 1960s. The second of these chapters features Christian Giordano’s discussion of political unity and cultural diversity in a Malaysian city in the past ten years. Giordano suggests that there is something to be learned from the ‘rainbow nationhood’, making of the Malaysian ‘unity

in separation' which may appear paradoxical to some in Europe. Whether discussing areas of the élite participation in Naples (Pardo), contrasting fieldwork experiences in India (Parry), rapturous experience in a southern Italian town as Albanian migrants arrived (Prato), the global processes influencing the Macedonian capital Skopje as well as the anthropologist's state of mind (Thiessen), street vendors in Cusco (Seligmann), funerals and dying in Northern Ireland (Mollica), gender and fieldwork in India (Donner), same-sex experiences in Beijing (Engebretsen), or just issues concerning fieldwork in multi-sited port cities (Monge), the authors of this book seek to suggest complex levels of participation in the anthropology of and in the city which go well beyond the accepted topical norms. I found the book intriguing for there are much more gems here than the titles suggest. In theory, it is a highly interesting text and a timely contribution to the field of urban studies in general and anthropology in the city in particular. The collection is well-edited and structured, it is easy to read and with so many cultural differences as well as fieldwork experiences described it will appeal to graduate students in courses on urban history, politics, globalism and anthropology of urban life. The concluding

paragraph to each chapter dutifully explains that the multiplicity of experiences or identities feature clearly in the authors' fields of research. While to some this may exude little sense of creativity, I would argue that in today's image-driven world such a careful editorial presence allows for a much more involved reading and understanding. Individual chapters, in particular, will be of great use in discussions surrounding issues such as urban politics, role of élites, gender and sexuality and other topics which they deal with. Readers may find some criticism levelled at anthropologists who have tended to see research in urban settings or 'at home' not as proper anthropology per se, a point I have stressed elsewhere in a different context as well (*Postsocialist Europe*, 2009). Clearly, this volume brings new horizons to the discipline and hopefully more studies will emerge in the Ashgate series on urban anthropology edited by Pardo and Prato.

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Davide Torsello (2012) *The New Environmentalism? Civil Society and Corruption in the Enlarged EU*
Farnham: Ashgate.

In this book Davide Torsello examines environmentalist social movements as they

respond to two deeply problematic economic sectors – the construction of large-scale development projects and the disposal of industrial waste. Not only do both of these sectors have potentially threatening environmental impacts; both are also highly susceptible to corruption. A strength of the book is that it brings together in a single framework environmentalist activism and corruption, analyzing their entanglements.

The context is the enlarged European Union that, after the ‘fall’ of Communism, launched an accession process designed to integrate former Soviet bloc countries into what had originated as a Western institution. EU planners, centered in Brussels, promoted and partially funded the infrastructure on which integration depended; major new arteries of transport and communication would link East to West. Concurrently, environmentalist movements arose to limit the anticipated damage and challenge the power arrangements that underlay the projects. An aerial photograph on the cover of the book hints at the drama of this confrontation. It depicts the intersection of two super-highways whose rolled-out clover-leaf connectors occupy a vast stretch of roughly cleared, glaringly barren land.

European Union enlargement also reconfigured industrial waste disposal.

Former Soviet bloc countries in the East offered promising dump sites: defunct and abandoned factories, barracks, and military bases in out-of-the-way locations. Such facilities, together with Eastern governments’ eagerness to encourage new businesses and regulate them lightly, resulted in costs of waste disposal up to ten times less in the East than in the West. Of course industries in Germany, Austria, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands contracted with firms that took their effluents eastward, the more so in the wake of the EU’s transformative legislation – the 1993 ratification of the Maastricht Treaty establishing a single market and currency, and the extension, after 2004, of the Schengen Agreement eliminating internal border controls to ten, and then to more, new members. Meanwhile, and in tension with this stimulation to cross-border flows, the Union imposed on each admitted state its stringent and costly protocols regarding waste and recycling, striving for an eventual standardized outcome notwithstanding occasional country-level amendments. As Torsello shows with admirable clarity, the contradiction drove waste produced in the West into illegal channels, and further east. Once trucked to Hungary, for example, it might simply be stored for transshipment to

Ukraine or Bulgaria. Anti-dumping activism has correspondingly assumed a wider geographical range, not to mention confronting obstacles that go beyond bribe-taking local and regional officials to include organized crime.

Torsello introduces these complexities in three thematic chapters that, following an introduction, take up, respectively, environmentalism, civil society, and corruption. Each constitutes a useful review of relevant literatures. Anthropology figures importantly in the reviews, but it does not stand alone; on the contrary, its contributions are assessed in relation to those of economics, sociology, political science, and geography – an interdisciplinary tour-de-force. Ethnographically grounded case studies make up the rest of the book, with four chapters devoted to road and railroad transportation projects in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Italy and Hungary, and one to the export of illegal waste from Western to Central Eastern Europe. There is also a conclusion.

In the literature on environmentalism, Torsello finds, particularly among anthropologists, an emphasis on grassroots movements that are set in motion by the felt need to protect a

natural resource. Perhaps activists hope to ‘conserve’ the resource for on-going, if restricted, use by humans; perhaps they hope to ‘preserve’ it from human intervention altogether. Either way, the movements come across as parochial, disconnected from wider structures of power and trans-local environmentalist organizations. This approach, Torsello, argues, is limiting – too likely to devolve into a simplified local versus global dichotomy. Drawing on his case studies, he shifts our attention to an ‘in-between’ arena in which localized activists deal with policy planners, markets, investors, NGOs and fund raisers at multiple levels of power. Regional and state authorities are part of this picture; so too are global umbrella organizations like Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Fund, and Friends of the Earth. As it turns out, some environmentalist responses to threats originate in the distant headquarters of a well-funded NGO whose specialized staff reaches ‘down’ to engage an affected, if apathetic or reticent, local population. Others, conversely, reveal the leaders of spontaneous grassroots initiatives reaching ‘up’ to gain support and money from an umbrella NGO. Ultimately, it may not be easy to sort out the difference.

In making the case that we cannot understand environmental activism without

analyzing the politics of the ‘in-between,’ Torsello brings to light the complex layers of decision making that preceded each of the large-scale projects discussed. This means enumerating the constraints on EU policy makers imposed by the Union’s doctrine of ‘subsidiarity,’ and presenting the multiple national, regional and local players who shape how EU policy gets implemented. It also means documenting interactions between locally based activists and large-scale environmentalist organizations. Interviews with a broad range of officials, as well as with movement participants, and observations of meetings and encounters, enhance Torsello’s account. To his credit, he presents the mind-boggling intricacies of in-between politics through a clear and accessible narrative, leaving us in a position to better appreciate what environmentalists are actually up against as they attempt to limit the impact of major new construction behemoths and illegal dumping.

One query: why the question mark after ‘new environmentalism’ in the title of his book? As Torsello shows, social scientists from a range of disciplines use the word ‘new’ to refer to all manner of social movements that, with the end of the Cold War, became more global. Inter-connections among actors and convergence in the

problems being addressed constitute evidence. But the word ‘new’ also references improved ways of analyzing movements. Torsello’s advance, with its emphasis on in-between political processes, could fruitfully be applied retrospectively to social movements predating the 1980s. They too struggled to be heard in complicated and messy political arenas, raising that proverbial doubt: how ‘new’ is new.

Davide Torsello is fully conversant with the many debates that have surrounded the concept ‘civil society.’ From Aristotle to Gramsci to Foucault, its definitions have been vague and contradictory. And yet, the concept seems necessary, not least because it is so widely used by a great variety of activists seeking to enlarge the spaces of civic engagement outside of state control. The recent accession of Eastern European countries to the European Union has only intensified the arguments. Having studied social movements that must address a supra-state institution, the EU, as well as engage with globally organized NGOs, Torsello rightfully challenges the usual gloss: civil society as socio-cultural formations that arise between the state and localized families, neighborhoods, communities. In addition, he offers a critical overview of the literatures contrasting civil society in ‘east’

and ‘west.’ With the ever more globalized reach and connections of ‘new’ social movements, environmentalism among them, the presumed divergence of ‘civic traditions’ is being erased.

The theme of corruption is particularly thorny, thanks to the writings of anthropologists who, not uncommonly, offer sympathetic accounts of *guanxi*, *clientelismo*, informal economies, gift-giving and reciprocity. Demonstrating that such practices ‘grease the wheels’ of everyday life for millions around the world, these scholars challenge the *discourse* of corruption that ‘outside,’ non-local power-holders iterate, in part to marginalize or denigrate, or portray as pre-modern, those involved. Ironically, anthropologists point out, extra-local power-holders may themselves be mired in corrupt practices – and on a vastly greater scale. In other words, what we call corruption is partly in the eye of the beholder, and more than that, can take quite different forms. (In a benign variant, corruption can be redistributive – a way for the have-nots to obtain something from the haves. A more malign variant facilitates accumulation while causing the powerless great harm.) For reasons that Torsello analyzes, mammoth construction projects are particularly marked by harm-inducing practices – in contract

bidding, in evading environmental impact reviews, in manipulating insider information regarding the eventual inflation or deflation of land values, and so on.

That the European Union is a powerful source of policy and funding for just such mammoth projects is a provocation to both increased corruption and increased environmentalist activism. By studying these provocations in tandem, Torsello has arrived at an original discovery. Based on interviews and participant observation, he proposes that environmentalist activists have much to gain from raising corruption as an issue. Discursive strategies that expose corrupt practices are often more compelling than appeals to environmental degradation when it comes to mobilizing a wide public, politicizing citizens’ demands for ‘sustainable’ development, and forcing politicians, otherwise pressured by the hegemony of neo-liberal capitalism, to take notice. Why this is, and what it means, are among the fascinating questions this book engages; its author is correct to position himself as introducing a ‘new perspective’ on environmentalism.

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COMPLETED DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

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Awarded: November 2009

Workers, Netas and Goondas: The Casualisation of Labour in an Indian Company Town

This study is based upon 15 months of ethnographic research conducted during 2006-2007 in the Indian industrial city of Jamshedpur. I analyse how the global shift towards casual labour is locally enabled through practices of state and trade union corruption.

The past decade has seen the majority of Jamshedpur's industrial workforce move from formal, permanent employment into various grades of lower paid, insecure casual labour. The move towards casual labour is a development replicated across international industry. However, the localised forms of this development require an understanding of the economy of violence and favour which characterises the region's labour politics. My analysis is therefore based upon ethnographic data collected from industrial workers on the shop floor of an automobile plant, trade union leaders and criminals.

I argue that the economies of crime, corruption and business do not operate in their own discrete spheres of influence, but rather rely upon one another for the symbiotic exchange of favour and capital. My research focuses upon the interaction between industrial and criminal economies in the casualisation of a company town labour force.

*Andrew Sanchez earned his doctorate in anthropology from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2009, where he subsequently lectured from 2009 to 2012. His writings on class, labour and corruption have been published in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* and *Critique of Anthropology*, and have featured in edited volumes and reports. Andrew's first monograph *Criminal Capital: Making Class through Corruption in an Indian Company Town* is in preparation for publication with Routledge. The monograph analyses the role played by corruption and organised crime in the erosion of industrial employment security. Dr Sanchez is currently a research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, where he is conducting a three-year study of the Indian metal trade as part of a new research group on *Industry and Inequality in Eurasia*. His interests in this project are the relationship between corporations and informal business practices, and the movement of commodities between different regimes of value.*

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Defended: September 2011

Selling the (post) industrial city. Capitalism, power and image policies in Roubaix and Sheffield (1945-2010)

Based on a careful study of the evolution of urban capitalism and power in two (post) industrial cities, Roubaix (France) and Sheffield (UK), this dissertation aims at refining the regulationist analytical framework commonly used by urban studies (based on two periods: Fordism and post-Fordism) by introducing a periodization in five steps. The first part of the dissertation analyses the emergence of the image policies in both cities at the turn of the 1960s as reflecting a process of ‘fordisation on urban policies’. This section proposes a division of the Fordist era into two ideal-typical periods: early, then late urban Fordism. Indeed, even during the Fordist era, the industrial base of both cities evolves, some new social interests emerge and the urban governments gradually move away from the working class. The second part is devoted to the few years of the ‘urban sacrifice’, during which industrialization accelerates. It highlights the role of urban social movements in the divergent evolution of the image policies in both cities, as Roubaix briefly considers the conversion of its economy towards advanced services while Sheffield becomes the symbol of the struggle of the North with the economic restructuring promoted by the national government. Finally, the third section on the ‘entrepreneurialisation of urban policies’ offers to subdivide the post-Fordist era into two sub-periods: early, then late urban entrepreneurialism. The evolution of the image policies, their production and their targets (from firms with high labor requirements to real estate development, the ‘creative class’ and tourists) results from the continuous decline of the industry in the economic base of both cities, from the fragmentation of the working class and from the closer collaboration of the urban governments with the private interests since the early 1980s.

In 2012, this dissertation was awarded the Association pour la promotion de l'enseignement et de la recherche en aménagement et urbanisme, the Centre d'études sur les réseaux, les transports, l'urbanisme et les constructions publiques, the Fédération nationale des agences d'urbanisme and the Plan urbanisme, construction et architecture the first prize for the best dissertation in the field of urban studies.

CONFERENCE REPORT

Issues of Legitimacy:

Entrepreneurial Culture, Corporate Responsibility and Urban Development

10-14 September 2012, Mostra d'Oltremare, Naples Italy

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Last September scholars from across the world and at various stages of their academic careers met in Naples to participate in this International Interdisciplinary Conference. The Conference was convened on the initiative of the IUAES (International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences) Commissions on *Urban Anthropology* and on *Enterprise Anthropology*. Italo Pardo was Scientific Coordinator. The media Group *Il Denaro*, the *University of Naples Federico II* and the *University of Naples 2* were local organizers. The organization of this event enjoyed the collaboration of the *China Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences* and the active involvement of the *Indian Anthropological Association*, the *Brazilian Anthropological Association*, the *International Association of Southeast European Anthropology (InASEA)*, the *Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS, Mexico)*, the *Colegio de Etnólogos y Antropólogos Sociales (CEAS, Mexico)* and the IUAES Commissions on *Anthropology of Women* and on *Human Rights*.

A generous grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation secured the participation of many scholars who would not have otherwise been able to attend. The Royal Anthropological Institute, the University of Kent and CIESAS were the other academic sponsors. Substantial funding from the Naples Chamber of Commerce, the Regione Campania and Il Denaro Group made it possible to hold the conference at the Mostra d'Oltremare, thus allowing participants to benefit from the Mostra's excellent facilities. The Adler Group and the Avvocato Gaeta Business Lawyers also contributed to the success of the meetings.



Naples, a major European city, was a particularly fitting venue for this conference. As visually synthesized by the clip by Lello Esposito that prefaced the opening session, and indeed by his art, this city encapsulates many of the complex economic difficulties and potentialities which, in various degrees, mark today's world-wide scenario, and a key part of which this Conference aimed to address. The proceedings were structured around several sub-themes. They were: Access to Credit, in particular the problems for Small and Medium Enterprises; the Relation between Entrepreneurialism and the Law,

Legitimacy and Ethics; Cross Cultural and Ethnic Business in Mixed Cities; Corporate Social Responsibility; Urban Development; Entrepreneurialism, Neo-Liberalism and Socio-Economic Policy; International Entrepreneurship and Women Entrepreneurs.

The Conference opened on the morning of September 10th with a plenary session. The customary welcoming addresses of the convenors and organizers were followed by short papers that spelled out the aims of the Conference and their significance for the scientific community, as well as the broader society. Anthropologists promoted this meeting because the anthropological study of economic systems empirically addresses the relationship between economic institutions and the broader society — that is political, legal and cultural institutions, as well as ordinary people. Committed to ethnographic field research, anthropologists offer in-depth understandings of economic institutions and individual and collective economic behaviours. The meeting provided a forum for anthropologists to share their findings with scholars from other disciplines — particularly, sociology, economics, law and political science. Included in the assembly were distinguished practitioners in the fields of finance, business, legislation and policy-making. During the deliberations, several plans for publication of revised and expanded versions of the papers were developed.

Alongside the discussions and exchanges that marked the large number of well-focused sessions, were the debates stimulated by Christian Giordano's and Martha Schteingart's key-note addresses. The lunch-time breaks were enlivened by book launches and ethnographic films and the program included several round-table discussions involving academics and non-academics. These discussions stimulated reflection on urban policies and practices in different countries. In this vein, on 14th September the conference concluded with a plenary conversation among scholars, business people and jurists who, in the light of what had been discussed throughout the proceedings, debated the social relevance of empirical research. The interested reader will find detailed information on the programme, participants and papers at www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/confna2012

The conference also enjoyed extensive media coverage. Reports in English and Italian appeared daily in important newspapers, and several interviews and comments were published in newspapers and magazines. There were several television programmes dedicated to the meetings, and all the plenary sessions were broadcast live on the web. Some of these broadcasts continue to be available at www.denaro.it

On a less formal note, a great deal of professional networking, academic exchange and socialization took place 'off-duty', throughout the various breaks, during the conference dinner and, perhaps most enchantingly, in the pleasant warmth of those Neapolitan evenings. While the conference as a whole was untouched by the normal scourge of 'academic tourism', many participants enjoyed ample local hospitality and took advantage of much of what the city of Naples has to offer historically and culturally.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Urban Communities in China

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This project, funded by the European Commission, 7th Framework, Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities, is one of four strands of research in a larger programme of research on the prospects for sustainable urbanisation in China. The overall project is organised by a consortium, Urbachina (with an informative website), coordinated in Paris and Rome. Two of the four strands are in the charge of the LSE. The other one at LSE is on land, law and policy, coordinated and led by Professor Athar Hussain, Asia Research Centre. This one is the only ethnographic strand.

Urban government in China is officially a task of social management and community formation. This task at the lowest, hands-on level is given to Residents' Committees that are understaffed and underpaid. Welfare beneficiaries rely on these staff, but others have little to do with what are officially 'their' committees. They form their own kinds of informal association. We ask how well are public spaces, utilities, and the fabric of the properties rented or owned (by leasehold) maintained, and how (or whether) residents can effectively bring deficiencies to their committees or to property management companies for remedy. We ask whether this limited representation or indifference to being represented or to government can be sustained.

Similarly, planning and rebuilding of cities creates spaces for residents' recreation but the question is how residents make use of these spaces. We use the idea of place-making, developed by Stephan Feuchtwang in a previous publication (2004 *Making Place: State projects, globalisation, and local responses in China*. London: UCL Press) to observe gatherings and any focal locations or buildings.

A larger question concerns the growing iniquity of provision of housing and other public goods and whether endemic deficiencies and complaints, including complaints about other residents, can be sustained. To ask and answer this question we are adapting the idea of 'housing classes' first used in a study of racial discrimination in housing in Sparkbrook, Birmingham, UK in the 1960s. In urban China discrimination is not racialised. It is instead a ranking of life-styles using the vocabulary of 'civilisation' and 'quality'.

Field research started in April 2012 and is being conducted in four cities, two mega-cities (Shanghai and Chongqing) a large-sized city (Kunming) and a medium-sized city (Huangshan) by a team of six researchers, three Chinese and three European, led and coordinated by Stephan Feuchtwang. Each researcher conducts two months' fieldwork, using a schedule of topics to be covered, in two fieldsites, each territory in the jurisdiction of a residents' committee, one central and one peripheral, in two cities. The results will be extensive field reports from a range of residents' committees, more numerous in the largest two cities. They will be completed in 2013. The end-report, combining all these field reports will be composed by Stephan Feuchtwang in 2014. There will be interim publications. The project ends in March 2015.

OBITUARY

Ghaus Ansari, 1929-2012

It is with a sense of deep and sad loss that last July I received the news that Professor Ghaus Ansari had passed away.

Professor Ansari was particularly known to the academic community as the founding chairman of the IUAES Commission on Urban Anthropology (CUA), which he led between 1982 and 2006. The numerous messages of heartfelt condolences that we received testify to his legacy, as a scholar and as a person. Many CUA members remember him as a keen scholar, a gentleman and an inspiration, especially to younger researchers who, having attended the Commission's meetings, decided to embrace urban studies.

With the Commission on Urban Anthropology Ghaus Ansari founded one of the most active commissions of the IUAES. The growth and thriving of the Commission are clear indication of his foresight and intellectual acumen. It was Ghaus who, on his return from the 1978 ICAES Congress in New Delhi, wrote to Cyril Belshaw (then President of the IUAES), mentioning the lack of interest of the anthropological community in the new and dynamic field of urban anthropology and suggesting the establishment of a specific Commission under the aegis of the IUAES. Belshaw enthusiastically supported the idea and invited him to coordinate the preparatory work for the organization of this new Commission. The CUA was founded in 1982 in Vienna following the first International Seminar on Urban Anthropology. The seminar was attended by 15 participants, representing 10 countries: Austria, Canada, Egypt, India, Japan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the USA and Venezuela. The proceedings were published in 1983 in a volume titled *Town Talk. The Dynamics of Urban Anthropology*, which Ansari co-edited with Peter Nas. Today, the CUA membership spans 51 countries world-wide.

I first met Ghaus in 1996, when I participated in an international seminar co-organized by the CUA and the Department of Anthropology at University College London. Thus, I began to follow the activity of the Commission. When, in 2003, I was invited to serve as co-chair of the CUA, I accepted what I knew would be a demanding task because of Ghaus's active leadership and unrelenting commitment to move the Commission forward, to expand, as he later wrote in the Foreword to the Commission's Handbook that was published on occasion of the CUA Silver

Jubilee in 2007, 'its academic involvement and commitment to exploring news strands of urban anthropological research worldwide'. Although over the past 10 years, for health reasons, Ghaus was unable to attend the Commission's conferences, he has offered throughout invaluable guidance and support in the fulfilment of my new role. Our collaboration has been marked by shared views not only on the CUA many activities but also on such strategic issues as the future of the Commission, its organization and the need to maintain a high academic standard. Both in our conversations and in our correspondence Ghaus reiterated his confidence that the Commission was moving in the right direction, acquiring renewed vitality both academically and organizationally, and achieving success at every conference.

Ghaus' active interest in the activity of the Commission continued after his retirement as chair of the CUA in 2006, sharing his experience with the new leadership, that is, Fernando Monge (new chair) and I (continuing co-chair). As, in 2010, I took over as chair, we remained in constant communication. Ghaus' enthusiasm and encouragement remained high until the very last moment.

Ghaus's professional approach and personal relationships were in a sense influenced by his childhood experience of life and of the evolving political events in India. As a young boy growing up in Lucknow, he became interested in the intricacies of life and politics at a very young age. His intellectual curiosity and social commitment led him to become involved in a radio station to which he contributed with stories, poems and plays for children. When his short story 'Sunflower' was eventually accepted for publication, he felt encouraged to write for several children's magazines and became a well-known Urdu writer for children. At that time (about 1943-44), Ghaus also regularly visited the *Lucknow Coffee House*, the meeting place of the city's intellectuals. He was an ardent follower of the Congress Party and as a young man joined their rallies and marches. The events of that time marked the early phase of his political involvement. Ghaus Ansari describes these experiences in his autobiography, titled '*Umr-i rafta*', written in Urdu and published in 2002.

After attending Lucknow University in 1952, Ghaus was admitted to study anthropology as an undergraduate at London University. Having completed his training, he held several teaching and research positions in various universities across the world. During his teaching career, Ghaus introduced courses in urban anthropology and stimulated debate and research in this field. His experience of different places such as London, Paris, Bagdad, Kuwait, Spain and

Vienna - where he retired as Professor Emeritus – strengthened his interest in comparative analysis and his multidisciplinary approach to urban studies. Such an approach is reflected in many of his publications, such as, to mention just a few, *Recent trends in cultural anthropology*, published in 1972 and the co-authored book *City and society*, published in 1985.

It would be fitting, I believe, to pay tribute to such an inspiring founder of the Commission and honour him best by building on the work he has done to make the CUA such a thriving community of scholars.

Giuliana B. Prato
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Forthcoming Conferences

17th IUAES World Congress, *Evolving Humanities, Emerging Worlds*, Manchester, UK, 5-10 August 2013

Nine Panels are convened under the auspices of the Commission on Urban Anthropology:

LD05 - Urbanization and reproductive health - **Convenor: Pramathes Dasmahapatra and Amlan Ray**

LD10 - Menopausal woman and assisted reproduction: rights to access of ART in an ethical context - **Convenor: Benrithung Murry and Amlan Ray**

MMM05 - Commodifying urban poverty, social exclusion, and marginalisation: spatial and social consequences - **Convenors: Eveline Dürr and Rivke Jaffe**

PE04 - Enquiring into the urban form through governing practices and social organisation - **Convenors: Marc Morell and Corine Vedrine**

PE05 - Sustainable development and urbanization: socio-economic aspects - **Convenor: Amlan Ray**

PE07 - Modern urban utopias and sustainable cities - **Convenors: Michel Rautenberg and Marie Hocquet**

PE14 - The urban poor and their struggle for survival: search for an alternative in livelihood - **Convenor: Sumita Chaudhuri**

SE02 - Ethnic-religious segregation: the preservation of memory or the preservation of conflict - **Convenors: Marcello Mollica and James Dingley**

WMW03 - Art and anthropology: common grounds - **Convenor: Danila Mayer**

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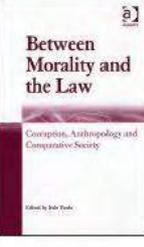
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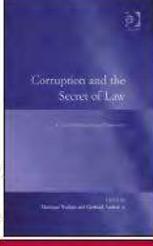




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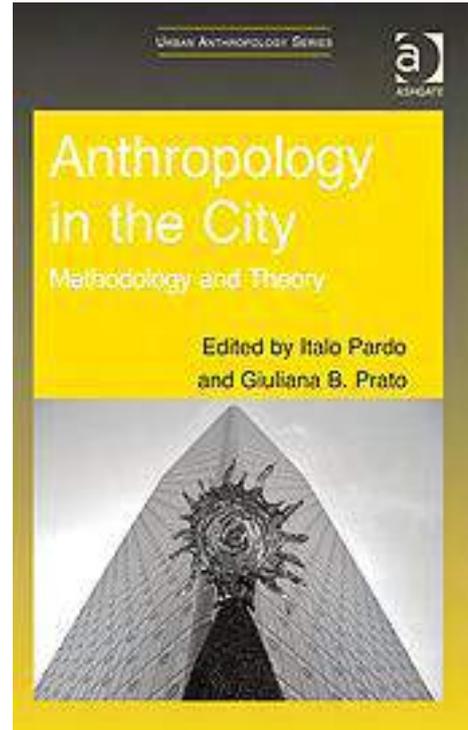
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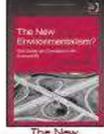
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