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## Errata Corrige

In Vol. 10 No 2:
The name of the institution in the article by Rosaline Georgevna Agiamoh and Alevtina Nikolaevna Larionova should read "National Research University Higher School of Economics". The caption to Figure 2 should read "Impact Radius of Incineration Plants in Moscow (2017/18). Source: https://mosnov.ru/"; the caption to Figure 3 should read "Average property prices in Moscow by Housing type 2020. Adapted by the authors".

The name of the institution in the article by Yaduvendra Pratap Singh should read "Ch. Charan Singh University, Meerut, Ina".

# *Living as a Capoeirista: Social Inclusion in the Periphery of São Paulo, Brazil*[1]

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Urban anthropology allows us to obtain an in-depth view of the complexities and challenges that occur in the intricate spaces of cities. Ethnographies highlight the voices of marginalized populations to better comprehend local systems of knowledge. This research explores how individuals in the low-income periphery of São Paulo, Brazil, use the Afro-Brazilian martial art of *capoeira* as a tool for social inclusion in an area of high crime rates, violence and insecurity. Living as a *capoeirista* forms a philosophy of life for these practitioners and provides them with a sense of citizenship and resistance to the hegemonic societal norms. However, these unequal systems of power and oppression are recreated in the realm of *capoeira*, complicating the rhetoric reflected in the interviews. Ideally, *capoeira* in and of itself is a beautiful, holistic art, which aids in social inclusion, re-education, citizenship, resistance and even spirituality to those who open themselves up to the possibilities and experiences. However, the human element added to the concept of *capoeira* is what creates further conundrum and discontent as we add our unique experiences to everything we encounter.
**Keywords**: Social inclusion, development, habitus, citizenship, cultural capital.

## Introduction

*Movimento.* (Movement/Motion). Life in a city is constant movement and motion. With larger populations, an influx of humans leads to various activities occurring at once, creating an energy or flow that my research participants describe as *movimento*. Urban anthropology is defined as: anthropology of the city, establishing the city as its unique social institution, or as anthropological research carried out in these urban areas (Prato and Pardo 2013). Although there are more people that reside in urban areas, cities have often been analysed as impersonal places of isolation due to occupational specialization. As a result, there is a lack of moral guidance, standards, or guidance for individuals to follow (see discussion in Prato and Pardo 2013).

Cities are more than just geographical spaces, but places of meaning and identity depending on what occurs in that space. Cities have the ability to give meaning to 'who we are'. For some, this could depend on what resources are available, for others it is the opposite. A city's lack of resources leads to a life of insecurity, in a form much different from a rural area. Citizenship, identity and belonging are constantly renegotiated in unique and creative ways (Prato and Pardo 2013). Although urban life is complex, ethnography has been proven efficient to understand the challenges associated with cities. By using ethnographic approaches, we are able to bring attention to intricate issues that arise out of the inequalities of urban life, such as marginalization, corruption, violence and conflict and movements of resistance (Pardo and Prato 2018).

Urban anthropology in Brazil tends to address three domains, which are interconnected. One area of research examines resistance, which has been reconceptualized as occurring when 'subjects who are subjected to multiple discursive influences create modes of resistance to those

[1] I would like to thank Dr Peter Collings, the editorial board and the anonymous reviewers for *Urbanites* for their valuable comments.

discourses out of the elements of the very discourses that shape them' (Caldwell 2007:16). A second body addresses the formation of citizenship, or of what Holston (2008:4) describes as an 'insurgent citizenship', processes by which the working classes and urban peripheries have become new types of citizens based on their lived experiences and hardships of inequalities and its challenges. The third is best exemplified by approaches that attend to Freire's (1993) calls for social justice in research in urban environments. This type of research frequently employs participatory action research frameworks to encourage participants to think critically about the realities in which they live, rather than imposing research programs on those under study in a hegemonic manner. This research seeks to yield results that improve the lives of marginalized urban residents.

This article follows Freire and others to examine concepts of habitus and social inclusion for practitioners of *capoeira*, called *capoeiristas*, in the periphery of São Paulo, Brazil. The term *habitus* refers to the structures that organize the way individuals perceive the social world around them due to their own life experiences, and how they react to them (Bourdieu 1980). *Capoeira* is an Afro-Brazilian martial art with roots in anti-slavery and resistance to colonial domination. Research on *capoeira* demonstrates the origin of the art, the lessons students learn and the complications of the practice. This article addresses how *capoeira* affects the habitus of its practitioners. Through extensive participant observation in the community and a series of unstructured interviews, I demonstrate that 'living as a *capoeirista*' becomes a form of social inclusion for individuals in a marginalized community. This research employs methodologies that emphasize understanding structures of experience and consciousness, and how *capoeira* may or may not alter these phenomena.

The following section examines previous research on creating consciousness and generating agency for practitioners, formations of habitus and how it is altered with this lifestyle, and understanding the context of the practice through the lens of social inclusion. I then turn to a description of the community in São Paulo and the methods employed in the study before examining narratives that establish what it means to live as a *capoeirista*.

**Habitus and Social Inclusion**

*Capoeira* is a unique martial arts practice, and it has generated a great deal of research interest. This research includes examinations of its historical roots in resistance (Lewis 1992), studies of the movement and play practice (Downey 2005), and perspectives of a life philosophy (Almeida 1986). Taken together, this body of research tends to fit in several different frameworks. One frame understands *capoeira* as a form of the creation of conscious beings, who have agency and are able to act with agency and have a voice in their society, allowing for social inclusion. Another form understands *capoeira* in the context of bodily forms, and how it recreates the habitus of practitioners, which includes gender. In this section, I discuss the importance of these different contexts to the research.

Any discussion of consciousness and agency must begin with Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, who approached these issues as a component of what he called development, or *desenvolvimento*. Freire measures development as 'whether or not the society

is a *being for itself*' (Freire 1993:163) rather than through statistical measures of per capita income or gross national product. I chose this definition for social development, as Freire grew up in the northeast of Brazil and migrated to São Paulo, as did the majority of families of my research participants. For Freire, quantitative evaluations more accurately exemplify modernization, not actual development. He argues that development is attained through cultural action in order to achieve unity within a social structure. His critique of development projects argues that developers often further marginalize the communities in which they seek to support, because projects both distract communities from addressing issues occurring in reality and reinforce hierarchies that exacerbate the inferiority of community members. Freire also analyses the role of *conscientização*, or how to learn to recognize social, political and economic contradictions and take a stand against oppression in society by becoming consciously aware of the myths that are instilled by the oppressors. He highlights the necessity of the creation of 'conscious beings' through education in acts of cognition, not mere transfers of information passed from one person to the next (Freire 1993:75). Freire's approach is phenomenological because the act of creating consciousness and transforming realities relies on active lived experiences. People participate in the transformation of their world by engaging critically with their reality and taking action against its oppressive elements. Freire highlights the importance of praxis, of reflection and action, which is fundamental in transformation. Active participation is essential for conscious awareness. These processes play out through *capoeira*, as *capoeira* emerges from 'below', from people themselves rather than being a state-driven or organized process. *Capoeira* is different from other forms of generating consciousness due to the history of its origins and how it has evolved, discussed in the following section.

Although *capoeira* is a martial art that generates social consciousness and awareness, *capoeira* also forms part of the *habitus* for practitioners. *Capoeira* provides a structure that organizes the ways they perceive the social world around them due to their own life experiences, and how they react to them. *Capoeira* shapes the way they interact with the world in particular ways and develops an inner cognitive embodiment of how one engages with the world and opens possibilities for looking at and shaping the world. It is not only the physical elements of how they train their body, but also shaping the mind for play, trickery and deception, equipping them to be able to get along in Brazilian society and adapt quickly to social situations. Bourdieu (1980) explains how these social spaces characterize bodily experience and practice through our everyday behaviours. Therefore, it is the *capoeira* academy that becomes the setting of this lived experience of the art of *capoeira*, which is then transformed into various metaphors that embody and naturalize social structures into everyday practice. The conditionings associated with the practice of *capoeira* produce habitus, further generating behaviour and practices without a conscious predisposition of the practitioner. Therefore, this habitus created by *capoeira* affects the way these individuals act in the world. There also exists a class habitus that runs parallel to the *capoeira* habitus common to these particular individuals.

The habitus enables the experience of *capoeira* to become a social system of cognitive and motivating structures, which define the interests and actions of the agents in that space, as well as other spaces, as different individuals in the group reproduce these structures. The

objective structure of *capoeira*, together with their economic class and geographic location defines the particular modes of the production of habitus, due to the conditions in which this particular habitus operates. Their actions both inside and outside the *capoeira* academy are reinforced, creating homogeneity within the group, which are often so normalized that they are taken for granted. Another interesting facet is that these individuals neither calculate nor consciously create these norms that harmonize within the group. This allows some individuals to monopolize this form of cultural capital by establishing hierarchy within the group based on years of practice, and often resorts to elementary forms of domination by normalizing hegemonic systems within the group. These very systems of habitus created within *capoeira* define how these individuals manoeuvre and operate in Brazilian society as they consistently seek a form of social inclusion, as they struggle to survive on the margins of society (Bourdieu 1977).

**The Art of *Capoeira***

The research employs Freire's critical marxist and phenomenological approach to dissect the underlying implications of *capoeira*. Due to its historical significance in Brazilian culture, *capoeira* is a strong symbol of resilience and resistance for marginalized populations in Brazil, and, more recently, abroad. *Capoeira* was first developed in the 1600s by enslaved Africans in Brazil to rebel against their owners and seek freedom (Lewis 1992). After liberation, it developed further as a means to defend their communities from outsiders. *Capoeira*'s unique style incorporates kicks, defence mechanisms and acrobatics as a means for unarmed men to defend themselves against armed attackers. *Capoeira* was practiced for hundreds of years as a fighting strategy for marginalized populations to protect themselves and their communities, and was illegal up until the 1930s. Since then, it has further evolved to become an art form and philosophy of life in contemporary society, as it represents a more generalized struggle against oppression and offers a message of hope.

*Capoeira* becomes a form of liberation, as practitioners become so focused and exhausted, creating an escape from the harsh reality of their daily anxiety and social responsibilities in a positive manner by reflecting on its history of resilience, based on claims by research participants. *Capoeira* has evolved to provide a different form of communication between individuals, on a deeper level that has nothing to do with skin colour, personal income, social prestige, status, occupation, kinship, or previous history. It is liberation from slavery, class domination, the poverty of ordinary life and the constraints of the individual mind and body. *Capoeira* is about the here and now, the contextual intricacies that are occurring with these people in this place at this time, because if one is altered all of the energy changes. It is here that *capoeira* reveals its deep cultural patterns through ritual and play and can serve as a framework for contextualizing social encounters.

Although *capoeira* has its origins in resistance as a martial art, *capoeira* is conceptualized as *play*. *Capoeira* a game between two players, who seek to outmanoeuvre their opponents (Downey 2005). *Capoeiristas* channel their aggression and fighting instincts into play, without having to harm others. The fight of *capoeira* is only metaphorical; the real fundamental aim is

liberation, liberation from slavery, poverty, oppression and the constraints of the body. Play is a more liberating term as it expresses this freedom and creativity, as it breaks daily patterns in its improvisation, which is reflective of breaking patterns of sociocultural order. Reflecting on social encounters, the idea is to control oneself strategically, but sporadically a playful game often ends up in an actual fight and respected individuals intervene. Interestingly enough, this intervention does not always occur for various reasons that are founded in the human ego. This is due to the personal insecurity that is inherent due to the contexts in which they are subjected to in the periphery of São Paulo. However, this phenomenon is not isolated to this area alone. Many people around the world inhabit this insecurity and feel the need to prove themselves within the *capoeira* hierarchy and in Brazilian society as a whole, as they have not always been treated as citizens. This is reflected in the work of Trimbur (2013), as members of an urban boxing gym are also seeking recognition, status, dignity, and sociality because they have been excluded from the restrictive labour market. However, as members seek to escape racial, class and gender hierarchies, they continue to operate in the structures of both boxing and *capoeira*, reflecting their lived experience.

*Capoeira* players often unmask the hypocrisy of the social system by the consistent lessons *capoeira* provides, even outside of class time, as *capoeira* can be applied to daily life. For example, a key aspect of *capoeira* is *malícia* or trickery and cunning. This *malícia* was also a form of slave resistance through dissimulation, which has a common pattern among subordinate groups worldwide. Upon meeting a new student, a *mestre* may reach out for a handshake and then use his *malícia* to kick the student, while teaching the lesson to always be aware and never trust too much. The brutality of the lesson reflects the brutality of the wider system; behind each blessing there is potential danger so be cautious (Lewis 1992). The practice of *malícia* is the art of deceiving your opponent to attempt to trick them into a compromising position. This is the goal of the game so it is not only approved but also praised. This is welcomed, as it is said to teach *capoeiristas* how to combat real enemies in society and to be aware when others try and trick you. This notion of extending principles of *capoeira* to life outside the *roda*, or the circle in which the game is played, is the underlying theme of this work. As *Mestre* Vicente Ferreira Pastinha said, '*Capoeira é tudo que a boca come'* (*capoeira* is whatever the mouth eats), meaning it is all the things that come in life (Almeida 1986:1).

Although the discourse of *capoeira* has been researched previously, it has not been approached through the lens of a social development perspective. Today *capoeira* has evolved and is often employed in low-income communities as a tool for social development to overcome oppression and offers youth an alternative path to drug trafficking and violence. *Capoeira* is a diversion from daily life in the periphery in São Paulo. In addition, it expands beyond the *capoeira* academy to teach lessons that are useful in daily life on the streets. This research demonstrates alternatives to the development discourse by observing ways that community-based approaches apply culture as a tool for resilience and resistance in the modern struggle for citizenship and agency by providing a voice for individuals in a marginalized low-income community in the periphery of São Paulo to tell their story.

Among the *capoeiristas* in my research community, it is the feeling of having agency that defines citizenship, embodying the idea of a universal human citizenship that transcends local and national confines. This type of citizenship is the capacity of the individual to have the freedom to make choices and act upon them and to be treated by other members of society as equals. Social inclusion is a product of this form of citizenship, as members of society seek to be treated by others with respect and feel as though they are part of a community. Freire viewed development as the ability of a society to transform the structure of oppression by allowing marginalized individuals to become 'beings for themselves' as opposed to being integrated into the current system as 'beings for others', which is how development is defined for this research (Freire, 1993:163).

*Capoeira* is still largely a male activity, and traditionally was exclusively practiced only by males, although this is currently changing. However, this change in gender restriction is correlated with income level. A pattern has been observed that when *capoeira* is played in the middle class and gains a higher social status, there is increased participation by women, even if on an occasional basis. For these women, they participate simply because they feel more enabled due to their enculturation. However, when *capoeira* is a lower-class activity, it remains dominated by males (Lewis 1992). Although some women do participate in the academies where research was conducted, it is highly dominated by males, which based on this pattern could be due to its location in a lower income community in the periphery of São Paulo. As a white, American woman in this space, my positionality creates complexities in the research, while allowing me to have a different view of the practice and the various pressures that men feel and face as they relate to inclusion.

As *Mestre* Acordeon explains, *capoeira* is not just a sport; it is a 'way of life' (Almeida 1981:17). This is why *capoeira* is characterized as being a philosophy of life, as it teaches us so much more about the world around us. Therefore, *capoeira* encompasses an art form in a game as a philosophy of life that is applicable elsewhere. The game of *capoeira* teaches lessons of historical resilience in the music lyrics and cunning, which was an important lesson in slavery and is still highly applicable in modern society today, especially in the corrupt system of Brazil. It also teaches lessons on life and social situations of not letting your guard down and trusting other individuals during physical play (Lewis 1992), of challenging yourself and your body and overcoming difficulties building strength and character. Another lesson in building cultural citizenship is being accountable to the consequences of your actions and to be conscious of your behaviour because how you treat people in the game is how you will in turn be treated. *Capoeiristas* are also taught specific techniques in the game that are applied to life, such as to catch yourself when you fall and to always be alert to your surroundings to avoid danger. When someone is attacking you in *capoeira*, it is best to evade the attack and strategize a counterattack. Not everyone you come across is an adversary and experiences should be used to improve yourself because often we are our own adversaries (Essien 2008).

The research within *capoeira* demonstrates that it can insert itself in the various discourses surrounding the frames of consciousness, habitus and social inclusion. *Capoeira* enables the practitioners the ability to begin to become conscious-thinkers and more aware of

their situation in order to advocate for changes. This creates a space in their habitus that opens up different ways of moving about in society, creating a form of social inclusion. All of these observations lead naturally to the question: What does it mean to 'live as a *capoeirista*'?

**Urban Area and Methodology**

This research is geographically situated in the periphery of the city of São Paulo, Brazil. São Paulo is Brazil's largest city, with a population of over 12 million in the city limits and 21 million in the larger metropolitan area (IBGE 2017). It is estimated that 20-30 percent of the city's population resides in urban slums often referred to as *favelas*, accounting for approximately 3 million people in the city limits. São Paulo contains the largest slum population in South America, as more than 70% of its housing is sub-standard and one-third of the city's population is below the poverty line (UN-HABITAT 2010). São Paulo experiences a high crime rate, with offenses ranging from theft to homicide. Street crimes are an immense problem, most prevalent being armed robberies and rape. During part of my research, there were a total of 962 documented homicide victims in the city of São Paulo between July 2016-June 2017, with peripheral areas bearing the majority (SSP 2017). Due to the economic situation in Brazil, violence becomes more prevalent and exacerbated in urban areas. Insecurity then becomes normalized; it is the way of life. Insecurity is enculturated into the youth and creates a vicious cycle, as children become adolescents and later adults who then become examples for their own children, as presented in research data.

In the research community, there is a large *capoeira* group on one of the main avenues of the neighbourhood. This community sits on the outskirts of São Paulo, in the periphery as they call it, with the majority of the activity occurring on *Avenida 1,* or 1st Avenue, with the hustle and bustle of traffic both on foot and with buses, cars, motorbikes and bicycles alike. The majority of the residents are lower-working class, either as unskilled factory labour or part of the informal sector, working as seamstresses or in food production offering cakes or dishes for sale from the home. Others are involved in illicit activities for sustenance income. The perceptions mentioned from an outsider residing in a different area of the city is that it is a dangerous place, 'where the maids live', with a social stigma attached to being from this area. For local residents, *capoeira* is often viewed as a way out of this social stigma. One of the students that graduated from this academy claims that *capoeira* has the ability to re-educate youth and offer social inclusion to create ethical citizens. He says that *capoeira* teaches people to see the world in a different form and creates new opportunities. The research critically unravels this claim in order to understand more about the discourse of development and context of *capoeira* in this community. Is *capoeira* a form of social inclusion? Could *capoeira* be a form of insurgent citizenship, cultural capital, or *conscientização*, as noted above? What other factors play into the *habitus* of the individuals of this *capoeira* community?

Following Freire's examples, this research employs methodologies that emphasize understanding structures of experience and consciousness, and how *capoeira* may or may not alter these phenomena. To avoid imposing the expectations of western social science on local understandings, I began my field research by analysing daily human behaviour and how

individuals understand the world, before asking questions. This analysis also involved discourse on the themes that were presented by the research participants.

As a fellow practitioner, I have been practicing *capoeira* for nine years, after having lived in Brazil with family on and off since 2004 and am a fluent speaker of Portuguese. I have had a *capoeira* academy in the United States for five years with a partner, teaching classes to all ages beginning at age 5. With our group, we travel frequently in the US, as well as to Brazil and Mexico. My first visit to this community in São Paulo was in 2014, so I got to know all of my research participants very well over seven visits, each consisting of approximately one month each. I interviewed 15 individuals that represent different economic backgrounds, ages between 18-45, and varying years training *capoeira*, with the most being twenty-five and the least being five years at the level of *mestre*, *contra-mestre*, *professor* and *instrutor*. In addition to immense participant observation, or rather observant participation, I also lived in the neighbourhood with the family of the *Mestre* of the group as my host. I conducted informal unstructured interviews to collect personal biographies in the form of conversations with informants to listen to their point of view on *capoeira* as social development through the context of their individual life experiences. Each interview was approximately one hour in length and all information used was recorded with their verbal consent with IRB# IRB201700289. I will use pseudonyms in the following discussion to protect their identities.

**Living as a *Capoeirista***

To uncover the common themes that underlie what it means for each of these participants to live as a *capoeirista*, the research employs a case study approach. All individuals interviewed spoke of 'living as a *capoeirista*', forming a philosophy of life for these practitioners.

The *mestre* of this group, José, is 42 years old and began *capoeira* at the age of 18. Since he began *capoeira*, he noticed a multitude of positive discourses within *capoeira* and he believed they should be shared in society. He says,

> 'In *capoeira* you have access to an uncommon happiness that only *capoeira* has, that sensation of freedom from everything.' Most practitioners of the art did not have access to liberty due to life conditions. José, goes on to say, 'Everyone has problems and difficulties, but *capoeira* liberates them from unpleasant situations because it helps them forget the problems, stress and tiredness and they want to share this with their community.' He tries to show this world to everyone around him because: 'If everyone shares this philosophy with those close to them, we can transform the world for the better.'

José explains that *capoeira* liberates us from the hidden slavery that society obligates us to live and teaches us to respect others. Everyone endures problems and difficulties, but *capoeira* liberates them from unpleasant situations because it helps them forget the problems, stress and tiredness and therefore, they want to share this with their community. Therefore, these ideologies exemplify the work of this *mestre*. José explains how living as a *capoeirista* provides numerous advantages:

> '*Capoeira* is the game of life… it is the adjective of ability for any other activity that you choose […] If you direct your experience in *capoeira*, in any other situation you will have a card up your sleeve that *capoeira* gave you […] Through the "*jogo de cintura*" [ability to escape difficulties] that *capoeira* gave you, your trickery in a good sense; you will get along well in dialogue with others […] *Capoeira* leaves you alert, prepared for diverse situations, a surprise. *Capoeira* has so many surprises […] so many situations that you don't predict, that you will be prepared for any surprise that life gives you.'

For José, living as a *capoeirista* represents the struggle for freedom and equality. He explains that *capoeira* provides the sensation of freedom, as it offers the vision of equality and happiness. He takes the lessons he learns inside *capoeira* to other situation in his daily life to adapt to different types of people, as he has to adapt while playing *capoeira* in the *roda*. The philosophy of *capoeira* presents advantages in his life because he remains aware and alert in all situations. It also opens the ability to believe in yourself and overcome challenges that are presented in life. This sense of freedom relates to the concepts of development and social inclusion as confidence enables opportunities.

Others spoke of the security that *capoeira* can offer, and discuss how they have experienced extreme violence and trauma in their neighbourhoods. *Capoeira* allows practitioners to share positive experiences with each other and live in a different reality. *Capoeira* offers an outlet for youth in urban peripheries. *Capoeira* provides a different perspective of life and opens their mind to different realities and possibilities. It also changes their life because it changes their expectations and teaches that violence is not the way to solve problems. As a result, these youth have a better outlook on life, with many good examples to follow. Here are in-depth statements from different research participants that demonstrate the harsh reality of living in the periphery of São Paulo, and how *capoeira* creates social inclusion and forms citizenship.

Carlos, with the graduation level of contra-*mestre*, began *capoeira* at 19 and is currently 34. He has an even different perspective of this concept.

> 'I lived in a very poor place in a favela and we didn't have many resources, and the things that were shown to you daily were negative things. People using drugs or death, thieves and from there it goes on […] I want to share [the happiness of *capoeira*] with others because I came from a place like this, and through *capoeira* I found another reality […] In *capoeira*, I learned how to differentiate what was right and wrong, many people dying in front of me and everything, but *beleza* (it's all good). And through this that I experienced, I had to find *capoeira*.'

Carlos said that once he found *capoeira* and met so many different types of people in *capoeira* that it began to open his mind. 'This helped me in question of what? Experience of life.' In *capoeira*, he says he evolved as a person and changed his mentality. He thinks differently about society and the world because it has opened up his mind.

Another participant, Paulo, began *capoeira* at the age of 9, but stopped in his early 20s and is now married with children. He said *capoeira* changed his life, because without it he thinks he would be doing bad things in the streets. For Paulo, the *capoeira* professors always guided him to stay away from drinking, drugs, trafficking and thievery. He always had lots of people in *capoeira* to look up to and show him the right path to follow. Paulo stated that living as a *capoeirista* is believing in yourself and in your dreams. It gave him the incentive to be a better person and do the right things, because he had good examples in *capoeira*. *Capoeira* taught him to have manners and gave him an education that he would not have received otherwise:

> 'If I did not choose the path of *capoeira*, I would have chosen another path that is not good […] drugs, alcohol, parties […] things that throw you far from a healthy life, a life with quality. Of my 7 or 8 friends that started [*capoeira*] with me, today 3 are dead, 2 are in jail and 3 are good working and studying […] *Capoeira* also was an incentive to be a better person, because we come from a difficult place, where society throws you down and tells you that you will not be anything, and you believe in this and follow the wrong path, the path of drugs, robbery, all the perverse paths. *Capoeira* for me was the biggest incentive […] during that time if I did not have good examples I would be in the streets learning bad things and never have contact with *capoeira* because if you start in this life here in São Paulo we say if you don't have a good head it is a path of no return […] Without the influence of *capoeira*, I could be in jail, I could be doing the wrong things, I could be dead, I don't know — I could be dead.'

Others have different stories of how *capoeira* shapes their life. Gabriel began *capoeira* at 14, and is currently 23 at the level of professor. He explained how *capoeira* was very important for him.

> 'If it wasn't for *capoeira*, I wouldn't know what I would be; I wouldn't have an outlook on life. In *capoeira*, I found my heroes. The people that are references for me, I found a lot of "dads2" in *capoeira*, when I didn't have one.'

For Gabriel, living as a *capoeirista* is having it be a part of your life all day, everyday. He uses *capoeira* tactics to pay attention while he is out in the streets, and he teaches this to others. *Capoeira* changed his life because it changed his life expectations and taught him that violence is not the way to solve problems. *Capoeira* gave him a better outlook on life, with many good examples to follow.

> 'Because in my house my dad has a lot of problems with my mom, I already have grown tired of my dad wanting to kill my mom, and my dad lives using a lot of drugs and all of those things, and this was a big influence on me. I had to listen to everyone in the streets saying, "you are going to be the same as your dad, *filho de peixe peixinho é* (the son of a fish is a little fish), you will be this, you will be that". So, all of this messed with my head, until I discovered *capoeira*. Since I started *capoeira*, everything changed, and I no longer thought that I would be the same as

my dad. I had a different perspective of life, because before I didn't even have a perspective of life, like, I didn't even know what I would be.'

Although research participants demonstrate the *capoeira* is an alternative to drug trafficking and violence, many individuals choose the latter path in order to have rapid access to greater amounts of cash, as opposed to other forms of employment. In addition, it is difficult for someone to be both a drug-trafficker and a *capoeirista*, as the drug factions do not allow their members to be a part of outside communities to reduce risk of exposure.

**Reflections**

*Capoeira* was created in deceit, deception, disguise and trickery as a means of resistance among enslaved Africans; it was developed as a tool to fight for their freedom. Therefore, we must look deeper than the surface to unravel particular truths about this philosophy of life. Although interviews created a discourse around such topics as education and friendship, I would still propose that there exists much disguise in the reality, due to the human aspect in the martial art. It is questionable to trust other *capoeiristas*, perhaps reflective of humans in our daily lives. *Capoeiristas* often use *malandragem*, this cunning or trickery previously mentioned, to appease others and tell them what they want to hear, rather than disclosing the actual truth. Then they secretly praise their own actions in doing so and explain the matter by stating: 'It's *capoeira*'. You must have *malícia*, or cunning, to make it in *capoeira* as in life. This is already a methodological problem with interviewing, so perhaps even more so in this case.

This research demonstrates that *capoeira* can be viewed as a form of social inclusion. As the research participants have mentioned, *capoeira* gave them a space in society that was not previously available to them. *Capoeira* issues them the opportunity of being included and having value as a citizen of a community and larger world in which we live in. Due to the complex world system, hegemonic domination often leads to the oppression of particular groups based on income, race, gender and place. *Capoeira* allows individuals from the periphery of São Paulo to resist that domination and create a form of insurgent citizenship for themselves. *Capoeira* provides belonging and social inclusion on the micro level as well. Participants attend classes regularly and become part of the social group, as they often get together during the day, before and/or after classes to create friendship and camaraderie. Members often travel to other *capoeira* events together and create a social bond with other members of the group.

However, another topic to be unravelled is the system of structure and power. In the periphery of São Paulo, many of my research participants talk often of oppression and 'the system' and how the system is constantly brainwashing and manipulating humans to have less power and therefore take away their agency as individuals. The system causes them to live in a constant state of insecurity with economic instability, due to lack of quality education and lack of resources, leading to increased violence. This diminishes their citizenship and causes them to feel anger inside. Therefore, many of these individuals are the products of generations of insecurity, carrying the trauma that occurs as a result of being excluded from society and trying to survive with their circumstances.

Consequently, within *capoeira* they recreate these same systems of power they wish to defeat. They have created a boys' club with a gang-like, mafia mentality, which has the possibility of shaping the ways of thinking of group members, starting at the top and dispersing through different levels throughout, depending on hierarchy and gender.

It is very problematic when individuals do not question hierarchy or authority, especially when abuse is present, such as emotional abuse during training or sexual abuse during events. Some only have *capoeira* and need *capoeira* to escape from their harsh realities in peripheral urban areas. In addition, humans often react to trauma, rather than heal themselves from it, due to cultural norms and lack of resources. It is this constant reaction that is part of the human condition, as is the ability of awareness to be better. However, there exists a separation between those that realize when these instances of abuse occur and others that do not, and therefore abuse often becomes normalized as a means to obtain a false sense of power.

Antonio bluntly states:

> 'Unfortunately, not all, but some are like this, and are good *capoeiristas* and are like this: "I am good at *capoeira*, I am going to go out of the country, I am going to make lots of money, and I will fuck lots of women." This is what kills *capoeira*; the ego of the *capoeirista*.'

He explains that a lot of *capoeiristas* lack professionalism because they travel often, but do not have any ethics and do not know how to administer or lead a group.

> 'I think that a *capoeirista* is egotistical and thinks everything is his, "*é meu é meu é meu, quero pra mim*" (It's mine, it's mine, it's mine, I want it for me).'

He continues:

> [*Capoeira*] 'is an expression of freedom, to get out of slavery, and unfortunately today many times a student ends up living in slavery. He ends up living in discrimination, because there are *mestres* that discriminate students […] *capoeiristas* are very jealous. They are afraid to lose their space, they are afraid to suddenly lose the shine they have […] this is bullshit.'

Maria gives another example:

> 'It's very pretty to say today there are so many women in *capoeira* and all of that. Yes, there is. There are a lot for the men to fuck, this is the reality. There are a lot of women in *capoeira* that the guys are using and abusing, destroying lots of things because of all this, all of the things that us women are chasing after the guys end up fucking up. This is how it works.'

Can *capoeira* in fact be used as a tool for social inclusion and to re-educate youth, and hence create citizenship in conscious thinkers? *Capoeira*, after all, pulls youth out of the streets and provides a community where there did not previously exist a healthy environment or support network. Some of my participants went through very tumultuous and violent situations, and *capoeira* provided an escape from these harsh conditions. But a pertinent question to ask is, what exactly is social development and who defines it? While some of my participants

created profound friendships in *capoeira* and a support system, others have stated and they have witnessed a harsh treatment to those who go against this very system that has been created in *capoeira*. *Capoeira* provides one set of values and skills for getting along in society, but it also replicates society, which is problematic. The malice and trickery characteristic of *capoeira* means that alliances and friendships are inherently unstable, often to gain more power either through prestige in the group or wealth. Prestige can be exemplified in the form of betraying one to get approval of another, and wealth by simply exchanging friendship for money, as the higher cords are often paid to attend events. One of my participants recently stated that he has more loyal friends in drug trafficking, that these types of things would never occur on the streets because they do not betray one another because it is immoral and repercussions are more serious and can lead to death. However, this is not to say that the trafficking community has higher morals and cares more about the way they treat others — just there has to exist more trust and loyalty while engaging in illegal activity as the consequences for betrayal are more dire and could lead to imprisonment or again death. So, what can lead to loyalty and morality? And is social development just that, achieving a higher connection with other human beings so that we must all live on this earth and survive?

Social development is not always defined in this way. It is too often viewed as economic development: having money. Society often values money over personal relationships and individuals seek to have increasing wealth to therefore have increasing power. However, in this research project, I look to the definition offered by the native Brazilian Paulo Freire who defines social development as 'whether or not the society is a *being for itself*'. He argues that development can be attained through cultural action in order to achieve unity in the social structure. So, what does unity in the social structure look like? Unity is derived from these very feelings of connectedness, which is often a result of cultural similarities. If the goal were to achieve unity in the social structure, there would be little conflict, high degree of concern for the welfare of others in that society and for the society as a whole (Miller 2010). In terms of this definition, I am not sure if *capoeira* does provide for that cultural action to achieve social unity.

If we shift the focus to Freire's role of *conscientização*, this discourse becomes even more complex. *Conscientização* is how to learn to recognize social, political and economic contradictions and take a stand against oppression in society by becoming consciously aware of the myths that are instilled by the oppressors. Based on the data collected for this project, *capoeira* does stimulate some critical thinking about societal forces, but different participants repeated the majority of examples provided in my interviews. It appears the *mestre* thought critically about society and passed on his experiences to his students. They then repeat what he has taught them, but I am not sure if they think critically on their own because they are not allowed to be independent thinkers, as they are not allowed to go against the system that oppresses individual agents in *capoeira*. This is highly reflective of the society in which they live in. Here, the *mestre* has replaced the controlling elite, perhaps in the form of a dictator and whomever choses to go against his ideology risks being ridiculed in the group and losing prestige or even being expelled from the group. So, a hierarchical power structure exists in both

realms. Even worse he could risk economic loss if he is a student who teaches or has chosen *capoeira* for his livelihood, and is thus exiled from *capoeira* by reputation.

*Capoeira* is a philosophy of life, although it is not applicable to all those who practice *capoeira*, just as all those who practice *capoeira* are not *capoeiristas* or embody *capoeira*. There are different degrees of absorption of the art into the consciousness of the human being, therefore leading to different results of the question at hand. Ideally, *capoeira* in and of itself is a beautiful, holistic art, which aids in social inclusion, re-education, citizenship, resistance and even spirituality to those who open themselves up to the possibilities and experiences. However, the human element added to the concept of *capoeira* is what creates further conundrum and discontent as we add our unique experiences to everything we encounter.

Due to its past deeply embedded in many forms of liberation, *capoeira* is often viewed in modern times as that which liberates the oppressed. Because oppression takes various forms, this can be liberation from society, the system, the routine, the body and even the mind. There are numerous dimensions to liberation, that which the final is most difficult in obtaining freedom. But *capoeira* has been providing a path for all forms of liberation for centuries, leaving space for humans to utilize its philosophy and story to overcome many of life's conundrums both inside and outside the realm of direct *capoeira* space within the academy. It is a knowledge base that practitioners can take with them to all aspects of their lives, reminding them of the fundamentals to the art. However, the practitioner must open themselves up to these possibilities for this to prove true. There are many practitioners of *capoeira* that are not capable of understanding and embodying the concepts of the art, which therefore complicate these notions. So, it is not to say that *capoeira* allows for freedom and liberation 100% of the time to 100% of those who choose to partake in the activity. Rather, *capoeira* provides the path and opens the possibility to another dimension of learning or being as an active agent in society.

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# *Social Media in Urban Suriname: An Ethnography on Christian Adolescents and their Cell Phones in Latour, Paramaribo*[1]

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This article is concerned with the use of social media in Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname, and more specifically in Latour, a city district on its outskirts, where I did ethnographic fieldwork in the community centre of StiBuLa (Stichting Buurtwerk Latour). In the style of Miller et al.'s project 'Why we Post' (2016), this article focuses on the social media use of different young Latourians, who are all involved with the neighbourhood, or the activities of StiBuLa, in different ways. It will consequently show and analyse how mobile phones and digital media productions are in constant dialogue with the established social and religious structures in the area. This ethnography provides an in-depth and culturally embedded analysis of not only how social media shape local reality, but also how local reality shapes our academic understanding of the social and cultural relevance of social media practices.
**Keywords:** Suriname, Paramaribo, Latour, social media, youth culture.

## Introduction

I cherish fond memories of my first week in Latour, Paramaribo, where I arrived amidst the joyous Keti Koti festivities (which literally means 'broken chains', in which the people of Suriname celebrate the day that slavery was officially abolished in 1863). Despite the festivities that day, I met Mr Koster, the coordinator of StiBuLa (Stichting Buurtwerk Latour), the organisation with which I worked. Mr Koster, with a bristly moustache and a charismatic smile, is a joyful man, and also the only salaried staff member of StiBuLa. He is responsible for the bulk of the organization's projects and its administration. As he showed me around the neighbourhood of Latour (one of the fastest growing areas of Paramaribo, however also one of the poorest), I vividly recall seeing the modest wooden houses with their fenced porches, and the bumpy semi-asphalted roads that crisscross through the area. I vividly remember the inhabitants of Latour, sitting outside or leaning against the walls of their house, their eyes curiously following our silhouettes as we passed in the colossus of a car belonging to Mr Koster.

As the weeks progressed, I learned more about StiBuLa's activities and soon became acquainted with the young people who visit the community centre. They are active in various neighbourhood-related activities, aimed in particular at tackling the urgent challenges surrounding sustainability in the area, such as recycling plastic bottles or raising awareness about the increase in the number of motorised vehicles. One day I met Darwin, a 20-year-old of Afro-Surinamese descent, a seemingly overconfident young man. I began chatting with him, hoping to make an acquaintance. He answered me half-heartedly and devoted most of his attention to his smartphone. After I asked him about his ambitions, he looked at me and told me that he wanted to become an actor in Hollywood. He had the talent and motivation, he emphasized, and now all he had to do was find the right contacts to take him to the top. Social

[1] I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography* for their attention in improving the initial manuscript. I am also grateful to the editorial board, and in to particular Italo Pardo, for their clear guidelines and assistance throughout the review process.

media helped him to find auditions in the neighbourhood and to appear in locally produced films or commercials.

Darwin's account already provides some interesting insights into his relationship with Latour, his personal ambitions and, parallelly, his social media activity. This study aims to provide insight into how young Latourians, such as Darwin, build a sense of the future and how they use their smartphones to achieve their ambitions. In this chapter, I will elaborate on the historical, urban context of Latour and give an introductory understanding of the rapid emergence and spread of new digital communication platforms in the area. I will also outline the basic framework for interpreting these technological developments through the eyes of various young adolescent interlocutors (Darwin among others) whom I was fortunate enough to meet.


Image 1. Topographic map of Suriname.[2]

## The Urban Context of Latour

The *ressort*[3] of Latour gained increasing importance in the mid-twentieth century as a government-sponsored housing project for lower income groups in the face of increased population growth in Paramaribo (Hoefte 2014). Located on the outskirts of the city, the spatial socio-economic inequalities between the area and other parts became more and more visible as the business sector gained control over the purchase and sale of housing in the central areas from the 21st century onwards (Hoefte 2014). Paramaribo now has about 240,000 inhabitants

[2] Under Creative Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Suriname,_administrative_divisions_-_de_-_colored.svg.

[3] This is the Surinamese equivalent of a municipal area within a specific district; in this case Paramaribo (Bouterese 2014).

and because there are almost no high-rise buildings, the urban area is spread over a large area (Verrest and Post 2007). As a result, the socioeconomic boundaries that separate the various *ressorten*, and the smaller neighbourhoods within the city, become even more solid as the city continues to expand.

Latour is a central neighbourhood in the *ressort* of Latour. It is unique for several reasons. Mainly because of its small population size,[4] Suriname harbours a highly diverse multi-lingual and poly-ethnic community, rooted in Europe, America, Asia and Africa (St-Hilaire 2001). In Latour, however, African-descent families, such as Creoles and urban Maroons, are predominant. The term Creole is generally reserved for the offspring of enslaved Africans who were forced to migrate to Suriname from the 16th century onwards, and who did not escape from their bondage by fleeing into the rainforest (Buschkens 1974, Hoefte 2014), as opposed to urban Maroons; that is, the offspring of Africans that fled slavery during the colonial period and that established semi-independent societies in the interior (Chin and Buddingh 1987), and who have in the last decade become a relevant ethnic group in Latour (Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek Suriname 2013). In general, most of the urban Maroons and Creoles speak Dutch, while Sranan Tongo and specific family idioms are spoken as well (St-Hilaire 2001).

Although the city has always been strongly divided into ethnic lines (Hoefte 2014), since the 1990s the practices of exogamy and inter-ethnic marriages have become more and more mainstream (Verrest 1998, Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek Suriname 2006 and 2013). During the Interior War that terrorized the country from 1986 to 1992 (van den Broek 1993), and in which the National Army fought domestic guerrillas in the jungle of Suriname, many Maroons fled to the suburbs of Paramaribo, most of which settled in Latour (van den Broek 1993, Hoefte 2014), becoming the ethnic group with the lowest education and socio-economic indicators. As such, they have for a long time been the subject of strong hostility and discrimination from the part of urban Creoles (St-Hilaire 2001).

According to Mr Koster, in the 1990s and early 2000s, several male youth gangs terrorised the streets and the number of teenage pregnancies was alarmingly high. It is thus no coincidence that StiBuLa concentrates its activities mainly on young men, who are found hanging out on the streets during school hours. This does not mean that girls have a lower drop-out rate than boys, but often the girls (especially if they are the oldest in the family) stay at home and do household chores, while their parents work outside the home (van den Broek 1993).

Fortunately, things have changed for the better in Latour. StiBuLa's activities, with occasional limited support from the Surinamese government, have played their part in this (Angel et al. 1999). Today, Latour's main street is reinventing itself with the emergence of several commercial companies, such as fastfood restaurants, bicycle repair shops and electronics shops. These socio-economic changes also resulted in a sharp increase of automobiles, and traffic jams have become for many a frustrating daily reality. These trends have mainly to do with a general recovery of the Surinamese economy after the end of the Interior War in 1992 (Hoefte 2014). New economic opportunities have led to accelerated

[4] In 2012, it counted 541,638 inhabitants (Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek Suriname 2013).

mobility since the late 1990s, and this is clearly visible in the rapidly changing context of Latour.

However, Latour is currently nowhere near overcoming all its pressing, internal problems; the recent decade has not been one of fast-growing prosperity. On the contrary, for many, living conditions have become increasingly tense and precarious. While the beginning of the new century was applauded by several academics as a 'reason for guarded optimism' (Hoefte 2014: 218), in Latour families are currently facing rising livelihood prices as the value of the Surinamese dollar rapidly declines. For a younger generation there are double forces at work. At the micro level, they are part of a generation that will reap the benefits of an increasingly stable social context, while at the macro level, they are exposed to a precarious and unstable national situation, which threatens to destabilise local reality dramatically.

Image 2. Residential Street in Latour, close to Stibula (by the author).

**The Rise of New Digital Possibilities**

Internet use in Suriname has rapidly gained in popularity, especially in the last decade (Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek Suriname 2013). During the week, young people come to StiBuLa to hang out, play football or basketball, or to take part in the organisation's daily activities. Although these activities are popular, their smartphones often demand their full attention. In Latour, the quick rise of social media apps such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram or Snapchat, seems to produce a discursive sphere of interaction, often voiced as frustration or incomprehensibility, as for instance parents, grandparents and StiBuLa associates, at multiple occasions, expressed their concern about online connectivity. They point out that the younger generation does not know how to behave on social media platforms while the young adolescents in turn often express their frustration at the tight control their family members try to maintain over their online activities. This dilemma is mainly expressed by female interlocutors, who are generally more sensitive to parental control, as they are expected to carry

out chores and help in the household, while boys move more freely, away from their parents' gaze (van den Broek 1993).

This article will shed light upon social media activity among these young individuals, who were born in one of the most disadvantaged areas of Paramaribo, and which is now in a rapid process of change. I will show how the sharing of online content on social media, such as images and videos, are closely linked to the social, economic and cultural changes that the inhabitants are undergoing. As such, I will expose the different ways in which changes at the macro-level resonate with the social reality of several of these individuals, while cherishing a diverse palette of dreams, imaginations and subjectivities.

**Methodological and Theoretical Framework**

Social media platforms have aided Latourian youth to look across the frontier of their former social world, and to come into contact with other views, individuals and mentalities. Studying the relationship between urban neighbourhoods and social media has been popularised by Daniel Miller's global 'why we post' book series, in which anthropologists around the world have begun to document the use of social media in urban areas (see for instance Miller et al. 2016, Costa 2016, Haynes 2016, Miller 2016, Sinanan 2017). Additionally, Sarah Pink argued that 'in any project a researcher should attend not only to the internal "meanings" of an image but [also] to how the image was produced and how it is made meaningful by its viewers' (2006: 29). As such, in this article, I will look at the 'scalable nature' (Miller et al. 2016) of social media platforms, a term developed in the 'why we post' series, to see how social media platforms create agency for these young individuals to decide and control their social interactions. In other words, they are able to manage who is excluded and included on the different platforms. In this way, social media platforms enable them to radically rethink the neighbourhood of Latour and the mentalities that govern it.

I will focus on young Latourians who, although very different in dreams, ambitions and opinions, are all actively engaged in StiBuLa's activities in various ways, for example through administrative work, supervising school activities or organising meetings. Most of the dreams and ideals they have are inspired by Christian values, although, as we will see later, they all have different views of what it means to be a good Christian. In George Marcus' terms, I see them as 'cultural producers', to emphasise the responsibility they feel towards their peers, and who are engaged in 'intellectual work in various genres and who are difficult to pin down by any single specialty, craft, art, expertise, or professional role' (Marcus 1997: 8). These cultural producers are exploiting social media as 'an empty space of creativity where new ideologies and cultural strategies are shaped and deployed' (Jules-Rosette 2002: 604).

*Social Media in Latour*

As Appadurai (1996: 31) notes, increased globalization has rendered the imagination as a 'key component of the new global order'. In Latour, too, the rapid emergence of social media has led to an increasingly versatile and dynamic range of media productions (images, music or video fragments, even personal interactions) that have influenced the imagination of its young

inhabitants. As social imaginaries, a term coined by the political philosopher Charles Taylor in 2002, provide for the 'totalizing backdrop required for human beings to make sense of the world' (Sneath et al. 2009: 7), it is thus interesting to see how the introduction of social media, along with a changing urban context in greater Paramaribo, mixes with local reality in Latour, creating new opportunities and new ideologies. It is therefore as exciting as it is necessary to investigate the growing acquaintance of a group of young people, who are constantly expanding their social reference, with a diverse range of genres, ideas and people who have always been 'elsewhere', and who have now come closer, and have even become accessible, through social media.

In Latour, the smartphone quickly entered people's social lives. In 2007, the telecommunications sector became privatized, as the Surinamese state company Telesur lost its monopoly to the multinational enterprise Digicel, dramatically lowering the costs for mobile telephony and spurring an increase in people's mobile phone use. Nevertheless, there is a difference between having a telephone and being 'connected' in Latour: having a telephone and some credit is not enough, if only because texting and calling with a prepaid card is considered quite expensive. Young people feel the need to be online and to engage in meaningful social activities. As Miller et al. (2016) argue, the important digital platforms in Latour, which are above all Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube, should be seen as platforms of potential interaction, opening up new and exciting spaces of representation and communication that anteriorly were never a possibility

If we look at Mauss' theory of the entanglement of persons, roles and masks (Hollis 1985), the use of social media in Latour could imply something important for the formation of an individual, striking a balance between concepts such as traditional and modern life, individual and family responsibilities, or between public and private life. The study of these analytical polarities are in line with contemporary ideas within urban anthropology that, when analysing urban contexts, it is important to integrate the challenges of macro processes such as globalisation and technological developments with local reality, for example in creating new forms of exclusion, segregation and even governance (Prato and Pardo 2013).

Thus, anyone with a smartphone and internet access can reconfigure public and private life and democratise the spheres of space and time for their own benefit (Fortunati 2002). Social media has thus lifted a significant proportion of the world's population into a more extensive social reality than before (Miller 2011). Social media users are increasingly able to mediate and negotiate their presence online, or to 'scale their sociality' (Miller 2016: 13), vis-à-vis others. Although the equalizing potential of social media is often criticized by anthropologists as overly optimistic (Pype 2016, Archambault 2013), it has to be admitted that in Latour, the possibilities for and scope of communication, via social media, have greatly expanded.

### *'Being young' and the Role of the Household*

Since this is a study of young adolescents, there must be a reflection on youth culture. I consider youth and adolescence as socially fluctuating entities. In other words, identifying someone as 'young' means positioning this individual in terms of a variety of social characteristics (relevant

to a particular socio-cultural context). Age can be a factor, but juvenility can oppose adulthood in many ways. For example, there is a difference between pre-industrial and industrial societies in terms of the transition from childhood to adulthood, as, in the former, the transition from one generation to another has always been more balanced than in urbanised environments, where 'children cannot expect to follow in the path of their parents, simply because the path has changed and it is continuing to change' (Ling 2004: 95).

It is above all the flexibility of what categorizes youth culture that makes young adolescents able to 'navigate and control new geographies and chronologies of globalization' (De Boeck and Howana 2005: 6). A multi-sided perspective of young people as 'being', but also as 'becoming' — 'the way youths are positioned in society, and the way they position themselves in society' (Christiansen et al. 2006: 11) is thus pivotal. Due to their highly flexible and scalable nature, social media platforms offer a unique opportunity to explore this position further

Moreover, social media channels are used by the young people of Latour to manage the dual forces of their daily lives, between the public and private life, or the individual and the network. I will show how their use of telephone and social media exposes the shifting power imbalances in the relationship with their family members, who in most cases play the most important educational and formative role in their lives. As such, these young people make use of available technology to increasingly 'manage interaction with their parents and with their peers' (Ling 2004: 119), often outside of the purview of the former

Particularly when it comes to religion, the above trend is most evident. In Latour, religious belief systems cannot be seen as a top-down practice of socialisation that comes from parents and is received and accepted uncritically by their children. Taking into account the variety of ways in which young people perceive their religious upbringing is therefore important (Habashi 2017). I increasingly realised that my interlocutors were constantly monitoring their identity and their representation as Christian young adolescents on various social media platforms. Without dismissing the moral and psychological implications of these young adolescents' relationship with their parents or with StiBuLa, I would like to emphasize in this article that they are increasingly choosing their own direction in a rapidly changing and often uncertain urban context.

As such, I make no clear distinction between the online and the offline. The things we do, the people we engage with and the activities we undertake on social media are as real as their counterparts in the physical world (Miller et al. 2016). In what follows, I will use photographic material published online by my interlocutors, but I will not limit my analytical gaze solely to these images. As an ethnographer studying visual culture, my primary goal is to show the interwovenness of online visual culture with the social world, and I support the prevailing view within social science literature that visual and virtual technological developments should be an integral part of the discourse of every contemporary anthropological ethnography (Zuev and Krase 2017, Krase 2018). Furthermore, I have been heavily indebted by the concept of 'communicative ecology' (Slater and Tacchi 2004, Slater 2005), arguing that one has to understand the broader context in which a new technological or media device has been

introduced. Social media platforms are not new spaces for creating reality; as they cannot be isolated from the hazy and very complex social reality in which their users already live

In this article, I contribute my own piece of the puzzle to what social media are and are represented in Latour, to show how technological developments are never neutral. In line with contemporary urban anthropological theory (Prato and Pardo 2013), I propose that the complexity of life can be found in the things around us that may seem most normal. The research data for this article was obtained firstly through 'online' and 'offline' participant observation in Latour, and secondly through roundtable discussions and semi-structured interviews with several young Latourians. These interlocutors have been carefully selected during my time as an intern and researcher at StiBuLa. I learned from them, listened to them and through their words I got a sense of what 'being young' means in Latour.

Cultural anthropology has a long history of studying distant societies, but it is in studying urban areas that the richness and complexity of social life can be found. Prato and Pardo (2013) have argued that, 'bearing in mind that a great part of the world population lives in cities and that urbanization will inevitably grow further, it could be argued that contemporary urban anthropology is Anthropology' (p.100). I suggest that the social media in Latour blend in with specific socio-cultural, historical and economic structures that are continuously shaping the area's social organisation, as well as of its inhabitants' complex and sometimes paradoxical decisions.

**Christianity, Networks and Reciprocity**

Sitting outside on the terrace of StiBuLa, Fabian, 24 years old, and I discuss social media. Growing up as a self-confident young man and developing his moral compass as well as leadership skills at the boy scouts of Latour, he decided to pursue a career in the political realm of Suriname. As he progressed to become the chairman of the national youth parliament, he had to be increasingly aware of his online presence. Having reached the maximum friends limit of Facebook (5000), he needs to be extremely vigilant of what he posts online. 'In Suriname you need followers to achieve your goals', he said, 'but it gets me thinking about Facebook. If I go to a bar with friends, or if I enjoy myself, I cannot show a picture of it afterwards'. Fabian thus seems to be aware of his representative status as a political figure and of his reputation as a well-educated Christian young man, who is not supposed to be drunk, surpassing himself with wild parties and outrageous behaviour.

This principle of 'being a good Christian' is of great concern to most of my interlocutors; it is ubiquitous, albeit often unconscious. It is the principle on which the Roman Catholic neighbourhood project StiBuLa was founded in the 1960s, and the words are also central to the world view of the Boy and Girl Scouts, of whom many of my interlocutors are active members. The importance of this movement and its formative function in their lives cannot be ignored. The role of the scouting movement in Latour dates back to the Dutch colonial period (van Niel 2017). For many of my interlocutors, the movement is a primary place of orientation, a place where they, as Christians, learn to 'be' in the world, to learn the values that underlie the social organisation of Latour.

The relationship between Christianity and the scouting movement is even spatially visible, as the scouts meet weekly on the grounds of the Catholic Church. However, the role Christianity plays in my interlocutors' daily lives is very complex, not in the least because the religious landscape in Latour is very heterogeneous, including, for instance, Roman Catholic, Jehovah, Lutheranism, Pentecostalism. As 23-year-old Julia explains: 'Although Christianity has played an important role in my upbringing, I am not one to take the Bible literally. For me it's more about the way I was brought up, I do believe there is more between heaven and earth, but I won't take it as proof'. For Julia, being a Christian is subordinate to being a morally good person, and passing on the example to others

The keyword the young adolescents use above all to describe their ambitions is 'responsibility' (Dutch: *verantwoordelijkheid*). For Julia, as a chemical engineering student, it is about the responsibility for Latour's environment. For Fabian, as an aspiring politician, it's about responsibility for the future of next generations. According to Mr Koster, during the Internal War, it was generally thought that young migrant families were not able to educate their children properly. Therefore, many of their offspring now feel strongly that they have a shared responsibility to paint a responsible picture of themselves.


Image 3. Julia's Facebook picture in 2018, wearing the traditional uniform of the girl scouts and raising awareness for Earth Hour.

Nonetheless, the publication of moralising and educational messages online is the subject of many negotiations. As Frida, 18, explains, posting too many moral and religious references can have a devastating effect on a person's popularity. In a society where visibility and connectivity are very important, Frida, as a committed Roman Catholic, makes an effort not to be found 'too boring', and therefore limiting Bible-related content online. In real life, she prefers the evangelical Christian masses to the Catholic masses, the church she belongs to, because she finds the latter masses somewhat 'grey and depressing'. The evangelical meetings are livelier in her eyes and give her more incentive to regularly go to church. She thus struggles

to negotiate her religious preferences, fearing that she will lose her peers' attention if her posts are too dull.

Next to this, my interlocutors are constantly rearranging their contacts online. Issues of reciprocity, especially on Facebook, are important. 'Normally, if someone sends me a friendship request, I accept it, given that the person has a decent profile', says the 22-year-old girl scout Eunice, 'and if they start talking to me, I will respond. You never know what someone else might do for you', which indicates the blurred line between a friend and a stranger on social media, both of which are called 'friends' (Dutch: *Vrienden*) in her vocabulary. However, the difference between a 'Facebook friend' and a 'real friend' (in Dutch: *goede vrienden* vis-à-vis *Facebook vrienden*) is also relevant, as Eunice explains: 'a good friend is there for you and we see each other outside, but someone new is interesting, and you can make nice *tori*'[5] (van Stipriaan 2015: 157). For Eunice, meeting new people to talk to is an important incentive to approach strangers on Facebook. Social media is therefore a way to understand the changing scale of her social life, to meet people from outside her traditional social circle and possibly form connections with them.

Marcel Mauss argued in the 1920s that reciprocity is important for the expression of social ties between (groups of) people, not solely measured in economic terms (Heins and Unrau 2018). The most important issue, as Mauss argued, seems to be sociality. Being connected to someone's social media platform brings with it a certain expectation of engaging in meaningful communication. Individuals who may not know each other physically, but who may be useful to each other at some point in life, thus create multiple networks a day. In Granoveterian terminology these would be 'weak links' (Granovetter 1973), local bridges aimed at the immediate or future distribution of goods, sociality, ideas or subjectivity.

In Suriname, talking to each other is an important part of everyday life. This could explain why many of my interlocutors on Facebook are quite flexible when it comes to talking to strangers. Nevertheless, they pay constant attention to who is 'useful' and who is not. 'Sometimes I meet someone on my friends list who I don't know and who never talks to me', says Eunice, adding, 'what's the point of keeping this person as a friend?' Thus, having a lot of friends on Facebook is not just about popularity, it's very social — people are expected to invest in their contacts.

Moreover, the affinities with different media platforms — Gershon (2010) calls these 'media ideologies' — are constantly changing. I felt a growing aversion to Facebook among my interlocutors, because many felt that it had become too big to manage properly. Other social media platforms were mainly discussed with more enthusiasm. Especially Snapchat was for many an ideal combination of the virtues of Facebook and WhatsApp, being not too openly public, yet easily manageable and scalable, while retaining the playful and representative qualities of Facebook. On Snapchat, young adolescents play with self-representation, manage social networks and have fun all at once. Eunice explains, 'You know, you can also copy Snapchat photos to Facebook and share them but then everyone would see it. On Snapchat, I

[5] This is the Sranan Tongo word for 'storytelling' or 'gossiping'.

can send personal, filtered photos to different types of people. I get to choose'. This way, Snapchat offers her more agency to manage online interactions with her peers.

For WhatsApp, the dynamics are different. As the platform is not suitable for the type of public display that Facebook offers, my interlocutors were not so much concerned with showing themselves explicitly on it. WhatsApp seemed more suitable for direct messaging. Being WhatsApp contacts overall has an air of gravity, and therefore, Eunice alludes to the fact that on the platform one can easily separate strong from weak ties (Granovetter 1973). 'If I give you my number, it means something', she says, and gives a clear example of a scaled sociality on her part:

> 'If I give you my number, we are friends, or we are about to become friends. Sometimes I add someone on WhatsApp, or someone adds me, whom I don't know too well. Then I can reset my profile to zero so that this person can't see my profile picture or status. We can only chat.'[6]

Although most of my informants agree that Instagram is no less public than Facebook, those who use Instagram generally emphasise feeling a higher degree of freedom. They dislike the fact that their Facebook profile is exposed to a variety of unwelcome actors, such as family members, strangers and fake accounts, which prevents them from moving freely. Facebook has become too big to scale. On Instagram, they are able to manage their accounts between private and public, or between exhibition and concealment, sharing photos while following others, such as international celebrities and interesting foreigners.

As this discussion shows, there are important differences between scaling strategies for the most popular social media platforms; namely, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Snapchat. Facebook is seen as increasingly stressful and demanding. As a result, WhatsApp, Instagram and Snapchat are rapidly gaining in popularity. Many of the social media activities of the young people in Latour seem to stimulate their sense of autonomy and responsibility, as they are navigating different platforms and using different strategies to create and maintain social networks.

**Economic Activity, Connectivity and the Household**

One could randomly choose an afternoon to visit the Latourweg and see groups of young men gather around the restaurants, bars or Chinese supermarkets. Often dressed in leisure or sports clothing, their smartphones are at the centre of the collective interaction. They listen to music and occasionally show each other videos or photos. Darwin explained to me that these young men are attracted to these places because of the availability of free Wi-Fi. Since StiBuLa is unable to offer an open Wi-Fi hotspot, these young men prefer to hang out here during the day, and even in the night.

[6] The original in Dutch reads: "Als ik je mijn nummer geef, dan zijn we vrienden of dan worden we vrienden. Het gebeurt soms dat ik iemand toevoeg op WhatsApp, of iemand voegt mij toe, die ik niet zo goed ken. Dan kan ik mijn profiel op nul zetten, zodat hij mijn profielfoto of status niet kan zien. We kunnen dan alleen maar praten".

According to Darwin, many of these young people do not have access to the Internet at home, because the costs of installing safe and fast wireless or cable connections in Suriname are relatively high, especially in comparison with other countries in the region (Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek Suriname 2013). The multinational Digicel responded to the demand for affordable internet by offering free Facebook access with a prepaid SIM card. Although this free access to Facebook is very slow in the eyes of many, it has convinced many people to switch from Telesur (the semi-state telecommunications provider) to Digicel.

For many Latourians, the chance of finding a job outside the neighbourhood has increased due to improved access to the Internet. Eunice is one of them. For her it is important to post work photos online, because she wants to present a good and responsible image of herself. However, having fun is just as important. Several of her photos have been adapted with so-called 'filters', photographic objects that can be added digitally to a photo to increase its attractiveness (for example rabbit ears or a crown). In this way she reinvents social life via the smartphone medium. Snapchat is an important platform where many of the edited photos are shared among her closest contacts, and sometimes she remediates them in the form of WhatsApp or Facebook status updates (photos or videos that remain on the platform for 24 hours and are then automatically deleted). These kinds of photos are rarely published for a longer period of time, exemplifying the ongoing negotiations of distance and proximity, or private and public life, online.

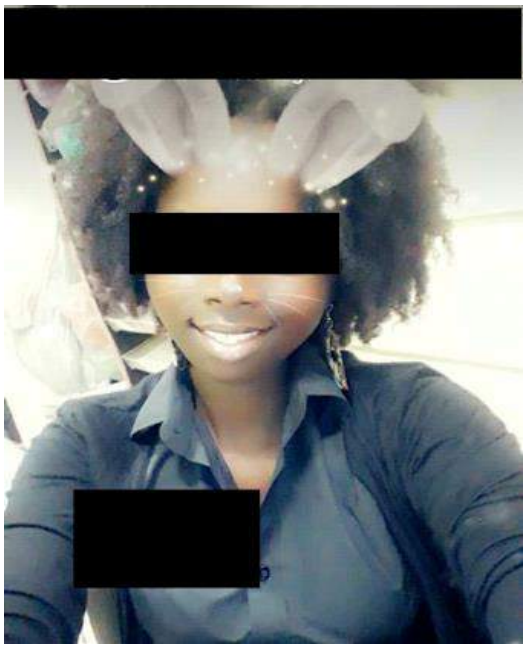

Image 4. Eunice's Status Update on Whatsapp in 2018, a filtered selfie taken at work.

In fact, managing the private and the public is an important concern in the neighbourhood. In a community like Latour, where social life is often lived outdoors and where it is often difficult to isolate personal issues from neighbours (van Niel 2017), social media platforms directly play into the desire in Latour to find new spheres of possible social connection in which, among others, one's status can be enhanced.

The importance of social networks in Latour therefore cannot be overestimated. For example, for both Fabian and Darwin, who both share political ambitions, it is very important to reach and speak to as many people as possible. Fabian says, 'To be a good politician in Suriname, you have to hear a lot of young people, and see what you can do for them. On social media, Facebook and Instagram, for example, I can show what my goals are and what I can do for others and my environment'. But bringing social networks into the realm of social media can create some new problems, as Darwin tried to get into the youth parliament during the 2016 elections and at that time his social media contacts increased. Two years later, they all want something from him. Visibly irritated, he told me one afternoon: 'They just don't leave me alone, they even bother me on WhatsApp. I befriended them and told them that I would do what I could for them and now I get messages from unknown people every day'. It should be noted that the verb 'befriending' often does not mean that one actually makes friends, in the traditional sense, online. It has more to do with making preliminary contacts in building new forms of complex social relationships related to the self, agency and, in the case of Darwin, political mobility. However, these 'friends' are now coming too close to his personal life. Above all, though, he is frustrated with their messages on WhatsApp, a platform which he considers with intimate contacts, and he regrets having given them access. Darwin, in his eagerness to be elected as a youth politician, made a mistake rushing to add and welcome people to his WhatsApp account. He thus failed in his efforts to manage private and public affairs, leading to a form of 'context collapse' (Marwick and Boyd 2010) where self-presentation can go wrong when mediating between different groups and people online. Darwin is particularly interested in befriending people who are relevant to get his political (or acting) career moving, and he calls them 'important people' (Dutch: *belangrijke mensen*). However, chit-chatters, or people who ask him for a favour, are undesirable.

Image 5. Picture of Darwin from his Facebook page in 2018, showing him on a film set, dressed in the robes of an African prince.

Most of the messages circulating on social media have to do with individuality and self-realisation, in one way or another. This contrasts sharply with the history of the Latour household or, even the history of the Maroon societies in the interior, where one derives one's identity mainly from belonging to one's village or matrilineal ancestry (St-Hilaire 2000). Now, by opening up the household as the most important sphere of socialisation and communication, young people think more and more of themselves as individuals. As such, the social media practices in Latour have influenced the relationship between my interlocutors and their family members. As social media platforms represent growing opportunities and openness to the outside world, it is crucial to remember that online and offline are inextricably linked. The reach of family members in the lives of these young adolescents is illustrative of this, as parental authority is rapidly extending to online platforms as 'a social activity' (Pype 2018: 4) that affects the relationship between parents and children. This evolution is seen by several of my interlocutors as an undesirable or unforeseen consequence of increased connectivity, confronting them with their expected role within established family relationships.

The interference of family members on social media platforms is considered highly undesirable or frustrating. A good example is given by Julia, who has had several disputes with her family members concerning her online engagement with others. Although she does not explicitly prevent her family members from befriending her, she has already blocked some uncles and aunts on Facebook. Although she is Christian, she was tired of the biblical quotes shared by several of them and found them 'boring' and somewhat 'annoying'. Above all, she wants to stay informed about what her good friends are doing, or be informed by good articles, and not be bombarded by biblical references and religious quotes.

Julia thus increased her connectivity (Miller et al 2016) and sought a balance between existing social tasks and the new social space offered by social media platforms (Gershon and Bell 2013). WhatsApp, in contrast to Facebook, appears to be the most suitable platform for managing these different relationships, due to its easily scalable functionalities. Miller, in England, also noted that Facebook's popularity was declining as young people increasingly classified it as 'a place for communication with relatives rather than the cool peer-to-peer platform for peers' (2017: 389).

Being online friends in Latour does thus not necessarily mean that you are physical friends. They are often 'fictitious friends' who are part of an ideal that 'modern relationships should reflect the authenticity and informality that are the supposed results of choice rather than the obligations associated with the past and tradition' (Miller 2017: 390). In most cases, my informants did not care whether or not they knew their social media contacts. The common thread seems to be reciprocity. One has to constantly give likes, make *tori* or comment on updates. If an online friend fails to do this, my young interlocutors agree, it is permissible to remove him or her from your account. In this way, proximity and distance are in an ongoing process of renegotiation.

In short, for the young Latourians, the world lies at their feet, and historically this is a new idea — novel and exciting opportunities are slowly replacing family responsibilities. In addition to receiving and using new information, genres and media content, my interlocutors

are able to actively dialogue with this content and choose which ones work for them and which do not. They then enter into dialogue with other people from all over the world, while continuing to use the agency to choose who to include and who to exclude. They see themselves more and more as autonomous individuals, responsible for both themselves and for the world they live in.

**Conclusion**

In this article, I introduced several young adolescents from Latour, Paramaribo, who are all active in the field of social media and who are increasingly embracing a contemporary lifestyle. At the same time, they are all indebted to the social, cultural, historical and economic context relevant to their neighbourhood. In a sense, a gradual neo-liberalisation of the district is taking place. By this I mean above all that the semi-hierarchical family system of the urban Creoles and Maroons is losing its function as a primary source of reference, in the light of increasing urbanisation and increased mobility throughout Paramaribo. My interlocutors are in a complex process of self-examination: they are learning to see themselves as individual agents and as the creators of their own future.

It is worth noting that these young individuals represent only a small percentage of Latour's rapidly growing young population. Moreover, most of them are already involved in social movements, such as StiBuLa, to tackle relevant issues in the neighbourhood. As promising as the imaginative possibilities of mobile and online technologies may be, it is necessary to point out that more academic research is needed to understand complex processes or urban mobility, youth identity and social media in the neighbourhood. More anthropological research on these issues is therefore needed to ground the claims made in this article.

Next to this, this article shows that social media platforms increasingly elicit different sites of struggle over influence and authority. For instance, the young adolescents often expressed their frustration about the social control of family members, especially on Facebook. Furthermore, social media has enabled my interlocutors to connect to new realms, make new friends, or new contacts. For them, being Facebook friends has no geographical boundaries — one uses his or her profile to show oneself, to open up to others, often strangers. They all represent themselves online and construct a specific image of themselves, through sharing images, or making *tori*, or small conversation to build new relationships and maintain networks. In this sense, proximity and distance are constantly in flux, between showing and not showing, or adding or removing, on different platforms

To conclude, the specific context of Latour affects the lives of these young people, and hence their social media activities. The changing geography of the district, which is increasingly linked to greater Paramaribo, presents a wide range of possibilities and dilemmas. Nonetheless, these individuals all have their own diverse and individual strategies to manage their (online) lives. In this sense, social media did not alter daily life in Latour; the neighbourhood was already changing and social media arrived just in time to become an irreplaceable pillar of localized social reality.

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# *Encountering Turkish Denialism: From the Syrian conflict to the Second Karabakh War*[1]

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In this article we examine how Armenian Genocide denialism is expressed and why it took place in urban areas and symbolic spaces during the Second Karabakh War. Denialism took the form of a 'battle' against Armenian heritage and Genocide-related memorials, from destruction to vandalism, from the heroization of old perpetrators of violence to direct violence against Turkish and diasporic Armenian communities. The denial of the Armenian Genocide penetrated the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Alongside Turkey, Azerbaijan also denies the Armenian Genocide and campaigns against its international recognition. The discussion will address the following questions: How was Turkish denialism symbolically reproduced in the Second Karabakh War narratives as an expression of a political strategy? How was denialism linked to the different urban settings and the transnational context? How was it transferred from the Syrian War to the Karabakh War in terms of symbols, actors and narratives?
**Keywords**: Denialism, Second Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Syrian conflict, ethno-religious violence.

## Dissolving the Temporal Gap

We have recently co-authored, a book titled *The Syrian Armenians and The Turkish Factor: Kessab, Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor in the Syrian War* currently in publication in the Series 'Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology' (Mollica and Hakobyan 2021). The book provides an understanding of contemporary events in the Arab Republic of Syria by reading them through the eyes of the Syrian Armenian community, which is a recognized ethno-religious group with religious, confessional, cultural and educational rights. This community was mostly formed in 1915, after the Մեծ Եղեռն (Great Crime), an expression used by Armenians to refer to the Armenian Genocide.

In 2003, there were between 65,000 and 90,000 Armenians in Syria (Ayvazyan 2003: 508; Migliorino 2006: 6). In 2017, there were around 28,000, 18,000 of whom lived in Aleppo (Mshetsyan 2017). In February 2019, the General Consul of Armenia in Aleppo, Armen Sargsyan, said that no more that 14,000-15,000 Armenians remained in the city (Mkrtchyan 2019). The direct involvement of the Turkish Armed Forces and the Turkoman militia in the Syrian conflict played a major role in Syrian Armenians' war narratives.

The Turkish government, not only supported the Syrian Opposition but hosted their headquarters. The Turkish Armed Forces (and the factions supported by them) launched three distinct military operations in north-western Syria: Operation Euphrates Shield, August 2016-March 2017; Operation Olive Branch, January 2018; Operation Peace Spring, started on 9 October 2019. The Syrian conflict prompted changes in the attitude of war actors towards the Syrian Armenians and their past and transformed urban realities that were regarded as important symbols of the Armenian diaspora.

Our discussion sheds light on war-related social changes in three urban case studies: Kessab, Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor. Here, conflict-related stories are part of everyday life and a means for actors to express and negotiate their experience. In such a frame, the involvement

[1] We are grateful to the Board of *Urbanities* for their comments and suggestions.

of Turkey in the Syrian War, is seen by the Syrian Armenians as an attempt to remove Armenian presence from Syria. The past represents itself in contemporary wartime events, materializing into a constant fear which has penetrated both the Republic of Armenia and other Armenian diasporic settings.

The memory of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-22 is a main marker of Syrian Armenian identity formation and representation. The contemporary involvement of Turkey in the Syrian conflict is seen by Syrian Armenians as a threat with direct links to the past, a past which is reproduced by new events. The symbols of the Armenian Genocide extend to contemporary views, as today's wartime narratives are linked to a dramatic past, almost dissolving the events' temporal gap and spatial distance.

**Connecting Armenian Enclaves**

The development of anthropological research in Western urban settings led to a prolonged methodological debate (Prato and Pardo 2013). Pardo and Prato (2010) have pointed out that this also emerged in relation to anthropological research in Mediterranean societies that addressed local communities as if they were isolated in space and time. Since the 1960s, as Pardo and Prato (2010) document, there has been a proliferation of Mediterranean ethnographies, among them Middle East studies addressed mainly the Israeli-Arab conflict, the role of religion in political processes (Fischer 1980), populations' ethnic composition (Shokeid and Dresden 1982) and nation-state formation dynamics (Aronoff 1986).

In our aforementioned book, we deal with critique of the so-called Mediterraneanist literature that, following the functionalist approach, initially conceived anthropology as the study of isolated' small-scale societies. There, we also take into account the questions raised by a new generation of 'Mediterraneanists'. As Prato (2009) has synthesized, when research on urban areas started in the 1930s, the functionalist approach was dominant in anthropology, but there was a lack of appreciation of broader dynamics. Thus, although a few authors tried to consider the wider picture (Boissevain and Friedl 1975), it is from the late 1980s that this trend took a definite form. Pardo's (1996) monograph on Naples represents a seminal work in a major Western urban setting that brings together micro- and macro- processes. In this line, we argue that Christian enclaves in the Middle East should not be seen as entities isolated in space and time nor disconnected from the wider regional arena. Marcello Mollica reached similar conclusions in his work on Syrian Orthodox Christians in South Eastern Turkey (Mollica 2011) and on Christians of various denominations in South Lebanon (Mollica 2010). We suggest that these settings are part of wider dynamics and deep-rooted processes that are brought to the fore by war-related events.

**How do Cities Matter?**

The old-standing *vexata quaestio*, 'how do cities matter?'. In our aforementioned book, we have argued that mass action has probably occurred in different places while addressing the same national issues (Tilly 1993: 274). Nevertheless, we did not mean to say that the occurrence of violence in Middle Eastern cities is an exception, or specifically Middle

Eastern. We have suggested, with Ghrawi et al. (2015: 21), that regional processes of urban modernization that are under the influence of exogenous forces can create specific forms of contention.

In his work on morals of legitimacy, Italo Pardo (1995, 1996, 2000) has argued that people do not always accept as legitimate what is formally deemed legal, nor do they regard as morally illegitimate actions that may fall outside the boundaries of the law (Pardo, quoted in Prato 2019: 30). In turn, an erosion of the legitimacy of the 'system' (Pardo and Prato 2019: 5) is engendered by the action of political and governmental bodies that fail to respond to the instances of citizenship (Arendt 1972: 140, quoted in Pardo and Prato 2019), as well as by the distortions of local bureaucracy and the arbitrariness of the law (Fuller 1969, quoted in Pardo and Prato 2019; Pardo 2000). Finally, these occurrences widen the gap between rulers and the ruled (Spyridakis 2019; Pardo and Prato 2019: 5-6).

Pardo and Prato (2019: 8) suggest that the main contemporary debate in this field is inspired by Weber's theory of different forms of authority and their sources of legitimacy. They suggest that the 'social-scientific study of legitimacy should recognize the distinction between normative and empirical aspects and produce an analysis of the social construction of legitimacy; that is why people accept or reject a particular form of government and governance' (Pardo and Prato 2019: 8). They ask, how much more governance failure before legitimacy is withdrawn? In our Syrian case, we asked, how much governance effort is needed before legitimacy can be brought back?

Indeed, alongside their political representation, religious symbols have great importance, especially when their religious meaning is associated with historical memory. It is by reference to a clear symbolism that the action of political actors and factions become understandable and the target audience — in our case, the urban Syrian Armenian communities — could easily identify with them.

We must also note that, the relation between the memory of the Armenian Genocide, its commemoration and the urban space impacted diasporic Armenian settings. This is documented in urban anthropological research on Armenian *loci* in the Republic of Armenia. One thinks, for example, Marutyan's (2008) study of loci where monuments were erected to remember Genocide victims in the context of Armenian mourning rites; or Gayane Shagoyan's discussion (2009, 2011) of natural and social crises, memory and urban space in the city of Gyumri, but also of studies carried out in diasporic settings, such as the Armenian community of Tbilisi (Ponomareva 2014) and that of Saint Petersburg, where cultural markers related to the memory of the genocide are defining components of group solidarity and identity (Brednikova and Chikadze 1998, Angelmyuller 1998).

**Exporting Northern Syrian violence to Nagorno Karabakh**

On 12 July 2020, when we started writing the Concluding chapter of our book, fighting suddenly erupted on a new front on the Armenian-Azerbaijani northern border, between the Armenian Province of Tavush and the Azeri District of Tovuz. In Armenia, these military actions were linked to new tension on the border between Syria and Turkey. Turkish support

to Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict and to Azerbaijani militants involved in the Syrian War were established features. What was new in the July 2020 clashes was that, according to Kurdish, Russian, Syrian and Syrian Armenian information sources, Turkey had started preparing the transfer of Free Syrian Army units to Azerbaijan. This proved not to be simply an allegation, as in October 2020 the involvement of Syrian fighters was confirmed (Sotak 2020).

It was the above event that, after a night-long Skype call, convinced us to embark into a new writing project. Northern Syrian war events reproduced themselves in the Nagorno-Karabakh War. In spite of the lack of geographical continuity between the two regions not only actors and factions were similar, but also the motivations, perceptions and actors' views of events were perfectly matched. For example, the Free Syrian Army registration points were opened in north-eastern Syria, in Jindires, Rajo and Afrin. However, when on 22 July, the fighting at the Armenian-Azerbaijani border ended, Turkey and Azerbaijan denied the abovementioned allegations. Nevertheless, a narrative developed that pointed to the transnational dimension of the Syrian War, and to the way in which it was linked to Armenian Genocide memory both in the mainland and in diasporic loci.

In our new writing project, we will not simply suggest that Armenian urban settings in Syria were not isolated entities; we will submit that this was also the case in Nagorno-Karabakh. Exogenous forces acting on their own or as part of international coalitions had for instance contributed to creating the current situation in Syria and to its spill-over into neighbouring countries (Mollica 2018). The dynamics that linked the memory of the Armenian Genocide, the Syrian political-military situation and the transnational and international context showed a logical historical progression and political transformation. A case in point is what happened on 13 February 2020, when the Syrian Parliament recognized the Armenian Genocide (*Al-Arabiya*, 13 February 2020). The resolution was passed in the aftermath of the clashes between the Syria Arab Army and the TAF in the southwest Idlib Governorate area. It gave additional resonance to the Syrian Armenian *lieux de memoire* linked to the Genocide, while reproducing old meanings into contemporary conflictual urban spaces and religious settings.

In the Conclusions to *The Syrian Armenians and The Turkish Factor*, we draw on the seminal study conducted by Avedis Sanjian (1965), who sets his analysis against the background of the Armenian communities' association with the regional area prior to the advent of the Ottomans. The communities were 'one segment' of the Armenian millet of the Ottoman Empire; their history was linked to larger groups in Constantinople and Asia Minor. Syrian communities were presented as a whole because the Armenian National Church was the major institution influencing Armenian community life, including the role that Armenians played in commerce and finance. Sanjian's analysis of the Armenian millet and the Eastern question helped us to understand and contextualize historically the perceptions of today's events among the Syrian Armenian communities. We aim to develop similar points about the Nagorno-Karabakh war and show how the Turkish direct involvement reproduces the same

narratives and polices in terms of real and perceived of ethnic and cultural cleansing while also penetrating the memory of the Armenian Genocide.

It is against this background that we will develop our analysis of the Nagorno-Karabakh context. Afterall, the fear of repetition of previous events is a key common theme in our ethnography of Syrian Armenian settings, where it is articulated in a variety of forms. We expect to find a similar fear in Nagorno-Karabakh.

**Preliminary Findings**

Building upon the findings discussed in *The Syrian Armenians and The Turkish Factor*, the new book will focus on a number of issues to be compared and contrasted between the Syrian War and the Second Karabakh War. Let us give a brief account of some of the indicative topics that we plan to address.

*The Turkish Armenian Community as a Target*

Since the beginning of the conflict, public opinion in Turkey focused on the military campaign in Nagorno-Karabakh. Anti-Armenian sentiments and slogans renewed animosity, while anger and protests broke out against Armenian communities, mostly in Istanbul. On 28 September 2020, a large group of cars paraded in front of the Armenian Patriarchate in Kumkapı. On 5 October, anti-Armenian demonstrations took place outside the Azerbaijani Consulate in Besiktas and in Beyazit Square, which symbolically reproduces the Genocidal past because on 15 June 1915 twenty Armenian prominent figures sentenced to death were hanged there. On that October day, convoys carrying Azerbaijani flags circled close to the Hrant Dink Memorial site (Barsoumian 2020).

In the words of Garo Palyan, an Armenian MP the Peoples' Democratic Party in the Turkish Parliament,

> 'Any hate speech towards the Armenian people makes our own citizens an imminent target. The Government is using this conflict for domestic consumption. Armenian-origin citizens have become scapegoats and the object of rising racism and hate speech' (Palyan quoted in Barsoumian 2020).

In a similar fashion, the *Armenian Weekly* pointed to the motto, 'Two states, one nation'. It reported,

> 'The slogan essentially declares that the states of Turkey and Azerbaijan belong to the one Turkish nation. It is a dangerous phrase that is repeated by [Recep Tayyip] Erdogan [the Turkish President], [Ilham] Aliyev, their top ministers, newspapers and the public. It is a phrase that harbors genocidal aspirations. It is a phrase that in theory exiles Armenians, Kurds, Alevis, Assyrians and Jews from their borders' (Barsoumian 2020).

*The Issue of Denialism*

Istanbul was a contested space linked with the Nagorno Karabakh war because Anti-Armenian sentiments and denialism had been reproduced there also in the past. The Istanbul

Armenian community had been targeted by the ultra-nationalist organization 'Grey Wolves' during the 1990's First Karabakh War. In 1994, the Grey Wolves released an 'official' threat against Armenians' existence in Turkey (Avagyan 2013: 97). More recent threats were made in 2012 and 2015.

Here, genocide denial is understood as an attempt to deny or minimize the scale and severity of a genocide. Denial is indeed an integral part of genocide; it includes secret planning and propaganda while the genocide is ongoing and the destruction of evidence of mass killings. Denialism creates an environment of hate and suspicion. Genocide denials are not just attempts at overthrowing historical facts; they are assaults on those who survived the genocide and on their descendants. Thus, the denialism that led the Turkish state to refuse to admit that the 1915 Armenian Genocide occurred is viewed by the Armenian community as an attack on today's Armenians and, by extension, on any other minority that raises troubling questions about the status of minorities in Turkey (Siobhan Nash-Marshall 2018).

*The Issue of Resettlements*

The Ottomans used Muslim communities — Kurds, Turkmens and *muhajirs* — as tools of ethno-demographic engineering in pursuing their external policy against the Great Powers and in dealing with internal pressure against the Christian population of the empire, especially Armenians in the eastern provinces and Cilicia. The chronology of the resettlement during the Genocide indicates that the process was synchronized with the cleansing of Armenians from the areas in which the *muhajirs* were to be settled. We discovered that similar dynamics were reproduced in relation to refugees in northern Syria.

During the Nagorno-Karabakh war, Turkey both provided military support to Azerbaijan and engaged in the large-scale recruitment and transfer of Syrians to Azerbaijan; an operation that was carried out by armed factions. Some of these armed operators were affiliated with Jabhat al-Nusra, Firkat Hamza, the Sultan Murad Division and other Salafi factions. Some reports suggest that Syrian mercenaries remained in Azerbaijan after the end of the War. At the same time, those returning from the front suggest that Syrian mercenaries are sending for their family members to join them in Azerbaijan or settle in the southern Nagorno Karabakh areas on the Iranian border that at the end of the war reverted to Azerbaijan (Rubin 2020). Indeed, on 2 February 2021, Stanislav Zas, the Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), said that 'Mercenaries from Syria must leave Nagorno-Karabakh, their activities near the CSTO countries pose risks to the collective security of the Collective Security Treaty Organization' (RIA Novosti 2021).

According to the Human Rights Organization-Afrin, Turkey engaged in registering ethnic Turkmen from northern Syria with the aim of settling them in Karabakh. Two offices were opened for this purpose in Afrin. As pointed out by *Asbarez* (2020),

> 'According to the human rights watchdog, the effort is being coordinated by Turkish Intelligence Service and the terrorist Grey Wolves gangs who are predominantly pro-Turkey armed factions of Turkmen origin, such as Sultan Murad, Suleyman Shah, al-Hamzat groups.'

Such transnational migration aimed at changing the ethno-demographic composition of Nagorno Karabakh has taken place since the beginning of the conflict. Similarly, in 1989-92 the Azerbaijani government resettled in Nagorno Karabakh Turk Mesketin[2] refugees from Central Asia (Ter Sarkissiants 2015).

**The Holy Saviour Cathedral: A Witness of 'Rebirth'**

The transformation of sacred loci and their profanation during the Syrian War penetrated the transnational dimension. These events were viewed as part of a Turkish ethno-political ideology linked to Turkmen and Turkish factors. In turn, the systematic destruction of the Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey was seen as part of the denialist policy (Cheterian 2015: 65; Chorbajian 2016: 173). In the Armenian narrative, the above paralleled the way in which symbolic and sacred spaces were used in the Karabakh War, as in the case of the Ghazanchetsots (Holy Saviour Cathedral)[3] in Shushi.

For the Armenians of Karabakh, the Ghazanchetsots is a major symbol of history and identity. It was damaged during the March 1920 Azeri massacre of Armenians. During the First Karabakh War, Azerbaijan used the cathedral as an armoury to store missiles. The Cathedral became a main marker of the First and Second Karabakh wars' narratives.

The transformation of sacred spaces became central in the Armenian narrative concerning the 1991-1994 Karabakh War. Shushi was captured by the Armenian forces on 9 May 1992. The restoration of the Cathedral began immediately and involved the Armenian Diaspora network. The Cathedral was reconsecrated on 18 June 1998. Yulia Antonyan suggested that the reconstruction of the Cathedral was 'perceived more as a cultural process aimed at a restoration of the Armenian cultural heritage, a spiritual and physical "rebirth" of the Armenian nation' (2015: 84). The Cathedral symbolized the 'rebirth' of Shushi and soon became a popular pilgrimage site for Armenians worldwide (Antonyan 2015). But on 8 October 2020, it was struck twice by the Azerbaijani forces. Two Russian journalists were wounded, one of them seriously (Yeghikyan 2020). According to the Human Rights Watch, this appeared to be a deliberate targeting in violation of the laws of war. It was argued that the Church, a major object of cultural significance, was an intentional target (Human Rights Watch 2020).

Referring to the Armenian Genocide, on 21 October 2020, Raffi Hovannisian, the Armenian Foreign Minister, wrote in the *New York Post* that,

> 'the swirling dust kicked up by violence against a Christian house of worship can take back even the most modern-minded Armenian more than a century — to the year 1915' (Hovhannisian 2020).

[2] This is a Turkish ethnic group that formerly inhabited the Georgian region of Meskheti and was expelled by Joseph Stalin in 1944 to Central Asia. In 1989, following riots with Uzbek communities, many fled into exile.

[3] This cathedral was built between 1868-1887 in a neighbourhood that at the time was inhabited by Armenians from Ghazanchi (Nakhidjevan).

For the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS), the strikes on the Cathedral were,

> 'part of the policy of the cultural genocide that the Azerbaijani government has been implementing over the past 30 years by systematically destroying the Armenian historical heritage' (*Armenpress*, 22 October 2020).

*Indoctrination and Schooling*

One of the most symbolic acts, at the end of the Syrian War, was the decision by Erdogan and Aliyev to build a School in the captured city of Shushi. The leader of Turkey's Nationalist Movement Party (henceforth, MHP), Devlet Bahceli, stated:

> 'It is our goal to build a school of nine classrooms in Shusha [in Turkish] by the Ulku Ocaklari Education and Culture Foundation on my personal instructions' (Bahceli quoted in Persecution.org 2021).

The Ulku Ocaklari (Education and Culture Foundation; full name, Idealist Clubs Educational and Cultural Foundation), is the official name for the Grey Wolves. In 1966, the founder of the Grey Wolves, Alparslan Türkeş, founded the so-called 'idealist hearts' (Ulku Ocaklari) (Jenkins 2008: 130). These were 'local cells designed to attract and indoctrinate students and youth. This recruitment gave rise to the "Grey Wolves", a fascist militia affiliated to the MHP [Nationalist Movement Party]' (Bose 2018: 182). The Grey Wolves have often been described as a terrorist organization — even by Governments, like that of Kazakhstan (Hans 2011: 744; Sullivan 2011: 236-237).[4]

At the end of the war, the Grey Wolves' leader Devlet Bahçeli announced that the Turkish and Azerbaijani Presidents were expected to lay the foundation of a school in Shushi. Meanwhile, representatives of the MHP and Grey Wolves presented the school project to President Aliyev, during their visit to Baku on 2 February 2021 (*Panarmenian.net*, 22 February 2021; *Dayli Sabah*, 2 February 2021).

According to Claire Evans, the International Christian Concern representative for the Middle East, 'the opening of a Grey Wolf school in Shushi further proves that this war has had strong ideological foundations from its start' (*Persecution.org*, 2021).

At the time of writing, the Turkish flag is clearly visible at the entrance of the Shushi border area, where the Azerbaijani control-zone has started since the area was captured by Azeri forces on 8 November 2020. In addition, the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States suggested that in 2022 Shushi should be declared cultural capital of the Turkic World; it stated, 'We propose Shusha to be declared such capital in 2022 and holding many cultural events' (Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, Baghdad Amreyev, received by President Aliyev on 19 January 2021, quoted in APA. Az 2021).

[4] The International Christian Concern [ICC] recently reported on the role of the Grey Wolves in the Karabakh War; see *The Anatomy of Genocide: Karabakh's Forty-Four Day War* at: https://www.persecution.org/2021/01/27/terrorist-organization-grey-wolves-announce-school-opening-nagorno-karabakh/.

Something similar had happened in Kurdish areas in Northern Syria, where the changed ethno-demographical and cultural landscape involved the establishment of Turkish educational institutions. Two years earlier, in 2019, Arshak Poladyan, the former Ambassador of the Republic of Armenian to Syria (2011-2018), had denounced the start of this process. He stated:

> 'The main goal is Turkey's expansionist ambitions towards northern Syria, Afrin has essentially been annexed. Afrin […] is essentially Turkificated. In Afrin they raised the Turkish flags, many faculties of Gazi Ayntab [Gaziantep] University are already operating in Afrin, where the Turkish is the language of teaching [….]' (*Horizon Shant TV*, 15 October 2019).

In Nagorno Karabakh, this process of 'turkification' is symbolically reproduced in the towns' landscape. Once Shushi was conquered, Aram Manukyan street was immediately named after Ataturk. Artur Yeghiazaryan, an Armenian from Shushi, said:

> 'The street on which our house is located was named after the founding father of Armenia, Aram Manukyan. Do you know whom the street is named after now? It is not named after the founder of Azerbaijan, but the founder of Turkey, that is, Ataturk' (*News.am*, 17 March 2021).

The dichotomy between Aram Manukyan and Ataturk is highly symbolic in terms of both memory and denialism policy. Manukyan (1879-1919) was born in Shushi. He was a leading member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) Party. In 1915, during the Armenian Genocide, he led the successful Armenian self-defence of Van. Manukyan is regarded as the founder of the First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) (Virabyan 2009). On the other hand, Kemal Mustafa Ataturk is regarded as the founding father of the Republic of Turkey.

Many scholars argue that a main reason for the policy of denial is that the Armenian Genocide enabled the foundation of the Turkish nation-state. Therefore, a recognition of the Genocide would contradict Turkey founding myths. Göçek notes that,

> 'The independence of Turkey emerged in direct opposition to the possible independence of Armenia; such coeval origins eliminated the possibility of acknowledging the past violence that had taken place only a couple years earlier on the one hand, and instead nurtured the tendency to systemically remove traces of Armenian existence on the other' (2015: 19).

**Exporting Violence and Denialism: Transnationalism in Progress**

The Grey Wolves were directly involved in anti-Armenian and denialist activities during the Second Karabakh War. The Armenian Genocide Memorial in Decines-Charpieu, outside Lyon, France, was defaced with pro-Turkish slogans. The Memorial was daubed with the giant letters *RTE* in yellow paint with reference to President Erdogan, and the words *Grey Wolves*, which is a prominent movement in France. A nearby memorial was smeared with an

expletive against Armenia (*France 24*, 1 November 2020). Pro-Turkish tags appeared in the neighbouring town of Meyzieu, on the walls of the Plantées shopping centre (Yégavian 2021).

Décines-Charpieu had already faced inter-ethnic tension between its Armenian minority and local Turkish communities. On 24 July 2020, about 500 people, including officials, had gathered there to protest against the Azerbaijani attacks on the northern border of Armenia. despite having received warning calls. Just a few streets away, Gray Wolves members gathered in response to the rally; the security forces prevented masked men branding bars and bladed weapons and shouting Where are the Armenians?' from assailing Armenian youths. Eventually, a few vehicles were damaged and the window of an Armenian shoe repair shop was broken. Ahmet Cetin, a member of the Grey Wolves who had made anti-Kurdish and anti-Armenian calls on social media for months and filmed himself on the streets of Décines-Charpieu, was later arrested and stood trial for 'inciting violence or racial hatred' (Ghazanchyan 16 November 2020).

It was, however, after the defacement of the Armenian Genocide Memorial, on 4 November, that the Grey Wolves organization was officially banned in France (*France 24*, 2 November 2020).

**Denialism in Progress: Revival and Glorification of Denied Symbols**

Turkey has been accused of using local Turkmen in Kessab and Aleppo. Turkmen were said to have had a leading role in the attacks against Kessab, which for Armenians symbolically reproduced the memory of the Genocide. The Grey Wolves supported Syrian Turkmen in the Syrian War because they consider them kinsmen (Xudosi 2019). MHP and Grey Wolves provided Syrian Turkmen Assembly with relief aid and fighters throughout the Syrian War. Something similar happened in the Second Karabakh War, when Turkey transferred from Syria mercenaries and Salafi-terror groups.

Most fighters who were transferred to Karabakh belonged to the Syrian National Army, SNA (Tashjian, 2020).[5] This coalition today operates in Turkish-occupied Syria and includes members of the Turkmen Sultan Murad Division. Units from this Division were located in the Azerbaijani military base of Horadiz. Other units came from the Hamza Turkmen Division and the Turkmen Sultan Suleyman Shah brigade — the Al Amshat militia (Tashjian 2020). The Sultan Murad Division is a Syrian-Turkmen group that fought against the Syrian Arab Army and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces. This group receives support from Turkey. The Hamza Division is a Turkish-trained group that participated in the 2018 Operation Olive Branch to conquer the Afrin canton. The Al Amshat faction operates in Afrin canton and is led by Muhammad al Jassim, the commander of the Suleyman Shah Syrian-Turkmen brigade (Pugliese 2020). Imbued with pan-Turkish ideology, these three groups were experienced in urban clashes, having fought in Aleppo and Afrin. This expertise was

[5] In December 2017, Turkey brought together all Syrian Arab and Turkoman military forces and founded the SNA; it consisted of 80,000-100,000 fighters (Tashjian 2020).

relevant, as the main target of Azeri Army was Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno Karabakh.[6]

A 41-year-old Syrian Armenian man interviewed in Yerevan in November 2020 recalled that in mid-September 2020, just before the start of the Second Karabakh War, he had a meeting with an old Syrian Arab Army friend, a Turkman from Syria who had migrated to Istanbul and became businessman, and other Syrian Turkmens. They were all interested in Nagorno Karabakh. Our informant explained what was going on. They were surprised and said that they knew a different version of the story: 'We were told other things', they said. Our informant then found that they had strong anti-Russian feelings; they said that Russia had occupied Syria and the same was going to happen in Azerbaijan. For our informant, 'they were brainwashed'.

On the one hand, Armenian public narratives often describe Turkey's role in the Second Karabakh War as a continuation of the Armenian Genocide, particularly given Turkey's continuous denial of the Armenian Genocide (Safi and McKernan 2020, Hincks 2020, *Reuters* 2020). Interestingly, on 10 December 2020, Erdogan delivered a speech at a military parade in Baku, symbolically reproducing a denialist narrative while turning the past into an 'heroization'. Referring to the leaders involved in the 1915 massacres against Armenians, he said: 'Today, may the souls of Nuri Pasha, Enver Pasha, and the brave soldiers of the Caucasus Islam Army be happy' (Erdogan quoted in *The Armenian Mirror Spector*, 11.12.2020). In a report, the International Christian Concern (ICC) pointed out that the speech of the Turkish President, was 'highlighting the narrative which is being pursued domestically by both countries [Turkey and Azerbaijan]. The language was purposefully cloaked in such a way that foreigners would have difficulty understanding the symbolism, but locals would grasp the full meaning' (International Christian Concern 2021: 7).

Enver Pasha, the Ottoman Minister of War, was sentenced to death *in absentia* for the planning and execution of the Armenian Genocide. Later, in 1922, he died in battle with the Bolsheviks in Central Asia, killed by the Armenian Red Commander Hakob Melkumov (Suny 2015: 336, 346). On 10 July 1918, Enver Pasha had created the Islamic Army of the Caucasus, under the command of his half-brother, Nuri Pasha, in order to establish control in Eastern Transcaucasia (previously Russian Empire's Baku and Elizavtepol provinces). This Army of Islam was a military unit of the Ottoman Empire (Erickson 2001: 189) meant to unite all Turkic nations under the banner of Islam and to capture the oil fields of Baku. On 15 September 1918, the Army took Baku and massacred between 10,000 to 30,000 Armenians (Hovannisian 1967: 227, 312). At the end of September 1918, Turkish units captured Shushi.

Ottoman and Islamic Army's atrocities against Armenians in Transcaucasia are today considered part of the Armenian Genocide (Dadrian 1995, 347-355). When at the end of the First World War, the Ottoman Empire had to withdraw its troops from the Transcaucasia, British troops replaced them. Nuri Pasha was arrested and held in detention in Batumi (Georgia) awaiting trial. However, in August 1919, his supporters ambushed the guards

[6] Later, a SNA military school in Ras al Ayn was renamed after Adel Al Shair, a prominent leader of the Hamza group killed in Nagorno Karabakh (Geghamyan 2020).

escorting him and helped him escape to Erzurum (Hovannisian 1982: 136-137). Yeghia Tashjian, a Lebanese Armenian researcher, has recently analysed these historical developments, including the Turkish involvement in the Second Karabakh War via Turkoman groups. He described the event as 'Erdogan's Enver Pasha Dream: The Revival of the "Army of Islam"' (Tashjian 2020).

Mane Gevorgyan, Prime Minister of Armenia's spokesperson, condemned the glorification of the ideology of the Young Turks (*Armenpress,* 10 December 2020). The Emirate-based Ahval News wrote that,

> 'The Ottoman-style celebration in the Azeri capital of Baku on Thursday [10 December, 2020] – with hundreds of Turkey elite soldiers from Turkey present — gave Erdoğan the opportunity to elaborate on his expansionist vision' (Baydar 15.12 2020).

In July 2020, Erdogan had stated that they were going

> 'to continue to fulfil the mission of their grandfathers, which was carried out a century ago in the Caucasus' (Report on Xenophobia in Azerbaijan 2021, 33). According to IAGS this was: 'a direct threat of continuing the Armenian genocide' (Armenpress, 22.10. 2020).

On 30 January 2021, Erdogan wished a 'blessed' Friday to Turkey's Muslim citizens, attaching a picture of the Armenian Cathedral of Kars that was converted into a mosque. In captioning the photo on social media, he added: 'May our Friday be blessed, my dear brother/sister' (*Panarmenian.net*, 30 December 2020). The following day, Turkey and Azerbaijan began a large-scale joint military exercise near the city of Kars, close to the Armenian border; the exercise ended on 12 February. For Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty this was 'the latest sign of deepening ties between the Turkic allies after Turkey threw its weight behind Azerbaijan in its victory against Armenian forces of Nagorno-Karabakh' (RFE/RL 02.02.2021).

Kars was the capital of the Armenian Bagratid Kingdom between 928 and 961. During this period, the Cathedral of the town, later known as the Church of the Holy Apostles, was built. It was to experience a troubled history. The Cathedral ceased to function as a church and was converted into a mosque in 1579, under the Ottomans. Then, between the 19th and the 20th centuries, during the Russian Empire, it was converted into a Russian Orthodox Church. In 1918-19, when it fell again under Ottoman control, it was reconverted into a mosque. Following the Armistice of Mudros (1918), the Turkish Army was required to withdraw to the pre-war frontier. So, the Republic of Armenia gained control of the city and the Cathedral was reconverted into an Armenian church. But in 1920 Kars was reconquered by Turkey, and the Cathedral again operated — briefly — as a mosque; soon, however, the Kemalist government put it up for sale. The municipality of Kars bought it with the intention to demolish it and build a school on its site, but the plan was never carried out. In the 1950s, the municipality used the monument as a depot for petroleum. Later, between 1964 and 1978,

it functioned as a Museum.[7] When the museum was moved to a new site, the building lay derelict. In 1993, it was reconverted again into a mosque, under the name of Kümbet Mosque. According to *The Economist* (15 January 2015), this conversion of a museum into a mosque is a clear example of the attempt to eradicate the Armenian cultural heritage from Turkey.

This dramatic past, which has played a major role in the wider Armenian community, seems to re-emerge today both in Syria and in Nagorno Karabakh.

**Conclusions**

The Second Karabakh War became a terrain where Turkish involvement reproduced new forms of denialism of the Armenian Genocide as a complex whole of political practices and narratives. Throughout the war context, it included both Turkish and Azeri denialism. Denialism became part of the ideology of the Second Karabakh War because the war employed symbols, narratives and practices of denial. These were linked to transnational actors (Syrian Turkmen, Grey Wolves) and penetrated a transnational dimension (Shushi streets and heritage, Armenian Genocide Memorials in France) in a framework of denialism and exportation of violence.

The Turkish attempt to change the ethno-demographic composition of Nagorno Karabakh through cultural engineering and a process of Turkification builds upon contemporary Northern Syrian events and past genocidal events. In such a frame we note the exportation of violence from Northern Syria to the South Caucasus through the employment of anti-Armenian, ideologically-driven Syrian Turkmen militants. This process draws on transnational links to reproduce denial narratives and convert them into violence against Armenian diasporic communities. It seems not to be accidental that during the Second Karabakh War the first Armenian community to be targeted was that dwelling in Istanbul, where space, victims and persecutors were nominally the same as in 1915. A logical ideological progression of this transnational spatial and symbolic dimension reproduced denial narratives by glorifying Genocide-related prominent icons such as Enver and Nouri Pasha and the Caucasus Islamic Army, and by blatantly appropriating religious symbols (the Kars Armenian Cathedral) and linking them with war games, including military parades in Baku or Turkish-Azerbaijani military exercises at the Turkish-Armenian border.

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# *Warrior Values and Society*[1]

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War as one of the instruments of the political system, plays a functional role in producing and maintaining the legitimacy of construction of a society. The discursive field of war which is shaped by historical and mythological narratives in social memory is one of the dynamic dimensions of this process. 'War as reality' experienced by society in the historical process and 'war as design' built by society's conceptions of today and shaped by the values attributed to war, play a role in the construction and continuity of this discursive field. Epic genre, which is a special category in mythology and is described as 'narratives of the founding ancestors' and 'hero cult', establish the basis for how a society assigns a meaning to war and how they legalize it. In this article, the way in which oral narratives produce a meaning for society as a political instrument will be discussed in the light of the Gallipoli campaign and of two narratives — *A Ballad of Çanakkale* and the *Hennaed Lamb* — that are associated with the Gallipoli campaign in social memory. However, in the present study, the Gallipoli campaign is not analysed from a historical perspective but, rather, with reference to why it is the subject of oral narratives. The analysis is based on fieldwork conducted in the city of Çanakkale, where the Gallipoli campaign battlefields are located.
**Keywords:** Anthropology of war, symbolic anthropology, hero cult, epic, Gallipoli campaign.

'Where the blood flows, you need to go and construct a reality for yourself'
Baudrillard (2008: 80)

## Introduction

This article discusses the relationship between warrior and society drawing on epic narratives. The focus of the study is the Gallipoli campaign in the light of the folk song *A Ballad of Çanakkale*[2] and the *Hennaed Lamb*, whose narratives are associated with this event in Turkish social memory. The discussion is based on fieldwork conducted in the city of Çanakkale, which started in February 2019 and is ongoing.

While earlier anthropological research was based on tribal or village communities, today anthropologists deal with the reality that a significant portion of the world's population lives in urban areas (Prato and Pardo 2013). Given the multi-layered structures of contemporary cities, anthropological fieldwork has an important place in urban studies. As Pardo and Prato argue, 'Field research is, after all, an "art of the possible", and in cities there are many possibilities' (2018: 2). Prato's (2015) analysis on '*urbs*, *polis* and *civitas*' brings to a head the debate on 'what constitute a city' and the problematic of incommensurability in using different 'definitions' and 'understanding' (historically and geographically) of city. Although there are different definitions of 'the city', one of the main features of a city is that it is a cultural and

[1] I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers for *Urbanities* and to the Board for their comments and suggestions, which have significantly contributed to the final version of this article.

[2] Although *A Ballad of Çanakkale* is classified in the social memory as a folk song, there are debates about its origin, whether it is actually an anonymous folk song or a composition. For those who accept that it is anonymous, it is a matter of discussion to which region it belongs and who has authored it. These debates fall outside the concern of the presents article. Nonetheless, these discussions are important because they show the value of the song for society.

ethnic centre of interaction that offers important opportunities to understand the cultural and economic effects of its history on urban society. This is the case with the city of Çanakkale, one of the important fronts of the First World War. Given its economic, political and symbolic significance, it is the subject of numerous historical and sociological studies.

The Çanakkale province is located in northwest Anatolia. The city has a European side (the Gallipoli peninsula) and an Asian side (the historical region of Troad) and its coastlines border The Marmara and The Aegean seas. The province is crossed by the Dardanelles Strait (Çanakkale Boğazı), which connects the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean Sea. The city of Çanakkale has five ports, the largest are Kepez and Karabiga. Due to its geographical location, Çanakkale is defined as economically and politically strategic.

The history of the city dates back to approximately 3000 BC and its name is mentioned in historical records as *Hellespontos* and *Dardanelles*. There are around 200 ancient ruins in the city region, the most important of which are Troy, Assos, Parion, Alexandria Troas, Maydos and Priapos. In 1354, the region became part of the Ottoman Empire after the Cimpe Castle, which is located in today's Gallipoli, came under Ottoman rule. Today, Çanakkale is one of the 81 Turkish provinces.

In 2018, the total population of the city was approximately 540,000. The local economy is dominated by agriculture, animal husbandry, industry and tourism. Çanakkale has a stable tourism industry that benefits from the local history and geography. According to 2016 data, the share of tourism in the urban economy is approximately 46%.[3] Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, founded in 1992, has significantly affected the social and economic structure and population of the city.

The war, which is called 'the Gallipoli Campaign' in the literature, is dominant in the identity of the city, and tourism activities play an effective role in this. The battlefield was located in the Çanakkale region. In the Turkish language, the Gallipoli campaign is referred to as the 'Çanakkale War'; therefore, the war and the city have the same name. The war contributes both a commemorative value to the place where it took place and an expanded meaning to the city's identity. As Calvino says, a city consists of 'relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past' (1997: 9). In Çanakkale, the history of the Gallipoli campaign and the words linked to it stand out in the names of places, institutions, businesses, and so on. For example, the name of the University is Onsekiz Mart; literally, Eighteenth March. This date marks the end of the naval operations.[4] Another example is the *Passage Hallio*, a touristic shopping centre known as the 'Aynalı Çarşı' (Mirror Bazaar), which was built in 1890 and is mentioned in *A Çanakkale Ballad*.

[3]Alamos Gold Inc report, 2019 https://s24.q4cdn.com/779615370/files/doc_downloads/project_info/EY_Alamos-Economic-Benefit_Final-Turkish.pdf; accessed October 2020.

[4] The naval operation (19 February-18 March 1915) was the first phase of the Gallipoli campaign. It took place in the Dardanelles Strait. Today, the bastions are organized as open areas for visitors. The second stage of the Gallipoli campaign, the land operation (25 April 1915-9 January 1916), took place in the Gallipoli peninsula historical national park in the Çanakkale region.

**On War**

In *The Perfect Crime,* Jean Baudrillard notes that in the midst of war and destruction Bosnians 'do not really believe in the distress which surrounds them. In the end, they find the whole unreal situation senseless, unintelligible' (2008: 133-134), and interpret the war as 'an almost hyperreal hell' (ibid.: 134). The highly familiar expressions that describe events in a war are very similar in modern and ancient languages. People talk about massacres, butcheries, crimes, and they say that rivers run red with blood.

In the grand part of 'history', the world was ruled by professional soldiers who thought they were engaged in the greatest of all vocations. Thus, the idea that war was universal because war was inherent to human nature became a common opinion. However, it would be reductive to rely on biology alone in understanding human phenomena, for 'The biologicalization of war causes its full social dimension to be put aside' (Clastres 2017: 15).

The argument, that war is part of human nature, is supported by our aggression and violence. To explain war, one must first explain why aggressive reactions have become a special form of organized intergroup conflict. The origin of war, I concur, lies not in the genetic reality of humans, but in the social existence of society; the universality of war refers to culture, not nature (Clastres 2017: 16); or, as Marvin Harris forcefully pointed out, 'how and when we become aggressive is controlled by our cultures rather than by our genes' (Harris 1991: 54). Moreover, warfare is distinct from other kinds of hostile or violent behaviour because war is made by organized collectivities, rather than by single individuals (Harrison 1996: 561).

In the studies on the origin of war, hunting and war are often associated with each other because the same tools — such as spears, arrows and bows — are used in both activities. Indeed, until the 15th century, these instruments, among the earliest evidences of human culture, were basic warfare devices. The 'primitive hunter man' could also be a warrior. However, 'the fact that the same arrow kills both a human being and a monkey, is not enough to put war and hunting in the same equation' (Clastres 2017: 15). A key difference between warriors and hunters is that while hunters intend to kill animals, warriors are groups of human beings who intend to do the same thing to each other in the event of war (Canetti 1981: 99).

War has become a way of life for a human civilization that has experienced fighting for centuries. Since the Bronze Age, which is considered to be the 'institutional structure' of defence and war, the changes in army structure and war technologies have been accelerating with a speed that extends to the humans who are involved in wars. These transformations extend, however, well beyond the tactical and the technological. Different models of social organization are reshaping war by producing new systems based on specific needs.

Wars continue to take place, because there are enemies and 'the enemy always starts war'. 'Rulers who want to unleash war know very well that they must procure or invent a first victim' (Canetti 1981: 138). Put bluntly, the reason for war lies in the existence of the other. Society establishes its relationship with the other through the laws by which it defines and legitimizes itself and defines the other, who, on a political level, could be either an enemy or an ally. So, war acts as a tool inherent to the political relationships that a society establishes with other societies. There is an enemy because our relationship with the other can produce it. Eco (2012:

16) says that even the most docile human creates an enemy by transferring the image of a human subject to that of a natural or social force that is threatening and must be defeated; among others, capitalism, environmental pollution, poverty.

**History, Epic and Heroism**

Society and its warriors may appear to be separate entities, with the fighters forming a separate class in the state; but they are engaged in a relationship that shapes each other. In states where military service is a citizenship duty, the effects of this relationship are more visible, linking directly to key dynamics that are at the centre of the anthropological debate on legitimacy and legitimation (Pardo 2000, Pardo and Prato 2019). It is beyond the scope of the present article to address the theoretical complexity of this debate (Pardo and Prato eds 2019). Here, I will simply note that it is 'the law' of his/her own society that grants the warrior identity and legitimacy. 'A warrior can design himself as a warrior only if society recognizes him […] Society and warrior play a game whose rules are laid down by society' (Clastres 1992: 218-9). However, an organized group of fighters risks being transformed into a ruling group that demands a constant state of war and decides on war itself. Society should control this situation against the warrior group's desire for power. 'Warrior values' play a strong role in the bargaining between society and warriors. Thus, 'the warrior becomes a man who puts his passion for warfare at the service of his desire for prestige' (Clastres 1992: 227). The way to make the warrior impotent is to destroy it by making him constantly fight (Akal 1998: 200). The warrior's desire to be a hero is inevitably linked to his desire to die. 'Because the last exchange is infinite celebrity versus infinite being of death […] the Warrior has been condemned to death by society' (Clastres 1992: 237). The warrior will 'live' in war memorials, poems, songs, epics and the collective memory of his or her community.

Epic narratives describe the heroism of warriors. The general characteristics of heroes are that they live in a war atmosphere away from their homes and die, generally at a young age and on the battlefield (Belge 2006: 425). Epic narratives serve as a kind of temporality in social memory, lending historical credentials to the epic tradition; thus, 'the information circulated through stories and shared by everyone' enjoys a dominant historical character. As Hartog notes, 'Historiography is a species born in a certain period; it is not common practice for the public' (2005: 69). Moreover, as Cohen points out, 'History is wonderfully malleable, whether in the hands of academic historians or of laymen. Even without the intention to distort, its recollection always rests upon interpretive reconstructions' (2001: 101). Thus, memory not only fictionally modifies the past, but also organizes the experiences of the present and the future.

**The Gallipoli Campaign: Today's Celebrations and Debates**

The Gallipoli campaign is considered to be one of the most important fronts of the First World War. This operation against the Ottoman army and its allies, the Germans, began on 19 February 1915 with the naval operations of the British and French fleets to cross the Dardanelles. On 18 March 1915, the campaign ended. On the morning of 25 April 1915, the

British, French and ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Cooperation) troops launched ground operations. On 9 January 1916, the war ended with the withdrawal of this army. Hobsbawm (1994) describes the period between 1914 and the end of World War 2 as the Catastrophe Age. In this period the world economic crisis deepened with the collapse of the imperial era and the colonial systems. Fascism, authoritarian movements and regimes began to advance. Land losses, economic dilemmas and nationalist movements contributed to the process of the Ottoman Empire's collapse. In this scenario, the victory of Çanakkale constituted a hope, especially after the Balkan wars (1912-1913) and the consequent significant land losses.

Today, the Gallipoli campaign exists not only in the history books but also in the social memory. Every year, the grandchildren of ANZAC soldiers visit the city of Çanakkale for the 'dawn ceremony'. Dawn ceremony, also known as Anzac Day, is held every year on 25 April by Australians and New Zealanders to honour the Anzac troops serving in the Gallipoli campaign. This ceremony is not only held in the Gallipoli where the operation takes place, but is also a national day in Australia and New Zealand. In my interviews with the participants in 2019, the group that came from Australia and New Zealand to attend the 'dawn ceremony' said that they saw this war as a step towards becoming a 'nation'. Today, the war has a strong influence among the citizens of the Republic of Turkey, and it has different meanings for different political sides. 'From both the official Turkish and popular perspectives, it is regarded not only as a magnificent victory but also as signifying the birth of the new Turkish nation' (Uyar 2016: 165). For the nationalist and Kemalist side, it is regarded as an 'anti-imperialist' struggle against the Western civilization and as the starting point for the 'National War of Independence'. For the Conservative and Islamist sides, it is a kind of Jihad war fought by Ottoman Muslims.

Every year in Turkey a celebration takes place on 18 March under the official name, '18th March Martyrs Memorial Day and Çanakkale Naval Victory'. This celebration is called 'Victory Day' among the people of Turkey and is the national victory day celebrated every year on 18 March. People celebrate the 'Çanakkale Victory' engaging in various activities in Turkey. The celebrations in the city of Çanakkale have a stronger influence and meaning because it is there that the war took place. For the people of Çanakkale, 'the torchlight procession' has special importance. A large number of people chanting slogans and carrying torches, Turkish flags and posters of Atatürk walk through the city streets.[5] Today, the daytime ceremonies and nightly torchlight processions are marked by political differentiation. The most common sentence heard in Çanakkale is that Çanakkale people do not participate in the daytime ceremony. However, 'the high level of participation' in the night event shows the city's dominant political 'Atatürkist and Modern' vocation. The size of the torchlight procession is the main focus of media reports.

It is important that the area where the Gallipoli campaign took place, which has been preserved to the present day, continues to have its effect. The Çanakkale battlefields are important sites for tourism. The visits to the area are called Martyrs' Tours. They have turned into an activity that spans the whole year and enjoys the support of public institutions, such as

[5] Atatürk was the leader of the War of Independence and founder of the Republic of Turkey.

municipalities, governorships, schools, and so on. The route reflects the political opinion of the visitors. The guides to the battlefield say that the visitors' political identity is evident during the tour and that visitors interfere with the description given in the guided tour. They say that some groups find 'the real history' boring, while others complain that Atatürk is not sufficiently mentioned. Interpretations of the war are mainly shaped by discussions on Turkism and Islamic ideology. Visitors from a wide range of fields, from academia to social media platforms, argue about whether the official descriptions are based on 'real history'.

### *A Ballad of Çanakkale* (*Çanakkale Türküsü*) and the *Hennaed Lamb*

As *A Ballad of Çanakkale* starts, the supporters' discussions stop and they move on to an emotion intensive partnership. The main theme of the folk song is death. A young soldier witnesses and tells of 'death before death and the death of those who are not yet dead'. The lyrics[6] begin with the soldier leaving his house to join the Gallipoli campaign: he says, '*mum I'm going against the enemy*', yet he is too young for the facts of death that he faces. The riff repeats, '*oh, my youth, alas*!'. Like him, other soldiers who fought together left their homes and their families behind '*some of us became engaged, some were married*'; the rest knew that death was certain. '*Mums and dads gave up hope, stopped sending letters*'. Death could happen at any moment. It comes with all its violence: '*they put me in a grave before I die*'. The last phrase is not from the soldier, because soldiers die heroically: '*The lion braves are lying here*'.

The melody that gives structure to the ballad is devised in a way that strengthens the dramatic effect. The beginning of the melody makes leaps to high-pitched notes, then the pitch goes into a heavy descent without returning to the high sounds. The theme of the melody closes in lower-pitched sounds. The quick transition to higher sounds on the first notes shows the soldier's hope, the slow descent of the tune is to tell the loss of the soldier's hope.[7]

Death 'is the absolute limit of the human', says Eagleton (2010: 26). The war, inevitably involving death, brings out this limit even before the soldier leaves his home. The song establishes a connection among the soldiers who go to their deaths for the future of their society and become heroic. Through this bond, their heroism is reiterated among those living today. This effect increases in strength through other narratives in the collective memory: A historical

[6] The Lyrics of *A Ballad of Çanakkale* read: 'In Çanakkale stands the Mirror Bazaar Mirror/ mam I'm going against the enemy; oh, my youth, alas! / In Çanakkale there's a cypress tree. / Some of us are engaged, some of us married; oh, my youth, alas! / In Çanakkale there's a broken jug. / Mothers and fathers abandoned hope/stopped sending letters; oh, my youth, alas! / Çanakkale's heights are shrouded with smoke. / The thirteenth division marched to war; oh, my youth, alas! / In Çanakkale the cannonballs landed. / Ah, our comrades fell wounded together; oh, my youth, alas! / Çanakkale's bridge is narrow, impassable. / Its waters have become blood red, not a cup can be drunk; oh, my youth, alas. / From Çanakkale I barely escaped / My lungs rotted from vomiting blood; oh, my youth, alas! / From Çanakkale I escaped, my head is safe / Doomsday came before I reached Anafarta; oh, my youth, alas / In Çanakkale they shot me. / They buried me before I died; oh, my youth, alas! / In Çanakkale are rows of willows / Brave lions rest beneath them; oh, my youth, alas'.

[7] The melody of *A Çanakkale Ballad* is analysed by Dr Murat Kanca.

speech about the war given by Atatürk during the land wars describes strikingly the inevitability of war and death. He said, 'I am not ordering you to attack, I am ordering you to die!'

Mehmet Akif Ersoy, who wrote the lyrics of the Turkish National Anthem, dedicated a poem to the 'Çanakkale Martyrs', describing the dreadful reality of war and death. The verses refer not only to the Gallipoli campaign, but also to other wars, with a strong emphasis on martyrdom. In a verse, the poet says that the martyrs of Çanakkale do not want graves because they will go to heaven where the Prophet Muhammad will be waiting for them with open arms. Martyrdom, which has an important place in the Islamic faith and Turkish culture, is considered sacred, and Muslim soldiers who die in the war will go directly to heaven. Today, 'martyrdom tours' are made as a kind of 'pilgrimage'.[8]

The influence of the folk song not only blesses the martyrs but also glorifies their death, and symbolically makes those who sing folk songs into soldiers. The singer who identifies with the soldier who threw himself to death to protect his society becomes ready for war. Like the heroes of the past, she/he is ready to die for the 'future'. Thus, as the song is sung the heroism-loaded past guarantees the future.

The story of the '*Hennaed Lamb*', a widely told narration of the Gallipoli campaign, states that it is not only the soldiers who bravely desire to die. This is a remarkable example of the readiness for sacrifice in the society that send the military to war. The narrative is categorized as an event experienced in social memory. The story is as follows: A soldier with hennaed hair is asked by his commander why his hair is thus tinged. The soldier says that his mother applied the henna before he left to go to war but he does not know why. He asks the commander to write to his mother and find out. The mother answers (in some variants, the letter comes after the soldier is killed) that they applied henna to the sacrificial lamb, and sent the son to war to be sacrificed for the motherland. In some variants of this narrative, the mother's answer includes three sacrificial aspects: henna is applied to a married girl, to sacrifice herself for her family; henna is applied to men who go to war, to sacrifice themselves for their homeland; henna is applied to animals, to be sacrificed to God. In Turkey, the 'Henna tradition' continues today; it is part of the wedding ceremony, of soldiers' farewell ceremony and of the ritual animal sacrifice.

Thus, the prestige gained through the heroism of the soldiers who died in Çanakkale is once again strengthened, as their death becomes a sacrifice. 'A key function of mythologies of the sacrificial monster was to separate the sacredness of the cosmos from a perilous nether world — "a foreign, chaotic space, peopled inhabited by ghosts, demons, foreigners"' (Kearney 2003: 34). As the soldier's pending death becomes a 'sacrifice', he is transformed into a sacred being even before he dies. This is based on the underlying 'values' that he will be sacrificed for both the social world and the supernatural. So, the duty of the soldier goes beyond the fighting; he or she becomes the guardian of the holy, and is sacrificed for it. In this way, both the war and the status of the soldier are placed on a legitimate ground by religion and social law.

[8] Mollica's remarkable essay based on fieldwork provides an important reading regarding the meaning of 'the grandeur of martyrdom, of dying for a cause' (2010: 192) for different cultural identities.

Moreover, gender roles are defined through the plural categories of sacrifice in the story to ensure the continuity of the social structure. A woman sacrifices herself for her family; a man sacrifices himself to protect society; a mother raises her children to sacrifice: all just like sacrificial lambs. The story describes a model of social organization that includes the mother who sends her children to war, the woman who marries and raises warriors, and the self-sacrificing warrior. This model has been reinforced by linking it to a violent reality like the Gallipoli campaign. The story has a pedagogical function: it is more than a reminder of the past; it also organizes the experience of the present and the future.

**Conclusion**

It is society that defines the warrior as a warrior. Society shapes its warriors according to a set of principles and controls their operations; it defines and approves who is a warrior and what actions are legitimate. Oral folk narratives are effective tools in containing and conveying information about warrior principles. Symbolic anthropological analysis of the narratives helps us to understand this process.

Current anthropological analysis (Pardo and Prato 2019) has highlighted the complex dynamics by which society builds its own legitimacy and reproduces itself through the relationship it establishes with its past. History and legends, we have seen, are functional to this process. Most important, legends reach more people in society. They are not questioned like history; people may or may not believe in legends, but they are definitely affected by them. In today's Turkish society, the Gallipoli campaign, which has priority in social memory, and the narratives of *A Ballad of Çanakkale* and the *Hennaed Lamb*, which the society relates to this war, provide examples for the analysis of the relationship between warriors and society. I have argued that, in line with relevant urban ethnography and anthropological debate (Prato 2015, Prato and Pardo 2013), our understanding of local life and dynamics greatly benefits from the empirical study of the reasons why these narratives are chosen, as well as their non-localness and the undisputed relationship of their narrators with the narratives. The present 'city identity' is, we have seen, strongly linked to the Gallipoli war, to the point that the commemorative festivities and rituals are important moments in the life of the city; in a sense, they mark its periodical, annual rhythm.

I have studied the narratives of *A Ballad of Çanakkale* and the *Hennaed Lamb* addressing the question of what society aims to do with them. Both narratives, we have seen, connect with a war that took place in the past, and in doing so they generate a kind of historical effect. However, symbolic analysis has shown that the effect is not limited to this, but is used to support the unquestioning acceptance of the information contained in the narratives. The narratives also provide guidelines for the present and a possible future, and they have a pedagogical function. Through the stories of the war's nameless warriors and their families, an explanation is given of what society expects from the warrior, and how the warrior is produced. In short, drawing on the strength of its bonds with the past, the narrative turns into an unquestionable truth.

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# *Sensewalking on Istiklal Street, Istanbul: Exploring Sensory Urban Changes*[1]

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As a result of Turkey's integration into the global capitalist system, major development projects have been undertaken in Istanbul as it raced towards Global City status. Some remarkable socio-spatial and architectural changes have taken place on Istanbul's Istiklal Street, altering some of its intangible qualities. This study looks at Istiklal Street via the method of 'Sensewalking,' an ethnographic research tool to describe and analyse changes in sensory qualities. Although the futures of cities depend on their physical features, their intangible dimensions and sensory qualities, or 'sensescapes' are also essential. While mainstream urban studies focus primarily on physical changes, it is argued here that new understandings about transformed places are possible using sensory ethnographic approaches; and, more importantly, that these insights should inform future planning decisions.
**Keywords:** Istiklal Street, intangible dimensions of transformed places, Sensewalking, sensory ethnographic approaches to urban places.

## Introduction

> 'Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs. Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets…' (Jacobs 1961: 29).

After the 1980s, Turkey became more competitive on the stage of world capitalism. As a result of these global aspirations, it initiated neoliberal urban policies. One outcome was the rapid development of Istanbul (Keyder 2009), where numerous urban improvement campaigns significantly changed conditions in many parts of the city (Keyder 1999). Because the decision-making process for the new urban projects was unclear (Akpınar 2014: 32), Istanbul was negatively affected by some neoliberal economic policies (Türeli and Al 2019). As a consequence, many development projects, plans and processes were soundly criticized by academics, the media, as well as local communities (Güney 2015).

In the case of Istiklal Street, development after the 1990s resulted in the area losing some of its distinctive features. For example, notable landmarks on Istiklal Street have disappeared. Meeting central issues in the current anthropological debate on urban change (Pardo and Prato 2018, Pardo et al. 2020), this transformation process leads us to re-think these issues and investigate, via ethnography, how local people sense, experience and relate to urban places (Krase 2012a, 2012b). Here we need to point out, in terms of urban ethnography, that alterations in the built environment effect not only structural, political, economic and cultural issues but the personal experiences of inhabitants as well. As noted by Degen, physical layouts of urban places are always reflected in sensory regimes (2008: 14), and

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unavoidably, physical changes influence sensory experiences (Degen 2010). Therefore, to understand the transformation effects of this street we must consideration the sensory experiences of inhabitants (Degen 2002: 19-35; Zardini 2005; Mattern 2009; Henshaw et al. 2011). This research approaches the case area through 'a sensory lens' to create a sensory urban ethnography (Pink 2009: 37). 'Sensewalking' is employed to picture, interpret and criticise the sensory experiences of walkers on Istiklal Street. The method requires a phenomenological openness which entails the use of a set of intertwined sensory ethnographic tools.

**The Story of Istiklal Street, Istanbul: Changes and Loss**

Istiklal Street has been one of the most important public places in the historic Beyoglu district of Istanbul, Turkey, with its distinctive past, socio-cultural and architectural faces. The street's local, national and global icons have continuously interacted with each other. The area has been a stage for many types of political, social and cultural activities. During a 24-hour period, one can meet many kinds of people from all over the world there. The diverse art galleries, design studios, vintage stores, religious buildings, architectural styles and eclectic mix of inhabitants reflect the rich, intangible, features of the street (Rodriguez and Azenha 2014, Paramita et al. 2014, Shirazi and Erku 2014). It has also been filled with cheerful crowds, world-famous bookstores, bohemian art galleries, small coffee houses and an abundance of street musicians and street performers from diverse cultural backgrounds. The area also assembled and distributed different flows of people, cars and lifestyles. The street brings together people of all ages, income levels and ethnic groups as it mirrors the broad socio-cultural distribution of inhabitants and visitors. As a result, the area has been a place for multi-layered confrontations, in which a wide variety of simultaneous sensory experiences have taken place (see Figure 1).

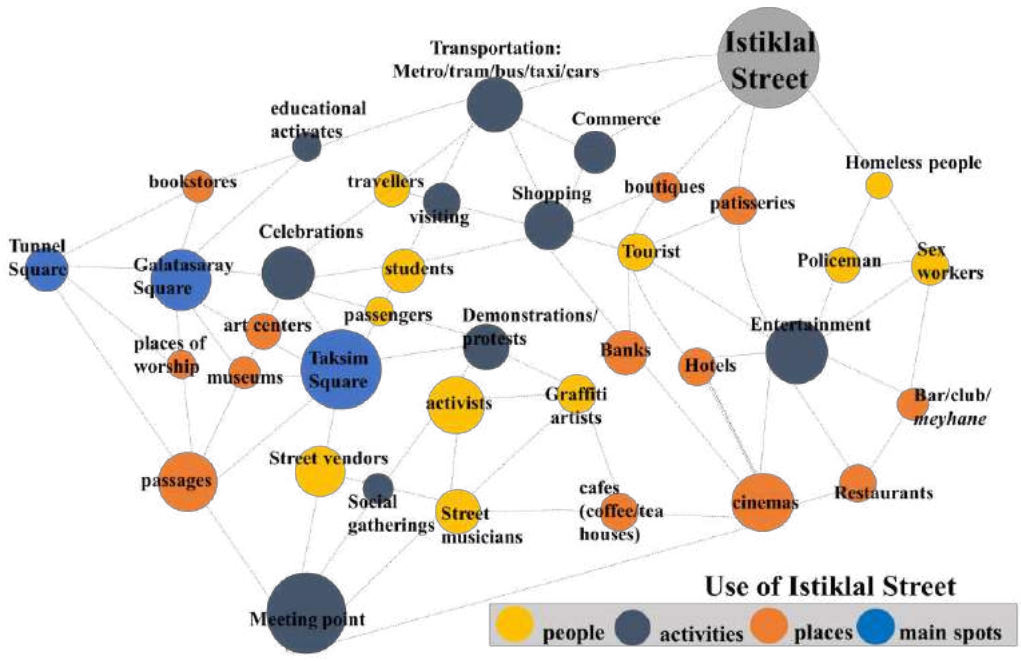



Figure 1. This graph picturises the use of Istiklal Street as an urban assemblage (Source: author).

Istiklal Street has a recognisable visual texture with distinctive building characteristics, as it is filled mostly by late Ottoman era buildings (from the 19th and early 20th centuries). Also, the street has had several 'First Turkish National Architecture' style and a few Art Deco style buildings from the early years of the Turkish Republic. The street is also populated with an array of historical and politically significant buildings such as churches, synagogues, mosques, academic institutions, as well as foreign consulates established in the 19th century by various nations. Istiklal Street has witnessed many changes since its inception in the 1850s as the 'Grande Rue de Péra'. First, the area housed European ex-pats and non-Muslim Ottomans. Historically, Istiklal Street has been a cosmopolitan venue for Greek, Jewish and Armenian minorities, as well as bourgeoisie élites and other migrants of varied origins.

Istiklal Street's reputation has long been marked by a combination of confusion and controversy (Batur n.d., Dokmeci and Ciraci 1988). However, when nationalist sentiments swept through the country in the 1950s, rioting crowds targeted the businesses on Istiklal and caused an exodus of the area's minorities. In September 1955, during the Istanbul Riots, the Street was pillaged in one night. It was covered with broken glass, torn clothes, damaged white goods, rolled over and burned automobiles and other debris from the wrecked shops. Then, the street briefly fell from grace again in the 1970s and 1980s, as its old Istanbul inhabitants moved elsewhere and migrants from the countryside moved into the empty homes. At this time, the backstreets of the area were populated by migrants from the rural Anatolia. After a while, the students and artists of Istanbul began to arrive and the area revived to some extent as a focus of arts and culture, which sparked its new urban energy (Dökmeci 1990, Tsibiridou 2018).

The transformation of Istiklal Street formed the initial research problem as it was related to new urban policies and strategies approved and adopted for the Beyoglu neighbourhood. The area began to be administered and physically restructured as a node in the globalization system after the 1990s. This stage was characterised by a highly authoritarian form of neoliberalism in which several factors promoted aggressive urban entrepreneurialism. This new vision for the street brought in new socio-cultural industries, service sectors and other transformations that aggressively reorganised the area and erased its distinctive characteristics (Erek and Köksal 2014). As a result, spatial hierarchies, magnitudes, usages and compositions of spatial patterns were greatly modified. Diversity in spatial uses have declined, due to the rapid construction, transfers, renovation and restoration projects.

Almost every section of Istiklal Street has been transformed spatially, as the street has been enlarged vertically from top to basement (Tekin and Akgün Gültekin 2017). In this process, the number of major brands stores have increased, while small-scale trades and local brand stores began to disappear because of increasing competition. Along the route, music shops, second-hand dress shops, silversmiths and antique shops inside the famous arcades of Istiklal Street have disappeared (Güney 2015). Neoiliberal policies are also expediting the eviction of tenants. More change has resulted from regulations and restrictions that ban outdoor tables and chairs for restaurants and cafés. These changes caused young and upper-middle-class patrons, who once hung out in Beyoglu, to migrate towards Beşiktaş and

Kadıköy. The capital-oriented urbanisation damaged the distinctive composition of the street and it has become like all the other 'High' streets around the world (Adanalı, 2011b) after losing its characteristic features and unique fabric (Güney, 2015, Shirazi and Erkut 2014). Many cinemas, theatres and bookstores have also moved, been converted, closed, or demolished. The closure of these iconic places is emblematic of the rapid disintegration of the Street's unique, hybrid character (Adanalı 2011a). The cosmopolitan heritage of Istiklal Street is now merely a trademark for Istanbul's global city projects and the accumulation of global capital (Tekin and Akgün Gültekin 2017, Güney 2015). Due to these changes, most intellectuals — including artists, columnists and musicians — agree that Istiklal Street has lost its 'soul' and 'magic.' These urban development and cultural policies have been criticised and protested by a large segment of the society, especially social scientists, urban planners and architects. Beyond academic discussions, there has also been a great deal of criticism on social media about how Istiklal Street has lost its distinctiveness, linked it to its multicultural past and cultural heritage.

**An Ethnographic Investigation of the Intangible Dimensions of Istiklal Street Using the Walking Method**

Walking has been an important aspect of artistic, cultural, performative, experiential and sensorial expressions for Baudelaire (1863), Benjamin (1979), Debord (1957) and de Certeau (1984) and is also found in urban and social theorizing (Amin and Thrift 2002, Benjamin 1979, de Certeau 1984, Rossiter and Gibson 2003, Rendell, 2006). To document intangible characteristics of the urban environment, Pink suggested the examination of places through embodied methodologies such as walking (Pink 2009; See also Krase 2014, Shortell and Brown 2014) Bassett emphasized 'walking as a fundamental activity of human being and way of interacting with the environment…' (Bassett 2004: 398). Low (2015) also suggested sensory walking practices to define and evaluate urban spaces. Moreover, de Vega argued that sensing and movement cannot be 'separable features of experience' (de Vega 2010: 398-399). According to Sheller and Urry, walking is a practice of 'mobile sensory ethnography' (Sheller and Urry 2006: 217-218; See also Psarras 2015). The 'sensewalk' technique emerged when attention to ecological perception arose in the latter half of the 20th century, as did 'perceptual geography', which is a humanistic and phenomenological approach to the sensory and cognitive human experience of the environment. (Henshaw et al. 2009). Adams and Askins describe Sensewalking as a method by which researchers might '…investigate and analyse how we understand, experience and utilise space.' (Adams and Askins 2009) Henshaw called on ethnographers to move beyond the hegemony of visual senses (Henshaw 2014), while Rubidge and Stones (2009) claimed that the walking process helps to answer questions about the sensory experiences of people.

**Research Methods**

The 'group Sensewalking sessions' were conducted during the daylight hours on 20 October 2018, 27 October 2018 and 3 November 2018. Each walk was conducted with a different group of people so that each person participated in only one. In total, 50 adults participated. It

must be noted that the data collected through these sensewalkings was influenced by the weather and other conditions on these dates. As a result, some sensory characteristics of the area might not have been experienced in each walk. In future studies, seasonally specific, sensory features might be better identified. For the same reason, it may be preferable to carry out 'sensewalking' studies at different times of a day. The age range of participants in this research was between 18 and 29 years. Although demographic data regarding age and gender of subjects have been recorded, they have been given only on an informative basis and not analysed in this study. It should also be noted, for future research, that a closer analysis of the participants' age and other variable, distribution might provide a more detailed picture of their sensory thresholds for the area.

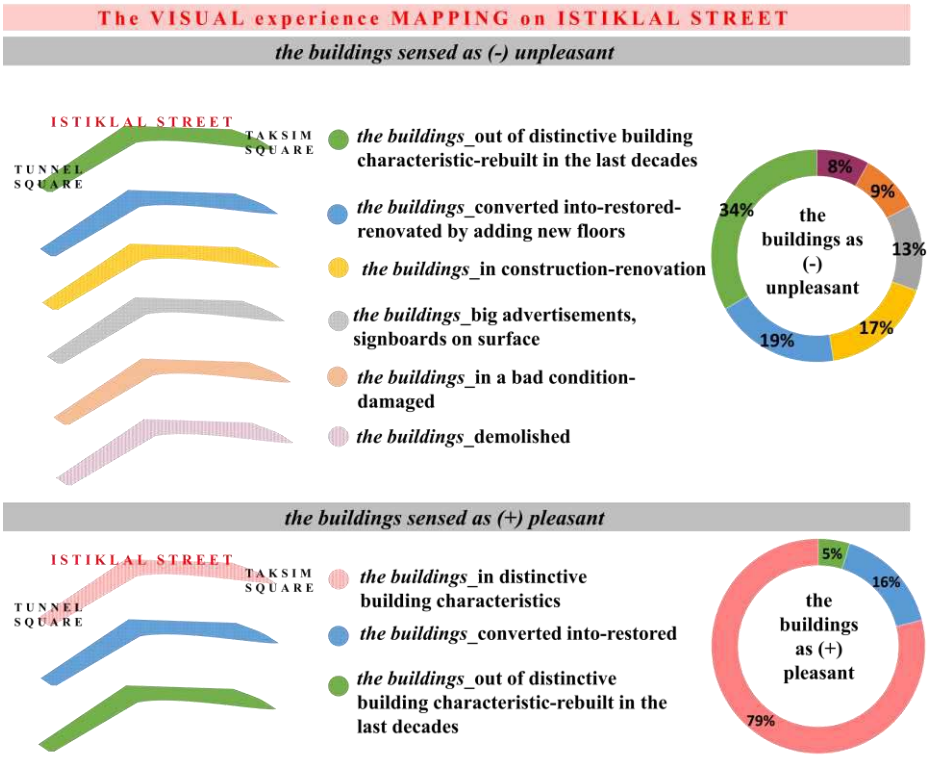
**Sensewalking Findings**

To investigate how sensory dimensions are experienced and assessed, by local people, three group Sensewalking sessions took place on a walk on Istiklal Street from Taksim Square to Tunnel Square. During the group sessions, fifty participants addressed five thematic questions: 1. 'visual'; 2. 'auditory'; 3. 'haptic'; 4. 'olfactory'; and 5. 'taste'. The participants also took photos of the physical structures on the street such as buildings (1st question); and noted their texture/material/graphic characteristics (3rd question); they also addressed 'food spots' (5th question) and marked their responses to each of the thematic questions as 'pleasant,' or 'unpleasant' while walking. For the 'auditory' 2nd question and 'olfactory' (4th question) experiences of Istiklal Street, the participants wrote down the sounds they heard and the scents they smelled on a template and marked them in the same way.

The overall findings on visual experiences showed that some of the unique visual characteristics of Istiklal Street persist, although they have been eroded due to the latest development policies and planning procedures. As one of the crucial elements of Istiklal Street, it is recommended that the visual properties be cautiously considered by planners to best preserve the pleasant visual mosaic of the area. Unfortunately, many vital social scenes have disappeared from İstiklal Street amid disruptive construction projects renovation, upscaling and marketing. For example, nearly all the street's visual urban components, from restored facades to the iconic tramway, have been converted into advertising surfaces. This capital-oriented development has decreased the distinctive visual composition of the street, making it look more like other global high streets (Adanalı 2011b).

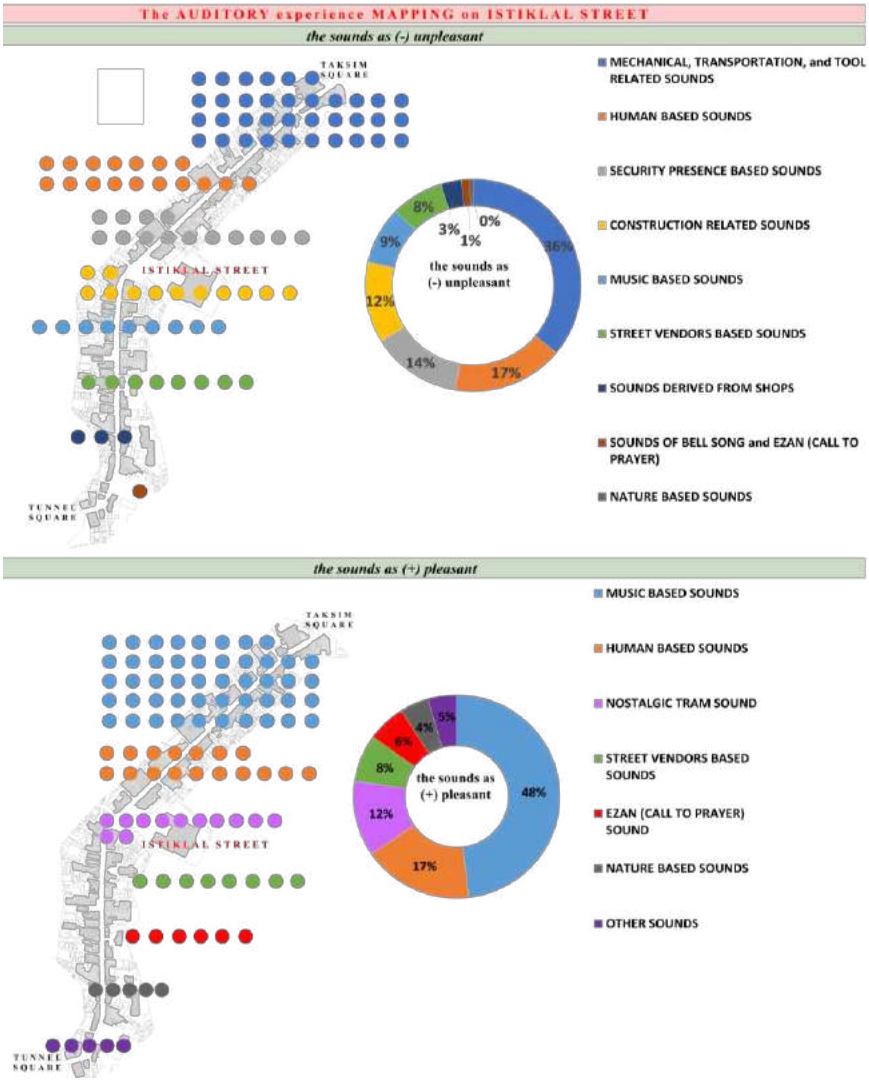
In Map 1, we can see the findings of the visual experience for walkers on Istiklal Street that were reported as 'unpleasant'. Firstly, the newer facades — unlike the prior distinctive facades — of the area were sensed as visually unpleasant, as were the non-historical buildings. Secondly, buildings, such as Demirören Shopping Mall and Narmanlı Han, which were recently converted or restored, were also judged as unpleasant. Thirdly, buildings that were undergoing construction and renovation were defined as unpleasant. Finally, the buildings that had large advertisements, or advertising signage on their surfaces, were also seen as unpleasant. In Map 2 we also see the pleasant sensory findings of the visual experience of Istiklal Street. Three-fourths of the buildings with 'distinctive building

characteristics' were considered as pleasant. This finding confirms the expectation that the historical buildings have shaped the more pleasant visual characteristics of the street. Therefore, it can be argued that these distinctive visual features need to be preserved in order to promote the positive sensory atmosphere of the street.




Map 1. The visual mapping of Istiklal Street based on the buildings sensed as un/pleasant (Source: author).

The overall auditory experience findings of sensewalkers on Istiklal Street confirmed that the area has been covered with unpleasant noises as the consequence of problematic implementations, planning decisions and technology-related issues that required correction. Istiklal Street has been a place of special sounds; some of them inherited from its past. When someone walked down Istiklal Street, s/he could encounter musicians from different parts of the world playing. It was also stage for interesting voices coming from street vendors. All these unique sound elements marked the diversity of the socio-cultural and sensory patterns of the street. In Map 2, we see that the auditory experiences of walkers were rated as disagreeable. These negative evaluations are the result of changes in local technology and infrastructure. Most unpleasant were the mechanical, transportation and traffic sounds. In second rank were 'security presence-based sounds', followed by 'construction-related sounds' as construction activities have expanded in the area.



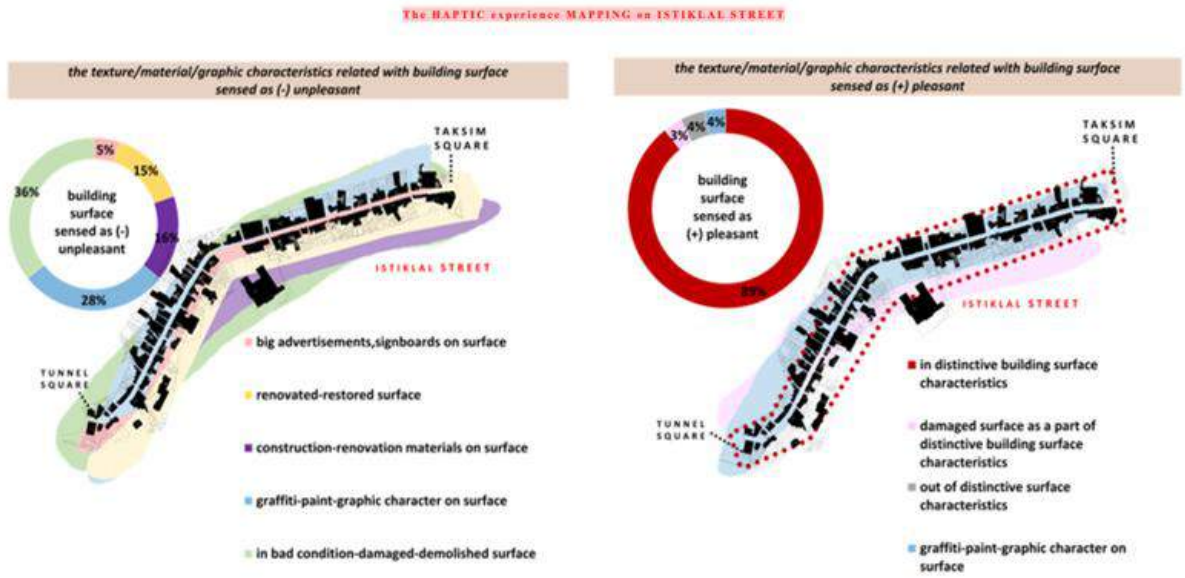

Map 2. The auditory mapping of Istiklal Street is based on the sounds sensed as un/pleasant (Source: author).

Here, we can also see that the positive auditory experience of Istiklal Street depended on its street musicians and performers, whose street music still shapes the pleasant auditory aspect of the area. The 'human-based sounds,' such as talking, on Istiklal Street have made it one of the important pedestrian streets of Istanbul. In addition to human sounds, the 'nostalgic tram sound' showed that the red tram's 'clink' had been one of the street's unique sounds.

The overall report on the haptic experiences of Istiklal Street sensewalkers indicate they are distinguishable among other haptic elements of the street. Theis suggests that haptic characteristics of the street's unique facades ought to be integrated carefully with other design applications. Other policies and practices should also consider the texture/material/graphic characteristics of the street more efficiently. Related to its haptic characteristics, as a canvas, Istiklal Street has afforded many opportunities for street arts, where people could share their feelings, anger and beliefs (Kıratlı and Sirin 2010). For example, there has been a great deal of graffiti on the walls of the stores in the area. They are part of the texture of the street (Koçak and Koçak 2014) and are seen by pedestrians as they walked along. Now, the outdoor advertisements and giant billboards dominate. As an effect of globalisation and marketing,

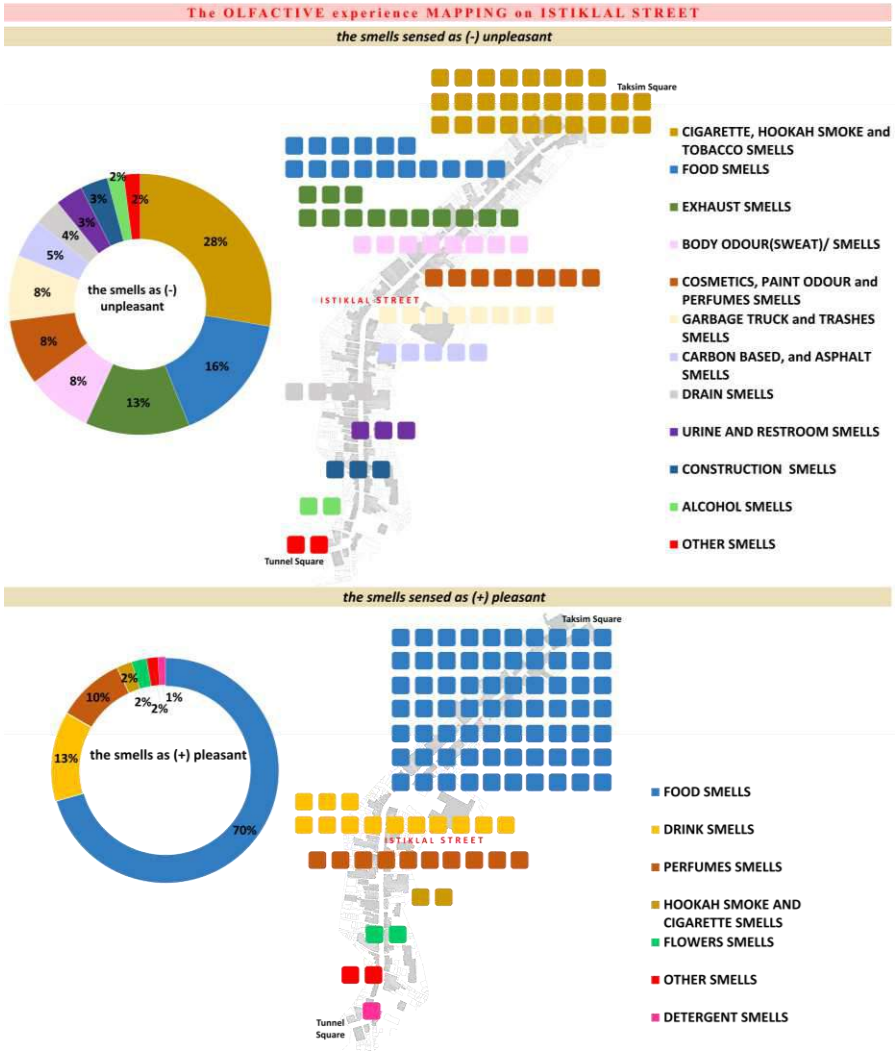
advertisers have used every possible wall on every corner, or even store roofs, as branding spaces (Kıratlı and Sirin 2010).

In Map 3, we see the haptic experiences of Istiklal Street are sensed as 'nasty'. The texture/material/graphic characteristics were sensed as 'in bad condition-damaged-demolished surface', as the building facades in the area have been eroded and neglected. Also, sensewalkers found that the 'construction-renovation materials on the surface were unpleasant, as the possible result of unsightly construction materials and equipment above the buildings' facades which have been significantly expanded. Moreover, the 'renovated-restored surfaces' were also defined as unpleasant. Participants also found the 'big advertisements, signboards on surfaces' to be unpleasant. This implies that the effects of globalisation-oriented urbanisation have damaged the haptic feel of the street. In contrast, the haptic experience of older, unique texture/material/graphic characteristics features of Istiklal Street had been sensed positively. It is suggested therefore, that these pleasant features need to be preserved or protected in order not to injure the remaining positive sensory experiences within the area.



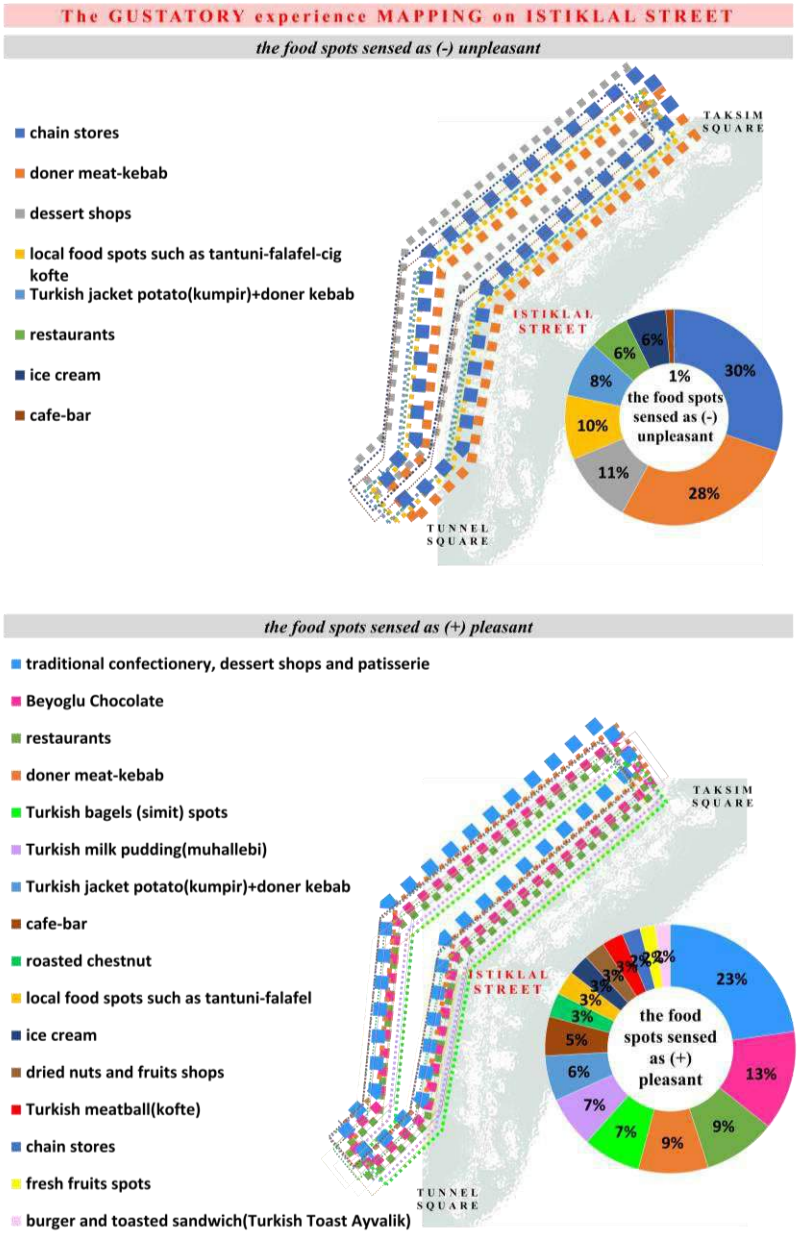

Map 3. The haptic mapping of Istiklal Street is based on the texture/material/graphic characteristics related to building surface sensed as un/pleasant (Source: author).

The overall descriptions of smells on Istiklal Street, show that the current olfactory characteristics have mixed the pleasing with the unpleasant olfactory features of the area. In Map 4, we see the olfactory experience of Istiklal Street was sensed as displeasing. This evaluation is possibly the result of the growing number of newly opened hookah smoke *(nargile)* cafes on the backstreets of Istiklal Street that dominate the olfactory characteristics of the area. Responses also show that the food spots have been remarkably expanded and follow the taste preferences of new patrons. Moreover, the unpleasant 'exhaust smells' show that transportation-related smells have had adverse effects on the olfactory character of the street. Overall, the more pleasant olfactory experience of Istiklal Street, is the probable result of increasing numbers of food spots of the street, while most of the cultural places (bookstores, cinemas and theatres) have been disappearing.




Map 4. The mapping of Istiklal Street is based on the smells sensed as un/pleasant (Source: author).

Through the typical food spots, the tasting experiences of Istiklal Street, are prominent in the study. One of the best ways to experience Istiklal Street had been through sampling eclectic culinary products offered by diverse types of food places. Although they still have some stores featuring traditional, refined, tasting specialities, these have been diminished along with the traces of cosmopolitan lifestyles. This loss of special food places on Istiklal Street could be the result of globalisation, as food tastes and offerings also become less local. In Map 5, we see that the tasting experiences of Istiklal Street are sensed as distasteful. The area's dominant food spots are now global chains such as 'McDonalds', 'Burger King' and 'Starbucks.' Restaurants offering ubiquitous 'doner meat-kebab' also were sensed as unpleasant. The unpleasant experiences could also indicate the older gustatory specialities are suffering because of the new taste preferences of the area. The traditional food stores were highly sensed as pleasant by sense walkers, demonstrating that users still appreciate the distinctive taste experiences of Istiklal Street, which ought to be given extra attention in future planning processes.




Map 5. The gustatory mapping of Istiklal Street is based on the food spots sensed as un/pleasant (Source: author).

## Brief Summary of Findings

- The visual, auditory, haptic, olfactory and tasting mapping of Istiklal Street demonstrate that the sensory experiences have been adversely affected by the latest changes in the area.
- The findings confirmed that distinctive ethnographical features of the street have been eroded by the latest changings as many landmarks that made Istiklal Street special have been disappearing.
- The Senswalking study showed how both the pleasant and unpleasant sensewalking experiences of buildings, sounds, texture/material/graphic characteristics, smells and food spots on Istiklal Street interacted to create the area's current urban sensescape.
- The findings also pointed out that the positive sensory experiences of the area relied on the mixture tangible and intangible features. However, as the area lost its spirit, diversity

and originality it lost its prior charm and began to look like every other 'High' or Main Street in other global cities.

**Summary Discussion: How Sensewalking can Inform Urban Planning**

As discussed, over the past two decades, the changes in Istanbul's socio-spatial configurations have resulted from multiple, interrelated, local, national and global economic and political factors (Keyder 2009, 1999; Akpınar 2014; Türeli and Al 2019). Although establishing a single, major cause of these transformations is impossible, as this exploratory study has demonstrated, to describe accurately how, as a consequence, the intangible characteristics have changed the Sensescapes in specific locations such as Istiklal Street.

This was accomplished via Sensewalking, an ethnographic method that looks directly at sensory experiences of pedestrians. The research showed that Istiklal Street lost some of its distinctive features as the area's other intangible qualities and social life were negatively affected. A major finding was that alterations in the built environment affect not only structural, political, economic and cultural issues, but the personal experiences of inhabitants as well as visitors to the street.

As noted by other researchers, physical layouts of urban places always reflect sensory regimes and unavoidably, physical changes influence sensory experiences (Degen 2010, 2002). To understand the transformation effects of this street we highlighted the sensory experiences, values and preferences of users (Degen 2002, Zardini 2005, Mattern 2009, Henshaw et al. 2011), as noted by Howes (2005), Degen and Rose (2012) and Zardini (2005).

As a result of this research, it is strongly suggested that knowledge of the intangible qualities of urban places should inform design guidelines, urban models and development tools. Such new perspectives can be useful for urban planners and urban authorities. In future studies of urban places, prior to development, their ethnographic sensory dimensions should be recorded and decoded as much as possible. Relatedly, positive dimensions of the sensual experiences found in multi-layered urban places, such as Istiklal Street**,** should be preserved and promoted. Finally, given the small size of subjects for this study, it is recommended that for both the design and implementation of urban and architectural plans, a larger and wider sample be selected for Sensewalking research. A positive future requires promoting the potentials of their sensory dimensions.

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# *Making Public Spaces Public: An Ethnographic Study of Three Piazzas in Bolzano, Italy*[1]

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It is generally accepted that public spaces such as Italian squares (piazzas) are there to serve the public, but who exactly makes up this public and to what extent are their voice heard when the transformation of public spaces is being planned? These are some of the questions this paper attempts to answer with presentation of the results of anthropological research in three piazzas in the city of Bolzano in northern Italy. All three piazzas were built during the Italian fascist period and although the echoes of history live on in the buildings, in the years following their construction the squares have been transformed by both those who manage these spaces and those who use them. Using interviews with the various stakeholders (residents, shop-owners, urban planners, architects, politicians, administrators, activists and users of the spaces), combined with photography of the piazzas to reveal how they are occupied throughout the year, the research attempts to reveal the multiple narratives that make up how the spaces are perceived and inhabited. The research follows the various voices, including pressure groups lobbying for a more transparent and participatory approach to planning the future of the piazzas. The results of the research reveal a conflict between citizen stakeholders who wish for a transformation of these public spaces in order to serve residents and respond to the urgent demand for more sustainable cities, and an institutional planning system that uses its power to maintain control of the planning process.
**Keywords:** Public space, urban planning, urban ethnography.

## Introduction

The aim of this article is to present the results of anthropological research undertaken in the city of Bolzano, Italy, from January to December 2019. Bolzano is located in Northern Italy, close to the Austrian border (Map1). It is a small city with a population of 100,000, and capital of the Autonomous Province of South Tyrol. Its history is that of a frontier city. In 1919, following the Austro-Hungarian Empire's defeat in the First World War, it came under Italian control and from 1920 under Mussolini's rule. During this period (1920 to 1943) urbanization and 'italianisation' went hand in hand, with the fascist regime bringing large numbers of Italian speakers into a predominantly German (dialect) speaking population and undertaking major architectural and urban development projects. In 1943 the city came under Nazi Germany's military control and at the end of the second world war it became once more part of Italy.

The research was undertaken as part of an interdisciplinary project at the University of Bolzano titled GreenCITIES. This project combined ecological, economical and anthropological research to improve understanding of the impact, use and perception, as well as costs and benefits of urban green space.[2] The anthropological research included a study of three piazzas in Bolzano, focusing on the perceptions and use of urban public space within the

[1] I am indebted for the contribution to this article made by the peer-reviewers, who provided invaluable feedback, advice and literature recommendations.

[2] GreenCITIES was a three-year project (April 2017 to April 2020), involving a collaboration between the Faculty of Science and Technology, the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Economics and Management. The project was funded by the University of Bozen-Bolzano. I would like to thank the GreenCITIES team for their support and advice on the writing of this article.

context of the city's urban development history. The piazzas were chosen for their historical and current significance as public spaces.


Map 1. Bolzano is in Northern Italy, close to the Austrian border.

This article considers to what extent ethnographic research in an urban environment can make a valid contribution to urban planning by gaining an insight into past, present and potential future uses of public urban space. The ability of anthropology to contribute to urban policy and planning through its use of ethnographic methodology is a key issue that I wish to look at in this article. The urgency and importance of the ethnographic study of life in urban settings argued by Pardo and Prato (2012 and 2018, Prato and Pardo 2013), particularly when considering the Sustainable Development Goal of 'Sustainable Cities and Communities' set by the United Nations in 2015 and to be achieved by 2030, adds weight to the results of this study (Pardo et al. eds 2020). Assisted by Foucault's theory of power and resistance (Foucault 1982b, 1985, 1991), particularly in its application to urban planning (Mashhadi et al. 2019), I attempt to confirm the current domination of a top-down urban planning process in the city of Bolzano and provide a signal of hope for a more participatory and inclusive bottom-up approach. The aim of the article is to demonstrate that the holistic and multi-layered ethnographic approach, analysed through the lens of power dynamics, provides insight of value to a humanistic urban planning process (Gehl 1987/2011, 2010; Dalsgaard 2014).

The article presents the city's historical context, followed by multiple narratives of how the three piazzas are perceived and inhabited, as well desires for their future. Particular attention is then given to one of the three piazzas, Piazza della Vittoria, due to its controversial historical setting and planned renovation, as well as to reveal the strengths and limits of a citizen-focused participatory approach.

## Methods

The mixed methodological approach combined archival research, stakeholder interviews, photography, participatory observation and participatory research. This variety of ethnographic research methodologies was used to gain a deeper understanding of the perception of, use of, and future desires for public space in the city, placed within the context of the city's past, present

and future urban planning approaches. The commitment to bringing a holistic ethnographic approach to the methodology is based on the conviction that it helps to reflect the complexity of research in urban settings, where political economy, city planning, grass roots action, governance and globalisation all have a role to play (Pardo and Prato 2012, 2018; Low 2014).

For the stakeholder interviews, I defined two broad groups:

1. 'Managers'; that is, those responsible, who have a professional view or take an active position concerning the past, present and future management of the piazzas. A total of 15 interviews were undertaken with architects, urban planners, technicians, administrators, politicians and citizen-focused activists.
2. 'Users'; that is, those living in or close to the piazzas*,* including adults, children and business establishments. These interviews were conducted with individuals or groups or took place as informal conversations with people who were using the piazzas when I visited. Thirty-seven interviews were recorded, whilst the number of spontaneous informal conversations that took place whilst visiting the piazzas were not registered.

The structure of the interviews was informal, following a loosely chronological line and focusing on discussion around perceptions of the past, present and possible future use of these public spaces.

Participatory research involved a variety of approaches. Work was undertaken with two classes in two secondary schools where the students, aged between 14 and 17 years, undertook different mapping exercises. One school was located on Piazza Domenicani and the other close to Piazza Mazzini and Piazza della Vittoria. The students first visited the piazzas and then developed and presented their design ideas for what they felt their chosen piazza should look like in the future. Later in the year, I worked again with the school on Piazza Domenicani, this time developing a participatory street-based action aimed at collecting citizen's proposals for the positive changes that they felt should be made. As Piazza Domenicani is predominantly a place of transit, it was difficult to find people willing to be interviewed. However, the students managed to undertake 20 mini-questionnaire interviews and 6 mapping games. The mini-questionnaire contained the double, connected question: 'The pros and cons of Piazza Domenicani, What would you add? What would you remove?' The game involved a giant image of the piazza and a choice of icons: tables, chairs, parking places, buses, trees, flowers, grass, fountains and food kiosks. The game player could place up to 9 ikons wherever they wanted on the image.

Here, I present the results of the first mapping exercise for Piazza Mazzini and Piazza della Vittoria and the street-based participatory project for Piazza Domenicani.

I also attended meetings and events linked to the citizen-focused activist group, *lab:bz*, concerned with the planned redevelopment of Piazza della Vittoria. *Lab:bz* is made up of a group of mainly architects, planners and designers, who advocate more transparency in the planning process and the need for a citizen-based, participative approach to the regeneration of public spaces in the city. The *lab:bz* campaign for Piazza della Vittoria was motivated by the council's plan to liberate the piazza from its current carpark status with the construction of an underground carpark, and the redevelopment of the piazza, planned for 2021. I participated

actively in the internal group meetings and in the events and meetings organized by *lab:bz,* including meetings with politicians, an Open Space[3] event for citizens and a press conference.

Photographs of the three piazzas were taken throughout the year at different times of the day and evening, and on different days of the week. In total, 81 visits to each of the three piazzas were made and 2857 photographs taken. During these visits, participant observation also took place; as well as observing the way the space was being used, I took the opportunity to talk with the people present in order to understand why they came to the piazza and what they thought of it, good and bad.

**Results**

The results of the research are presented in a timeline of past, present and future. The past covers the urban planning approaches from the colonial period up to the present and includes archival research and stakeholder interviews. The present focuses on the role of the piazzas revealed by the photography, participatory observation and stakeholder interviews. The future of the piazzas focuses on the participatory research activities and stakeholder interviews.

Foucault's theories of power, conformity and resistance (Foucault 1977, 1982b, 1982a, 1985, 1991) are used to try and add coherence to the results and move towards an understanding of the various power relations taking place in and around the piazzas and across the various individuals, groups and institutions.

**The Past: The Historical Context of the City's Planning and Development Approaches**

All three piazzas that were the focus of my research were constructed during the Italian fascist period, when the government brought this former Austrian territory under its control. The planning approach was linked to fascist ideology and domination, using the rationalist architecture that was then popular throughout Italy. The development concept for the city was that of expansion and growth through 'italianisation', which included the destruction of the city's Austrian-influenced buildings and replacement with rationalist architecture. Obermair's (2020) evocative portrayal of Corso Libertà that runs from Piazza della Vittoria to Piazza Mazzini and beyond, describes how the architecture with its gigantesque and linear form was intended to discipline and subordinate the South Tyrolian.

Piazza Domenicani was to be the Italian piazza of the historical centre; in 1933, the original piazza, Kaiser Josepf Platz, was restructured to form Piazza Domenicani. Piazza della Vittoria and Piazza Mazzini were constructed as part of the 'new city' of Bolzano. These two piazzas, combined with the laying of a huge road axis over fields and vineyards, created a forced architectural unification of the old city with the new.

[3] Open Space Technology is a method for organizing and running a meeting, where participants are invited in order to focus on a specific, important task or purpose. Unlike pre-planned conferences with scheduled speakers, Open Space events are participant-driven and 'self-organized'. A document of discussions, decisions and conclusions is produced and sent to all participants as a follow-up to the event.

Following the Second World War and the collapse of fascism, came the renovation of war damaged buildings and the growth and densification of the city that continues to this day. In 1998/99, Piazza Domenicani was restructured once more: the central island containing lamps, grass and trees was removed and the pavement area enlarged. Until the 1980s, cars had free access to the old city and Piazza Domenicani was used for parking. After the access to the old city was closed to cars, the piazza became a place of transit for the huge number of buses transporting people in and out of the city centre.

In architectural terms, Piazza della Vittoria should be considered a component of a single structure containing three parts: the monument (Monumento della Vittoria), the park (Parco della Piazza della Vittoria) and the Piazza itself. The construction of the Monumento della Vittoria was undertaken at the behest of Mussolini and was built over a two-year period from 1927 to 1928. Significantly, it was built on a park containing the unfinished Tyrolian Kaiserjäger monument.[4] As an 'architectural symbol of the Fascist soul' (Sabrini ed. 2016),[5] it remains a controversial structure and in the late 1970s various attempts were made by South Tyrolean separatist groups to destroy it, leading to the monument being encircled by a fence, and access limited.

Behind the monument lies the park, which at its creation in the early 1930s contained a combination of mature trees and newly planted saplings. The park remains largely unchanged, with trees only being removed and replaced as they become old or unstable.


Photo 1. A postcard of Piazza della Vittoria in 1955, before the increase in car ownership turned the piazza into a carpark (Copyright Bolzano city archives).

[4] This monument was begun in 1917 and was intended to be dedicated to the fallen soldiers of the *Kaiserjäger* regiment during the First World War.

[5] The architectonic structure comprising the monument, the park and the piazza was created as symbol of the domination and victory of the fascist regime over the Austro-Hungarian Empire and rule over South Tyrolian citizens.

The park faces onto the piazza, also constructed in the 1930s, which was to be the new city's main piazza, surrounded by administrative buildings. Originally, the piazza was paved with stone slabs (Photo 1), but these were later replaced with asphalt. Piazza della Vittoria has always been used as a carpark, and with increased car ownership the presence of vehicles parked in the piazza has grown significantly. Only on Saturdays is car-parking forbidden, when the piazza and surrounding side streets are transformed into a large and lively market.

Photo 2. Piazza Mazzini, initially a blank open space (Copyright Bolzano city archives).

Piazza Mazzini, constructed in 1936, is less monumental than Piazza della Vittoria, but is nonetheless a significant public space. Initially, the piazza was a blank open space, with large rationalist buildings being constructed around it in the late 1930s (Photo 2). By 1962, Piazza Mazzini had become 'more welcoming with a small garden containing several species of trees and flowers' (UPAD, 2002). From the 1960s, this park side of the piazza has seen a variety of changing combinations of trees and flowers, as well as the addition of benches. Over the years, as car ownership grew and traffic increased, the central road running through the piazza further divided the two spaces, and the paved section of the piazza was increasingly used as a carpark. However, in the late 1990s the piazza was restructured and became car free, with the installation of a fountain and a line of trees in raised beds. Every Tuesday there is a farmers' market that attracts many local residents.

## Local Urban Development Within a National Perspective

### *The City's Mobility Policy and the Automobile*

It is important to note that all three piazzas have been influenced by Bolzano's mobility plan. In 1948, the decision was made to remove the trams that ran through the city and dedicate public transport to buses. The three piazzas were used to address the subsequent demand for carparking space consequent to increased car ownership. Traffic levels are of undeniable significance when considering the city's development and the effect it has had on the three piazzas. However, an

urban planning policy that has allowed itself to be dominated by the automobile is common to mobility policies throughout Italy and beyond, from both an historical and current perspective. The policy's success (locally and globally) lies in the fact that it has been matched by the population's willingness to embrace individual car ownership and its daily use in the urban environment, despite increasing evidence and unease about the environmental damage caused.[6]

*The City's Neoliberalist Policy Approach*

The city council's adoption of a neoliberalist approach for the city's urban development reveals how the promotion of the interests of capital above all else has penetrated both political and social institutions (David 2007). In theory, neoliberalism aspires to create a utopia of free markets liberated from the intervention of the state. In reality, it entails 'a dramatic intensification of coercive, disciplinary forms of state intervention' where market rule is imposed on all aspects of social life (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 352). In Bolzano, a previous form of state protectionism, where the interests of local independent shops were taken into consideration and the establishment of chain stores in the city was discouraged, has now been abandoned. A variety of chain stores currently have key positions in the city centre and the council has permitted the construction of shopping centres both in the heart of the city and on its outskirts. The impact on the three piazzas has been a slow but steady economic decline. All three piazzas are surrounded by a number of independent shops and bars, many of which are steadily closing without being replaced. The old-fashioned style of these businesses — in stark contrast to the commercial chains in the new shopping centres and on-line shopping options — means that these shops are fighting an ever-losing battle to remain commercially viable, as they increasingly rely on the loyalty of their steadily ageing clientele.

**The Present: Embodied Space or Non-place — The Uses and Abuses of Public Space in Bolzano**

The Italian piazza has an enviable reputation, as it is often described as the '*salotto urbano all'aperto*' (outdoor living room) and an essential component of all Italian cities. A piazza is defined physically as a large open space surrounded by (public, residential and commercial) buildings, and socially as a meeting place for people, providing them with a sense of community, identity and a set of resources for everyday life. Pitkin (1993) describes the deep impression that piazzas in Rome made on him when he came to do ethnographic fieldwork in the city. He describes the excitement that he felt when he saw how the piazzas came alive at night, and his experiencing *la passeggiata* (the cultural art of strolling), where public space is all about visibility — to see and be seen. Garau, in his article celebrating the piazza, describes its magic, as he suggests that it is the 'total randomness and unpredictability of use that makes a true public space' (Garau 2016: 22).

Two of the three piazzas that are the focus of my research do not match these descriptions. Piazza Domenicani is used as a thoroughfare for buses and Piazza della Vittoria is a car park. (Photos 3 and 4). The space of these two piazzas is inhospitable and unconducive to social

[6] https://www.theworldcounts.com/challenges/consumption/transport-and-tourism/cars-impact-on-the-environment/story , accessed 26 January 2021.

interaction. Ironically, despite their historical and architectural significance, they are effectively 'non-places' in the sense that they are soulless spaces of transience, holding little or no significance as communal public space (Augè 1995).

The third, Piazza Mazzini, is different. It is a daily lived space, although on a far more modest scale than that described by Pitkin (1993) and Garau (2016). In spite of being divided by a main road, it contains 'embodied' space (Low 2011), with both sides of the piazza being used on a daily basis by a variety of people.

Photo 3. Piazza della Vittoria, car park and Non-Place (Source: author).

Photo 4. Piazza Domenicani, thoroughfare for buses and Non-Place (Source: author).

The photographs and observations made in Piazza Mazzini reveal the ebb and flow of a wide range of people using the space at different times of the day, week and season (Photo 5). Each part of the piazza has a different role: The paved area is used in the cooler spring and

autumn periods to catch the sun and for children to ride their bikes, roller-skate, or even play cricket. In the summer, when the paved area is too hot to be used during the day, it becomes inhabited during the late afternoon and evening. The park area is used for rest, relaxation and for socialising by those in search of companionship. The park is used more intensively during the summer months, to obtain relief from the heat. This is particularly the case for the elderly, who go to the park specifically to enjoy coolness and shade, despite there being only one bench that remains in the shade throughout the day. There, I often saw East European caregivers (*badanti*), who would meet alone or with their elderly charges, as well as parents, grandparents and children from a variety of cultures and backgrounds (Photo 6).

Photo 5. Piazza Mazzini liveable, lived and vital space for the people living close to the piazza (Source: author).

Photo 6. A group of women who work as *badanti* (carers) taking a break from work (Source: author).

Both sides of the piazza are used by a culturally mixed group of Italians and migrants. Both the park and paved area of Piazza Mazzini, particularly during the summer months,

become the *salotto urbano all'aperto*, though not as a place to see and be seen. For those who live close to the piazza, it is a vital space where they can go; an alternative to being confined to homes without balconies or gardens.

### *Degrado*… — The Language of Abandonment

Whilst in Piazza Mazzini I found it quite easy to strike up conversations with people, in Piazza Domenicani, it was far more difficult. Here, the majority of people were waiting for buses and had neither the time nor the inclination to talk with me. Piazza della Vittoria, as a carpark revealed little or no human activity. For this reason, I turned to the Parco della Piazza della Vittoria for photography and interviews, but again there were very few people there, apart from a group of homeless people.

During the interviews with residents and shop owners in Piazza Domenicani and Piazza della Vittoria, many used the word *degrado* (decline and neglect) to describe the way the space in both piazzas is 'misused' and express their sense that the place is being abandoned by the city council. In their narratives, this *degrado* included historic buildings not being maintained, homeless people's (mis)use of the space, the lack of public facilities and furniture (public toilets, benches, green areas with trees and flowers), as well as the inappropriate location of public facilities (such as recycling bins placed close to bars and restaurants). All these factors were seen as contributing to and being evidence of this state of *degrado*.

The issue of the homeless people using the Parco and Piazza della Vittoria came up in almost every interview, with residents and shopkeepers criticising and complaining about its appropriation by homeless people (Boucher 2017). This issue also received much coverage in the local media and was widely debated among politicians and in the city council. The negative media coverage generally focused on alcohol abuse and issues of hygiene (the use of the park as a sleeping place and toilet). However, some people had a different attitude towards the homeless; a group of volunteers supported them in various ways. In an interview, one of the volunteers who lives in Piazza della Vittoria described how when she first moved there she noticed that virtually no-one used the park; she said, 'a few people would take their dogs there, two or three men would meet to chat, that's all… School kids would go across the park to the bus stop'. She described the park as 'transit space'. She stated that the city council and many other people would like the homeless people using the park to simply disappear: 'People are uncomfortable to see them […] I sometimes also have difficulty looking at them, but we should be looking at them *more* […] The city council, not all of them, but a minority would like them to disappear'. She went on to explain that the city council had forbidden the volunteers from giving the homeless meals in the park and is now making use of the new Italian legislation, which empowers them to sanction and remove these people from public spaces (Flusty 2011).

### The Future: Different Voices, Imagined Futures

The school mapping project in Piazza Mazzini and Piazza della Vittoria gave students an opportunity for re-imagining these public spaces. The predominating ideas included the creation of social spaces such as bars, restaurants, libraries, playgrounds and furniture (benches

and tables); greening of the areas with more grass, flowers and trees; and the diversion or reduction of traffic and the removal of car parking. The mini-questionnaire participatory mapping game undertaken by students in Piazza Domenicani produced very similar results: add more 'green' (trees and flowers), more benches, tables and chairs, and remove the traffic.

There was a sense of frustration and anger amongst the shopkeepers of Piazza Domenicani. Many of them told me that they have been saying for years what is needed to improve the piazza and feel that they are consistently ignored by the city council. Several said that there was a citizen-based group called *Quasi Zentrum* that aimed to give voice to the needs and desires of the residents and shop owners in and around Piazza Domenicani. I interviewed one of the core members of the group, who explained that in 2014 the group organized an Open Space event to which residents and local businesses were invited. The event was very well attended, and the moderator was provided and paid for by the city council. However, the group's actions came to nothing 'We went to the mayor and to the vice mayor […] We had lots of meetings (with the key people) […] and they made a map […] where we wanted one tree here and one tree there […] They signed it but then nothing happened […] With the elections everything changed […] I know that they [the council] are not allowed to guide this kind of (participatory) process anymore […] they have been stopped'.

**Case Study Piazza della Vittoria: Participatory Vision or Retreat into History?**

With the planned construction of an underground car park and the consequent freeing of Piazza della Vittoria from cars, the question is raised as to who decides how this public space should be re-designed and used. Research in this case focused on interviews with residents, politicians, technicians working for the city council, architects directly and indirectly interested in the future of the piazza and, in particular, the citizen-focused group *lab:bz.* In this section I present the results of my research, focusing on the above question.

*The Playful Architect for a Monumental Shake-up*

My interview with an architect discussing Piazza della Vittoria revealed that he saw the entire architectural structure of monument/park/piazza as problematic in terms of physical structure and as historical symbol, both of which in his opinion needed shaking up.[7] He said, 'The whole town (old and new) doesn't work as a centre […] and then we have this monument here, which is closed up and where nothing happens and then you have the flat piazza, which is only symbolic'.

In 1979, this architect entered an architectural competition aimed at transforming the area from the bridge that crosses the river in the old city centre, to Piazza della Vittoria. He made a controversial and playful proposal, which naturally did not win. However, his explanation of the motive for his choice of design are interesting. He proposed closing the gap between the old and new city by constructing a ship-like bridge where there were also 'bars, restaurants and

[7] See Wells (2007) who refers to the difficulty governments have in disposing of historical monuments, due not only to the underlying political and historical context but also to the fact that they were built to be physically permanent.

dancing'. His solution for the monument was to 'transform it in an artificial way […] a ruin […] I made time go faster so it falls down like a ruin with some plants and green growing over it'.

I asked this architect how he felt now (in 2019, rather than 1979) about the monument/park/piazza combination and whether he felt as an architect it needed to remain pure, in the sense of unchanged in its architectural form. His answer was an emphatic 'No'. He added, 'There should be trees to make shade (in the piazza) […] in the park behind (the piazza), that's now something holy and prohibited […] and then there is the fence around the monument […] you should open it and make the monument a place where they sell *würstel* (sausages) […] underneath (the monument) you sell papers or make a bar […] full of life […] that would also stir the whole area piazza/monument — one should make something interesting for the town, for people, for children'.

### *The Shop Owner for a Clean Break*

This architect is not alone in his desire to make dramatic changes to the monument/park/piazza design. The owner of the piazza's bookshop had similar ideas. He said, 'In my opinion, architects often lose sight of functionality. Maybe there is a middle ground that is aesthetically appealing and comfortable? Because in the end we live here […] Maybe they could put in cypress trees or make a complete break and create a forest'.

These ideas of stirring up the architectural and symbolic character of the monument and its piazza seem also to be a desire to free it from the historical and political weight that binds it to the past. However, there are those who remain convinced that the architectural design should remain (or return) to its original state. And it appears that it is these people who currently hold the decision-making power.

### *Lab:bz, the Ufficio dei Tempi and the Failure of the Participatory Process*

*Lab:bz* is involved in a number of campaigns in the city, one of which is titled 'The future of Piazza della Vittoria', encouraged by the information that after many years of deliberation the city council has finally confirmed the redevelopment of the piazza. In April 2019, the group organized a 'lab:cafè' (very similar to an Open Space event) with a number of thematic tables of discussion. The event was attended by around 30 people, including residents, bar owners and businesses located in or close to the piazza. The outcome of the event was a mini report containing a series of ideas and proposals linked to the various themes and in response to the question 'What do we want for the piazza?' The message of the report was clear. People wanted to create a public space incorporating a physical and social infrastructure that would transform the piazza into a lived space. However, *lab:bz* were not alone in making such proposals following a participatory action. In 2012, the city council (the *Ufficio dei Tempi,* which had also worked with *Quasi Zentrum* on Piazza Domenicani) launched a process of redevelopment of the area around Piazza della Vittoria using a participatory approach that involved working with citizens, shop owners, associations and public and private institutions. The results led to another section of the city council (the Public Works Office*)* presenting a proposal for the redesign of Piazza della Vittoria. In an interview with the director of the office, I learned how from the participatory work undertaken together with the

*Ufficio dei Tempi* he had understood that Piazza della Vittoria needed to become a more lived space, meaning more attractive to people. The group of shop owners felt that if more people visited the piazza then they would also be more likely to visit the surrounding shops and bars. The office prepared a design for the refurbishment of the piazza, including a line of trees to close the space on three sides, an area with seating and an area for recreation. The director told me that the design had been rejected outright by the Buildings Commission (also part of the city council). He stated, 'the Buildings Commission said no. They said that they wanted the piazza as it was in the 1930s — a rationalist (architecture) argument […] Our proposal was brutally rejected […] We are angry because we spent years listening to the shopkeepers to understand what they want and we arrived at this solution but our councillors didn't listen to us'. The neglect and indifference of local politicians towards citizens and their (mis)governance of the urban planning process is also described by Pardo in his research in Naples (2012).

Following this interview, I tried to make an appointment with a key member of the Buildings Commission but was only permitted a brief telephone interview. When I referred to the Buildings Commission's rejection of the proposal made by the Public Works Office and mentioned that I understood that the proposal had included trees lining the sides of the piazza, his response was 'I would never support this'. He explained that the sense of the piazza is that of an 'empty space' that can then be used for a variety of events. He said that the mistake had been to use it as a carpark, and that the piazza should be retained according to its 'original logic'.

So, the participatory process encouraged and actively used by one part of the city council was halted by another section of the council, and it appears that the opinion of the Buildings Commission overrode the wishes of the citizens of Bolzano.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Foucault acknowledges that governments constantly try to exert their power over populations, and that their ability to do this is particularly efficient in cities. Control can be maintained through a combination of architecture, surveillance and the discourse of authority (Foucault 1972 and 1977). This has been seen in Bolzano from the fascist period, through its architecture and subjugation of the German speaking population, to the current surveillance and control of homeless 'delinquents' in the Parco and Piazza della Vittoria, as well as in the control exerted by the Buildings Commission over decisions for the future of Piazza della Vittoria. The power dynamic between the city council and citizens in the management of the Bolzano piazzas reveals how discourse transmits and produces power but can also render it fragile and thwart its purpose. Interviewees and those taking part in the participatory actions consistently expressed their desire for more social space (including 'green' space) and less traffic, and many were against the closure of shops in the piazzas. The combined efforts of *Quasi Zentrum* and the city council's *Ufficio dei Tempi* produced clearly defined and realistic proposals for improvement using the participatory Open Space Technology. In the case study of Piazza della Vittoria we saw clear proposals for the future of the piazza developed by a collaboration between the city council (*Ufficio dei Tempi)* and citizens. More problematic was the conversion of these ideas and proposals into practical action by the decision makers in the city council.

Repeatedly, individuals and citizen-based groups created to give voice to public opinion were encouraged and then ignored by a system that, ultimately, appears to be indifferent to this voice. Citizens suffer from their hopes for change being constantly raised and then dashed, which is also exemplified by the frustration of the shop owners in Piazza Domenicani and Piazza della Vittoria. This wearing down of resistance risks leading to apathy,[8] and to the subsequent acceptance of policies that are predominantly in the interest of the market rather than that of the citizen. This, in turn, raises the question of how neoliberalism undermines democracy (Pinson and Morel Jounel 2016) by turning the concept of freedom into mere freedom of enterprise, where the place of planning (when it does not incorporate the interests of stakeholders) is reduced to the denial of freedom (David 2007).

Ethnographic research, particularly the use of participatory tools that raise public opinion to the level of expert (Wortham-Galvin 2013), should be an obligatory part of the urban planning approach, with the results considered as part of a collaborative planning process. However, its contribution is clearly limited if this is not the case (See also Shore et al. eds 2011).

By definition, a piazza should be a social space that serves citizens. Piazza Domenicani and the Parco and Piazza della Vittoria*,* fail miserably in fulfilling this service. They are described as empty and abandoned, suffering from neglect and decline. This state is literally personified by the presence of the group of homeless people in the Parco and Piazza della Vittoria*.* The volunteers who care for this homeless group have argued for their right to use this space and not to be further marginalized. This position is supported by Mitchell (2003), who expresses his unease when the homeless are denied access to public space and argues for a democracy that tolerates difference. However, for many shop owners and residents, the homeless occupying the park have no such legitimacy (Boucher 2019). They contribute to the degradation of the piazza and the park and prevent 'legitimate users' from occupying the space. Nevertheless, it appears that these 'legitimate users' have largely chosen not to occupy the Piazza and Parco della Vittoria and the homeless are only there because of the absence of others filling this space. Clearly the piazza remains a 'non-place' because of it use as a car park, but why does the park remain empty? It has trees and grass and benches where people can sit. Maybe it is empty because it is constantly described as abandoned and in a state of degradation, which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Rotenberg and McDonogh 1993). Or it could be because — as expressed by the architect and the shop keeper quoted earlier — it needs to be ruptured and detached from its 'architectural mummifications' (Mumford 1938). Maybe it needs to undergo a physical transformation that will allow it to take on a new, more hospitable form? Is it this kind of transformation that the Buildings Commission's architect I spoke with was resisting? His comment that the piazza should retain its 'original logic' is odd when we consider that the piazza's construction took place during a period when public space was used for military parades and the 'making of totalitarian urban space' (Atkinson 1998: 13). It is a shame that he was unwilling to elaborate on his statement.

[8] Citizen apathy is also counterproductive for the work of the anthropologist whose research relies on the cooperation and collaboration of their focus of study, in this case the local population (Hayward et al. 2004, Clark 2008).

The hypothesis that public space needs to break with its past in order to provide for present needs is supported by the situation in Piazza Mazzini. The piazza has succeeded in reinventing itself to become an embodied space. In fact, so many different cultures and age groups share this space that the question is raised of whether the socio-spatial contact between different groups succeeds in creating the healthy development of urban citizens described by Sennett as the spatial ideal of public space (Sennett 2002.) Although there was little sign of contact between the various groups, the very fact that they manage to share this space with little or no indication of tension would suggest evidence of healthy urban citizenship. Change and adaptation has been rewarded with social, lived space.

Returning to the key question of this article: To what extent can ethnographic research in an urban environment make a valid contribution to urban planning? With its mixed methodological approach, it can provide powerful insight into an understanding of the state of public urban space (Pardo and Prato 2012). The stakeholder analysis allows for relevant voices to be heard (Ervin 1996, Pardo and Prato 2018). Photography and participant observation give an idea of spatial use and meaning at a given time and over a period of time. The historical context is understood through archival research on the distant past, and selected interviews allow an understanding of more recent events. Participatory tools allow a targeted approach that has the capacity to obtain feedback from larger numbers. Combined with an understanding of the political and economic context through an analytical tool such as Foucault's theory of power, the result is not so much thick description (Geertz 1973), as a broad and layered spread of narratives that can be confirmed, challenged or deepened through further research.

Having said this, the power of the research is dramatically reduced if the methods and results are not incorporated into the urban planning process (Price and Arteaga 2002). In cases where ethnographic research is not being used as part of such process, the anthropologist's only option is for his/her research to be used to support the advocacy work of citizen-focused groups such as *Quasi Zentrum* and *lab:bz.*

However, by recognising the fluidity of power and the subsequent potential for change on the part of all those involved in the power network, Foucault indicates an optimistic outlook (Foucault 1985). The flexible nature of this position provides recognition of the reality of power relations, whilst acknowledging the potential for a rebalancing of this power (Foucault 1980). This statement of potential, and therefore optimism for the possibility of change, means that citizen-focused advocacy work can remain an important option even in cases where the institutional power behind urban planning repeatedly ignores efforts to involve citizens in the decision-making process and/or actively surveys, controls and prohibits citizens' behaviour (Pinson and Morel Journel 2016, Fusty 2004.).

The results of this research clearly bring out three main demands by citizens for public space. They are: less traffic, more green space and more social interaction. The irony is that the city council should be welcoming these demands as they run parallel to the requirements for more sustainable cities, which all urban conglomerations will be required to adhere to in the future (Colantonio and Dixon 2011, Kelbaugh 2019, Colau 2016). Anthropological research in

the city should continue to be used to reinforce stakeholder opinions in whatever way it can and by doing so contribute to a readjustment of power relations in the urban planning process.

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**Review Article**

# *Ethnic Identity, Then and Now*

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I was pleased to be asked to write a foreword for my good friend and colleague Rosemary Serra's *Sense of Origins: A Study of New York's Young Italian Americans* (2020). Re-reading her text has led me to reflect on my own personal and academic experience with the Italian American Experience. I have long-followed her impressive trail of well-informed and well-researched studies of Americans of Italian descent. I have also been not a little jealous of her closer attention to a subject to which she is also 'well-connected'. Like her, my own interest and involvement in Americans of various generations of Italian descent has grown over a very long time. However, as opposed to her natural and deeply-felt personal Italian roots, my own half-Italian (rather Sicilian) roots are quite shallow. For 'White Ethnics' like me, Richard Alba's admonition that Italian Americans were well into *The Twilight of Ethnicity* (1985) is more apropos.

My distinguished old friend Rudolph Vecoli, (1927-2008) was a major force in Italian American studies beginning, but not ending, with his pioneer study of the *Contadini in Chicago* (1964). In this classic work, he passionately criticized Oscar Handlin, the premier scholar of turn of Twentieth Century American immigration, for his book *The Uprooted* that essentially condemned the imported culture of Italian immigrants to not only assimilation and acculturation but oblivion as well. Vecoli would have thought of Dr Serra as one of the tens of millions of 'rooted' (racinated) Americans. On the other hand, I would clearly fit the bill of fellow Brooklyn-born Handlin's *Uprooted* (deracinated), being thoroughly assimilated. Here I should note that Vecoli did not end with his complaint against Handlin in 1964, and three decades later published a racially, as well as culturally, provocative essay 'Are Italian Americans Just White Folks?' (1995).

Serra was aware, if not a bit stimulated, by my pioneering studies of Italian American students at Brooklyn College (1975, 1978, 1986). These studies came about because of my commitment, not to my co-ethnics, as I did not yet see them in that light, but because, like other minorities in the CUNY system, their culture was not understood and therefore their educational needs were neglected. Had she conducted the research at that time (1975), I am sure their needs would have been better met than was the response to my limited study, which, not coincidentally, led to the eventual establishment of the John. D. Calandra Italian American Institute, which immensely facilitated her later, much more expansive work.

The major finding of my work was the Italian American students of all immigrant generations did not 'feel at home' at Brooklyn College. I am pleased, and honoured, that she included some my discussions of Italian Americana in this book.

> 'Krase (2003), with the intention of defining Italian Americans in today's society, maintains that although they are well integrated into the American social structure, they are still distinct. He adds that "despite the concrete disunity of Italian Americans, they are united by images shared in people's minds about who they are" (ibid, 14). These representations of Italian Americans can be contradictory because, despite the stereotypes, the individuals are very different from each other. In fact, as with other large groups of ethnic Americans, "Italian Americans do not comprise a monolithic and cohesive group, but they are instead members of the most disparate communities" (ibid). Thus it is possible to arrive at the paradox that "in many cases, Italian Americans have more in common with non-Italian Americans than they do with others in their own group"' (ibid). (Serra 117)

Serra was also far bettered prepared for her extremely detailed study that includes a variety of qualitative as well as quantitative methods. This challenging, multi-method approach is required in order to see the multifaceted phenomenon of adjustment, as immigrants of all origins have struggled to 'make it' in America; or simply to be tolerated, or to fit into it. Hers was a two-phased project beginning with 51 in- depth interviews from which she developed a detailed questionnaire to administer to a sample of 277 Young Italian Americans. Most impressive for me, as an urban ethnographer, were her in-depth interviews. Such deep probing is the only way to get at the core of the heart of ethnic identity. I suggest that the details of the questionnaire construction provided in the text should be used as a guide for others; especially for conducting comparative research within and between ethnic groups, albeit with much larger sample sizes. which is sorely needed in the field of Ethnic Studies of all kinds. A further enhancement of Serra's study would be the inclusion of direct ethnographic observation, such as participant observation, of the social behaviour of some of the young Italian Americans in her study. Direct observations of family, peer group, and neighbourhood life, as well as religious and associational life would complement, and I believe support, her detailed analysis of data from other collection methods.

Although I found all eight chapters to be rich in scholarly content, I was most impressed with Chapter 12, 'Profiles of Young Italian Americans'. In Chapter 12 Serra related her subjects' connection to Italian and Italian American culture by their level of knowledge to their level of emotion and attachment. The resulting Table 12.1 'Characteristics of the Four Groups of Young Italian Americans' (p.281) mimicked Robert K. Merton's 'Paradigm of Anomie'. The compilation resulted in four self-explanatory groups: Contemporaries (19.3%), Integrated (25.5%), Disinherited (19.3%) and Traditionals (35.9%). Each of the groups is provided with a detailed sketch and is statistically enhanced with extensive tabular data, as is true of all her other discussions. As to this vast improvement on my pioneering studies of young Italian Americans, my simple paradigm of connection to Italy, from most to least assimilated, was based simply on how they identified themselves as 'Italian', 'Italian-American', 'American Italian' and 'American'. I was also interested in who played the most important roles in connecting them with Italian culture and found that Mothers and Grandmothers were most

important. Serra's more sophisticated analysis found some agreement in that Young Italian Americans ranked the influence of: Grandmothers (75.1 %), Other Relatives (73.6%), Self. (69%), Father (65.7%), Mother (62.5%), Grandfather (62.1%), Everyone (48%) and No One (1.1%).

I am compelled to quote from Serra's 'Concluding Reflections', as to how young Italian Americans might best connect to their origins. After passing reference to the efforts of public institutions to promote a sense of ethnic identity for other Americans, she reported that her subjects did not expect similar treatment and offers the following solution:

> 'The young people must be able to find support and engage in meetings where bidirectional exchanges with previous generations occur. These young people, in their transition to adulthood, are looking for identifications with meaningful 'others'; the elder generations should not remove themselves and shirk this passage but instead help the younger ones find reasons to fell connected to this inheritance, yet also provide a space to exchange ideas, involving the youth and making them responsible for finding their own "way" of interpreting and loving this culture through knowledge and their own personal contribution.' (329)

As a visual sociologist, I also have a special interest in her various intensive treatments of the image and stereotype of the members of the Italian American community as they have a reciprocal relation to both still and moving images as well as their portrayal in literature. Serra's book, and particularly her analysis in Chapter 5 'The Image of Italian Americans', clearly demonstrates that there is no easy 'one image fits all' for her, and may I now say 'my' community. For ethnographers of Italian Americans as well as others included in the subjects of race and ethnicity in the United States, this exceptional work provides a solid platform from which to do much-needed comparative research within and between ethnic groups and cohorts. Her Notes and Bibliography are also impressive.

As what I hope will be many other readers of *A Sense of Origins*, I look forward to the many future scholarly fruits of her labour. I especially await to learn of the prospects for Italian American culture in the decades to come. I should note at this point that Alba's use of the term 'Twilight' (1985) to symbolize a pessimistic view of the sunset of even a hybrid Italian American culture might be a mistake as twilight also refers to sunrise. In sum, I recommend this book, which was originally published in 2017 as *Il Senso delle Origini: Indagini sui giovani italoamericani di New York* (Milano: Franco Angeli), to all those wishing an in-depth study of not only a particular hyphenated American ethnic group, but an excellent multi-methodology that should be applied to other groups. I also repeat the suggestion of ethnographic follow-up studies of young Italian Americans and other groups.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**M. Bell and G. Armstrong**, 2021. *A Social History of Sheffield Boxing*, *Vol. 1 – Rings of Steel, 1720-1970*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book, published in the Series 'Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology', sets out to discover the history of boxing and to establish how Sheffield grew into a city that is now synonymous with boxing world champions and trainers. The authors Bell and Armstrong, neither of whom claim to be experts on boxing or pugilism, use a wide range of sources of information to track the development of boxing in the city. It is the depth of research that makes this book so compelling and informative, using historical written evidence from newspapers, Government publications, a number of important images and even notes from court proceedings.

This is not just a book about boxing, but a commentary on the social conditions in Sheffield around 150 years ago, when the first boxing events took place in the City. Sheffield was never considered to be a pleasant place to live, certainly a 'tough' Northern working-class industrial city as portrayed in Samuel Sydney's comment in *Rides on Railways*, 'Sheffield is very ugly and gloomy: it is scarcely possible to say that there is a single good street'. This might be one of the reasons why boxing became popular as a way to escape poverty, when in the late 1880s a typical prize was as much a factory worker might earn in a year, and boxers could earn more than in any other sport at that time. What this book also shows is that it was the promoters and investors in boxing who earned the most from boxing, which is perhaps true of boxing today, and that, from the very beginning, the safety of boxing was questioned. In fact, the introduction of gloves, in response to the dangers of bare-knuckle fighting, seemed to lead to even more injuries and inevitably deaths. If the Government had taken more notice of the inherent dangers in boxing, then one could argue that it should have been banned long ago. Boxing was also linked with drinking and betting, which tended to attract a rowdier clientele.

The first Sheffield boxer was George James Corfield — born in London — who fought for the first time in 1890, but up until that time, most of the events were held with fighters from the USA and other parts of the UK. He quickly established himself as a trainer and promoter and built a boxing club with some of his earnings to help develop the next generation of fighter.

The setting up of the Boxing Board of Control and the support of the King, in the late 1920s further legitimised boxing, although many boxers continued to die as a result of their injuries. Boxing was further promoted as a 'morale builder' and one that could address class issues, and its popularity grew.

It is for the reader to make up their mind about the importance of boxing and its inherent dangers to boxers, and this volume sets up the reader to discover more about the history of boxing in Sheffield. This volume ends in the 1960s, a period of considerable change in the city; but in boxing terms, Sheffield was set to become an important centre for producing future world champions. What makes this book stand out

is the level of research and attention to detail covering some 80 years of sporting and social history, featuring not only Sheffield and its boxers, but also boxers from other cities and countries. This book is a must for those interested in the history of sport, the sociology of sport and even the business of sport.

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**Matthew Bell and Gary Armstrong,** 2021. *A Social History of Sheffield Boxing*, *Vol. 2 – Scrap Merchants, 1970-2020*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

For me, a lad born and reared in inner city Sheffield in the 1950s and 1960s, Bell and Armstrong have not only crafted in this volume (as Sean Bean dubs it in his inspiring Foreword) a 'great read' but they have also expertly evidenced the power of sport (in this case boxing) to transform lives for generations of young people born into disadvantage.

Sheffield born and well known for their contributions to the written knowledge of aspects of a city that had faced deindustrialisation on a massive scale, the authors' comprehensive and detailed chapters notes and references illustrate the depth of their journey into the world of boxing.

Interestingly, neither of them is from the sport or make a living reporting on it. Neither is the research the product of funding. They are, as they state in volume 1, just two nosey locals who were fascinated by any correlate between place and athletic ability.

The outcome is not a book about who hit whom where and when. It — obviously — focuses on many individuals crucial to what one commentator has termed 'showbusiness with blood' but equal consideration is afforded the circumstances in which, in a city undergoing enormous economic, political and social upheaval, the neighbourhood boxing club led by dedicated and caring innovators inspired young people to escape both themselves in many ways and the tyranny of the 'street'.

Boxing is described as one of Sheffield's success stories at a time when the city, at a low point, bedevilled by the impact of industrial change and strife, sought to re-emerge from decay. In searching an explanation for this success, the authors' focus is on lesser-known practitioners rather than the superstars who have written their autobiographies to tell their stories. As the authors say, their work is intended to be a 'biography of a city and its boxing people'.

An explanation of the context of the fight game and the complexities of exploring its soul and energy emerge in two dozen life stories. Collectively these present a powerful picture and convey a sense of 'salvation' ('redemption') from waywardness, criminality, drugs that obeying the strict discipline and rules of the gym demands. Many individuals are remodelled, changed, freed from the practices of the street but remain (as they record) 'one of us'.

Crucially, the authors account for those who lapsed in their pursuit of the straight road; boxing does not work for everybody.

For this reader, the role played by Brendan Ingle, his family and others who have followed in their path most relates to my own experience. Taken off the streets to play table tennis, tennis and football by dedicated grassroots coaches changed my whole view of what life could be about and what I could achieve through hard graft. None of those teaching me reached the heights of the Ingles whose innovatory practices challenged the boxing orthodoxy of the time, imposed a rigid and unbending discipline on their boxers, and acted as the standard for others who left their teachings to open boxing clubs in other disadvantaged areas. They like the Ingles cared deeply about their protegés not necessarily as potential champions like Herol Graham, Johnny Nelson, Junior Witter, Kell Brook and others, but as young people who could make a better and healthier life for themselves through participation in their sport.

The Ingle gym was not about making champions — champions were almost a by-product of more modest ambitions. In Ingle's words, progress was '[…] someone going to College rather than being a labourer' and someone else '[…] holding down a job'. Examples include 'Towering' Towers who was transformed from drugs and violence to being a trainer and who recounted that '[Ingle] saw qualities in me that I weren't experienced or educated enough to see'; and Reagan Denton who was once a boxing champion who lapsed into drugs, then transformed from heroin addict to community champion. As co-founder of the 'De Hood' social enterprise at the Manor Top, one of Sheffield's most difficult areas, Denton presides over a premise that provides a safe place from austerity, community breakdown and offers meanwhile all who enter a chance in his words to 'learn from my mistakes'.

Chapters 1 and 5 provide fascinating insights into the beliefs, characteristics and modus operandi of the mentors, trainers, organisers who played a huge part in creating what has been the enduring success of the City's boxing achievements. That journeys from gyms in the backstreets of Sheffield were not smooth is hardly surprising. Harnessing the 'hard man' identity that had arisen to replace the masculine identity associated with gruelling work in tough industries (mining/steel) not only required a personal philosophy that was applied equally to all to be they potential champions, journeymen or just young men seeking sanctuary from the streets but also a single-minded dedication to the goals of the enterprise.

Challenging the orthodoxy of the time, dealing with spectacular break ups (as between Ingle and Prince Nasim), and handling events that ranged through working men's clubs to spectacular world championship fights held in football stadia and on TV with huge audiences evidence the authors' description of Brendan Ingle as 'innovator, technician, entrepreneur, philanthropist, disciplinarian'. Chapters 2-4 exemplify the relationships between boxers, mentors, and the art of boxing; the final chapter, in summarising the characteristics of the young men who came forward to

subject themselves to the discipline of the gym and the ring, ably demonstrates that they came from a range of backgrounds, talents, motivations and ethnicities and mainly from the city's council housing estates. To the question as to why so many able fighters emerged in the city over some 30 years the authors concluded that if there were any indications of a would-be champion, then it was a mix of 'innate ability' and 'learned dedication' that separated them from the others together with coming willingly into the fight game both motivated and self-aware.

Those who achieve(d) greatness are but a few of the thousands of young people who passed through the Ingles' gyms and the many thousands of others that led media to describe Sheffield in 2016 as in the top three of 'boxing cities' based on urban population and boxing clubs within its boundary, but they prompted the authors' question 'What makes for a champion?'. The search was ultimately bound up in the notion of *genus loci.* This provoked a most fascinating digression into research into a pursuit that many consider as equal to boxing in its obsessive and individualistic characteristics — ballet. If anything, this short discursive section that raises notions of social capital (acquired though ballet/boxing education) and competing styles both between ballet schools and boxing gyms provides a fascinating and new train of thought at the conclusion of the volume.

For this reader who has devoted much of his voluntary activity into attempts to redress the imbalance between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in access to the social, physical and health benefits that engagement in sport brings, this study, published in the Series 'Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology', makes an important contribution to the literature in that field. Sheffield is indeed a 'City of Champions' but its amateur boxing clubs also make their special contribution to well-being and community cohesion in some of the most challenging urban areas.

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**Andrew Deener**. 2020. *The Problem with Feeding Cities: The Social Transformation of Infrastructure, Abundance, and Inequality in America*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

In *Feeding Cities*, Andrew Deener looks at how cities have evolved to feed the people who live in them. While many take the current infrastructure for granted, the industrialized, big box retain chain is the result of various demographic shifts and urban transformations. Using one city in particular, Philadelphia, we get a clear picture of the logics and entanglements between urban infrastructure and food distribution.

In short, we have come a long way. The customer of the corner grocer of the early 1900s likely would not recognize the supermarket of today. The produce and other products would likely confound comprehension; out-of-season fruits and vegetables; foodstuffs from other countries; and the vast volume of goods stored on site have dramatically changed in a relatively short period of time. Even trying to figure

out how all of that stuff got here would be difficult to say the least.

Deener urges us to think of food as similar to other goods, electricity, housing, etc. that changed dramatically in the United States, and elsewhere, in the twentieth century. Of course, food is imbricated in larger systems, such as public health, urbanism, capitalism, and the environment. The food system operates under a profit-driven logic that cities had to reconcile with and adapt to. Many did not; many could not. The result was many inner-cities and inner-ring suburbs were left behind as grocers became corporations and shifted outside of urban confines. Wholesale systems, think large farmers markets where farmers dropped off truck-loads of produce for small grocers to pick up, where food was not refrigerated and left to rot or for other, more furry consumers, rise and fell. With the wholesale system, urban middlemen, who delivered to stores or helped facilitate distribution elsewhere, perished. By the 1950s the wharfs and multi-story distribution centres had fallen into disrepair (and are only now being rehabilitated as living spaces in some cities) and key distribution spots emerged trying to connect urban areas with a migratory population that was moving into outer-suburban regions. In many places, like Philadelphia, this required new urban forms — both spatial, like decentring the urban food market — and relational, like the necessitation of planning committees. Getting food into the city was not the issue anymore, getting it around increasingly dense but simultaneously sprawled cities was problematic, as was getting it out of the city to newly developed areas.

Deener does an excellent job taking the reader on this trip — by boat, by railroad, long haulers, and cars — to see how our food gets from point A to point B (with a lot of other points in-between). As he notes throughout the text, these changes were complex. They did not occur because of simple changes in movements of goods, but from adjusting numerous organizational, technological and relational components. In one chapter, for instance, he discusses how the introduction of the bar code system represented a 'new infrastructural regime'. While the components for this system were developed independently, they, along with the humans who became entangled in them, were forced into an interdependent assemblage. The end result was new efficiencies which materialized both into larger profits (for those grocers who could take the most advantage of the technology — think Wal-Mart) and new logistics between geographies of production and consumption. To give the reader an idea of the scope of this change — it was originally estimated that approximately 6,000 grocers would use the universal product codes — today in the United States alone there are over five billion bar codes scanned every day.

One of the after-thoughts of the change in food distribution systems is food apartheid, especially in urban neighbourhoods. The elimination of the corner grocers and the cost-efficiencies of the big box stores, has created large swaths of urban areas where there are few if any

opportunities to purchase fresh produce. This has resulted in high rates of urban food poverty and the emergence in the mid-twentieth century of a charity-based emergency food system. Likewise, as we have shifted from local farms supplying corner grocers to large, industrial, regional farms supplying the nation, we have made it difficult for small producers to plug into the distribution system. Farming and packing techniques have to be completely adjusted into retailers' sociotechnical systems (p. 204). As such local producers are often left out of local markets. Thus, while alternative systems, such as the slow food and locavore movements, have risen as outlets for local goods, many urban residents are left out of these movements because of cost (and rural residents are left out because of location). As Deener notes, this is an 'unfinished infrastructure' that cities and regions are managing, but most urban grocers left cities because of changes in land use and transit and it is not clear how these patterns will change anytime soon.

Deener's analysis of urban food relationships took a lot of work. His findings come from nearly analysing a hundred years-worth of archival materials, policy and planning reports, material from newspapers, feasibility studies and tours of dozens of facilities, and close to two hundred interviews from a wide range of people. To his credit he does an amazing job telling an incredibly complicated story. Changes in food distribution in the twentieth century led to much of the infrastructural decay we see in US cities in the twenty-first century. Likewise, changes in urban distribution patterns solidified and some places exacerbated food inequalities that still reverberate today. And yet, we rarely see or think about these relationships, preferring, at least in the US, to focus on other key systems and institutions. Deener's book helps think about the interdependent relationship between cities and food which will be needed to solve *The Problem with Feeding Cities*.

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**Pepper Glass**. 2020. *Misplacing Ogden Utah: Race, Class, Immigration and the Construction of Urban Reputations*. The University of Utah Press.

Generally, when we think of places as good or bad, we believe we are making objective distinctions. We like to think that places that have high crime rates or lots of abandoned houses probably veer towards one side of the continuum and places with lots of amenities, like good schools, trendy restaurants, or parks veer towards the other end. Glass shows us that these kinds of qualifiers are more complicated and that they often rest on urban reputations.

This seems to be the case with Ogden, Utah. Ogden is depicted as both good and bad; as understood and misunderstood; as a ghetto and as a home. Ogden is in some ways a paradigmatic place to study urban reputations. After it became a central point for rail travel and shipping, it diverged from Salt Lake City. Residents of Salt Lake, having hoped it would get the rail station, were quick to stigmatize Ogden. Glass calls phenomena like this, 'historical echoes'. These echoes reverberate, creating

conditions that continue to shape a place long after the historical antecedent is long forgotten. As such, Ogden is much less Mormon and much more secular; it is less white and more diverse; and it has more immigrants than the surrounding region.

As Glass notes, in Utah these are often the categories of the dominant and dominated. Residents of the inner city, particularly members of the Latinx population and some native residents, see Ogden as a special place. The further one travels from downtown Ogden, the more likely the positive view of the town recedes. By the time one is outside of Ogden, the typically higher-class, white, and Mormon residents are quick to point out Ogden's bad reputation. Glass writes that rather than focus on culture of poverty arguments for downtrodden urban areas, we should focus on the 'culture of abundance' of outsiders who work to maintain urban divisions through reputations.

Urban reputations hinge on what Glass calls 'moral frontiers'. Creating these frontiers involves boundary making and boundary policing, and thus the meaning(s) of the reputations are always oscillating, reflecting the beliefs of different groups. Of course, much of this work is identity construction/maintenance; using social demarcations to create ingroups and outgroups. Thus, while everyone in Ogden can point to the bad part of town, for some it is a narrowly defined space involving a few blocks. For others it is west of a particular street. Individuals seeking status or attempting to protect the status they already have engage in demarcating projects. This occurs at times with native residents who want to see themselves or position themselves as the moral equivalent of outsiders and thus further away from the immigrants who inhabit the 'bad' Ogden. Ogden is a racial and cultural outlier. In a state that celebrates homogeneity and conformity, Ogden is different; different is bad; so, Ogden is bad (p. 42).

Glass notes that these demarcations often do not prevent those who disassociate with the people on the other side of the moral/spatial boundary from nonetheless consuming their culture or foodways. Similar to other places, notably parts of New Orleans or Memphis, where outsiders come to consume cultural goods while disparaging the people who live there, or natives who depend on the newcomers for service jobs or domestic work and simultaneously complain about immigration policy, Ogden both attracts and repels. The cognitive dissonance of some residents who experience Ogden as a good place, but have bought into the reputation of 'bad Ogden', comes across in interviews with Glass where they seek reassurance that they have experienced bad things or note stabbings they have heard about or possible gang members they think they have seen in the area, only to laugh it off.

Many residents engage in what Glass calls 'micro-differentiation' to minimize the bad reputation of Ogden, but allow for the existence of 'others' that may be justifying that constructed reputation. The city likewise does this, minimizing the difference between outsiders and insiders, between Ogden and other towns in the region, and between its diverse past and present. City leaders go to great lengths to

distance themselves from the bad reputation of Ogden and the people they believe are responsible for that bad reputation—immigrants. In this way they not only whitewash portions of Ogden, but fail to address legitimate issues in marginalized communities.

These moral reputations are obviously symbolic but eventually reproduce structural inequalities. People move away from certain parts of the city; businesses relocate or opt to build elsewhere; rents decrease; and both people and places become abandoned. As such, Glass explains that understanding the genesis and maintenance of these reputations are important for unifying communities and for urban regeneration. In understanding reputations as boundaries rather than through disorder or disorganization, we can get rid of the partitions that keep downtowns down.

Ultimately, Glass suggests rather than undoing boundary making activities, which would be difficult, residents and regionalists should engage in 'blurring boundaries', which may be more difficult than focusing on micro-differentiation strategies. Glass advocates for getting outsiders and insiders, those with a pejorative view and those with a positive view of Ogden together, be it through festivals, sports activities, or live music. It might be naïve, but it is certainly better than the status quo.

*Misplacing Ogden* is a quick, but insightful read that will make the reader think about the 'bad' neighbourhoods in their own cities. What historical echoes cause those places to separate from the 'good' neighbourhoods? Who gains by constructing and reproducing these bad reputations? Hopefully, Glass's book will help start us down the road of studying urban reputations.

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**Jerome Krase and Judith N. DeSena** (eds). 2020. *Gentrification around the World, Volume I: Gentrifiers and the Displaced*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
**and**
**Jerome Krase and Judith N. DeSena** (eds). 2020. *Gentrification around the World, Volume II: Innovative Approaches*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Between the 1970s and 1980s some anthropologists were deeply influenced by the perspective of political economy, aiming to understand everyday city life as it is influenced by capitalist structures and relations of production. Since the late 1980s, an important development in urban studies has been the so-called spatial shift, which in general and, indicatively, draws on the work of Michel Foucault on the relationship between space, power and knowledge, of Henri Lefebvre for the social production of space, of Michel de Certeau on the way in which agents negotiate space, and David Harvey's marxist approach to capitalist urbanization, the geographical transfer of value and the spatial class structure. The encounter of anthropologists with the concept of space renewed both their approach and their views about issues related with social reproduction and perceptions of it, as they are shaped and expressed through architecture and the

dominant logic of urban planning. In this context, the concept of space and its integration into the anthropological agenda raises the question of defining the field, which can no longer concern 'entrenched' entities but may 'include' broader networks and links, which are carried out within and through the space. As has been argued, the field, as a place of research and institutional recognition, is an integral and irreplaceable territory of data-tapping and of ethnographic practice. It, however, is not a self-evident reality, always ready to 'welcome' in situ social and cultural action. In the current context, spaces are recognized as functioning more like palimpsests within which the stakes of the game of identity, multiplicity and consequent relationships are in an endless process of re-registration. We are well aware that the 'Other' is closer than ever, as social groups and actors are not so strictly encapsulated in spatially demarcated or culturally homogeneous places. The anthropological inquiry now challenges the spatial identity of local social groups that studies and accepts the fluidity and relativity of their cultural differentiation in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world. This fact has considerable effects on the methodological view of the field, from where the anthropologist, after a long stay, retrieves the material of his study. For anthropologists, and many ethnographers from cognate disciplines, the main issue is to look for a way to explore the de-territorialized trajectories of peoples, spaces and places by means of a conception of the field as a not given and non-stable space of social action. This presupposes a comprehensive reassessment of the field as containing social life in a given situation as well as an epistemological reframing of both the field of research and the field of anthropological endeavor. Therefore, the ethnographic field is a space through which social action exists, it is a means of highlighting the variety of practices and not their teleological end. This is because this action is also determined by processes that are not located directly in the field, but often beyond that, in other spaces. From this point of view, urban anthropologists and sociologists perceive the city and its space as a set of processes rather than as a consolidated territory in the context of global connections and flows.

It is in this theoretical context, in my view, that these two important volumes published in the Series 'Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology' are embedded. The first volume, *Gentrification around the World, Volume I: Gentrifiers and the Displaced*, introduced by the editors, Jerome Krase and Judith N. DeSena, is divided in three parts concerning America, Europe, Middle East and Far East. The chapters look in depth at urban issues, based on detailed and thorough ethnography. The topics include but are not limited to: social class, development, im/migration, housing, race relations, political economy, power dynamics, inequality, displacement, social segregation, homogenization, urban policy, planning, and design. They are: 'Brooklyn Revisited: An Illustrated View from the Street 1970 to the Present' by Judith N. DeSena and Jerome Krase; 'Gentrification and Aging in Montreal, Quebec: Housing

Insecurity and Displacement Among Older Tenants' by Julien Simard; 'Forced Removals in Gentrifying Rio de Janeiro and San Francisco: Experiencing Displacement' by Sukari Ivester; 'Gentrification Vernacular in Malasaña, Madrid, by Fernando Monge; 'Visualizing the Contrary Logics of "Regeneration" Through Arts Practice-Based Research' by Fiona Woods; 'Visualizing Gentrification in Ancoats, Manchester: A Multi-Method Approach to Mapping Change' by Gary Bratchford; '"We're Not Moving": Solidarity and Collective Housing Struggle in a Changing Sweden' by Catharina Thörn; 'Pacifying La Goutte d'Or, Getting Paris More French: Grounding Gentrification in a Cosmopolitan Neighborhood' by Maria Anita Palumbo; 'Residential Transformation Leading to Gentrification: Cases from Istanbul' by Nil Uzun; 'Tourism Gentrification of the Old City of Damascus' by Faedah M. Totah; 'When Ideology Replaces the Market: Gentrification in East Jerusalem' by Ori Swed; and 'Gentrification, Machizukuri, and Ontological Insecurity: Bottom-Up Redevelopment and the Cries of Residents in Kamagasaki, Osaka' by Matthew D. Marr.

The second volume, *Gentrification around the World, Volume II: Innovative Approaches*, introduced once more by Jerome Krase and Judith N. DeSena, takes a more global perspective. It includes four parts, addressing respectively North America, Europe, Africa, and South Asia. Special emphasis is given to gentrification outside Western Europe and the United States of America, as well as to methodology. Chapters are about: 'Life on the Algorithmic Estate: The Neo-Feudal Logic of Corporate Sovereignty' by Stephanie Polsky; 'New Business in the Old Neighborhood: Young Polish Shopkeepers' Responses to Commercial Gentrification in Greenpoint, Brooklyn' by Aneta Kostrzewa; 'Social Transformation and Urban Regeneration: Three Interpretations on the Phenomenon of Gentrification in the Historic Center of A Coruña (Spain)' by Alberto Rodríguez-Barcón, Estefanía Calo and Raimundo Otero-Enríquez; 'Shimmering Surfaces, Toxic Atmospheres, Incendiary Miracles: Public Housing and the Aesthetics of Re-Valorization in Salford UK' by John van Aitken and Jane Brake; 'Anti-Displacement Social Movements in Lisbon: A Perspective from the Trenches in the Fight Against Transnational Gentrification' by Luís Filipe Goncalves Mendes; 'The Politics of Visibility: Gentrification and Immigration in East London' by Timothy Shortell; 'MyyrYork: Rejuvenating a Housing Estate Neighborhood for the Next Generation of Residents' by Johanna Lilius; 'Revanchist Kigali: Retro-Victorian Urbanism and the Gentrification of a Twenty-First-Century Metropolis' by Samuel Shearer; 'Tools for Citizen Participation in Segmented Societies: The Case of Barranco' by Waltraud Müllauer-Seichter; 'Gentrification Processes in the City of Buenos Aires: New Features and Old Tendencies' by María Mercedes Di Virgilio; 'Gentrification and Post-industrial Spatial Restructuring in Calcutta, India' by Tathagata Chatterji and Souvanic Roy; and 'The Systemic Gentrification of Education in India: A Media Case Study' by Eddie Boucher.

Both volumes show that urban research is an indispensable source of ethnographic data precisely because it takes place in

settings that are transformed, sometimes invisibly and sometimes clearly, and that these places act as mediators of social practice, a fact that in turn counteract through space and shape it. This involves the conditions and the possibility of conceiving the field as an open system of social activity. Through this perspective, both volumes highlight what is not obvious when research is a-spatial. In this context, both volumes show that research gives the possibility to understand that the formation of space is closely linked to the production of difference and multiplicity. Krase and DeSena work timely and sensitively in this line, seeking to show that it is important to explore how space is created, as the result of interrelated movements, material practices and hierarchical actions. These need space to be carried out. Just as there are no autonomous spatial processes, so there are no non-spatial social processes. And it is in this sense that, as the paradigm of gentrification shows, these imply plurality. But precisely because of this multiplicity space is always incomplete, in a constant becoming; and this is why it is produced anew. Krase and DeSena offer an excellent work, a springboard for knowledge and future research.

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**Germaine R. Halegoua**. 2020. *The Digital City: Media and the Social Production of Place*. New York: New York University Press.

*The Digital City* is an engaging and original book that offers a new theoretical framework for reconceptualizing digital media and digitally mediated interactions as placemaking activities. The author, Germaine R. Halegoua, is a Film and Media Studies scholar at the University of Kansas and advocates for a reimagining of our daily interactions with digital technologies, media and infrastructure. Based on several case studies conducted across the United States and various analysis techniques including participant observation, and content, discourse and textual analysis, *The Digital City* builds a strong investigation of urban digital placemaking. The book is organized into five chapters over 226 pages; Chapters 1 and 2 address re-placing the city in terms of formal, strategic urban development, Chapters 3 and 4 examine how the individual, habitual uses of digital media re-place urban environments by creating and expressing emotional connections to place and emplaced identities. Chapter 5 analyses both formal and habitual uses of digital media in creative placemaking practices, dissecting how digital media is paradoxically situated in creative placemaking for its recognition as both a beneficial tool and an enemy of place-engaged human interaction.

In Chapter 1, Halegoua identifies and thoughtfully critiques the various ways in which urban planners, technology developers and city officials often struggle to incorporate the people into their smart city designs. Halegoua analyses the outcomes and potential outcomes of three smart-from-the-star cities mainly through their discursive constructions in: (1) Songdo, South Korea; (2) Masdar City, Abu Dhab; and (3) PlanIT Valley, Portugal. Due to smart city developer goals of economic development and data production, the

designs are centred around creating a local business environment that supports a global business community (p. 48). In order to generate excitement and build successful, inclusive smart cities, Halegoua urges smart city designers to reconceptualize the city as a 'field of care' instead of spaces for domination (p. 63).

In Chapter 2, the reader learns how different models of digital infrastructure deployment can be designed and marketed as solutions to digital divides and promise to create a newfound connection within cities, but they often generate boundaries of inclusion and exclusion and intensify already existing place-based inequalities. Using the case example of Google Fiber for Communities project in Kansas City, Missouri, Halegoua explores how this project re-placed the city without recognizing community member's diverse relationships to the city or the pre-existing disparities that would influence its technology adoption. This chapter does a wonderful job of accounting for various forms of place attachment and digital literacy within cities and begins to fill the gap in present literature concerning how technology non-use, media refusal or 'opting-out' impact an individual's experience in, and relationship to place during the modern era.

Chapter 3 serves as an empirical analysis of the ways in which digital navigation technologies are used to encourage people in transit to replace the unfamiliar city as a recognizable and accessible place. Drawing from her survey and interview data collected in Madison, Wisconsin in 2010, along with participant observation, survey and interview data collected in Lawrence, Kansas in 2015, and various blog posts representing populations in mid to large scale cities, Halegoua explores people's personal experiences with digital navigation technologies. She challenges the negative preconceived notions about reliance on technology for wayfinding as distracting and damaging to a person's sense of place within urban environments. The various sources of data and types of analysis combined with a 5-year difference in data collection help emphasize how the re-placing effects of digital navigation transcend city boundaries and are constantly evolving with time. The author convincingly demonstrates how these technologies are integrated into placemaking behaviours by producing new opportunities for people to acquire spatial knowledge and thereby encouraging them to explore and develop an enriched sense of place instead of diminishing one (p. 113).

Similar to the effects of digital wayfinding strategies, Chapter 4 discusses how people develop a sense of comfort and familiarity with unknown urban environments, however this time through locative social media use. The author analysed uses of locative media through participatory observation and discourse analysis to demonstrate the ways people envision and communicate their sense of place by using locative social media. Instead of destabilizing or diminishing a collective sense of place, Halegoua argues that the frequently used 'check-in' or location tagging practices on social media produce a layered and diverse collection of place attachments, place identities, and

place narratives (p. 157). The author uses poignant examples of Instagram accounts to illustrate the different ways people engage in re-placing the city through locative social media. The examples in this chapter clearly demonstrate how we often see these social media practices as unrelated to the production of place when they pave the way for new opportunities of reclaiming and reproducing a sense of place within rapidly changing media and urban environments.

Halegoua explores why digital media use and placemaking practices that engender creative production are not discordant with one another in Chapter 5. Through content analysis of funded projects and discourse analysis of published interviews, the author analyses the paradoxical position of digital media within professional creative placemaking. Creative placemaking has the goal of improving the quality of places, and the lives of those who live in and visit them by implementing measurable projects that cultivate artistic and cultural experiences (p. 182). Halegoua discusses how creative place-makers can and should utilize digital media within their practices in order to achieve their goals and foster a sense of community connection. Through the use of digital media, community participation can be welcomed to help counter the perception of creative placemaking as a purely rhetorical device (p. 193). The author demonstrates the conflicting perceptions of digital media use in creative placemaking by providing several cases of projects across the United States where digital media is often portrayed *in competition* with physical urban space for social interaction and attention, but also recognized as working *in support* of vibrant, socially engaged physical urban space.

This book highlights the ways that urban environments are constructed by not only digital media, digital infrastructure, or broadband networks, but by digitally connected *people* who make place through both strategic initiatives and habitual behaviours using technology. Additionally, this book provides a sound theoretical framework for future research on how digital media use is not only ingrained in the development of one's sense of place but can also contribute to the unmaking of place. All in all, *The Digital City* is an insightful analysis of our relatively new abilities to negotiate our social and physical familiarity or strangeness within modern urban environments. It is a timely and increasingly relevant contribution to our understanding of placemaking in the technological age.

The author writes with an accessible use of terms and covers a wide range of cutting-edge trends and topics within the fields of both urban and media studies. By providing summaries and clarifying main points throughout the book, Halegoua sufficiently guides the reader through each subject at hand. The author connects diverse topics, case studies, and methodologies, each one expanding our understanding of the role that digital media plays in re-placing the city. I especially appreciated the inclusion of photographs in the last two chapters, which strategically highlight the significance of context when it comes to digital placemaking. The uses of photo and textual examples were a welcomed addition

to this book, orienting the reader and enhancing the overall understanding of its contents. Due to the significant impact of technology on everyday urban life, *The Digital City* is an essential reading for anyone working on space and place and makes an excellent resource for all urban and/or media scholars at the upper undergraduate student level and higher.

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**Italo Pardo and Giuliana B. Prato eds**. 2021. *Urban Inequalities: Ethnographically Informed Reflections*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

This volume addresses a perennial social challenge, that of societal inequalities in urban spaces and communities. The chapters cover significant topics one would expect in such a volume: socio-economic, political, class and gendered inequalities, experienced in settings one might anticipate, such as social housing and marginal urban locations. In addition, there are welcome extensions in settings in this volume, for example, those set in urban sports arenas of boxing and football. Another indication from the title, or subtitle in this case, is the focus on ethnography with most authors explicitly referring to their ethnographic approach and reflecting on its value in gaining more complex and nuanced insights. A strength of this work lies in the diversity of global locations and identities of both the sites of social interactions, and the researchers.

The breadth and scope of this work is set up comprehensively by Italo Pardo and Giuliana Prato in their chapter, 'Querying Urban Inequalities' which introduces and outlines the intellectual ground that this volume builds from and moves beyond. As they indicate, the conceptual areas covered in the chapters include an array of inequalities, erosions of senses of citizenship, the experience of inclusion and exclusion, shifting legitimacies and compromised moralities. While there are such themes, trends and commonalities, the editors have decided not to organize the volume around particular sets of themes, allowing each chapter to focus on different aspects of the wide-ranging experiences of social inequalities. As a result, this review will also take a more individualistic approach, bringing out the central theme in each chapter, rather than grouping the chapters around broader conceptual areas.

Picking up some central thematics, Italo Pardo in his chapter 'Making Second-Class Italians: A Progressive Fabrication and Entrenchment of Inequality' draws from his decades-long relationship with research participants in Naples, and reflects on the hopelessness some feel in the face of the disconnection between the rulers and citizens. His focus on power, governance and legitimacy, articulated as only someone with deep and comprehensive knowledge can, highlights the experiences of, and options for, citizens living with corruption and discrimination trying to live a fulfilling life. Pardo paints a bleak but not hopeless picture.

Giuliana B. Prato examines the entrenched economic and social inequalities between northern and southern Italy. In her chapter, 'On Human Stupidity and

Economic Policies. How Cities Inequality Generates Losses for All', she draws on extensive ethnographic fieldwork, mainly in the city of Brindisi, and Cipolla's essay 'The Basic Laws of Human Stupidity' to illustrate effectively that there are no winners in the case she describes. For all recent economic policies and interventions aimed at stimulating economic growth in the South, territorial inequalities persist. The decisions made by local administrators and other elites are leading to more inequality and a sense of 'limited citizenship' amongst growing numbers of southern Italians.

Hend Aly's chapter, 'Unequal Citizens: Between the Gated and the Informal in Cairo', addresses issues of differential citizenship, looking at how residents in two neighbouring locations engage with the local government, particularly in terms of differential access to amenities and services. Based on empirical research she clearly and skilfully presents the situation in both urban spaces and elaborates on the significant difference this makes to day-to-day living in each location. The state-citizen relationship is not Gellner-esque in either situation, rather, as she concludes, 'This translates into a systemic process of transforming citizens into either underprivileged people or consumers' (p. 89).

The chapter on 'Precarious Employment and Social Exclusion in Times of Crisis: The Case of Athens', by Manos Spyridakis and Andreas Feronas, focuses on a growing precariat through two conceptual lenses, precarious employment and social exclusion. Their discussion is based on a year of ethnographic research in Athens, post Global Financial Crisis, with participants who have always struggled financially to some extent, for all they have skills and know-how, who are moving into even more precarious situations. They comprise something of a 'reserve' work force called on for flexible and part-time employment with no security or associated benefits. They are not a homogenous group and do not form collectives; rather, as the authors note, they work as individuals resorting to pre-crisis individualistic strategies.

In his chapter on 'The Destiny of Urban Peripheries: Downtown Tel Aviv's Contested Realities', Moshe Shokeid discusses urban gentrification and associated impediments in Tel Aviv. Engagingly, he relays his own family's experience of living in one of the researched areas. This is compared with two others, in Tel Aviv, and in Chelsea, New York City. The different origins, trajectories, histories of internal migration and architectural developments are described as impacting on the 'feel' of the three areas. While this chapter may be theorised less than others, the ethnographic writing conveys the stories successfully, both descriptively and comparatively.

Falia Varelaki traces inequalities in breast cancer care in Greece, describing the inequities determined by one's financial position, of access to new breast cancer vulnerability, genome-based diagnoses and treatment. While drawing attention to this particular situation, she also outlines historical inequalities in accessing public health services in Greece. Whilst healthcare

is now generally more accessible than it was prior to 2016, the diagnostic test she writes of, costing over five times the average income, is out of reach for the majority. This chapter movingly demonstrates, and challenges, the ethics of differential access to medical care in a neoliberal system.

'Crisis, Disorder and Management: Smart Cities and Contemporary Urban Inequality', by David Nugent and Adeem Suhail, can be read as part one of a pair of chapters on Smart Cities. Theirs is a disturbingly thought-provoking piece introducing the idea, and potential pitfalls, of smart cities. The concept is posited as future-oriented and reliant on algorithms and computations in seeking the best outcomes for the most people in flattening out inequalities. Not surprisingly, the application of this utopian ideal does not deliver, as exemplified through examples from a South Korean and an Indian city.

The second of this pair of chapters on Smart Cities is Janaki Abrahams' 'Urban Transformation for Whom? Notes from the Margins of a Town in North India'. Her findings further support the conclusions indicated in the previous chapter, that for all its theoretical promise, Smart Cities do not deliver. The inequalities continue, with the poor still on the edges of society. This model is about business, not social justice, so it should not be surprising that it fails to deliver. These points are made well through her fine-grained ethnographic focus on one poor low caste Hindu woman.

Chapter 10, 'Mixed Occupancy: Mixed Occupations? Inequality and Employment on an Inner-City Housing Estate', by James Rosbrook-Thompson and Gary Armstrong, is based on fieldwork in an ethnically diverse London inner city housing estate and focuses on the restructuring of the labour market. As well as revealing local, global and shadow economies, the study draws attention to relationships of acquaintanceship, interdependency, and the flexible moralities in operation. By tracing the experience of tenants who move from secure employment to gig economy-type employment, their precarity is exposed. Along with that are pragmatic strategies, for example, of service exchanges, and turning a blind eye to neighbour's low level drug dealing.

Two chapters on Turkey address different aspects of women's experiences of inequality in this country. Nurdan Atalay examines Turkey's credit crisis as a result of the country's earlier financialization processes. Her ethnographic examples explain the effect of easy access to credit and debit cards and address the strategies women employ in the face of mounting debt. Sidar Çınar's chapter brings out how patriarchy and under-development radically reduce women's employment opportunities, often on top of already reduced education and marriage options. The women focussed on here are either denied or forced into outside employment, with men traditionally maintaining influence in the family even when they are unemployed. More positively, these two authors see changes beginning as women become conscious of the inequalities and start to leverage some power within the family as a result of their earnings through workforce engagement.

The next two chapters draw on ethnography in the field of sport: first

boxing then football. Chapter 13, 'Inequalities and Redemption: A Boxing Story' by Gary Armstrong and Matthew Bell is an exploration of socio-economic and access inequalities in Sheffield and looks at the potential advantages of belonging to one particular boxing club. This club was founded by a local, Ingles, who gained a reputation for taking in disadvantaged youth and producing good citizens. As well as working on their boxing technique, he promoted education and self-improvement in club members, viewing this as the way towards their redemption. The biblical vocabulary and metaphors are a playful addition to a fascinating study written with vitality and drama.

In the second sports-focused chapter, and last chapter of the book, Massimiliano Maidano concentrates on the football fan club, the Zenit Ultras. It is based in St Petersburg, modelled on other European fan clubs, with male physicality and aggression sometimes formalised with 'Russian boxing' sessions, but other times displayed in less formal thuggery. The researcher, recognising the value of participant-observation, entered into the spirit, as he says, 'Relations with informants were fair, although on some occasions I was contested and had to punch some Zenit ultras in legitimate self-defence.' (p. 291). Distinctly Russian aspects are evident in this chapter, such as the fan club needing to operate underground initially but with Kremlin backing in later years. The inequalities and discriminations in operation are many: gendered, classist, racist, culturalist/nationalist. As such, it provides a lens through which to understand more of the political tensions, fractures and schisms, and socio-ethnic tensions in certain pockets of Russian cities.

This book is in the series, Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology, which calls for volumes to 'address theoretical and methodological issues, showing the relevance of ethnographic research in understanding the socio-cultural, demographic, economic and geo-political changes of contemporary society'. There is no question that this brief is effectively met. Bringing together such a diverse set of ethnographic accounts offers insights into a multiplicity of experiences of inequalities in urban social settings. The ethnographic micro-analysis and theoretical explorations make this a must-read for scholars interested and engaged in understanding more about the contemporary mechanisms of a wide range of social inequalities.

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**Jack Santino (ed.)**. 2017. *Public Performances: Studies in the Carnivalesque and Ritualesque*. Utah: Utah State University Press.

I recall my first years as a PhD student, when Jack Santino's *All around the year* (1994), *New Old Fashioned Ways* (1996) and *Holidays, Ritual, Festival and Everyday life* (2004) were milestones in the study of festivals. The fourth volume in the series, *Public Performances: Studies in the Carnivalesque and Ritualesque*, edited by Santino, derives from research presented at a well-known series of conferences on 'Holidays, ritual, festival, celebration and public display' held annually from 1997 to

2011. The purpose of this volume is to stress similarities among various event types and unify the field of public performances.

In the first chapter, Santino sketches the approach of performance events as *carnivalesque and ritualesque* to deconstruct their shifting nature. He summarizes his earlier theoretical and methodological considerations on interpreting public displays by emphasizing the mistaken association of their expressive nature with the symbolic one, clarifying the –*(e)sque* terms for carnival and ritual and abolishing the mistaken dichotomy between festivals and rituals. This chapter testifies to the editor's intention to move from traditional carnival through ritual to ritualesque events — both political and theatrical in nature — and closes with the consideration of performative environments (p. ix). It segues into Chapter 2 where Kinser approaches the early modern Nuremberg Carnival and compares it to the Carnival of the Port of Spain. He analyses carnivals' nature, focusing on the power of local experience, which feeds carnival's performative fantasies by means of social dynamics that are displayed in one-to-one or small group encounters (p. 21). Kinser focuses on three traits: porosity, spectacularization, and politico-social conciliation and offers three working hypotheses. The longest chapter in this volume, it describes these two carnivals based on rich background information that test and discuss the abovementioned traits. The way Kinser weaves his historical approach through the three traits and the hypotheses he grounds on local knowledge is valuable, since we are usually missing historical interpretations that are productive and offer us methodological tools for future elaboration.

In the third chapter, Roger Abrahams turns to the past to explore European-American and African-American clubs in important ports, such as New Orleans, Havana and Rio. His chapter, along with the fourth one by Stoeltje, discusses elements of social conflict embedded in public performances. Stoeltje's contribution on ritual and politics is realized through her thorough description of all sorts of groups — small and large, hegemonic or resistant — that use ritual as a social process (p. 67). It reveals how ritual could not be more political and vice versa. Focusing on ritual/political events with a vast number of participants and global communications, Stoeltje examines the status of ritual as a performance genre, emphasizing its power to transform, affect and unify. Inspired by Cohen's conception that ritual and politics occur together in social life and that symbolic activities have political consequences, she discusses why politics and ritual were separated for a long period. Thus, she unravels an extended analysis on performance, ritual, communication, symbols and authority to demonstrate conflict through the examples of Northern Ireland, London, Liberia and Istanbul.

John Borgonovo's chapter examines a set of case studies on parades and processes. He explores the politics of bass brand culture in Cork in the 20th century. Participation of brass bands in all historical and political phases of Ireland, we learn, transformed the bands into a tool for national, governmental, political and syndicalist ideological demonstrations. Borgonovo portrays political movements

and revolutions, adding an account of the bands' presence in funerals. Likewise, Elena Martinez's *Que Bonita Bandera!* is devoted to the Puerto Rican parade in New York. Along with Borgonovo and the following chapters of Harnish and Moro, these contributions constitute the 'parade section' of the book. Drawing on extended fieldwork, Martinez deconstructs the presence, history and use of the Puerto Rican flag. Harnish takes us to Indonesia for the processions in Bali and Lombok, looking at these public displays as a multisited performance incorporating motion, movement, sound and theatre. Harnish's discussion of festival processions is so articulate and flowing that you feel present at them.

Laurent Sebastién Fournier states her aim for a meta-theoretical approach to *ritualesque and carnivalesque*. She begins from the history and status of French social research on festivals and examines the association of festivals and culture. Then, she mainly focuses on the folklorists' approach to festivals and the folkloristic approach of the festival organizers, synonymous to exoticism, nostalgia and authenticity. She returns to Van Gennep's *Rites de passage* considering the different uses of the term. Lisa Gilman, partially influenced by Stoeltje, presents the festival of Umthetho in Mzimba, Malawi as an example of a festival negotiating power between traditional and national leadership systems (p.181). She lays out the dimensions where power manifests, and focuses on the evolution of its form, organization and production, along with the discourses surrounding it. She provides a detailed history of the festival, ethnic groups, subgroups and traditional leaders in the area, past and present cultural practices and the ways all these factors blend, thus achieving a thick description with reflexivity.

The final chapters focus on activist and protest performances. Pamela Moro writes about 'activist spectacles' that foment bonding and communitas, even where audiences are fluid and unpredictable. Zinn focuses on how protest performances can be understood through the hybridization of concepts from diverse literatures. Magelssen explores the *ritualesque* use of theatrical performances surrounding ecological issues. Graham examines the role that space and place play in the consciousness and memory of the individuals and families in Northern Ireland, especially as it regards the transformation of private to public grief in the performative nature of memorials. Finally, Wocjik focuses on the use of 'outsider art' as a form of social protest.

This collection of essays reflects current fieldwork and the tendency for theories to evolve from that fieldwork. The deep exploration of these public displays in this volume is a crucial contribution to the multidisciplinary approach of public performance genres and has the power and importance of a seminal reference publication.

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## FILM AND VIDEO REVIEWS

*Território Suape*. Directed by **Cecília da Fonte, Laércio Portela and Marcelo Pedroso**. Produced by Marco Zero Conteúdo, Símio Filmes and Ventana Filmes. 2020. 70 minutes. Colour.

'Suape Territory' (Suape territory) is a feature-length documentary that explores the disparities regarding land occupation around the Suape Industrial and Port Complex in the state of Pernambuco, Brazil, and its consequences. To meet its objective, the film offers narratives of residents of the most vulnerable areas surrounding the project, along with interviews given by representatives of major real estate developments located in the region.

These two groups of characters, interconnected by their relationship to the Suape Industrial Complex, are presented to viewers based on their antagonisms. A wide range of topics of considerable interest to urban studies are addressed: inequalities regarding access to land, the environmental and social impacts of large enterprises, rights violations through forced relocation, and so on.

Residents of the poorest, most vulnerable areas of the city of Cabo de Santo Agostinho reflect on the urban violence that marks their daily lives and the ways in which they deal with this adverse context to create paths of personal and collective fulfilment. Those who were relocated as the Suape Complex was being constructed report threats and spoliation during the process as well as changes in family and work dynamics, in the way they live and relate to nature.

In contrast, two major real estate projects developed to support the industrial and port complex provided upper class housing: the planned 'Reserva Paiva' neighbourhood, which is a gated community of luxury residential and commercial buildings, and 'Suape Convida', which is a planned city project. The speeches of the representatives of these projects — interspersed with promotional videos — underscore the dynamics of economic, social and political power that mark the viability of projects of this type. The documentary builds its discursive strategy essentially from the speech of the characters and elements that present the geographical and social contexts; there is no voiceover and intervening texts are minimal. This choice, which was possible due to the considerable skill both in the editing and the conduction of the interviews, can, however, pose difficulties for viewers less familiar with the context.

One of the film's strong points is the visibility given to actors and speeches from the richest and most powerful social strata, which, in general, remain more guarded or absent from the critical debate regarding the impact of their ways of life. One speaks without the slightest constraint of the inheritance of vast tracts of land and the concentration in the hands of a few families. Moreover, exaltation regarding the partnership with the government in the planning of regulatory frameworks as well as in the construction of roads and bridges to ensure the viability of the project reveals that the élites in question unabashedly defend the wide use of public and collective resources for the maintenance of their exorbitant consumption and ways of life.

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*Sunday*. Directed by **Paulo Mendel and Vitor Grunvald**. 2018. 25 minutes. Colour.

The documentary *Sunday* depicts the participation of the 'LGBTQI+ Stronger Family' in the political protests that occurred in Brazil in the year 2016. The '*Fora Temer*' protests denounced the Brazilian coup d'état that deposed elected president Dilma Vana Rousseff.

Paulo Mendel and Vitor Grunvald begin the documentary arriving in Jardim Nazareth, a district located in the East Zone of the city of São Paulo. They show us a little of the urban configuration before introducing the actors of this film: the 'LGBTQI+ Stronger Family'. Thus, at the beginning of the documentary, we are presented to the urban scenario: soccer fields, graffiti on walls, and low-income residential buildings. We hear the shouts of vendors advertising and selling their products in the streets. The audio and video are perfectly matched to introduce the viewer to the actors that will follow in this documentary.

The 'LGBTQI+ Stronger Family' emerged in 2006 and currently has about 250 members who are part of an affective and political network, in which they fight against LGBTphobia. The concept of family appears in the work of philosopher Jack Halberstam, who shows us that the idea of family becomes central to the construction of alliances and solidarity relations between queer and trans people. The same movement is followed in the documentary *Domingo* from the perspective of the 'Stronger Family'.

Mendel and Grunvald follow some members of 'Stronger Family' on Sunday 4 September 2016, during one of the largest political acts against the coup d'état that deposed former president Dilma Rousseff. According to newspaper reports, the demonstration started peacefully on Paulista Avenue, one of the largest and most important avenues in São Paulo; then, the military police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters.

Mendel and Grunvald show us the meeting at the headquarters, the preparation for the act, the route they take until they arrive at the act and the protest. However, after the first 20 minutes and until the end of the documentary, the members of the 'Stronger Family' are no longer the focus of the film. The confusion, shouting and violent dispersal of the political act take over. The main actors — the members of the 'Stronger Family' — get lost amidst the general confusion. I think it would have been appropriate for the closing to return to them and to the importance of their participation in the democratic protest.

The main goal of this documentary, is to show the participation of a segment of the LGBTQI+ population in the democratic acts against the coup d'état that occurred in Brazil in the year 2016. This documentary is of great value for urban studies, as it presents a fine urban ethnography. Moreover, it can be presented to academic and non-academic audiences. Finally, I would like to point out that, by dividing the main screen into two distinct frames showed concurrently, the filmmakers have successfully constructed — through open, medium, and close-up shots — a powerful narrative about the political participation of an LGBTQI+ group during democratic acts of protest in an urban scenario.

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*Real Life.* Directed by **Milena Perdikari**. 2020. 10 minutes. Colour.

*Real Life* is a portrait of a student spending her quarantine alone in Greece. Starting off with images of a bedroom and kitchen, the film sets the main backdrop: a home. The first scene introduces the main character: a young, dark-haired woman wearing a facemask — the first clue that the film is set during the corona pandemic. We then follow an encounter with her neighbour and learn that our main character is forced into quarantine by herself, as her family is stuck on a Greek island. This highlights not only the compulsory physical distance — accentuated by the facemask and gloves, it also shows that, in this film, the viewer might never leave the home.

*Real Life* is firstly a film about loneliness and how quarantine impacts our social relations. It is a visual portrait that lacks any physical intimacy or affection, in which all communication is either from a distance or online. Our main character seems to follow demotivating online classes, communicates with family and friends through her smartphone, and only gets a glimpse of other people's lives by peeking from her balcony into theirs. This is symbolized in a cliché image that we usually associate with bonding: a medium shot of our main protagonist eating dinner alone. The alienation is further emphasized in the observation that the food (usually a source of comfort) also does not seem to taste good. Between these relatively depressing scenes, our protagonist slightly lights up when escaping into another reality. We follow how she builds a strikingly identical avatar in the life simulation game 'The Sims 3'. Through this virtual reality, we learn more about our protagonist's main dreams: biking around freely, having family dinners, and playing in the ocean with an elderly avatar we assume to be her dad. We also learn that our protagonist and avatar have a shared ambition: becoming a film director. After receiving positive feedback from her teacher on what we assume to be the script of the film covered in this review, the portrait is unfortunately rushed to an ending: in faster edited and higher saturated images, we see our protagonist on her roof terrace seeming more hopeful about the future.

*Real Life* could be described as an autoethnography. Firstly, one asks, how do we even make films in a pandemic when we are forced to stay in our homes? Secondly, the uniformity of the quarantine experience would lead one to expect *Real Life* to be about the director herself. In a pandemic, there is perhaps no 'Other'. Around the world, our days and experiences have probably never been so similar. With the repetitive movements of getting up, pouring coffee, sitting behind your desk with occasional breaks of pouring another liquid, all days seem more or less the same. Our perception of 'home' has changed, not simply because most of us are working from within our personal spaces, but also because what was private has now become visible to our colleagues as our Zoom backdrops. We can travel to other places only virtually and escape to self-created digital utopias, such as in Real Life.

*Real Life* sheds light upon the impact of the pandemic on ethnographic research, because our homes have become our main sites of research, including the digital field. The legitimacy of online ethnography as virtual ethnography or cyber ethnography has been based predominantly on the

increasing emergence of social groups and online forms of expression, yet it was long been received with criticism. At the start of the pandemic, however, countless researchers (and filmmakers) were forced to return from the field and alter or even cancel their projects. Additionally, a short Google search confirms that in the past year our online communication, use of social media and gaming has skyrocketed. With no clear end in sight, even those who are still sceptical of such digital ethnographic practices are forced to embrace them. The pandemic has changed 'the field' in ethnographic research for good. Lastly, I checked with the director and the film is indeed a self-portrait.

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*Songs that never end.* Directed by **Yehuda Sharim**. 2019. Produced by Sharim Studios. 114 minutes. Colour.

Poet and filmmaker Yehuda Sharim's *Songs that never end* is an intimate, lyrical, melancholic meditation on home and belonging at a time of displacement and dispossession. The film is set in Houston, Texas and revolves around the experiences and everyday life of the Dayan family, who had — due to political unrest and persecution — fled from Iran first to Iraq and then to Turkey before arriving to the US. Told mainly through the filmmaker's conversations with Ali — the Dayan's charming, forthright 14-year-old son — and Hana — their affectionate, precocious nine-year-old daughter, *Songs that never end* is an unflinching yet deeply humane portrait of a family struggling to find meaning in their new life as they come to terms with the devastation of their past.

The isolation of urban life is brilliantly captured through Sharim's cinematography. The camera rarely zooms out of the confines of the family's small suburban apartment, focusing instead on individual moments — the mother Samira listlessly staring into space, the father Abbas aimlessly watching TV with his twin toddlers beside him, Ali scrolling through his phone, and Hana sitting alone eating leftover rice. The sense of claustrophobia is heightened by the incessant crying of the twins and Samira's pleas for assistance from Ali and Hana. Even the rare forays into the outside world do little to mitigate the sense of displacement. Ali and Hana are always alone when they run through the isolated neighbourhood at night and no neighbours drop by to visit or play. Hana declares, as she hums to herself and cleans a cupboard full of shoes, 'I don't know what to do; sometimes I do nothing […] I like working'. Ali dreams of moving to another planet. The Dayan family trips to a theme park and the city only serve to illustrate how, despite the promises of freedom and unlimited consumption in the US, time and money are precious commodities for immigrant families struggling to survive. The film later reveals that Samira has lupus, is suffering from mental health issues, and can barely cope with managing the household and taking care of the twins. Abbas, we learn, had been a successful manager at an oil company in Iran, but, in the US, he has to work long night shifts and is too exhausted to spend time with his wife and children when he comes home. Through a focus on the domestic and the mundane, *Songs that never end* poses critical questions about the

weight of history and inequality as it collides with the longing for home and belonging. 'I don't like human beings', declares Hana, 'Because they have money in their pockets […] but they don't care about the person […] who does not have money'.

Amidst the chaos and unpredictability of their immigrant existence, the film gives us a glimpse into a life that was and could have been. Abbas is a poet. Samira remembers every line of all the poems he has written to her during their courtship and marriage; she recites them to the camera in a spirit of serene joy. There are moments of deep affection and quiet companionship between them and the children. Through these moments of love and hope, *Songs that never end* reminds us that our human existence holds the potential for both beauty and brutality.

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*Archivo Cordero***.** Directed by **Gabriela Zamorano**. 2020. 59 minutes. Colour.

*Archivo Cordero* focuses on 'Fotos Cordero' (Cordero Photos), Bolivia's most emblematic photography studio. The documentary clusters objects, images, sounds and testimonies around seven different thematic categories — 'Archive as Lineage', 'Montage', 'Framing', 'Belonging', 'Overflow', 'Trace' and 'Legacy' — and explores the importance of this La Paz-based studio as a major contributor to the country's national identity. The studio was founded by the acclaimed photographer Julio Cordero in 1900. Recently, the city government of La Paz bought a selection of the studio's photographs and objects related to urban development in Bolivia in the twentieth century. This collection will be housed at the country's first photography museum.

The aim of director Gabriela Zamorano, a Mexican anthropologist and filmmaker, is to provide a glimpse into the historical memory of Bolivia's social and urban development during the country's liberal period (1899-1920). The film highlights the studio's archival material, which includes glass plate negatives of urban scenes, black-and-white photographs of city dwellers, and the tools that were used to improve the developed photos.

Central to the film's storyline is the testimony of Don Julio Cordero, the charismatic and elderly grandson of the studio's founder. His difficulty in remembering his grandfather's techniques initially tricks the viewer into presuming that he has a fragile memory weakened by advanced age. Instead, Zamorano demonstrates how Don Julio's active memory labours, with obstinate force, to attach itself to objects and behaviours, and perseveres in its task to keep them from fading into oblivion.

Don Julio is portrayed lifting his grandfather's negatives and placing them against a light bulb. Through this act of mimicking his grandfather's techniques, he explains how the images were produced. Evocatively, he searches for old photos and tools within crumbling, sepia-tinted boxes. Inside his dimly lit and dust-filled studio, he moves slowly but comfortably, as if he were an expert witness of Bolivia's urban development and the construction of a liberal national identity.

To showcase this era, the film foregrounds the aforementioned theme of

'Belonging'. Here, Zamorano deploys high-quality and digitized early twentieth-century photos referencing La Paz's iconic and grandiose buildings, its growing railroad system, and the city's élite. In turn, political developments are analysed in the 'Overflow' section, while 'Framing' focuses on delinquents and prostitutes who lived on the fringes of the city's urban and legal frameworks.

Rather than overcrowding the film with textual explanation to accompany the images, Zamorano invites the audience to speculate about whose images are being portrayed and why they were selected. Also left open for audience interpretation are the questions of how the studio became a site of memory and a repository of Bolivia's history of urbanization, and how will the collective memory of this period be weaved into the country's official, national history now that La Paz's city government is the custodian of the archive.

The minimal referential information, incorporated mostly at the beginning of the film, does not aim to tell the full story of twentieth-century Bolivian history. Rather, Zamorano intention seeks to draw the viewers' attention to the images themselves, while simultaneously prompting them to experience other sensorial elements, such as the sounds of indigenous musical instruments, the background noise of the buzzing city, different shades of light, and the juxtaposition of fragments of the past and present.

This montage transports the viewer through La Paz's different temporalities, generating profound questions along the way about how archives become an infrastructural element of a national development, how collective memory is actualized in the materiality of the built environment, and how places connect different experiences of time and belonging across generations.

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## Series Editors

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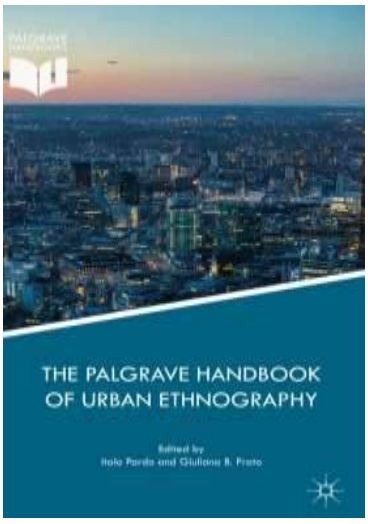


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*1st ed.: November 2018, pp. XIX, 575, 26 illus*

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