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Anglo-Indian Returnees: Reverse Migration to Goa[1]

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The Anglo-Indian community is a culturally hybrid Indian minority of colonial origin, whose members are English-speaking, Christian, urban dwelling and traditionally employed in government services such as the Indian railways. In the almost seventy years since India gained its independence from Britain Anglo-Indians have migrated in large numbers, mainly to English-speaking Commonwealth countries. There has been no notable trend of remittances or of reverse migration, as occurs with many other diasporic communities. Based on ethnographic research in the State of Goa, India, a new migration story is emerging, one of Anglo-Indians returning to India mainly or primarily for economic reasons. Some were struggling financially in their adopted countries for both personal and recent systemic reasons, while others who were quite economically comfortable have capitalised on the global north to south differential and exchanged comfortable for luxurious living. In contrast to other migrations their returns fit more closely with those 'later life' migrants (however they are termed) whose motives are mainly for improved climate and lifestyle. In the case of Anglo-Indians, there is the added appeal of an identity fit, in combination with the ethnic capital to make it achievable.
Keywords: Anglo-Indian, Diaspora, Return Migration, Goa, Capitals

Introduction

This article draws on data from a project which explores the situation for Anglo-Indians, a minority Indian community, in 'small towns' of India. Members of the community live in many parts of India and their situation is impacted by the socio-cultural, economic and political situations of the different towns, cities and states they reside in. The state of Goa, which is featured in this article, has a particular history and contemporary situation which Anglo-Indians respond to in a unique way.

The situation I describe adds to the literature on migration, return migration in particular, with Anglo-Indian experiences and decisions differing from most other return migration situations. A key distinction is that while these migrants are returning to the country of their birth they are not, for various reasons, returning to a familiar home. They are moving to better their prospects in their later years in the same ways that others do; one thinks, for example, of the wealthy migrants described by Prato (2016). Significantly, it is also an example of global North to South migration that is being seen in other parts of the world and that is reversing an earlier trend which saw the direction of migration flowing almost exclusively from the global South to the North. Another feature of this return migration situation is that it draws on a number of 'capitals' (in the Bourdieuian sense) in unique ways: 1) Having lived in the west for many years, they have often accrued economic capital; 2) their experiences abroad are transferred into forms of social capital on their return to India; and 3) another type of capital, which I have called ethnic or birth-country capital, also factors in their experiences.

Similar Migrations

In 1980 Gmelch, in his review article of the works that focused on return migration, noted that there was a lack of comparison across studies and an absence of theories that connect them (Gmelch 1980: 155; see also Leavey and Eliacin 2013, Percival 2013a). Gmelch set himself the task of connecting and then 'typing' the examples, with the result that he proposed three main types of return migrant:

> '1) Returnees who intended temporary migration. The time of their return is determined by the objectives they set out to achieve at the time of emigration
>
> 2) Returnees who intended permanent migration but were forced to return. Their preference was to remain abroad but because of external factors they were required to return.
>
> 3) Returnees who intended permanent migration but chose to return. Failure to adjust and/or homesickness led to their decision to return' (Gmelch 1980: 138).

Gmelch's typologies are still key in understanding the motivations for return migration, although several variations have been added by other scholars (Leavey and Eliacin 2013, Percival 2013a, Cassarino 2004), for example, 'the circular migration theory; the target income theory; the social network theory and the modernisation theory' (Leavey and Eliacin 2013: 204). These theories refine or offer further nuances of his types, but appear to be variations on Gmelch's types rather than adding genuinely new categories. The 'target income' theory, for example, resonates strongly with Gmelch's first type, that of returning after the achievement of objectives. Modernisation theory seems yet a further nuanced version of Gmelch's first, with an emphasis on the returnee bringing home, on their return, progressive ideas and skills which would be of value to the home country.[2] Circular migration seems a variety of Gmelch's first also, with short-term rotations and the sense of not committing to either the host or home country over the course of one's life — working life at least — a refinement. But is this strictly a return migration at all? Reyes (2001) discusses this phenomenon in her work, recognising that many migrations, for example those from Mexico to the US, are not expected, by those moving, to be permanent.[3] The social network theory, attributed to Massey (Massey 1990) 'views immigration as a dynamic process that is based on more than just economic pursuits' (Leavey and Eliacin 2013: 204), so takes into account many dimensions of a person's life and social world determining whether a person stays or returns and after what period. Certainly in the case of Anglo-Indians, while financial gain may have been tied up in the package of motivations for the original move, the more pressing reasons were concerns about personal and family security, combined with a sense of the West being 'home' (Andrews 2007, Caplan 1995), as I explain further in this article.

Even with added nuance, with the occasional exception of Gmelch's last 'type', Anglo-Indians do not fit easily into any of the return migration categories. A reason may be found in the later age they return at, so their migration may be more closely allied with those who are

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[2] For more on this theory, see Kearney (1986), who offers a useful critique.

[3] Policy and politics often view such migrations as permanent move and as Donald Trump's much reported Republican-nominee campaign comments make clear, this is a migration situation feared by many US citizens. It is reminiscent of the paranoia in New Zealand in the late 19th century over the number of Chinese and Indian migrants who were arriving. What was not made clear at the time were the numbers who were also leaving. So while there was a net gain, it was on nothing like the scale that was presented by the press (Roche and Venkateswar 2015).

written about as wealthy migrants, or expatriates, as Prato does when writing of those 'who move abroad in search of a better climate and lower living costs' (Prato 2016: 189), or those who write of migrants who move to Spain from the UK in their retirement years (see Hall 2011, Hardill *et al*. 2005).

This category of later life returnees is discussed by Cerase, who writes that retirement is a common time for return migration (Cassarino 2004) as a return to friends, family and familiar neighbourhoods. This phenomenon is also discussed in Percival's edited work (Percival 2013b) which includes a revised version of Blunt, Bonnerjee and Hysler-Rubin's article (2012) on Anglo-Indian returns to India. The authors draw out the distinction made by their interviewees though; that going to Calcutta 'as a former resident' was different to going to other parts of India, which they did as a tourist. Theirs is a nostalgic trip back to the city of their earlier years, sometimes after many decades, which for some was a one-off visit and for others it was repeated, but they were *visits*, rather than return migrations. As I discuss later there is also some work on global North to South returns, some of which resonates with Anglo-Indian experiences.

Drawing on ethnographic research carried out in Goa, including the collection of life histories, I identify issues that have motivated Anglo-Indian return migrants to resettle in Goa. As will be seen, the experiences have less in common with return migration theories and more with what is written about migration, rather than return migration, in later life. But still theirs is a unique situation as it *is* a return and fortunately for the returnees it is this very factor which makes the move possible, as I will describe. Before I introduce some of the participants of the research and draw out the pertinent factors, I introduce the community more generally.

Anglo-Indians

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

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

Socially and culturally Anglo-Indians are more western than Indian in their practices and world views, for example, they are Christians, mostly have English as their mother tongue and they have European names. Another characteristic of Anglo-Indians is that those in India have a culture of migration, or as Caplan puts it, an 'emigration mentality' (Caplan 1995 and 2001). This is based in large part on more than half of the population leaving India since India gained its independence from Britain in 1947. The culture of migration is so pervasive that Anglo-Indians who stayed in India are frequently referred to by others as having been 'left behind'. Migrants who leave mostly do so because they feel insecure about what the future in India offers to themselves and their children, especially in terms of maintaining their life styles and cultural practices, obtaining suitable employment and finding suitable marriage partners. Many of the early migrants were afraid of negative repercussions after centuries of aligning themselves with the British during Raj times. Mostly, then, their migration was driven by a complex combination of economic, political and cultural

insecurity. After leaving India, they primarily settled in English-speaking Commonwealth countries: England, Canada, Australia and to some extent New Zealand (Andrews 2014, Blunt 2005, Caplan 2001, Otto 2010). They have formed a diasporic community with Anglo-Indians, connecting locally through social get-togethers and globally through social media sites and through events such as world reunions which are held every three years in cities with a large population of Anglo-Indians — either in India or abroad. Other factors relevant to the present discussion are that as a diasporic community there has been almost no return migration, nor has a culture of remittances been developed.[4]

Anglo-Indians have prided themselves on being 'good migrants' with a documented history of smooth entry into the western countries they have migrated to, where in many ways they have been considered 'desirable migrants' (to use Rachel Simon-Kumar's term, Simon-Kumar 2015) in that they speak English and are mostly well educated (for example, many were teachers). Both Alison Blunt and Glenn D'Cruz (Blunt 2005, D'Cruz 2006) remark on Anglo-Indians in Australia being 'good Australians'. As I will discuss later, while they may generally be seen in this positive light some have, nevertheless, faced discrimination in their adopted countries based on their origins.

The Project
I will now describe briefly the research I have recently been involved in, a portion of which forms the basis of this article. The project, titled 'Ethnographic Profiling of Anglo-Indians in Small Towns of India' (also known as 'The Small Towns Project'), is a collaborative effort to understand the situation for Anglo-Indians living in the non-metropolitan towns of India.[5] In each of the selected 'towns' a researcher carried out qualitative research which included informal semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and as much as possible participation in events, in view of accomplishing further ethnographic research.

I carried out the research in Goa over two visits, in January 2014 and again in January 2015, accompanied by my husband, an Anglo-Indian originally from Kolkata. I carried out fifteen interviews (usually in the homes of interviewees, over several hours of a day interspersed with other activities) and enjoyed dinners, lunches and suppers with Anglo-Indians, only some of whom were formal interviewees and attended events such as the Goa

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[4] Empirical material on Anglo-Indians is not as clear cut as for many other groups in India, as records do not distinguish between different groups with European names (such as domiciled Europeans or Anglo-Indians), but historical and contemporary anecdotal evidence points strongly to this conclusion. There have been isolated cased of returns which the political leaders, who have consistently been opposed to Anglo-Indians leaving India, have drawn attention to, but these cases seem to have been exceptional.

[5] I lead the project which includes scholars from around India, only some of whom have previously focussed their research on Anglo-Indians. These regions have received little or no scholarly attention and include railway towns (of Asansol, Kharagpur, Hubli and Ranchi), hill stations (Kalimpong, Dehra Dun and Mussoorie), Kochi, the State of Goa and the Union Territory of Pondicherry. Research on each of the 'towns' has provided different insights for what it means to be Anglo-Indian in each of these places — with involvement in the schools being significant in the northern town of Dehra Dun, their Portuguese descent influential in Kochi and the maintenance of many on-going railway connections in Kharagpur, to highlight just a few findings. Where possible, the researchers were selected because they were already living in the towns under study and had links with the community or, in cases such as my own, because they were able to spend extended periods with participants in order to gain a sense of the pattern of their lives, as well as interview them.

branch of the All India Anglo-Indian Association (AIAIA) 5th anniversary celebration day. The relative youth of this branch of an association that is over 100 years old is due primarily to the history of Goa as a part of the nation.

Goa: A Socio-Political History and Description

Goa was a Portuguese territory from 1510, when Afonso de Albuquerque claimed it as a territory (after Vasco De Gama had originally landed there) acting as the site of Portuguese rule in India (Otto 2016), to 1961 when Portuguese rule was overthrown after a series of negotiations with Portugal had failed and 48 hours after a military campaign was launched. The militarily-supported Portuguese administration was expelled as India annexed the state and Goa became a Union Territory. Even after the Portuguese left, it was not until 1987, after more than two decades of being governed centrally from New Delhi, that Goa became a State of India, with the relative autonomy common to Indian States. At this time, Konkani became the official language of the state. What is noteworthy is that this history meant that Goa was never part of British India.

The State comprises mostly Hindus (at over 66 per cent) but also a large population of Christians (at over 25 per cent) and according to the 2001 census (the most up-to-date official figures available), almost all of these are Roman Catholics (India).The Christians, including Anglo-Indians, generally live in the western coastal regions and the Hindu population is mostly in the interior. Goa is a well-known tourist destination with the lucrative tourism industry beginning, as Dayanand notes, as 'The "flower children" of the 1960's ended up at the pristine and virgin beaches of Goa thus giving the first indications of what was to become of Goa as a tourist destination' (Dayanand 2006: 1). The tourism figures for 2014 were at over four million visitors a year, over half a million being international visitors (2016).

Before I began research in Goa I had been told that I might not find any Anglo-Indians there, that it is not a place where they live, historically or currently. However, I had seen on Goa's AIAIA website that they had an almost five-year-old association branch there. Once in Goa I learned that the membership was growing quickly (which is in stark contrast to what is happening in other association branches, as demonstrated by research in other 'towns' in the project). New association members moved in from other places in India and, according to the branch secretary (personal correspondence, May 2015), 10 per cent of their membership comprised of Anglo-Indians who had returned to India from abroad. It was these returnees that I became most interested in, particularly given that return migration has not been a feature of the community.

From the research with these overseas returned Anglo-Indians some clear themes emerged as to why and how they returned. For many, their economic situation was a significant reason and as such their experiences form part of a wider return migration story, one that is emerging as a result of changing global finances. As the following three case stories from Anglo-Indians (selected for the characteristics they have in common with others who I have interviewed) in Goa indicate, there are also other motivations acting alongside economic ones.

Three Case Histories

Errol: I couldn't survive in the U.K.

Errol (which is a pseudonym, as all names are) told me that he had left India reluctantly as a 23 year old, in the late 1960s, when his parents made the decision for the family to move to the United Kingdom. He said that his father, 'decided there is nothing left in India for us, Anglo-Indians. There is no scope…' He said he had never wanted to go and had always

thought he would get back. But instead he settled into life in England, working for more than 30 years until, '…suddenly I lost my job. When I was well over 50 years old I was made redundant. No one would employ me anymore'.

For a few years he lived on funds he had saved, but after a while he said he began to feel very concerned about his future. 'I had savings', he said, 'but I was using my savings to survive: because the rules, if you have more than this, the State would not help you. I was coming down to nothing and I said, 'Okay'. I got my OCI[6] [Overseas Citizen of India registration] with no problem at all, so came here'. He said that a cousin had come before him which had given him someone to stay with initially. By the time he came to India, he was eligible for a United Kingdom's pension, although not for the increments, but as he says, 'I am happy, I am very happy. I need to save, even on that small pension. I am not on a private pension, just a state pension and I am managing on that here, quite comfortably. Fortunately, dad taught me not to be too expensive'.

When I asked whether the economics of staying here was one of the reasons, he said: 'It's purely for that that I am here now, because if I went back to the UK I wouldn't survive'. Then I asked if there were others he knew of who had also come back for financial reasons. He told me about meeting up with someone he had known in India earlier, adding: '…and we were in the same boat, of course he was 11 years younger than me, but we were in the same boat. And we are all back in India and I am in the flat above him'. He told me that he did not have sufficient funds to purchase a home in Goa so he rents a flat. Whenever I saw him, which I did on several occasions, he was in the company of other Anglo-Indians, although he wasn't interested in joining the local association. There are things he misses about England, including his siblings who have remained there, but he described being generally very happy to be living in Goa.

So Errol moved from England for mostly economic reasons, feels settled and financially comfortable, has some Anglo-Indian friends he spends time with but is not interested in joining the association, indicating perhaps that he is not deeply embedded in the community. The next case history is Jenny's; she also focused on economics, but financially she is at quite a different level to Errol.

Jenny: living like a Rani

Jenny returned permanently just three years ago and is unequivocal about now living the 'good life'. After leaving India in the 1970s, she has had a successful life and career in Australia, returning to India every year or two for holidays, thereby retaining an association with India, about which she says, 'Culturally, I always find it interesting to be in India. I love the vibes of India; that India lives! Even if I stand on the road and look at two little goats playing with each other I think 'India lives!' You don't see that in the middle of [named Australian city]'.

Jenny told me that it was when she was reaching retirement age and thinking about what she might do next, that she realised 'I want to go back to India and I want to go back while I am young enough to enjoy a few more years in India'. She was clear that initially her retirement plans had been very much about returning *to India*, rather than specifically to Goa. This sentiment seemed to be shared by a number of others I spoke to who also had decided to come back to India and then for various reasons, such as the climate, the fact that it is a tourist destination and is known as a Christian and more Western State, it was Goa they settled on.

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[6] Later, I discuss the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) registration in detail.

Jenny is an active member of the Anglo-Indian Association and lives in a beautiful apartment with views out over the Arabian Sea, in an exclusive part of the state capital, Panaji. She refers to many economic factors, for all she does not explicitly cite this as the primary reason for her return. In her own words, 'This [Goa, India] was the best place to be. Living is so cheap and reasonable. I pay for everything in cash.' To my remark that her flat was beautiful and that she had a fantastic view, she said, 'It is beautiful. You pay for all those things, you know, but then why not? This is the last quarter of your life as I always call it. And yeah I love it! I love it here.'

I asked whether she could get a pension. She said, 'I get the Australian pension. Because I have lived there over 30 years, I can get my pensions overseas.' I asked whether she could get increments, mentioning that I had spoken to people who are on a UK pension and because they live in India, they don't get increments. She replied: 'I don't know about that. I get a pension, I don't even know what I get, really, honest to God. It's something, I know they deduct something of it but it's so negligible it does not matter. I don't even use my pension, because you don't even spend so much. Nothing costs as much, not even a bottle of wine.' I asked how she came to buy her flat. She, like others, had in the time before settling back obtained OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) status, which gave her various rights, including the ability to buy a home in India.

Although she said that she has not yet established a set of like-minded friends, she did talk about her social life, giving examples of her 'good life' with a focus on parties she has been invited to and has given. In her own description, 'When I have a big party, like I did at Christmas time, for about 35-40 people, I just get the food in. It's so easy. All the things are delivered hot. There's a knock on the door at 9 o'clock; in comes the hot pulao and the kormas and everything. It all gets delivered. So, life is easy. So I always say LG. Life's good.'

Jenny seems pleased to be able to lead her particular lifestyle. She has membership in an élite five star hotel club and also manages to have holidays in India and overseas and entertain overseas guests who holiday with her. She portrays herself as cosmopolitan in terms of her international sociability (the result of links to international networks as well as local connections (Gruner-Domic 2011, Schiller *et al.* 2011)) drawing attention to her transnational lifestyle in Goa. She said, 'I have friends coming from Delhi next week, or the week after or something. Then I have friends coming from Chicago just after they leave. Then I have my Kiwi friend coming from Australia; she is coming for about six weeks. She will be here, end of Feb and it's lovely. I have been to Hyderabad. I went back to Delhi for a cocktail party. I went to Singapore for New Year's Eve.'

Jenny is conscious that her cosmopolitan taste and experiences are reflected in her décor also. She stated, 'We, who have been living abroad for so long, live very differently. You would have seen that probably between my home and somebody else's home. I don't know anybody else's home like this. But they are happy. Some of them, they come up here and say "it looks like a Vogue magazine!" and I am thinking, "Which of it looks like a Vogue magazine?"' To my remarks that the décor was very nice; all the white, all beautifully colour coordinated and that I really liked the way she had integrated her western aesthetics with Indian, she replied, 'Well, I *am* Anglo-Indian!'

The only challenges Jenny spoke of related to the language spoken: Konkani. She said that 'besides that I have not found any disadvantage in settling here.' In fact, for Jenny, it was the opposite — the move brought with it tangible advantages: she was able to live a lifestyle unlikely to be attained in Australia and it gave her the opportunity to transfer her years in the West for social capital. The next case history is another example from Australia, in this case a married couple.

Marion and Ronnie: Disenchanted Returnee Migrants

Marion and Ronnie, a retired couple, had been back in India for just over two years when I met them, after they had sold up in Australia and moved all their possessions into their new apartment in a well-serviced gated community. Importantly for them, it is within walking distance of a Catholic Church, just a few kilometres from the outskirts of a busy town. In Australia, where they had lived for many years, they belonged to Anglo-Indian associations and were active in them. They were also very involved in their church community and had successful careers, but they said that they never felt that they really fitted in. This seems to be mostly linked to workplace discrimination they encountered. Another reason they gave for their decision to return was to combat health problems that were being exacerbated by the cool climate where they were living. They said they see themselves as torch-bearers for a number of friends and family who are also considering coming back to India, to settle in Goa. They said they had numerous friends and family from Australia and other places, who were watching them closely to see how they liked being back and in the meantime were coming to spend holidays with them, as they considered their own options about returning or not.

An additional reason for being back, although not articulated as such, was the comfort of the life they were able to lead in Goa. As they showed me around the public areas of their community it was clear they took pride in all the amenities they had the use of. This residential situation gave them a local residential community, comfort and social capital. In addition they were very involved in the Anglo-Indian association and with the church, in the spare time they had when not entertaining visitors from within India and abroad.

Understanding the Return to India

While categorising the motivations of returning migrants is not straightforward, there are various themes, often in combination, which seem prevalent in the interviews and stories I heard and mostly they differ from return migration theories. Two common stimuli causing these people to consider a return to India were weighing up retirement options and personal economic situations. Being unhappy in their adopted country for sociocultural reasons was a less commonly presented motivation, but it was a consideration for several. For all of them the implicit condition was that the move needed to be to a place suited to their identity and this identity, fortunately, gave them an advantage over others who may also aspire to retirement in India.

A Retirement Consideration

Most, but not all of those I spoke to, were of retirement age, so the move was carried out after looking at where they would live out their lives. This is a situation, as I have noted earlier, that is addressed by the migration researcher, Cerase, as a common time for return migration. Cerase's study (quoted by Cassarino, 2004)) indicates that this move 'home' is often a return to family, friends, neighbourhoods and known communities. Jones (2003) and Ni Laoire (2008), for example, both write of Irish return migration which is motivated by being closer to family and friendship and known neighbourhoods than for economic rationales. This destination characteristic, however, is not the case for Anglo-Indians, both because so many Anglo-Indians friends, family and colleagues had also left India in the intervening decades and, in the case of Goa, this area was never a place that Anglo-Indians had resided in, or at least not in sufficient number to be widely known about.

Retirement is a time of life when migrations generally (rather than return migrations) have also been documented, such as the trend observed by Hall (2011) and Hardill et al.

(2005) of the growth in International Retirement Migration within the EU in recent years, notably the large numbers of British retirees moving to Spain. Some of these migrants are conceptualised as being trans-migrants (Hardill *et al.* 2005), or as expatriates, 'a person residing in a country other than his/her homeland' (Prato 2016: 189). In the case of people moving in their retirement years Anglo-Indians are not expatriates in the usual sense of moving somewhere for the purposes of work, self-initiated or assigned, as described in the edited book edited by Andresen et al. on self-initiated expatriation (2013). They may gain employment but the move is not for that employment. Healthcare issues are what are often focussed on in research on this cohort, including problems encountered due to social and geographical isolation.

That Goa is scenically beautiful has a benefit for relocated retired Anglo-Indians in the form of streams of visitors from other parts of India as well as from around the world. This experience is similar to that reported by Legido-Quigley et al. (2012) about the UK migrants involved in their research in Spain who said that family (especially children and grandchildren) were more likely to visit them in Spain than in the UK and that those visits would be pleasurable experiences for everyone. Goa is an attractive option for Anglo-Indians who come back to India with money (either capital or a pension) from 'abroad', from the United Kingdom or Australia particularly.

A Response to Financial Situations
Those I met talked about their purchasing power in rupees as a significant incentive to be in India.[7] The economically-motivated migration stories that I collected ranged along a continuum. Nearer one end were those such as Errol, who had very little economic capital and had been struggling to survive in their adopted countries, so coming to India was a way to escape what was felt to be a worsening situation. Even those who had considerable savings were concerned about the impact of steadily decreasing interest rates, fearing that they were not going to be able to cover their lifestyles costs as they had hoped to from interest accruing from investments. At the other end of the continuum from Errol were those such as Jenny, whose decision to move to Goa was portrayed as a particularly good move since they were now able to 'live like royalty' in India. These different positions on the economic continuum would determine whether their decision to migrate to India was due to the need to leave an increasingly untenable financial situation, or to being drawn towards India as a financially attractive option.

The financial impetus to migrate, as well as being a feature of migrations generally at this point in people's life can also be understood as a response to the global economic crisis which began in 2008. Anglo-Indians are making the most of the differential between the economies of the global north and south by bringing global north finances (in the form of capital and pensions) to be used in the global south. The migration direction of these Anglo-Indians echoes what is happening in other parts of the world as a result of changes in the financial markets. Brazilian, Bolivian, Puerto Rican, Irish and non-Anglo-Indian Indians are also returning to their homelands. For example, Bastia (2011) writes about the changing direction in the movement between Spain and Argentina, with former expatriate Argentinians who came to Spain seeking opportunities, now moving back to Argentina. This is reversing the long-running, economically-driven global south-to-north migration, in response to

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[7] Cost of living calculations such as those found on this website for Goa: http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/city_result.jsp?country=India&city=Goa indicates that it is about a quarter the cost of living in cities in the UK and less than a third the cost for Australian cities.

changes in opportunities in both adopted and birth, or home, countries. In most cases, this economic motivating factor, results in a return to family and friends too, but for Anglo-Indians it is usually decades after they have migrated before they return and by the time they do many other Anglo-Indians have left India too, so those returning are not coming back to re-join family, friends and colleagues.

A Response to Being Un-settled in the Adopted Country
While there are significant differences in the rationale for Anglo-Indian return migration in comparison with two of Gmelch's three types, the last 'type' is in accord with some isolated experiences that I recorded. Ronnie and Marion are examples of migrants who claimed that a reason for their return was that they did not feel that they fitted into their adopted country; this, it seems, was mostly due to a workplace discrimination that strained what seemed in other ways a positive experience (in belonging to clubs and churches) of being settled in their adopted country.

The literature on the Anglo-Indian diaspora paints a complex variety of 'settling' pictures. While most accounts are positive, focusing on how well-suited migrants are as citizens and how well they settle, others have recorded negative experiences which include stories of discrimination. Rochelle Almeida (2013) writes of such experiences in the UK. Still, for migrants to take the step of returning after such a long period of time away from the country of their birth is indicative of a set of compelling reasons for them to see this as the best way forward.

An Ethnic Advantage (Over Other Aspiring 'Hotel Marigold' Residents)
Anglo-Indians are not alone in looking at India as a final destination. The British movie, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (Madden 2011) resonates with aspects of the stories that I was told, although there are obvious points of difference.[8] The movie tells the fictional story, in a very visual and sumptuous way, of a group of UK nationals going to live long-term in India with the intent to see their days out there. If this idea was to be picked up by people in a similar category, they would soon come across a road block to their plans in the form of visa requirements. For example, Citizens of New Zealand, Australia and the UK are issued with only 90 to 180 day visas. US citizens can obtain much longer visas but that still does not secure the ability to live permanently in India. But if the characters were Anglo-Indians they, having been born in India, would get there more easily because of their eligibility to register as overseas citizens of India (or OCIs).[9]

The returnee Anglo-Indians I spoke to had all registered as OCI or were in the process of doing so, making the most of the ethnic capital that they had by virtue of being born in India. This could now be strategically transferable into creating a secure future in India for themselves, as an OCI grants the holder the ability to buy property, take up paid employment (with some restrictions) and come and go from India without needing a visa to re-enter, with no restrictions on the time spent in India.[10]

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[8] There is also a BBC reality show *The Real Marigold Hotel* (*The Real Marigold Hotel,* 2016. Directed by Anonymous.: BBC 2.) also featuring aspiring retirees to India.

[9] This option to register as OCI is also available for the children, grandchildren, or spouse of someone born in India who has an OCI.

[10] For further details see: www.hicomindia.org.nz

Challenges
On the surface the westernised, Christian and more affluent Goan way of life is very similar to Anglo-Indian's: both are more Western than 'Indian'; both dress similarly; both centralise their Christianity, which for Goans is exclusively Roman Catholic and for Anglo-Indians is *mostly* Roman Catholic; and both draw, in various ways, on their identities from a mix of European and Indian descent histories. These similarities seem to be significant in attracting Anglo-Indians to the State. The obvious differences are in the language spoken as a mother tongue — Konkani for Goans, rather than (most commonly) English — and in the fact that, for Goans, Goa is their State and the identity they claim is Goan. In comparison, Anglo-Indians are 'outsiders' and can be made to feel that. They also do not usually have the social capital or networks that they can call on — including long-term friends, family and business networks, which make such a difference in India. As noted earlier, this is an unusual situation for return migrants who are more often able to settle back with the friends, family and communities they had left (Ní Laoire 2008).

Not speaking the local language, Konkani, was the main challenge identified by Jenny and others, which highlights the fact that they are not from Goa and makes it more difficult for them to operate in the market and in bureaucratic domains.[11] In addition, for this Christian community it also makes full participation in the life of the church more difficult. Masses are most often in Konkani, although there are English masses on Sundays in some churches. Daily masses in English are particularly difficult to find.

An Entity to Belong to
The establishment of the branch of the AIAIA is of great value in assisting Anglo-Indians to settle and may make Goa a more attractive option for other Anglo-Indians looking to come back to India. One respondent captured the significance of this aspect saying, 'It gave me an entity to belong to'. Many participate in Anglo-Indian-run events, such as the 5th anniversary celebration that I attended in 2014. They also have regular meetings and social get-togethers throughout the year. This provides some social networks and even those who have not joined the branch appreciate having 'an entity' that they can identify with, even if they do not belong to it.

The President of the first Goa branch explained that he had set up the branch to help Anglo-Indians meet other Anglo-Indians who they would not otherwise have realised were Anglo-Indian. He said, 'Frankly speaking, I started the association to get our people together… you know, like a small little close-knit family we should move around with each other'. The Secretary of the branch was clear about the present aims, stating: 'We have the association to keep the culture. I don't see the Anglo-Indian community vanishing, by the way.'

In Goa Anglo-Indians seem to be in the process of building the community as nowhere else in India. What is assisting in the resettling process, I would suggest, is the establishment of the association, which gives incoming Anglo-Indians an entity to belong to, in a State where they are, otherwise, relative outsiders.

Conclusion
The relative exodus of Anglo-Indians after Indian Independence has led to diminished numbers in most of the places where they had traditionally lived. The numbers are so low in

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[11] Their mother tongue of English is, however, the language of prestige in India (Andrews 2006) and, as a signifier of cosmopolitanism, it is likely to have some value in terms of social capital.

many towns that Anglo-Indians, are concerned about the prognosis of their community into the future, as they see low turnouts for dances and other occasions and mourn the loss of a 'community feeling'. This is especially the case in areas such as the hill stations and railway towns that are also featured in this 'Small Towns' project. In Goa, however, I observed a reversal of this trend, albeit in the early stages.

Just as many Anglo-Indians decided, individually, to leave India, some are now deciding, independently, to come back to India, finding in Goa what they are looking for. The reasons for their return are varied and complex, as in all migrations, but include those Anglo-Indians, mostly in the retirement years, who have been able to make the most of the differential between the global north and south economies by bringing global north finances to be used in the global south. Due to their 'ethnic capital' of having been born in India, they are able to secure the legally required means which are not available to non-Indians, and can therefore return to India and live there permanently. These Anglo-Indians, part of a community who have had a history of leaving India with something akin to a sense of rejection of and by the country of their birth (Almeida 2015, Andrews 2007, Blunt 2005, Caplan 2001), are now reversing that trend: re-finding and reclaiming India as a place they belong to.

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Faith, Space and Selfhood in East London 'Youth Gang' Culture[1]

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This article focuses on the role of religion in Serious Youth Violence (SYV)/gang interventions in contemporary Newham, East London. We examine the work of a Pentecostal Christian charity, Teaching Against Gangs (TAG), and the ways in which its founder, Sheldon Thomas, crafts the subjectivities of his young charges (primarily young men aged between 13 and 25) by appealing to notions of space and separate spheres. Rather than relying on a radical break between sacred and profane, Thomas' strategies, we argue, set up an opposition between the 'community' and 'The Road'. He posits salvation as something to be realised in the here and now, via legal income streams. Relatedly, the young people he reaches out to — his 'subjects of intervention' — are cast as naïve and deluded, with societal structures and racial politics ranged against them. As former gang members, agents of intervention (like Thomas) chart their own ongoing path to redemption, their selfhood forged in relation to those they seek to rehabilitate.
Key words: Gangs, Intervention, Pentecostalism, Serious Youth Violence, Space

Introduction

Be it the stake in conformity or fear of the wrath of God, 'religion' has been held to keep believers on the societal straight and narrow. In recent decades approaches to combating deviance originating in the US and Latin America have aimed at 'setting gang members free' via the scriptures and the practices of Pentecostalism. With its focus on the experiential dimension of faith, especially around worship, Pentecostalism has offered a path to redemption to various 'gang associates' punctuated by expressive, energetic and interactive church services. A number of schemes inspired by this denomination of Protestantism also use 're-integrative shaming', a strategy characterised by the forging of bonds between 'recovering' gang members and a sympathetic church congregation. At a deeper level, such interventions work on the subjectivity of young people — both gang members and prospective gang members — and re-inscribe the boundaries of public and private, and sacred and profane. The attempts at refashioning a young person's sense of selfhood — also assisted by the sanctuary provided by certain spaces (both real and imagined) — underline the 'salvific' power of Pentecostalism. Our analysis focuses on the work of Pentecostal Christian charity, Teaching Against Gangs (henceforth, TAG). We draw on the findings of ethnographic fieldwork to examine how TAG's founder, Sheldon Thomas (henceforth, ST), seeks to combat Serious Youth Violence (henceforth, SYV). More specifically, we document ST's efforts to connect with young people involved in SYV/gangs by challenging their understandings of selfhood and appealing to notions of space and divisions between spheres. We briefly survey the extant literature on religion and gang-related crime, before considering the methods employed in the research and the settings in which TAG interventions were staged. Then, we examine in detail the strategies

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and realities of the interventions themselves. A reflection on the utility of religious values and rituals in the work of TAG and its attempts to prevent SYV/gang violence follows.

From Shaming to Salvation: Religion, Rehabilitation and Gang Membership
Programmes in the United States and Latin America rooted in various branches of Protestantism exist to address a clutch of 'gang-related' issues including drug- and alcohol-addiction (Brennerman 2011, Leon 1998, Sanchez-Walsh 2003, Wolseth 2008). These programmes aim to address criminal behaviours through a combination of religious practice, prescribed patterns of scripture-inspired interaction and techniques of self-monitoring. The 12-step model of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) — beginning with the admission of addiction and culminating with the assistance of fellow group members — directly informs the work of organisations such as *Criminal and Gang Members Anonymous*.[2] The model is premised on the drawing out of latent religiosity in offenders as well as explicit negotiations of (hyper) masculinity (Flores and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013: 4).[3] According to their proponents, programmes incorporating the 12 steps have enjoyed considerable success (Toft 2000). However, such interventions have also been subject to criticism. Some have claimed that the model reinforces neoliberal policies at state and federal level (which champion 'entrepreneurial values' and 'individual responsibility') by forcing subjects to accept fault and accountability (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). Others have argued that such methods disempower adherents by forcing them to follow a linear narrative of recovery from a regrettable past, to existential crisis, to clean future (Carr 2010, Flores and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013), thereby extending and reinforcing state power.[4] Such interventions, however well intentioned, raise many issues.

Apart from pointing to the basic contradiction between Pentecostalism's rhetoric of 'freedom' and its ascetic codes (O'Neill 2011, Pine 2008), commentators have noted its perpetuation of patriarchal ideals. In the majority of Pentecostal churches in the United States, leadership positions are reserved for men. One might therefore argue that the Church's appeals to recovering gang members are predicated on trading one male code of honour for another (Leon 1998, Sanchez-Walsh 2003). Young men in the space of liminality may be encouraged

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[2] *Criminals & Gang Members Anonymous* was founded in 1997 by Richard Mejico, a one-time gang member and prisoner of Mule Creek prison in Ione, California. Sentenced to death for murder, while on death row Mejico was visited by a nun who gave him a copy of the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*. In examining the book's teachings he realised that many of these could be applied to criminal gangs. The organisation's mission is to assist gang members in overcoming addiction to the criminal activities typically associated with gang life.

[3] Though largely considered to be couched in the terms of Protestant Christianity, the exact religious orientation of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) strategies seems to be context dependent (Rudy and Greil 1989). In his study of young alcohol dependent men in Mexico City, Brandes (2002) noted how the core values of Mexican Catholicism — guilt, confession and salvation — figured frequently in AA programmes' narratives.

[4] These criticisms draw on wider debates about structure and agency and whether the former — patterned and/or institutionalised arrangements and assemblages which delimit human action — or the latter — the ability of individuals to act independently — has primacy in shaping human behaviour (Giddens 1976).

to forgo extreme acts of *machismo* (such as street violence and domestic abuse), but do so in exchange for the less exaggerated masculine dominance in the household — or, in other words, the privileges of so-called 'soft patriarchy' (Wilcox 2007). Interestingly, some researchers have praised this adaptation of masculinity because it facilitates upward social mobility through the deflection of resources from the street to the domestic family unit (Brusco 1995). In the respective markets of masculine credibility there is thus space for various forms of mobility and collateral.

The Sacred and the Profane

Space and place, so integral to debates around gang (and wider youth) culture (Armstrong and Rosbrook-Thompson 2012, Goldson 2011), are also entailed in practices of salvation. As detailed above, young people in Central America confessing to gang-related misdeeds through instances of 'reintegrative shaming' are encouraged by pastors to weep in the presence of church attendees (Braithwaite 1989). The objective is to undermine the hyper-masculine status of reluctant gang members through displays of vulnerability. The hoped-for confession is meant to cultivate a new sense of trust among fellow believers who seek to replace the congregations of the gang setting (Brennerman 2011). However, the use of an alternative strategy — labelled 'disintegrative shaming' — in mainstream institutions such as schools and prisons has been criticised (Rios 2011). For some, this method apportions blame to the deviant individual, as opposed to stigmatizing his or her behaviour, and is therefore inimical to rituals of reacceptance and reintegration. As a result of these shortcomings, critics argue, deviant behaviour is likely to continue (Braithwaite 1989, Flores and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013, Hagan and McCarthy 1997).

Salvation via subjectivity is promoted elsewhere. A faith-based child sponsorship programme for young people imperilled by gang violence in La Paloma, Guatemala, has as its aim the 'subject of prevention: the individual imagined and acted upon by the imperative to prevent' (O'Neill 2013: 205). The programme attempts to instil a set of values associated with Protestant self-mastery — neatness, order, reliability, gratitude and delayed gratification — in order (ideally) to produce 'a subject through a series of confessional images and imperatives' (O'Neill 2013: 218). Self-cultivation was not a one-way street, however. Helping sponsored children to escape poverty, drugs, abuse and gangs, donors based in North Carolina (who sponsor 'at-risk' Guatemalan young people to the tune of $35 a month) hoped that — with God's help — they might be spared the meaningless materialism and consumerism which they believed characterise much of life in post-industrial America (O'Neill 2013: 205).

The separation of public and private spheres is an important criterion in a number of interventions. Wolseth (2008: 96) notes how in Honduras Pentecostalism's 'doctrine of separation from community life' allows young *cristianos* to 'exclude themselves from violent retribution by appealing to their rights to the sanctuary of the church.' The church 'saves' young people not only by taking them out of a life of everyday violence, but by providing them with a set of spatial metaphors which can be invoked in navigating their dangerous neighbourhoods. These metaphors are organised around concepts such as the social and the spiritual, safety and danger, and allow *cristianos* to uphold their religious convictions at a 'respectful distance' from

gang-related activity. Their devotion can be signalled by their orderly (as opposed to subcultural) dress, their ability to recite scripture and their enduring engagement with the local Pentecostal community. It is only when the mask appears to slip, when a *cristiano* is suspected of behaving in ways inconsistent with scripture (consuming drugs or alcohol, dancing in public places, and so on), that such individuals risk becoming the target of gang violence (O'Neill 2013). Interestingly, this amounts to converts not only policing themselves but effectively being policed by gang members. Such a curious dynamic relies on a kind of vicarious religiosity on the part of gang members; in order for them to recognise departures from religious codes, these codes have to be understood (if only in a demotic sense).

Pentecostalism's persistent focus on the individual has understandably led to claims that it chimes with, and possibly even vindicates, the neoliberal paradigms of governance and security which so many have blamed for widening inequality and deepening injustice. Whereas security regimes in neoliberal cities tend to promote qualities such as 'choice', 'character' and 'self-discipline' (O'Neill and Thomas 2011), their Pentecostal counterparts, as noted above, seek to convert individuals rather than tackle wider societal ills (Lancaster 1988). This is ironic, given the reality that neoliberal policies — including the curtailment or elimination of social services, suppression of wages and funding cuts in areas such as state education and health care — result not just in the suffering of individuals but in the atrophying of the 'social body' (O'Neill 2008). Structural conditions most notably evident in economic policies can see public spaces becoming unsafe and levels of civic participation (particularly among young people) dropping accordingly. In fact, it is this retreat from public space which has arguably strengthened the appeal of 'privatised' Pentecostal fraternities as well as the 'private' street gangs that cause such consternation (Montenegro 2001, O'Neill 2011).

All the interventions described above share an ontological dispensation which Weber (1993 [1920]) famously called 'salvific'. So-called 'salvific religions' respond to the existence of evil by positing a future in which the saved will live amid utopian conditions. This outlook, Weber argued, was attractive to the poor, the exploited and the oppressed — these might be migrants, manual labourers and low-level merchants — because of the compensation it offered for the ills experienced by marginalised groups in the here and now. The spread of this religious ideology would, its proponents argue, see society transformed through the conversion of individuals rather than these people's challenging existing structures of oppression and inequality (Wolseth 2008). Crucially, as O'Neill (2013: 210) puts it, one would witness 'the reformation of subjectivity over the restoration of society'. Viewing the Pentecostal way of life as removed from the wider society encourages this way of thinking. If this was in any way radical it was also quintessentially personal.[5]

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[5] Indeed, a contrast can be drawn between the apolitical stance of this radical break and the perceived activism identified with Catholic liberation theology (and figures such as Gustavo Gutiérrez and Oscar Romero) along with its political gloss on social injustice in settings such as the USA and Latin America (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998, Stephens 1995, Wolseth 2008).

Settings and Method

The research described in what follows took place between 2011 and 2013 in the east London Borough of Newham (henceforth LBN). In the contemporary Newham setting, SYV/gangs is one of the main concerns of those tasked with policing, community relations and all manner of related public-spirited interventions (see Armstrong et al. 2016). Situated north of the River Thames, around five miles from the City of London, Newham is one of the poorest boroughs in the UK (Office of National Statistics 2011). It is also the second most diverse in terms of the ethnicity of its residents. According to the 2011 Census, 29 per cent of Newham's estimated 307,000 population is White (16.7 per cent White British, 0.7 per cent White Irish, 0.2 per cent Gypsy or Irish Traveller and 11.4 per cent Other White), 4.6 per cent is of mixed race (1.3 per cent White and Black Caribbean, 1.1 per cent White and Black African, 0.9 per cent White and Asian and 1.3 per cent Other Mixed), 43.5 per cent is Asian (13.8 per cent Indian, 12.21 per cent Bangladeshi, 9.8 per cent Pakistani, 1.3 per cent Chinese and 6.5 per cent Other Asian), 19.6 per cent is Black (12.3 per cent African, 4.9 per cent Caribbean and 2.4 per cent Other Black), 1.1 per cent is Arab and 2.3 per cent is of other ethnic heritage. With the highest fertility rate in the country (LBN 2014), this incredibly diverse population is set to grow rapidly in coming years. In terms of religion, the population of Newham is 40.0 per cent Christian, 32 per cent Muslim, 9.3 per cent No religion, 8.8 per cent Hindu, 2.1 per cent Sikh, 0.8 per cent Buddhist and 0.1 per cent Jewish, with the borough being home to some 35 mosques, 26 Anglican churches, 16 Baptist churches, 12 Catholic parishes and four synagogues. In this setting there were an estimated 300 young men whose association and activities were of concern to police and the local authorities. Many of their behaviours were classified as 'anti-social'; their most destructive behaviours had resulted in serious wounding and death (normally, following knife attacks). Some had discharged guns in street disorders. These incidents occurred in other London boroughs and were identified by those in authority as Serious Youth Violence/Gang activity. This category of SYV/Gangs was synonymous with 'black' youth.

Many youth involved in SYV/gang activity arrived in London as child migrants. Years later they sought to 'defend' a neighbourhood with which they had no connection beyond their lifespan. Violent encounters between the young men who populated the Metropolitan Police Service's database of SYV/gang 'nominals' had a rationale imputed to them by various outsiders. A glib argument proposed that these incidents were about 'postcodes'; that is, antagonism rooted in the place of residence and in convenient notions of boundary defence and transgression synonymous with the sorting codes of the Royal Mail. In truth, no one spoken with in our research could define where such boundaries began and ended. Instead causation has to be sought in variously: youthful neighbourhood associations, male peer group loyalties, familial networks, the defence of street level drug markets and the propensity of teenage boys to insult their equivalents in words and lyrics propagated by social media (see below). In seeking causation amid this tangle of variables, one size did not fit all, and while 'space' was integral to many contestations it did not underpin them all. The parents of these youth did not attach the same significance to these places and did not deem them in need of 'defence' from outsiders. As a result, there was little argument for any sense of cultural or generational transmission through parents; the issue cried out for enquiry from the bottom up.

We adopted an ethnographic approach combining observation, participant observation and in-depth interviews (Prato and Pardo 2013, O'Reilly 2011, Venkatesh 2008). In the instances that follow, we secured access through TAG. ST played a key role in this. Aged 50 at the time of the research, ST lived in the borough with his wife Michelle. Both of Caribbean parentage, they were not born and raised in Newham but had lived in the area for a decade and were well-known to many Newham residents. Accompanying TAG personnel provided us with a passport to areas and encounters not easily accessible to the multiple agencies which set out to address the issue. We are white males with a generation separating our ages. While relatively well-versed in inner-city London life as a result of part-time employment as youth workers and sports coaches, we recognised our differences with those under study. By contrast, TAG's workers were of either West African or Caribbean parentage, while the young people they reached out to were almost exclusively drawn from black minority ethnic backgrounds.

Methods and meanings were crucial in interpretation. While there are a number of definitions of 'ethnography', there is broad consensus that the method requires the researcher to understand and articulate the meanings through which social agents encounter the world (Atkinson *et al.* 2002, Prato and Pardo 2013). Ethnography is particularly relevant as a methodology to facilitate an understanding of marginalised communities (Kearns and Smith 1994). Others exploring the complex social issues associated with crime have recognised the method's potential to give a voice to society's most peripheral groups (Robinson 2002, Emirbayer and Williams 2005, Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009). The ethnographic method is thus both a process and a product (Milgate 2007). Making sense of that witnessed is thus not a simple task. In what follows, the predominant voice is that of ST, who in 2012-13 was funded for one year by Newham Council to implement policies of 'Intervention and Diversion' (supplementing the Enforcement strategies of the Metropolitan Police Service's Gangs and Firearms Unit) among active, suspected and potential SYV/gang 'nominals'. These individuals were flagged up by Newham police on its SYV/gangs database which processed intelligence from Youth Offending Teams. The interventions and diversions designed by TAG had grown out of years of attempts to offer solace and advice to those embroiled in SYV/gang activity. The policies implemented were fluid and pragmatic, and relied on a powerful narrative.

Agency and Structure
Beginning life in 2007, the 'Gangsline', a 24 hour helpline for youth 'gang' members and people worried about the involvement of friends or family members in youth gang-related activity, metamorphosed two years later into TAG. TAG sought to reach youths involved in a life of drugs, guns and knife crime with messages of hope derived from the Gospels and channelled through the messages of Pentecostal Christianity.[6] This faith was most evident in ST's phone and face-to-face conversations which were smattered with words such as 'bred'

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[6] A similarly committed Christian, black British Michelle Thomas was integral to the TAG enterprise. Her tasks included speaking with female victims of SYV/gangs and contacting the mothers of the young men who constituted TAG's client base. Michelle came from a highly respectable Christian family and had no claims to a previous criminal life.

(short for brethren) and 'bless' (the sign-off: God bless). The organisation thus grew from an information/advice service — primarily a phone line which also produced leaflets distributed in fast food outlets and wherever its outreach workers could find groups of young people 'hanging out' — to an intervention-based organisation that was both reactive (with a specialist Outreach Response Team) and proactive in utilising its various expertise.

From its inception, TAG sought to address the root causes of SYV/gang membership, a task which ST believed required an understanding of psychosocial issues including family breakdown, anger problems, the consequences of rejection, emotional hurt, unresolved conflict, a (missing) sense of belonging, the dangers of the disillusioned and the despair of struggling parents. In founding Gangsline/TAG, ST was seeking to offer credible support through programmes and workshops that focused on developing the submerged and unrealised talents of young people. The interventions were structured according to curricula and programmes based in conflict resolution and counselling delivered over a 12 week period. They aimed to equip individuals with the necessary tools to bring about responses to variously emotional, physical, financial and spiritual factors which — ideally — would allow an individual to break free from distorted thinking and destructive life cycles.

The TAG mission was underpinned by a faith-based framework that focused on notions of personal responsibility, morality, humanity, positive thinking, cognitive behaviour and self-esteem. The training programmes did not follow a set format and its curriculum was delivered in diverse settings to individuals or groups. Sessions were adapted to meet the needs of young men — and women — at times too frightened or lacking in confidence to leave their known and 'safe' environment. ST led the sessions using his major strengths of articulacy and charisma. Because of speeches he delivered at conferences addressing youth offending in the capital, he was approached and contracted by both local government officials and Metropolitan Police Service (henceforth, MPS) personnel over the years 2008-2011 to conduct various forms of interventionist work with young offenders. The organisation *was* essentially ST and his wife, Michelle. The other street workers were hourly paid staff. The personnel who at times accompanied ST or worked in pairs on designated home visits were drawn from various sources. Some had contacted TAG seeking employment. Some were former charges of TAG who, having changed their ways, wanted to help others. There was no 'ideal type' TAG worker. Whatever defined a 'gang' in contemporary London, the reality of death and 'gang-related' activity aroused concern at the highest level of both police and political governance. It was an issue that provoked some innovative thinking in police circles. Realising that addressing this problem required more than policing, some officers tasked with a SYV/gang remit were humble enough to seek outside assistance and information on a culture and phenomenon about which, many admitted to us, they knew little.

'The Road' to Nowhere
The admission from police and indeed politicians that such an issue required specialist intervention received an added impetus following rioting across the country in the summer of

2011.[7] According to the Mayor of London,[8] 250 youth gangs — together comprising 4,800 individuals — were active in the capital in 2012.[9] The behaviours and tactics used by those perpetrating such violence in 'gang' collectives and the personnel tasked with preventing their offending behaviours differed from borough to borough.[10] The governance of 'gang' crime was thus crucial, and deserves far greater analysis than is possible here.[11] For now, suffice it to say that according to MPS intelligence in 2010 the London Borough of Newham contained a dozen known 'youth gangs', five of which were 'violently active'. According to the same source, in 2011 Newham was home to three individual 'gang nominals' — those suspected by police of gang involvement — who were among the top ten in London in terms of violent potential. In 2012, the same source identified one of the borough's gangs as among the most notorious in the capital. For Newham MPS, the policing objective for the year 2012-13 was to target such groups that gathered within its boundaries using the triology of Enforcement, Diversion and Intervention.

The target demographic of both the MPS and TAG was the young men who, in the colloquial sense, were 'On the Road' (that is, involved in both the entrepreneurial activities of gang life and the concomitant violence such enterprises demanded). These collectives operated in an underground male-dominated and drug-related economy pervaded by notions of 'respect', 'trespass' and 'business' enforceable by both threatened and actual violence (Decker and Van Winkle 1996). The 'Road Man' varied in age from mid-teens to mid-twenties. Those categorised by both gangs and police as Road Man 'Elders' were generally at the upper end of the age spectrum and were assumed to be involved in more consequential and lucrative criminal enterprises than the 'Youngers'. They were also presumed capable of more grievous forms of

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[7] These 'riots' took place between 6th and 11th August 2011 and were triggered by the death of Mark Duggan, a 29-year-old black man shot dead by police in Tottenham, North London. Having started in Tottenham, disorder spread to other parts of London and eventually to other town and cities (including Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Nottingham). These disturbances resulted in five deaths and property damage estimated to be in excess of £200 million. Though Prime Minister David Cameron blamed 'gangs' for orchestrating the disorder, his claims were subsequently challenged by the findings of a high-profile academic study (Lewis et al. 2011).

[8] The Mayor of London during the period of research was the Conservative Party's Boris Johnson. Together with the 25 elected members of the London Assembly, the Mayor was responsible for the strategic governance of the 32 boroughs that constitute Greater London. Under pressure to tackle 'gang violence' in the aftermath of the 2011 'riots', Johnson's attempts to do so culminated in Operation Shield, a scheme modelled on policies pioneered in the USA and centring on community mobilisation and harsh punishments for recalcitrant gang members. The Operation ran aground in 2015 when it was rejected by local authorities in Lambeth and Haringey (two of the three councils tasked with trialling it) on the basis that it risked worsening police-community relations (Gayle 2015).

[9] In 2007 youth gangs became the focus of a Home Office specialist subgroup, the *Tackling Gangs Action Programme*, chaired by the Home Secretary and overseen by the *Task Force on Gangs and Guns*.

[10] These personnel also face fundamental issues relating to the definition of gangs and consequently gang membership and gang crime (Esbenson et al. 2001).

[11] For an extended analysis see Hobbs (1997), Hallsworth and Brotherton (2011), and Armstrong et al. (2016).

violence. Jail time and the propensity to inflict serious wounding on perceived enemies typify life On the Road. The consequences of this behaviour to both perpetrators and victims had seen people like ST make it their life's work to offer an alternative way of living.

Spheres of Influence: Space and Rehabilitation in TAG

TAG's approach to prevention and rehabilitation did not posit any radical break between Pentecostal Christianity and wider community life. Although ST often staged his discussions and workshops in a hired room located in a Methodist church complex in Newham, this was more a matter of convenience (and price) than religiosity. On other occasions he would deliver impromptu sessions in the homes of existing or potential gang members. His proselytising was also free of any sharp distinction between sacred and profane; if anything, he charted an intermediate course between these spheres, knowing that identification with one or the other was less important than whether a young person decided to live within or beyond the bounds of legality. This strategy did, however, hinge on one of Pentecostalism's central selling points: the integration of 'fragments of believers' racial, gender, and class identities into a coherent alternative ethics' (Wolseth 2008: 100). Perhaps the best way to explain this is through the presentation of ethnographic observations.

At 4.30pm on a wet Thursday afternoon in February 2012, six young black men sit with ST around a table in the meeting room of the Methodist church complex. They hail from three different areas of the borough and represent three named 'gangs'; they have all participated in the selling of drugs on the street and in altercations with one another's peer groups where weapons were used. Two have stabbed rivals; two have suffered stab wounds in similar circumstances. The meeting place carries no territorial threat or controversy. To help matters, ST meets all concerned on nearby streets and walks with them to the venue. Once in the room, they are soon at ease with ST who has spoken with them personally over the previous six months during his street-based 'outreach' work, which sees him drive around various neighbourhoods and talk with groups of teenage boys and young adult men stationed on street corners. Having obtained the mobile phone numbers of various key players, he was able to get those now gathered to attend the meeting at the appointed time and place. ST begins by asking all present for a basic level of respect, which requires them to turn their mobile phones to silent and avoid answering any calls for the duration of the meeting. Then, thanking them for attending, ST launches into a narrative as to his '*ting*' (purpose).

The young men, listening to the narrative of ST, quickly get a sense of what is and is not authentic:

> 'In the last three years there's been 40 youth murders in London with one common characteristic: the victims and perpetrators are all black, all of an age range of 15 to 20. You gotta ask: why is that? And who killed them? You might know the answer — some of youse have been close to death. The victims are the same profile as the perpetrators … You lot can't even blame racists for the violence on youse and the deaths. Those of us on the streets in the 70's, we had to put up with racism from

white police and NF (National Front)[12] gangs — it wasn't black-on-black then. Mine was a time with proper gangsters — you're not. [This assertion elicits a nervous chuckle from the five]. Let's have the bare truth: None of you are big time gangsters out there … Why? Gangsters don't make YouTube videos. YouTube videos are for black kids. Now that's real talk for you isn't it? (All five nod and stifle smirks). Let me tell you this: in my day there was no guns, no 16-year-old had a gun. You were too irresponsible to angle one — you still are. If there was a gun, it was an M16. My 'land' (territory) was Peckham and Brixton (South London).'

Of the eight now in the room (two arrived late), only two have a job providing regular and decent income. The rest are scraping an income through the street-level selling of drugs — small weights of marijuana and 'wraps' of crack cocaine. One moment of humour is provided when ST asks all present whether they are 'On the Road'. One latecomer to the gathering, not fully understanding the thrust of the question, explains by way of response that he is actually 'On the Rail'; he works full-time for a rail transport franchise! He combines the 35-hour per week position with a leisure-time associated with the Beckton Boys. [13]

Keen to impress upon them the futility of their activity, ST explains what he sees as their existence, which is essentially disorganised 'organised' violence relating to a variety of slights (real or perceived) enacted without any established or accepted hierarchies or codes of behaviour. Furthermore, he explains that he is aware of recent intra-Newham youth gang enmities exacerbated by the production of short (five-minute) rap videos posted on YouTube, in which members of rival gangs were mocked, derided and threatened. In the ethos of 'respect' that they shared, such insults had to be acted upon. Those considered both perpetrators and silent sympathisers (by virtue of their being part of the video) had been attacked and in some instances wounded by stabbing. The business model these young men pursued, the monies earned from Road Life and the messages sent and the violence occasioned by these activities did not impress the speaker, who adds:

'You're involved in random shooting and stabbing, and that's not "gangster". You've got no-one to answer to and you're just looking to go to jail. You've got no order or structure, you do what you want to do. Things were different when I was 14 — I was approached by the (names a South London Crime syndicate). Among

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[12] Founded in 1967, the National Front (NF) is a far-right, 'whites-only' British political party which opposes non-white immigration and endorses a programme of repatriation. Its support reached a high point in the 1970s — it fielded 303 candidates at the 1979 general election (none were elected) — but since then its popularity has waned. In the 2010 general election the NF fielded just 17 candidates.

[13] The young men known collectively in police circles as the Beckton Boys were — unsurprisingly — all drawn from the Beckton district of Newham. This neighbourhood collective had (somehow) been accorded the status of a 'gang'. The leading lights in a recent tit-for-tat exchange of violence with counterparts from the Woodgrange district a few miles away shared an enthusiasm for football. The one detail that brought them together in common enterprise was attempting to win weekly football matches. Out of this endeavour they would be found sharing time and space together on the streets of their neighbourhood.

other things, they did diamonds. They said I could work for them and — hear me out — they said to me, "you bring «heat» (that is, trouble with other gangs and/or police attention), we will kill you." … The big white gangs and big men like (names a big white player in drugs distribution in the borough). The Feds (police) can't touch him so they go after you lot. His income is worth more than all of us in this room put together. If he wanted to he could "drop" £100k to a police friend, some of them are on £35k so his money is good for them. He's virtually untouchable — and you can't match him. You've got to understand this: real gangsters don't feud over a £5 debt, and they don't live in Newham. What you're doing is feeding The Man (those in authority intent on keeping others in a subordinate position) by carrying little bags (metaphorical and actual in the case of cannabis and crack cocaine, and then you make YouTube chat and think you're "all that" (hard and affluent)'.

The room falls silent. What the young men hear is the truth and comes from a man who is physically a match for any of them. Lightening the mood somewhat, ST then asks: 'So; can we come together?' The immediate response is from Asa, a member of the 'Beckton Boys', and consists of two short statements which explain the dilemma that prompted today's meeting. 'Too stubborn. Too much pride'. Everybody present, by way of a wry smile, seems to know what such words mean. Breaking the next silence, ST outlines some new horizons. Aware of Asa's skills in penning lyrics for YouTube rapping clips, ST outlines a business model whereby Asa's undoubted ability as a 'lyricist' could be promoted by those in rival areas of the borough who had other skills and the collective product could then be transported by those from yet another area — in a sense, a four-way business model where everybody involved wins; that is, makes money from the enterprise.

Following this creative interlude, ST launches into a discussion of income and the potential for custodial sentences. Going round the table he asks everyone present if they are currently making money. They all laugh at the question: they are not, and only two admit to making a few hundred pounds over the last few months through drug dealing, which elicits from ST the comment, 'if they could see you, the white man would just be saying "Jiggaboos...cheap change. They're (black youths) making no money and meanwhile shooting each other, and I'm sat on my seven-million-pound boat."' The hour's workload for such income is then discussed. The street-corner drug market requires some 12 hours on duty which entails making oneself available until the early hours. The business also calls for constant vigilance; rival dealers would 'rob' their adversaries of drug monies at knife- or gunpoint, well aware that no complaint to police would ensue. The ideal response to such an affront is violence, but not all possess the resources, capability or desire needed for summary retribution. ST then tells them that they are working for maybe half the national minimum wage and suffer taxation rates on their income through drug sales — at times — as high of 100 per cent. If this is a business model, it has no future.

While on the topic of income, ST asks rhetorically, 'How will you make money in the future? Do you fancy being broke at 23? There's so much "beef" (that is, potentially violent

hostility) around here you can't even earn legally. To go four miles (from Beckton) to Stratford (the transport and commercial hub of Newham borough) you have to take a (mini) cab there and a cab back (as opposed to public transport) 'cos you can't take the tube' (an admission that entering areas 'belonging' to enemies necessitated cab rides rather than journeys by public transport at a tenth of the price). All recognise this dilemma and laugh at the ludicrousness of the situation, which is neatly summarised by ST: 'You're stopping the flow of money and you can't even move in your own neighbourhood.' At this point Danny, who had recently completed a three-year custodial sentence for discharging a shotgun in the direction of a drug-market rival, interjects, explaining: 'This is so real … I recently promoted a "rave" in Stratford and I lost money. Why? Because the club security wanted extra men as they'd heard some of the others (youngsters from areas 'other' than Stratford) were going to turn up and fight which means many people, fearing the beef, didn't turn up. If there'd been no beef I would have made money and I would have invested in other areas. All could have eaten nice (made some income).'

If the devil makes work for idle hands then God-inspired employment might offer an antidote to such a path. Informing those sat around him of the futility of their ways is one thing, but ST has to offer an alternative existence which for all bar one around the table requires gainful employment. He thus tells them of a business model which requires three things of them: they have to commit to accept week-by-week help, join the TAG programme and 'work with what you've got'. The latter commitment requires those in school to study, those out of school to consider business opportunities and all, regardless of their age and status, 'to put the community above self, get out of the ghetto mentality, forget the *bling* (jewellery and expensive branded accoutrements), and stay out of the game'.

A wider context is provided by ST: 'This may sound superficial, but in truth why I'm here is as much about stopping innocent people getting killed as about youse.' This leads to him probing what they consider to be future ambitions. The issue of respect is raised with a new dimension offered. ST explains: 'What you call "respect" is actually not about fighting … the respect a man gets in life … is based in how you can help people. You've got to put down noise (fracas between members of rival groups) and guns and get off the road. In a few years you'll be lucky to have wives and kids (one individual in the room has a child — he is aged 17). Who's gonna' pay for your kids food and school? Are you going to settle down with a girl with that life? Are you gonna' be 29-years-old sticking up people (robbing people at knife- or gunpoint), thinking you're bad? (All nod approvingly.) And that's why I'm here; squashing the beef' (reducing the sources of conflict). The enormity of the task is brought home as Asa explains that the problem is their Woodgrange equivalents.[14] According to Asa, who was a victim of a recent beating at the hands of youths from the Woodgrange district, they must strike up the first apology to end matters: 'They rushed (collectively attacked) me first — they have to say sorry.'

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[14] Taking their name from a district of Newham, in 2012 the 25 young men who gathered under the banner of 'Woodgrange' attained London-wide notoriety via a YouTube video titled 'Who's That Click'. This five-minute clip showed the gang rapping and subtly insulting neighbouring groups. The video attracted more than 250,000 views. It was eventually taken down from the website following an appeal to YouTube by Newham police in conjunction with Newham Council.

The ensuing silence is again broken by ST, who looking around the room asks, 'How do we stop all this?' One youth ventures the following argument, stating: 'If we (Beckton) come off, the rest have to do the same. Trust is needed. We need to know we're all on the same thing'. Another youth, hitherto silent, chips in: "There's six groups (named 'gang' entities) on Newham — so which crew do we start with? I agree, I don't want my kids going down this road, and I don't want my daughter taking a bullet from a stray shot.'

ST implores the youngsters to divert their resources into family life. Their current endeavours, he explains, are destined to flounder or fail. Legitimate revenue streams would be more lucrative. They already possess the means to be successful. What is required is a reappraisal of methods and priorities. To 'put the community above self' is a not only virtuous commitment but holds the prospect of acquiring status in the wider community. Conscientiousness would secure such an elevated status and, consequently, material betterment. This is salvation in the here and now.

Before the group depart, ST exhorts them to come again and bring their friends, but warns that if anyone in the interim 'beefs' (continues gang-based vendettas) they are not to come back. The words seem to register and the departing Asa states aloud: 'I'm squashing the beef' (i.e. ending hostilities). A couple of others nod slowly in approval but say nothing. All present are asked to clasp their hands together in prayer and close their eyes while ST asks for God's blessing on all in the room and on all that they hold sacred. His closing word of 'Amen' is repeated by all eight, who then go their separate ways.

Compelling Subjects: Selfhood and Rehabilitation in TAG
In this section we seek to build a picture of TAG's subject of intervention; that is, to paraphrase O'Neill (2013), the individual imagined and acted upon by the imperative to intervene. In his study of the US-based programme aimed at preventing young people in La Paloma, Guatemala, from joining gangs, O'Neill found that the forging of selfhood was a two-way street: 'This "subject of prevention" includes at-risk youths … but also (and increasingly so) evangelical Christians who self-consciously craft their subjectivities through their participation in gang prevention — as ministers, missionaries, and mentors' (2013: 205).

This alternative way of life was consonant with an alternative ethics. Unlike other Pentecostal-inspired interventions, a reformed life did not mean retreat into a 'separate' religious community. The meaning derived from involvement with Pentecostalism could be carried over into life amid the wider community. This offered the prospect of comfort, safety and, potentially, affluence. Indeed, two of ST's most compelling appeals centred on the possibility of making money through legal channels, and parlaying masculine capital amassed in gang life within the sphere of the wider community. In leaving behind the 'ghetto mentality', young men could transpose rather than relinquish certain strains of their masculinity.

In observing the work of TAG it became clear that here, too, the business of self-cultivation was reciprocal. ST's speeches indicated that, for him, the work of intervention represented an ongoing process of redemption. Even though his days as an enforcer were behind him, ST's overtures to young people relied heavily on his past exploits, many of which involved violence and intimidation. Indeed, the respect that these young people had for him was not

solely bound up with his role as rehabilitator; it was contingent on his violent past — a potential which would never again be realised. Such a process required a biography and a confession. As ST explained to all present to the aforementioned meeting:

> 'You mess up your life based on a lie. I and others in this room have come through the pain barrier. I've been "played", and I reckon I've been a dickhead … My game was extortion. I had a big reputation and I was a Rasta (sporting dread-locked hair). I didn't look normal and I could walk around alone in any borough South and East (London). I could and did pull up any man without a gun. Was I a good fighter? No, but if I got "marked-up" (injured at the hands of a rival gang) cars would have ridden up and shot down the street. I took money (robbed with the threat of violence). I could approach a Bred' (friend) and if he was rude, and I had to ask again, he got a gun put in his face. I got out because of a "West" (West London versus South London) issue — Notting Hill and Shepherd's Bush booked a rave on Brixton. This was rude, they didn't ask our permission. Me and others were asked to ride up in a car. As we did, I got an unease. I said "Stop the car, something's not right". In the boot of the car were five guns. I ducked out. I never killed anybody. In those days, you didn't kill your own: it wasn't black-on-black. I got called everything (in patois he recites the insults he received from his associates). The next day I read about 20 people being shot that night in the venue.'

This knowledge was crucial in acquiring the listeners' respect. ST's stories were salutary not only in underlining his masculine capital, but in positioning his young charges as subjects of intervention. Alongside this, changes in the complexion and dynamics of SYV in London were useful in fashioning subjectivities along the lines of 'race', competence, experience and masculinity. ST situated the plight of his audience in relation to the wider context of organised crime and of his own experiences as a 'serious' gangster. This device was used to sketch the lines of both his own and his recruits' sense of selfhood. For the latter, these concerned the somewhat hapless attempts to navigate the racial politics of organised crime. For the former, they marked an ongoing road to redemption. ST's sermons also touched upon a latent religiosity and the role of parenting.

In the Name of the Father

For many of those TAG reached out to, rehabilitation involved a return to, rather than discovery of, the religious life. Most young men with whom ST dealt had attended church regularly as youngsters; so, involving themselves in religious life represented a gathering up of slackened spiritual reins, as opposed to being something wholly new. Entering the Methodist Church's function room, ST explained that many of the local teenage boys with whom TAG worked knew the location well as 'They once came here as little kids on Sunday mornings, dragged by their Mums.' Their refusal to attend church as teenagers was not prompted by an alternative belief system but by the view that church attendance was for the conformists among their peers, those who dressed smart on Sundays and sang in praise of the Lord in the company of parents — many of them fathers.

The notion of 'manhood' was as integral to the work of TAG as it was to the ambitions of those it challenged. In a conversation we had after the described session, ST elaborated on the circumstances that created aspiring young gang members:

'Forget the "Big Man" gangster stuff around here, because once you have a gun, you are your own man and no one gives you orders. Guns come from all over down this end: Bosnians, Lithuanians, white criminal networks. Black guys don't have structures like them. Neither do they have the markets for the straps (guns) so they have to buy second-hand. A 9mm cost £300, a Glock £450, a MAC10 £800, an Eagle Eye £600. The ammo (ammunition) comes with the guns. The thing is, there's no target practice or training ... that's the reason why these black youths can't really shoot straight; they buy a piece (gun), and use it the next day but can't control it and that's how innocents get killed or maimed. These black kids need telling they are not "gangsters", because unlike their white counterparts, they don't make money. White gangs don't live with their Mums. White gangsters don't live in blocks with piss-filled lifts and their children don't go to no-hope comprehensive schools …'

The causation for the situation so many young black men found themselves in was multifaceted. Having once lived the life and having for years engaged in attempts to change mind-sets, ST was forthright in explaining what he saw as familial deficiencies and their consequences:

'I would put family breakdown as a major cause. It's not parenting *per se*, some of their homes are nice and some have a good family network, but it's too female-centred for many of these boys. There's a common denominator in many of these boys' lives, and that is the absence of a father. A good father would make all the difference and go a long way to stopping all this. As it is, some of them are in their mid-teens and end arguments about their behaviour with their Mums by punching them … Some look to religion as well. Danny has recently come out of prison. He "got" Islam when inside. But for many of them it's a fashion because a true Muslim wouldn't tattoo their bodies or fornicate or make rap music or provoke violence…'

In attempting to refashion the subjectivities of the young men who listened to his talk, ST also reinforced his own identity as rehabilitator and rehabilitated. Teenagers involved in SYV were usually fatherless, deluded, naïve and in many ways inexperienced, and they struggled to reconnect with a faith they last encountered as children. Rather than challenging the societal structures which saw young black males born and raised in marginal areas of the city, often in female-headed households, TAG was abidingly Pentecostal in its attempts to rehabilitate young people through faith, one individual at a time. Overseeing their rehabilitation was ST, whose continuing path to redemption was contingent on saving these youngsters. Their fecklessness, haplessness and hopelessness shaped not just ST's approach to rehabilitation but, one might argue, his own sense of self.

TAG's championing entrepreneurship is consistent with the teachings of Pentecostalism. The road to salvation is reminiscent of debates surrounding the Pentecostal movement. By encouraging relinquishing gang activity through religious conversion, Pentecostalism offers young men the chance to trade the hyper-masculinity SYV/gangs for the 'soft patriarchy' of heterosexual domesticity. This is soft patriarchy with hard edges, however. Indeed, sociologist of religion Bernice Martin contends that the movement encourages a radically individualised self-consciousness which acts as a fitting primer for the realities of neoliberal capitalism. For Pentecostalism, she argues, 'business is the business of selfhood' (1998: 129).

The Here and Now

In drawing to a close, we should connect the issues of space and subjectivity to the broader themes discussed earlier. The first of these relates to the kind of salvation held out by TAG and, more generally, the appeal of Pentecostalism. The *motif* of salvation was certainly evident in the work of TAG but tailored to local conditions and mind-sets. The imminent and immediate reality took precedence over contemplation; ST used words rather than religious texts, realising that in interventions of this nature quoting psalms and parables was a waste of time. Thus, TAG meetings avoided engagement with religious scripture, even if young men admitted their past misdeeds through forms of quasi-religious confession. No mention was ever made of an afterlife.

Salvation therefore largely consisted of being saved by TAG from premature death as a result of SYV/gangs. However, within this closer-time horizon, worldly redemption also promised material gain. Business opportunities could be pursued which were not only legal but broadly consistent with Pentecostal values. By making the most of their skills — some of which were currently being used to express and embroider gang rivalries, ST sought to harness elements of young people's racial, gender and class identities to a set of coherent, alternative ethical principles. As underlined throughout this article, however, adhering to this ethic was a task for the individual. Rather than setting up redemption as an induction into the sacred from the realms of the profane, a pair of more worldly proxies had to be stressed. Swapping 'The Road' along with its dubious and elusive trappings for the 'community' promised not just a more meaningful but most likely a more lucrative existence.

Constantly stressing the racial politics of both organised crime and the wider society, ST set up an opposition between structure and agency and vowed that redemption would come via the latter. Tapping into the vein of a shared history of oppression along racial lines, he emphasised the futility of seeking an income within criminal-entrepreneurial structures ultimately dominated by white gangsters. The 'white man' — characterised as 'The Man' — occupied a superior position within the hierarchies of both acquisitive enterprise and organised crime. The same man raked in the profits from both contexts while remaining aloof from observable day-to-day criminal activities. Furthermore, whereas he might curry favour with the police through bribery, some police would disproportionately target the ethnic-minority gangs

operating at neighbourhood level.[15] Those TAG sat and walked amongst were the low-hanging fruit that were picked for crime statistics. In terms of selfhood, whereas the 'subject of intervention' was naïve, immature and incompetent, the 'subject of redemption' was realistic, shrewd and committed to family and community. These newly-forged qualities would see the latter pursue legal, sustainable opportunities and cultivate deep and enduring relationships.

Conclusion: A Place on Earth

The efficacy of the work of TAG — and ultimately, of ST's words — was, like all interventions promoted in the criminal justice system, difficult to prove. Those funding TAG were forever seeking to quantify the organisation's interventions. They wanted 'results', ideally manifested in a reduction in the number of SYV-related crimes recorded in the borough. This constituted value for money in a system that sought to quantify and monetize everything and was unable (or unwilling) to comprehend and indeed tolerate notions of spirituality and the slow progress that might typify personal redemption. The change that the police and politicians wanted from these young men also required alternatives to scripture for the recalcitrant; enforcement (the application of criminal charges in the pursuit of convictions and in many cases custodial sentences) was therefore a policing option. With the various structures of crime and security ranged against them, going legit and relinquishing the 'ghetto mentality' made business as well as spiritual sense. In this powerless position, the paradox was that retreating into a community of like-minded individuals represented the best way forward and, more concretely, the most likely prospect of material improvement.

As with all religious faiths, that sought and that lived were not always consistent. Indeed, here faith tended to be specified rather than actualised. One year after the aforementioned meeting, Danny received a six-year jail sentence for sexual assault, possession of an offensive weapon and attempting to prevent the course of justice. Asa, however, left 'The Road' and obtained legitimate employment in a government-funded training programme. There remained much work to do in this milieu, as at the time of writing levels of serious youth violence in the U.K. were at their highest since the 'riots' of 2011 (Hamilton 2016). The protagonists of SYV/gangs were thereby spoken to in various tongues by parents, peers, police and the proselytisers of TAG. However, the gift of the discerning spirit was not always theirs; many needed a guiding light and in ST and TAG they found an inspiring and caring intermediary as

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[15] In some ways, this interracial dynamic has parallels with the early twentieth-century beginnings of the Pentecostal movement. The man credited with organising the first institutionalised practice of Pentecostalism, William Seymour, the son of former slaves, learned from white preacher Charles Parnham the doctrine that glossolalia (or speaking in tongues) was evidence of a Christian being infused with the Holy Spirit. Seymour was given permission to listen to Parnham's lectures, but only through an open door while sat in the corridor of a Bible School in Houston, Texas. Although Parnham was initially supportive of Seymour's attempts to spread the word of Pentecostalism, as a sympathiser of the Ku Klux Klan he disapproved of the co-presence of whites and blacks at religious gatherings, and the two became dissociated, forming the (black) Church of God in Christ and the (white) Assemblies of God, respectively (Espinosa 2014). One might therefore identify a religious precedent for the racial division of labour in the drug distribution market so lamented by Thomas.

well as someone they could admire and enjoy talking with. Ideally, having listened and learned, the young men would in true Pentecostal style be 'running the aisles' and no longer deluding themselves that they ran the streets of East London.

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How the Crisis Helped Informality Re-enter the Temple:
A New Sicilian Custom[1]

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This article builds upon ethnographic material collected mostly in the Sicilian coastal city of Messina and in its provincial area over the last twenty years. Through an examination of how publishers have changed their book launches, selling behaviour and venues following the global economic crisis, I suggest that a multilevel uncertainty produced by ambiguous practices has slowly turned informal transactions into culturally accepted norms within the community, as well as penetrating locations, both sacred and profane, previously denied to them.
Keywords: Messina, Sicily, publishers, authors, distributors

Introduction

Messina is known for having suffered a political 'cumulative inconsistence' of choices (Moraci forthcoming), as well as sheer inability, collusion with supra-regional powers, immoral parochial choices and managerial incompetence (Mollica 2012), which has led people to what Pardo (2004) conceptualized as a generalised distrust in the institutions. In the Messina case, this is to be considered in the face of a devastating economic crisis that, just in 2015, contributed to the closure of some one thousand economic activities. In this article, I address this issue through an examination of how publishers have changed their book launches, selling behaviour and venues following the global economic crisis. I shall suggest that the uncertainty produced by new practices has slowly turned informal transactions into culturally accepted norms within the community.

Messina is the third-largest city on the Mediterranean isle of Sicily, after Palermo and Catania, and the thirteenth-largest city in Italy, with a population in September 2015 of 238,842 (Istituto nazionale di statistica 2015a) and of 641,734 in the provincial area (Istituto nazionale di statistica 2015b). Messina is located near the northeast corner of Sicily on the so-called Strait of Messina, facing the town of Villa San Giovanni and the city of Reggio Calabria in continental Italy. The distance from the mainland, at its narrowest point, is 3.1 kilometres. Such a short distance has led to a longstanding debate on the possible construction of a suspension bridge that could connect the isle with mainland Italy. The debate has strongly influenced the political agendas of all national parties as well as the recent socio-political and economic lives of the cities of Messina and Reggio Calabria, the isle of Sicily, and the Region of Calabria (Mollica 2012, Sacco and Scotti 2013).

Messina's main resources are its seaports (commercial and military shipyards), cruise tourism, commerce and agriculture — mostly wine production and cultivation of lemons,

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oranges, mandarin oranges, and olives (Mazza 2007). Messina hosts a Roman Catholic Archdiocese and Archimandrite seat and is home to a locally important international fair. The city boasts the University of Messina, founded in 1548 by Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the first Jesuit school opened by the Society of Jesus. I graduated from that university in the nineties. The city was completely destroyed in 1908 by the most devastating European earthquake and tsunami of the last several centuries, claiming some 80,000 victims just within the city, a city that was then the third-largest populated centre in Italy after Rome and Naples. Messina never completely recovered (Motta and Altarozzi 2008, Caminiti 2009). Large earthquakes and tsunamis usually hit the city every century.

The discussion that follows builds upon a multi-sited ethnography and in-depth interviews, focus groups (Barbour and Kitzinger 1999) and above all participant observation that I conducted mostly in the Sicilian coastal city of Messina and in its provincial area over the last twenty years. The ethnography on which I draw is to be considered 'multi-sited' (Coleman and Von Hellermann 2011) because although it focuses mainly on Messina it also covers the province, the isle of Sicily as a whole and other cities in mainland Italy. I have used the expression multi-sited in inverted commas in view of the several fascinating and longstanding methodological and theoretical problems posed by multi-sited fieldwork in urban settings as they have been recently and extensively discussed by Prato and Pardo (2013), and in full awareness that these problems are far from being solved.[2]

For the purpose of this article, the challenging conclusions reached in the analysis of informal transaction in two coastal, harboured and highly complex and dynamic Southern Mediterranean urban ethnographies are particularly relevant. I refer to the work of Manos Spyridakis (2012) in Piraeus and of Italo Pardo (2012; also, of course, 1996) in the Southern Italian city of Naples. Spyridakis's study of former Keranis workers in the Greek city of Piraeus shows how workers struggle to cope with the extremely difficult conditions created by market forces. Pardo's seminal work on legitimacy, governance and entrepreneurship in Naples brings out a number of economic transactions that take place at the margins of the law and are significantly connected to fully legal business practices. In conducting the fieldwork *at home* (Prato and Pardo 2013) on which this article is based, I faced the challenges posed by gathering data both in multi-sited ethnographies and in informal economic networks. My role as researcher was visible, including in sensitive situations. Perhaps most important, I am 'known' locally because of my past and ongoing research on local history and popular culture and because I live in the area, though not as a permanent resident.

Given these caveats, the aims of this article are threefold. First, it will attempt to show whether informal practices in the world of book production and sale serve as a way to solve new tensions, which sellers and purchasers are not capable of managing through conventional means. Second, it will examine the extent to which informal practices produced by the global economic crisis have changed the morphology of spaces that sellers and purchasers previously saw as untouchable. Third, it will consider the way in which the economic sector represented by small publishers reacted to pressure from large book distributors.

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[2] See, for instance, Marcus' (1995) and Falzon's (2009) conflictual ideological positions.

In order to accomplish these aims, I will begin by recounting how I got involved with a publisher and consequently with book launches, first as a novelist and local historian and then as a university researcher. I will then outline my experience over the last twenty years with reference to locations and changing selling and buying behaviour in book launches. I will place a major emphasis on the limitations introduced by the so-called Brunetta Law in 2009 (Law 150/2009) and on the consequential informal practices adopted to flout those limitations. The chronological descriptions of personal events will intersect peculiarly local and wider dramatic changes related to the global economic crisis. Finally, I will describe the means devised by small Sicilian publishers to try to counter the effects of the economic crisis on their jobs. Given my personal involvement and the massive use of entries from my diaries as well as self-reflections, what follows will be narrated in the first person. This additional caveat is relevant as it concerns me first as a participant and then as an observer and an interpreter — and the fact that I will only speak of book launches in reference to this *parallel* activity of mine, thus not referring to any academic publication.

Redeeming a Young Novelist
In the mid-1990s, determined to put an end to the sentimentally turbulent final phase of my bachelor studies, I decided to write a book about love. After a relatively short gestation, I produced a historical novel with a tragic end. I took part in a regional literature competition, which I won. By chance, I met a publisher who decided there was a pretty good chance that that passionate love story historically framed in my native area (north eastern coastal Sicily) could sell. The novel was titled *Il Pianto delle Ciaule* (The Cry of the Daws, Mollica 1995) and was priced at 16,000 Italian lira, approximately 8 Euros. The publisher turned out to be right, as the book was reprinted three times and became part of the curricula of some gymnasia in the province of Messina.

Let me explain that from now on I will use the word 'province' for descriptive reasons only, because the province of Messina, like the other eight provinces in the island, was abolished by a Sicilian law on March 11, 2013 (*Gazzetta Ufficiale della Regione Siciliana* 2013, No. 13). However, it took more than two years of acrimonious debate for the Sicilian Parliament to pass a new law (July 30, 2015) to define borders and competencies of the new territorial units that were meant to replace the old provinces. They were given a new name, Liberi Consorzi (Free Associations of Local Authorities; *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Regione Siciliana* 2015, No. 32). Meanwhile, the three largest cities (Palermo, Catania, and Messina) were given the new status of 'metropolitan cities'. According to some politicians, this change was expected to create a serious blackout in the administration with huge financial repercussions for at least 14,000 public employees. But 'province' was then and still is more than a hybrid administrative entity. In spite of the relatively recent creation of the first fifty-nine Italian provinces in 1861 in the then-new Kingdom of Italy, the name carries deep cultural and linguistic peculiar features which still today overlap the historically sensitive boundaries of the Sicilian Catholic archdioceses and dioceses, including that containing my native region, whose history was part and parcel of my novel.

Indeed, my novel relied on a systemic description of the territory, mostly based on ecclesiastical sources, as it was set before the abolition of feudalism.[3] The local Bishop was lord of the area, thus maintaining both ecclesiastic and religious powers (Mollica 2003 and 2004). The novel contained a chapter about a tragic sexual interlude in the basement of a seaside medieval tower settled in the tempestuous early 19th century of Sicilian history. However, my romantic vein had not yet run its course, as just two years later, the novel gave birth to the lyrics of a Sicilian-language historical musical. The musical was set on the bicentenary of the reconstruction on the coast of a hilly medieval town, with all its churches and palaces. The piece, *Petra supra Petra* (Stone upon Stone) was represented in public squares and small theatres a dozen times (Mollica 1997).

We were, in the meantime, approaching the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. One winter evening in 1998, I received a call at my parents' house from the Bishop of my dioceses, whom I had met once or twice but never expected to receive a call from. He told me that he had received a call from my publisher, who was interested in publishing a book for the Great Jubilee and asked whether I wanted to write a book on the most famous sanctuary of the area; that is, the Church of the Virgin Mary of Tyndaris (Tindari). I said yes, and the following day I went to Messina and signed a contract with my publisher, who agreed to pay me one million lira (approximately 500 Euros) for the work.

Tyndaris is a well-known tourist attraction because of a nearby Greek theatre and the ruins of a Roman town that even Cicero had written about (*Action V in Verre* cit. in Mollica 2000: 50). The nearby Catholic Marian sanctuary is the second-most-visited place of pilgrimage in Sicily after the sanctuary of the Weeping Madonna of Syracuse. The place gained additional visibility when, in 2000, one of the most-read European novelists, the Sicilian, Andrea Camilleri, titled one of his bestsellers *Gita a Tindari* (Excursion to Tyndaris, 2000). The following year, this bestseller became a movie, part of the TV series *Il Commissario Montalbano* (Inspector Montalbano), based on Camilleri's books and broadcast on prime time on the main public Italian national channel, RaiUno, and later by the BBC (BBCFour).

Thus, the Bishop officially endorsed my publisher's idea because I was a young writer and, apparently, a promising local historian. However, friends told me years later that rumours in the dioceses pointed to the fact that he wanted to redeem me (and my reputation) from that erotic chapter I had included in my 1995 novel. If the rumours were correct, I had to assume that he had read my novel, including that chapter.

Unfortunately, my romantic vein did not last long and neither Camilleri's book nor the connected TV series had any dramatic impact in the coming decades on the sales of my Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 book on Tyndaris (Mollica 2000). However, that experience left a personal mark in the form of a strong attachment to local history and manuscripts held in parish and dioceses archives. This attachment was so strong that I applied to perform my Civil

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[3] Feudalism was maintained until 1810, when it was abolished by the Sicilian Parliament, although its abolition was sanctioned by the king two years later.

Service[4] with the local diocesan Caritas after graduation, helping to catalogue manuscripts. Once I completed my Civil Service, I started writing books on local history for the same publisher (Mollica 2003 and 2004). I kept publishing with him in the following years and also received small municipal research grants to investigate local history. It became a sort of parallel activity to my early university career and to another (however much more rewarding and strictly informal) activity also linked to local history, as I carried out genealogical research for rich Sicilian migrants to North America.

In the meantime, I started touring Sicily with my publisher, visiting libraries, schools and public institutions in Messina and in small villages, towns and cities in the province. I soon found myself launching not my own books (which were few) but someone else's books. This process never stopped, not even when, at the end of the year 2000, I moved to Leuven, Belgium, to pursue my doctoral studies. Since then, every time I have returned to Sicily (on average, six times a year), I have continued to launch books. Sometimes, I see the book I am going to talk about just a few hours before the launch.

However, in the year 2000, when my book on the Great Jubilee was published, I participated in around fifty book launches in one year, mostly on Sundays before or after mass, and we toured almost all parish churches of my dioceses.

I should also mention a number of international book fairs across Italy. In my case, I launched my books with the same publisher at the international book fairs in Pisa, Turin, and Rome (the most important in Italy). Over the last five years, I have also started launching books in Tuscany, both because I am currently based at the University of Pisa and because my publisher, for reasons that will become clear later, opened a branch in central Italy, in the Marche Region. As I was often in central Italy, and could easily cover a number of regions, my publisher started asking me to launch books in Tuscany, where he now has some two dozen local authors.

So, I found myself in the midst of it when the global economic crisis hit and can testify as to how the habits of my publisher (as well as those of other Sicilian publishers) changed. Gradually, I saw him (and the others) starting to engage in new kinds of tours, first in Sicily, then in Italy and now apparently also outside Italy (as he has recently talked about traveling by car as far as Istanbul).

Book-launching Informality on Consecrated Soil
The chronology of the mostly personal events that I have outlined, runs parallel to formal and informal economic practices. With reference to selling and buying policies, a number of stages help define these practices and map their impact. In terms of locations, I will look at public (mostly city halls) and private (mostly churches) places. Needless to say, I will examine these stages through my own memory and files with a high degree of engagement

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[4] At that time, military service was compulsory for all male Italian citizens. However, regulations allowed people to opt, instead, for 'civil service'. The Statutory military service was abolished on December 31, 2004.

that cannot be hidden or denied, as cannot hide or deny that I did and still do enjoy launching books.

When I started book launching in 1995, and until 1999, I was mostly involved in Sicily and operated in 'traditional' — private and public places, both indoors (city halls, public libraries) and outdoors (squares, gardens). One of the first events was the book launch of a small pamphlet containing the lyrics that I wrote for the historical musical *Petra supra Petra* (Mollica 1997). The pamphlet was sold mostly outside the main village church following an early-spring Sunday Mass, and it was advertised during the homily, as the piece was about a religious representation and the main sponsor was the parish church. This kind of book was usually sold by young parish volunteers outside the church, in accordance with the tradition of putting the books on a stand in the *piazza* facing the main church portal, from which the congregation exit after mass. Most book launches took place in public places, such as town halls, although some took place in private premises. For example, I recall two events in a famous pub in the historical area of Messina.

I witnessed the first changes in the year 2000, while touring promoting my book on the Great Jubilee. My publisher never sold the books on consecrated soil, although we did usually speak at the end of the Mass beside or below the church pulpit or the main altar. I recall at least two book launches where my publisher sold books in the church rectory. On one occasion, the parish priest organized a party for my book and advertised it in the local papers and TV, which neither my publisher nor I expected. We later discovered that this was part of the priest's personal ideological war against some TV shows, one of which was scheduled for that very evening (21 December 2000): Canale 5, a national private TV channel, was broadcasting live the final of the Italian *Big Brother*.

That year, as the president of the province of Messina had financially supported my book on the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, many book launches took place in public places, including half a dozen in city halls and in the province hall. The President and the Bishop had written short introductions to the book. Publishers were accustomed to adopting this strategy. Getting political or religious leaders to write an *Introduction* or a *Presentation* implied that the authorities would directly support the publication (for example, by buying a certain number of copies for public libraries or schools, or as presents that their administrations would give to people during certain festivities). Although I was living outside Italy for work, I continued to be engaged in book launching for several years, as I published more local history books.

A big change occurred in 2010, when a national law known as the Brunetta[5] Law (law 150/2009), imposed restrictions on the locations and procedures of book launches. Indeed, this new law made it officially illegal to sell books in schools, municipalities, university buildings and even libraries located in those places. My informants in Messina and its province believed that this law was passed to forbid book launches, in the interest of the

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[5] Renato Brunetta is an Italian economist and politician. He served as Minister for Public Administration and Innovation under the third Berlusconi Cabinet from May 2008 to November 2011, coinciding with the start of the economic crisis.

largest book distributors. Needless to say, the Brunetta Law addressed much more than this issue. It included innovations considered 'good' by all sides — among them, the reform of public employment, the institution of annual targets for the Public Administration, introduction of mechanisms to assess merit in the Public Administration, the promotion of national and international mobility and the rationalization of disciplinary proceedings. And yet, as a consequence of the Brunetta Law it became impossible to sell books in city council buildings. Some small publishers went so far as to argue that the Brunetta Law was used by the state to help organized crime (the Mafia). Meanwhile, it became increasingly common to sell in new locations, such as functioning churches — sometimes just after the Holy Mass.

So, following the Brunetta Law, book launches had become unprofitable events. For the first year, the Brunetta Law was strictly enforced in all the places mentioned. Some key informants recall book launches banned even in areas not included in the prohibitions. The few book launches that my key informants held in municipal buildings, mostly in Messina, always started with the notice *Qui non si vendono libri* (Books are not sold here).

This state of affairs did not last long, though. After a year, book launches continued as before. However, the old practices resumed with some additions. Informal practices increased as the new law coincided with the beginning of the economic crisis. My publisher also resumed the practice of selling books, even though in most of the traditional places (such as public buildings) it had become technically illegal to do so. After all, to attend or even better to speak at a book launch is seen as something prestigious, and not just in the Sicilian tradition; especially if the event is close to or, better, coincides with local elections. Thus, just one year after the Brunetta Law came into being, mayors, council members, high-ranking public officials and police officers belonging to the Carabinieri or even to the Guardia di Finanza (Financial Police) again started attending book launches. Publishers resurrected the old practice of selling books; now, regardless of the ban, also in the presence of public officers, who were supposed to enforce the Brunetta Law but *in fact* legitimizing its transgression. Sometimes the latter even introduced the event, thus stressing further Pardo' point on the legitimacy of not strictly legal behaviour (Pardo 2000).

Seen through the publishers' eyes, the only 'technical' problem was the *locus*. Publishers are not required to issue receipts and have no limitations in terms of the number of books they sell, because early in production process everything has already been declared and therefore taxed. Only the place of sale was a problem. But what were technically 'illegal' places turned into places that acquired legitimacy through the active presence of those who were supposed to prevent the violation of the law.[6]

Meanwhile, book launches slowly moved also into consecrated locations, and they were eventually sold on the main altar. I was recently involved in this practice when a book of mine was presented in the main church of a village. The book was about mummified priests who were kept in the crypt of that very church (Mollica 2014). Something similar also happened in Montepulciano, a medieval town in Tuscany, where last year I was invited to speak about a

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[6] See Pardo (2000) on the key concepts of the legitimacy of behaviours that are not strictly legal and the illegitimacy of behaviours that are legal.

book on the timely issue of refugees arriving on the Sicilian island of Pantelleria, from the Maghreb or the Middle East (Rapisarda 2012). In both cases, the books were sold in front of the altar after the book launch.

So, reminiscent of the informal economic strategies of ordinary people in Naples (Pardo 2012) and the Piraeus (Spyridakis 2012), in recent years publishers have adopted new practices to improve their chances of selling books during the economic crisis and have devised ways to deal informally. At the International Book Fair of Pisa, my publisher sold for 10 euro a cookery book together with what was advertised as a Sicilian pumpkin. He brought to the International Book Fair of Turin a famous cook, who cooked in the publisher's stand and customers could buy *pasta al dente* and books. In 2000, he sold *Liquore di Fico d'India* (Prickly Pear Liquor) with a book on Sicilian conundrums.[7] In 2007, over two hours he sold alongside books two olive trees, ten boughs with fresh lemons and more than twenty mother-in-law's cushions (*Echinocactus grusonii*). In Calabria, *'nduia*, a traditional salami, was sold with books on traditional cooking. At the International Book Fair in Rome, my publisher sold books with pistachio, almond, walnut and hazelnut pesto, as well as salami, *cucunciagra* (capers pâté), and pistachio cakes. At the Siena City Council fair, he sold books with Brunello wine and *'nduia*. In Civitanova Marche, he sold books and *'nduia*. In the Sicilian town of Sinagra, at an international handicrafts trade fair for the day of the local patron saint, Saint Leone, he sold books with salami and *provola* cheese.

Encountering the Big Fish in Informal Waters

The economic crisis was clearly evident in terms of overall book sales. After a sharp decline that started in 2011, in 2015 book-reading statistics in Italy had become relatively stable compared to 2014. Book-reading was still much less common in the south of Italy, although in Sicily there was a small increase in 2015. However, between 2010 and 2014, household expenditure on books (as well as on newspapers and magazines) decreased by 18 per cent. This was a dramatic decrease, if compared with the 6 per cent decrease on overall expenditure on goods and services (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica 2015c).

At the same time, I saw that attendance was also decreasing at book launches. People were simply not turning up as before. As an informant explained, 'If a lady buys a book, then she cannot go to the hairdresser or buy a new dress. This (practice) is much more visible in rural areas where people are not going to book launches anymore' (informant #1). Traditionally, at book launches the public is expected to buy a book for at least two reasons. First, the member of the public usually knows the author, who expects the transaction to happen. Second, the person is expected to buy by other community members because of her/his attendance at the event. Since books are usually sold at the end of book launches, those attending the event but not willing to buy a copy of the book leave the room before the event ends, a behaviour that I have seen increase markedly in the last few years. Moreover, book prices have increased. As another informant explained, 'It is not just that the book is not seen as important anymore; people prefer other, less expensive forms of leisure, such as

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[7] In one day he sold the incredible amount of 120 books and 64 bottles of liquor.

Facebook. As a consequence, the *value* (my italics) of a book has enormously diminished'
(informant #2).

As part of the wider, documented reduction in book sales (Istituto Nazionale di
Statistica 2015c), also the number of books sold directly by small publishers at book launches
has decreased. Paradoxically, however, publication of new books has increased in recent
years. Would-be authors wanting to be published approach small publishers, who then use a
different publishing house name to avoid using the name of their main publishing house on
modest books while still publishing the new book for money. Rumours also point to the fact
that two of the largest Italian publishing houses, Feltrinelli and Mondadori, have recently
been publishing modest books charging authors between 8,000 and 10,000 Euros but have
carefully avoided publicising those books. However, despite the increase in the number of
books published, small publishers' overall publications have decreased. I found, for instance,
that small publishers who traditionally publish academic books in their own cities, faced a
huge reduction in demand as financial support for academic publications dramatically
decreased following cuts in Italy's public expenditure on research and development since
2009.[8]

In general, people are buying less for other reasons too. As an informant put it,
'Recently we have also the triumph of advertised books' (informant #2), pointing to pressure
to buy advertised books, while small publishers continue to face the extremely low prices
imposed by the so-called 'large distribution', which, as an informant told me, '[…] is on the
border of legality' (informant #1). He meant this pressure on buying 'advertised' books
causes serious problems for those trying to sell non-advertised books, implicitly destroying
the market. Big publishers are also affected. They pay for market imbalances, since they need
to publish as well as distribute; meanwhile, small publishers can more easily reduce their
distribution. The market is nevertheless damaged for three other reasons: too many authors;
joint selling of books with weekly magazines or newspapers;[9] online publishing. Online
publishing, for instance, means that anyone can publish his/her own book. As a consequence,
informants argue, customers select the easiest and cheapest choice. According to a key
informant, for instance, even if the economic crisis were not felt in the south as it was in the
north, people in the south of Italy saved more money (a point recently supported by Ferragina
2015), thus highly limiting their already weak allocation of money for books. As an informant
explained:

> 'Let's take the case of shopping centres. Beyond a normal discount of 15 per cent,
> no other discount should be allowed by law, as this (the 15 per cent discount) is a

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[8] In Italy, public expenditure on research and development is considerably lower than the average for
the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (Consiglio Universitario
Nazionale 2015).

[9] See for instance *Il mio libro* (My Book) and *Il Filo* (The Thread), property of the two largest Italian
publishing houses, the former belonging to the Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso S.p.A.
(http://ilmiolibro.kataweb.it/), the latter to the Gruppo Albatros controlled by the Arnoldo Mondadori
Editore S.p.A. (http://www.gruppoalbatros.it/).

discount not linked to the price of the item. In addition, shopping centres often lack expert bookshop assistants and just a few books are on the shelves. They do not operate as bookshops. Bookshops are, in other words, subject to unfair competition. Licences in those cases should not be granted because those commercial establishments do not have the features of a bookshop' (informant #1).

As an immediate consequence, shopping centres, including rest stops on Italian highways, have massive quantities of unsold books. Those books are then sold for 1 or 2 Euros to stock buyers of unsold books, who then proceed to sell them at street or flea markets. However, large publishing houses can rely on their own shopping centres; for example, Mondadori has the large Mediaset S.p.A. group, and Feltrinelli has the Supermarket chain GS S.p.A. Informant #1 gave me a powerful example. He said:

'Last year, I was in one of the oldest and most famous bookshops in Messina old city which recently is run just by the owner. A lady came in and asked for an Andrea Camilleri's book. She said she had just searched for that book in a famous shopping centre in the city but could not find it. She found the book she was looking for in the bookshop, approached the desk with the book in one hand and her wallet in the other hand. Then she asked the owner, who was at the desk, for a discount, adding that at the shopping centre there was a 15 per cent discount on all books on sale. The incensed owner started screaming at her and asked her to leave. He refused to sell her the book, which was probably one of the few he would have sold that morning' (informant #1).

In addition to the aforementioned problems, publishers lament the structured disinformation on book distribution, as customers can only see the 'lowest price'. However, for the publishers whom I interviewed the 'lowest price' policy involved not just the cannibalization of small bookshops, but also large distributors' competing with the extremely important 'local history' book market niche for schools. This 'local history' market traditionally belonged to small local publishers, who possessed the proper tools and know-how. Indeed, small publishers have traditionally seen schools located in their areas as target customers for their books, since they usually publish on local history and popular culture. However, selling to schools has recently posed additional challenges. Key informants report that, alongside the 'lowest prices' problem raised by large distributors, it has recently become common for book salesmen for large publishing houses to be allowed (illegally) by heads of schools and teachers to peddle their wares in the classrooms. As an informant puts it, 'They (the book agents) also act against the law because it is not just immoral to sell their poor-quality books but it is illegal to sell them in a classroom. Even more so, considering that the potential buyers are minors' (informant #2). This informant was reporting on a well-known common phenomenon involving vendors giving gifts to teachers and heads of schools, who let them enter the classroom. These gifts can either be coupons or coffee machines, which usually include coffee capsules.

Trying to Escape the Big Fish's Mouth: The 'Book Tour'

A key informant explained the need for a two-pronged strategy adopted to face the crisis. First, small publishers need to increase the number of book launches, as this will help them reduce distribution costs. Second, increasing book launches brings higher visibility, which in turn helps to improve their chances to meet people and reach both new authors and new buyers. The latter point is extremely important, as it allows them to bypass the intermediate stage of distribution (which is totally outside their control). Indeed, distribution dynamics have recently become small publishers' main problem.

In terms of income, until a few years ago publishers and distributors shared basically equal percentages. As a product of the crisis, distributors started asking for a higher share. In the last two years alone, distributors' share apparently grew from 55 per cent to 60 per cent. However, including mailing costs and the cost of books lost or damaged during shipment, the real cost grows to 65 per cent. So, distributors have taken advantage of small publishers' increasing difficulties. Over the last five years many small publishers have gone out of business, as they could not manage in what has become an increasingly competitive market. Others have been forced to work for large publishers or invent new strategies to survive in the market. At the same time, large distributors had a strong interest in setting up a monopoly in the sector, which also includes the north of Italy. However, while small publishers would not give 60 (let alone 65) per cent to large distributors, because they could not raise the prices of their books, large publishers could raise their prices, thus increasing their profit. As we have seen, the 'book tour' was one of the strategies adopted by small publishers, as a way of countering both the economic crisis and the large distribution while pursuing informal practices that I have described.

When my publisher goes for instance to the central Italian city of Bologna, he knows that he has a chance to distribute his books all the way from Sicily and back. He can stop in towns and cities where there will be book launches. Meanwhile, he can enter into direct negotiations with libraries, suggesting his books to them while getting his share from bookshops that are already clients. This is one way to bypass the large distribution while engaging local book buyers. Of course, even when he sells directly at a book launch or fair, he still needs to pay not only for travel, accommodation and food but also for the stand and probably a hostess. He thus needs to structure the book tour, and if he is unable to do this he does not leave Messina. On one occasion, as I needed to travel south from Tuscany, I took part in many small book tours as well as in two- to three-day book tours, as I needed a lift from Florence to Sicily, with a stopover in Rome, and my academic timetable coincided with that of my publisher.

This new strategy seems to be working, as my publisher recently told me that he is setting up an association of small Sicilian publishers in order to reduce the costs of the book tour. This association will allow a small publisher *on tour* to bring with him books published by other small publishers, who would contribute to the overall trip expenditure (fuel, accommodations, etc.), while saving on personal and other expenses. He argued:

'The big distributors are associated. Small publishers should do the same if they want to survive. We were here before the large distribution appeared and the Brunetta Law was passed and we want to be here still.'

Conclusion

In this article I have examined the impact of the global economic crisis on the modest, albeit highly symbolic, economic sector of small publishers. The research was multi-sited although mostly conducted in the Sicilian coastal town of Messina and its provincial area. I also played a direct role in the ethnography, as I have authored novels and local history books and was a privileged witness at several book launches. I have developed an analysis of the situation in line with what, drawing on his fieldwork on élite groups in the Naples, Pardo (2004) has conceptualized as a generalised institutional distrust. Pardo's argument on the legitimacy of not strictly legal behaviour and the received illegitimacy of laws that are received as unworkable or unjust (Pardo 2000) is confirmed here by both publishers' and consumers' flouting of the law at book launches in the presence of those who are supposed to enforce that very law. We have seen that in this ethnography the tension between citizens and the rule of law reaches its peak when the law enforcers endorse, in fact, that very violation by speaking at book launches, presenting books there or simply sitting, often in high uniform, in the front seats. This happens both in private settings where the selling, although morally debatable (as when it takes place on a church's main altar), is legal and in public settings (such as city halls or public libraries), where the selling is unequivocally illegal.

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Experiments in Civil Society in Post-war Urban Sicily: Danilo Dolci and the Case of Partinico 1955-1978[1]

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Italy and particularly the South have been stereotyped as corrupt. This portrayal is explained by the weakness of civil society which in turn is understood via the power of the Church and the family as well as the legacy of fascism. This article questions these assumptions arguing that proto-civil society experiments can be found in apparently unlikely places — Partinico in the Province of Palermo. The work of Danilo Dolci demonstrates that the practices of civil society — protesting, campaigning and lobbying — were already developing prior to the remaking of Italian politics and society post-1989.
Keywords: Civil society, corruption, non-violence, family, Southern Question, Church and State, cooperation, urbanisation

Introduction

This study originated from my interest in corruption in urban society. Much of the literature on corruption identifies Italy as a corrupt society and moreover that it is a low-trust society where social capital is weakly developed. It is argued that in these circumstances civil society[2] is correspondingly weak, as suggested by scholars such as Edward Banfield (1958), Robert Putnam (1993) and latterly by Paul Ginsborg particularly in his *Italy and Its Discontents: Family, Civil Society and the State 1980-2001* (2003). Ginsborg has suggested that civil society's development in Italy has been retarded by the power of the Church and the family. Here he follows Banfield. However, he develops a new narrative in which he argues that a stronger more vibrant civil society emerges after *c.*1989, which he attributes to the end of the Cold War causing the Christian Democrats to lose their *raison d'etre* as the bulwark against communism and also because of the impact of the liberal Pope John Paul whose *Familiaris Consortio* (1981): 'From the family citizens are born' had rejected traditional papal teachings which had emphasised the sacramental role of the family. Finally, Ginsborg suggests, the longer term effects of the growth of higher education from the 1960s onwards had created a new 'reflexive' middle class whose broader horizons enabled it to be responsive to social and political issues that were beyond mere self-interest. Moreover, they have adopted civil society participative techniques to defend the constitution of 1948; challenge the monopoly power of the *partitocrazia*; campaign to return utilities to public ownership; support free media; adopt anti-racist positions and above all to be anti-corruption (Nautz ed. 2013). Most important, as we shall see, the historical ethnography analysed here strongly suggests that these activities existed far before the 1989 (see also Prato 2000).

Before examining the work of Danilo Dolci in western Sicily in the 1950s and 1960s and the contention that corruption can be attributed, in part at least, to the weakness of civil society it is essential to consider the approach of historians, political scientists and

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[1] I am grateful to the Editorial Board of *Urbanities* and to the Journal's anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments.

[2] The literature on civil society is vast; for the present article, starting points include Morris (2006), Kumar (1993) and Ginsborg (1995). For the wider issue of trust see for example Fukuyama (1995).

anthropologists, specifically those who adopt an urban perspective (Pardo 1996 and ed. 2000). Historians have long borrowed analytical tools from other disciplines often to illuminating effect (See for example Darnton 1985). The contention of political scientists that corruption can be understood via the weakness of civil society is not without merit but it is essentially a circular argument that has probably been exhausted (Pardo and Prato 2011). Indeed Putnam's thesis has been criticised by John A. Agnew (2002) because it draws a rigid dichotomy between the north and south of the country claiming an inverse relationship between clericalism in the south and civic mindedness in the north without accounting for the variation within regions or indeed differences between places and spaces.

This case study then explores the work of Danilo Dolci (1924-1997) who promoted a range of projects — educational, environmental and economic — designed to provide a small urban community, Partinico, in Sicily with a political voice. Dolci arrived in Sicily in 1952 and headed to the small town of Trapetto where he initiated a series of self-help projects. He moved to nearby Partinico in 1955 where he established the *Centre for Research and Initiatives for Full Employment.* (CRI); and from these small beginnings additional centres were set-up in Roccameno, Menfi and Corleone. The establishment of the *Centre* in Partinico was perhaps the logical consequence of earlier experience in voluntary activity at the Nomadelfia community near Modena the patron of which was the Countess Pirelli. The community was directed by an inspirational renegade priest, Don Zeno Saltini. These experimental communities, of which Nomadelfia was one example, drew from various traditions: Christian missionary initiatives as well as Fourierist self-help experiments. These experiments suggested that the building of a civil society was a difficult task throughout Italy and not just in the south. Dolci was not a clear thinker but he was an inspirational organiser who was at ease as he said with 'the poorest of the poor'. Most important was Dolci's development of a repertoire of civil society practices — campaigning, petitioning, promoting broad spectrum social coalitions to lobby local councils, regional and national parliaments, using local radio, conducting social research, engaging in acts of civil disobedience to heighten awareness of injustice. Hunger strikes were his most dramatic tactic. The hunger strike was symbolic of poverty and in 1952 Dolci began his first fast after having written to the regional government in Palermo following the death of a child from malnutrition. The fast took place in the room where the child had died. After eight days Palermo responded with promises of funding for sewers and the provision of a pharmacy (Baldassaro 2015).

Understanding the culture of urban society in post-war Sicily has attracted considerable attention (J. Schneider 1969, J. Schneider ed. 1990, Cucchiari 1990, J. Schneider and P. Schneider 2003). Historians, however, have tended to call on the work of political scientists.[3] Dolci's work in the small town of Partinico south of Palermo opens up the possibility of analysis informed by anthropological perspectives and particularly urban anthropology (Prato and Pardo 2013, Pardo and Prato eds 2012) and the relationship between citizenship and governance (Pardo and Prato 2011). Dolci's activity as educator and political campaigner invites exploration not only of civil society practices but also of his writings — interviews

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[3] Most notably Robert Puttnam (1993).

with all manner of men and women — which provide rich oral testimony of the conditions of poverty, religious beliefs, realities of power, gender relations and much more. Indeed for his *Inchiesta a Palermo* (1956) and *Spreco: Documenti e inchieste su alcuni apetti dello spreco nella Sicilia occidentale* (1960) Dolci and his assistants conducted 500 interviews with people in Palermo and the surrounding small towns (Foot 1998; Dolci 1959, 1963 and 1981). Their testimonies provide 'thick description' of the life and culture of Sicilians in both urban and rural settings by means of analysis of texts, rituals, practices and language.[4] These proto-civil society activities were manifest fully forty years before Ginsborg's suggested turning point of 1989-1993.

Danilo Dolci and the Practice of Civil Society

Dolci, from northern Italy, came as a settler in a foreign land not dissimilar to Samuel and Henrietta Barnett at Toynbee Hall in London's East End in the 1880s. Comparable experiments had also occurred in the USA and Russia, of which Jane Adams' Hull House in Chicago founded in 1889, and Alexander Zelenko's network of settlements in northern Moscow in 1905-08 were perhaps the most notable. Dolci's activities and campaigns promoted proto-civil society practices in what had been regarded as a barren waste as far as civil participation was concerned; but the collapse of fascism presaged a new beginning as the Republic's Constitution declared, 'Italy is a democratic republic founded on work, [Article 1]; and, 'the republic recognises the right of all citizens to work and promotes the conditions which render effective this right' [Article 4].

Dolci's campaigns involved road building and other unauthorised 'public works' without pay, the so-called '*sciopero alla rovescia'* or strike in reverse. An initial action in 1956 resulted in his arrest along with fifty others, mostly day labourers. Following his arrest, Dolci stated that his aim had been to draw attention to the problems of unemployment and poverty. In some respects Dolci was building on notions of public works that had been promoted in the liberal phase of the Italian state and also in the Fascist era but which had not been effectively sustained. Indeed peasants' land hunger had prompted a peasant uprising at Marchesato in Calabria in 1943, which had in turn prompted peasant protests in Apulia, and Luciano in Sicily. Dolci's road building protest worked, as his action sparked protests of unemployed workers in Palermo, Rome and Trapetto.[5] The trial in Palermo became a *cause celebre* and a number of lawyers offered to defend Dolci and his supporters without a fee; but Dolci conducted his own defence and so he was able to test out the State's commitment to the Constitution, a classic exercise in civil society politics. The trial also attracted the support of members of the Italian intelligentsia — Alberto Moravia, Carlo Levi and Ignazio Silone. Dolci and his co-defendants were acquitted of resisting arrest and insulting the police but were found guilty of trespassing on public land and sentenced them to 50 days imprisonment (time they had already served while in police custody).

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[4] Geertz (1973); and for historians, Gunn (2006).
[5] *La Stampa*, February 1956 (http://www.archiviolastampa.it/, accessed 3 August 2016)

Dolci was often referred to in the Italian press as the 'Sicilian Gandhi' because of the emphasis placed on the power of non-violent resistance. If there was a connection between Dolci's thinking and Gandhi's it probably came via Aldo Capitini (1899-1968). Capitini had studied philosophy at the University of Pisa in the 1920s and he became an opponent of fascism but he abandoned his Catholic faith when the Vatican concluded the Lateran Treaty with Mussolini. Gandhi briefly visited Italy in December 1931 on his return from the Round Table conference in London and met with Mussolini who he may have regarded as a potential ally against Britain (Wolpert 2002). Gandhi's visit inspired Capitini to take-up promotion of the peace movement and non-violent protest as a political strategy (Fallica 2001). He was subsequently imprisoned twice in1942-43; but in July 1944 he established, in partnership with Emma Thomas, an English Quaker, the *Centre for Social Orientation* in Perugia. The *Centre* was essentially a political education device and similar centres were established in Ferrara, Florence, Bologna, Lucca, Ancona, Assisi and Naples. Capitini was active in numerous causes — the preservation of free education, vegetarianism, ecumenical religious activity as well as non-violence. In 1954 he promoted an international seminar in Perugia specifically to explore strategies of non-violent campaigning; and in 1961 he promoted a Peace March from Perugia to Assisi which became a regular event organised by the Brotherhood of Peoples. It was significant that Italy had adopted St Francis as its patron saint in 1939 and in 1946 the President of the new Republic went to Assisi to hear Cardinal Canali's homily. The number of pilgrims that visited St Francis' grave in that year reached a record high, an indication of the success of the Republic and the Vatican to popularize the saint (Guaina 2009). This kind of activity later became more secular in character and drew also from the British CND tradition but Capitini's slogan *Pace da tutti i balconi* ('Peace from every balcony') was a particularly evocative statement of a European wide pacifism that emerged in the 1960s. Capitini also introduced Dolci to Giulio Einaudi (1912-1999), the Turin-based publisher and it was this connection that drew Dolci into a wider intellectual *milieu* which included Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell, Ignazio Silone, Alberto Moravia and Carlo Levi. The scope of civil action in the new Republic encompassed social issues including poverty and unemployment; political issues, principally peace and non-violence; and economic issues involving public works such as roads, housing and irrigation.

It was in this environment that Dolci's thinking evolved. He recognised that the key issues were poverty, sanitation, irrigation, the Mafia and that the solutions to these issues were to be realised by the 'mobilisation of the discontented majority' (Dolci 1981: xxii). In this respect he drew on liberal reform ideas of land reclamation — the *bonifica integrale* — and the draining of marshes and wetlands, which had begun in the 1920s; and *bonifica montana* the reclamation of upland areas. His identification of irrigation was a key issue to promote profitable agriculture in the Belice valley which would potentially revive the struggling agro-towns of Partinico and Trapetto, both of which were racked by poverty. Dolci also conducted numerous social research projects most notable being his *To Feed the Hungry* (1959), which compassionately revealed the lives of road sweepers, cigarette sellers, market traders, building labourers, sulphur miners, card sharpers, leech doctors, snail gatherers,

beggars, women fish-curers and others on the margins of casual employment and poverty (Dolci 1956).

'We ought to get together, set up a co-operative and make work for ourselves'

'They ought to make the Constitution effective … Put [it] into effect with its rights and duties …'

'We ought to unite and do something for ourselves over and above what the parties are doing'

'First and foremost they [the parties] should observe the Constitution'

'Strikes are no good. The best thing to do is to get into the good graces of the Head of the Labour Bureau'

'No one was as good as me at getting grants … I knew all the politicians as I've belonged to all the parties in my time'. [Founder of Partinico Co-operative] (Dolci 1963).

Although there appears to be an underlying naïveté in most of these testimonies there was recognition of some of the political realities: the solutions to their problems resided not only in some form of self-help but also in attracting support outside the orbit of the *sottogoverno*.[6] The Constitution and its guarantees were known; solutions could be found in connections and negotiation with a representative of the regional government in Palermo — the Head of the Labour Bureau — even if there was an element of deference or a search for a patron. The peasants and artisans were essentially not dissimilar to the *popolino* (little people) of Naples whose 'cleverness' was essential for their survival (Pardo 1996). Overall, conduct might not conform to an ideal liberal model of civil society action, autonomous and articulate but the testimonies of Dolci's 'witnesses' reveal a link between 'moral behaviour' [in Palermo and Partinico] which informs their 'management of existence' in Pardo's sense (1996). Nevertheless the Centre was providing valuable civic education and signalling that public space could be occupied by the poor and the powerless. The activity of Capitini, Don Zeno Saltini, Dolci and many others illustrates a significant development: civil society exists not only in places but also in a space — social, political and physical — between the state and the family. But it is also an analytical space where the cultivation of horizontal solidarities capable of drawing together a broad spectrum of individuals and social types can be observed and understood.[7] It also has the potential to check the excesses of the political class and is therefore a bulwark against corruption. Civil society manifests three essentials: first, social self-organisation, as it is made up of a myriad of voluntary organisations, clubs, societies, pressure groups, charities which could empower citizens to retrieve public space for civil purposes. These organisations can also provide a critique of the prevailing excesses of

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[6] There were 'unofficial' agreements among DC, PCI, PSI which sometimes also included smaller parties like the PLI and the PRI. For an anthropological analysis of *sottogoverno*, see Prato (2000).
[7] See Kocka (2004) and Muir (1999). In the European context, historians (Nautz et al. 2013; see also Ginsborg 2014) have studied the relations between the state, the family and civil society.

contemporary power structures. Thus, in the 1970s and 1980s Leoluca Orlando led the *Città per l'Uomo* movement in Palermo, while in 1985 the newly established *Società Civile* in Milan proclaimed its intention, 'to liberate the city from the parties'. Secondly, civil society is shaped by liberal rather than revolutionary ideology and by definition accepts a plurality of political positions. Finally, and very importantly, civil society exhibits a series of practices including at least petitioning, lobbying, testing the justice of the legal system, civil disobedience as well as social reportage and analysis. Anthropologists have offered an articulated analysis of this issue. Prato (2011: 136-140) has contrasted a liberal understanding of civil society where the individual grants 'conditional legitimacy' to political powers to a Marxist view that civil society conceals the collusion between the State and dominant socio-economic classes (including Gramsci's addition of the cultural element to this alliance). In view of recent approaches that criticise the concept of civil society as a 'third sector' between the family and the state (which nowadays would include formally-organized, and sometimes ideologically-oriented, NGOs), Prato has suggested that it would be analytically more useful to address 'civil society' in terms of 'moral community' and that "social cohesion, trust, cooperation and solidarity are based on commonly held norms" (Prato 2011: 140).[8]

Dolci's international reputation grew throughout the 1960s and beyond and the CRI was instrumental in providing evidence on diet, health and wages as well as education and training in civil society approaches: the techniques of political organisation and campaigning. For example, in 1978 the activists in Partinico began a campaign for road improvement to link Partinico to the small town of Mirto. A delegation was set-up composed of the CRI, trade unions, the Mayor of Partinico and representatives of the political parties to lobby the Minister for Agriculture of the Regional Government. This campaign demonstrates clearly the transactional nature of civil society politics. Additionally, it invites consideration of the importance of urban spaces — the *piazza* — where public rituals such as the *passeggiata* provided a vehicle for information exchange, discussion and potential action. The estimated cost of the road project ranged from $150,000 to $250,000. Peasant small holders and labourers simultaneously lobbied the Regional Government offices. By July, at a Partinico council meeting a joint intervention involving the CRI and trade unionists broke the deadlock and the budget for the road was approved in August 1978. This campaign was perhaps more recognizably convention than the road building tactics that Dolci had led in the 1950s.

Dolci taught organisation, self-help, the accumulation of evidence to support reform campaigns, lobbying as well as symbolic protests. His charisma and adoption of ascetic forms of protest — he subjected himself to numerous publicly orchestrated fasts — were undoubted factors that contributed to civil society in Partinico. The hunger strike invites comparison with Gandhi's activities in India as a means of shaming British authorities into submission. Although, as I have mentioned, the wider European press referred to Dolci as the 'Sicilian Gandhi', it was more likely that the hunger strike in Sicily drew on a Catholic tradition. It represented a non-violent resistance to achieve justice and was allegedly practised by St Patrick in early Christian Ireland. But it also featured in the Revolutionary War of 1848 when Giuseppe Arcangeli eulogised upon the dead bodies of the 'Citizen Martyrs' killed in the

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[8] On trust as a fundamental aspect of legitimation and moral consent, see Pardo 2000: esp. p. 4.

Battles of Curtatone and Montanara, near Mantua.[9] He exhorted others to follow the martyrs whose blood was sacred. Indeed, Arcangeli's oratory was a mix revolutionary and religious metaphor (Riall 2010, Mollica 2012). Dolci's practice of the hunger strike or fast was closer to Terence McSwinney, the Catholic Mayor of Cork, who fasted for 74 days in Brixton prison in 1920 and the Hispanic Labour leader in California, Cesar Chavez, who endured a number of fasts between 1968 and 1974 and was certainly a much closer cultural contemporary of Dolci than Gandhi. The cult of Catholic martyrdom undoubtedly resonated in Sicily possibly levering in support from members of *Catholic Action*, the most important of the Catholic leagues; Dolci's missionary approach might also be regarded as a Christian calling (Moessner 1992, Sweeney 1993). Dolci's fasts were always carefully calibrated. In 1962 his campaign to secure the Iato Dam was carefully orchestrated with preliminary publicity and a protest march on the third day involving 2,000 people walking through the streets of Partinico (Baldassaro 2015). His courage in the Belice earthquake disaster of 1968 shamed the government into action and his earlier willingness to provide evidence to the Government's *Anti-Mafia Commission* (1963) made him a marked man. But the successes in respect of road building, the Iato Dam project, education provision were collective efforts that suggest the emergence of a proto-civil society in an apparently unlikely place. The Partinico project built horizontal solidarities within and without its immediate community and beyond the party machines. Key issues around work, infrastructure and freedom from Mafia intimidation were galvanising agents which mobilised the local population and generated a modest vibration on the Richter scale of local and regional power. Dolci's work was undoubtedly innovative but it is important to recognise that the growth of civil society in Sicily prior to *c.*1989-1993 was shaped by a range of factors: the *questione meridionale* or Southern Question, as well as the Church, the state and the family. While these cannot necessarily be seen as inhibitors, in Sicily and in the South more generally there were also a range of promotional factors, including the development of co-operative banking; urbanisation which provided places and spaces in which civil society could grow; peasant protests/movements could develop and so could structural demographic change which resolved longstanding problems including over-population, under-employment, inefficient under-capitalised agriculture.

Obstacles to the Development of Civil Society
Mezzogiorno and the Southern Question
The case of Dolci and Partinico qualifies Ginsborg's argument that Italian civil society has only emerged significantly since *c.*1989-93 because of long term developments in Italian society. In addition to the orthodoxy in respect of corruption and the political class in Italy it is important to recognise an additional orthodoxy: the presentation of the *Mezzogiorno* by politicians, writers, historians as backward and unchanging. Such orthodoxy has created the *questione meridionale* or so-called 'Southern Question'. The image of irretrievable backwardness and comparability with the underdeveloped world has left little space to consider civil society programmes. Further, Edward Banfield's idea of 'amoral familism'

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[9] These were mainly Tuscan and Neapolitan volunteers who, together with the 10th Regiment of the Army of the Kingdom of the two Sicilies, had joined the fight against the Austrians. Interestingly, they wore a tricolour cross as a 'federalist' symbol of a unified and independent Italy.

(1958) argued that southern society in Italy was marked by a family culture that excluded the outside world and denied all notions of social or communal responsibility (See also Hobsbawm 1969).[10] Indeed, 'amoral familism' has entered the lexicon of social theory to underpin arguments that assert that civil society and civic responsibility have been developed only weakly in the *mezzogiorno* and Sicily in particular (Levi (1947). The image of 'otherness' has also been accepted by historians with Judith Chubb's description of Palermo a notable example:

> 'Italy's sixth largest city is balanced precariously between Europe and Africa. Behind the façade of a prosperous metropolis, the crumbling slums, narrow twisting alleyways, and dank courtyards of the old city harbour conditions of housing, health and sanitation more reminiscent of a Cairo or a Calcutta than of a major European city.' (Chubb 1982: 1)

The 'Southern Question' was created in the 1870s by the reports and writings of Leopoldo Franchetti and Sidney Sonnino (1876) who highlighted the backwardness and poverty of the region south of Rome and including Abruzzo, Puglia, Calabria and Sicily. *La Sicilia nel 1876* (Franchetti and Sonnino 1877) was written in the form of a travelogue and constructed an image of savage barbarism and of what cultural theorists such as Edward Said would call 'otherness' and which later anthropologists have called 'Orientalism in One Country' (Said 1978, Schneider, J. ed. 1990, J. Schneider and P. Schneider 2003). Such a negative view was stretched still further by the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso in his *Criminal Man* which posited racial theory as an explanation of criminality (Lombroso 1896). Additionally, Sicilian novelists such as Giovani Verga (1882) and Tomasi di Lampedusa (1958) extolled the notion of the Sicilian 'essence' certainly for the aristocracy which encompassed an inherent fatalism and pure self-interest.[11] Later still Gramsci developed his thinking about the concept of hegemony arguing that the ideological sway of the *latifondisti* was assured by the teachings of the Church. The peasant, Gramsci says, feels his 'Powerlessness, his solitude, his desperate condition, and becomes a brigand, not a revolutionary, he becomes an assassin of the *signori,* not a fighter for communism'.[12] Such a view was also accepted by historians of the left including Eric Hobsbawm in his short study of social banditry (1969). However, Gramsci's thinking is much more agile than might first appear. Indeed he extolled the view that man could change his environment by recognising it as an 'ensemble of …relations' that could be changed.

The Family, the Church and the State

For many observers of Italian culture and society the family is the 'accredited masterpiece … the bulwark, the natural unit, the provider of all that the state denies the semi-sacred group,

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[10] For an overview of criticism of Banfield, see, Pardo (1996).

[11] A more recent version of this perspective is expressed by Sciascia (1961).

[12] From Gramsci, La Questione Meridionale in 'Operai contadini', *L'Ordine Nuovo* 3 January 1920 quoted in Joll (1977: 69).

the avenger and the rewarder' (Nichols 1973: 68). From the moment of unification of Italy in the 1860s the family has been an ideological battle ground for the hearts and minds of the people. The early liberal state made little progress in wresting the family from the Church and was unable to mount a vigorous anti-clericalism like had emerged in the French Third Republic. After 1922, Mussolini and the Fascist State sought to compromise with the Church with the consequence that 'Italian civil society, frail in many parts of the country, lost all its elements of autonomy, pluralism and dissent and became little more than a series of assembly points for the regime's parades and activities' (Ginsborg 2014: 208)**.** The fascist state had in fact appropriated Italy's public space to achieve political control and consent (De Grazia, 1981). Mussolini set out his views on the family in 1927 in which peasant family was the engine that would power the Fascist State by means of state programmes of marriage and fertility. Thus Fascist organisations such as the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* (youth organisation for 8-14 year-olds) and the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* sought to instil fascist values via various organisations to promote loyalty to the cause. Women though still devoted time to organisations such as Catholic Action. But fascist organisation in Italy flattered to deceive. The theatrical events and parades disguised the fact that family welfare remained the prerogative of the Church which taught the anteriority of the family over the state and society. The Fascist-Church accommodation institutionalised in the Lateran Decrees represented in fact a 'fragile consensus' (Mosse 1979). Moreover, Italian families were often sceptical of the flummery of fascism and were suspicious of the state. During his exile to the remote village of Cagliano in Basilicata, Carlo Levi was told:

> 'There are hailstorms, landslides, droughts, malaria and the State. These are inescapable evils; such there have always been and there always will be. They make us kill off our goats, they carry away our furniture and now they're going to send us off to the wars. Such is Life.' (Levi 1947: 78).

The primacy of the family has been extended to argue that Sicily is constituted as a 'low trust' society where the family is the sole repository of refuge, assistance and protection. Beyond the confines of the family according to this interpretation there is an absence of trust in the State and therefore an absence of voluntary associations and mutual aid.[13] According to this view, families and individuals live in suspicious isolation inhibiting social solidarity between families and denying the possibility of the development of associational life and therefore civil society. As I have indicated earlier, despite substantial criticism exposing the weakness of this view, the political scientist Robert Putnam (1993) has indexed the declining civic commitment of Italian society on a north-south axis: there is a strong and vibrant associational life and civil society in the north but a weak propensity to associate and co-operate in the south which has allowed the invasion of the state by criminal elements who enjoy the collusion of national and local élites. What is regarded as legitimate and illegitimate,

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[13] For a long time, trust between Southerners and the State has been missing on both sides. As Pardo notes, trust 'between two parties, [it] must work both ways in order to work at all ... it is credibility that inevitably breeds trust; and credibility is heavily dependent on the relationship between the actual and the perceived management of responsibility' (2000: 7).

however, is not always clear as in social and political reality there is a 'blurring' of the line dividing acceptable conduct from inadmissible conduct (Pardo 2012).

There are three questions that arise. First, does the claim that Sicilians have an inability to co-operate stand up to the evidence? Second, was1989 a watershed for the development of civil society in the south and Sicily, or was there in fact proto-civil society experiments pre-dating the 1989 turning point? Third, was there an evolution of civil practices that enabled Sicilians to exert power prior to the 1990s?

Factors Promoting Civil Society

Co-operative Banking

It is certainly the case that the northern provinces of Lombardy, Emilia Romagna and the Veneto have a richer tradition of associational activity (Muir 1999). However, the South and Sicily were able to develop co-operative banking prior to 1914 with some considerable success. The *banche popolari* movement required both trust and co-operation. Following the banking legislation of 1866 the southern provinces had established 377 *banche popolari*, more than half of the nation's co-operative banks. Admittedly, they carried a lower proportion of the nation's equity but southerners had been able to establish more banks per capita than was the case in the northern provinces: one per 34,000 inhabitants as against one per 52,000 inhabitants in the north. In both the north and south *banche popolari* shareholders were small merchants and industrialists although the south attracted more small farmers than the north and the north attracted more small businessmen than the south. These patterns were not surprising given the divergent economic structures of the two regions. Furthermore, balance sheet evidence suggests that the southern *banche popolari* were controlled by small proprietors, shopkeepers and self-employed craftsmen. Moreover, the collection of local government taxation — *esattorie* — was proportionately greater in the south than in the north (A'Hearn 2000). Additionally, the co-operative banking movement in the south, including Sicily, displayed other associational potential. In 1915 there were six Catholic leagues with 1,087 members per 100,000 population. It might be objected that the Catholic Leagues were instruments of *latifondisti* and Vatican hegemony but like the co-operatives the Leagues suggest a capacity to associate denied by the traditional view of the Mezzogiorno and Sicily in particular. At the same time it is important to recognise that there was also an entrepreneurial culture indicating innovation and flexibility that in turn required co-operation and trust (Pardo 1996). The impact of the Great War polarised the country between communism and fascism of which the latter in the end was able to co-opt many of the Catholic-inspired organisations by using its cell structure to pursue a policy of entryism in relation to the Catholic Leagues. Consequently, the potential for associational activity was arrested and therefore the exercise of power via an open civil society was suppressed by a totalitarian regime from 1922 until 1943. The *banche popolari* movement, the wider co-operative movement and the Catholic Leagues suggest the presence of sufficient social capital to organise and associate. Such a view of the south and Sicily qualifies the Banfield-Putnam low-trust equilibrium which has denied the possibility of co-operation and therefore the possibilities that might follow — horizontal solidarities, civil society and potentially political power. This was not, however,

the complete picture and there is no doubt that the Italian Republic after 1943-48 was characterised by stasis and corruption. However, civil society in Sicily was yet to develop organisations and practices that enabled people to navigate the public realm to achieve positive social and political gains.

Urbanisation, Urban space and Demography

The portrayal of the South and Sicily as backward and underdeveloped is not without foundation. It deserves scrutiny, however, because it limits our analytical ability to penetrate the nature of power — especially the apparent power of the powerless — in a society often viewed as the victim of extra-state power and short-hand descriptors such as violence, criminality, patronage, deference, apathy, insularity and low-trust. In fact these descriptors lead to a view of Sicilian life and culture that constructs a stereotypical view of an inability to co-operate and therefore unable to build the organisations and associations that are the hallmarks of modern civil society. There was, however, a range of transformational processes at work which helped to modify this bleak picture. Urbanisation was certainly a key development post-1943. This was especially important in the east of Sicily and the Straits of Messina where the cities of Catania, Syracuse and the port of Augusta all grew substantially. However, Palermo had stagnated, gaining only 0.6 per cent in population between 1936 and 1942 although the impact of war and the Allied invasion undoubtedly had an effect. But the telling evidence of urban stagnation lay in the smaller medium-sized towns so that between 1936 and 1942 the proportion of Sicily's population living in towns of 50,000 or more declined from 51.4 per cent to 26.1 per cent of the total (Population Index 1943: 146-153). Nevertheless, urbanisation was undoubtedly a key driver of associational activity. The Allies, too, provided impetus to the process of organisation and participation; and Marshall Aid provided funding for infrastructure, the promotion of a free press, as well as the provision of technical expertise and productivity programmes.

The processes of demographic and urban change were complex and change in the south and Sicily did not arise from internal dynamism. Rather, it was the northern and central regions that were the most dynamic; and between 1861 and 1971 some 15-16 million people migrated from the countryside to more industrialised areas where wages were higher. In the North, urban growth was a function of increased labour productivity in both urban and in rural areas. Between 1860 and 2000 labour productivity grew nineteen-fold because the capital to labour ratio grew of an almost similar order. Even after 1943 there is significant evidence that in Sicily capital, technology and manpower were underemployed and this could be a constraint on urbanisation but it was also a driver of migration to central and northern regions of the peninsula. Crucially, the gap between urban and rural wages goes some way to explain the rural-urban migration flows and the higher wages of the cities signified their higher productivity per capita (Malanima 2005). Growth in total factor productivity was especially significant in the period 1951-73 (Malanima and Zamagni 2010), and the Italian surge in industrial capacity coincided with a marked decline in real energy costs: the shift from coal to oil and gas favoured Italy and Sicily's strategic position favoured both industrialisation and

urbanisation. In 1977 Enrico Mattei had secured the agreement to bring natural gas by pipeline from North Africa to Syracuse on Sicily's south-east coast.

At the same time the cultivation of industry and urbanisation was encouraged by the unintended consequences which flowed from the state's land reform programmes. Parliamentary inquiries showed that the extent of underemployment in Sicily and the south generally was especially acute and so the programme of land redistribution of *latifondo* and to settle a long running grievance for the peasantry was finally achieved in 1950-52. However, the new government-subsidised farmhouses were soon abandoned as the re-settled families were unable to make them economically viable. Thus, the long run trend of rural depopulation was emphasised still further: in Sicily alone it is estimated that some 200,000 people moved from the mountains to the plains; from the centre to the coast; to railway stations; to main road sites. Further, the promotion of petro-chemical industry by the state facilitated the growth of Syracuse, Catania and Messina. Between 1951 and 1971 the establishment of petro-chemical plants at Syracuse and Gela accounted for sixty per cent of Sicily's industrial investment. Thus, significant structural change came primarily as a consequence of out migration allowing those that remained to become on balance more productive. The dynamic differential in urban-rural wages widened dramatically in the post-war world, and not just in Italy but between developed and underdeveloped regions which were often transnational. Additionally, exogenous shocks such as earthquakes, in the Belice valley for instance, also prompted migrations. Cities and towns presented attractive social opportunities — marriage, the possibility of better housing and so on. Crucially, for a country like Italy the falling costs of energy between 1945 and 1973 moved the international terms of trade in its favour and Sicily was geographically favourably located to import oil and natural gas. All these factors favoured urban capital formation, both fixed and mobile, which in turn enhanced the urban-rural productivity ratio. Extrinsic factors — the European Recovery Programme (Marshall Aid) and the Italian state's entry into the EEC in 1957 — all had an effect on urbanisation as growing employment in industry and services caused rising inequality in personal income distribution, thus facilitating rural-urban migration. In 1951, 41.1 per cent of Italy's population was classified as urban and by 1971 this proportion had increased to 52.2 per cent. Even the small towns of the Palermo region began to grow modestly after a long stationary period. So, those within the catchment area of Palermo, including Partinico, grew from 24,000 to 28,000 between 1951 and 1971. Similarly, nearby Alcamo grew from 32,000 in 1931 to 42,000 in 1971.

	c.1911	1951	1971
Partinico	21,700	24,700	27,800
Alcamo	32,200	41,800	41,900
Roccamena	2,500	3000	2,400
Trapetto	1,400	2,400	2,300

Fig 1: Population of Selected Towns in the Palermo Region (http://www.istat.it/en/, accessed 6 August 2016).

The most dramatic growth took place in the east: Catania grew from just over 300,000 in 1951 to 409,000 in 1961; and Messina mushroomed from 220,000 in 1951 to 270,000 by 1968. These trends simply underscored the economist's rule that labour will follow capital. At the same time, there were key processes at work which promoted the possibility of civil society in Sicily's small agro-towns. First, the long term effects of emigration, although often viewed negatively, reduced pressure on the land as it reduced the overall size of the agricultural labouring population. It also encouraged those that remained to commercialise their activity and invest in land improvement and equipment. The remittances from those who had emigrated encouraged the upward mobility of those that remained as they invested in property improvement for renting out, house improvement and the education of children. Second, the growth of the state bureaucracy brought new professions to Sicily — civil servants, local government officers and teachers — who began to edge out the older professions — doctors, lawyers, land agents — from the public sphere. In sum, these changes began to disrupt the older hierarchical patronage structures as well as creating new social groups that were more open to participative behaviours. The small Italian agro-towns were also the locations of a number of organisations; and even before Dolci arrived in Partinico the town had many associations, including allotment societies, four trade unions, co-operative and building societies, a sportsman club, a football club and the Civic Club Umberto, which was frequented by clerks and shopkeepers. Admittedly, they were almost exclusively male-dominated, indicating the gendered boundaries of civil society in the town (Hageman 2013). Furthermore, these towns had physical structures that facilitated associational life and sociability. There was the *piazza* and the *corso*, the venues of *passeggiata*. It was in these places that social exchanges were made and confirmed and where the solidarities of the town were made manifest (King and Strachan 1978). Thus, the traditional narratives of national histories have overlooked pockets of civil society practices in Sicily and have also underestimated the significance of social experiments in smaller urban settlements that were able to achieve vital agency through critical development issues — work and the tradition of toil, roads, irrigation projects — revealing a capacity for civil society practices to populations cast as cynical, narrowly family-oriented and apathetic towards social and political matters.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Italy and Sicily have faced many challenges in establishing a civil society that can exercise effective restraint upon the political parties. However, it is clear that Dolci's experiments have left a legacy that has enabled the new 'reflexive' middle classes to claim back the *piazza* and establish a range of solidarities that are active around the environment, employment and immigration. The peace movement, too, has an enduring tradition in the region; and the work of prosecuting magistrates to tame the worst excesses of Mafia power has created space for civil society, although this of course has not been without its tragedies. Perhaps the coalescence of Mafia power and political power resides more, according to the prosecuting magistrate Giovanni Falcone, in administrative fragility, inertia and casual indifference and the weakness of the state rather than in the weakness of civil society (Della Porta and Meny eds 1997). The practices of clientelism and the diffusion of the

funds from bartered votes has perpetuated corruption and consequently arrested the development of civil society, but the activities of Dolci and his supporters showed that social and political actors can succeed seemingly against the odds. The development of civil society was undoubtedly encouraged by the growth of economic prosperity between 1948 and 1973; that is, from the declaration of the constitution of the new Republic to the great oil shock. In 1999, Palermo hosted the *Civitas* world congress in recognition of the city's achievements, in its citizens having reclaimed the city — '*Città per l'Uomo*' — from the mafia and having established a new regime of lawfulness as well as a cultural renaissance (Orlando 2001).

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'You Want to Eat Pizza with your Feet on the Table':
Dropping Out of School in Spain in the Context of the Financial Crisis[1]

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Early school-leaving is a hot topic in Spain due to the high level of early abandonment. Using mostly a quantitative approach, existing research on this issue focuses on identifying social factors such as social class, family structure and resources and parents' educational level. These approaches usually consider dropping out as a one-time action and a wrong decision for which the victims themselves are held accountable. Moreover, informed by two implicit ideas, current research in Spain maintains that the economic crisis has made people come back to school; it is assumed that the former economic prosperity has influenced the high percentage of dropouts and that higher education leads to more and better job opportunities as people who drop out of school have limited access to the labour market and get more precarious and lower-payed jobs. Drawing on our ethnographic evidence, in this article we discuss these problematic assumptions and introduce a different idea. We argue that people see a more complex link between education and employment and that this is influencing dropout processes. We develop a critique of deterministic arguments and defy the 'blaming the victim' view.
Key words: Early school leaving, Spain, ethnography, economic crisis

The Council of Europe defines early school leaving as 'the percentage of young adults between 18 and 24 years old who have not finish Secondary Compulsory Education at least and do not carry on with further studies or training' (de Medrano Ureta and De Paz Higuera 2010: 19). This subject is a hot topic in Spain due to the high percentage of early abandonment (among the three highest in the European Union, close to 23 per cent in 2014), and the fact that the country failed to achieve the dropout target of 10 per cent that the European Union set for 2010 in Lisbon.[2]

Existing research on the topic of school dropouts, mostly using a quantitative approach, both at national and international levels, mainly focuses on identifying social factors (individual and institutional) frequently associated with this phenomenon, such as social class, family structure and resources, parents' educational level (more specifically, the mother's level), gender, family mobility, type of school, and the students' grade of school affection or disaffection, and retention (Rumberger 2010).

At the same time, these quantitative approaches usually considered dropping out as a one-time action and a terribly wrong decision, for which the victims themselves were held accountable. Their voices have been scarcely taken into account in prior research. Due to this

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[2] www.oecd.org/document/55/0,3746,en_2649_37455_46349815_1_1_1_37455,00.html (home page), accessed 17 February 2016.

lack of attention by researchers, we know very little about their circumstances and their reasons for dropping out of school. We hope to address this neglected issue in our work.

Our current research aims at analysing school dropout as a process, instead of a one-time action, by doing ethnographic fieldwork. Our goal is to gather narratives from those who have lived through the process of dropping out. These narratives will allow us to delve more deeply into the discourse elaborated by dropouts to identify the reasons for and the consequences of their decision from their own perspectives.

Our focus on narratives has a two-fold purpose: first, to analyse the social values that channel and legitimize behaviour patterns and attitudes in relation to the schooling process; and second, to describe the agency exercised by individuals in relation to their school and family circumstances that influenced their decision to drop out.

We understand agency as the possibility to make decisions in any situation, which is conditioned by structural circumstances. We understand that this situation involves a process through which people are governed by social norms and values, combining reproduction and resistance strategies to manage conflictive situations. We expect to identify these types of complex responses to conflicts within narratives and demonstrate how people make sense of their own lives retrospectively.

We believe that our approach to the topic of dropouts will better highlight issues that have been absent in the scholarly literature. At the same time, our approach will reveal the complexity of the processes that are embedded in the agency of individuals and thereby problematize the causal relationship that emerges from quantitative studies. The ethnographic approach will also better provide us with access to the social context.

We are locating our subjects in our fieldwork using two different approaches. The first one leads us to institutions and organizations that aim to provide adult students with programs to return to school, such as Schools for Adults run by the government or NGOs. Our second approach involves a more difficult path to follow, because we try to find young adults who have dropped out and not returned to the education system and, therefore, cannot be found in any specific place. We have two strategies to locate these people. First, we explore public spaces such as parks or community centres, taking advantage of our previous experience in these types of fields. Second, we use the 'snowball' technique to contact people through our personal networks.

The preliminary results we are going to discuss in this paper come mainly, but not exclusively, from our fieldwork developed in a Centre for Adult Education regulated by and depending on the Board of Education of the Community of Madrid, Spain. However, we have also included testimonies from youths who have not returned to the education system in any way and who do not intend to in the near future, located from our personal networks.

We want to highlight the importance of exploring gender to better understand a higher dropout ratio among men. With few exceptions (Whitmire 2010, Casquero Tomas and Navarro Gomez 2010), little progress has been made in understanding the relationship between gender and school dropout. In this sense, the fieldwork considered here has addressed mainly — but not exclusively — male subjects. Nevertheless, we take a gendered

approach in our analysis, and one member of our team is focusing her fieldwork specifically on locating female subjects.

Research on dropouts in Spain argues that the current economic crisis has made people come back to school. Behind this assumption, we find two implicit ideas. The first one is that the former economic prosperity has influenced the high percentage of dropouts. The second implicit idea is that higher education leads to more and better job opportunities, that a person who drops out of school has limited access to the labour market and gets more precarious and lower paying jobs.

We try to problematize both assumptions from our ethnographic evidence, which enables us to introduce a different idea: people's perception of a more complex link between education and employment is having an influence in dropout processes. We intend to make the former simpler and deterministic arguments more complex as well as to defy the 'blaming the victim' conclusion (Ryan 1972).

Adrian,[3] a 25-year-old young male who left school early and never returned, was one of the first people who decided to tell us about his dropout experience. He told us:

> 'Since you are 15 and living in your parent's home, no matter how well you get along with them, they are your parents, and you want to be independent and free, you want to do whatever you want. You don`t like to have a curfew to come home at night…, or you want to eat pizza with your feet on the table'.[4]

Living in a little village, two hours away from Madrid, he left school at 15 and immediately began working in construction at a small company owned by his father. That was a time of economic prosperity, and he earned enough money to buy a car, rent his own apartment and live independently. He claimed that by 18 he was making more than 2,000 euros per month,[5] a salary similar to that of a tenured professor with some experience.

When the crisis started, his father lost the company, and Adrian had to look for a new job. He found work in a factory, hacking pork on a conveyor belt. Later on, this company offered him a better position as a waiter in a restaurant they were going to open in Madrid. When we met him, he had been just promoted to lead waiter after only working there for one year. He never came back to school and did not finish compulsory education;[6] nevertheless, this fact did not prevent him from finding a new job and even getting a job promotion.

Samuel, one of Adrian's closest friends, who did not continue studying after finishing compulsory education at 16 and has had a series of unskilled jobs since then, reasoned as follows: 'If it wouldn't be so easy for us to say: Let's go! I don't want to study, I'm going to

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[3] All names are pseudonyms.

4 Interview conducted in Madrid on 27 November 2014.

[5] Interview conducted in Madrid on 27 November 2014.

[6] Unlike most European countries where education is compulsory until 18 years of age, in Spain it is finished at 16.

get a job. If we would have no other choice but studying to make a life, maybe then we had to do it (keep studying)'.[7]

These and other similar experiences allow us to argue that the labour market in Spain has been acting as a trigger for many youths to leave school and start making independent lives. Our evidence highlights that a large demand for unskilled workers is related to the high rate of dropouts. Before the crisis, Spanish economic growth was mainly based on sectors requiring a low skilled work force, such as building construction and tourism, which seemed to have acted as a pull factor to leave school. This idea is also supported by the fact that these jobs are usually occupied by men, and men leave education in higher proportions. We believe that women's narratives may give us a more complex insight on this issue.

In addition, during the period of economic growth, nobody asked these youths for any type of qualifications to get an unskilled but high paying job. Sometimes recruiters even actively search for teens and young people to offer them these types of jobs.

Edgar,[8] a Colombian male now 28 years old, came to Spain when he was just 15. His father had arrived in Spain two years before him and, after finding a job and a house in a little village, he brought Edgar and his four siblings with him. The day after his arrival, Edgar started to work in a construction company. He recalled his experience as follows:

> 'Edgar: … When I started, I was earning 800 € but I did not like that job, so I did not want to stay there.
>
> Q: And, for how long were you working there?
>
> Edgar: Working in construction? More or less two years.
>
> Q: And that happened just when you arrived? That is to say: you arrived and immediately began to work.
>
> Edgar: Yes, yes, I started to work the day after my arrival. And how amazing! I couldn't believe that there were so many vacancies!
>
> Q: And how did you find the job?
>
> Edgar: They went to my home to look for me.'[9]

It is a requirement to have parental permission and to be at least 16 years old to get a job as a minor in Spain.[10] However, the informal economy has been, and still is, an important source of unreported employment. Just like Edgar, Antonio[11] found a job at 14 in a bar. His parents had recently divorced, and his mother neither had a job nor enough money to live independently. When his father refused to help her in any way, Antonio decided to leave

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[7] Interview conducted in Madrid on 27 November 2014.
[8] Interview conducted in Madrid on 17 March 2015.
[9] Interview conducted in Madrid on 17 March 2015.
[10] The coming of age in Spain is 18.
[11] Interview conducted in Madrid on 10 February 2015.

school in spite of his good results at high school, and he found a job that allowed him to pay her bills. He told us the following about how he got that job:

'Q: How could you get a job being 14? Didn't they ask you for…?

Antonio: Yes, I got the job thanks to my aunt; she had been the owner of a bar…

Q: Aha.

Antonio: And then she left the bar and the new owner asked her [for somebody to work there]… She told him a little bit about my situation and… [he gave me the job] without any kind of contract, of course!

Q: Aha. That is what I was going to ask you about, because it is not allowed to get a job at that age.

Antonio: No, it is not allowed.

Virtually, all job offers require proof of Secondary Education completion, which is compulsory for everybody. However, it seems to be rather easy for most of our informants not to comply with this demand. Most of them acknowledge having lied about it by simply telling their employers they have earned the Certificate. One of the youths we interviewed, when we asked if the Certificate of Compulsory Education was required to get his job in a burger franchise, told us:[12]

Well…, I… I said I got it. I answered as if I already had it but in fact, in fact I think… I think it is required. I didn't have any problem so far. I cannot do anything about it! […]But, of course it is a requirement, anywhere! To do any kind of work, even to have a job in delivery. They ask you for it everywhere. […] I just say I got it anywhere I go to look for a job […] In some places, they check, and I just don't get the job.'

Antonio is even more eloquent in this regard. When we asked if his current job requires a Certificate of completion, he told us:[13]

'Yes, it was required in every single job I have had. In one occasion I lied about it, I just said I had finished Compulsory Education. And in my current job, they are waiting for me to get it, but in fact they ask not only for Compulsory Education but also for Baccalaureate'.[14]

Some of our interviewees told us that sometimes employers turn a blind eye in order to take advantage of the lack of certificates, imposing worse working conditions and having the possibility to fire them easily in the context of an informal or semi-informal economy. This is what Antonio told us about his current job as a waiter in a fancy restaurant located in one of the richest neighbourhoods of Madrid City. He said his employers pay half of his salary under the table due to a lack of certification. The following exchange is indicative:

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[12] Interview conducted in Madrid on 3 February 2015.

[13] Interview conducted in Madrid on 19 February 2015.

[14] In Spain, after Compulsory Education, students should enroll in a 2-year Baccalaureate course to get direct access to University.

'Antonio: They are waiting for me to get the certificate in order to sign up for a full-time contract, because right now, I have a full time job but with a part-time contract.

Q: But…

Antonio: … [I work] more, even more than full time, fifteen hours more [than the maximum 40 hours established by law per week].

Q: And… but, are you paid for all the time you work?

A: Of course, but I get half the money legally and half under the table. […] But, right now, telling from the people I know, 80 per cent of the jobs have the same conditions.'

Another youth told us a similar experience when he started working:[15]

'One of the older guys in my neighbourhood had a painting business, a family venture, and he told me: Why don't you come to work for me? And I took the job and remained in it until now. Well, in fact I quitted that company because he didn't give me a contract. I worked two years without one, and I said: This is it. I went to work for another company with a contract, and that is where I am right now […] But I do not have still the kind of contract I should have.'

All these experiences support our idea that the current labour market is linked to a giant economic bubble and acts as a powerful trigger for these youths to leave school. However, most of the young people do not seem to believe anymore in a promise of a better life through education. In our conversation with Adrian and Samuel, they told us the following about this matter:

'Adrian: How many people are unemployed with a…?

Samuel: Yes.

Adrian: With the hell of an education! With the hell of a degree and a brilliant CV, to finally get a job in the corner supermarket, or as a waiter…'

People feel that having a higher education does not always lead directly to more and better jobs. A recent report on employment perspectives by the OECD allows us to argue that this perception is not wrong, because it concurs with the evolution of the labour market as described in this report. There are indications of a trend towards a greater polarization of the work market: highly skilled workers are needed for technology-related jobs; low-skilled workers are hired for services that cannot be automated or digitized (such as caregivers); but mid-level skills are being replaced by smart robotics (OECD 2012: 21). Statistical evidence shows that the idea that a higher education does not always lead directly to more and better jobs is also supported by gender differences; despite the fact that the dropout rate is lower

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[15] Interview conducted in Madrid on 30 November 2014.

among women, they usually have lower salaries, a higher rate of unemployment and more part-time jobs.

The issues explored in this paper lead us to conclude that an unregulated, wild and greedy labour market is behind the high dropout rate in Spain, one that pulls students out of school. In addition, this is something that is not usually considered or mentioned in studies on this topic. We will continue exploring ethnographically this disguised relationship between the process of dropping out of school and the type of jobs the labour market demands. We expect that our ethnographic fieldwork will contribute to unearthing the complexity behind this relationship, defying hypocritical political discourses that almost exclusively blame the victims, their families and their demographics.

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Commons vs Commodity: Urban Environmentalisms and the Transforming Tale of the East Kolkata Wetlands[1]

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The increase in urban ecology research in the social sciences since the 1980s can be explained as an outcome of contemporary urbanization. From an understanding of the commons as a rural artefact, this concept has expanded to include urban spaces and practices. This is significant for countries like India, which are supposed to experience huge urban growth in the coming decades. The emergence of peri-urban interface, where rural and urban features tend to coexist, will be one crucial aspect related to this pattern of urbanization. While striving to reinvent themselves as utopias for investors, entrepreneurs and consumers, like their counterparts in the 'global South', Indian cities are consuming peri-urban ecological commons that are not only critical to urban economic production and cultural vibrancy but also crucial for ecological sustainability of cities and their surroundings. Applying temporal trajectories and political ecology framework, this article looks at transformations of wetlands at the eastern periphery of Kolkata, a process which not only recycles the city's waste, but also produces vegetables, crops and fishes, providing livelihood to poor communities. We explore a core-periphery metabolism that determines socio-economic and ecological sustainability and engages into complex interactions among varieties of environmentalism that shape the city's urban transition.
Key words: Kolkata, East Kolkata Wetlands, environmentalisms, political ecology, commons

Introduction

Historically, when viewed through the lens of market mechanisms, capital has had a tendency of appropriating resources that seem to be vague in terms of ownership. So, appropriating resources that do not have a defined individuated right acquires legitimacy under capitalist property regimes. There is a Lockean logic in appropriating the commons; what is produced from one acre of enclosed land is ten times more than what is produced by an acre of land of equal richness lying waste in common. This logic marks the annals of statehood from the post-Reformation era (Whitehead 2010). There are many historical examples of appropriation and destruction of commons in various forms, including in the developing world particularly during colonialism. The use of the Weberian concepts based on empirical-positivistic notions of *res nullius* (meaning, that which is not assigned by the sovereign belong to the sovereign) and *terra nullius* (meaning no man's land) provided the colonial state with the legal justification to appropriate community resources, including commons, and mark them as 'waste', to be then used to generate revenue for the Crown (Chakraborty 2012). Since time immemorial, commons thrived and survived by dancing in and out of the state's gaze, by escaping its notice, because notice invariably brings with it the desire to transform commons into state property in the contemporary era (Gidwani and Baviskar 2011). As neo-liberal globalization colonizes space at a rapid scale, the accumulation spree of capital makes the situation grimmer, with massive effects on ecosystem resources and marginal ecosystem-dependent communities.

With rapid urbanization and growth of urban areas in recent times, especially across developing countries, the concept of 'commons' is expanding from being overtly perceived and understood as a rural artefact to include urban spaces and practices (Gidwani and Baviskar 2011, Marotta 2014). Moreover, one of the crucial aspects of contemporary urbanization in developing world is the emergence of the 'peri-urban' interface, where rural and urban features tend increasingly to coexist within cities and beyond their limits (Allen 2003, 2009; Shaw 2005). While striving to reinvent themselves as utopias for investors, entrepreneurs and consumers — like their counterparts in the 'global South' — Indian cities are consuming peri-urban ecological commons that are critical not only to urban economic production and cultural vibrancy but also to the ecological sustainability of the entire region. Protests and resistances are taking place in different ways and with different implications across different Indian cities, in the process making commons evolve as complex sites of politics, negotiations and contestations (Baviskar 2003, 2011; D'Souza and Nagendra 2011; Bose 2013; Marotta 2014).

Within this context, we discuss transforming tales of emergence, evolution, cooperativism, privatization and commodification of wetlands — named and designated as the East Kolkata Wetlands (henceforth, EKW) — on the eastern fringes of Kolkata. Then we also explore the complex saga of the urban environmentalisms related to the preservation and management of this ecological site.

Methodology and Methods

Using political ecology framework that argues for the analysis of environmental degradation in its historical, political, economic and ecological contexts (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987), we trace transformations of peri-urban wetlands across long temporal trajectories including colonial, immediate post-independence and contemporary neoliberal times.

Aware of key issues in urban anthropology (Prato and Pardo 2013), in order to trace the historical trajectory, we have used archival research methods and oral narratives alongside other qualitative methods, including key informant interviews and formal and informal group interviews with members of cooperatives, fishery department, government of West Bengal, NGOs such as People United for Better Living in Calcutta (PUBLIC) and Centre for Environment and Development (CED).

Transforming Tales of the East Kolkata Wetlands

The sustenance of Kolkata heavily depends upon its interaction with its peri-urban interface. This 'interface', mostly accounted for by wetlands in the eastern part of the city, acts as a transitional zone, an urban–rural continuum for a rapidly urbanizing space (see Map 1). The EKW and Dhapa landfill area absorb approximately 750 million litres of waste water and 2,500 metric tonnes of waste generated by the city per day. It is the world's largest recycling ecosystem, fully managed by the local inhabitants through inter-generational knowledge. Low-cost, traditional and indigenous recycling practices undertaken by fishermen and farmers residing in the area have paved the way for three major eco-environmental practices:

wastewater fisheries, effluence-irrigated paddy cultivation, and vegetable farming on garbage substrates. The EKW not only treats the waste water and waste at minimum cost (almost no cost) but also generates employment opportunities and provides livelihood to around 1,000,000 people living in the core and buffer zones and flocking to Dhapa as daily labourers.
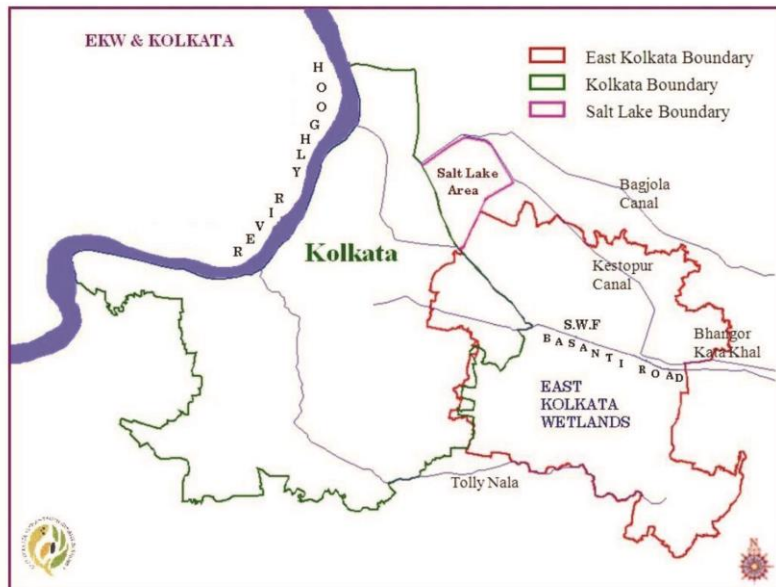
Map 1: *Kolkata and the EKW* ─ http://www.ekwma.com, accessed 10 March 2010
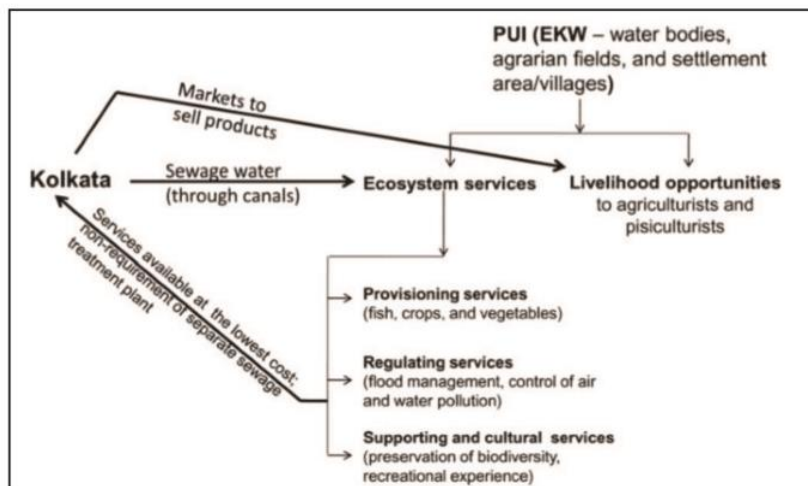
Fig. 1: *Sustainable flows between Kolkata and its PUI* ─ Mukherjee 2015a

The Colonial Victory of Site over Situation

The history of the region makes us aware that the mutual interdependence and sustainable flows between urban Kolkata and the peri-urban wetlands (a contemporary connotation) on the east (see Fig. 1) evolved as part of the colonial project of urbanization (Mukherjee 2015b). Kolkata's natural ecology, with the Hooghly River on the west, the saltwater marshes on the east, and the Ganges and her numerous tributaries and distributaries intersecting the whole area, played a key role in the selection of the city as the seat of the imperial capital

(Mukherjee 2009-2010). When the British arrived in the region, the settlement site was a narrow strip of land on the bank of the Hooghly River, surrounded on all sides by swampy jungles and brackish lagoons. It was a place of mists, alligators and wild boars. From several colonial reports, letters and other secondary sources it is evident that when the British settled here the environment was unhealthy and deleterious. Sterndale's historical account of the Calcutta collectorate (1885) narrates that *pargana Kalikata* was full of jungles infested with wild beasts and snakes and even dacoits, and Job Charnock and the British who succeeded him hunted wild boar in the area adjoining the Chowringhee (Mukherjee 2009-2010). The situation of the entire stretch was so deplorable that when in 1690 the colonizers issued a proclamation permitting people to erect houses in any portion of the wasteland that was under the possession of colonial companies, even that kind of an inducement was a sine qua non for attracting a population.

'The Salt Water Lake on the east left masses of dead, putrid fish as water receded in the dry season, while a dense jungle ran up to where Government House now stands. The new settlement was situated about 160 miles from the sea. The south wind — the only mitigation of the fierce tropical heat which prevails from the end of March to October – blows over salt marshes and steaming rice lands on its way to the city. Its most uniform dead level, with depressions lying below the level of high water in spring tides, renders it difficult to drain properly, while the soil on which the town is built possesses every quality which the site of human habitation ought not to possess' (O'Malley 1914: 42-43).

But why, in spite of such disadvantages, did the British stick to their decision of selecting this place as the imperial capital? The selection of Sutanuti, the modern embryo of Calcutta was the result of a deliberate judgement on the part of the British and Job Charnock, who saw the many advantages that the place offered. The Ganges and its tributaries gave the foreign merchants an opportunity to extend their trading operations inland over a wide area. No other place outside Bengal covered such a vast area of influence. The economic logic of commercial development of the Ganges valley gathered momentum (Ghosh et al. 1972). The Hooghly River tapped the trade of the Ganges valley and the site was situated at the highest point where the river was navigable for sea-going vessels. On the eastern side, it was protected from invasion by the presence of an extensive salt lake, the swamps and marshes of which made it invulnerable to the enemy (see Map 2). The cost of land acquisition was cheaper due to the vast swamps and, most importantly, the Ganges and the numerous creeks and channels offered immense potential for trade between Kolkata and her eastern counterparts, including Khulna, Faridpur, Backhergunj, Barishal and so on. The colonial understanding of the significance of this site in terms of both defensibility and serviceability led them to intervene and tame the natural ecology of channels and marshes into 'waterscapes'[2] that constituted the best means of inter-communication between rivers and

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[2] This involved the use of labour and capital in the adaptation of the natural environment.

estuaries; at the same time, solutions of drainage and sewerage were found for the emerging urban site with the core purpose of generating revenue (Mukherjee 2009-2010).[3]
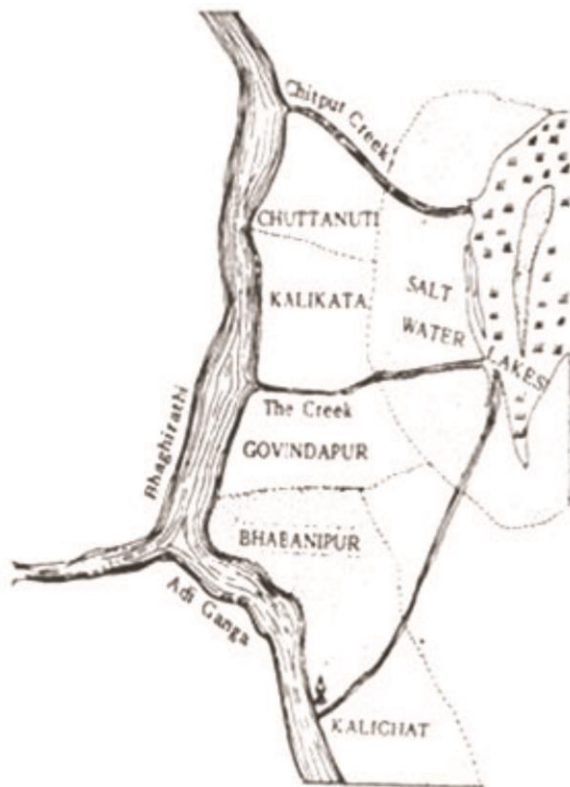
Map 2: *Conjectural Map of Kolkata in the Period of Tradition* ─ Chattopadhyay 1990

Excavation of Canals and Reclamation of Marshes

Urbanization occurred in parallel with canal construction and marsh reclamation. The colonial history of excavation of canals (which finally evolved into the city's Eastern Canal System; Ienglis 1909) and reclamation of marshes offers a unique insight into the growth of an expanding city. While the system emerged to make space for the colonial motive of interconnecting Kolkata with her hinterland, ensuring an unobstructed flow of raw materials and commodities to the city and the port, exploitation of economic opportunities was the most important factor behind Kolkata's expansion as one of India's largest urban centres. Inevitably, how to deal with the drainage and sewerage problem for the gradually expanding city became a major challenge. The Eastern Canal System (see Table 1), along with some additional excavations which were then integrated into it, was built to drain the sewage into the existing saltwater marshes (Chattopadhyay 1990, Mukherjee 2009-2010). An underground drainage system for the disposal of sewage and storm water through a combined drainage

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[3] The denomination, 'Kolkata' is a reflection of its hydraulic topography. Kolkata lies 'in the middle', with Sutanuti to the north and Govindapur to the south. The middle portion was marked by indentation in the coastline because of creeks and inlets. To denote this, a Bengali word was used – 'kol-kata', 'kol' = shore, coast and 'kata' = cut open. Taken together, the two words mean: coast or shore cut open by creeks and inlets (Biswas 1992).

system of storm water flow (SWF) and dry weather flow (DWF) canals into the saltwater swamps, which were then finally connected to the Bay of Bengal through the Bidyadhari River was designed by sanitary engineer William Clark, and completed by 1884. The Bidyadhari River dried up (due to natural reasons and also constant excavation and re-excavation of canals that speeded up the process of silt deposition on the river bed) and was officially declared dead in 1928 for both drainage and navigation. The Kulti Outfall Scheme was executed and commissioned in 1943 (see Map 3). This led to a gradual transformation in the aquatic environment of the area from saline to non-saline; from saltwater marshes to sewage-fed freshwater wetlands. The eastern marshes were saline in nature as the Bidyadhari River carried saline water from the Bay of Bengal and spilled over the low-lying area. The silting-up of the Bidyadhari River caused a decrease in the inflow of saline water. Moreover, with the decay of the river, sewage and storm water came to be diverted into the saltwater lakes through canals, turning them into freshwater lakes. When the Kulti Outfall Scheme was implemented, an adequate water-head was raised for supplying sewage to most of these fishponds by gravity, which resulted in the extension of wastewater fishponds further east and south-east for about 8,000 hectares. The EKW lies between the levee of the River Hooghly on the west and the Kulti River on the east, and is distributed nearly equally between the two sides of the DWF channel that reaches the river (Ghosh 2005). The EKW evolved as an output and input produced and required by the city and in parallel evolved as the space of informal, 'untamed' practices by marginal peri-urban fishing and farming communities (Mukherjee 2015b) (Map 1).
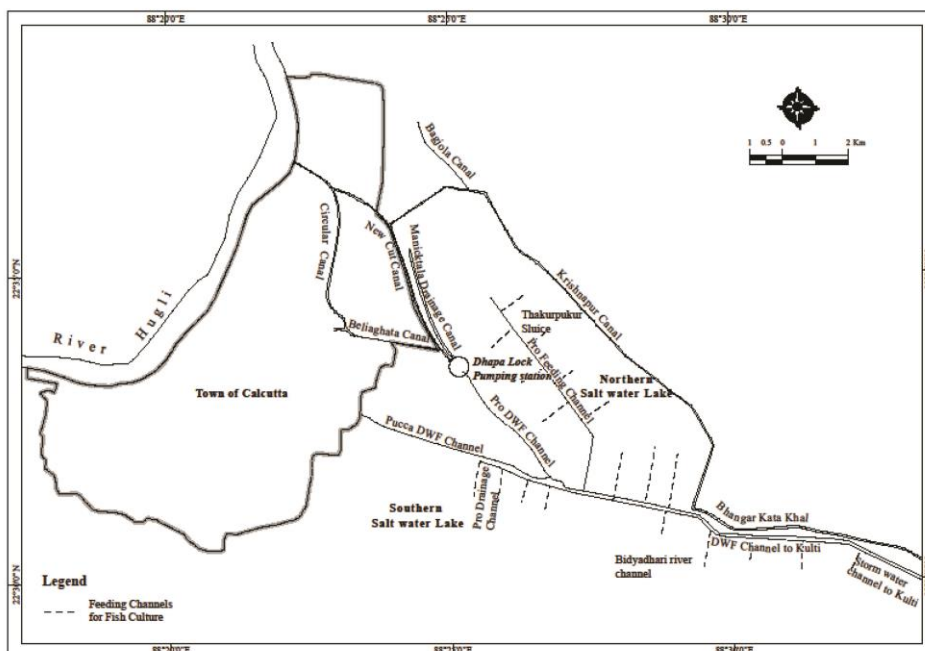
Map 3: *General layout of the drainage channels* ─ Bose 1944

Name of the excavated canal	Year of execution
Beleghata Canal	1810
Circular Canal	1831
New Cut Canal	1859
Bhangar Canal (canalized)	1897
Krishnapur Canal	1910

Table 1: *Eastern Canal System* ─ Inglis 1909

Within the ambit of the colonial state, reclamation plans for eastern marshes were designed in order to generate revenue. Dhapa was leased to individual holders (Table 2) and sewage farming experiments were conducted to generate profit from waste recovery activities (Chattopadhyay 1990).

The Post-colonial Transformation of Wetlands into Estate
Major conversions have taken place since the post-independence period, transforming wetlands into estate that include construction of the Salt Lake Township and number of other small townships and big projects in the contemporary neoliberal times, affecting the age-old urban and peri-urban flows and interlinks with disastrous socio-ecological implications in the near future. In the 1950s, the Salt Lake Township sprung up. In the 1960s, when 3.75 sq. miles of North Salt Lake was acquired (including the 58 fisheries of that area), 44 hectares were sacrificed to meet the needs of the expanding city (Master Plan for Fisheries Development 1975). By 1970, 2000 hectares had been encroached upon. In the north Salt Lake Area, 26 fisheries were taken over by the Salt Lake City housing complex alone (CMDA 1976). In the 1970s and 1980s, the East Kolkata Township and Baishnabghata-Patuli Township were constructed on the eastern periphery of Kolkata. When a series of plans since 1970s focused on a poly-centric (east-west) direction of development violating the earlier plan of development across the bimodal (north-south) axis, huge acres of wetlands were converted to make space for real estate speculation. The polemics of Kolkata's urban planning and development in the post-independence period can be explained across changing politico-economic imperatives during the period between 1947 and the recent times (Mukherjee 2015b). 'It is clear from the planning reports that the actual purpose of this pattern of urban expansion is to capitalize on the enormous development potential in the vast stretch of undeveloped land on the city's eastern fringes' (Mukherjee 2015b: 45). The outcome was 'development along the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass — the highway that skirts the eastern edges of the city along the wetlands — with townships, amusement parks, hotels, hospitals, and country clubs dotted around the existing landscape' (Bose 2015: 97; see Fig. 2). Finally,

another big township called the Rajarhat sprung up on the easternmost periphery of the city, converting acres of agrarian lands inside and outside the wetlands (Dey et al. 2013).

Year	Amount (in rupees)	Year	Amount (in rupees)
1908-09	250	1919-20	4,750
1909-10	500	1920-21	5,250
1910-11	750	1921-22	5,750
1911-12	1,000	1922-23	6,250
1912-13	1,250	1923-24	6,750
1913-14	1,750	1924-25	7,250
1914-15	2,250	1925-26	7,750
1915-16	2,750	1926-27	8,250
1916-17	3,250	1927-28	8,750
1917-18	3,750	1928-29	9,250
1918-19	4,250	1929-30	9,750
Total: 1,01,500			

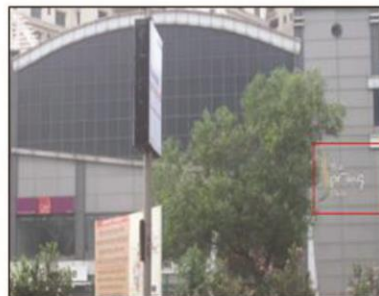Table 2: *Annual rent payable by the lease* ─ Chattopadhyaya 1990: 38

Fig. 2: *Some projects along the EM Bypass*

The Successes and Failures of Urban Environmentalism(s)

Urban environmentalism is an important emerging concept in anthropology (Prato and Pardo 2013), involving the incorporation of the 'environment' in urban planning. This concept has flourished even in the face of the kind of global environmental despondency that marks the neoliberal context (Brand 2005). Drawing on new attitudes and expectations with regard to urban space, the idea of urban environmentalism appears to be part of a legitimation strategy of city governments (Pardo and Prato 2010) that is being realized through neoliberal institutional reforms (Brand 2005). Emphasizing important aspects in the current analysis of gentrification and displacement (DeSena and Krase 2015), this state-led authoritarian environmentalism is often cherished by a middle-class bourgeois ethos and attitude that includes capital-intensive beautification schemes and other projects securing resources for capitalist restructuring within the neoliberal regime, but clashes with the poor who inhabit the area and are ecologically-dependent for their sustenance and survival (Baviskar 2003, Bose 2015). The resulting catastrophic environmental change is explained not only by the wider pattern of 'accumulation by dispossession' in an age of new imperialism in contemporary India, but also by long-standing aesthetic values associated with modernity (Harvey 2009).

The environmentalism(s) surrounding the EKW manifest complex and plural configurations among multiple stakeholders, including state, civil society organizations and the people who are affected (often mobilized by NGOs) and invites us to move beyond the opposition between state-led and bourgeoisie-supported environmentalism, on the one hand, and environmentalism of the poor, on the other had. The protection of the EKW from private real-estate speculation against the interests of the marginal peri-urban communities was brought to light by the environmental activism of leading environmental groups and NGOs involving the poor, as well as farmers, fishermen and some bureaucrats who supported the cause. In 1991, a city-based NGOs embraced the cause of wetland protection and conservation together with like-minded bureaucrats who wanted to protect the environment. This was the beginning of a movement that had an explicitly environmental goal in the metropolitan area. Bringing to mind a key issue in the citizenship and governance debate (Pardo and Prato 2010), for the very first time it forced the West Bengal government to take into account public opinion on urban planning (Dembowski 2001). In 1992, a writ petition was filed in the Calcutta High Court by the movement called 'People United for Better Living in Calcutta' (PUBLIC) and by a leading NGO (joined by four other city-based NGOs). The petition demanded that the State of West Bengal and its officers should be legally responsible for protecting the wetlands in accordance with the West Bengal Town and Country Planning Act of 1979, section 46(1), Article 51A of the Indian Constitution, which states that protection of the environment is a vital duty of the citizens of the country, and Article 21 of the Constitution, which implies the right to live in environmentally safe and pollution-free conditions. The High Court verdict stated that, 'There can't be any matter of doubt that the Calcutta Wetlands present a unique ecosystem apart from the materialistic benefit to the society at large' (Kundu et al. 2008: 879) and that no government or non-governmental body could reclaim any more wetlands. The Land Reforms Department and the Department of

Environment, Government of West Bengal, identified around 32 *mouzas* (local unit of land measurement) to be preserved as part of the waste recycling region of Kolkata. Following this, the land schedule and the report were sent to the Ramsar Convention, which then, on 19 August 2002, declared the EKW a *Ramsar* site (No. 1208). A statutory authority, called the East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority (EKWMA), was set up under the East Kolkata Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Act in 2006 (Mukherjee 2015b). This new Authority would be responsible for the implementation of wise use-principles for the management of the EKW.

Unfortunately, the Ramsar-designated 12,500 hectares, including 37 *mouzas* (five *mouzas* were later added), are now facing severe threats of rampant, unplanned urbanization. The EKW still suffers from ambiguous boundary definition and ownership. There is an immediate need to redraw the map of the EKW since no such effort has been made since 1985, and it is important to remove areas that have been urbanized, as this land-use change is irreversible. 'Though the wetlands enjoy the protection of court orders, legislations and international conventions, there is no real shield on the ground. In the past 10 years, nearly 10 per cent of the EKW has been converted into concrete. Another quarter of the wetlands are under threat. Land sharks use an old but ruthlessly effective method of walling up a part of the wetland and dumping tons of fly ash, concrete and garbage in the dead of night. Within weeks what was once a thriving *bheri* (fish pond) turns into dry land and the site for the next multi-storey' (Niyogi and Ray 2013).

The most threatened *mouzas* are Paschim Chowbaga, Chowbagha, Chak Kolar Khal, Kharki, Bhagabanpur, Karimpur, Jagatipota, Ranabhutia, Atghara, Mukundapur and Thakdari. Moreover, numerous water bodies have also been converted into paddy cultivation. The availability of sewage is not governed by the demands of fishermen who are the primary users of it; it is, instead, but largely slanted in favour of the needs of the metropolis. During the monsoons, when there is significant waterlogging in the urban reaches of the city, the entire storm flows are flushed through the SWF to the Kulti River, leading to a drastic decline in sewage flows by 60–80 per cent (East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority 2010: 21). Lack of supply of waste water is a major cause of concern for the fishermen. Another recent report published in *The Times of India* commented: 'The flow of sewage into the fish farms or *bheris* has been deliberately reduced in an attempt to snuff out fishery and farming and make way for conversion of the land into real estate' (Niyogi 2015). This mirrors wider trends of urban development in the city, impinging upon hard-fought rights for the ecological protection of the wetlands. While the KMDA and other government and development agencies, like the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation and the West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation (HIDCO), are interested in attracting private investments through urban and industrial development in this region, environmentalists, civil society groups (PUBLIC and Save the Wetlands, among others) and local residents are strictly against such ventures, pushing instead for the preservation of the wetlands (Mukherjee and Ghosh 2015).

Conclusion

The dominant literature on urbanization and its present challenges focuses on the 'hardware' of cities (built city infrastructure: transportation systems, housing, water works, sanitation, slums, and so on). Scholars (especially urban sociologists) seem to be concerned also about the 'software' of cities (as centres of creativity and lifestyle, involving culture and learning institutions, and so on). However, very little is written about the ecological infrastructure of cities, which involves their wider ecosystems (Sukhdev 2013). A focus on this aspect, reflecting more on the ecology 'of' cities rather than ecology 'in' cities (McDonnell 2011, Prato and Pardo 2013) can be important in addressing the global problematic of urbanization and sustainability (Mukherjee 2015a and 2015b).

Again, it is also important to study and examine complex layers within the dominant form of urban environmentalism propagated by the neo-liberal state and supported by the middle-class. The Kolkata case-study highlights this singular dominant variety of state propagated and middle-class-supported 'bourgeois environmentalism' and invites us to identify various strands or pluralities in urban environmentalism(s) and the complex dynamics of conflict, collaboration and negotiation among these that play a pivotal role in determining the urban environmental transitions in specific contexts. The Kolkata case also invites us to go beyond an analysis of who gains and who loses (which is nonetheless important in political ecology) among divergent groups and stakeholders and attempt to understand the impact of urban environmental trajectories of commodifying commons on the urban space and its wider periphery.

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

Purposeful Agency and Governance: A Bridgeable Gap
University of Kent, 15-17 June 2016

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Convened by Giuliana B. Prato, Italo Pardo and Michael D. Fischer at the University of Kent, U.K., this International Interdisciplinary Conference was a coordinated effort to stimulate well-integrated analyses of key issues in today's increasingly urbanized world. The meeting was organized by the International Urban Symposium–IUS, the Commission on Urban Anthropology (CUA) and the HRAF Advanced Research Centres EU (hrafARC) in association with the Centre for Social Anthropology and Computing (CSAC) and the School of Anthropology and Conservation (SAC) of the University of Kent.

Ethnographers have demonstrated the moral and cultural complexity of *strong continuous interaction* between the material and the non-material in individual action. And they have studied the impact that misplaced or instrumentally selective moralities in policy and in the production of the law have on the legitimacy of governance. Mainstream anthropological analysis has shown how selective moralities underlying rules and regulations that are biased towards those in power or are badly defined or impossible to apply encourage exclusion and widen the gap between rulers and the ruled across the world. Parallel to this, anthropological research over the past decade has focused on the properties of the 'digital society' with respect to how people experience external changes, organize themselves and enact new change.

With specific reference to urban settings and the interactions between cities and regions, the meeting was convened in the belief that ethnographic research has a unique contribution to make to our capacity to understand important processes of agency (individual and collective) and the ways in which agency is capable of influencing the system and encouraging good governance, intended as governance that promotes and makes the best of the local resources and styles of citizenship. The meeting brought together high-quality, ethnographically-varied papers by a strong international field of distinguished senior, mid-careers and younger scholars (including doctoral candidates) that spoke to each other and stimulated reflection on the interplay between personal morality and civic responsibility, and between value and action. Participants used well the ample time allocated to discuss how governance is evolving and the many ways in which people deal with obstacles.

Enlivened by engaged debate, the ten sections brought together sophisticated analyses and criticism and suggestions were given and taken in a professional and friendly manner. Over three days we had the privilege of debating fully the listed issues. Participants' regional and academic diversity made the scholarly exchanges especially insightful. Astute chairing by

Manos Spyridakis, Jerome Krase, Giuliana B. Prato, Michael D. Fischer, Maria Kokolaki, Italo Pardo and Bella Dicks helped to identify strengths and weaknesses in the papers and to direct debate towards further intellectual development. While time was kept, vibrant discussion overflew into the breaks and the evening receptions.

Two sections were dedicated to a Panel convened by Maria Kokolaki (University of Kent, U.K. and Institute of Educational Policy, Greece) and Michael D. Fischer (University of Kent, U.K.) on *Spaces of Enclosure in the Globalised Information Society: The Critical Role of Education*, which focused on the modern world's transitioning to an 'information' phase, where information is the principal commodity, and to a 'network society' that stems from decentralised and diffused information technologies. Power becomes, thus, more polar, and formal and informal transmission of knowledge is critical. The Panel included five papers. Based on fieldwork in Greece, Maria Kokolaki's and Michael D. Fischer's paper on *Local Knowledge at the Crossroads with the World of Global Cultural Flows: Rhetoric of Resistance and the Potential Role of Formal Education* considered how local communities employ local knowledge to oppose 'cultural amnesia' and preserve their cultural distinctiveness. In a paper on *Secondary Education and Vocational Training of People with Disabilities in Greece: Mapping Heterotopias* Athena-Anna Christopoulou and Athina Zoniou-Sideri (both at the University of Athens, Greece) discussed special education examining educational policies and initiatives aimed at the elimination of discrimination. A paper titled *'What day is it today?': A Chronotopic Analysis of Classroom Episodes in a Special Education School* by Georgia Papastavrinidou and Athina Zoniou-Sideri (both at the University of Athens, Greece) looked at segregation through the study of special schools for pupils who are excluded from general education. The paper by Maria Kokolaki, Georgia Papastavrinidou and Athena-Anna Christopoulou (University of Athens, Greece) on *Schools as Thresholds within Prison Heterotopias: Perspectives on the Poetics of Prison Education* examined the role of school as a transformative anti-structure opposed to the prison's highly structured and controlled space and time. In her paper on *Space as an Ark and Ghetto or as a Field of Action and Social Change? The Case of Roma Space in Northern Greece,* Giota Karagianni (University of Thessaloniki, Greece) challenged the ghetto view of Roma space looking at their need to create new meanings for space and social relations.

Fifteen papers were presented in the other eight sessions. In their discussion of *The Death of the Social and the Birth of Tel Aviv Singularity*, Orphee Senouf Pilpoul (Tel Aviv University, Israel) and Tamar Barkay (Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College, Israel) unravelled the ways in which single women's agency and sense of belonging are constructed and negotiated daily. In *Performing Veganism: On Vegan Subjectivity and Activism*, Zohar Yanko (The Academic College of Tel Aviv-Yaffo, Israel) and Regev Nathansohn (University of Michigan, U.S.A.) explored how vegan activists' day-to-day practices are crystallizing into dominant personal and political identity in Tel Aviv. In *'I bring social well-being to the public space, but no one knows it'*, Marie-Pierre Gibert (University Lumiere Lyon 2, France) analysed invisible social competence drawing on her rich ethnography of French street cleaners. Chris Diming (University of Durham, U. K.) explored personal agency in a governmental context considered by informants to be unstable and unsupportive for would-be

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entrepreneurs in a paper on *'With Connections': Agency, Networks and Public Space in Pristina.* In *Crossing the Line: Silenced Voices, Urban Policies and Illusive Means of Participation,* Margarida Fernandes (Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal) discussed infrastructural deficiencies in Lisbon, people's feeling that nobody will listen to them and their subsequent lack of action. In a paper on *Facing the Financial Crisis: Governance, Entrepreneurs and Territorial Economy*, Paola De Vivo and Enrico Sacco (both at University of Naples Federico II, Italy) investigated how businesses in South Italy succeed thanks to new strategies, despite a financial crisis and weak governmental support. In their paper on *Migrations Guided by the State: Motivation and Agency in the Czech Republic*, Zdeněk Uherek (Czech Academy of Sciences and Charles University, Prague) and Veronika Beranská, (Czech Academy of Sciences) analysed integration in the light of the connections between the power relations of the state and of immigrant groups. Lucy Koechlin (University of Basel, Switzerland) drew on comparative research in Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire in her paper on *'Fertile Ambiguities': A Tentative Typology of Urban Political Articulations* to argue that normative ambiguity may provide spaces within which the governance of rapid urbanisation is articulated. Bianca Botea's (University of Lyon, France) paper on *Urban Research as Agency. A Case Study of Urban Renewal* looked at how the effects of an 'urban renewal' policy on everyday life in Lyon pointed to a gap between the governance of urban spaces and actors' agency. In their *Brooklyn Re-Viewed from the Street: Agency versus Governance*, Jerome Krase (Brooklyn College CUNY, U.S.A.) and Judith N. DeSena (St. John's University, U.S.A.) discussed the radically changed public perception of Brooklyn and local people's resisting government agencies' attempts to displace them from their home territories. Robin Elizabeth Smith's (University of Oxford, U.K.) *The Unintended Consequences of Tax Reform: Istrian Winemakers Confronting a Bureaucratizing State* showed how state efforts to make business easier may raise new barriers to entering the formal economy, ultimately increasing informality. Z. Nurdan Atalay Güneş' (Mardin Artuklu University, Turkey) paper on *How to learn to spend? Financial Literacy Practices in Turkey* examined financial literacy looking at key strategies that have emerged under conditions of extreme debt. In *Governing the Poor: Social Exclusion and Citizenship in Today's Greece*, Manos Spyridakis (University of the Peloponnese, Greece) studied state policy on poverty and the uneasiness of a population on the verge of social exclusion to reflect on how this situation is producing new social categories and modes of citizenship. Italo Pardo's paper, *A Gap that Can but Will Not Be Bridged: Misgovernance Frustrates Southern Italians' Entrepreneurialism* examined how rulers' lack of recognition of the grassroots culture and actions makes unbridgeable an otherwise bridgeable gap between citizenship and governance. In *Government, Governance and their Discontents*, Giuliana B. Prato contextualized case-studies from Italy and Albania in a changing Europe since the collapse of real Socialism to argue that the application of the concept of 'governance' has too often yielded outcomes contrary to the originally stated aims.

The success of an International Conference of this kind is measured in terms of intellectual output and academic exchange. The aim to encourage exchange of ideas and to build upon existing, intellectual bridges and engender new links was well met in what by common agreement turned out to be an unqualified success, intellectually, academically and

socially. Old relationships were reinforced and new friendships and collaborations were forged, promising well for the future.

The collective findings of this Conference have produced an in-depth, ethnographically-informed understanding of the problematic of the relationships between citizenship and governance and of the traditional and new ways through which ordinary people cope with this problematic. The quality of the papers, their well-integrated analyses and their in-depth discussion have motivated the Convenors to edit a Special Issue for the peer-reviewed Journal *Urbanities* and a volume for the Series 'Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology'.

On a less formal note, a great deal of professional networking, academic exchange and socialization took place 'off-duty'. While the conference was untouched by the scourge of 'academic tourism', participants enjoyed the warm evenings taking advantage of the natural beauty of the University Campus and of what the medieval city of Canterbury has to offer historically and culturally. Many participants took dinner together at restaurants in the city centre. Most remarked that they felt that we were evolving into a real human group as opposed to an association of disparate scholars who happened to be in the same place at the same time.

Understanding the Postcolonial City: New Directions for Urban Research

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The Bangalore Research Network (BRN) was formed in December 2012 to bring together scholars researching the city using perspectives from the humanities and social sciences. In collaboration with NAGARA, an urban research collective represented by Professor Smriti Srinivas (Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis), the BRN held a day-long workshop to discuss ongoing research on Bangalore in August 2015.

Participants included PhD students and faculty from the Azim Premji Institute, Cambridge University, Emory University, National Institute of Advanced Studies, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of California (Los Angeles), the University of California (Santa Barbara) and other Bangalore–based scholars. Papers were divided into three panels focused on space/spatiality and practices in the city (with Dr Smriti Srinivas as discussant), identities in postcolonial and neoliberal Bangalore (with Dr Lata Mani, independent researcher, as discussant), and economies and ecologies (with Dr Carol Upadhya, NIAS, as discussant). In addition, Dr Purnima Mankekar (UCLA) offered comments and feedback.

In her opening comments, Smriti Srinivas contextualized the workshop against a larger background of urban studies research in India. Describing the current moment as a transitional and productive one for the study of cities, she identified the late 1990s as a time when theoretical approaches to cities in India shifted. There has been an expansion from the dominant thinking about cities in terms of migration, caste, and industrialization to include new frames: gender, media, technology, popular culture, and architecture, to name just a few. The work up until the 1990s had largely been focused on colonial cities (Bombay), archetypical 'religious' cities (Banaras), or capitals (Delhi); this has been joined by research on other cities such as Bangalore and Hyderabad and 'middle' towns and middle cities that expand the scope of earlier projects. With a surge in urban growth across Africa and Asia, scholars need new terminologies to study emergent urban processes that do not follow the same historical patterns as European or colonial cities. Scholars working on the city need to maintain a balance between theorizing the nation–state and understanding urban processes in the global South. Full–length monographs theorizing Bangalore are still few in number, Srinivas noted (they include Heitzman 2004, Nair 2005, Srinivas 2001, Stallmeyer 2011).

The papers presented at the workshop drew from a range of methodological approaches including visual ethnography, oral life–histories, interviews, participant observation, and surveys. They reflected ongoing research including on the current social life and circulation of historic postcards in the city, understandings of 'heritage' in an élite neighborhood, the role of lawns as green space in the city, on English–language learning classes, Anglo–Indian teachers, as well as ethnographic work on food economies, Corporate Social Responsibility programs, and sanitation work.

The workshop's call for papers invited research challenging dominant characterizations of Bangalore that are rooted in Information Technology, its most visible — and celebrated — industry. Yet the discussants noted that several papers tied resolutely back to I.T., if not directly then by invoking it as a central referent. Lata Mani asked, 'To what degree is contemporary critical discourse too closely entangled in terms of normative understandings and predispositions with the very phenomena it seeks to illuminate to be able to produce genuine insight?' Carol Upadhya noted that Bangalore has become a favourite site to study certain kinds of things — 'are we reproducing the same representations that we are confronted with?' These questions prompted discussion on how researchers carve out certain objects of inquiry.

Relatedly, workshop participants discussed how to study the 'new' and, conversely, what it means to harbour nostalgia for a remembered or imagined past. There is much about Bangalore that seems 'new' or 'emergent', after all: its aspirations, its public–private partnerships, the return migration of professionals and the turn to English–language education through private tutorial centres. Carol Upadhya urged a more careful consideration of how practices or objects that seem 'new' are located within larger commodity chains shaped by deep and embedded social relations. Lata Mani cautioned that by focusing on certain practices that seem ascendant (or new) we are 'running the risk of inadvertently doing the marketing for neoliberalism's rapacious imagination'. In response to papers on the 'work' of heritage and on the circulation of colonial postcards, Mani suggested that we might ask how particular

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constructions of nostalgia also offer an understanding of the historical. To think critically about our practices of remembering — what kinds of events do we remember? How do we memorialize memory? Who is feeling nostalgic? — is also to destabilize 'the present' which within neoliberal discourse merely operates, she noted, as a way-station for the future.

Participants' research questions centred on memory, nostalgia, aspiration, and idealism initiated another productive conversation around method and epistemology: how do we come to 'know' the city? Papers relied on traditional social science approaches that focused on oral testimony. But what if ethnography were to serve as a primary entry point into methodologies that explore a whole range of senses? Purnima Mankekar suggested expanding disciplinary conversations to better grasp — or sense — spaces of the city. For instance, ethnographic inquiry might draw from film studies literature on the haptic to use the visual as a point of entry into a whole range of senses that come into play. Discussants suggested sensorial modes of approaching the city: sensing its rhythms, walking it (see also Srinivas 2015), feeling it, smelling it, drawing from visual art and non–oral modes of representation and understanding (see also Mani 2015), and privileging affect to place relationships between humans and non–humans as part of a larger energetic field (see also Mankekar 2015). Purnima Mankekar noted that urban anthropology has not typically taken popular culture seriously; when discussed it emerges as a hermeneutic project rather than through its potential to offer structures of feeling and knowledge about the city.

Looking ahead, Smriti Srinivas wondered what it means to talk about studying 'Bangalore' as a composite whole in the present, given the city's tremendous growth in recent years. Carol Upadhya drew attention to one such collaborative project: an urban lab documenting different ways of inhabiting the city (online here: http://srishti.ac.in/centers-and-labs/center-for-experimental-media-arts). Participants also discussed the possibilities for mapping projects that could trace the diverse temporalities of walking in the city, gendered spatial movements, or developing connections between different neighbourhoods in the city.

Following the success of last year's workshop, the Bangalore Research Network and NAGARA, in collaboration with Jaaga, invited participants to its next iteration, planned for July 30, 2016 in Bangalore. Researchers employing social science and humanities perspectives-broadly understood—to ongoing analyses of the city were invited to submit paper abstracts of 250 words to bangaloreresearchnetwork@gmail.com by 1 April 2016.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Ethan N. Elkind (2014). *Railtown: The Fight for the Los Angeles Metro Rail and the Future of the City*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

From its title, this book challenges both the assumed image of Los Angeles as America's automobile metropolis and the urban rationale of infrastructure needs. *Railtown* deals with the future of that city by narrating the fight for Los Angeles Metro Rail. The subtitle frames very well the content of the book by pointing out two key terms: 'fight' and 'future'. The departure point is a vision of the future promoted by Tom Bradley's campaign for mayor in 1973. Those who understood that the future of a sustainable Los Angeles was linked to the development of a public transit rail network and more transit-oriented walkable neighborhoods. Those who promoted the metro rail system in the city wanted 'to elevate Los Angeles into a world-class city' (p. 2). The story the book carefully describes reaches the current situation and outlines the future prospects of a twenty-first-century railtown.

Ethan Elkind's narrative moves from the rationale of train and public transportation in LA to the contingencies and complexities of developing public transportation in a car oriented city — it was not always this way. Before the car, there was a good network of rail services in the city. Los Angeles is difficult to define. The problems, well outlined by the author, are not just related with the enormous size of Los Angeles county (four thousand square miles) but also with the sprawling political power of the 'byzantine political structure' of a city composed of eighty-eight cities, a big county, and 'state and federal representatives and agencies. Underlying these entities were communities segregated by class, race and ethnicity' (p. 8). It seems miraculous that such a complex political, social and urban structure could be led in a unified way.

But the future of Los Angeles envisioned by the promoters of an environmentally friendly network of rail public transportation did not come without a fight; actually, a long and complex series of arguments, coalitions among agencies, officials and lobbyists at local, county, state and federal administration levels. This book is a detailed and meticulously reconstructed story of all the plans, controversies, fights, campaigning for funding, setbacks and successes that have marked the construction of a, still evolving, public rail transit system. The reader sometimes finds himself immersed in a complex and multisided story that resembles the best soap operas.

Narrating such a fight is not an easy matter, and Elkin does a great job describing the whole story, focusing mostly from 1973 to 2008 and the different contexts that gave a sense to the deployment of the different rail and light rail lines of the Los Angeles Metro Rail.

This book provides great material for urban anthropologists. It shows how the planning, development, and building of public transportation is shaped and, sometimes, ruled by the usually petty personal, agencies, communities, and ethnic group interests. In a way, it is a 'study up' focused on those individual, agencies and administrations with power; but it is also an enlightening ethnography where local leaders, activists, affluent and

poor neighbors play a part. We read about residents of suburban areas worried about gentrification; neighbours of economically depressed areas interested in an affordable and safe public transportation system to carry them wherever jobs can be found; communities fighting for rail routes that do not affect their quiet backyards or religious life. Some of these movements could be clearly defined as NIMBYs, while others seek the commercial advantage of the shops of specific thoroughfares and avenues. In any case, the author keeps a balanced and safe distance from any party.

Studies of Los Angeles would benefit greatly from this book. What about those urban studies scholars not directly related with the peculiarities of this city? It seems to me there is a lot to learn and think about in these pages. Unfortunately, some of the more general topics that could be ascertained from this study are not easy to grasp, e.g., the interest of the commercial developers of downtown Los Angeles and the renaissance or reinvention of the central urban core. This book provides a good amount of food for thought about governance; the complex interweaving of public agencies, private interests, activists, and residents; and some of the key issues on the future of metropolitan areas.

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Fabien Frenzel and **Ko Koens** (eds) (2015). *Tourism and Geographies of Inequality. The New Global Slumming Phenomenon*. London: Routledge.

This research-focused edited volume provides the reader with insights into the complexities of slum tourism. The text posits that the controversial practice of 'slumming', which refers to travelling for leisure purposes to 'slums', is rising in popularity globally. Papers from the conference 'Destination Slum! — Reflections on the production and consumption of poverty in tourism', held in Bristol, U.K., in December 2010, served as the origins of the eight chapters written by ten authors. This collection of chapters was previously published in *Tourism Geographies* (May 2012).

This text is a composition of qualitative case studies that contribute to the growing field of research about slum tourism. Of particular note is this text's contribution to the field of urban anthropology. The work of various authors compiled into this edited volume allows the history of slum global tourism to be traced back to Victorian England. The histories and intricacies of global slum tourism are then depicted in various intersecting contexts in several developing nations. Myth debunking is a focus of the chapters, as is asking the reader to reflect upon the ethics of slum tourism.

Chapter One introduces the reader to the interdisciplinary and relatively young field of slum tourism research. The term *slum* in the text is defined using the United Nations Human Settlements Programme's 2003 definition: 'a heavily populated urban area characterized by substandard housing and squalor' (p. 4). Although the authors utilize the phrase 'slum tourism', they clarify early on in the text that there is no global definition of slum tourism as 'these areas all originate in particular historical conditions and hence form distinct social and political spaces' (p. 4). Chapter One

also reflects upon the numerous papers presented at the 'Destination Slum' conference in 2010, listing them in detail, although not all papers are included in this edited volume.

In Chapter Two, '"We did the Slum" — Urban Poverty, Tourism in Historical Perspective', the reader is given a historical perspective of slum tourism dating back to Victorian England, when the upper class would go 'slumming' to see poverty in the East End of London. The reader is then taken forward into the twenty-first century and reminded of 'township tourism', which takes place in South Africa, as well as organized slum tourism in areas of Manila, Jakarta, Cairo, Buenos Aires, Nairobi, Bangkok, and Windhoek. Chapter Three, 'Poor but happy: Volunteer tourists' encounters with poverty', is a must-read chapter for professionals or volunteers who encounter poverty while travelling. This chapter focuses on how poverty can be threatening and cause anxiety for volunteers. In order to combat these feelings, volunteers may in effect normalize poverty and construct and romanticize the poverty experience to be one that is 'poor but happy'. The fourth chapter focuses on Dharavi, Mumbai, which was the setting for the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. The most poignant part of this chapter is its focus on perspective — mainly, that the representation of Dharavi is 'subjective, conditional, and uncertain' (p. 60).

Chapters Four through Eight, while they still focus on slum tourism, share similar themes in that they focus on the aesthetics and images of slums. Chapter Four, 'Representing and Interpreting "Reality" in Dharavi, Mumbai', focuses on

the aesthetics and questions surrounding the dangers of using aesthetics as a means of attracting poverty to a type voyeurism. Chapter Five, 'Informal Urbanism and the Taste for Slums', also focuses on images of slums, albeit with a focus on aesthetics and politics. Eleven images are presented throughout this chapter, and the reader is asked to reflect upon questions about whether the 'impact of voyeuristic gaze of the Western tourist produces an aesthetictization of poverty' (p. 81). Chapter Six, 'Mobile Imaginaries, Portable Signs: Global Consumption and Representations of Slum Life', examines how the image of the slum has been used by global consumerism. Examples of how urban poverty is portrayed and dispersed for global entertainment purposes are provided and questioned when urban poverty is portrayed in a stereotypical fashion — often through just a minimal number of images. Chapter Seven, 'Glimpses of Another World: The Favela as a Tourist Attraction', explores the *favela*, the word for slum used in Brazil. The chapter describes the favela as a social space and sociological category as well as the commodification of the favela as a tourist attraction. Chapter Eight, 'Encounters over Garbage: Tourists and Lifestyle Migrants in Mexico', offers an in-depth discussion of slum tourism through an analysis of a tour to a garbage dump in Mexico. This half-day tour starts at a church and is well-advertised and attended, particular by retired North Americans. According to the author, 'the tour activities affect marginalized urban spaces in Mazatlan against the backdrop of a particular set of globalization processes, thus producing a distinctive response to

urban poverty, that is, a tourist experience of poverty, framed by discourses of charity' (p. 159).

As a professor who teaches undergraduate students, I feel that aspects of this text — particularly the history of slum tourism and the chapter about volunteering — would be especially useful for students to read before embarking on volunteer work or travel abroad to impoverished areas. From an anthropological perspective, although this text significantly contributes to the field of urban anthropology and the growing field of slum tourism in particular, its link to the field of anthropology could be more consciously bridged. Each of these chapters individually present a view of slum tourism that could be linked together, yet the thread that seems to weave all the chapters together, in my mind, is their common referencing of the sociologist Bianca Freire-Medeiros. The first chapter introduced the subsequent chapters as if they were still papers from a conference. It would have been helpful to this reader if an introductory chapter would have been written for the reader not knowledgeable about slum tourism, perhaps including a more definitive and working definition of slum tourism as well as more background about the subject and an overview of Freire-Medeiros' work. Therefore, I would recommend that Freire-Medeiros' *Touring Poverty* be read as a companion to this text.

All in all, this book was a fascinating read because the distinct case studies shed further light on the ethical and complex issues surrounding tourism to geographies of inequality. The authors carefully document how historical, sociological,

political, and anthropological perspectives differ among geographical spaces; these principles must not be overlooked because a space is deemed a slum. As a result, this text makes an important contribution not only to the field of global tourism, but also to the field of urban anthropology.

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Matthew Gandy (2014). *The Fabric of Space: Water, Modernity, and the Urban Imagination.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

The *Fabric of Space* is an important book that ought to be read by anyone interested in the future of cities. In 351 pages including abundant footnotes, a rich bibliography, photos and index, Matthew Gandy, a geographer who was director of the UCL urban laboratory, wrote a very convincing fresco based on a large variety of data and academic literature, completed by novels and artistic works that provide real sensibility, density and realism to the book. Everybody interested in the past and the future of cities as well ought to read his book. The guiding principle is to highlight some main topics of the modern urban making, from the mid-nineteenth century emergence of water engineering to the present climate disorders. Gandy focuses on six cities that have special relationships with water: Haussmann Paris, Weimar Berlin, colonial and post-colonial Lagos, modern Mumbai, Los Angeles and its concrete river, the inundation of London.

Water makes an excellent thread to describe cities' contemporary evolution: it 'lies at the intersection of landscape and infrastructure, crossing between visible

and invisible domains of urban space' (p. 2). Water connects every home to the public technological networks. Sewers, adduction systems, floods and swamps have been part of the modern transformations of cities all over the world for at least the last two centuries and constitute some of the major technical issues in urban life and policies.

There is no general model of evolution of cities or consistency among models. Water management has often been seen as an index of progress, following the Hausmanian model of Paris. In Nigeria as elsewhere some urban planners still subscribe to it. In every city, urban modernization ought to involve water infrastructures: draining of marshes, safe water supply and sewage disposal. This would imply a public sphere that would be able to undertake expensive public works and powerful enough to implement its policies. During the 1940s, the British colonial administration in Lagos tried to eradicate malaria, but it has been a failure and malaria is still active. In Los Angeles, the Congress approved the construction by the Army Corps of Engineers of a fifty-one-mile-long concrete channel to canalise the river that regularly flooded the city. This is now a concrete linked to thirteen water departments that rarely agree on coordinated strategies on irrigation or renewal of flood defence. In London, the British government built the Thames Barrier to protect the capital from the inundation that could come from the estuary, but lacking confidence in the Barrier, people want to restore an 'idealized ecosystem from the past' (p. 207).

Before the climate crisis, the main contrast to the evolutionist city and the engineering model is the social collapse that occurs more and more. This point is well exemplified by Global South cities: in Mumbai, 'severe disparities in public health can persist because of the array of technological, scientific and architectural innovations that enable wealthy households to insulate themselves from the environmental conditions of the poor' and 'the public health crisis facing slum dwellers does not directly endanger middle-class residents' (p. 135). In Lagos, 'the relationship between disease and segregation established in the colonial era persists in terms of middle-class intolerance (consecutive to the) "miasmic disdain" for the olfactory proximity of the poor' (p. 108). Dickens and Conrad remind us that, in social imagination, and in reality as well, the Thames estuary was a place of abandonment and social malaise. Consequences of climate change are particularly illustrated by London. 'There is tacit acknowledgment among many government agencies (...) that increased flood risk is inevitable' (p. 196). Technical solutions will not solve this problem, above all in a country that has dramatically weakened the strategic planning role of the Environment Agency. Solutions ought to be found somewhere between the restoration of the traditional ecological role of the estuary and education, individual responsibility and new public policies.

Water policies have never been strictly technical. Hygiene, disease control, comfort and entertainment were used to civilize urban people and to control urban space. Water policies make it possible to better understand public policies in

general, but also contestation, local autonomy and popular appropriation of the urban space. In many places water exemplifies the contested terrain of local policies, strengthened between the knowledge of engineers and the knowledge of the population. During the 1990s and until now, the question of water played a major role in the emergence of the urban political ecology and its connection with the dwellers. But 'the intersection, between water, democratic deliberation, and the public realm has been extensively occluded' (p. 14). However, placing democracy and its practical forms in the urban development — particularly managing water resources, combating diseases such as malaria or developing ecological responses to reduce the effects of global warming — probably constitutes one the today's main issues. In Mumbai local mobilisations organize supplying drinking water. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) convince local authorities to have an emphasis 'on measures such as rainwater harvesting as a rediscovery of traditional approaches to water management' (p. 130). Protests over access to drinking water and health, led by some NGOs, via 'grassroots campaigns to extend citizenship rights to marginalized communities' and 'the deployment of repertoires of local knowledge has allowed some of the poorest communities in the city to become visible for the first time' (p. 130). In Los Angeles, an 'ecological urban citizenship' has emerged that initiates 'a myriad of grassroots initiatives and new forms of public engagement with nature' (p. 149) where water is a constant feature. They originated with a grassroots organisation called the Mothers of East

LA, which was created in 1984 to campaign against pollution and health-threatening industrial facilities near poor and predominantly Latino and African American neighbourhoods (p. 176).

The possibility of new forms of 'urban ecological citizenship' (...) requires reflections on the different modalities of power within the urban arena' (p. 218). But dramatic events occur even more quickly when a long time [lags] between events and response. Models lose their practical utility, experts' knowledge becomes inefficient, sources of power are dispersed, 'and we are left to contend with ideological parameters of science fiction imaginary' (p. 220). Now, 'water both constitutes and delimits the public realm, not necessarily as a stable or coherent social formation, but as a set of spheres of contestation and negotiation' (p. 221). At the same time, inequalities are widening between suburbs and gentrified downtowns; cities concentrate wealth and power to the detriment of their rural hinterlands; private investments are unable to respond to the water needs of the population and to the impact of climate change. Democratic solutions are more needed than ever.

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Susannah Hagan (2015). *Ecological Urbanism: The Nature of the City*. New York: Routledge.

This is a book about urban design that goes beyond design to include anthropology, politics, governance and environment in a

consolidated approach that is termed 'ecological urbanism', a term that the author agrees is not popular but gaining ground. At the outset the reader is told that ecological urbanism is about cultural practice and demands a transformation in thinking from those in charge of the urban environment; architects, planners and power holders. This concept is separated from related terms like urban ecology and sustainable cities; the former is about the green spaces in the city and the latter about maintaining some kind of equilibrium state, but ecological urbanism is neither. It is a modified view of city planning that recognizes that those in charge of building and maintaining the city as well those living in it, must recognize that 'urban apocalypse' (p. 150) is to be attributed to the 'four horsemen' of urbanisation, environmental degradation, climate change and wealth being concentrated in the hands of the few. As the majority of the people in the world are moving to urban areas, not always voluntarily, the dreams of a good life are often shattered as many of them are pushed into unliveable conditions, often having to struggle to find their own solutions to survival, like building on places that should not be built on. Such unplanned growth may cause havoc on the lives of citizens as well as on the environment; a tragedy that is being manifest in climate change, urban pollution and manmade urban disasters.

This volume prioritizes the human elements and focuses on the negative aspects of planning and of governance globally; namely power, profit and the essential inequalities of urban life. Solutions may not be found in absolute terms to deal with problems of inequity

and injustice, as the author realizes that utopian conditions are not possible. Yet as this book tries to explain, design and technology can be used to advantage if planning and architecture incorporate 'an ethics of size, of social mix, of density and public space' (p. 8). In other words, urbanism needs to situate itself within the matrix of human culture and its bio-physical environment. One cannot emphasize one at the expense of the other. The author does not talks in metaphoric terms but illustrates her arguments and propositions with examples of real cities and visions of ideal places, like Lilypad.

The first section of the book deals with the definition and understanding of key concepts such as urban ecosystem, cultural ecology, landscape and environment. The second section describes three major models of city planning and design; the Garden city, the city within boundaries and the city unbound; the last being where the rural and urban are seen as shading into one another. The issues raised in this section include the role of citizens, 'civic pride' in maintaining spaces like the garden city and the gradual loss to corporate and capitalist interests that are taking over city planning. This section describes how sacrifice of cultural and human interests to the needs of capital gain and profit has played havoc with many city environments. The compact cities that represent the second model are bound around a strong centre and often the materialist connotations override the cultural and social ones as these are governed by a central power. Here questions of democracy, of control and access to resources may become paramount. In contemporary times, issues

of carbon footprints and pollution may be of critical interest as are questions of density, energy and that of relation of city and suburb, both environmentally and politically. The concept of the Broadacre city brings in thinkers and planners like Patrick Geddes and Ian McHarg, whose visions were to incorporate the natural within the social. Geddes had emphasized mapping histories before planning, an innovation not attempted before. One is introduced to the concept of a 'performative landscape', where any place is evaluated not as empty but in terms of its cultural and ecological content.

The reader is offered several conceptual models with real examples, like Edge city and the Seed Catalogue, to deal with urban intensification and spread. The seed catalogue is an interesting concept that provides various solutions to varieties of environments like wetlands, brownfields etc. The next section describes ideal cities, often small ones that may be real like Auroville or fictitious like Lilypond or simply metaphoric like a future eco-city, the possibility of which remains open.

The book is based on a large corpus of factual data, discussing actual planners and architects, real cities as examples and also contains relevant drawings and diagrams as illustrations. It contains historical material from ancient cities to the very modern ones, bringing in architects, planners and social thinkers ranging from Vitruvius, Le Corbusier, Howard, Henri Levebre, De Certeau and Marx, to give theoretical depth to the understanding of city planning. The ultimate goal of this book is about power and control and its message very clear; unless there is a synchronization of the top

down and the bottom up perspectives, unless there is participation of masses and heed paid to their needs, no city planning can be successful. A dysfunctional city embodies both social and environmental disasters and is ultimately economically non-viable such that even in the interest of future viability, ecological urbanism is a way out and a solution worth considering.

The practicality of wedding technology to humanism, planning to the human element is clearly demonstrated and makes this slim volume an important resource for both analytical and for applied purposes.

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Tone Huse (2014). *Everyday Life in the Gentrifying City: On Displacement, Ethnic Privileging and the Right to Stay Put*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Tone Huse is a Research Fellow in the Department of Sociology, Political Science and Community Planning at the University of Tromso, Norway. This book originates from Huse's other book Toyenghata-et nyrikt stykke Norge (2010). The book describes how Toyen Street in east Oslo was transformed after 30 years of gentrification. *Everyday life in the Gentrifying City* is actually the expanded and revised version of her previous book. Diane Oatley through translation of the book made it possible for the international and global community to read the book in English. The most interesting and unique relevancy of the book lies in the lively description of Toyen Street. It is the outcome of Tone Huse's three years of

dedicated urban ethnographic study during 2007-2010; that is, her qualitative research on Toyen Street. Huse has efficiently established the fact and effect of gentrification through her observational study which is expressed brilliantly and skilfully with the help of narratives, discourse conversation etc. Tone Huse actually describes a small part of Oslo as the neighbourhood area of her study which is less than a kilometre long. The region of her study may be small in stretch but the varied description with her focus on ethnic minorities and how far they feel disconnected from Norwegian culture and society as the new culture is totally different from their culture, is immense. She represents everyone, from the disadvantageous immigrant minority to the advantageous native Norwegians. She illustrates locality details and the real story of Toyen Street with every colour expressed in her urban ethnographic study. Her writing gives voice especially to the ethnic minor community who struggle every day to survive amidst Norwegian culture and to live a challenging but decent life with limited or very little resources in an unknown world. Tone captures their effort to integrate and feel the sense that they belong and are accepted in a new society. Gentrification started the moment when Toyen Street became part of the immigrant's everyday life and a meeting place for their physical and psychological existence.

The book starts with an introduction and then is divided into nine chapters. Tone Huse wisely uses these nine chapters to outline the different consequences and stages of gentrification and everyone's opinion about their experience and how

they are affected. In the well written introductory note she refers to her previous research and theories in the field of gentrification and their impact in Norway. However, what is missing is the historical part of the ethnic minorities' arrival, as the main focus of the book is to give them a voice and highlight their efforts to stay in and around the central business area. But she is successful in giving the historical account of Toyen Street in context with all stages of the change that is taking place through the inclusion of everyone who witnessed or is witnessing it. She collected a huge pool of information which is relevant to the transformation process of east Oslo. After the introduction, Chapter 1 starts with 'Renewal and Eviction', which are shaped by politics and then gentrification process through which people are facing the outcome of gentrification. For them, their family members, and friends, the outcome may mean displacement that leads to separation from each other. It is a good documentation and analysis of everyday life of a particular place (Toyen Street) focussing on everyone - privileged and underprivileged- residents, businessmen, artists, officials. She portrays not only the voice of the unfortunate immigrant population of their own words through quoting them in her research canvas but also documents every scenario which transformed Toyen Street into its present form. This book will certainly add knowledge to scholars about certain ethnic populations in Norway. It is also a really good script for urban studies and other social science disciplines, especially those who are doing research in migration dynamics – in and out migration of certain

ethnic populations. The ethnographic descriptions are good and its findings likely to hold true anywhere in the world where immigrants face hardships as they have to adjust to new cultures and languages in their struggle for survival. However there may be some opportunity to improve upon the continuity or flow of events to increase the interest and provide the quality of readability.

She embraces everyone on and off the record. She uses semi-structured interview questions. She also admits honestly to the problem of the cultural differences she faced while taping interviews. The off record conversations become more important as the people tend to participate more freely in such discussions which is normally absent in a formal interview. People's responses in these discussions make reality so genuine and personal. Some photographs are good. The black and white photographs (Carsten Aniksdal) go well with the theme and ethnographic description of the book.

This book reiterates that there is always a gap between policy and practice. In reality politicians and policy makers use certain policies to attract and use the public for their own gain. They attract public attention with policies which may mitigate some social injustices, but ultimately the system stays the same.

The book highlights the fact that the initial settlers in one area, which eventually grows and prospers as it becomes an urban city, become evicted by the calculated game of builders and re replaced by the new and affluent people and their new culture. The immigrants who were doing business have to move out due to an increased cost of living and resettle on the outskirts of the city. Once again they face culture shock. They are compelled to emigrate to a new and alien community where they begin again the process of survival.

Psychological trauma impacts everyone, from children to the elderly. Some people become alienated from their own community, due to the arrival of new people and culture in their own surroundings. The psychological shock is immense and the author throws light on both physical and psychological trauma people are faced with. For some people the psychological attachment or detachment can create such a trauma that it leads to death. On page 56 where one of the author's interview participant Bjorn described some situations after gentrification – '…they lost one another. They did not feel safe, in their new surroundings. They locked themselves inside and died. At number 29 alone, there were six elderly people who died the year after they were moved out.'

The book also emphasizes the interplay of economic disparity, migration and religious dynamics; how a poor ethnic minority living in poverty tries to stay in the core area of the city. The power of bonding and togetherness is their ultimate strength to fight against the calculated game of eviction and displacement.

In Chapter 9, 'From Toyen Street', which is also the concluding chapter of the book, she mentions that the average Norwegian is living in the Golden Age. The chapter reflects the ethnographic depth that her research has uncovered. Here she focuses on the issue of shrinking social housing and on the municipal officials who promote multiculturalism in words, but

then implement policies that drive ethnic minorities away from the central or core area of the city where they feel most comfortable both in terms of the their livelihood and mental health.

One-sided decisions made by elected members of political parties and developers ignoring the residents, both immigrants and citizens should not be the accepted practice. Instead, policies and practices must involve the participation of everyone in society- the rich, the poor, the homeless, activists, immigrants, and long-time citizens. Everyone has a role to play in the enrichment of Oslo. The author expresses the hope that the authorities in cities such as Oslo should plan the future of the city with all the residents of the city and not just with the developers and investors. Only then will the diversity of individuals and groups become a true resource for Oslo.

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Ian Lindsay (2014) *Living with London Olympics: An ethnography*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

In this book Iain Lindsay explores the process of the geographic, economic, and social transformation of the London borough of Newham as a result of organization and production of the 2012 Olympic Games in London. This book makes an original contribution to the study (ethnographic and otherwise) of sporting events and their impact on host cities. Lindsay explores the phenomenon of the Olympic Games through a dual perspective which compares the rhetoric of the Olympic Delivery Authority with the

perceptions of the local community of Newham. Lindsay contrasts the top-down, sensationalistic rhetoric, which considered the coming of the Olympic Games as a saviour, a bearer of development and progress, and contrasts it with the view from 'the bottom', from the direct observation of the everyday life of Newham and the relationship of its residents to the city's urban spaces.

In many editions of Olympic Games, host cities have taken the chance to advertise 'a particular urban geography to an international audience.' Yet, as the mayor of Newham, Sir Robin Wales, noted, in London 2012, 'for the first time in history the Olympics were used to transform a deprived area completely.' (p. 26) Indeed, before that point, the sporting event had never been taken as a way to redesign the whole city area. The choice to designate Newham — one of the poorest areas of London and the entire country — as the main venue for the most important sporting event in the world, should be situated within the broader trend that sees the opening of international capitals as a way to achieve an 'improvement' of urban areas. Lindsay remarks that the organizing committee and local authorities considered Newham 'the absolute embodiment of East London's ''gash'' (…) that needed to be healed by the Games' (p. 31). This view was based on statistical evidence, according to which Newham ranked highly in the various constituents of the index of deprivation that can be considered precedent to regeneration (see Armstrong, Hobbs, and Lindsay 2011). The neighbourhood's stigmatization as a deprived place (to be redeemed and assimilated) along with a utopian vision of

improving the neighbourhood and giving a 'better life' (p. 18) to the local community were among the central tenets promoting London as a candidate for the 2012 Games.

The author bases his criticism of the Olympic Delivery Authority's rhetoric on these two aspects, laying the premises for his ethnographic exploration. Unlike other studies on the Olympic Games, observation of the neighbourhood was not limited only to the duration of the Games, as it involved the entire time span of its preparation as well. This let the author explore the process of transformation and renegotiation of the relationship between the people of Newham and its urban spaces. The rhetoric of the Olympic Delivery Authority presented the 'pre game' and 'post game' and the 'pre Newham' and 'post Newham' as two opposite poles of its utopian view, which was also seen as marking the passage from a deprived community to a regenerated place. He contrasts this with a gradual observation equipped to understand the slow, contradictory metamorphosis of the relationship of the neighbourhood locals with its urban spaces. Lindsay's ethnographic discovery of the neighbourhood leads him to a conceptual redefinition that contrasts starkly with the representation of the Olympic Delivery Authority's rhetoric.

Drawing inspiration from the ideas of writers like Augé and Lefevbre, he seeks to give a theoretical organization that succeeds in representing the neighbourhood's transitory nature: 'Newham's diverse, deprived community lacking a holistic identity, a shared history, and even a shared relational culture may be defined as residing in a non-place' (p. 20).

Yet, he notes how the lack of homogeneity cannot in itself be considered proof of a lack of identity. Lindsay borrows Lefevbre's phrase (1991) to term Newham a 'strange entity' (p. 40). The absence of such identity-affirming uniformity would make Newham a 'strange entity' (Lefebvre 1991: 53); that is, a place that, though aspiring to be 'real,' fails to produce its 'own space' or simply lacks those distinctive qualities that, according to Augé, characterize a place.' (p. 154)

The second aspect of his observation was about appreciating the neighbourhood's differences and its heterogeneity. Lindsay sharply criticizes flattening representations of Newham that portray it as a homogeneous world made up of consistent traits. He writes, 'A holistic definitive definition of what constituted Newham, and indeed the Newham community, remained elusive and ephemeral' (p. 38). According to the author, it is actually the neighbourhood's cultural, ethnic and social heterogeneity that define it. In order to observe and understand the multiple, diverse nature of his object of study, Lindsay made a mobile, decentralized observation so he could explore it through different perspectives, changing his point of observation often and listening to the multiple voices of its inhabitants. 'I participated in clearing out cupboards in community centres, sweeping floors with those on community service orders, supervising bouncy castles at Islamic religious functions, overseeing sport events, working in youth clubs, and much more' (p. 108). This let him discover a heterogeneous world where the relationship between the locals and the

urban places is constantly renegotiated. An essential concept here is habitus, as the 'social re-negotiation that can only be maintained through exchange, and evolves through continual experiences and exchanges' (p. 22) through which Lindsay finds one of the most important interpretive keys for his object of study. Newham is far from a static, uniform world, and it can be explored through an ongoing process of resignification through which its residents relate to its urban places. The Olympic Game organizers' elite viewpoint, with its linearity and consistency, fails to grasp the heterogeneous aspect and cannot consider the personal aspect of internalization of spaces by local residents as it simply presents idyllic visions with a single-voiced, unilateral view.

In the second part of the book, Lindsay offers more detailed discussion of the discordant points that emerged between the organizers, local authorities, and neighbourhood residents during the preparation of the Olympic Games. Here he focuses most on the concept of hegemony as 'the dominant representations and practices of those in power who maintain the 'dominant story lines' to consolidate their standing' (Agnew 1998, p. 6). He notes how even the moments of dialogue between these groups can be used with an end to keep control (…) by conceding some pre-determined acceptable ground, thereby placating opponents with the illusion of progress, and maintaining their hegemony.' (p. 174) He then makes a clear, detailed description of how often strategies of assimilation and integration promulgated by the heads of the Olympic Game organization often end up actually marginalizing the local population.

The book's essential merit is Lindsay's ability to produce an ethnographic discourse that contrasts with the urbanized viewpoint of power. The rigid dictates of the top-down discursive production are shaken by observing the urban world through a mobile, delocalized viewpoint that can grasp its contradictions and changeability.

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FILM AND VIDEO REVIEWS

Solaris. Directed by **Pavel Borecký**. (2015). 25 minutes. Colour. Distributed by Baltic Film and Media School, Tallinn University.

A man is sitting at a desk under a single bright lamp in a dark room filled with machine-like noises. He then goes to a large underground parking lot and takes some stuff out of a storage room. An escalator takes him up to the first floor of what is now recognisably a shopping mall. He leaves through the exit in order to wash the massive windows from the outside. But the spectators are not going out with him. They stay inside, observing the last human activities before attendants at supermarket counters and security guards finish their shifts. Then their intimate meeting with the night life of the creature begins. Brightly glistening refrigerator windows in large dark rooms, the terrible noise of a massive ventilation system, a frighteningly silent empty cinema hall, a fountain water, uncannily coloured in purple, in an eternal dance of artificial ebbing and flowing. You watch it until it becomes a blurry blotch of incoherence accompanied by a constant chaotic noise.

The film opens with a quote that plunges the spectator into modern philosophy and ends with a dedication that potentially transcends it into a social critique. Revealing these here would be a bit of a 'spoiler'. It is more important to point out what is in between is neither philosophy, nor social critique. Thinking about how the scenes resonate with the two statements leads to the always present inevitable problems of interpretation and the dynamics between text and image.

While remaining critical of the director for perhaps imposing meaning on his film with this textual framing, I invite the spectator to leave this aside and think about what the film actually does very effectively – represent a mundane place in a very unmundane way. It disturbs the senses. It sharpens your hearing and even annoys it. It makes you want to see the sunlight. It takes you someplace where you start begin to think you should not be, although it is the exact same 'non-place' you have visited numerous times. It gives you the feeling of Samuel Becket's 'Endgame' – there is nothing beyond these four walls and you will have to bear witness.

If the mission of anthropology, whether visual or textual, really is to turn the exotic into the trivial and vice versa, then 'Solaris' is a brilliant piece of anthropology. I watched it for a second time soon after I read a fantastic paper by Alan Klima in which he wonders what we can do in an age where the visual stupefies our perception and our compassion. He searches for an answer amongst a particular group of Buddhist practitioners who use images of corpses to foster the brain, which they understand to be sixth sense, to contemplate and deeply internalise the abject qualities of dead decaying human bodies and body parts. After I saw 'Solaris' I came to realise that what Klima was doing was very intentional and far less theoretical than it first appeared. He presented his potential Western readers with an account of a practice that can make them consider whether, no matter what, in this day and age images really are emptied out of meaning.

I think that this is precisely what 'Solaris' manages to achieve. It questions how well we know those boring shopping malls that we see everywhere. It offers a face-to-face meeting with a never sleeping giant. We all know the story about how people thought Lumière's train would hit them, as they were sitting in the movie theatre. Here, we are dealing with the same shocking effect. Alan Klima suggests that we imagine we are able to perceive all those media images of war, suffering and violence not only visually, but internalise them and then estimate whether nowadays they really cannot foster a deep emotional response. Pavel Borecky makes us feel trapped inside the organism of the noisy giant. For those ready to *feel*, not be *explained* what a shopping mall is, this might be more affective and thought-provoking than a classic documentary. Surely, the main disadvantage of the film is that it may be a complete failure for many people who are not predisposed to its perspective. Overall, I am not sure whether the film amounts to a social critique. But I know that it opens up a path for a new type of social critique. We all *know* that capitalism is wrong. There is a myriad of documentaries about it. I am not sure, however, that we all *feel* it – that we have sensed how unmundane it is and how terrifying its intestines can be. And whether the director will take pity on you and take you out of the beast's stomach, or will leave you inside as Becket did, you will find out at the very end.

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Passinho Dance-Off (orig. tit. *A Batalha do Passinho – Os muleque são sinistro!* Directed by **Emílio Domingos**. (2013). 73 minutes. Colour. Osmose Filmes.

The film *Passinho Dance-Off* documents the emergence of a new aspect of *funk carioca* culture, practiced by the younger generations of Rio de Janeiro's favelas. Using tools like the Internet, YouTube and video cameras, boys organize duels in which they combine *passinhos* or dance steps from *frevo, lundu, samba, capoeira, hip-hop, kuduro* and many other dance styles. The prowess and striking nature of the phenomenon caught the attention of cultural activists Julio Ludemir and Rafael Nike, who in 2011 began organizing live dance 'battles' in various favelas of Rio. This phenomenon quickly began to appear on television and spread throughout Brazil. The film captures these first moments, until 2012 when the success of *passinho* was confirmed in various manifestations – a musical called *Na Batalha* (In the Battle) and a band called the *Dream Team do Passinho*, which toured Europe and the US.

This is director Emílio Domingos' second feature. His first, *L.A.P.A.,* (2008) traced the origins of Rio's hip-hop scene. In this investigation of the trajectory of the *passinho* dance, he stresses the potential of creative youth who each day confront the absence of the state in the favela, and how this affects the basic rights of individuals. Virtually all the young people involved in *passinho* had dreams of being recognized, hoping this would allow them to improve their quality of life. *Cebolinha, Camarão Preto, Cristian, Bolinho, Gambá* and others try to find a way to construct a genuine culture, a culture often

marginalized by the dominant gaze, but which eventually came to be recognized as legitimate, as the film shows, representing a type of resistance from this historically violated group.

According to Leandra Perfects, one of the few girls who take part in the phenomenon and who is also a moderator of a related group on the Internet, the *passinho* raised the boys who dance to a powerful category who are desired by girls in the favelas. For Leandra, 'the girls want to see the boys who stand out and who have power, and in the favela someone with power is either a dancer or a drug dealer.' This may be an exaggeration, but it is true that the careers and fame of some *passinho* dancers exploded when their lives gained exposure. Throughout the film, the boys' descriptions of their experience linked to the love of dance portray hopes for a promising future in which Brazil may be entering. But we realize how much there is to overcome, as is the case when *Gambá* mentions the painful alternative given to him by his boss: 'You choose: either work or dance.'

His decision to dance will provide him some good and glorious days, awards and fame; as he was considered the 'king of *passinho*'. This highly productive youth created innovative dance steps that played with gay mannerisms and elevated them to the category of funk steps. Suddenly, everyone began to dance like *Gambá*. However, in a country that was late to abolish slavery, opportunities are not the same for everyone. The film clearly portrays this contradiction: *Gambá,* a young black favela resident, was murdered for no apparent reason upon leaving a *baile*

funk on New Year's Eve 2012; he was in the wrong place yet with the right color.

Perhaps this sad episode is the most illuminating moment in Emílio Domingos' film: the desire to become what one wants is almost always vetoed when one is born with no resources. However, the possibility to resist springs forth constantly when we see art blossoming amidst gunfire and negligence. The film reverses our way of thinking and should be widely seen. The *passinho* created by these young people is a metaphor of the battle for life, of the effort to fulfill one's dreams, of the possibility for social transformation, for the right to protagonism. These youth speak through dance. 'Dancing,' as Carlos Alberto Mattos (2013) affirmed, 'is a supreme way to speak.'

(*Translated from Portuguese* by Jorge de La Barre, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil)

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The Bastard Sings the Sweetest Song. Directed by **Christy Garland. (**2012). 90 min, Colour. Produced by Chris Bennett and Christy Garland.

'The Bastard Sings the Sweetest Song' narrates the daily life of a seventy-year-old woman, Mary, and her family in Guyana. The documentary starts with 35-year-old Muscle and his friend talking about the

increasing prices of vegetables; then Mary, Muscle's mother, enters the scene. She speaks about her broken dream of writing a book of poems and then recites one powerfully for the camera. At that point, her alcoholism is revealed, along with her children's attempts to keep her from it. The rest of the movie mainly portrays Mary's movements through her neighbourhood, her house and her relationship with her family and the broader community.

The film touches on several themes, including the link between poverty, violence and alcohol abuse, the normalisation of violence against women, the experience of aging and intergenerational solidarity in post-colonial societies and aspirations for social mobility among lower class Guyanese. The documentary is a window to settings of daily sociability and entertainment for these Guyanese, such as cock fights and a peculiar singing competition between birds, which give the title to this film.

While accurately and sensitively documenting Mary's and her family's life story from their stormy past to the realisation of their dreams as entrepreneurs, no link is drawn between their story and the wider socio-cultural and economic context of Guyana today. The documentary does not show to what extent Mary's story is a common case in Guyana, nor whether the protagonists' narratives represent a microcosm through which we can reflect upon wider social and political processes in this region. Only well after the beginning of the film do spectators understand that the protagonists are Guyanese (when Muscle happens to mention his ancestry). The documentary is thus a valuable document of a life story,

but does not develop the potential anthropological and sociological contribution of such a deeply researched work.

The close look at Mary's family's everyday life shows that the documentary is based on the meticulous work of building a trusting relationship between the protagonists and the director, and of establishing an intercultural dialogue between different societies. However, some ethical doubts arise when the camera does not stop recording Mary after she had explicitly asked not to be filmed while walking around the neighbourhood looking for alcohol against her children's wishes. Although this choice may be justified, more reflexivity on the director's position towards her interlocutors might have been advisable. While the director's presence is clear in the movie, her voice is hidden. For instance, she asks questions that the protagonists answer and which sustain the film's core arguments, but viewers never know what the questions are. Conversely, we never hear the director's answers to the protagonists' questions. This, rather than contributing to a realistic representation of the protagonists' lives, inserts a bias in the portrayal of the protagonists' stories and conveys a feeling of inequality between the director and her interlocutors as well as a lack of objectivity.

Nevertheless, 'The Bastard Sings the Sweetest Song', remains a precious narrative, useful not only to those working on contemporary Guyanese society, but also to scholars, documentary filmmakers and a general audience interested in a biographical account of the long-term consequences of gender violence and alcoholism in lower social classes. The

film is also useful for those working on perceptions of social mobility within developing countries and family strategies for dealing with aging relatives. Since the wider historical and cultural context of Mary's story is somehow taken for granted, this documentary may be more easily accessed by those with a deep knowledge of Guyanese society.

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Behind The Screen. Directed by **Aung Nwai Htway**. (2012). 35mins. Colour. Distributed by Yangon Film School.

Behind The Screen director Aung Nwai Htway's mother, Daw San San Aye, and father, U Yin Htway, were renowned film actors in the exuberant cinema culture of Myanmar's first decades of military rule. Told through archival footage, film stills, and interviews, *Behind The Screen* is a study of the private rather than public cultural space generated by cinematic labour and film industry infrastructure. The story tracks the evolution and subsequent breakdown of Htway's parent's marriage within the familial environment of the Shumawa studio. Found scenes from films they worked on together illustrate the highs and lows of his parent's turbulent relationship and bitter divorce. Htway's strength lies in his engagement with a dispersed archive of Myanmar moving image media, approached with an archeological zeal that traces the genealogy of his family unit in parallel

with that of Myanmar film history. Htway's parents were loyal to the studio that employed them; the first signs of strain in the young couple's relationship appears when his mother began to feel the urge to work with other producers outside of the studio network that brokered their meeting.

While the re-assemblage and imaging of personal history through fragments of film scenes, unedited footage, and stills manages to strike a difficult balance between an engagement with film as both a social phenomena and material object, Htway's use of music to provide broad emotional cues jars with the meditative pace of the film. Similarly, brief reenactments filmed in black and white are extraneous and unnecessary to the film. Except for these slight stylistic details, Htway's perceived goal for the film – to discursively engage with the state-planned use of cinema in the early decades of military rule in Myanmar through the lens of familial division and trauma – is brought to a successful conclusion.

Behind The Screen is a three-way dialogue between the narrator-son, the interviewee-father, and the now-deceased mother, conducted through found footage of her film roles. Yet, the snowy static, shaky framing, and generation loss in some of the illustrative film scenes are evidence of another intimate relationship with the video material: that of the archivist. Due to Myanmar's recent combative history, the preservation of the nation's cinematic heritage has required the input of innovative young media workers such as those in the Yangon Film School (YFS), with whom Htway produced *Behind The Screen.* The Berlin-based YFS provides

workshops and training, and was responsible for the restoration of the 1972 film *Ché phawa daw nu nu* (Tender are the Feet), starring Htway's mother Daw San San Aye. This film set a precedent as a rare example of a film restored from a non-celluloid carrier, in this case VHS, and was shown at the 2014 Berlin Film Festival.

In *Behind The Screen,* the archive is an essential element in the recollection of lived and collective memory. At some point the remaining but fragile film footage of Myanmar cinema was transferred to video, thereby extending the lifespan and social life of the images that illustrate Htway's film. When the horizontal static of the video transfer is absent, this often indicates that the illustrative scene was a rush cut, an off-screen moment captured by the camera and not included in the final film. *Behind The Screen* is full of these liminal spaces between the private sphere of cinema studio labor and the public world of film culture, generating moments of reconciliation through an individual's engagement with archival film footage.

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Tyres. Directed by **Kyaw Myo Lwin**. (2013). 33 minutes, B&W and Colour. Distributed by Yangon Film School.

In the city of Yangon, Myanmar, old tyres are taken apart and the components recycled in multiple ways. The documentary *Tyres* shows some steps in this process. The first consists in the separation of different layers of the tyre to get to the rubber that is the most flexible part and best for reuse. The different layers are separated by workers who cut the tyres with simple knives. Part of the rubber is processed locally by people who use it to make buckets and sandals. The steel wire that is removed from the tyres is reused by steel brush makers. These different activities take place in workshops that sit next to each other on the same street and that support each other.

Tyres shows these processes in meticulous detail with a focus on the workers' skills. They use basic tools, like knives, chisels, and a whetstone to sharpen the knives. One steel-brush maker has invented his own hand drill and explains with some pride that others may use an electric drill with twice the capacity, but his drill is not vulnerable to electrical blackouts so he never fails to meet an order. With silent admiration the filmmaker regards the skill of the workers and the rhythm of the coordinated movement of hands and feet (feet are used, for instance, like a vise, to hold materials in place).

The focus on the physical aspects of production is both the strength and a weakness of the documentary. The film offers far less insight into the social side of production and the economic information is even scarcer. From a few overviews of a whole workshop the viewer can surmise the number of people working there, and their genders and ages. Consumer items like clothes, watches, a meal of plain rice with no side dishes, a bicycle, a TV, and a bamboo ball reveal their modest incomes. Five workers are introduced with a video portrait, name, job, age and years of experience and from this information the spectator can infer that most began this

work in their teens and have been doing it throughout their lives.

These five video portraits are the only images in colour. Even then, however, the screen is mostly filled by a background of black tyres, which highlights the coloured images of the silent workers. This is just one example of the artistic nature of the film. Another example of the creative quality is the quiet way in which the story unfolds. Most scenes begin with a close-up that leaves the spectator puzzled, and only gradually does the view widen to include more of a workshop, and at most the street. This sequence draws the audience's attention. Yet we never get beyond the tyre cutters' street, and this narrow localization gives the film a timeless quality. The fact that the film was made right in the middle of a dramatic democratization process remains unsaid.

The suggestion of a timeless activity is reinforced by the few words spoken in the film. As the lyrics of an old song express: 'The cycle of life is very long and never-ending. […] What you want, you don't get, what you don't want, you get'. Or in the words of a philosophical tyre cutter: 'you'll only ever earn enough just to get by' and 'they've got to pace themselves if they want to survive this job'. In a decade or so we will know whether tyre cutting is indeed an unchanging activity or whether *Tyres* will become a historical document of a disappearing craft. Given the global need to recycle resources, it is conceivable that tyre cutters have a future.

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Power to the Pedals: Wenzday Jane and the Culture of Change. Directed by **Bob Nesson**. (2016). 32 min, Colour. Distributed by Documentary Educational Resources. DVD.

Power to the Pedals tells the story of Wenzday Jane, a Cambridge, Massachusetts, resident and her company Metro Pedal Power, a local cargo service that uses only pedal-powered vehicles. The business Wenzday founded is part of a wider movement exploring new horizons in urban life, seeking to integrate the values of sustainability and environmental protection into daily transactions.

Wenzday's initiation into this growing movement arrived with the sense of empowerment she discovered by learning metal-welding techniques, a skill she now passes on to others. She contrasts this with the dependence on welfare and sense of having 'given up' that she witnessed in her parents. Learning these manual skills taught her to see material objects from a 'masterful place' and for her the self-reliance she found in repairing and creating zero-emission pedal-powered vehicles is a fundamental merit of the business model she continues to develop.

Running the business has also raised more mundane issues, as the fundamental social and environmental values of the business compete with its economic viability. The first is discovering the technical limits of moving cargo with pedal-power. The bicycles have proved to be perfectly adapted for short journeys and light loads. One cyclist on a pedal-power vehicle can move up to 600 lbs with their legs alone. With a fleet of seven larger vehicles, three bicycle trailers and three other small cargo bikes, Metro Pedal

Power delivers fresh produce to local restaurants. For these clients, the eco-credentials of the business may be as attractive as its economic advantages. However, a milestone was reached when the company submitted a bid to win a municipal contract to collect waste from the city's many waste recycling drop-off points. Competing against traditional petroleum-fueled trucking services, Metro Pedal Power made economic sense for the city. It increased pick-up frequency, a stated goal, while drastically reducing costs and emissions. The contrast of the comparatively tiny pick-up bicycle arriving at the recycling plant surrounded by huge trucks and bulldozers is striking, yet the cyclist seems at ease and confident in his work.

Wenzday's employees appreciate the decent wages she tries to offer, and the opportunity to work outdoors in a healthy job, but it is also clear that she looks for people who share her vision and who can contribute to its development. Her right-hand man, John, performs the vital task of saying 'no to everything', moderating her slightly idealistic yes to all proposals.

Beyond a dedicated workforce and immediate clients, Metro Pedal Power is part of a wider community of businesses that are committed to a sustainable lifestyle. This incorporates movements such as community-supported agriculture, food co-ops, and those interested in reforming processes like distribution and waste management. Here, Wenzday introduces her own 'inquiry into the nature of business, value, and economy', alluding to issues such as fair salaries, a cooperative model and the need to instil responsibility, pride and a sense of ownership in those

that operate within the network. Her inquiries are not just philosophical, in addition to her regular repair work, she is researching and developing a pedal-powered compost mulcher.

As a long-distance freight train, laden with symbolism, hurtles past Metro Pedal Power's yard, fresh products from a local organic farm are dropped off to be collected onsite by local co-op members or delivered to them by bike. Locals may also have their organic waste picked up, turned into compost and returned to the farm. Thus, pedal power is one link among many in the chain of the 'generative economy', which Wenzday defines as allowing both people and the planet to thrive.

The bicycle has a special place in alternative visions of the city, raising important questions about the impact of society's preferred means of transport, the car, on urban life. As Wenzday asserts, many of our urban journeys can be replaced by pedal power. Over the last twenty years, in many Western countries pro-bike associations (such as Critical Mass) have worked to dislodge the car from its central role in urban planning and develop new kinds of mobility within modern cities. The academic study of cycling cultures has also grown exponentially in recent years and governments and municipalities are funding studies to develop urban plans and respond to public interest in cycling. Examples include the CYCLA (http://www.proyectociclovias.es) and Ciclopart (http://ciclopart.redcimas.org) projects in Spain; as well as university-led multisite and interdisciplinary initiatives such as Cycling Cultures (http://www.cyclingcultures.org.uk) or

cycle boom (http://www.cycleboom.org) in the UK.

This growing group of slow-living, Zen-type city dwellers seek to differentiate themselves from the ubiquitous car users and the consumption cycle of non-organic and carbon-heavy food. While the United States ranks second in the world in terms of its carbon footprint per capita, it is also home to many such communities. Not surprisingly, Cambridge, Massachusetts is a veritable hot bed, known as the 'Peoples Republic of Cambridge' in reference to its residents' leftist and liberal tendencies. But in a global context where half of the world's population lives in cities where cars are still dominant and represent for many a symbol of the 'developed' Western standard of living, the question of whether this culture of change can take hold remains pertinent.

The documentary is technically well accomplished, putting little between the viewer and the positive story of Wenzday's successful alternative business. Yet, the focus on Wenzday's achievements perhaps takes away from the issues she is still exploring, for example her 'inquiry into the nature of business' and her search for the 'ideal structure' for trade in the generative economy. This inquiry, although she may not have all the answers, could prove more valuable to the global challenges we face than proving the economic viability of pedal power.

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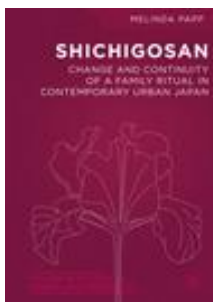
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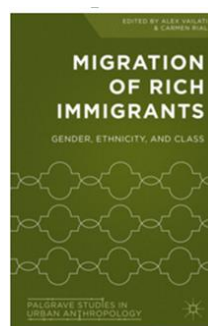£65.00 (Hardcover)
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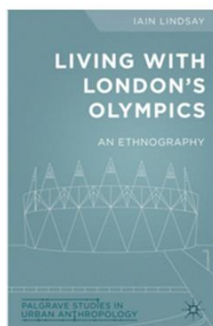
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