URBANITIES

Journal of Urban Ethnography

Volume 11 · Number 2 · November 2021

ISSN 2239-5725

ISSN 2239-5725

Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography is published in association with the International Urban Symposium (IUS) and the IUAES Commission on Urban Anthropology (CUA).

For more information visit the Journal's website: http://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com

Contents

Articles

Errata Corrige

In Vol. 11 No 1:
The name of the institution in the article by Bas Dikmans should read "Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Netherlands, Belgium".

Conceptualizing Modern Urban Governance in the Everyday Language of an African Society[1]

Teshome Emana Soboka Assefa Tolera Sori
(Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia)
teshome.emana@aau.edu.et sorianata@gmail.com

Ethiopia is one of the fast-urbanizing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. As an inescapable phenomenon, urbanization has become a topic of people's everyday discussion particularly in areas such as the suburbs of Addis Ababa where urban expansion is appearing with a multiple of effects. People evaluate, analyse, judge, and/or try to estimate the future outcomes of urban expansion into their residential area which was primarily rural. In their everyday communication, they try to conceptualize the legitimacy and proper functioning of the contemporary urban governance systems. In connection with this, the main purpose of this paper is to explore how a particular common expression, *fafee*, in Afan Oromo (Oromo language) in Ethiopia is used by a community to frame the injustice and inequalities due to urban expansion in a newly established urban centre near Addis Ababa. Primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews and unstructured discussions, and secondary data from the municipality. The findings show that the concept of *fafee* is used to explain the pervasiveness of grievances that individuals, groups, or the community at large express due to institutional or individual actors' incompetence to provide the required services. The article argues that if a system together with the actors who operate it is inept, there will be incongruity between expectations and performances of the institutions in the modern urban governance system, which later ends up in distrust and conflict.
Keywords: Ethiopia, *Fafee*, institution, Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi, Oromo, urban.

Introduction

Today in Africa, we can easily observe that modern governments and their machineries are not rendering the expected services to their societies, which resulted in different forms of conflicts and instabilities. These conflicts can be between the states and societies or between political factions. The consequences are internal displacement, inadequate services, migration, corruption, lack of justice, and pandemonium which are manifestations of lack of democratic institutions and accountable governance systems. Several reasons can be cited for all these deficits. One is the unwillingness of the African governments to give the recognition it deserves for the indigenous principles of African moral values. Even where some attention was given to indigenous value systems, they are not used in the way they can contribute to the efficacy of modern governance systems. Another major reason is the incompatibility between the traditional values and the modern laws, believed to have been copied from the West,[2] governing the socio-economic and political life of Africans; most of all, the dwindling morality that was once the guiding principle. To strengthen this position, Okpalike (2015: 2) says 'Gone are the days when morality and discipline used to be virtues'. Francis Nyamnjoh argues the 'pursuit of personal success and even self-aggrandizement' challenge African value systems such as Ubuntuism (2019). The diminishing of the moral values in the modern governance systems has become part of the everyday communication of the communities grappling with the complexity

[1] The final version of this article has benefited from the feedback and comments by the Editorial Board of *Urbanities* and the comments and criticism given by the anonymous reviewers.
[2] Most African countries did not have a constitutional history before colonialism. As a result, African constitutions were heavily influenced by the former colonizers in the 1960s, the US or the Soviet Union during the Cold War and, more recently, by the requirements of the international (donor) community. https://www.ascleiden.nl/content/webdossiers/african-constitutions

of the challenges that they face due to urban expansion in the suburbs of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, today.

The main purpose of this article is to explore how a single negatively charged concept, *fafee,*[3] is used by the Oromo community of the study area to enforce positive consequences in the society's daily practices, and how this concept is used to explain the deficit of modern urban governance system in a particular urban centre, Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town, in Oromia. The main source of data is an ethnographic fieldwork conducted in this town between 2011 and 2012. The complexity of the situation in the locality calls for the use of such an approach to explicate the different perceptions and competing interpretations of the realities because 'ethnographic research is an "art of the possible", and in cities, there are many possibilities [...] the application of ethnographic methodology leads to a great variety of approaches and to new paradigmatic challenges' (Pardo et al. 2020: 1). Clifford Geertz's (1973) innovative idea of 'Thick description' also works in urban ethnography because it helps to generate several forms of knowledge out of the many possibilities (Krase 2018). Of course, the above authors acknowledge the contribution of scholars from different academic disciplines such as social anthropology, sociology, history, and urban planning for the 'methodological and theoretical development' for the 'contribution that ethnography offers for a better grasp of our rapidly changing and increasingly complex cities' (Pardo et al. 2020:3).

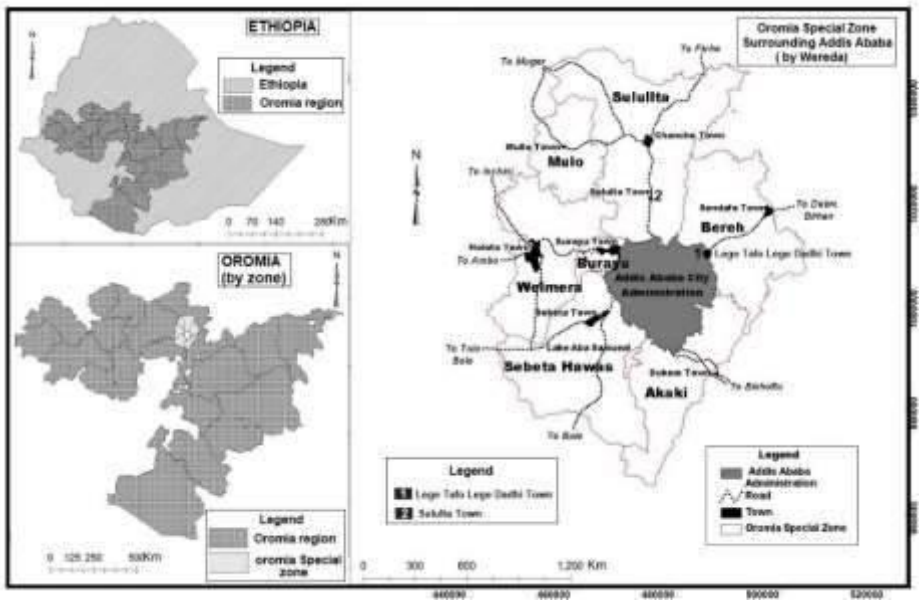
The paper first reviews how the underpinning principles of some selected African indigenous values have served humanity, and then elaborates the context in which the concept *fafee* is used to examine the incompetence of urban governance system, as perceived by the farming community which is recently included in the newly established Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town, located about 20 km in the eastern border of Addis Ababa. The development of Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi, and other towns which were made to have their own municipal administrations after 2005 around Addis Ababa, has historical, empirical and political foundations.

Historically, before the establishment of Addis Ababa (AA) in 1886, the present location of the city was predominantly occupied by the Tulama Oromo which is one of the five 'clans' of the Oromo, the largest ethno-national group in Ethiopia (Haile 2009). Tulama Oromo in the area were predominantly farmers who used the land for crop production and animal grazing. However, due to the establishment of AA and the expansion of its frontiers over time, the farmers have continued to lose their land due to the influx of migrants from other areas of the country to tap the opportunities of urban way of life. Since then, these farmers who have been pushed away from what is now the centre of the city have protested against the exclusive nature of the urban policies and urban development programs. Whenever regimes change in Ethiopia since the creation of the modern Ethiopian state by Menelik II, they come up with their own land and urban development policies which have never made justice to the Tulama Oromo farmers in and around Addis Ababa although they claim they owned the land until the advent of the city in 1886.

[3] The word *Fafee* is derived from *fafa*. It means to become deformed, maimed or physically handicapped. Figuratively, it means 'useless or good-for-nothing' (Gamta 1989: 204).

Empirically, the city has fast expanded after the coming into power of the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)[4] in 1991 with its 'free-market' economic policy where the value of urban land has appreciated. Since the creation of the modern Ethiopian state with the Abyssinian expansion to today's southern half of the country (Baxter 1978), land has been a centre of struggle. The struggle was between the Abyssinian landlords and their local agents and the dispossessed people until 1974 (Markakis and Ayele 1986) and between the state and the people during the Military Dergue regime (1974-1991), which nationalized rural and urban lands. The EPRDF that came to power in 1991 declared that exclusive ownership of land is vested in the State and the Peoples of Ethiopia (Art. 40: 3) leaving only usufruct rights for citizens. Today, land ownership has been a centre of two opposing views under the EPRDF — whether, on the one hand, the country should privatize land or, on the other hand, keep it as it is under state ownership because the present Prosperity Party (PP)-led government retained state ownership of land.

In practice, the 'federal government assumes the power to formulate the broader land policy' (USAID 2004: x), while the regional states have their own respective rural land laws. The Oromia Regional State, where this study area is located, has enacted different rural land policies (see Proc. No 56/2002, 70/2003, 103/2005, 137/2007). Yet urban land administration is governed by federal laws such as Proc. 89/1993, 445/2005, 721/2011, and 1161/2019 which facilitate urban land lease holding system. The implementation of these laws, however, has resulted in challenges such as displacement, lack of transparency in the land transfer, unfair and unjust compensation payment, and lack of rehabilitation mechanisms for the displaced people. These have resulted in inequalities and injustices in the land administration and the overall urban governance system in Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town.



Map 1. Major towns surrounding Addis Ababa. Source: GIS in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, AAU.

[4] This is a coalition of four organizations; that is, Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDO) and Southern Peoples Democratic Movement (SPDM).

In addition to the above historical and empirical reasons, there is a political dimension behind establishing new municipal administrations for small towns around Addis Ababa. In 2005 the Oromia Regional State, the region in which Addis Ababa is located and where there is a heated contention over who should administer the city, declared the establishment of eight municipal towns including Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi (See Map 1). The decision to establish new municipalities around Addis Ababa sounds reasonable and logical at face value to check the expansion of the city and to help the farming communities to stand up to the pressure of the ever-expanding AA through their own local administration under the new municipalities. But politically, the regional government was in fear of losing more administrative territories, which may make it lose its power in the contentious suburbs. Paradoxically, although the Regional Government is proud of the result of the decision, it is palpable that the new towns themselves have consumed large size of farm land in their localities exacerbating the pressure on the farming communities. It is these historical, empirical, and political complexities that the local farming communities grapple with to frame in their everyday language.

According the data from the municipality, the population of the town is about 18,000, of which 90% are Orthodox Christians, 5% are Muslims and the remaining 5% are followers of other religions. The town is expanding into the farmlands of the surrounding farming communities in three directions (south, east and north) and the population is also growing. In the west, the town is almost connected to Addis Ababa where Xafo River is the boundary separating the two.

While this study is primarily the result of qualitative data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with community members and key informant interviews with officials from the different sector offices of Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town, it is spiced with a literature review of African indigenous value systems documented by scholars in the field of social sciences some of whom have used an anthropological lens in analysing these values. It is this anthropological lens that this study employs to examine how the concept of '*fafee'* is used by the farming communities to frame their understanding of the impact of urbanization on their livelihoods, express their grievances and understand the urban governance system in the study area. However, before we look at how the concept is used, let us have a brief overview of how indigenous African value systems have served for human wellbeing.

African Indigenous Values as a Base for Human Happiness

African societies have had their own indigenous governance systems with which they used to enforce moral value principles in their respective communities. They have their own philosophy of life and living which were used to shape and monitor the daily practices and moral values of members of the specific societies. Of course, though not as efficient as they were, some of these indigenous value systems are in use with less potency to influence modern governance which have to do with collective or individual everyday engagements. Since many African nations have copied their laws and constitutions from the West, it seems that they do not have sufficient room to accommodate indigenous value principles in formulating modern governance systems. Even if one claims that he/she has done this, it remains only a lip service. In this section, we

will briefly review a few of the indigenous value principles selected from among African societies to provide a broader conceptual background to discuss about the concept *fafee*, a negatively charged expression but used to encourage and uphold positive behaviour while explaining the injustice in the existing urban governance systems and the administrative actors. The concept may serve to stimulate people's mindfulness and call for possibilities to create a new order that accords with people's expectations.[5]

Despite the effect of colonization and the weakening of indigenous governance systems, many African societies have maintained their indigenous value systems which are still at work at their respective community levels. These value systems grounded in their indigenous philosophies possess the potential to ensure the wellbeing of humanity and call for their enhanced role in the modern governance systems. To begin with, one widely cited and most ubiquitous in almost all parts of the African countries where the Bantu language is spoken is the Ubuntu indigenous philosophy. It is integrated into all aspects of the day-to-day life of the more than five million Bantu speakers in Southern, Central, West and East Africa (Metz 2012). Ubuntu philosophy believes in group solidarity, which is crucial for the survival of African communities where it is exercised (Mbigi 1997). Based on the 'ideals of trust, conviviality and support' (Nyamnjoh 2019: 1), Ubuntu philosophy guides the societies to evaluate whether what they are doing is for the betterment of human happiness.

Broodryk (2009: 175) further illustrates the positive attributes of African Ubuntu indigenous value system by using the term itself as an abbreviation for several values that prevail in humanity. These concepts include universality of human brotherhood, the importance of developing the behaviour of humaneness where unity is so crucial for solidarity and social bond in the community. Ubuntu values the importance of negotiation, consensus, and equality which could be ensured through tolerance, patience, mediation, understanding, and forgiveness to ensure the universal values that one wishes to see in African modern governance system today. That is why a commentator in *News 24.com* in its user's comments on 15 November 2011 stated: 'If more people embrace this realizing the value of Ubuntu moral principles…, I believe that we can see a Renaissance of global proportions which would ensure the survival of the human race as a species and further our own evolution as being who can actually decide between right and wrong'. Moreover, Gutierrez (2017) believes that '[…] the African Ubuntu can bring about a revolution of tenderness if the people of the world allow themselves to drink of its spirit'.[6]

In Ethiopia, there is a variety of cultural groups with their own cultural value principles in all spheres of their everyday life. This is reflected in the indigenous environmental protection systems of the Gedeo people (Senishaw 2014) and indigenous land fertility management systems with diverse traditional applications among the agriculturalist Amhara, Oromo, and Tigray communities in the highlands of the country (Lemmma and Haile 2000, Demissie et al. 2000). The practice of '*Kwor'* as a moral principle for ensuring justice and order in the traditional peace-making processes among the Anuak society (Tasew 2000) in the western part

[5] This explanation is made following peer-reviewers' comments.

[6] http://aefjn.org/en/ubuntu-an-african-culture-of-human-solidarity-2/, accessed on 25 09 2019.

of the country is an indicator of the diverse cultural practices which can be alternative sources of knowledge for modern governance systems in a multinational and multicultural country like Ethiopia.

As the main aim of this article is exploring how the concept *fafee* is used to explain the everyday encounters of the farming communities in Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town, it behoves upon us to exert some energy into the understanding of basic moral values in the Oromo Gada System[7] which are common, though not equally practiced everywhere today, among the nearly forty[8] million Afaan Oromo[9] speakers in Ethiopia. Of course, it is the basis for the main theme of the discussion in this article. Gada is a generation and age set system (Legesse 1973, 2000; Jalata 2012; Taddese 2009; Fituma 2017). It embraces crucial legal, political, social, religious, and economic aspects which together build a basic framework for order and execution of meaningful life to prevail. As a governance system, Gada guides the life course of individuals and regulates political, economic, social and religious activities of the community. In his study of 'African Indigenous Leadership Philosophy and Democratic Governance System: Gada's Intersectionality with Ubuntu', Abdurahman Abdulahi (2020) has made an exhaustive comparison of Ubuntu and Oromo Gada System and outlined a list of overlapping value principles. The principle of human universality in Ubuntu is termed as *Namummaa* (humanness) in the Oromo Gada System referring to respect, equality, and dignity of all mankind. Human freedom and the value of respect for human rights, equality of mankind irrespective of any ascribed or achieved capital at both collective and individual level, are other principles that the author explored in the value principles of the Gada System. In addition, *Safuu* (morality) (Alemayehu 2015, Megerssa and Kassam 2019, Abdulahi 2020) — which is expressed as tolerance or unity in Ubuntu value principles — is used to transform conflict and restoration of peace and healing (*nagaa*) for better relationships among the Gada practitioners. Other principles such as decision-making through consensus, rule of law, separation of power, and division of power are Gada System treasures of values that overlap with the modern governance system (Abdulahi 2020, Fituma 2017). This is why Abdulahi (2020) has also explored how the value principles in Gada System are seen in the UN, OECD, and AU good governance principles today.

The above overview of African indigenous value principles, and particularly the moral values in Oromo Gada System are the basis for looking into the concept '*Fafee'* as an everyday expression in Oromo language, though not strictly considered as one of the guiding value principles in their culture.

[7] The Gada system has been added to UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity since 30 November 2016.

[8] Since numbers are always politicized in multi-national federal Ethiopia, these days it is difficult to get uncontested figures on the population size of a given ethno-national group. The Oromos always claim to constitute at least 50% of the Ethiopian population.

[9] This is an Afroasiatic language that belongs to the Cushitic branch. It is native to the Ethiopian state of Oromia and is spoken predominantly by the Oromo people and neighbouring ethnic groups in the Horn of Africa. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oromo_language

Fafee — An Everyday Oromo Expression for Framing Modern Governance Systems

Like any other oral society, the Oromo people have a long-established way of transmitting the cultural values they feel worth sustaining. In doing so, whatever they do or encounter, good or bad, is the result of the will of *Waqaa,* the creator God. Although the majority of the Oromo in the study area are Orthodox Christians, the traditional understanding of *Waaqaa* is still there because 'the indigenous Oromo religion which had been practiced long before the introduction of the two major religions, Christianity and Islam into Northeast Africa, was known as *Waaqeffanna*. It is the term derived from an Oromo word, *Waaqaa* which literally means sky God (above all else) and a believer in it is called *Waaqeffata*' (Ta'a 2012: 90).

For everything that takes place, the people say *Waaqatu godhe (*God did it*); hojii Waaqayyooti* (It is God's work). This can also be used by an individual, a group, or a community being under different forms of stressful conditions or state of helplessness. Under His all-powerfulness, it is believed that there are some misfortunes that happen to an individual, a group, or the larger community that are perceived as the outcome of God's wrath; that is, His withdrawal, leaving one to the mercy of minor evil powers for wrong doings or a curse from forefathers, which are still under the will of God because *Waaqa* is the 'Father of Truth and Justice' (*Abbaa Dhughaa)*' (Megerssa and Kassam 2019:206). All these fortunes/misfortunes are culturally conceptualized and interpreted in the everyday language of the society.

One of these useful concepts is *fafee*, which we picked up during the fieldwork in Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town. We picked the concept from the interview we had with a farmer who was forced to give away his landholdings for a real estate development project. In an attempt to understand what had happened to him and his fellow farmers after their lands were expropriated, he summarized their agonizing experience saying: '[...] *Asis dhaqinee achis dhaqinee nama nudhagahu dhabnee, waan fafeetu nu'argaate.*' (We went here, we went there, nobody listened to us; we felt unfit). In this statement, '*waan fafeetu nu'argate*' means we experienced something culturally unacceptable, ignominious, and morally wrong.

Though not perceived as one of the widely known traditional value principles in Oromo culture, *fafee* is an everyday expression with which the Oromo people in the study area evaluate and interpret their contemporary social practices. Although it seems a negatively charged concept, it is understood as a means of striving towards efficiency in achieving law and order in systems of governance or among the community members to deliver what is morally/culturally expected of them.

Contextual Application of the Concept of *Fafee*

This section discusses the meanings of *fafee* and its applicability to a variety of contexts in the daily lives of the Oromo people, particularly the Tulama Oromo who have lost their farmlands due to 'development' projects. In most of the literature we reviewed for this section, *fafee* often explains incompleteness, incompetence, acts out of the accepted norm, ineptitude, uselessness, and similar concepts that stand for lack of skill, capacity, or vigour to assume a certain responsibility in the community.

After staying longer with the farming community in Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town, we learned that *fafee* is widely used to allude to wider issues. Therefore, it is important to deal with this wider understanding of the concept as an everyday common expression before we discuss how it is used locally to frame the impact of urban expansion and the structural malfunctioning of the urban governance system in the town.

During the interview we conducted with the elderly people to generate data for this study, we learned that there are cultural concepts related to some behaviours which are perceived to be *fafee* in the community. But we will briefly discuss only a few of them which we thought would elaborate the concept. First, the concept is related with physical incompleteness, particularly congenital ones. A family who has got a child with some kind of impairment, say an eye, a leg, or any incomplete part of the physical body, is assumed to have been cursed. It is believed that the family has committed an act against the will of God, and hence He has revenged by withdrawing His blessing. Our informant, Baqala Dadhi, said that this type of *fafaa* or the word *fafee* is not often used because it is a taboo word. For the Oromo, it is a taboo to call terms like *jaamaa* (blind), *duudaa* (deaf), *naafa* (lame), and *kan hin dubbanne* (dumb) in front of a physically impaired person (Takele 2017:192). Instead, they use euphemistic expressions such as visually impaired for 'blind' and hearing impaired for the deaf as a sign of respect for the person.[10] In addition, no one chuckles at someone who is congenitally *fafee*. This is mainly for fear that someone who laughs at or ridicules such a person or an animal with some kind of physical deformity, *fafee,* may encounter *fafachuu,* being *fafee*, in his/her family in the future. That is why there is a proverb which says '*kan ilkaan dhalchu, kormi hin dhalchu*' (roughly, what a tooth begets, a bull does not). This means that if you laugh at the natural defect of a person, you invite similar mishaps/defects to your descendants.

The concept can also be associated with marriage or sexual affairs. Among the Tulama Oromo of the study area, one of the most serious cultural practices that need inspection is marriage. Therefore, a naturally competent person is expected to marry because a man or a woman who remains unmarried is considered incomplete, *fafee,* in the community. In a related manner, a person who has a sexual affair with his/her close or distant kin is *fafee* because he/she was involved in incestuous relationship, *haraamu*, in Afaan Oromo.

Cowardice is another meaning attached to *fafee* at individual or group level. *Lunnoomuun fafa* (being a coward is frivolous). In their history, the Tulama Oromo are known for being great fighters and for their bravery. It is not allowed to retreat from any form of group fight or individual confrontation of any cause. A young man who loses in a fight against his fellowman is not accepted by his family, and his father is liable to be ridiculed in the village.

It is equally *fafee* for a man and a woman not to live on their own income in the context of the value the Tulama Oromo attach to work ethics. A grownup healthy person who has the land and other requisite resources is expected to engage in farm activities and produce for his/her family's sustenance. But sometimes there could be a few deviants who, despite their possession, wander around in the village to share from and eat what others have got. Such an individual is socially excluded and not invited even for traditional work parties. In case such a

[10] For a detailed discussion on this, see Birhanu Takele (2017).

person happens to join a work party organized by a co-villager, s/he is always ridiculed through songs customarily sung during cultivation or harvesting in the field. The norm encourages hard work for a member of the community to be fit and socially accepted.

In the context of this study, *fafee* is used to explain the individual capability, skill, and commitment at all levels of the administration in Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town. Similarly, it is also used in a wider context in which there is no clear structure with any defined responsibility and accountability in the town's governance structure. In the eyes of the farmer who commented in the public meeting held on 13 December 2012, the procedure followed to assign the town administrators is equally *fafee*.

'*Akka aadaa keeynatti bulchaa keeyna nuti fillata. Amma garu gararraadhaa gadi nutti fidani; maal goona?*' (In our culture, we should elect our leaders. Now they are brought from above. What can we do?). For this commentator, it is *fafee* to assign a manager or a mayor without the knowledge and consent of the local community. Until the advent of Abyssinian colonial expansion to the Oromo land, the Oromo Gada System was encouraging participatory system of governance, and the administrator (*bulchaa*)[11] elected in this way was 'expected to be a responsible, dependable and trustworthy person, acting like the proverbial shepherd in respect to his flock' (Megerssa and Kassam 2019:196). Far from being acting like a proverbial shepherd, from the discussions we had with the informants, it was clear that they were all aware that the government was dispossessing their land in the name of development which seems mainly to serve the interests of the immigrant haves. According to the informants, these immigrants are called *Ormma,* stranger or alien*,* not native to the area, which includes all the non-farming people in their communities. We also learned that this group also includes real estate developers and their clients, the government policy implementers, the *dalaala* ([land] brokers), and the diaspora. Informants believe that dispossession of their land is facilitated by the locally appointed civil servants such as the land administration officers, engineers, and the locally emerging businessmen including the *dalaala.* Since these local level officers and experts are not working fairly, which would have benefitted members of the local community, the latter calls them *fafee* — incomplete, incompetent, inefficient, and incapable.

With regards to inadequacy of individuals' capacity to manage the situation and the farmers' helplessness in the face of massive land dispossession, an informant, a farmer, said: '*Nui maal beekna? Isaan afaan tokko dubatuu silaa*' (What do we know? They speak the same language). This shows that the individuals who were employed and being paid to serve the community betrayed 'their' people and spoke the language of *Ormma*. They have their own development language which*,* to a greater extent, is unintelligible to members of the local community.

Regarding the use of the concept to explain the sternness of how Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi municipality provides its daily services, particularly in handling the cases of farmers dispossessed of their lands*,* the data gathered from the interview conducted with different people such as the municipal administrator, experts in the Office of Agriculture, and the farmers

[11] The 'word *bulchaa* is derived from *bulchuu*, "to care for; to support; to govern; to lead"' (Megerssa and Kassam 2019: 196).

themselves illustrated that the system was incompetent. In the first week of May 2012, we went to interview the municipal administrator to get an overview of the structure of the town administration and asked him if he could serve us with a copy of the approved structure. In the interview, he told us that the town did not have a clear administrative structure except for fragmented units that were not up to the standard of the present-day urban administration system in Ethiopia.

Similarly, we also inquired if the Office of Agriculture was established with a legally defined role in urban setting and included accordingly in the administrative structure of the municipality. When we visited the office in March 2012, we found four people who were performing their daily office routines packed in a small room. Except the Team Leader, *Obbo*[12] GT, all the three experts were born in that area, which is now at the heart of the town, where urbanization is deepening its roots. Those agricultural development experts and their parents were victims of the process of land expropriation and its attendant effects. Therefore, they had a fresh memory to bear witness on the matter. Leaving the other three for later interviews, we decided to have an in-depth discussion with the Team Leader.

Our first question to *Obbo* GT was about the responsibility of the Office of Agriculture in the municipality because it was the question for many of our informants in the town. At first, he was very suspicious and reluctant to respond to our questions. Though he recalled that the office was established in 2012, he insisted that he did not have detail information and, thus, advised us to inquire further on this matter with the higher-level town administration officials. He admitted, however, that his office did not have any clear objective and structure which in principle had to be part of the structure of the town administration.

In our further discussion, *Obbo* GT emphasized the need to have *caasaa* (approved structure) and budget for the office he was a Team Leader to at that time; but there was none. He said, '*caseeffami odo jiraatee waan baayyee hojjechuun hindanda'ama*' (If there were a structure, we could do a lot). From all the discussions we had with informants at all levels, we learned that lack of a formal government structure was the major cause for malpractices in land administration, land valuation, and compensation payment processes.

This indicates that the administration does not have the requisite structure and is, therefore, incompetent to provide the required services. From the above discussion, the overall concept of *fafee* among the Tulama Oromo could be summed up with the following simple conceptual framework which illustrates how, under the will of God, a specific epoch or a historical period may make an individual or institution remain *fafee* — incompetent, ineffective, and/or inefficient to meet the expectation of the contemporary society. Thus, this individual and/or institutional inefficiency could result in the emergence of illegitimate social actors with their own vested interests which may, sooner or later, end up with new economic or social relations that may, in turn, call for change through resistance on the ground. This goes with the findings of De Figueiredo et al. (2019), who show how the development approach to restructure Rio de Janeiro with the goal of increasing the economic competitiveness of the city resulted in negative impacts on its economy and its urban dynamics.

[12] This *Afaan* Oromo word is the equivalent of Mr.

The farming community members in the study area had accepted that all the aforementioned incapability and inefficiency of services at individual, group, or institutional level, and all the challenges they faced were the will of God. It is believed that God has already set specific time for something positive or negative to happen on the earth (*lafa)*. That is why BD, one of the informants, said '*Waaqatu bara akkasii nutti fide*' (It is God who brought such a time upon us). A wider interpretation of *fafee* can be made in such a way that one *fafee* can be a cause of another and yet a consequence of another *fafee*. For the moment, the concept can broadly be understood at individual and institutional levels.

Individual level *fafee* in the town administration mainly focuses on individual civil servants who work in offices such as the office of land administration and finance. This was clearly indicated in the public meetings and individual interviews with some of the farmers. The following is an excerpt from the interview conducted with one of the youth leaders of the farmers' movement during the open resistance movement that continued in the town from August to December 2012.

> '*Namooti ganda irratti shoomamani dandeetti hinqaban. Uummatas hinfayyadan. Fakkeenyaf bulchan ganda 02 Obbo. BM (naanno Laga Xafoo) waggaa ja'aafi gandicha bulche.waggaa kana keessatti mana woofchoo lama kaba; hoteela tokkoofi grosarii tokko qaba; makinaa galbachii lamafi makiinaa mana tokko qaba.*' This translates as: 'People who are assigned to administer the *gandaa*[13] do not have the capacity. For example, Obbo BM, who used to administer Ganda 02 (Laga Xafo River area) for six years has accumulated wealth, i.e., two flour mills, a hotel and a restaurant; he has two dump tracks and an automobile.'

In the above interview, the informant felt that the administrators occupying various levels in the administration structure had no capacity (in terms of training or of education level) to accomplish their duties to the expected standard. It also shows that the administrators had embezzled public resources and hence they are *fafee*, unfit for the position they held.

Similarly, a man who was taking part in a public meeting held on Friday 28 November 2012 said the following to the person who was chairing the meeting representing the Oromia regional government.

> '*Akka aadaa keenyatti warri nubulchan uumatatu isaan filata. Amma achumaa gadi nutti fiddan; nui waan goonu hinqabnu. Warri dur nubulchaa turan mere essa jiru? Doolchee afuriin lafa keenya gurgurate. Ammamo nubulchuuf dhufe. Amma nuyyuu nama barate qabna. Maali?*' This translates as: 'In our culture, leaders are elected by the community. Now you brought (them) from up there. We can do nothing. Where are the previous administrators? A person who sold our land for forty cents has returned to administer us. Why? Now we have our own educated children.'

[13] This is the lowest administrative unit in the urban administrative structure of the Oromia Regional State.

For this speaker, the people who had been administering them or are coming to administer them now are morally and socially *fafee*. They are morally *fafee* because they expropriated the farmers' land for extremely low compensation, just forty cents/meter square. They are also *fafee* for they were not elected by the community and, therefore, not legitimate to administer them. Unlike in the past when they did not have educated people of their own, now they have educated people among their children who can manage their communities' issues.

Institutional level *fafee* encompasses wider understanding of the concept. At present, the Ethiopian government has urban development policies and administration structures that are supposed to facilitate smooth delivery of services. It is expected that regional states also have their respective urban development policies and administrative structures. Oromia Regional State, through its different level urban development offices, provides legal frameworks and institutional arrangements for the towns and cities in Oromia. Having this in mind, we interviewed the municipal manager of Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town, AO, in April 2012, to know if the town had clear structure for proper functioning of the town administration.

> *Amma yoonatti hinqabnu. Magala jiran hundaafuu Biroo bulchinsa Magala Oromiatu qopheessa. Eegataa jirra.* This translates as: 'Up to now, we do not have administrative structure on paper. It is Oromia Urban Development Bureau that prepares organizational structure which is applicable in all towns in the region. We are still waiting for that.'

So far, there is no defined administrative structure for the town. This situation made the urban services to be complicated and ineffective in the eyes of the *farmers* who reside within the administrative boundary of the town. The farmers complain that they do not have any legal status to consider themselves as urban dwellers. That is, there are farmers within the jurisdiction of the city administration whose lands have been expropriated in the name of development, and who still continue to reside in the city on the remaining small piece of land.

Presumed Consequences on the *Ground*

When an institution or a system, or an individual for that matter, fails to meet the expected standards in service delivery, there is a likely occurrence of unexpected consequences or uncertainties. If all the above understandings are prevalent in the present context of the urban administration in Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town, it is evident that some forms of prejudices are likely to manifest themselves.

In this study, we observed that there were two forms of prejudices which we have labelled as subconscious and conscious ones. The 1995 FDRE Constitution, the Oromia Regional State Rural Land Holdings Proclamation No.137/2007, the Land Expropriation and Compensation Proclamation No 455/2005, the Urban Land Lease Proclamation No.721/2011 and many other legal documents of Ethiopia affirm the equality of all people before the law. Accordingly, Art. 25 of the Constitution states:

> 'All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall guarantee to all persons equal

> and effective protection without discrimination on grounds of race, nation, nationalities, or other social origin, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, birth or other status.'

The Constitution ensures the just treatment of all persons irrespective of their background. In this regard, all the legal documents are very much conscious of the rights of people.

If all these legal documents ensure the equality of the citizens, the constitutional right to property ownership, free access to land and protection against eviction, where does the cause of prejudice and marginalization lie? First, even though the law claims that it treats all persons equally, there is no clear and transparent system of accountability and control mechanism of conscious malfeasance within the subconscious system. Informants reported that individuals who abused public office and used land and its resources for personal gain are rarely held to account for their corrupt behaviour.

During the fieldwork, we learned that the administration of the town did not clearly show or somehow indicate the status of the farmers whose livelihood was literally dependent on farming but live within the administrative boundary of the town. Although we are aware that, as set out in the federal and regional legal documents, the system was not set to discriminate against any section of the residents in the town, some of the informants felt that they were not treated equally, or they were marginalized by the individual actors who favour the newcomers attracted to the area in the name of 'development' or investment. The perception is clearly stated in the following excerpt from an interview with a farmer: '*Hunddi issaanii tokko. Afaan tokko dubbatu*' (They are all the same. They speak the same language). Is there any ground to blame the government structure? Obviously yes. In spite of the existence of clear government policies and regulations, there was no legal instrument to ensure transparency and establish accountability in the process of land measurement, valuation of properties, and payment of compensation upon land expropriation. The following excerpt is from an interview with a farmer, SL, on the Voice of America (VOA).

> 'If we see the way Laga Xafo-Laga Dadhi town administration expropriates land, firstly, more than 75% of the land dispossessed from the farmers is used for residential house construction. But we do not know who takes the land. The administration sells it. We do not know the people who are constructing the houses here (on those lands).'

Although the land belongs to the state and the people (of Ethiopia), it is the farmers who have been using the land. We know that a farmer should give his land for development purposes. However, when he gives the land, certain requirements should be fulfilled; but practically these requirements are not there.

A farmer is not informed why s/he should leave the land. He/she does not know the boundary. The compensation payment process is not transparent. The land is measured without the presence of the farmer. Farmers are not asked. The administration sends the engineers and local administrators. After the size of the land is somehow known, the amount of compensation is determined, the data is taken to the municipal administration, then the land losing farmer is

called to collect the cash compensation. If a farmer complains that he/she did not understand about the compensation procedure and the legal entitlement he/she has on the remaining plot of land, he/she is taken by the police and the local militia to the police station for detention.

The above interview shows that the farmers had developed a sense of being excluded from the process of land measurement, land valuation, and compensation determination. This obviously eroded the bargaining power of the land losing farmers and made them lose trust in the governance system. In this sense, no one can see an open discriminatory action but individuals who exercise their power in the urban governance system evade the regulations or laws to control the land resource to advance their individual or group interests. This is what we call a conscious act in a subconscious system. The acts are conscious in the sense that the actors, irrespective of what the laws say, accumulate the land resources in the hands of their relatives, brothers, sisters, or friends appropriating it under the guise of development. In a public meeting held on 10 December 2012, one of the youths in attendance at the meeting said:

> '*Obbo AY, bulchinsi laafaa duraanii bootaa afurtamii ja'a qaba. Haati mana isa biiroo gali hojetti. Lafa kana hunda maqaa fira isanitiin fudhatan. Maqaa saree isaniitiin illee fudhataniru.*' This translates as: 'Mr. AY, the former head of the Land Administration Department, owns 46 plots of land in this town. His wife is working in the Revenue office. They took all this land in the name of their relatives and even in the name of their dog!'

Such a conscious act within the subconscious system results in another conscious act (such as, the accumulation of public resources in the hands of a few corrupt civil servants and their associates) within the subconscious system, though a blatant violation of the law results in another conscious but opposite act (for example, resistance and protest, which depending on circumstances could either be violent or peaceful in the form of street protests or petitioning the government) by way of delegitimizing or withdrawal of legitimacy of the subconscious together with its conscious actor(s). This, in turn, results in the conscious actors' feeling that they are discriminated and marginalized. The effect is much wider, resulting in the discrimination of the whole system together with its actors. This form of prejudice is very much informed, which we label as conscious discrimination. From the point of view of the informants, since the system did not serve in the way it was legally mandated to, they totally rejected it saying it was not theirs and the targets of the delegitimization exercise are the institutions, the system and the individuals who work for the smooth functioning of the dysfunctional city administration structure.[14] The community is conscious that the actors of the system consciously work against their interests manipulating the latter and, therefore, both the actors and the system deserve discrimination.

But if the system consciously declares and publicizes that all persons are equal before the law, why is it not conscious enough about the conscious malfeasance of the actors in the city administrative structures? Two main reasons can be drawn from the in-depth interviews

[14] On legitimacy and legitimation, see the mainstream discussions published in this journal (Pardo and Prato 2018).

conducted with several people in the study community. First, even though the laws and the regulations categorically prohibit any form of corrupt practices, there were no transparent control mechanism to prevent the manipulation of the law by individual actors. Of course, one may argue that there are legal procedures and institutions such as the criminal justice system and other legal instruments such as the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission. However, since the abuse of public office to use land resources for personal gain was done in a very sophisticated way, there were no robust federal or regional government institutions to counteract against such a corrupt system. Second, the moral integrity and competence of the individual actors are challenged by the community. Soon after the peasants began resistance against the massive land expropriation that was going on in the town, most of the civil servants in the town administration stopped providing services for they were easily agitated and frightened by the resistance movement. The following is extracted from an interview conducted with an employee of the Justice Office:

> '*Amma hojiin hinjiru. Hojjetaan hojii dhabeera. Akka kootti sirri dha. Namni tokko biiroo keessatti dhufee yoo itti tufee maalgodhu. Yeroodhaaf miliquu wayya.* This translates as: There is no work now. 'People have stopped work. I think they did the right thing. What if someone comes to their office and spit on them? It is good to disappear for a while.'

However, the expansion of both public and private development projects has forced the farmers to be involve in a wider range of relationships with diverse group of actors, often with competing interests. The issues they discuss and the modes of communications were also varied. They communicate with government employees, the private project owners and their clients, the *dalaala*, the new migrants who came to the town seeking jobs in the real estate construction projects, manufacturing, or other sectors. Therefore, the increase in the number of issues to manage and actors to engage with made the farmers busier than usual. Whenever such multiple actors appear with different, sometimes incompatible, interests, it may result in different forms of resistance by individuals or groups who think their interests were not accommodated.

Concluding Remarks

In this article, we have shown how deep and humanly the African indigenous moral principles are by taking a particular concept from the Oromo culture. We have seen that African value principles are reflected in the everyday practices of their respective communities to ensure respect, human dignity, justice, and compassion. *Fafee,* despite the fact that it encompasses some value outlooks that treat disability as an incompleteness resulting from *Waaqaa*'s withdrawal, the concept is used in the everyday language of the community to explain people's cultural perceptions in response to injustice and inequalities that arise as a result of rapid urbanization.

But the question is, if African societies have these values that protect human dignity and justice in their indigenous philosophies and everyday language, why does the modern African governance system shy away from utilizing these potentials? There are two possible reasons.

One is fear of holding accountability. Most African governments have restrictive laws in order to protect their entrenched leaders and to legitimize the abuse of term limits in office. In addition, they develop weak national, regional or continental mechanisms of human rights protection thereby corrupt their own systems for which they should be held accountable if modern justice systems are non-*fafee*.

The other possible reason is that modern African governments could not liberate themselves from seeking foreign solutions for African problems that arise from system inefficiencies. Here we do not take any position to oversimplify the complex relationship between Africa and the West or the 'traditional' versus 'modern' perspectives, but we cannot deny that we Africans have been seeking wisdom from abroad since the coming of 'modern' governance system. Our constitutions are copied, our modern education systems lack the spice of local wisdom, and our urban governance systems are alien to the local cultures.

So, recognizing where our *fafee*/*fafeness* lies in our urban governance practices will help to listen to our own people and speak the everyday language of the community. From the forgoing discussion, we can understand that *fafee* is a negatively charged concept, but it guards against any deviation from the acceptable moral and ethical values of the community, which will eventually be judged both by earthly laws and *Waaqaa*'s final verdict.

References

Abdulahi, A. 2020. African Indigenous Leadership Philosophy and Democratic Governance System: Gada's Intersectionality with Ubuntu. *Journal of Black Studies*, 51 (7): 727-759.

Alamayo, D. A. 2015. *SAFUU: The Indigenous Oromo Moral System*. MA Thesis, Dept. of Philosophy, Addis Ababa University.

Baxter, P.T.W. 1978. Ethiopia's unacknowledged Problem: the Oromo. *African Affairs*, 77 (308): 283–296.

Broodryk, J. 2009. African 'Ubuntu' Philosophy and Global Management. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 84: 313-328.

De Figueiredo, J. L., Grand Junior, J. Borges Corrêa, S. 2019. Urban Restructuring in Rio de Janeiro: Creative Economy and New Perspectives of Development. *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 9 (1): 91-107.

Demissie, N. 2000. Indigenous Technical Knowledge of Farmers in North Shoa: Soil and Water Conservation and Pest Control. In *Proceedings of the Ethiopia National Workshop on Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Ethiopia*. OSSREA Ethiopia Chamber: 14-15.

Fituma, D. 2017. Indigenous mechanism as a Foundation for African Solutions for African Problems Comprehension: Lessons from Gada System of the Oromo Nation in Ethiopia. *Sociology and Anthropology*, 5 (5): 379-387.

Geertz, C. 1973. *The interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Book Publishers.

Gutierrez, L. 2017. Ubuntu: An African Culture of Human Solidarity. *Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network*; http://aefjn.org/en/ubuntu-an-african-culture-of-human-solidarity-2/.

Haile, A. 2009. Gada *System: The Politics of Tulama Oromo* (vol.1). Addis Ababa: Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau.

Jalata, A. 2012. Promoting and Developing Oromummaa. *Sociology Publications and Other Works*; http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_socopubs/83; retrieved 12 February 2015.

Legesse, A. 1973. Gada: *Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*. New York: The Free Press.

Legesse, A. 2000. *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System*. Lawrenceville & Asmara: The Red Sea Press, Inc.

Krase, J. 2018. The Multitude of Approaches to Urban Ethnography: Blessing or Curse? In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lemma, M., Mitiku, H. 2000. Farmer Innovators and Innovations in Land Husbandry in Tigray: The Experience of ISWC II Ethiopia. In *Proceedings of the Ethiopia National Workshop on Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Ethiopia*. OSSREA Ethiopia Chamber: 16-17.

Markakis, J., Ayele, N. 1986. *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia*. New Jersey: The Red Sea Press.

Mbigi, L. 1997. *Ubuntu, the African dream in management.* Pretoria: Sigma.

Megerssa, G., Kassam, A. 2019. *Sacred Knowledge Traditions of the Oromo of the Horn of Africa*. Fifth World Publications.

Metz, T. 2012. *Ubuntu* as a moral theory and Human Rights in South Africa. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 11 (2): 532-559.

News 24.com. 2011. User's Comments. 15 November.

Nyamnjoh, F. 2017. Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the Currency of Conviviality. *Journal of Asian and Africa Studies*. 52 (3): 253–270.

Okpalike, C. 2015. The Rebirth of African Moral Traditions as Key to the Development of Sub-Saharan Africa: The Igbo Paradigm. *Journal of International Education and Leadership*, 5 (1): 1-15.

Pardo, I., Prato, G. B. 2018. *Urban Ethnographers Debate Legitimacy*. Special Issue, *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 8 (Suppl. 1); https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Vol-8-Suppl-1-April-2018.pdf

Pardo, I., Prato, G. B., Rosbrook-Thompson. J. 2020. Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections. In I. Pardo, G. B. Prato and J. Rosbrook-Thompson (eds), *Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections*. Special Issue, *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 10 (Suppl. 3): 2-12; https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/4-Introduction.pdf

Proclamation No 455/2005. *A Proclamation to Provide for the Expropriation of Land Holdings for Public Purposes and Payment of Compensation*. Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing Press.

Proclamation No. 130/2007. *Oromia Regional State Rural Land Holdings Proclamation*. Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing Press.

Proclamation No 271/2011. *A Proclamation to provide for Lease Holding of Urban Lands.* Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing Press.

Sineshaw, G. 2014. *The Nexus of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, Livelihood Strategies and Social Institutions in Midland Gedeo Human-Environment Relations*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Addis Ababa University.

Ta'a, T. 2012. Religious Beliefs among the Oromo: Waaqeffannaa, Christianity and Islam in the Context of Ethnic Identity, Citizenship and Integration. *Ethiopian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, viii (1): 87-111.

Tadesse, W. 2009. 'We Have Been Sold': Competing with the State and Dealing with Others. In Schlee, G. and E. Elizabeth (eds), *Changing Identifications and Alliances in North - East Africa (Vol.2).* Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Takele, B. 2017. A Thematic Analysis of Linguistic Taboos and Their Corresponding Euphemistic Expressions in Oromo; http://localhost:80/xmlui/handle/123456789/16300.

Tasew, B. 2000. An Anyuaa (Anuak) Myth and Its Implications for Kwor. In *Proceedings of the Ethiopia National Workshop on Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Ethiopia*. OSSREA Ethiopia Chamber: 21-22.

USAID. 2004. *Ethiopia Land Policy and Administration Assessment*. USAID Contract No. LAG-00-98-00031-00, Task Order No. 4.

Creating Community Feelings Among Impoverished People: An Ethnography of Civil Groups in Urban Australia[1]

Ritsuko Kurita
(Kanagawa University, Japan)
kurita@kanagawa-u.ac.jp

This article recognizes that in order to grasp the complex urban dynamics anthropological studies in Western industrial societies should pay attention to the relationship between micro-processes (at community level) and macro-processes (at regional and national level). The discussion examines the ways in which impoverished people in urban Australia cope with neoliberal forms of governance and negotiate their citizenship, identity and belonging at the grassroots level. The analysis focuses on the activities of two civic groups. Interviews were conducted among impoverished Anglo-Australians who, deprived of self-respect and dignity by a welfare system influenced by neoliberal policy, engage in community-based self-help activities in which the legitimacy of the welfare system and citizenship are questioned and challenged. By forming loose alliances in dealing with the shared problem of poverty, they attempt to restore a sense of belonging as citizens and strive to redefine 'mutual obligation' not as top-down imposition of duties on citizens, as promoted by the government, but as relatedness and mutual help among citizens of equal status.
Keywords: Impoverished Anglo-Australians, urban poverty, grassroots civic groups, self-help communities, sense of belonging.

Introduction

The study of cities, particularly in Western industrial societies, has long been undermined in anthropology due to academic division between sociology, intended as the study of 'complex' societies, and socio-cultural anthropology, regarded as specialising in the study of so-called 'primitive' societies. Even after the interest in Western industrial cities grew as a subject of anthropological study, urban research continued to apply the traditional functionalist paradigm to the study of allegedly 'isolated' and 'autonomous' communities. Offering only a fragmentary picture of urban reality, early works were mainly 'problem-centred', including poverty, minorities and urban adaptation. Instead, as Pardo and Prato argue (2018), in order to grasp complex and dynamic urban processes, attention should be paid to the relationship between micro-processes (at community level) and macro-processes (at regional and national level).

The legitimacy of governance is one of the key issues faced by urban citizens today (Pardo and Prato 2019). In urban settings marked by socio-economic, cultural and political forms of inequality, the failure of those in power to be 'co-cultural' with ordinary people leads to illegitimacy of governance (Pardo and Prato 2021). Some anthropological studies have examined the impact of illegitimate governance on the lives of ordinary people and the complex ways in which the latter cope with top-down economic and political agendas in their everyday lives. For instance, Pardo, who examined the impact of slanted policies and bad governance on local life in Naples, Italy, has argued that under the pressure of misgovernance and ruling by administrative double standards, ordinary citizens who are excluded both from the formal 'sector' of the economy and from important rights of citizenship negotiate their lives by engaging in grassroots entrepreneurialism based on relations of kinship and friendship (Pardo 2018).

[1] This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists), Grant Number 19K13460.

In a similar vein, Spyridakis (2018) has examined the impact of the decline of the shipbuilding industry in Greece on local people, showing that local workers who are exposed to employment insecurity struggle to cope with the asymmetrical framework of the old socio-spatial discriminations and inequalities. They rely on their direct knowledge of the exploitative labour system and on the social networks that they have built over the years. Spyridakis argues that there is a complex articulation of forces, projects and actors operating at different levels which should be taken into account when addressing global urbanism and urban dynamics.

These studies show that policy and political decisions have important effects on people's lives, but this does not necessarily mean that they will be accepted uncritically or unconditionally across society since what is legal is not always regarded in the broader society as moral and legitimate (Pardo and Prato 2019).

This article draws on the theoretical framework that I have outlined above to examine the way in which impoverished people in urban Australia cope with neoliberal forms of governance and negotiate their citizenship and, by extension, their identity and belonging (Pardo and Prato 2018: 6). Under neoliberalism, governance moved from a liberal progressive approach which conceptualised and responded to social ills structurally and collectively to one that highlights decentralized and individualized remedies for social problems. In the latter form, a person is reconfigured as an active entrepreneurial agent, an expert in making self-interested choices and mitigating risk (Kingfisher 2013).

However, as Kingfisher (2013) argues, the reality of neoliberalism and neoliberal policy is not homogenous throughout the world, and it is important to look at how neoliberal policy is constructed in each specific local context. In Australia, where social governance based on a neoliberal ideology has prevailed since the late 1980s, questions have been raised on the legitimacy of governance, especially regarding the welfare programme (Shaver 2002, Stratton 2011). With the introduction of the notion of 'mutual obligation' between the state and citizens, welfare recipients are required to give something to society in return for welfare support. They are asked to seek work actively and engage in self-improvement in order to become employable. Welfare is no longer considered to be a right for the individual citizen; it is now conceived as support provided on certain conditions. Furthermore, the welfare claimants are denied equality of selfhood, because welfare assistance emphasises supervision instead of sovereignty (Shaver 2002).

Under this ideology of an individualised contractual relationship, the unemployed are generally cast as contractual malfeasants (Somers 2008: 3). The ideal type of 'normal citizen' has changed accordingly. In Australia, where citizenship and nationality are equated, 'Australianness' has long been associated with 'whiteness' (Hage 2000). However, as neoliberalism gained ascendance, the idea of Australianness became associated with a robust work ethic and the ability to make rational choices. In neoliberal societies, citizenship is generally determined by a person's economic autonomy and by that person's economic contribution to the nation (Stratton 2011). In such a context, welfare recipients face exclusion, irrespective of their race and ethnicity. For instance, Peel (2003), who examined the life experiences of impoverished Anglo-Australians residing in disadvantaged suburbs of major cities, showed that residents receiving welfare payment were viewed by the welfare office as incapable and as welfare frauds and, as a consequence, were treated disrespectfully.

In spite of being white, unemployed Anglo-Australians, namely those of Anglo-Celtic descent mainly from England, Ireland and Scotland,[2] are deemed to have failed in their obligations as citizens and are categorised as 'undeserving members' both by the government and by middle-class Australians. Like non-white ethnic minorities, Anglo-Australians on welfare suffer not only from poverty but also from stigma, humiliation and loss of self-respect (Peel 2003, Marston and McDonald 2008). However, these perceived undesirable citizens do not necessarily or unconditionally accept the public stigma.

The discussion that follows aims to examine how impoverished Anglo-Australians cope with the illegitimacy of the welfare system and negotiate their citizenship, focusing on the activities of some spontaneous civic groups which they have established at the grassroots. It also illuminates the role played by self-help civic groups in creating varied forms of community that help to generate a sense of belonging among the urban marginalised.

In order to clarify such a context, the following sections first offer an outline of the welfare agenda for the unemployed as it is implemented in Australia under neoliberal governance, explaining how civic groups address their members' vulnerability and compensate for the deficiencies in the welfare programmes. Then, an account of the methods used in the research is followed by the descriptive analysis of two cases studies that focus on the activities of civic groups; specifically, an advisory group for the impoverished and a group that provides community meals. This ethnographic material helps us to examine the ways in which impoverished Anglo-Australians deal with the illegitimacy of neoliberal governance at the grassroots level. Finally, I offer tentative conclusions and bring out some implications for future research.

Welfare Services Under Neoliberalism in Australia and Their Problems

As in other Western countries, the neoliberal ideology affected the welfare reforms in Australia. Both welfare governance and public attitudes toward welfare changed accordingly. The notion of 'mutual obligation' mooted in 1996 demanded that income support recipients must fulfil the obligations of 'active job-seeking behaviour'. Consequently, Australia implemented a long-term version of workfare for the unemployed, labelled Work for Dole (henceforth WfD) Programme. Workfare requires the unemployed to work in order to gain access to welfare. In order to develop skills and experience for work, those who are targeted for WfD must engage in work-like activities at not-for-profit organisations and government agencies. This programme was later extended to include people with disabilities and single parents, despite the fact that access to welfare payments was supposed to be a right of all citizens (McDonald and Chenoweth 2006: 113-114).

Liberalism as a form of governmentality regulates the conduct of individuals and oversees the performance of services in the absence of state sovereignty (Foucault 1991). In Australia, the concept of workfare is implemented through organisations such as Centrelink (an income security agency) and the Job Network (a quasi-market system offering employment services). These entities are subcontracted by the federal government. They assess individual clients in terms of the degree of employability within the framework of prevailing occupational systems (McDonald et al. 2003). The long-term unemployed and those assessed as posing significant difficulties in obtaining employment

[2] This, I note, is an arbitrary category (Stratton 2011).

are monitored by case managers, who provide intensive guidance customized to their individual circumstances with the aim of improving their chances to achieve employment. Those who fail to participate in the activities designated for them face financial penalties: their benefits may be suspended, and their case managers may submit a negative report to Centrelink (McDonald and Chenoweth 2006, Marston and McDonald 2008).

As Kingfisher (2013) noted, disciplining and policing marginalised people in terms of gender, race and class (for instance, poor single mothers) through welfare reform becomes a mechanism for the construction and assertion of the normative. Here, the 'marginalised' are seen as opposed to the 'civicised', who are self-sufficient, autonomous and capable of managing their own risk.

Although Anglo-Australian welfare recipients are not racially marginalised, they are considered to be deviant from the norm. They are viewed as people who lack the ability to work because they are poor and need administrative intervention to change their behaviour. Social workers embody the workfare logic in their position as agents of both the state and the client. With some notable exceptions, they tend to identify the personality and psyche of the unemployed person as the cause of unemployment (McDonald and Chenoweth, 2006). Significantly, social workers are, in turn, subjected to performance management and performance goals. The ideals that informed the social service and the moral elements of welfare have, thus, been replaced by managerialism, with the consequence that welfare services blame the 'clients' for their condition, leading to welfare recipients' low self-esteem and self-denial (Shaver 2002, McDonald and Chenoweth 2006, Singh and Cowden 2009).

In 2008, the Australian Government launched a reform agenda to reduce and ultimately end homelessness. This agenda inherited its basic concept from the homeless programmes of the mid-1990s, which emphasised individual case management because, it was believed, the problem of homelessness could be resolved by helping people to address their individual problems, issues or circumstances, and to achieve increased self-reliance. Thus, recent policies to reduce homelessness place less emphasis on the structural factors that cause poverty and homelessness, focusing instead on the individual needs and problems of the homeless (Bullen and Reynolds 2014). Notably, the emphasis on self-reliance was criticised because it blamed individuals for social problems (Minnery and Greenhalgh 2007, Polakow and Guillean 2001). For example, by casting homeless as people who deserve homelessness as a result of their choices, this view neglects individuals' complex circumstances, such as mental illness or drug dependency, and their likely need of additional support and services in order to achieve self-reliance (Minnery and Greenhalgh 2007).

Therefore, citizens who engage in activities aimed at improving their lives have formed civic groups. These groups, including charity establishments, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and non-profit organisations (NPOs), play significant roles in supplementing the deficiencies of public welfare services, as they offer people living in poverty important services, such as food, everyday goods, health and housing. However, these services are vulnerable because they depend solely on the benevolent intentions of the volunteers and on donors' generosity. One notes, for instance, that, when philanthropists who support these groups are presented with negative portrayals of the homeless in the media, they may change their attitude towards homelessness and switch to viewing the issue as 'a matter of choice' and unworthy of help (Tually et al. 2013: 45-48).

We should consider that trust-based relationships between service providers and beneficiaries are pivotal for the development of a sense of acceptance and self-respect among welfare recipients. Voluntary groups and associations could encourage autonomy and motivate those on welfare to improve their circumstances and achieve their goals (Rowe and Wolch 1990, Thompson et al. 2006, Johnstone et al. 2015). Nonetheless, services based on philanthropy generate asymmetrical relationships between service providers and recipients, sometimes against the will of the benefactors (Goldberg 2009, Tually et al. 2013). Some studies have also demonstrated that welfare services do not necessarily produce fundamental solutions to the problems faced by the recipients; instead, they may distract attention away from the problems that cause and sustain poverty (Parsell and Watts 2017). In other words, the simple act of providing housing, food and everyday goods helps, but does not necessarily address the multidimensional problems of poverty (Johnstone et al. 2015, Parsell and Watts 2017). Existence in a state of poverty is associated with the lack of social ties and a diminished sense of connectedness and belonging (Vandemark 2007). In short, it is important for Anglo-Australians struggling with poverty also to gain a sense of place and social belonging.

Methods

The present study is primarily grounded in my ongoing fieldwork among the interracial social networks of impoverished urban residents in Australia. The material that I discuss in this article was collected during a five-month of intermittent fieldwork carried out between 2017 and 2020 among two civic groups. They are, an advisory group for the impoverished in Adelaide and a community meal-providing group in Sydney. The ethnography includes information from these groups' newsletters and home pages. I interviewed 12 people who identified themselves as Anglo-Australians. They are five service providers and seven beneficiaries. The beneficiaries were regular recipients of the service and agreed to share with me their experience with the groups. Their age ranged from 20s to 50s. I initially contacted the service providers of each organisation and, having obtained their consent to participate in the research, recruited them as key informants. I also attended the regular meetings held by the groups at a local public library and conducted participant observation at a service site. The field study was done in full compliance with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. I use pseudonyms for all participants and civic groups.

Results

The following case studies are based on information from interviews and participant observation. When necessary, this material has been supplemented by the content of the newsletters issued by the groups.

Case 1: The Advisory Group for the Impoverished

In 2013, people who had been affected by poverty established in Adelaide a community-based advisory group for the impoverished. This association aims to 'advocate for the dignity, rights and well-being of people on low income and create community networks that provide emotional and practical support to those affected by poverty' (extract from their homepage). In 2018, the group included approximately 50 core members; most were Anglo-Australian, and some were Indigenous

Australian. Members included job seekers, low-income workers, single parents, age and disability pensioners, students, community and welfare workers and supporters. Their main activities include the provision of support and advice to those subjected to income management; assistance in dealing with the employment agency and with welfare office applications; campaigning for the abolishment of the cashless welfare card; and negotiating with local councils to increase unemployment benefits. The group also hosts fundraising events and organises lectures to promote awareness of poverty-related problems among non-recipients of welfare services for the unemployed.

Members with university degrees and individuals with work experience act as group coordinators offering fellow members support, advocacy and information related to welfare services. They also facilitate interactions among group members and organise meetings at community centres in several districts. In 2019, Cindy, an Anglo-Australian woman in her twenties who grew up in the northern suburb of Adelaide, one of the most disadvantaged places in South Australia, was chief coordinator of the advisory group. Like other residents in her neighbourhood, she had experienced socioeconomic difficulties: her father, a labourer, died from an injury when she was six years old. Her mother was long unemployed and suffered from psychiatric illness, which forced the family to subsist on scant welfare payments. In spite of her impoverished background, Cindy managed to study while working part-time. She received welfare payments from Australia's Youth Allowance programme and was admitted to a university in Adelaide, where her tuition was waived. She gives her fellow group members information about their entitlements, including the right to pursue legal action (Interview, 11 September 2019).

Dignity and respect are believed to convey a sense of full citizenship (Rosaldo 1994). The way in which Anglo-Australian welfare recipients who reside in disadvantaged urban settings are treated by the welfare office undermines their self-respect (Peel 2003). For instance, Paul, a founder of the advisory group, described how welfare recipients who are forced by circumstances to join the WfD programme experience daily harassment in the form of disrespectful treatment by the Job Network personnel. He said:

> 'More often than not, these organisations (welfare offices) are sources of stress and frustration for unemployed people. They exert force, quite stringent force on these people, forcing them to attend course-oriented jobs that might not be suitable for them, as they do not match up with their skills.' (Interview, 17 February 2017)

Welfare recipients who are targeted for inclusion in the WfD programme are placed under surveillance and are obliged to engage in regular interviews with welfare office personnel, report progress on their job-search and conduct for a defined period job hunting activities on the office computers. Welfare payments may be reduced or postponed if recipients fail to meet these obligations, regardless of whether they have legitimate reasons for doing so. Cindy and other coordinators of the community-based advisory group for the impoverished deal with members who complain of unfair treatment from the personnel of Job Network, giving them advice on how to deal with the harassment.

For example, five years ago, Sue, an Anglo-Australian member in her fifties, lost her job and house because the company where she worked shut down. When she became a welfare recipient, she experienced constant harassment from a Job Network officer. Sue described her experience:

> 'The lady I have to see is only 25 years old. My daughter is 31. Therefore, she is six years younger than my own daughter. She treats me like a naughty child. She yells at me. She is always telling me that I have to do things. One time, I had a meeting with her at a certain time. But I had a job interview at the same time. Before she first gave me the appointment I said to her straight away, "I've got a job interview at that time." She said "it doesn't matter, you have to come to this." I said, "but the whole thing with the Job Network is that they are supposed to help you find work." She said, "no, you can't go to a job interview. You have to come to this meeting".' (Interview, 22 September 2018)

When she was ill-treated by the Job Network employee, Sue did not have any support, including from her family. When her welfare payment was postponed, she was driven to the point of having to scavenge for food from garbage cans. Yet, she managed to cope with the harassment thanks to the advice she received from group members who had undergone similar experiences. Joining the advisory group made her realise that others struggled with poverty, too, and that she had access to a community of people who could fight with her against impoverished circumstances. At the time of her interview with me, Sue shared her experience both at a public meeting and in the local and mainstream media. She related her ordeal as follows:

> 'Before I found the group, I did not know some of the rules. Being yelled at like that would upset me terribly. Well, it still does, but now I know the rules and I know my rights. I feel more able to stand up for my rights because that's the thing, if you do not know your rights, you cannot stand up for yourself. This is a big problem for many people. Many people do not know their rights. And the Job Network agency will not tell you.' (Interview, 22 September 2018)

According to Cindy, participation in the WfD programme involves the unfair treatment meted out to claimants by Job Network personnel but does not generally lead to opportunities for employment. When job agencies introduce jobs to their clients, the experience and interests of the individual are hardly taken into consideration, and most of the jobs are menial and unlikely to assist clients with acquiring skills for their future careers. Cindy expressed her views on the WfD programme as follows:

> 'Personally, I think it's not a good experience, because people do things that do not give them much experience. A couple of examples we have from our members … they were going to the Work for the Dole site, but there would not actually be anything to do. Then, the supervisors would say "okay move those rocks over there." It was at a railway station. Another one at a church site would say "pick the weeds from the garden." If someone has theoretically been out of work for five years or something, they really need some experience that might better them, but a lot of the time we find that it's not worth taking those programmes because many people cannot find good organisations to gain actual experience doing meaningful work. Working for the Dole is more of a punishment.' (Interview, 17 September 2018)

Members of the advisory group share accounts of stigmatisation and offer each other advice about coping with the situation in a newsletter, as well as at regular meetings. For instance, Paul, who was unemployed at the time of the interview, explained how he helped his fellow members:

> ' We are providing advice to people about their rights, when it comes to Centerlink; particularly when it comes to Job agencies or employment services providers. Sometimes we will like counsel people if they ask us to go with them, and sit next to them to make sure their rights are respected.' (Interview, 17 February 2017)

In the newsletter, Paul pointed to the shortage of jobs and emphasised that poverty and unemployment are the product of structural and policy factors, rather than individuals' flaws and weaknesses. He said:

> 'The system would be an unfair and harsh one even if all the rules were followed. This is because ultimately, the role of job agencies is not to help unemployed people find work. After all, there are 19 jobseekers for every job — including the unemployed, the underemployed and the "hidden unemployed" […] The role of job agencies is to put unemployed people through plenty of frustration and stress, create as many hoops and hurdles as possible, which people must jump through and over. Hence, the demoralising, endless search for non-existent jobs, or for jobs one is not suited to, simply to make-up the numbers. Hence, the endless appointments and flimsy, demeaning courses. "Keep the unemployed busy" is the motto.' (Quotes from the group's newsletter, *Quarterly* 2017)

Through these actions, the advisory group raises awareness among the members that unfair treatment by the welfare staff is caused by structural flaws and should not be seen as a consequence of one's own faults. Notably, this helps members to become aware that they do not have to succumb to such treatment, and that it is important to resist such disrespect by consulting with each other about how they can claim what they are entitled to. For instance, Byron, a member of the advisory group, shared his experience of succeeding in claiming his rights when his new case manager at Job Network agency wanted to increase his unemployment obligations from three to four days a week. He said:

> 'I said that if the new activities were mandatory, I would need to get that statement in writing from her before I would sign to anything new. On hearing this, she said that I must do "whatever they tell me to do or I would not get paid", and that "welfare is not just free money anymore" […] I swallowed my guts and said "you know that the not free money anymore comment you just made doesn't mean that organisations like yours can just milk job-seekers for all they are worth. We both have rules to follow." […] She didn't pursue the matter any further and the appointment was ended immediately after that exchange.' (Quotes from the group's newsletter, *Quarterly* 2016)

Interacting in the meetings and exchanging opinions on poverty in the newsletters fosters among the group members both a sense of coalition to fight against the illegitimacy of the welfare system and a temporary sense of togetherness which encourages them to claim what is legitimate in the welfare system and to reflect on how it should be reformed. It may thus be said that the advisory group does not just advocate for welfare recipients; it also helps to restore their self-respect and

dignity, teaching them how to deal with the welfare system, how to claim their rights and how to insist on being treated as equal members of Australian society.

Case 2: The Community Meal Providing Group

The second civic group that I studied runs a community meals programme to meet the needs of the urban impoverished. This programme was founded in Sydney in 2017 by a faction of the Communist Party. It aims to 'build a sustainable community where no one is left out, by serving food for people who are homeless in addition to enlightening working-class people about the importance of social power and social equality' (extract from the homepage of the organisation). Every Saturday evening, volunteer members of the group cook and serve food and provide everyday commodities for homeless people. They do so from a site in Sydney's central business district (CBD). John, a founder of the meal programme originally from Syria in his twenties, explained why they chose this site:

> 'We set up in the street. This site is close to the Reserve Bank of Australia. It's a bit iconic to show that here is the reserve bank and parliament is just there. We can do more than them blokes. It's a political lesson as well. We want to show people where a sort of attack on capitalism in Marx's. We know the weaknesses of those institutions. We are attacking those weaknesses.' (Interview, 1 September 2019)

A volunteer lady, who has also participated in the activities of other volunteer groups, explained what she saw as the distinctiveness of this group. She said:

> 'They operate like at a street level. I like the fact that they set up for quite a few hours. A lot of the organisations are more limited in their time. They come, set up, serve, then pack up and leave quite relatively quickly. But here it's more rather than one big feed, it's like tea and coffee, snacks and food for quite a few hours. It just creates really lovely community. It's just a friendly community. Nutritious food, they always cook beautiful food.' (Interview, 23 February 2020)

According to John, approximately seven or eight volunteers serve around 400 or 500 meals every week. Most group members are in their twenties and hail from diverse ethnicities, such as Middle Eastern, Asian, Anglo-Australian and Indigenous Australian. John described the homeless who regularly visit the group's weekly food service as follows:

> 'A lot of these people were just average working-class people until they had a divorce and ended up on the streets, or lost their job, or were injured at work and could not get compensation. That's what happens. Insurance companies drag out the issue, so you get your pay out six months later. However, six months later, you are on the street. Most are likely to be people who are sleeping on a friend's couch rather than on the streets.' (Interview, 1 September 2019)

John differentiates the community meal programme from other groups providing similar services by saying, 'We are doing the same work and being more effective than they are by providing warm food and creating a community' (Interview, 1 September 2019). He was also aware of the similarities and differences between other organisations, especially church groups, and his association. He said:

> 'Similar to the way we do things, they go out and feed people who are homeless, but they also hand [out] Bibles and say prayers. They tell them "You need to be Christians," whereas we tell them to read Lenin and Stalin. We need to join forces.' (Interview, 1 September 2019)

John has personally experienced homelessness. He used to work at a construction site but became temporarily homeless after he was injured at work and did not receive compensation. Moreover, the recipients of the community meal programme include not only people who are homeless but also people who were once homeless but now live in public housing.

Some homeless people are reluctant to become too involved with the group once they become aware that the meal programme organisers are members of a Communist faction. Others, however, continue to visit the location every week for the meals and for social interactions with the members of the group and other homeless people.

Some regular members are acquainted with each other and when they meet at the weekly communal event they discuss their daily problems and possible solutions to these problems. As they eat a hot meal, they also exchange information on the public or voluntary services available to them. For instance, on a day I visited the site, a few homeless men were discussing the inefficiency and punitive aspect of the housing system for the homeless in Sydney. It is meaningless, they said, to be housed in temporary accommodation where one can stay only for 28 days; then, after that, one is back on the street and has to wait several years for permanent housing. A man pointed out that, while in temporary accommodation, he was obliged to apply for 10-week housing and had to provide details of his application, regardless of whether he could afford such accommodation. He continued, saying, 'The worst part is that you are on the streets through life circumstances or no faults of your own; whatever reasons you are on the streets, you don't need to be punished any further.' Then, the conversation expanded into how much money the government is paying to the private companies that provide such temporary accommodation. Another man in his thirties said:

> 'You know, when you talk about welfare state, welfare gets paid so much more money for welfare cooperation than the money that goes to poor people. The money spent on welfare is fraction of all government spending. And this is about human beings, it's about human lives that are part of our society. That's not important for the government.' (Interview, 23 February 2020)

Although these conversations do not lead directly to the solution of problems, by analysing the situation in which they objectively are placed, the people involved can at least realize that they are not to blame for such situation, as it is instead claimed by both the welfare agency and mainstream society. The service thus serves as a place where the urban impoverished can share their doubts and frustrations about the government and its welfare system and discuss the difficulties they face in their lives without being judged. This weekly association meeting helps them acquire a sense of being members of a social network, albeit a temporary one.

The meal programme helps to initiate the creation of a community also by encouraging interactions among the visitors. Among other things, a small birthday party was organised for a regular visitor called Matt, an Anglo-Australian man in his forties who used to be a baker but lost his

job due to alcohol problems and became temporarily homeless. A volunteer who was not a formal member of the group but visited the site every week brought a birthday cake. At the time, Matt no longer had an alcohol problem and lived in public housing on a disability pension. Yet, he continued to visit the service site to benefit from the food and the everyday provisions, and to remain connected with the service providers and the homeless. He explained that the volunteer who brought the cake was a good listener and had helped him overcome his alcohol problem. He described her as follows:

> 'I have known her for about two years. She volunteers at two places. She is a good person with a good heart. She used to have a drinking problem. She does not drink anymore. We can relate to each other. It's individual, but you still can kind of relate.' (Interview, 1 September 2019)

Matt needed someone he could relate to on a daily basis because he did not have a close relationship with his family. His case demonstrates that the mere provision of accommodation was not enough to overcome poverty-related problems and readjust to society. Associating with his friends at the food service location gave Matt a sense of belonging, which helped him 'get by' day by day and eventually overcome his alcohol-related difficulties.

These findings suggest that the meaning of community is reinterpreted by the service recipients in a way that does not necessarily meet the initiator of the programme's aim to instil them with the Communist ideology.

Discussion

These two case studies show that the impoverished Anglo-Australian who are exposed to the neoliberal forms of governance do not accept the situation passively; they question, and challenge, the legitimacy of welfare programme and citizenship. The civic groups that I have described object to the legitimacy of neoliberal forms of governance. The advisory group for the impoverished emphasise that the current welfare programme undermines the dignity and rights of welfare recipients. This group not only reaches out to people who are on the Work for the Dole programme to make them aware of the rights as citizens, but also analyses and exposes the structural flaws that cause job shortage and economic inequalities. On the other hand, the group providing the community meal challenges the deficiencies both of the capitalist society and of a government that denies any responsibility for people's unemployment. We have seen how this group attempts to negotiate the citizenship of those who are socially excluded by creating a temporary community in which people on welfare can share their experiences, frustrations and sufferings and gain a temporary sense of belonging to a social network.

The activities of these two civic groups point to the development of an alternative kind of citizenship and sense of belonging among the impoverished and socially excluded Anglo-Australians; specifically, one which is not based on a notion of 'mutual obligation' among self-sufficient individuals who are expected to draw on self-responsibility in addressing these issues. Through their daily activities, these groups show that the notion of citizenship modelled on neoliberal ideology fails to confer to each member of society the right to be treated with fairness and respect, as well as a sense of full social belonging. The official notion of 'mutual obligation' prevents the impoverished from

gaining their dignity. On the contrary, the relationships that are built over time among the members of these civic groups give the urban impoverished practical support and help to restore their sense of belonging as citizens. Most service providers, especially the initiators of these groups, have personally experienced unemployment, poverty and feelings of alienation. Thus, in line with earlier accounts (Curtis 1997), they interact with service recipients as equals; they do not draw boundaries between them based on asymmetric power relations.

The grassroots civic groups that that I have described offer the impoverished a space where they can congregate and discuss poverty-related problems with each other both formally and informally. Sharing a common experience of suffering does not necessarily create solidarity among the impoverished or lead to a collective social movement. However, it does make people aware of the importance of not surrendering to the system and teaches them to handle their problems without blaming themselves for their circumstances. Thus, we have seen, the urban impoverished learn that their poverty is not attributable to some failure of their own. They become aware of the structural flaws in neoliberal society that cause poverty and understand that they can cope with their problems by confronting, if not changing, the existing welfare system.

These civic groups view people not as isolated individuals but as persons who are embedded in a relationship with others. Through their activities, they show that it is such a connection with others that makes it possible for individuals to face and deal with their problems. The study of these groups and their members shows that 'mutual obligation' in a real sense should not be intended as a top-down imposition of duties of citizens; it should, instead, be based on mutual help and relatedness among equals, who can relate to each other's suffering and can help each another by sharing their similar experiences.

Conclusion

This Australian ethnography suggests that, while the notion of 'mutual obligation' is officially presented as a legitimate form of neoliberal governance, impoverished Anglo-Australians who are viewed as deviant from this notion bring out the failure of the current welfare system to achieve its original goal of assisting people to be self-reliant, become reintegrated in the society and gain a sense of full social membership. We have seen how impoverished people negotiate the failings of governance and citizenship by engaging in community-based self-help activities and interacting with peers who remind them of their rights as citizens and help them to recover to some extent, their dignity and respect.

We have found that the self-hep community assists impoverished individuals to cope with the poverty not through some kind of 'personal responsibility' but through their relationship with others who are in a similar situation. Thus, the legitimacy of neoliberal governance is challenged and power relations between those in power and ordinary people become open to redefinition. This shows that, as Pardo and Prato (2019) argue, neither inequalities nor the relationship between norms and interest are fixed; instead, they can be negotiated in the complexity of ordinary people's life.

The self-help community could be viewed as contributing to address social problems with which the government can no longer deal. It could, therefore, be instituted as a section of the government and thereby used as a contemporary form of governance under neoliberalism (Rose 1999). In this

line, a future study will need to focus on what form should a community that is meaningful to the urban impoverished take in order for it to counter the failings of neoliberal governance. Attention should also be paid to the potential alliance between Anglo and non-Anglo Australian impoverished in urban settings who, despite their different backgrounds, share the experience of social exclusion; such a potential alliance would constitute a strong challenge to the illegitimacy of neoliberal governance in this field.

References

Bullen, J. and Reynolds, F. 2014. Reforming the service system. In C. Chamberlain, G. Johnson and C. Robinson (eds), *Homelessness in Australia: An Introduction*. Sydney: UNSW Press.

Curtis, K. A. 1997. Urban poverty and the social consequences of privatized food assistance. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 19 (2): 207-226.

Foucault, M. 1991. Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Goldberg, S. H. 2009. *Billions of Drops in Millions of Buckets: Why Philanthropy doesn't Advance Social Progress*. New Jersey: John Wiley.

Hage, G. 2000. *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*. New York/London: Routledge.

Johnstone, M., Parsell, C., Jetten, J., Dingle, G. and Walter, Z. 2015. Breaking the cycle of homelessness: Housing stability and social support as predictors of long-term well-being. *Housing Studies*, 31 (4): 410-426.

Kingfisher, C. 2013. *A Policy Travelogue: Tracing Welfare Reform in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Canada*. Oxford: Berghahn.

Marston, G. and McDonald, C. 2008. Feeling motivated yet? Long-term unemployed people's perspectives on the implementation of workfare in Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 43 (2): 255-269.

McDonald, C. and Chenoweth, L. 2006. Workfare Oz-style: Welfare reform and social work in Australia. *Journal of Policy Practice*, 5 (2/3): 109-128.

McDonald, C., Marston, G. and Buckley, A. 2003. Risk technology in Australia: The role of the job seeker classification instrument in employment services. *Critical Social Policy*, 23 (4): 498-525.

Minnery, J. and Greenhalgh, E. 2007. Approaches to homelessness policy in Europe, the United States and Australia. *Journal of Social Issues*, 63 (3): 641-655.

Pardo, I. 2018. Between Stereotype and Bad Governance: An Italian Ethnography. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pardo, I. and Prato, G. B. 2018. Introduction: Urban Ethnography Matters—Analytical Strength, Theoretical Value and Significance to Society. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pardo, I. and Prato, G. B. 2019. Ethnographies of Legitimacy: Methodological and Theoretical Insights. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *Legitimacy: Ethnographic and Theoretical Insights*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pardo, I. and Prato, G. B. 2021. Querying Urban Inequalities. In I. Pardo and G.B. Prato (eds), *Urban Inequalities: Ethnography Informed Reflections*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Parsell, C. and Watts, B. 2017. Charity and justice: A reflection on new forms of homelessness provision in Australia. *European Journal of Homelessness*, 11 (2): 65-76.

Peel, M. 2003. *The lowest rung: Voices of Australian poverty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Polakow, V. and Guillean, C. eds. 2001. *International Perspectives on Homelessness*. Westport/Connecticut/London: Greenwood Press.

Rosaldo, R. 1994. Cultural citizenship in San Jose, California. *PoLAR*, 17 (2): 57-63.

Rose, N. 1999. *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rowe, S. and Wolch, J. 1990. Social networks in time and space: Homeless women in Skid Row, Los Angeles. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 80 (2): 184-204.

Shaver, S. 2002. Australian welfare reform: From citizenship to supervision. *Social Policy & Administration*, 36 (4): 331-345.

Singh, G. and Cowden, S. 2009. The social worker as intellectual. *European Journal of Social Work*, 12 (4): 479-493.

Somers, M. R. 2008. *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stratton, J. 2011. *Uncertain Lives: Culture, Race and Neoliberalism in Australia*. New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Spyridakis, M. 2018. Shipbuilding Decline and Dubious Futures: A Greek Ethnography of Creative Destruction. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*. New Yok: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thompson, S., McManus, H., Lantry, J., Windsor, L. and Flynn, P. 2006. Insights from the street: Perceptions of services and providers by homeless young adults. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 29 (1): 34-43.

Tually, S., Baulderstone, J., Slatter, M. and Skinner, V. 2013. *Beyond charity: The engagement of the philanthropic and homelessness sectors in Australia (Final Report).* University of Adelaide and Flinders University. http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/4110/1/Beyond-Charity_Engagement%20of%20philanthropic%20&%20homelessness%20sectors%20in%20Australia_2013.pdf , accessed 26 May 2021.

Vandemark, L. M. 2007. Promoting the sense of self, place and belonging in displaced persons: The example of homelessness. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 21 (5): 241-248.

When Walls Bear Witness: From Collective Memory to Tourist Artefact in Belfast and Derry[1]

Cécilia Germain Julien Doutre
(Grenoble Alpes University, AGEIS Laboratory, France)
cecilia.germain@hotmail.fr juliendoutre@hotmail.fr

Numerous murals adorn the walls of Belfast and Derry in Northern Ireland and are among the most famous tourist attractions of this province of the United Kingdom. These murals were made famous by 'the Troubles', the civil war that pitted Republican separatists against Loyalists (or Unionists) loyal to the crown of England for close to thirty years. During the conflict, factions from both sides painted building facades in their respective community for reasons of propaganda, or as a threat to the other side and as a tribute to the victims. Twenty years after the end of the conflict, it is clear that peace did not put an end to the practice of murals. New themes have emerged and certain murals, perceived as offensive, have been removed. This article provides insight into the heritage processes that have allowed this practice to continue and sheds lights on how it carried out at the end of the conflict.
Keywords: Heritage, city, murals, tourism, art.

During the 20th century, there has been a significant development of muralist practice and many examples can be found worldwide: Mexico (Ménard 2016), Argentina (Longoli 2015), Dakar (Diouf 2005), the United States (Mendoza and Torres 1994), the Basque country in France (Pragnère 2014) and Italy (Cozzolino 2014). There is even work focusing on an international approach to recent murals (García-Gayo and Giner-Cordero 2021). Usually employed to support political or social struggles, they sometimes refer to conflicts taking place in a local region or, in some cases, to conflicts occurring on the other side of the world.[2]

Murals in Northern Ireland are often associated with the civil war between Republicans, who want independence from the UK, and Unionists loyal to the British crown, also known as Loyalists. They have a sulphurous reputation linked to this conflict.

While they are primarily known for their evocation of 'the Troubles',[3] the wall paintings in the public space in Northern Ireland date back to the early 20th century and were designed to draw support during The Orange Troubles (Rolston 1995). This practice was originally undertaken by Loyalist communities and it was not before the 1970s that murals painted by Catholics began to appear (Jarman 1998, Rolston 1991). The reason explaining this late appearance of Republican murals is that the Flags and Emblems Act of 1954 punished such representations.[4] Murals were both a political propaganda tool (Rolston 1995) and a form of identity expression (Cozzolino 2013). They also served as spatial markers separating neighbourhoods (Jarman 1998). They, thus, both reinforced the peace lines that divided public

[1] We wish to acknowledge the contribution made by the Board and two anonymous expert reviewers for *Urbanities* to the final version of this article.
[2] For example: the international wall in Falls Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland. The mural located on the peace line in Belfast expresses Republican solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for equal treatment rights, the Basque community and South Africa.
[3] The Troubles refers to the recent period of conflict between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland. It stretched from the late 1960s, which was marked by the Catholic civil rights movement, to 1998, when the peace accords were signed.
[4] See https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/hmso/fea1954.htm

space and set up neighbourhood boundaries from the beginning of the Troubles (Ballif 2001). Murals are an important part of the visual and symbolic culture of working-class communities in Northern Ireland (Ballif 2001, 2012; Goulding and McCroy 2020).

In 1977, the Belfast City Council tried, for the first time, to get involved through the Community Murals Programme with the aim of changing some of the themes depicted. Young artists painted more than forty non-political and non-sectarian murals in various locations of Belfast (Sluka 1992). The government's wanted to attract foreign investors and give a positive image to stigmatised neighbourhoods that had been embroiled in community conflict for years. This approach was not as successful as expected, and the new murals disappeared with the rhythm of the seasons and bad weather (Rolston 1991).

Since 2006, certain murals evoking paramilitary groups have been erased as part of the Re-Imaging Communities Programme. The programme's objective is to erase any form of 'racist, xenophobic and sectarian' representation.[5]

This Programme sought to mark the transition to a post-conflict era. However, the demilitarisation process remains ambivalent. Paramilitary murals are often replaced by emblematic community figures, such as William of Orange, or by references to the British crown. These symbols are hardly neutral. Similarly, Republican murals shout out Northern Ireland's right to self-determination. Gaelic is often used and illustrations depict Republicans as victims, with almost Christlike figures such as the famous Bobby Sands, who died during a collective hunger strike concerning recognition of their status as war prisoners; after their death, he and his fellow IRA prisoners were turned into martyrs.[6] It is worth mentioning that the majority of the murals that have benefited from this programme are located in Loyalist neighbourhoods. It must be acknowledged, however, that the illustrations on the Republican murals are not as warlike as those of the Loyalists. They present themes different from Loyalist murals which, nevertheless, are far from neutral because their emphasis is on victimisation (Ballif 2015). Removed and replaced by others, the Loyalist murals generally represent armed and hooded paramilitaries and are seen by the Catholic community as particularly offensive.

Not all militaristic murals have been removed. Some were preserved for economic reasons associated with the development of tourism (Rolston 1991), and because they commemorate a collective memory (Conway 2010).

These murals are also a tourist attraction (Jarman 1998, Hill and White 2012), which may be viewed as a form of 'dark tourism' (Lisle 2006). In her study of tourism in post-Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Julie Hernandez (2008) defines this concept as specific to cultural tourism, primarily aimed at allowing the direct experimentation of the arts, legacies and 'spirit' of a place. Foley and Lennon (2000) point out that in the case of dark tourism, the primary purpose of people's visit to a country or city is to see a site of death or disaster.

---

[5] The words 'racist', 'xenophobic' and 'sectarian' were used by the Art Council within the framework of the *Re-imaging Community Programme* to refer to problematic murals, see: http://artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts/visual-arts1/re-imaging-communities

[6] Mollica (2012) has discussed at length the analytical significance of hunger strikers and their actions.

However, none of the tourists that we interviewed came specifically to visit the Northern Ireland murals. They spoke about their interest in the history of the conflict and the Troubles, but their visit fell within a more global context: the discovery of a country that has many attractions to offer, such as the Giant's Causeway, the Game of Thrones Tour or the Titanic Belfast Experience. The Northern Irish conflict and the visit to the sites of remembrance with which it is associated, such as the murals, was not their primary motivation. In this view, one cannot really speak of 'dark tourism'. Visiting the Belfast's or Derry's murals can be seen as a form of phoenix tourism (Causevic and Lynch 2011) aimed at highlighting the reconciliation between the two communities and at promoting the development of the neighbourhoods concerned. The term 'traumascape', used by both Tumarkin (2005) and Naef (2011), may also apply to the type of tourism observed, which is interesting with regard to the murals of Northern Ireland. Indeed, these traumascapes are places where the Troubles are repeatedly staged by stakeholders in tourism who use the murals as decor.

In contrast to the tourist approach that seeks to preserve the murals from depicting the Troubles and especially those that make direct reference to the conflict, many local habitants push for the replacement of these murals with others that have nothing to do with the Troubles. Yet, remembrance is a very important aspect in the healing process because both communities must preserve their own identities while opening and sharing with the other (McDowell and Braniff eds 2014). Thus, recent and ancient murals coexist in an apparent chaos, but as we shall see later, their placement is no coincidence.

It is important to understand the role of tourism in the heritage production of space: these places that house the murals are produced, but they also produce their own space (Lefebvre 1974). Indeed, these spaces are the product of 30 years of conflict, often involving underprivileged neighbourhoods that were not spared by the Troubles and bear the stigma of those troubled times. These decaying spaces become 'factories' that produce ruins and traces (Veschambre 2005) that will become the monuments, the heritage of tomorrow (Dickinson 1996). Thus, tourism becomes the catalyst of a very singular production of space: the heritage.

There are several approaches concerning an ongoing heritage process involving items related to the Troubles. Most are generalist in terms of the heritage process, while some are very specific to the Troubles.

Most of the social scientists agree that heritage is a social construction rather than just a deposit of history, as it is often stated through common sense (Riegl 1984, Di Méo 1995, Davallon 2000, Rautenberg and Tardy 2013). Others, like Smith (2006), have examined the question of heritage, particularly with regard to the institutional discourse that serves as the foundation for the establishment of a collective memory and a place as heritage.

Murals are part of a dual heritage process. First, some of the murals that the residents of Belfast consider to be embarrassing because of their content have been replaced by murals that replace the violence displayed with identity references. Both these new murals and those that are preserved in their original state become sites of remembrance because of the people's will and the passing of time, ultimately acquiring the status of symbolic elements (Nora 1984-1992). Their primary role of murals as tools of political propaganda is fading, and they are becoming

symbols of identity specific to each community. This phenomenon, which combines the preservation and the removal of murals, fits into a broader heritage process that may lead to a material and symbolic recycling or reappropriation of the urban space (Veschambre 2005). Beyond this dynamic of conservation and erasure, these collective initiatives for selection of images present in the public space illustrate a more complex process of social agency that is expressed at community level, at the level of political power and in the economic domain. Thus, the analysis of the replacement or conservation of murals demonstrates how a community, a divided country, wishes to speak about its collective memory in relation to a civil war; but also, how this discourse evolves over time. Observation in the city and its neighbourhoods is therefore a valuable tool for making visible this process in action.

With this in mind, the present article focuses on how the different actors (residents, tourists, tourist guides, social workers) view the heritage process of murals and the extent to which they succeed in including them in their own practices. We will see how identity and economic and cultural elements succeed in transforming these murals into heritage objects.

Drawing on the examples of Shankill Road in Belfast and Bogside in Derry, respectively Loyalist and Republican neighbourhoods, we will show how several distinct heritage processes have been set in motion and how they coexist.

Methodology

This study of an urban setting is based on an ethnographic fieldwork carried out using semi-structured interviews, observation and photographic documents. Here, the ethnographic method, originally applied by anthropologists to the study of tribes or communities, is employed in a singular terrain: the city (Prato and Pardo 2013). Urban anthropology has gradually established itself as a relevant field for the study of the 'mille-feuille' structures of modern cities (Kanca 2021). Previously the domain of sociology, which often used a quantitative method (Durkheim 1951), the anthropological method has successfully confronted the study of cities by combining micro and macro approaches (Pardo 1996, Pardo et al. 2015, Pardo 2018).

In addition to belonging to the field of urban anthropology, our work is also related to visual sociology. The city is a favoured field for researchers interested in this visual approach (Zuev and Krase 2017), the value of which is no longer in doubt (Sztompka 2008, Collins 2004). The use of images in public space as research data is not only valid (Nathansohn and Zuev 2013), but it also provides insights into the way people behave and evidence of material products of culture, its iconography (Pauwels 2010: 546; Alexander et al. 2010). Visual sociology is well suited to the study of the social, political and economic issues surrounding murals, notably through the study of collective identities, the perception of urban landscapes, ethnic conflicts and collective identities (Nathansohn and Zuev eds 2013).

We have thus called upon the classic tools of anthropology and sociology, such as the methods of direct and participant observation and interviews, the tools of visual sociology, such as photographic-documentation, and data generated by the research subjects (Margolis and Pauwels eds 2011). The observational method is particularly useful as it allows us to understand the history of the city, its dynamics and the interaction of its inhabitants (Krase 2012).

Monuments, architecture and traces are all markers that illustrate the plurality of discourses in this territory. This makes it possible for us to understand how communities and, by extension, inhabitants and politicians deal with it.

To carry out this urban anthropology study, we conducted extensive observations and interviews in Belfast and Derry between the summer of 2014 and the autumn of 2016. The interviews lasted between thirty minutes and two hours. They were recorded with the consent of the interviewees and subsequently fully transcribed. All interviewees were given a pseudonym to guarantee their anonymity. Pseudonyms were chosen in a way that maintained national, social, generational and religious affiliation of the respondents. The interviews included several categories of people: inhabitants (8 interviews), tourists (12 interviews), people directly involved with the murals (9 interviews). The latter were artists, social workers working in neighbourhood associations and social centres, parishioners, tour guides and taxi drivers. The interviewees were contacted directly in the field, drawing on observations and tourist visits. The interviewees recommended several actors to whom we had less access.

To understand fully the context in which this ethnographic study took place, one must take into account the largely reserved attitude of the Northern Irish people concerning anything related to their contemporary history. We soon realised that almost everyone knew a family member who had died or had been imprisoned during the Troubles. The weight of the history associated with this conflict is still very heavy and it was often difficult to engage actors fully in conversation. Investigating this subject in Northern Ireland quickly proved challenging for a researcher, especially a foreign one. One needed to be patient through silences and missed appointments in order to collect precious information.

We went several times to Northern Ireland to explore and understand the muralist practice. As French researchers we had a specific approach because of our unfamiliarity with this field. It was both an advantage and an inconvenience to be a foreigner. The main advantage is that foreigners have external views on the matter. This means that they can see things that a local researcher would probably ignore, for, even if employing much reflexivity, one cannot fully avoid the common-sense relative to one's own culture (Geertz 1986).

Making a Detour via Belfast: Where a Working-class Neighbourhood is Learning to Link the Past and the Present

Shankill Road is part of West Belfast, a Loyalist stronghold that was particularly active during the Troubles and was infamous for the armed fighting between Loyalist militias and IRA. It shows a large number of murals, for some of which the distinguishing feature is the representation of hooded and armed paramilitaries. These are among Northern Ireland's most famous murals and the tourist flow to see them, which contrasts with the fact that Shankill Road is a working-class, socio-economically disadvantaged, area.

There have been many changes in recent years, as Edward, a social worker in a local association, explains:

> 'Lower Shankill was probably the first Loyalist community to join the Re-Imaging Communities Programme about a decade ago. The dominant paramilitary group in

> the region believed that "because gunmen were no longer on the streets, it was time to remove them from the walls". Belfast City Council agreed to fund the project and we negotiated an agreement in which seventeen "contentious" murals would be replaced one by one. We then embarked on a broad community consultation process, such as newspaper advertisements, the distribution of brochures in each household and workshops, to identify the themes the community wanted for the new murals designed, for example, around themes such as culture, sports, history, etc. The entire process from the adoption of the protocols to the replacement of the seventeen murals took most of the year.'
> (Interview with Edward, social worker, Shankill resident, 47 years old).

What Edward is actually presenting is the progress of the mural heritage process on Shankill Road. It appears that rather than being completed all at once this process occurred in phases. The first phase corresponded to inhabitants' assertions — irrespective of whether they were 'civilians' or members of a paramilitary militia — that it was time for the neighbourhood to engage in a process of appeasement in line with the peace agreements made more than a decade before. Then, Belfast City Council, which at the time was running a mural programme, agreed to fund the replacement of seventeen murals selected by the community. As these were gradually replaced, the inhabitants were systematically consulted. The new murals are, thus, the result of a cooperation between the inhabitants of Shankill Road and the city council. This not only legitimises the presence of these new murals in the neighbourhood, but also makes them a testimony of a bygone and accepted past.

Indeed, during our visit to Shankill Road, we saw these new murals alongside some of the old murals which are still in place. The paintings that have been replaced are easily identified because a plaque describes the old mural and explains the new one. The majority of the seventeen murals that have been replaced displayed masked paramilitaries holding Kalashnikovs. As Edward pointed out, the new murals centre on different themes:

> 'Social issues, rights, equality and history. For example, we now have murals on the themes of resilience, participation, children's A to Z history of Shankill, where Belfast's oldest parish stands.'
> (Interview with Edward, social worker, Shankill resident, 47 years old).

The focus is on the values of the inhabitants and on their history. Thus, Edward adds:

> 'It was very important to us that children did not face this violence on a daily basis. We don't want them to go through the same events as their parents did and, to overcome the violence, we had to remove it from the walls they walk along every day.'

The community therefore needed positive elements on these new murals which would be more in tune with their daily lives, and which would allow them to build a favourable post-conflict identity.

The photographs 1 and 2 below are examples of murals repainted as part of the Re-Imaging Communities Programme in collaboration with the Shankill Road neighbourhood

association. In photograph 1, the mural illustrates perfectly the themes desired by the inhabitants and the historical facts they wish to see on their walls. In photograph 2, a plaque explains the meaning of the new mural. It says: 'The Gold Rush mural replaces a paramilitary image of two silhouetted gunmen representing the Scottish Brigade. This new image by artist Tim McCarthy represents an event in July 1969 in Christopher Street when children digging in the rubble of the then demolished "Scotch Flats" discovered a hoard of gold sovereigns. Word spread quickly and thus began "the Gold Rush". The project was funded by the Re-imaging Communities Programme of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and delivered by Belfast City Council with the support of the Lower Shankill Community Association. The project would not have been possible without the support and the participation of the local community'.

Photograph 1, Photograph 2.
Photograph 1: 'The Gold Rush mural'. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.
Photograph 2: 'Plaque with old mural'. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

The transmission of the neighbourhood's history and collective memory played a prominent role in the drive to replace murals. An informal discussion with the locals clearly reveals this logic. They are proud of the new works that adorn their walls. Emma, a 36-year-old Shankill resident and stay-at-home mother, explained that she was now happy to be able to walk the streets with her children and show them 'the history of this place, through the red hand of Ulster, the story of Luther, but also women's role in the community.' Thus, Emma presents the history of her community in a positive light, deliberately ignoring any reference to the Troubles. These new murals allow this resident to pass on to the younger generation a complex history that spans over the origins of the community (the red hand of Ulster), from Protestantism to the demand for egalitarian values.

The story of Shankill and its people is not limited to these dark times. On the contrary, community and individual practices express people' demands and the great influence of Northern Irish history, as well as a willingness to write a new chapter for a long-stigmatised neighbourhood. Emma remarks are related to what is selected to be part of a collective memory. Not every event that took place needs to be there; only those important to the group do (Halbwachs 1992). This also means that, as a social agency, every community will select its own important things that are to be part of its collective memory (Mcdowell and Braniff eds 2014).

Charlotte's story, however, shows a different perspective. It shows that a child can be an actor in this process and initiate conversation about this subject. Charlotte has to answer questions from her 3-year-old son, Liam, on a daily basis.

> 'It's mostly him who makes me talk about the murals (she says, while pointing to her son).
> Every time we leave the house, he asks me what's on the walls.
> He asks me, "What's the big hand?"
> I explain to him what it is and, to find out whether he recognises the colours, I ask him what colour is it? Red.
> Or he asks me, "What are the children doing? Who are the men?"'
> (Interview with Charlotte, 25, a supermarket employee, in a relationship. Interviewed in the presence of her son Liam, 3)

At a time when questions abound, murals succeed in getting parents to talk about the community's past and present. Murals then become an effective mediation tool between the mother and her son in order to explain part of the history of the neighbourhood, of its people and of one's own family.

Emma's and Charlotte's testimonies suggest that mothers may use these new murals as educational support. In this way, they can pass on their culture and some historical facts recognised by the community. Generally speaking, the parents of young children acknowledge the educational significance of these new murals and welcome the fact that they can present to their descendants something other than the painful memories associated with the Troubles. Through these images, they can thus explain on a daily basis the core elements of their culture, irrespective of whether they are religious, historical or even mythical.

Moreover, we were informed that the area was also home to the oldest parish in Belfast. This reinforces its historical and heritage value and distinguishes Shankill Road as a remarkable place in the northern Irish capital. It is therefore logical that a heritage process should have been adopted in this neighbourhood, drawing not only on its origins, but also on some of these new murals and sculptures. Some traces were erased, while some other are kept and extended (Veschambre 2018).

While an erasure logic prevails at Shankill Road, the murals that disappeared became part of the heritage: the way they are presented, forming a diptych with the new mural that replaces them, evokes memories of the past. Viewed on its own, the new mural shows only the themes it presents, but associated with the plaque that describes the old mural, the painting takes on another dimension: that of a site of remembrance.

Tourism professionals and visitors in search of traumascape do not share the same desire to ‘close the book’. As a result, not all the murals featuring paramilitaries have been removed. Certain murals, such as the ‘sniper’ holding his rifle in a way that gives the impression that he is following the observer, are famous and are among those visited by all those who pass through Shankill Road.

Photograph 3: ‘The sniper mural’. This mural depicts a sniper from the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), a Loyalist paramilitary group. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

These murals are ‘typical’ of those drawn during the Troubles, and they are preserved and regularly restored; otherwise, weather-related hazards would have led to their disappearance over time. The logic of the tourism economy is therefore in contradiction with that initiated by neighbourhood’s people. This seems logical because there is no tourist infrastructure in Shankill Road; as we mentioned, it is a working-class neighbourhood. Apart from the taxis and bus queues bringing tourists to see the place, nothing is done to encourage the latter to stroll around. The only existing businesses are clearly intended for residents, who are not necessarily delighted to see visitors, as many are exasperated by the constant comings and goings of tourists. On occasion, the neighbourhood feels insecure, due to various factors: broken glass scattered at the foot of some murals, somewhat unfriendly people staring at tourists, and so on. This sense of insecurity was confirmed by Florine Ballif (2015), who deplored the aggression towards tourists (insults, stone-throwing) and the acts of vandalism targeting tourists’ vehicles (fires, damage). Several tourists whom we interviewed confirmed Ballif’s findings. For instance, Benjamin, a French tourist said:

> ‘I feel that the tension between the two communities is still present. It’s real, concrete; it’s not quite a thing of the past yet. You can see that there is always a wall separating the Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods. It’s not without reason,

> and at night the wall is closed; that's not a negligible fact. The wall may well have fallen in Berlin but here there is still one that seems even more resistant but no one talks about it. I feel like it's taboo. Nobody talks about it on TV. You can also see that there's glass, debris on the ground. You understand that projectiles are always exchanged at night. It is not a climate of peace. Even when you're a tourist, you have to be careful; you can easily become a target. When I was taking pictures of the murals, of the peace line, I got insulted by a youth gang, children, who asked me what I was doing there, why I was taking pictures of this thing and that I should go back to my home and fuck myself, if you can excuse the language. I was shocked to see such young people — they were not even teenagers yet, given their appearance — make such remarks and express themselves with such violence. All because I was taking a picture of the mural. I think there is a hatred towards tourists who come to see these murals and I think it is transmitted quite early. Even though I am having a wonderful experience in this country, I think that one must remain cautious and on guard because the conflict is still present, despite everything.'
> (Interview with Benjamin, French tourist, engineer, 38 years old, travelling alone).

During observations in the Loyalist Sandy Row neighbourhood, we too noticed this animosity when one of us photographed a paramilitary mural that was being demolished. An inhabitant expressed his displeasure very loudly as he passed us by. His stare and his aggressivity made us leave quickly the area.

These stories, however, refer to relatively isolated cases. Indeed, the vast majority of visitors are delighted with the experience proposed by the tour guides and talk about the quality of the immersion. For instance, Patrice, a Belgian tourist traveling with his partner, a nurse of 34, no children, had this to say:

> 'It's impressive, it really feels like you're in that period, during the Troubles. You feel like everything has stayed in place, that nothing has changed since then. You can even feel the tension. It's crazy! You feel that it's hostile! Also, when you are able to take a tour with a guide, it really gives a different dimension. The guy, he was there, at that particular time, he knows many anecdotes, the history, because he experienced it, it's not just a guy who tells you something he memorised. It's his story, his country, what he went through. He even told us that his cousin died because of this conflict. It's really poignant, moving. It's going to remain an unforgettable moment.'

Tourists' sense of immersion is also due to the fact that the visits to Shankill Road are mostly confined to the street entrance where the paramilitary murals are located. These guided tours often omit the street centre, where the majority of the new murals are located.

Murals' location has always been very important and has a strong meaning. During the Troubles, the messages shown on murals in a neighbourhood were intended for the inhabitants, whereas those located outside were intended for enemies (Miossec 2009). The most menacing murals were positioned at the neighbourhoods' borders and were clearly visible. The primary role of the mural was to provide information that could not be found in the media and was

censored by the state, because it related to paramilitary groups or to groups considered to be terrorist. This information was intended either for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood — in the form of memorials where the victims of the conflict were celebrated and tribute was paid to the martyrs — or to the enemy threatened with death or reprisals. During the Troubles, it was belligerent-fuelled propaganda.

The heritage process of the Shankill Road murals highlights what is important for the inhabitants, now, in this post-conflict era. It shows what defines them and illustrates a wider identity process; that is, the redefinition of a collective identity (Rautenberg and Tardy 2013, Micoud 1995). This explains this mishmash of preserved, updated murals showing the plural identity of the inhabitants of this Belfast neighbourhood. This identity includes the memory of a dark period, of human losses and of the war, but also and above all of what they seek to build together, of their values. Even legends like the Red Hand of Ulster participate in the creation of a collective identity (Pardo and Prato 2019, Kanca 2021). However, the case of Shankill Road is not unique and there are very similar processes of heritage that mobilize a strong collective memory through a very assertive identity, one example of which is the work of Jean Clément Martin on the Vendée (Martin 1984).

Everything that we observed in Shankill Road shows how this process of building a collective identity is established, especially through the social agency dynamics of the people, the economic and institutional actors.

Having dealt with the meaning of murals in the Loyalist neighbourhood of Shankill Road, we now turn to the practice of painting murals in the Bogside neighbourhood of Derry. We will see that here, too, there is a heritage process in place which differs considerably from the Shankill Road one.

Imagining the Neighbourhood as a Site of Remembrance

Like Shankill Road, the Bogside neighbourhood outside the city walls of Derry was made famous by the dramatic events associated with the Troubles. This Catholic neighbourhood was the scene of the Bloody Sunday tragedy in the early 1970s.[7] Accordingly, the Bogside murals propose a radically different content from those at Shankill. Here, the role of the Republican mural is viewed from a different philosophical and artistic angle that somewhat contrasts with the Loyalist paintings discussed earlier. The Bogside artists who created these murals told us that they believe these painting to have a single purpose; that is, to show ‘what life was like during this difficult period’, and to ‘describe key events without submitting to political will’.[8]

The Bogside Artists worked together with local people, who support their approach, which rejects politics from all sides. These locals lent their walls and sometimes even directly assisted the artists by providing materials. This clearly shows that the Bogside residents support this project.

[7] Bloody Sunday refers to a massacre that occurred on 30 January 1972.

[8] The artist in question is keen to distinguish himself from Sinn Féin, the Catholic and Republican political party that is now part of Northern Ireland’s coalition government.

At first sight, the Bogside aera hardly appears attractive to tourists. It is located further down the historical city centre and has nothing particularly interesting to visit; no department stores, no remarkable architecture. This is a residential working-class area. However, the locals and the Bogside Artists have taken advantage of the geographical position and the neighbourhood's offering a commanding view when walking on the ramparts that surround the city centre. This panorama allows visitors to see numerous monumental murals, each occupying the entire façade of a building. Although the shortcut to the Bogside from the ramparts is not easily found, this alignment of murals encourages visitors to walk through a few streets in the neighbourhood and admire the murals more closely. Clearly, those murals have been positioned in a way that creates a pathway where visitors also find plaques explaining the events that occurred during the different periods of the Troubles, and specially of Bloody Sunday.

Photograph 4

Photograph 5

Photograph 4. Bogside mural named 'The Petrol Bomber'. It was painted in the summer of 1994 for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 'Battle of Bogside'. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.
Photograph 5. Signboard exposing the Bloody Sunday presented on the murals. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

The Bogside murals appeared to be positioned in a way similar to what we observed on Shankill Road. These murals are intended for tourists, for outsiders, and are there to be seen by them. The starting place for this tour is a house, or rather a white facade, since that is all that remains of the house. It is prominently located and lies on both sides of an avenue. On this facade is the famous slogan 'you are now entering free Derry'.[9]

[9] In front of the house, a plaque describes the history of this first Republican mural in Derry: on 5 January 1969, after a night of riots and following an assault by the British police, the words: 'You are now entering Free Derry' were painted on the facade of a house located at 33 Lecky Road. This graffiti has become a symbol of the civil rights struggle around the world. The remains of the house have been preserved but the street ceased to exist in 1975.

Photograph 6. 'The Free Derry house', a mural at Bogside entrance with the famous slogan: 'You are now entering free Derry'. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

From there on, gigantic murals are placed one after the other to emphasise central themes in the iconography of Catholic Republicans, such as the struggle for human rights, illustrations of Bloody Sunday, the Republican hunger strikers who opposed the politics of Margaret Thatcher,[10] and even figures of world peace such as Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King and John Hume.[11] While this neighbourhood has all the trappings of authenticity, it is nothing more than a set-up, a musealisation of this urban space, transformed by these works into a testimony of the past. According to Philippe Dubé (2011), musealisation is a side effect of heritagisation, seeking to assign heritage status to an object or a place that was initially devoid of it.

Indeed, the gathering in one place of murals and other historical elements, such as the British government's response letters concerning their involvement in the Bloody Sunday incident and photographic testimonies portraying the harassment of inhabitants, create a particular atmosphere that goes beyond the individual scope of these different elements. This remind us of Crooke's work (2016), where it is argued that everyday items can be granted a heritage value after they go through three phases (mourning, evidence and museum piece). These photographs and letters are related to the Bloody Sunday incident and are used as evidence to push the United Kingdom to recognize its implication in the murder of innocent people. Finally, as time passed, those items became proof of this tragedy and are used as

[10] In 1976, imprisoned IRA activists lost their status as political prisoners. Their response to this loss of rights was a hygiene strike, followed by a hunger strike. The United Kingdom, led at the time by Margaret Thatcher, did not give in and ten prisoners, including their leader, Bobby Sands, succumbed to the hunger strike.

[11] John Hume is a Northern Irish politician who helped drive the Good Friday Agreement and was awarded the 1998 Nobel Peace Prize.

museum pieces. A display of documents on Bloody Sunday includes a letter from the British government dated 26 March 2013, which reads:

> 'Dear Mr Bradley,
> Thank you for the letter which you sent to the Prime Minister requesting an apology for the death of your brother Seamus Bradley, during the course of Operation Motorman in 1972.
> The Minister of State for the Armed Forces has now had the opportunity to review the report of the Historical Enquiries Team into the circumstances of your brother's death. I regret to inform you that he has concluded that there is nothing in the circumstances of his death, as detailed in the HET report, which would make it appropriate for the Government to apologise.'

The elements presented above appear to support the heritagisation of the neighbourhood, especially when one discovers that the series of twelve monumental murals created by the Bogside Artists is named the 'People's Gallery'. This gallery is designed and presented as an open-air museum, associating the characteristics of a society museum[12] (Drouguet 2015) with those of an art gallery, thus combining a collective memory and the observation of works of art. The Bogside Artists project is ambitious and relies on foreign viewers' curiosity and interest in learning part of the neighbourhood's inhabitants' history through these artworks. Similarly, as highlighted by certain graffiti drawings in streets further away from this neighbourhood, the inhabitants express their duty of remembrance with the slogan: 'Remembering the victims of Bloody Sunday'. A little further on, on the corner where a social centre stands, there is a wall with a mural on which is written 'the laughter of our children', which refers to a poem written by Bobby Sands in prison and often reproduced on murals; it reads, 'Our revenge will be the laughter of our children'. These works and other forms of free expression in the public space show a sense of identity and strong memory. However, these initiatives are few, even marginal, in the Bogside aera, where the 'official' murals are mainly displayed.

The murals painted by the Bogside Artists do not play the same role as those in Belfast's Falls Road[13] or Shankill Road. They were designed primarily as part of a collective artistic project in this open-air museum. In some cases, at least, their authenticity is also questionable. Indeed, some illustrations, like the 'peace' mural that shows a swirling image of a dove, appear to be out of step with other Republican murals. Others are reconstructions, such as the famous mural, 'You are now entering free Derry', which was repositioned at the entrance of the neighbourhood after the original was destroyed. The People's Gallery is therefore a construction that assembles the elements that disappeared from or did not initially exist in the area; in short, it is a simulacrum in Baudrillard's (1976) sense. When the signs of reality have

[12] By society museum, we refer to the categories described by Noémie Drouguet, ranging from 'a thematic collection to the national museum, from the open-air museum to museums without objects — and an exciting complexity worth exploring: political issues, identity issues, emotional relationships with memory, status of ethnological heritage.' (Drouguet 2015: 70).
[13] Falls Road is a famous Catholic neighbourhood in Belfast.

replaced the real, a simulacrum is set up where the copy replaces the original. As the neighbourhood has been redeveloped, it could not be presented as it was at the time of the Troubles. This, however, does not diminish its museum and heritage dimension. As Céline Éloy (2010) points out, an object on display in a museum is not judged according to its appearance but rather by its ability to illustrate an idea.

Nevertheless, many original elements were added to these simulacra. The numerous anti-British tags and stickers displayed throughout the neighbourhood also promote the authenticity of the place being visited. They give a certain taste of authenticity to the tourist's visit. Giulia, a 27-year-old Italian tourist and communications officer, married with one child, said:

> 'It's a visit not to be missed. It's an exciting place. You realise that the emotions associated with the conflict are still present. I feel like you get emotional when you're here, you feel that tragic things happened. You have pictures with wounded, mutilated people. It sends chills up your spine. You see that the locals are asking for justice for what happened. There are even letters from the British government. We are not here for the beauty of the place. Okay, you can see works of art and, aesthetically, they can represent something beautiful, but what matters to me is what they mean and the story they tell, like a memory, a memory visible to everyone. They show that one must not forget what happened here. You can also see in the plaques, the graffiti, that the tension is still there. You can even see them, the inscriptions, from the heights of the city, because they are written on rooftops.'

This Italian tourist shows how these items carefully chosen and gathered in this open space museum shape an agency (Conway 2008). Here, we can clearly see that the different elements that compose this scenery are more than the sum of its parts. Together, they evocate a vision of the Bloody Sunday tragedy that has been progressively built by 'memory entrepreneurs' (Conway 2008). Conway calls 'memory entrepreneurs' people who have shaped how the events of the bloody Sunday are perceived. Representations of this event did evolve and went through three phases. The first phase took place in the 1970s and focused on an internal and exclusive debate, whereby the community expressed mourning and anger. The second phase, from the 1980s to the early 1990s, saw a progressive opening in the discourse, and did involve an expression of commemoration, as well as a search for truth and justice. The third phase took place from the year 2000 to date, and involves a will to share and communicate the Bloody Sunday victims' memory to a wider audience. The museum of Free Derry is a good example of what has been created during this third phase. The work done by 'memory entrepreneurs' is clearly seen through the ethnography that led us to identify the musealisation process and the touristic approach of the Bogside area, where the public space is clearly used as an open-air museum and commemorative place.

This musealisation of the public space is clearly spoken by the Italian tourist quoted earlier, who refers to the choice of the items on show, the murals, the fact that it can all be seen from the ramparts of the old city. All of this contributes to create an impression of reality and authenticity, a testimony of what happened here. This is a way for this open-air museum to show agency; a capacity, that is, to act by bringing out the truth about the Bloody Sunday tragedy. It is thanks to such Agency that this kind of musealisation is possible.

Photograph 7.

Photograph 8.

Photograph 7. This photograph illustrates the anti-English and pro-IRA propaganda visible in the Bogside aera. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

Photograph 8. Photograph of the roofs of the Bogside where one can see IRA and BRY (Bogside Republican Youth) inscriptions. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

A closer look at some murals reveals adjacent panels showing documents and photographs in glass frames, such as photographs of wounds inflicted on protesters by the British military. All these elements, independent of whether they are original, help create an atmosphere of recollection, a willingness to witness the horrors of this conflict.

Entirely dedicated to tourism, the People's Gallery of Bogside is a gigantic open-air museum with monuments that contribute to giving the area a historical and memorial dimension. There is a real desire to explain the Bloody Sunday events under the necessarily biased prism of the Catholic artists who set up this gallery. Heritagisation is expressed here through the musealisation of more or less authentic elements that create a coherent whole. Letters, photographs and other archival documents enhance the visitor's experience and add a touch of authenticity that encourages real immersion. The artists' imagination that has made this area a site of remembrance, an open-air museum. Beyond history, beyond the tragic events that took place at Bogside, the arrangements made by artists and inhabitants have given the area a 'soul', a certain 'presence'. One may legitimately question whether this form of tourism, this sense of immersion, this sense of a place inhabited by the past, would exist without the murals, the signboards and the traces of such a past (letters, photographs).

It is this social agency, the inhabitants' will and the power to act that have given this image to the district; it is thanks to these illustrations, these memorials that this work of memory has come to be. This is the fruit of a collective fight by the inhabitants and the victims' families,

for whom it is invaluable that this memory should be passed on to the young generations, but also to all those who visit the aera.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper we tried to explain the processes of heritage in two areas: Shankill Road in Belfast and the Bogside in Derry. The initiative to paint murals in these two areas draws on different motivations.

In Shankill Road, the process of heritage is fairly transparent, considering that the community expresses its attachment to the United Kingdom through new murals. Today, it is no longer a matter of hooded paramilitaries and direct threats to the Catholic community, but of historical and religious figures and positive values that are representative of their identity. These new murals fit into an institutional and consensual framework characteristic of 'authorised heritage discourse' or AHD (Smith 2006). However, many murals depicting the Troubles were kept. They also are heritage, but for a different reason. These are the murals that tourists come to see, those that allow the 'black cabs' to organise visits to Shankill Road. They play a major economic role in this working-class area and provide work for many residents. Thus, Shankill Road displays both the AHD representation of their identity and a heritage that many would like to see disappear but which is preserved for necessary economic reasons.

In the Bogside, unlike the frescoes from the Re-imaging Programme, the murals have gradually become a legitimate heritage. Here, social agency is expressed in keeping with a collective memory that slowly shifts from a discourse made by the inhabitants for the inhabitants to a discourse made by the inhabitants for themselves as well as for the visiting tourists. Thus, the discourse evolves over time, particularly following the recognition of the British government's involvement in this tragedy. The version of a story that was not recognised at the time becomes the official story recognised by all. The AHD evolves accordingly, with time and in line with this recognition.

The study of Shankill Road and the Bogside illustrates two processes of heritagisation, which are certainly different but united by the same logic. In both places, the discourses, the AHD, the collective memory and also the identity of the two communities have evolved. This is an active and progressive process driven by a form of social agency. In this former civil war theatre, heritage action participates in an identity reconstruction that allows the two communities to heal their wounds and move forward.

References

Alexander, J., Smith, P., Dzhakupova, S., Kurakin, D. 2010. Strong program in cultural sociology. *Russian Sociological Review*, 9 (2): 11-30.

Ballif, F. 2001. Belfast: vers un urbanisme de paix ? Les recompositions spatiales au sortir de la guerre civile. *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine*, 91: 53-60.

Ballif, F. 2012. Artefacts sécuritaires et urbanisme insulaire: les quartiers d'habitat social rénovés à Belfast. *Espaces et Sociétés*, 150: 67-84.

Ballif, F. 2015. Belfast en temps de paix: la guerre civile comme attraction touristique. *Téoros*, 34 (1-2); online journal.

Baudrillard, J. 1976. *L'échange symbolique et la mort*. Paris: Gallimard.

Causevic, S., Lynch, P. 2011. Phoenix tourism: Post-conflict tourism role. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38 (3): 780-800.

Collins, R. 2004. *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Conway, B. 2008. Local conditions, global environment and transnational discourses in memory work: The case of Bloody Sunday (1972). *Memory Studies*, 1 (2): 187-209.

Conway, B. 2010. New Directions in the Sociology of Collective Memory and Commemoration. *Sociology Compass*, 4: 442-453.

Cozzolino, F. 2013. De la pratique militante à la fabrication du patrimoine. *Cultures & Conflits*, 91-92: 45-64.

Cozzolino, F. 2014. L'histoire complexe du muralisme en Sardaigne. *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*, *Pictures, memories and sounds*, 30 January; online.

Crooke, E. 2016. Artefacts as agents for change: commemoration and exchange via material culture. *Irish Political Studies*, 31 (1), 86-100.

Davallon, J. 2000. Le patrimoine: 'une filiation inversée'?. *Espace Temps*, 74 (1): 6-16.

Dickinson, J. 1996. Entropic zones: Buildings and structures of the contemporary city. *CNS*, 7 (3): 81–95.

Di Méo, G. 1995. Les nouvelles contradictions du territoire/New territorial contradictions. *Géocarrefour*, 70 (2): 169-175.

Diouf, M. 2005. *Mural Paintings and the Writing of History.* Ann Arbor, MI: MPublishing.

Drouguet, N. 2015. *Le musée de société. De l'exposition de folklore aux enjeux contemporains*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Dubé, P. 2011. Le musée dans ses états gazeux, vu sous l'angle de deux concepts: muséalité et communalité. *Sociétés*, 114 (4): 79-93.

Durkheim, E. 1951. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. New York: Free Press.

Éloy, C. 2010. Muséaliser l'art conceptuel: de Seth Siegelaub à Lawrence Weiner. *Culture & Musées*, 16: 93-111.

Foley, M., Lennon, J. 2000. *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*. New York: Continuum.

García-Gayo, E., Giner-Cordero, E. 2021. Crossroads: Urban Murals and Their Relationship to Memory, Tourism and the Possibility of Conservation and Restoration. In V. Santamarina-Campos, E.M. Martínez-Carazo, M. de Miguel Molina (eds), *Cultural and Creative Mural Spaces*. Cham: Springer.

Geertz, C. 1986. *Savoir local, savoir global les lieux du savoir*. Paris: P.U.F.

Goulding, S., McCroy, A. 2020. Representing the (un)finished revolution in Belfast's political murals. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 18 (5): 538-564.

Halbwachs, M. 1992. *On collective memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hernandez, J. 2008. Le tourisme macabre à La Nouvelle-Orléans après Katrina: résilience et mémorialisation des espaces affectés par des catastrophes majeures. *Norois*, 208: 61-73

Hill, A., White, A. 2012. Painting peace? Murals and the Northern Ireland peace process. *Irish Political Studies*, 27 (1): 71-88.

Jarman, N. 1998. Painting Landscapes: the place of murals in the symbolic construction of urban space. In A. Buckley (ed.), *Symbols in Northern Ireland*, Belfast: The Queen's University of Belfast.

Kanca, E. 2021. Warrior Values and Society. *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 11 (1): 55-64; https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/6-Kanca.pdf

Krase, J. 2012. An argument for seeing in urban social science. *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 2 (1): 18-29; https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/3-Krase.pdf

Lefebvre, H. 1974. *La Production de l'espace*. Paris: Anthropos.

Lisle, D. 2006. Local Symbols, Global Networks: Rereading the Murals of Belfast. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 31: 27-51.

Longoli, A. 2015. Muralisme militant. *Cultures & Conflits*, 98: 169-186.

Margolis, E., Pauwels, L. eds. 2011. *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Martin, J. C. 1984. *La Vendée, région mémoire*. In P. Nora, 1984-1992, t.l., *La République*: 595-617.

McDowell, S., Braniff, M. eds. 2014. *Commemoration as Conflict: Space, Memory and Identity in Peace Processes*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ménard, B. 2016. Mythes et héros de la Révolution mexicaine dans El laberinto de la soledad de Octavio Paz et le muralisme mexicain : un imaginaire collectif . *L'âge d'or*, 8; online.

Mendoza, R, Torres, C. 1994. Hispanic traditional technology and material culture in the United States. In T. Weaver (ed.), *Handbook of Hispanic Culture Anthropology*. Texas: University of Houston.

Micoud, A. 1995. Le bien commun des patrimoines. In *Collectif*, *Patrimoine culturel*, *patrimoine naturel*. Paris: la Documentation française.

Miossec, A. 2009. *Murals d'Irlande du nord, Quel avenir après cent années de pratique communautaire*. Rennes: Université Européenne de Bretagne.

Mollica, M. 2012. Political Manipulation: Death, Dying and Funeral Processes in Northern Ireland. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *Anthropology in the City: Methodology and Theory*. London: Routledge.

Naef, P. 2011. Du traumascape au touristscape. Regards croisés sur Vukovar et Sarajevo. *Tsantsa*, 16: 164-168.

Nathansohn, R., Zuev, D. 2013. Introduction. Sociology of the Visual Sphere. In: R. Nathansohn and D. Zuev (eds), *Sociology of the Visual Sphere*. New York: Routledge.

Nathansohn, R., Zuev D. eds. 2013. *Sociology of the Visual Sphere*. New York: Routledge.

Nora, P. 1984-1992. *Les lieux de mémoire*, Paris: Gallimard (7 volumes).

Pardo, I. 1996. *Managing Existence in Naples: Morality, Action and Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pardo, I., Prato, G. B., Kaltenbacher, W. 2015. *Le positionnement de l'anthropologie urbaine*. Special issue of *Diogène*, 2015, 3-4 (no 251-252), 3-11.

Pardo, I. 2018 [2015]. Italian Elite Groups at Work: A View from the Urban Grassroots. In I. Pardo, G.B. Prato and W. Kaltenbacher (eds), *Placing Urban Anthropology*. English edition of *Le Positionnement de l'anthropologie urbaine*, Special issue of *Diogène*, 2015, 3-4 (no 251-252). Sage Online, Published February 14, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1177/0392192117740026

Pardo, I., Prato, G. B. 2019. Ethnographies of Legitimacy: Methodological and Theoretical Insights. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *Legitimacy: Ethnographic and Theoretical Insights*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pauwels, L. 2010. Visual sociology reframed: An analytical synthesis and discussion of visual methods in social and cultural research. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 38 (4): 545-581.

Prato, G. B., Pardo, I. 2013. 'Urban anthropology'. *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 3 (2): 80-110; https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/docs/tableofcontents_5/7-Discussions%20and%20Comments.pdf

Pragnère, P. 2014. Circulations transnationales: expressions murales partagées entre Irlande du Nord et Pays Basque. *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*, *Pictures, memories and sounds*; online.

Rautenberg, M., Tardy, C. 2013. Patrimoines culturel et naturel: analyse des patrimonialisations. *Culture et Musées*. *Hors Série*: 115-138.

Rolston, B. 1991. *Politics and Painting: Murals and Conflict in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Associated University Presses.

Rolston, B. 1995. *Drawing support 2: Murals of war and peace.* Belfast: Beyond the pale.

Sluka, J. A. 1992. The Politics of Painting: Political Murals in Northern Ireland. In C. Nordstrom and J. Martin (eds), *The Paths to Domination, Resistance and Terror*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, L. 2006. *Uses of Heritage*. New York: Routledge.

Sztompka, P. 2008. The focus on everyday life: A new turn in sociology. *European Review*, 16 (1): 23-27.

Tumarkin, M. 2005. *Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy*. Victoria: Melbourne University Press.

Veschambre, V. 2005. Le recyclage urbain, entre démolition et patrimonialisation: enjeux s'appropriation symboliques de l'espace. *Norois*, 195: 79-92.

Veschambre, V. 2018. *Traces et mémoires urbaines: enjeux sociaux de la patrimonialisation et de la demolition*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

Zuev, D., Krase, J. 2017. Visual sociology. *Sociopedia.isa* 1-12; DOI: 10.1177/2056846017121.

The Social Meaning of Seeing the Bodies of Others and Showing One's Own Body: Alleys and Cafes in Seoul, South Korea[1]

Kim, Young-Jin
(Korean Sports University, South Korea)
azadazad@hanmail.net

This article investigates people's reactions to strangers' glances in public places. The study addresses the social meaning of simple visual interactions between strangers in public or semi-public spaces, with special attention to unconscious aspects. The ethnographic material was collected among old people sitting in alleys and young customers — in their 20s — of 'transparent' cafes with glass curtain walls. The analysis shows that the reaction to strangers' glances varies from person to person. On the other hand, there is a difference in the opportunities for visual interactions with strangers between the elderly using the alleys and young cafe customers. Drawing on the mirror neuron theory, the discussion shows that the difference in opportunities is directly related to the different reactions to strangers' glances. The ultimate aim is to contribute to extending the discussion on the social meanings of street spaces to unconscious aspects of interactions.
Keywords: Strangers, mirror neurons, public spaces, alley, cafe, visual interactions.

The Social Meaning of Simple Visual Interactions

The focus of my research is the occasional interaction of 'seeing the bodies of others and showing one's own body' that occurs between strangers in the public or semi-public spaces. The aim is to disclose the social meaning of such a simple visual interaction, focusing on the unconscious aspect. Here, the 'body' is intended in Merleau-Ponty's sense as a unity of the physical body and the mind. His rejection of the mind-body dichotomy is famously expressed in his declaration 'I am my body' (Merleau-Ponty 1945: 175).

The study is cast in the anthropological approach to the urban space. As Prato and Pardo (2013) point out, until the 1980s, mainstream urban anthropology tended to be an 'anthropology of the city' as opposed to the conceptualization of 'anthropological research in the city'. Furthermore, the subjects of urban anthropology ranged from religious identity to ethnic minority, migrants, gender issues, education, social networks and so on (Prato and Pardo 2013: 92). A so-called 'spatial turn' occurred in the 1990s and 2000s, putting the urban spaces among the subjects of urban anthropology. Some anthropologists began to employ spatial theory and focused on the built environment (Low 2014: 15-17). In particular, several scholars have emphasized the social functions of the urban public space. In his study of Brasilia, Holston (1989: 107) refers to the streets as an urban space where one can experience public display and transactions of crowds. Lefebvre (2003: 18-19) enumerates the functions of the urban space of the street as follows: 'a meeting place', 'a form of spontaneous theater', a space where 'revolutionary events generally take place', and so on. Benjamin (1999: 423) argues that the streets are the dwelling place of the collective who is an eternally unquiet, eternally agitated being and that the masses of people learn, understand and invent in the space between the building fronts.

[1] I express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for *Urbanites* and the editorial board, and in particular to Italo Pardo and Jerome Krase. This work was supported by the Ministry of Education a nd the National Research Foundation of South Korea (NRF-2019S1A5B5A07106461).

However, unlike the above-mentioned studies, in discussing the social function of the streets, the present article focuses on the unconscious aspect of street encounters. In agreement with the approach that consider strangers as a major factor of public urban spaces (Jacobs 2010: 273; Lofland 1985: viii), this article focuses on very simple visual interactions that happen between people in the streets.

Academic debate on the visual interactions of strangers in the public spaces owes a great deal to Goffman's book, *Behavior in Public Places* (1963). According to Goffman, unfocused interactions are the kind of non-spoken communication that occurs when one person enters another person's field of view at an instant, and such interaction usually occurs in the situation of 'sheer and mere copresence' in relatively unobstructed places like public streets (Goffman 1963: 17-24, 33). These unfocused interactions comprise body idiom, that is, the bodily appearance and personal act such as dress, bearing, movement and position, sound level, physical gestures (Goffman 1963: 33). Goffman (1963: 35) argues that an aggregate of individuals constitutes a society when everyone shares some knowledge about body idioms. Gehl (2011: 21) points out that we get information about the outside social world by just being with others, and through this information we establish a confident relationship with the world around us.

Current academic interest in the visual interactions of strangers is reflected in the growing number of studies on the public realm. Lofland (1998: 77) notes that popular public realms are associated with pleasure and people-watching is one of the sources of such pleasure. Lofland defines 'public realm' as a social territory, the world of strangers and 'streets' (Lofland 1998: 10, 51). On a different level, Whyte (1980), a pioneer of visual sociology, recorded and analysed the streets of New York from different perspectives, using several kinds of cameras, and identified not only environments (movable chairs, fountains, etc.) but also people (pedestrians, musicians, etc.) as key elements that attract people in the public spaces (Lofland 1980: 19). In a similar line, research on urban life tends to rely on 'seeing' both as research methods and in relation to the research subject (Krase 2012: 20).

As I mentioned, the aim of this article is to extend the study of the social function of visual interactions between strangers in urban public spaces to the unconscious level. The 'mirror neuron' theory makes such an attempt possible. Mirror neurons have radically changed our understanding of social interactions (Keysers 2011: 10). According to this theory, some specific neurons 'mirror' the behaviour and emotions of the people surrounding us in a way that others become part of us. From such perspective, social cognition is understood as a form of communication that relies on the resemblances between organisms (Keysers 2011: 32).

Pardo and Prato (2018: 2) state that field research is an 'art of the possible', and in cities there are many possibilities thanks to the complexity of urban life. They also suggest that cooperation and exchange of knowledge across cognate disciplines can contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexity of the world. This article moves in that direction, trying to connect the field research based on ethnographic methods to the theory of neuroscience for a better understanding of the simple visual interactions between strangers in the streets.

A Bath of Multitude, Intercorporeality and Mirror neurons

In the early 1990s, a team led by Rizzolatti discovered mirror neurons in a macaque monkey; they were described as neurons that are activated not only when directly executing a motion but also when observing the motion of others (Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2008: x-xi). Further discovery was made by Fogassi et al. (2005: 664-665), who found out that mirror neurons differentiate various intentions hidden under the same motion. At the same time, fMRI and PET revealed that such mirror neurons also exist in the human brain (Heyes 2010: 578; Keysers 2011: 42-45; Rizzolatti and Craighero 2004: 175-6). In particular, fMRI largely contributed to specifying where mirror neurons are located in the human brain (Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2008: 119).

Mirror neurons in the human brain are more complex than those in the monkey brain. To begin with, while the latter respond only in the transitive motions with the object, the former are also activated by the intransitive actions (Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2008: 117). Moreover, mirror neurons were discovered in wider areas of the human brain than in the monkey brain (Keysers 2011: 45-47). Finally, human mirror neurons are involved in a wide range of social cognition tasks as well as performing a specialized role in action understanding (Heyes 2010: 576-581). Heyes (2010: 579) enumerated and analysed the experiments carried out by Calvo-Merino et al. (2005) and Haslinger et al. (2005), among others, which showed that the activation of mirror neurons can be modulated by observation, sensory stimulation and learning. He concluded that the above-mentioned differences between monkeys and human beings can be explained by the different growth of the mirror neuron system. Several experiments also showed that mirror neurons may change even after becoming adults (Bastiaansen et al. 2011, Lahav et al. 2007). Furthermore, Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008: 192) have argued that the elaboration of the mirror neuron system requires a potentially shared space for action; similarly, Bauer (2006: 54) has suggested that mirror neurons do not develop without a partner.

Some scholars have gone beyond 'action understanding' and tried to explain empathy with neural mirroring. It must be noted, however, that even long before the discovery of mirror neurons, authors like Baudelaire and Merleau-Ponty were interested in 'the direct communication between bodies'. For example, Baudelaire's prose poem 'Crowd' gives an excellent insight into the intuitive communication experienced among the mass, the main agent of modern cities.

> 'It is not given to every man to take a bath of multitude; enjoying a crowd is an art [...] The poet enjoys the incomparable privilege of being able to be himself or some one else, as he chooses. Like those wandering souls who go looking for a body, he enters as he likes into each man's personality. [...] The solitary and thoughtful stroller finds a singular intoxication in this universal communion. The man who loves to lose himself in a crowd enjoys feverish delights that the egoist locked up in himself as in a box, and the slothful man like a mollusc in his shell, will be eternally deprived of. He adopts as his own all the occupations, all the joys and all the sorrows that chance offers.' (Baudelaire 1970: 20).

In Baudelaire's poem, 'a bath of multitude' is the privilege of being able to be oneself or someone else. The subject who takes the bath is 'the poet' who loves to lose himself in a crowd and adopts as his own all the occupation, all the joys and all the sorrows of the crowd. On the opposite side is 'the egoist locked up in himself as in a box' or 'the slothful man like a mollusc in his shell'. In conclusion, a bath of multitude is a metaphor for a kind of communication that breaks the boundary between one's body and another person's body.

In *Phénoménologie de la Perception* (1945), the philosopher Merleau-Ponty elaborates his analysis of physical and sensual interactions. Later, he argued that the communication of gestures comes about as if the other person's intention inhabits 'my body and mine his' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 215), meaning that a person and another person are like organs of one single intercorporeality (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 168). Communication is based on a similar psycho-physical body in that it is precisely my body that perceives the body of the other and discovers a miraculous prolongation of my own intention in the other body (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 411-412). Merleau-Ponty argued for the immediate and direct communication between bodies about 50 years earlier than the discovery of mirror neurons. Contemporary scholars call Merleau-Ponty's theorization 'intercorporeality' (Tanaka 2015: 460-461), and this concept supplies a theoretical basis to neuroscientific analyses on empathy (Gallese 2009: 526).

Singer et al. (2004) and Wicker et al. (2003) draw on their experimental results to argue that visual stimuli cause neural mirroring. Thus, people can obtain emotional empathy or intuitive perception of the pain or disgust experienced by others.

Inspired by this diverse literature, in this article I look at very simple and basic visual interactions — that is, 'seeing other bodies and showing one's own body' — that take place in public or semi-public spaces. The discussion attempts to contribute to extending the social meaning of such visual interactions to the unconscious aspects.

Visual Interactions between Strangers

Field Sites: Alleys and Transparent Cafes

I carried out fieldwork in the spaces where visual interactions between strangers take place in real-time. The aim was to collect not opinions based on memory but the feeling when the interactions occurred. Initially, I planned to conduct fieldwork only in alleys. In Seoul, the alley is the space where, traditionally, communal relationships occur (Cho 2015: 78). However, since the 1980s, the Housing Redevelopment Project of the Seoul government has prompted the replacement of low-density residential areas inhabited by low-income people with expensive high-rise apartment complexes; as a consequence, the alleys have almost disappeared (Cho 2015: 52-53). According to Hwang (2005: 71), the 'loss' of social interactions in the alleys is a phenomenon found across many cities in South Korea. Nevertheless, Seoul is a city with many mountains and, therefore, small neighbourhoods with alleys are still located on steep slopes around the foot of the mountains. So, I expected that during the fieldwork it would be easy to discover people sitting in the alleys in these neighbourhoods and to be able to ask them why they were spending time outside their houses.

During my first field trip in the winter of 2020, while walking around several neighbourhoods located on mountain slopes, I observed a few benches and traditional wooden bedsteads (*pyungsang*) in the alleys of *Heangchon-dong*. I decided that this neighbourhood would be my field site. *Heangchon-dong* is a neighbourhood (*dong*) in *Jongno-gu*. As of 2015, the total population of the neighbourhood was about 4,000 (Seoul Government 2016: 118-120). Geographically, the neighbourhood is located at the bottom of the *Inwang* Mountain, one of four mountains that are connected by the Fortress Wall of Seoul, a traditional fortress in old Seoul.

However, when early summer arrived and the weather got warm, I did not see people sitting in the alleys. The exception were old people sitting outside the open front yard of the community centre for the elderly (*gyungro-dang*)[2] and a few elderly females chatting while trimming vegetables on the cement porch of Sr-3's house. Sr-3 is one of the senior citizens whom I interviewed. I use the numbered acronyms Sr-1, Sr-2, and so on, to maintain the anonymity of my interlocutors. I soon realized that chance encounters with the chosen group of elderly people would not be easy; they were mainly affected by the weather conditions, like the rainy season or heat waves, and, later, by the severity of the COVID-19 emergency measures. Thus, I identified the 'transparent' cafes as an additional field site. The expression 'transparent cafe' refers to a cafe with glass-curtain walls, which fosters a relationship of 'mutual intrusion' between streets and cafes. In other words, thanks to the transparent walls, pedestrians can see cafe customers sitting by windows; at the same time, cafe customers can see passers-by and enjoy the street landscape.

While wandering the streets, I saw cafe customers sitting by the window of the transparent cafes, although there were other seats available inside the cafes, and wondered why they chose those specific seats. Architect Gyeong-hwan Chun (the representative of the architect's office, Deep Scenery) whom I interviewed, notes that cafes with glass-curtain walls have been popular since the early 1990s in Seoul. According to him, this type of cafe appeared for the first time in *Apgujeong-dong* and then expanded to *Sinchon*. More specifically, the cafe 'Bodyguard', which opened in *Apgujeong-dong* in 1993, is considered the first transparent cafe with glass-curtain walls. The KBS news of 9 June 1994 refers to the transparent cafes around *Gangnam* and *Sinchon* as 'so-called Bodyguard cafes'.

In architectural history, the fashion of glass walls is the result not only of new techniques, such as curtain walls and steel frames, but also of a new conception of 'space-time' (Giedion 1969: 430, 483-492, 598-599). This new conception emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, following attempts to integrate space and time in various fields such as science, art and architecture. The space-time is characterized by a 'simultaneity' that allows perspectives from various angles and 'the interpenetration' between inner and outer space (Giedion 1969: ivi, 436, 445, 529). Today, glass contributes greatly to realizing this concept in architecture, of which transparent cafes with glass walls are a representative example.

[2] In Seoul, there is at least one *gyungro-dang* in the administrative division of *dong*.

Eventually, I decided that my research sites would be the alleys in *Heangchon-dong* and the four transparent cafes located in *Mangwon-dong* and *Changcheon-dong*. For the collection of ethnographic material, I found three methods particularly relevant; walking, interviews and questionnaires. Walking helped me to identify the features of the streets and discover suitable sites for the fieldwork. Also, walking was a way to find potential interviewees. I carried out interviews with the elderly sitting by the *gyungro-dang* and in the alleys. According to a staff of *Gyonam-dong* Community Service Office, as of 2020, the total number of members of the *gyungro-dang* in *Heangchon-dong* is 36. Of these, 10 senior citizens were interviewed. A short-answers questionnaire was used instead for customers of the transparent cafes in *Changcheon-dong* and *Mangwon-dong*.[3] Because the two selected neighbourhoods were crowded with transparent cafes, I could easily move to a different cafe in case the owner or staff did not allow me to distribute the questionnaire, or if there were no customers sitting by the window. Let me explain why I used questionnaires instead of interviews in the cafes.

In the last decade, the number of cafes in Seoul has sharply increased, to the point that it is called a 'City of Cafes'. Cafes are now used not only as places for drinking tea or meeting people but also as reading rooms, study rooms or offices (Jun and Kim 2021: 30-44; Kim 2019: 3-5). The increase in the number of cafes can be partly explained with the individualized, residential instability, and employment difficulties in Korean society (Jun and Kim 2021: 44). Generally, cafes are not a place where one would talk to strangers. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult to conduct interviews indoors. So, instead of interviewing them, I asked cafe customers sitting by the window to fill in a questionnaire. A total of 10 people — 9 cafe customers and 1 employee — completed the questionnaire. The staff volunteered to complete the questionnaire.

The Senior Citizens in the Alleys

Interviews in the alleys were carried out among old people who were sitting at the two aforementioned places; that is, the yard of the *gyungro-dang* and the porch of Sr-3's house. I did not collect personal information such as the name or age of the elderly. As I mentioned earlier, interviewees were identified by a number added to the abbreviation for 'Senior' ('Sr'); thus, I shall refer to them as Sr-1, Sr-2, and so on. The interviews were carried out intermittently, from June to September 2020, avoiding the periods when the number of COVID-19 infections sharply increased and the summer rainy season (*jangma*) which lasted 54 days.

[3] *Mangwon-dong* a neighbourhood in *Mapo-gu*, and *Changcheon-dong* a neighbourhood in *Sinc hon*.

Figure 1. The benches in front of the *gyungro-dang*. Photograph by Kim Young-Jin.

Sr-1, Sr-2, Sr-3 were interviewed in June, Sr-4 in August, interviews with Sr-5 to Sr-10 were conducted in September. All, except Sr-3 and Sr-6, are female and were interviewed in the yard of the *gyungro-dang*. Sr-3, female, was interviewed at her house's porch. Sr-6 is the only male interviewee. I came across Sr-6 while he was walking with a stick near the *gyungro-dang*; I asked if I could interview him. Sr-6 agreed, sat in a chair in front of a house near the *gyungro-dang* and answered all my questions.

I was told that elderly males usually do not sit on the bench of the centre and that they usually spend time at home or walk along the promenade route of the *Inwang* Mountain. Even when senior citizens attended the centre before the COVID-19 pandemic, female seniors and male seniors used different floors: the former stayed on the first floor and the latter on the second floor. The sex ratio of the elderly population in this neighbourhood sharply changes after the age of 75. Specifically, as of 2010, the men ratio per 100 women is 66.3% for the 75-79 years old and 43.30% for the 80-84 years old (Seoul Government 2016: 121). Local residents reported to me that male members are less than 10 among a total of 36 members. This explains the scarce presence of elderly males in the neighbourhood.

Unlike elderly males, elderly females are often seen sitting on the wooden benches of the open yard of the centre. According to Sr-1, the elderly usually stayed inside the centre, but now are sitting in the yard because all *gyungro-dangs* in Seoul have been shut down due to COVID-19 since early February 2020.

> *Researcher* (*henceforth, Resch*): I have walked the alleys of the neighbourhood for a few days. But it was hard to see people.
>
> *Sr-1*: Yes. People do not spend a lot of time in the alleys.
>
> *Resch*: Why aren't they coming out?
>
> *Sr-1*: Because of Corona.
>
> *Resch*: Did they spend a lot of time in the alleys before Corona?
>
> *Sr-1*: Oh, the *gyungro-dang* was not closed at that time, so people usually stayed inside the *gyungro-dang*.

Resch: You are usually staying indoors?

Sr-1: Yes, I am.

Resch: So, there are normally not many people in the alleys? Or only these days?

Sr-1: No, it was like that in the old days, too. Even when I go to the market, I go fast and come back home by bus.

Usually, elderly females preferred to stay inside the centre rather than in its yard. All female interviewees said that they see people passing by because they now sit in the yard, but they do not enjoy watching strangers. Nevertheless, they prefer to sit in this yard rather than staying at home on their own. Sr-2 said that she prefers to stay in this yard because she can meet people. Sr-4 explained:

> 'It is good because this yard is cool and I can hear people's voices. It is better coming here than only changing the channel on television at home.' (Sr-4)

The senior citizens of *Heangchon-dong* generally spend most of their time in the neighbourhood, except when they go to markets, cathedrals, churches or the *Jongno* Culture and Sports Centre. Sr-10 said, 'The rich can go around in their own cars. But in our case, we all go to *Youngcheon* market, at best'. This traditional market is a few bus-stops away. Their daily interactions, too, were centred among the neighbours. Sr-2 said, 'On the day when I do not meet any acquaintance in this yard, I am a little depressed and disappointed'.

Sr-3 also said that she feels 'disappointed' on the day when she does not see neighbours. She cannot take long walks because of health problems. So, she usually meets neighbours outside her house. She used the word 'cool', to describe how she feels when sitting on the porch in front of her house. Then she added that while the inside of her house is also cool because of being airy, it is enjoyable talking to and playing with neighbours coming and going by the house. Therefore, 'cool' can be interpreted as expressing both emotion and temperature.

Resch: Do you feel depressed on the day you do not see any neighbours?

Sr-3: I feel disappointed when there is no acquaintance in the alley.

Resch: Is there a difference between staying inside and sitting in front of your house?

Sr-3: Oh, it is cool when I am sitting here. When I come out of my house, then I can see people coming and going. But my house is cool, too. Even though other houses might be hot, my house is airy if I open that door [she points at a door inside her house]. So, the inside of my house is cool. Nonetheless, when I stay here, neighbours who pass by sit and play. I am sitting here because it is enjoyable.

When I asked, 'How do you feel when strangers passing by in the alley look at you?', I got two different answers, split equally among the interviewees. Sr-1, Sr-2, Sr-3 and Sr-8 answered 'I feel uncomfortable', while Sr-4, Sr-5, Sr-7 and Sr-9 said 'I do not care about it'. Most of them could not explain the reason for their answer. Only Sr-5 said, 'I don't care about it. They have eyes. So, they can look at me'.

Besides, two elderly people pointed out that there had been changes after the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in answering the question, 'Why do you feel uncomfortable when strangers look at you?', Sr-6 said:

> 'It's a thin story! We do not know whether they have a disease or not. People do not talk to each other even though they pass by each other. […] Before, people were kind to each other, had a conversation even with strangers in the park. […] There's absolutely no such person these days!' (Sr-6)

While answering the question, Sr-6's feelings ran high and he left abruptly without saying goodbye.

Another interviewee, Sr-10, complained that, after the COVID-19 pandemic, she felt hostility from strangers' glances; before, she said, she did not have this feeling. It must be pointed out that the Korean government began to implement Social Distancing in February 2020, forcing people to use masks and maintain a physical distance of 2 meters in both public and business places.

> 'Before Corona, it was okay. These days, I am scared of people's eyes. I feel hostility from people's eyes. […] These days, I am scared even of the youth of the neighbourhood.' (Sr-10)

Then, I asked whether senior citizens look in the mirror and care about their clothes before they go to the yard of the centre. Most interviewees said that they usually do so when they go out. For instance, Sr-2 answered:

> 'When I go out of my home, I change my clothes and care about my appearance. [...] Anyway, I care little about the clothes but I change at least a top when I go out.' (Sr-2)

I asked why elderly people care about their appearance. Sr-1 answered, 'Because of meeting people' and Sr-2 said, 'Because neat is better than dirty when one comes into contact with people'.

To recap, the interviews I carried out among elderly people in *Haengchon-dong* show that they began to get together in the front yard of the *gyungro-dang* after the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, before the pandemic, they spent much of their time inside the centre; furthermore, they did not often go outside the neighbourhood. Therefore, they did not have many opportunities to come face to face with strangers in their everyday lives. However, we have also seen that a few elderly women gathered for a chat on the cement porch of Sr-3's house. When I asked the elderly women sitting on the benches and the cement porch how they felt when strangers looked at them, half said that they felt uncomfortable, while the other half said that they did not care. I shall compare this material with the responses of the transparent cafe customers, which I will present in the next sub-section. Let me anticipate that I found a negative response to strangers' glances more among the elderly sitting in the alleys than among the transparent cafe customers.

Customers Sitting by Windows of 'Transparent' Cafes

The transparent walls of cafes reveal the entire body of a customer sitting inside, from head to toe. Through such a large window, the customers can see the street landscapes and, at the same time, become part of the street landscape. The present study focused on the visual interaction between street pedestrians and cafe customers that happens at this kind of cafe.

Figure 2. The transparent walls of Personal Coffee. Photograph by Kim Young-Jin.

The questionnaire survey was carried out focusing on the customers sitting by the window in four cafes, from June to July 2020. The cafes were 'Starbucks' and 'Hollys' in *Changcheon-dong*, and 'Offnen' and 'Personal Coffee' in *Mangwon-dong*. For reference, the word, Offnen, means 'to open' in German. A total of 10 persons completed the questionnaire and the results are as follows. All respondents said that they preferred window seats, 'because of being able to see outside scenery'. The exceptions were Respondent-C (henceforth, Respt-C) and Respt-D (see Table 1). Respt-C said, 'As it is bright'; Respt-D said, 'I can concentrate easily'.

Respt	**sex**	**age**	**Q-2: (If you prefer to window seats) What is the reason?**
A	F	early 20s	Because of good view.
B	F	early 20s	I feel good because I can see the outside.
C	M	late 20s	As it is bright.
D	M	late 20s	I can concentrate easily as my eyes do not go onto the place where sound comes out.
E	M	late 20s	I like the seat to watch the outdoor scenery. As it is open.
F	F	early 20s	Because of watching outside the windows and looking at people passing by.
G	F	late 20s	Because I can watch outside the window.
H	F	early 20s	I like watching people passing by, nature, etc. I like open areas as it is not stuffy.
I	M	early 20s	Because I like watching the street landscapes from window seats.
J	F	late 20s	Because I like being in an open space.

Table 1. Answers to Q-2.

The third question (Q-3) was 'Do you feel uncomfortable when people walking in the streets see you?' 9 of 10 respondents answered 'No' to this question. Respt-D said 'Yes'. Those who said 'No' explained their answer as follows (see also Table 2). Respt-C, Respt-F, Respt-J gave a tautological answer, saying, 'I don't care about other people's glances' but gave no explanation as to why they do not care about other people's glances. Respt-B, Respt-G and Respt-H replied, 'Because I know that people are not interested in others'. This statement is interesting when compared to those by elderly people. None of the elderly people mentioned the nature of strangers' glances. However, many of the cafe customers referred to the nature of the public's glances.

Looking at the other answers, Respt-A answered, 'As I am sitting on the second floor, I do not make eye contact'; Respt-E said, 'I am not conscious of others' glances when I focus on work'; Respt-I said, 'Because I also look at people inside cafes when walking in the streets'. Respt-I's answer deserves some attention in that he took a reciprocity position: 'you can do it because I do it'.

Respt	Q-3	Q-4: (If not uncomfortable) What is the reason?
A	No	As I am sitting the second floor, I do not make eye contact.
B	No	I don't think that, usually, people are interested in others.
C	No	I don't care.
D	Yes	I intend to avoid the seats with too wider windows. I do not like that strangers see me and that I make eye contact with them.
E	No	I am not conscious of others' glance when I focus on work.
F	No	Because I'm not conscious of other's glance.
G	No	Because people don't seem to be looking at me.
H	No	I know that people don't look at other persons attentively.
I	No	Because I also look at people inside cafes when walking in the streets.
J	No	I became less conscious of people's glance.

Table 2. Answers to Q-3 and Q-4.

The answers given by cafe customers, ranging from 'People could look at me because I look at them' to 'People are not interested in others', show a kind of 'familiarity of mind'. Bauer (2006: 112) states that, thanks to mirror neurons, people can obtain a 'familiarity of mind'; that is, the sense that 'I am basically the same as other people, and other people are basically the same as me' (Bauer 2006: 112). Four cafe customers took strangers' glances for granted as part of people's behaviour. Among the elderly respondents, only Sr-5 gave a similar answer, saying, 'They have eyes. So, they can look at us'.

On the other hand, Respt-D answered 'Yes' to Q-3 and explained, 'I tend to avoid the seats with too wide windows. I do not like that strangers see me and that I make eye contact with them'. He was sitting by the window on the second floor of a cafe and that seat was by a column crossing the window vertically. Thus, he could avoid the glances of both pedestrians and cafe customers. Nonetheless, he answered Q-6 (How are you feeling when looking at the people in the street?) saying, 'I sometimes look at people in order to refresh my mood while studying'.

Respt	Q-5	Q-6: How are you feeling when looking at people in the street?
A	Yes	Vitality and peacefulness.
B	No	I also don't care about other people.
C	No	I don't pay attention.
D	Yes	I don't think anything when I look at them. But I look at them sometimes in order to refresh my mood while studying.
E	No	I don't feel anything.
F	Yes	It is peaceful. I also wonder what for they come to this street.
G	Yes	I wonder what kind of life they live.
H	Yes	I get the impression such as 'The baby is cute', 'That man is stylish', etc. I change my mood by looking at other people.
I	Yes	All people live a busy life.
J	Yes	I do not get any feeling.

Table 3. Answers to Q-5 and Q-6.

It is interesting that Respt-A felt vitality when looking at pedestrians, despite sitting in a chair. Lee (2011: 37, 49) points out that a kind of 'relationship looking at each other' is established between cafe customers and pedestrians thanks to the transparency of cafe windows. According to Lee, while walking, people look inside cafes; in turn, cafe customers perform a kind of 'walking of sight' by watching pedestrians. Mirror neurons are activated not only by performing an action but also by seeing the behaviour of others. From this perspective, the expression 'walking of sight' is not an exaggeration; beyond a metaphorical expression, it is indeed what happens in the brain.

The last question, 'What kind of image do you want people in the streets to see?' (Q-7), was a multiple-choice question with five options. The results are shown in Table 4. The option '2' was selected 5 times; '4' was selected 3 times, and '5' was selected 2 times. Respt-C did not choose any option. Respt-B and Respt-J chose the options '2' and '4'. Lastly, three respondents choose option '5'; they were Respt-D, Respt-E and Respt-H. In the blank space reserved for additional comments, Respt-D wrote, 'I hope not to give any image'; Respt-E wrote, 'I do not want anything'; and Respt-H wrote, 'Happy'.

Options	(1) active	(2) leisurely	(3) social	(4) comfortable	(5) Additional comments
Total Nmb.	0	5	0	3	3

Table 4. Answers to Q-7.

Although Respt-F and Respt-J, had answered Q-3 saying, 'I do not care about others' glances', they responded also to Q-7. Respt-F chose '2 leisurely' and Respt-J '4 comfortable'.

Looking at the answers to the questionnaires given by cafe customers, all in their 20s, we realize that almost all declared that pedestrians' glances did not make them uncomfortable, which is interesting when compared to the responses given by the senior citizens of *Heangchon-*

dong. Half said that they feel uncomfortable when strangers look at them; also, while all elderly people, except Sr-5, could not explain why they feel uncomfortable at strangers' glances, some cafe customers offered a clear explanation.

Respt-B, Respt-G and Respt-H generalized the nature of strangers' glances, saying that people are not usually interested in others. Respt-I took it for granted pedestrians' glances, based on mutual respect. These answers show that there is a kind of 'familiarity of mind' between these respondents and pedestrians. On the other hand, Respt-A mentioned, perhaps ironically, that she felt 'vitality' when looking at pedestrians. Yet, the existence of mirror neurons makes it possible to understand the vitality that she felt despite sitting in a chair, for the mirror neurons in her brain fire not only when she directly performs an activity but also when she sees the other's activity. Today, this function of mirror neurons is applied in rehabilitation therapy for stroke patients. Ertelt et al. (2007: T164) show that action-observation has a positive additional impact on the recovery of motor areas in the brain of stroke patients.

Conclusion

This study has dealt with a very simple visual interaction between strangers, focusing on the two field sites of alleys and transparent cafes. The findings have shown that, first, the reaction to strangers' glances varies depending on people. Second, the number of respondents who said that they felt uncomfortable under the strangers' glances was greater among the elderly sitting in alleys than among cafe customers. Relying on the mirror neuron theory, I have suggested that these differences may be related to the fact that elderly people had fewer opportunities than cafe customers to do neural mirroring with strangers. The former preferred to stay inside the *gyungro-dang* before the COVID-19 pandemic and did not spend much time outside. On the other hand, younger people spent a long time in the cafes, which were crowded with strangers. In short, there was a difference between these two groups in terms of opportunities for visual interactions with strangers.

Mirror neurons make the unconscious and direct communications of bodies possible. Several experiments also show that mirror neurons may grow by stimuli and experience, which leads to the argument that shared spaces and partners are needed for neural mirroring. In the study that I have discussed here, only one among the elderly people explained why they felt uncomfortable when strangers looked at them, whereas many cafe customers mentioned the nature of the strangers' glances. The difference in these responses may be the result of a gap in opportunity for neural mirroring that contributes to forming a kind of 'familiarity of mind'. In conclusion, the visual interactions between strangers in public spaces have a social meaning in that they may give people an opportunity for neuron mirroring with strangers and, as a result, contribute to a greater understanding of strangers or to encouraging the view that others are basically the same as me.

I must point out that the present study has limitations in that there is a great gap in the age range of the participants and the methods applied in studying different participants are different. First, it was originally not intended that the study should belong to two age groups, the elderly and people in their 20s. Second, the former group was interviewed, while the latter was asked

to complete a questionnaire. So, the possibility could not be ruled out that the age variable and the different empirical methods applied may have had an influence on the research results. Additionally, the study did not take into account the gender, social class, occupational status and marital status of the participants. These factors need to be addressed in future research.

Nonetheless, the study is meaningful in that it shows that it is not always given that strangers peacefully and naturally look at each other in public or semi-public spaces. Also, it has significantly attempted to connect the mirror neuron theory with urban fieldwork in order to examine the social meaning of simple visual interactions between strangers. Such an attempt lays the foundation for us to consider a very fundamental aspect of the public spaces by extending the discussion on visual interactions between strangers to the unconscious aspect. Ultimately, this endeavour aims to emphasize the social function of public spaces.

Psychological experiments showing that sensory deprivation causes mental disorder or cognitive impairment (Beck 2015: 7; Heron 1956: 53; Kaye 2009: 6) are contributing theoretically to neuroarchitecture, a discipline that deals with the influence of the built environment on the human brain and behaviour. Metzger (2018: 154), the author of *Neuroarchitecture*, notes that, in order to keep the senses alert and healthy, human beings are dependent on experiencing daily the dynamics of sensory fields. He offers various examples of built environment where people can have a multisensory experience. Other experiments demonstrate the positive influence of the built environment on the human brain and body generally, including the correlation between ceiling height and creativity (Meyers-Levy and Zhu 2007: 183), the therapeutic influence of the view through a window (Ulrich 1984: 421), and so on. These scholars point out that the built environment can guarantee multisensory or dynamic stimuli through porosity.

However, the urban space of Seoul is becoming more and more closed. Above all, here the physical exclusiveness of residential areas has become a universal phenomenon (Kim and Choi 2012: 110). This trend results from the fashion of building apartment complexes, coupled with the commercialization of apartments and the deepening of residential segregation (Gelézeau 2007; Kim and Choi 2012: 109). As a result, we see barricades at the entrances of these apartment complexes, a keypad lock installed at the communal entrance and the restricted use of elevators. Spaces for socialization are marked by physical exclusiveness, too. In Seoul, people usually spend their spare time in a walled space like Song-*bang*, Game-*bang* or PC-*bang*. This phenomenon is called '*bang* (room) culture' (Song 2004: 88). So, both residential areas and the spaces for social life are characterized by physical exclusiveness. This situation focuses on the public space as an arena for exchanges and for direct contact among diverse persons. It is hoped that this article contributes to bring out the importance of public spaces.

References

Bastiaansen, J. A., Thioux, M., Nanetti, L., van der Gaag, C., Ketelaars, C., Minderaa, R. and Keysers, C. 2011. Age-Related Increase in Inferior Frontal Gyrus Activity and Social Functioning in Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Biological Psychiatry*, 69 (9): 832-838.

Baudelaire, C. P. 1970. *Paris Spleen* (Translated by Louise Varèse). New York: A New Directions Book.

Bauer, J. 2006. *Warum ich fuhle, was du f˙uhlst* (*The Psychology of Empathy: How can I Feel your Mind even if you do not Say*, Translated by Mi-ok Lee). Seoul: Ecolivres.

Beck, A. J. 2015. *Use of Restrictive Housing in U.S. Prisons and Jails, 2011-12*. Special Report of U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Benjamin, W. 1999. *The Arcades Project* (Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin). Cambridge: The Belknap Press.

Calvo-Merino, B., Glaser, D. E., Grezes, J., Passingham, R. E. and Haggard, P. 2005. Action Observation and Acquired Motor Skills: An fMRI study with expert dancers. *Cerebral Cortex*, 15 (8): 1243–1249.

Cho, Okla. 2015. The Characteristics of Community among Urban Poor in Baeksa Village Based upon Alley Culture. *Cross-Cultural Studies*, 21 (1): 51-85.

Ertelt, D., Small, S., Solodkin, A., Dettmers, C., McNamara, A., Binkofski, F. and Buccino, G. 2007. Action Observation has a Preactivation on Rehabilitation of Motor Deficits after Stroke. *NeuroImage*, 36: T164-173.

Fogassi, L., Ferrari, P. F., Gesierich, B., Rozzi, S., Chersi, F. and Rizzolatti, G. 2005. Parietal Lobe: From Action Organization to Intention Understanding. *Science*, 308: 662-667.

Gallese, V. 2009. Mirror Neurons, Embodied Simulation, and the Neural Basis of Social Identification. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 19: 519-536.

Gehl, J. 2011. *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Translated by Jo Koch). Washington: Islandpress.

Gelézeau, V. 2007. *Apartment Republic: Korean apartment as seen by a French geographer* (Translated by Hye-yeon Gil). Seoul: Humanitas.

Giedion, S. 1969. *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Goffman, E. 1963. *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the social organization of gatherings*. London: Collier-Macmillan.

Haslinger, B., Erhard, P., Altenmuller, E., Schroeder, U., Boecker, H. and Ceballos-Baumann, A. O. 2005. Transmodal Sensorimotor Networks during Action Observation in Professional Pianists. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 17: 282–293.

Heron, W. 1956. The Pathology of Boredom. *Scientific American*, 196 (1): 52-56

Heyes, C. 2010. Where do Mirror Neurons Come from? *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 34: 575-583.

Holston, J. 1989. *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hwang, Ikjoo. 2005. Bystreets, Plazas and Parks: An Anthropological Essay on the Formation of Sense of Local Community in the City. *Gern-Chook* (Journal of Architectural Institute of Korea), 49 (1): 69-76.

Jacobs, J. 2010. The Death and Life of Great American Cities. In G. Bridge and S. Watson (eds), *The Blackwell City Reader*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell.

Jun, Sangin and Kim, Meeyoung. 2021. Cafe as a Third Place and Modern Habits of the Heart. *Studies in Urban Humanities*, 13 (1): 29-52.

Kaye, J. S. 2009. Isolation, Sensory Deprivation, and Sensory Overload: History, Research, and Interrogation Policy from the 1950s to the Present Day. *Guild*, 66: 2–17.

Keysers, C. 2011. *The Empathic Brain: How the Discovery of Mirror Neurons Changes our Understanding of Human Nature*. Lexington, Ky.: Social Brain Press.

Kim, Ji-Eun and Choi, Mack-Joong. 2012. Empirical Analyses of Physical Exclusiveness of Multi-family Housing Estates in Seoul and its Socioeconomic Effects. *Journal of the Korean Housing Association*, 23(5): 103-111.

Kim, Taehwan. 2019. *An Analysis on Status and Market Conditions of Coffee Shops*. KB Research Report. No. 2019-29. Seoul: KB FGMRI.

Krase, J. 2012. An Argument for Seeing in Urban Social Science. *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 2 (1): 18-29; https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/3-Krase.pdf

Lahav, A., Saltzman, E. and Schlaug, G. 2007. Action Representation of Sound: Audiomotor Recognition Network while Listening to Newly Acquired Actions. *Journal of. Neuroscience*, 27: 308-314.

Lee, Suan. 2011. Cafe as Hybrid Spaces and Cultural Scapes of Nomadic Subjects. *Culture and Society*, 10: 34-66.

Lefebvre, H. 2003. *The Urban Revolution* (Translated by Robert Bononno). Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.

Lofland, L. 1985. *A World of Strangers: Order and Action in Urban Public Spaces*. New York: Basic Books.

Lofland, L. 1998. *The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory*. New York: Routledge.

Low, S. 2014. Spatialities: The Rebirth of Urban Anthropology through Studies of Urban Space. In D. M. Nonini (ed.), *A Companion to Urban Anthropology*. Malden: Wiley Blackwell.

Merleau-Ponty, M. 1945. *Phénoménologie de la Perception*. Paris: Gallimard.

Merleau-Ponty, M. 1964. *Signs* (Translated by Richard C. McCleary). Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. 2002. *Phenomenology of Perception* (Translated by Colin Smith). London and New York: Routledge.

Metzger, C. 2018. *Neuroarchitecture* (Translated by Rae Walter). Berlin: Jovis.

Meyers-Levy, J. and Zhu, R. J. 2007. The Influence of Ceiling Height: The Effect of Priming on the Type of Processing That People Use. *Journal of Consumer Research*: 174-186

Pardo, I. and Prato, G. B. 2018. Introduction: Urban Ethnography Matters—Analytical Strength, Theoretical Value and Significance to Society. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Prato, G. B. and Pardo, I. 2013. "Urban Anthropology". *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 3 (2): 80-110; https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/docs/tableofcontents_5/7-Discussions%20and%20Comments.pdf

Rizzolatti, G. and Craighero, L. 2004. The Mirror-Neuron System. *NeuroSci*, 27: 169-92.

Rizzolatti, G. and Sinigaglia, C. 2008. *Mirrors in the Brain: How our Minds Share Actions and Emotions* (Translated by Frances Anderson). Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Seoul Government. 2016. *The Neighbourhood Surrounded a Fortress, Haengchon: A Record of Cultural Life of Haengchon*. Seoul: Seoul Government Residential Environment Improvement Division.

Singer, T., Ben S., John, P. O. and Holger, K. 2004. Empathy for Pain Involves the Affective but not Sensory Components of Pain. *Science*, 303 (5661): 1157-1162.

Song, Doyoung. 2004. *Seoul Reading by Anthropologist Doyoung Song*. Seoul: Sohwa.

Tanaka, S. 2015. Intercorporeality as a Theory of Social Cognition. *Theory & Psychology*, 25 (4): 455-472.

Ulrich, R. 1984. View through a Window may Influence Recovery from Surgery. *Science*, 224 (4647): 420-421.

Whyte, W. 1980. *The Social Life in Small Spaces*. New York: Project for Public Spaces.

Wicker, B., Keysers, C., Plailly, J., Royet, J., Gallese, V. and Rizzolatti, G. 2003. Both of us Disgusted in my Insula: The Common Neural Basis of Seeing and Feeling Disgust. *Neuron*, 40 (3): 655-664.

A Closed Circle: An Ethnography of the Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto Prison, Messina[1]

Roberta Pandolfino
(University of Messina, Italy)
roberta.pandolfino@unime.it

Building upon in-depth interviews and fieldwork conducted from 2018 to 2020 in the difficult and extremely changeable urban setting of the Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto Prison (Sicily), this article discusses the operational and ethnographic limits and pitfalls that prison fieldwork entails. The discussion takes into account the difficulties and challenges in prison entry, staff resistance and the unexpected challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.
Keywords: Sicily, prison, asylum, ethnography, conflict.

This article builds on in-depth interviews and field research conducted from 2018 to 2020 in the Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto Prison (Sicily). I discuss the operational and ethnographic limits and pitfalls that prison works entails, drawing on my doctoral study of various relational dynamics linked to the phenomenon of education in prison (Forster and Forster 1996), as well as those related to health and the right to health, gender and emotion (Corazza Padovani 2018). I use the Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto Prison as a 'case study' to discuss the difficulties and challenges in prison entry, staff resistance and the unexpected challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic

Research in Prison: American Studies

Case studies of institutions contribute to the holistic examination of a phenomenon, and they help to avoid the separation of components from the larger context of a situation. A case study may explore aspects of culture, society, community, subculture and group organization, or phenomena such as beliefs, practices, interaction, and any other aspect of human existence. Case studies conducted by way of participant observation attempt to describe a research problem comprehensively (Jorgensen 1989). Today, legions of new social researchers are engaged in searching for the so-called 'exotic at home' (Pardo and Prato 2010). They are aware of how it is possible to comprehend influential and influenced practices in a specific community or autobiographical setting and from a much wider context, including social, cultural and economic points of view. They engage in theoretical debate that highlights the complexity, feasibility and importance of ethnographic research in contemporary urban settings (Pardo and Prato 2012). They also propose an inductive interpretation free from general and a priori paradigms (Geertz 1973, 1988).

One of the urban areas that most refers to the idea of the exotic is, without a doubt, the prison context. Not surprisingly, during the second half of the 20th century, this limited field of investigation became a privileged destination for American sociologists, who investigated the population of these institutions in isolation, recognizing the uniqueness of real microcosms,

[1] I wish to acknowledge the contribution made by the Board and two anonymous expert reviewers for *Urbanities* to the final version of this article.

societies within society (Sykes 1958, Jacobs 1977). The interest of these scholars was mainly aimed at institutional activities and the analysis of small subcultures that were influential in the prison context as well as outside. This brought some very particular mechanisms of the penitentiary world to the attention of academics and civil society. First, Clemmer (1940) was responsible for coining the term *prisonization* to describe a process of acculturation (Redfield et al. 1936) in which prisoners inevitably participate, especially if imprisoned for long periods.

This term describes the gradual process of adapting the offender to the code of honour of the prison. The degrees of adaptation are represented by the extent to which the inmate adheres to the models provided by the prison culture, it being understood that the prisonization process can increase and feed the inmate's antisociality. As an expression of the natural spirit of adaptation, this process risks favouring the self-representation of oneself as criminal, triggering the eternal mechanism of the revolving door. Furthermore, there is no lack of ethnographic studies, more specifically autobiographical. The founding father of this intellectual approach, known as Convict Criminology is John Irwin, author of in-depth studies based on participant observation in California prisons (Irwin 1970, 1980, 1985).

Convict Criminology is a new approach that aims at revealing the reality of prison life, starting from the interventions of prominent personalities considered to be political prisoners, such as Malcom X (1968) and Angela Davis (Nadelson 1972), and leading up to the development of a real methodology of investigation, applicable by anyone as long as it produces first-hand knowledge. To illustrate this point, one of the members of the Convict Criminology school attacked their predecessors with strong words: 'This is reality, and in hell — what the "experts" raised in college classrooms, degree collectors, scholarship grabbers, from their well-funded, air-conditioned offices say, far removed from the filthy reality of life of prisoners' (Rideau and Wilkberg 1992). These words justified social research based solely on observation, structured interviews and informal conversations; a formal ethnographic approach, that is, based on data from the prisons themselves and the truthfulness of the lived experience (Ross and Richards 2003) and not on the lists provided by the national institutions. It is a school of thought born of violence as a need and destined to find a solid place not only in the USA but also to be a model for the study of prison institutions all over the world. Convict Criminology is perfectly placed within the interpretative framework of today's anthropology. Prato and Pardo (2013) note that earlier social scientists were interested in studying the 'problems' of their own society and contributing to planning social intervention aimed at the solution of such problems. They point out that for these scholars, the Western metropolis was considered a breeding ground of social problems and the city was conceived as a mosaic, where each piece presented different problems (Prato and Pardo 2013).

This line of studies was soon destined to come to a halt (Prato and Pardo 2013, Pardo and Prato 2018); in fact, it has imploded, a victim of what has been called hyperincarceration (Wacquant 2009).[2] So, just when prison ethnography could have found increasingly fertile

[2] Hyperincarceration is a term coined by the sociologist and social anthropologist Löic Wacquant to define how, since the mid-1970s, the United States has experienced a gradual replacement of the regulation of poverty through a prison-welfare continuum that has intertwined and connected the

ground, it suffered a halting blow. This was perhaps due to the privatization of prison facilities that made meeting with prisoners even more complex, creating a strong deterrent for social researchers.

Research in Prison: European Studies

In the rest of the world, this example has been followed to some extent. Some have taken a path similar to current urban research, which, as Pardo and Prato (2012: 10) observe, follows 'the interactions between economic, political and cultural aspects' and 'contextualizes local dynamics and change in national and global historical processes (Prato 1993, 2000, 2009)' (ibid.: 10). Others have adopted an approach that examines 'the relationships between local and national processes and policies of global restructuring that fundamentally influence the local environment and people's everyday life (Spyridakis 2006, 2010)' (Pardo and Prato 2012: 10). At the turn of the 20th century, prison research entered a new phase in Europe: it was the English and French scholars who gained the most experience. They began investigating institutional activity (Combiesse 2001, Genders and Player 1995, Sparks et al. 199, Liebling 1999, King and McDermott 1990, King 2008, Foucault 1975), as well as specific symbolic and relational dynamics (Mathieu and Rostaing 1998, Rostaing 2014, La Caisne 2000) and the link to violence (Liebling 1992, Chauvenet et al. 2008, Dingley and Mollica 2007).

The Italian scene has touched on these issues. The very first approach to prison ethnography appeared at the end of the 1990s, when Emilio Santoro gained the attention of the academic committee with his work of re-editing, translating and analysing the main American texts published up to that time (1997). This first step was not sufficient to bypass the fears and difficulties of conducting research in total institutions (Goffman 1961), particularly in Italy.

These difficulties risk giving rise to prison studies whose authors have never actually confronted the prison reality, drawing instead on second-hand knowledge drawn from the official reports and documents of the Justice Ministry, national and European Observatories and varied journalistic reports. Great merit goes to the non-profit organization, *Antigone*, an association for rights and guarantees in the criminal system engaged in the collection and dissemination of information on prisons. Also noteworthy is the activity of *RistrettiOrizzonti*, a newspaper engaged in the narration of the Italian prison context which is closely linked to the national news.

Today the representation of the prison world is developing, including major voices and perspectives on the study of total institutions: their functioning, the methodological aspects of research and the storytelling of direct experiences of prison life. Proof of this is, for instance, that, in my own university department, I am not the only one dealing with prisons (Bitto 2020, 2021). Recent contributions focus on current and former prisoners (Chiappini and Baglio 2019,

discourse, practices and categories of welfare with those of a hypertrophic and hyperactive criminal apparatus. This passage, however, did not concern all Americans; it manifested itself above all towards the poor, those who showed themselves recalcitrant to the new economic and ethno-racial order that was taking shape on the ashes of the defunct Fordist-Keynesian system and the crumbling urban ghetto.

Beccegato and Marinaro 2018), thus following at least one of the dictates of the Convict Criminology approach.

Limitations of Prison Ethnography in Italy

It is not easy to investigate effectively an environment closed to the public. As there are many problems to be faced, prison social research is struggling to take off. There are operational limits relating to penetrating the closed circle of total institutions, as well as intrinsic constraints to ethnographic activity, which risks to be inefficient due to restrictions and resistance by the operators and by the prisoners. Awareness of these constraints and limitations cannot completely prepare an inexperienced researcher, but is an excellent starting point for those who want to undertake this kind of study and want to circumvent these problems. Certainly, the work of Francesca Vianello, leading voice and author of important contributions on the prison environment (Vianello 2019; Vianello and Sbraccia 2010, 2016; Vianello and Degenhardt 2010) is a point of reference.

The first aspect to be analysed is the actual possibility for the researcher to enter the prison. For sociologists or anthropologists, this is hard, because their function is not recognized. So, it is more difficult for them to insert themselves into the prison environment. They often resort to using tricks based on a mutual exchange of values or engage in reciprocity, treating field alliances as a system of indebtedness (Lavanchy 2014). Thus. they end up proposing themselves as interns or volunteers, in order to collect the research material in a well-defined role. Even if it were possible to structure a shared project, the bureaucratic delays associated with accreditation would still need to be addressed. Every activity carried out in the Italian prisons must be approved not only by the prison management but must go through the national authorization process managed by the Ministry of Justice. This double authorization procedure risks extending the timing considerably.

Patience is a fundamental tool for anyone who wants to deal with prison field research; a tool necessary not only while waiting for ministerial authorization but throughout the research process. The second element of operational difficulty is the prison administration's mistrust of social research, often seen as an undue intrusion in the field rather than as a resource. In fact, the researcher is often considered as a stranger aiming to observe the activities and thereafter judge them. Naturally, for the operators in question who feel to be under scrutiny it is easier to dismiss the observer rather than understand the reasons for the research. This opens up a sort of defence of the working context of cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 1997), a more or less conscious mechanism which can inhibit, slow down or block the researcher's entire activity.

The dynamics that I have just described are without a doubt the most difficult to manage. It is important to create acceptance, which is more easily accomplished with a pleasant personality than with authoritative professionalism. Once the authorizations have been obtained and the right relationship — inevitably based on compromise — is established with all the operational teams, it is time to start working, collecting data and information and engaging in observation. Even this phase, however, will be inevitably punctuated by a series of difficulties endogenous to ethnography in prison.

As Casale (2019) states, the intention to use the ethnographic method in the study of the prison is not always feasible, due to the complex variables. Ethnography presupposes immersion in the social world that one intends to study, demanding knowledge from within and measuring oneself with little obvious aspects. It is necessary to take into account the interpretative difference within the full expression of the activity of the researcher who probably will develop difficulties in empathic identification with the object of study and a subsequent inability to remain objective. The ethnographic description therefore appears as a long process which begins before going in the field, and which should continue afterwards, to provide description of the prison reality. It is also the product of a limited interpretative practice, which attempts to reconstruct the complex network of non-explicit communication and the often contradictory meanings that affect individual prison institutions and national penitentiary contexts.

A further problem concerns the different levels of importance given to the declarations of the subjects within the penitentiary, which are strictly connected to the hierarchical role covered and socially recognized as more or less credible. These dynamics contribute to a mystification of reality, to which it is easy to succumb when one is extraneous to the analysed context and instinctively seeks interpretative support and considerations on or representations of reality from those who manage the institution. This interpretative framework can be as much the result of the naivety of a bewildered researcher faced with a plurality of dynamics to be analysed as a process conveyed from above, whereby the content of the research is manipulated by the ideas of those who have more power and decide what should be researched and what is off limits; this is a convenient hypocrisy that the researcher runs the risk of being completely unaware of. An additional form of manipulation, or rather deprivation, which the researcher is often a victim of concerns the possibility of investigating life in the penitentiary at times of greater dynamism. This is in reference to all kinds of critical situations. Except for the fortuitous presence of the researcher when a critical event takes place, the resolution of the problems and the bureaucracy underlying these events will prevent the scholar from coming into contact, at least for a short time, with those directly involved, as well as with the entire penitentiary reality. The kind request to leave the research site for a few days or the more common 'barred door' are the mechanisms usually put in place by the penitentiary institution to protect themselves from prying eyes and be able to manage the event according to their own rules. Once again, this implies a non-acceptance of the researcher's work, in this case considered in the same way as the journalist — to be kept at bay until the conflict responsible for the crisis can again be swept under the carpet. Obviously, these are just some generalizations. In fact, it is necessary to take into account the specific rules in each individual prison.

In the following pages, I will explain how I faced some of the aforementioned difficulties, how I was the victim of some operational dynamics and how I managed to circumvent some limits imposed by the prison reality.

The Case of the Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto Prison

This section will be dedicated to the in-depth study of the methods, mechanisms, tricks and restrictions which I had to juggle in order to comply with the obligations of my PhD research

(2018-2020). This was an ethnographic experience to be carried out in my own city, not an exotic setting; but, according to Lavanchy (2014), while the location where we work is not always geographically distant, it remains an unfamiliar setting even when we have been 'there' before. In my case, it is a place in a different context, with its own rules and provisions; it is a context where to observe how the 'machine' of the prison administration works and discover unique work and relational dynamics.

The case of the Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto Prison makes a peculiar and interesting case study for various reasons. For contemporary anthropologists, urban phenomena must be contextualized in the global system, taking into account that, as Pardo and Prato (2018: 3) observe, 'what constitutes a city and what is meant by urban are differently understood in different parts of the world'. However, they also point out that, 'While the definition of the city is varied and culturally and politically specific, urban settings are widely identified as hubs of cultural and ethnic interaction' (Pardo and Prato 2018: 3). Indeed, if cities, like districts, are elements of a complex macrocosm, such a macrocosm must be accounted for when trying to unravel what is going on at the local level (Leeds 1972, 1973, 1980). The jail is a real neighbourhood located in the heart of the city of Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto (henceforth Barcellona P. G.). The Barcellona P. G. prison has an almost secular history. It was built in 1925 under the name of 'Judicial Asylum'. It became a Psychiatric Judgement Hospital in 1976, and only in 2017 obtained the current name. Each of the listed classifications evolved over time according to institutional mandates and specific population. The Judicial Asylum was developed in Italy in the 1920s as a social need. It aimed at relieving pressure from a penal system that was at its limit, managing the system's surplus and paying attention to the health needs of offenders who had become insane during imprisonment and of those who should have been declared insane before standing trial for their crimes. It was an environment that guaranteed them medical support, but above all was intended to remove the unmanageable individuals both from prisons and from cities, to safeguard civil society. For these characteristics alone, the institute would have been of great historical interest, in the sense of Richard Fox (1977), who emphasized the relevance of including historical analysis in the locally significant global dimension.

As we have seen, my research would not have produced a real prison ethnography since the focus of my work is centred on the analysis of the historical archive. However, in spite of my interest in documents, I could not have exempted myself from interacting with those who worked in the institute, which brought out how onerous it is, in terms of commitment and patience, to operate within a closed environment.

The first meeting — Give up!

In the preceding section, I discussed in generic terms the difficulties which one is likely to encounter. In retrospect, I can say that during my experience at the penitentiary of Barcelona P. G. I have come across many of these difficulties.

Usually, the acceptance of a research proposal depends upon the perceived importance of the topic, and on a trade-off between possible benefits and the possible demands of having a researcher around. Broadly speaking, we may think of research which links to self-contained,

emerging areas of policy where policy divisions have not yet been able to find a place in the larger official research programme, and of narrowly defined pure research which offers further exploration of promising leads which have emerged from earlier research (King and Liebling 2008). But in the Italian context the relationship between prison institution and researcher is more complex and my access to the institute was a lucky concession that I was able to pull off only by virtue of an agreement stipulated in the previous year (2017) between the former director of the institute and my university department.[3] In the UK or the US, decision-makers want to consult policy divisions to see whether the research could have some useful pay-off, and getting access to registry offices can be surprisingly easy (Lavanchy 2014); but in Italy external operators are viewed as intruders. I experienced a long wait just to obtain a preliminary appointment; demonstrating how research is often considered as the last thing to pay attention to in the face of a new and complex settlement. In fact, in those years, the institute had not only changed direction but had also changed its entire organization. In spite of the delays and with the full support of my contacts, I managed to get that preliminary meeting about six months after starting my work. Fortunately (or unfortunately?), it was my first time in a prison, and although I only visited the spaces dedicated to staff, everything seemed excessive and extravagant. There are strange elements in all forms of ethnography because, by definition, when we are engaged in ethnographic research we are working within social and political contexts with which we are not familiar, therefore we are vulnerable (Sugden 1996). In my case, I found that there was a procedure to be followed just to access those spaces, including small waits, doors that open only after others close, questions, phone calls, and so on. It is a process that is quite easy to get used to, but the first time is terrifying; especially when passing through closed doors in a metal corridor.

During that first meeting, I was able to speak about my research goals expressing my enthusiasm for being able to begin browsing the archives; an enthusiasm that was welcomed positively but also immediately downsized by a multitude of codes and regulations. I had to wait a little longer for a ministerial authorization, to verify that the Prison had never had insurance charges towards me, and to organize my 'chaperoning'. This third element would become the worry of my entire experience at the penitentiary, a simple action through which I would experience all the resistance that the penitentiary reserves for researchers.

The historical archive was located in a detached area from the administrative offices and to reach it I had to leave the institute to re-enter it from a secondary access, then retrieve the material of interest and bring it back to the administration, where I could consult it. A rather cumbersome process but the only one really possible, considering a series of issues that the Director did not fail to bring to my attention. I was never allowed to go there alone, even just quickly to retrieve some material, a restriction that was presented to me as necessary for my own safety and that of the documentary material, which was rich in sensitive data and liable to theft. Despite these convincing reasons, over time I came to understand that the real interest of the management was to have everything under control at a time of difficult transition and management. My business could have created confusion and misunderstandings, which,

[3] That is, the Department of Ancient and Modern Civilizations (DICAM) of the University of Messina.

according to the Director, only a strict protocol would make it possible to avoid. Furthermore, the Director requested a possible reorganization of the archival complex that I could take part in. The impression I had was that I would be giving something in return for the concession to enter that mysterious world which was kindly granted to me. On that occasion I decided to comply with every request of the Director, showing my willingness to help as long as I could start my work; after all, I had no choice.

You can do research in prison, but you really get the space and time you want only if you promote a mutual exchange of value in terms of good publicity for the institution or, as in my case, carrying out tasks beyond the competence of the employees; that is, if one does not accept the primary, instinctive invitation offered by the penitentiary institution — i.e., the invitation to desist.

Staff Resistance — Inside Clashes

I began my field research in May 2019. I arrived armed with my diary and the telephone number of the legal-pedagogical officer to whom I was entrusted — my contact person, my 'chaperone'. These tools were insufficient to allow me free access to the institute; every day, the process in that metal corridor took several minutes and often no one answered the phones. In fact, one of the major problems that I encountered concerned the first approach with the Penitentiary Police; at least during the early days, every time I went there, I would have to present myself, explain the reasons of my entry and wait for confirmation from the upper floors. Initially, I did not see this state of affairs as a form of obstruction; rather, I understood the motivations of those who were doing their job. After some time, the staff became less rigid, as I endeavoured to make myself more familiar to them, at least making it easier for them to recognize my face. I tried to converse with those who welcomed me, spending time at the internal bar so that I could introduce myself and chat with anyone. I tried to convey a pleasant personality and build up a sort of conviviality that I hoped would help me to attain my goal. I soon had to face the futility of this strategy, which turned out to be ineffective in overcoming my difficulties.

After a couple of months, during which my patience and acceptance were severely tested by long waits that ended only thanks to the intervention of an official who, knowing me, guaranteed for me, I requested official documentation certifying that I could access the institute, but that all my activities would be monitored and would therefore fall under the full and sole responsibility of my contact person. Although this document did nothing but confirm what was already tacitly agreed, it allowed me to overcome easily one obstacle but set up another, greater one. My efforts to gain the approval to win over penitentiary employees obtained minimal results in the health area as well with the Penitentiary Police but almost no results in the administration, among the 'educators'— the direct colleagues of my referent, that is — who did everything possible to keep me at bay. I thought that attitude was circumstantial, but I would soon discover that it was far-sighted. Sooner or later, my presence would have created a specific disturbance in the work activity. Moreover, escorting me for a few minutes a day to the archive — an ancillary practice done only as a personal favour — was an activity that no one wanted to carry out. This combination explained the distance that was being taken from me. The staff saw

me as a problem, and in a prison, both staff and prisoners have a vested interest in avoiding problems; this varies considerably from prison to prison (King and McDermott 1990) but in my case it seemed that many had become extremely skilled in doing so. I only became aware of this issue many months later. In the early days, I maintained constant telephone contact with my contact person at the institute to schedule my time there. We agreed on the schedule from day to day, but I spent many hours waiting for the right moment to go to the archive, which, however imperfect the system, worked well. My referent, who was my most valid supporter within the prison environment, made it clear that I would certainly have operational difficulties in his absence. So, I decided to be there mostly when he was.

The situation changed drastically when my contact person was forced to take time off from work for an indefinite period. It only took a month for me to find out just how true his advice was. Not knowing for how long he would be absent, I decided to continue my research activity, hoping that once I was on site I would find someone willing to support me. This was ideally a perfect plan but immediately clashed with denials and administrative issues. That month I was forced into long waits which did not always end with a positive outcome. During those days, I was often invited to go home without being able to complete my investigation; only a couple of times did I get someone to escort me to the archive and, in both cases, he was an agent perhaps adequately solicited or more simply moved to compassion by the incompleteness of my stay in the institute. This difficult phase affected my spirit of adaptation, forcing me to give up, at least temporarily. Because no one would perform duties not specifically attributed to their job, in the harshness of that environment, the absence of my referent increased the need to obtain authorization even for the most banal procedures.

In the Barcellona P. G. prison, there were complex reasons responsible for a constant state of tension between the various operational teams of the institute. Earlier, I mentioned the legal position and the upheavals that the prison had experienced in recent years. It was in this climate of change that various internal conflictual dynamics developed. Perhaps I became a scapegoat in these conflicts. The real reason for the tensions was the process of de-structuring of the entire work activity. There was no more group planning or team work activities aimed at the achievement of common objectives. Instead, there were four distinct teams that no longer responded to a single imperative, but acted according to the rules, codes and dictates of the Ministry.

The prison environment was entirely managed and organized under the authority of a single person, the Director, who modelled the statutes by responding personally to the authority of the Ministry of Justice in a rather original way. This partially removed other operators who would have worked following the Director's instructions. In the Barcellona P. G. prison context, the Director was identified as not only a problem solver but also as a real point of reference. He was admired and appreciated by all operators as well as by prisoners and patients. I interviewed several professionals who had personally experienced the statutory transition and, listening to them, I identified a common leitmotif, appreciation and nostalgia for the time under the former Director. His departure, and the restructuring inevitably generated confusion and tensions. Today the administration, the Penitentiary Police, the School and Health Care Unit coexist

within the institution. Teams must work together, but they follow different dictates. They proceed without certainty as to which dictate prevails over the others.

While waiting for this state of affairs to change, some penitentiary workers have taken other paths; some have moved to different jobs, others have chosen early retirement. Those who have stayed or have recently joined the staff have to deal with a climate of tension both between the different operating units and within the unit to which they belong. They do not necessarily take part in the underground conflict but are inevitably influenced by it in the performance of their duties. I found myself in this situation because the team put me in the most difficult situation. They withheld the support prescribed by the management; they agreed to grant me interviews and then prevented me from addressing certain issues; they paid attention to me lasciviously, also commenting on my clothing; they gave me countless appointments that were often postponed or even cancelled. Obviously, all these difficulties did not cancel out the sympathy, honesty and hospitality of most of the operators with whom I had the pleasure of sharing my days. However, these difficulties remain in my memory as a marker of my experience in that specific context and as examples of what can be encountered in similar situations.

The Logic of Extreme Confidentiality: Criticality and the 'Off the Record'

The last significant elements to be taken into account are the 'unspoken', the 'off the record', and all those subdued silent practices that express the reality of the logic of extreme confidentiality that is in force in prisons. Given the strict confidentiality attitude of all the officials, from the first moment, I had the feeling that in that closed system, it would be difficult to obtain information on the present activities or even on grisly past events. As King and Liebling (2008) state, there are situations where access has been denied and researchers have found themselves temporarily side-lined. Although small critical issues always arise but can be managed with immediacy and ease, things are different when more unusual events occur, especially when they attract media coverage.

Three critical events occurred during my field research; at least, three that I was aware of. The first took place right at the beginning of my fieldwork. Two restricted inmates, who were transferred to the Barcellona P. G. prison following some disagreements with other inmates, set fire to the mattresses in their cell in protest, causing the intoxication of seven officers and a nurse (Bruno 2019a). Although this was a particularly difficult event to manage, both initially and later on, it did not influence my activity. This applied also to the second incident, the attempted escape in 2019 of two prisoners and their subsequent pursuit (Editorial Board, Poliziapenitenziaria.it 2019, 2020). In this second case, it was more difficult for me to obtain information, for there was a certain reluctance in addressing the issue; I was given a summary report but most of the information was published in the newspapers. In spite of this reticence, even in this case I was lucky to be able to continue my activity quietly, including my trips to the archive. I was treated differently when the third critical event occurred, which devastated the institute and all its operators. That September (Bruno 2019b), a twenty-year-old inmate committed suicide. On that occasion, I was invited to avoid attending the prison for a short period. On my return, I found that it was impossible to discuss what had happened — the

topic had become taboo. I am convinced that during the time I spent there many more events occurred, perhaps less dramatic and not considered newsworthy. But the events that I have described, and others that were hidden, remain in an aura of mystery and extreme secrecy.

The interviews that I held in the prison revealed the personality of some individuals who had lived through the aforementioned events. It was difficult to break down the barriers and involve the participants in an open-hearted narrative about their work experience. In this regard, it will be useful to mention an episode that put me in an uncomfortable situation. I was to carry out an interview with the manager of the treatment area. As I started, I used the word 'interview', a choice that I made naively and that had unexpected results. This word generated an instinctive reluctance from the interviewee. She apologized, stating that she had thought that ours was going to be just a chat. Unwittingly, I had made alarm bells ring — prison workers seem to be naturally equipped with this defence mechanism, especially when an external agent is involved who might form a judgment or evaluation which they cannot control. In this particular circumstance, our 'chat' was postponed. Then, a ministerial authorization became necessary, and a couple of months later the interview finally took place. Bringing to mind Anne Lavanchy's fiction (2014), this awkward experience engendered a productive reflection on methodological specificities and useful insights on the challenges one encounters in doing fieldwork. The question is, how can we engage in interpersonal relationships whose primary purpose is their usefulness for our research and recognize their instrumental character while avoiding manipulation?

The unfortunate misunderstanding that I have described aside, in almost all the conversations, I noticed a reluctance caused by the use of the tape recorder. The fact that every word was recorded generated an almost natural resistance to face the hottest issues, such as the external interference on the activity of the institute's staff, or the work choices that were made due to bad management, which was attributed to third parties. Stories were told only after I uttered the proverbial phrase 'off the record' and responded to cold glances at the recorder implying that I should turn it off. The attitude originates in the logic of absolute confidentiality to which, evidently, prison workers are tacitly instructed, and which influences them even after they have been discharged from their job.

But what most of all continues to be shrouded in an aura of mystery is precisely the historical archive. Being the main object of my research, I spent time trying to gain information from those papers without ever obtaining clear answers. What I wanted to clarify mainly concerned the absence of part of the documentation. The disappearance of this documentation remained a mystery, considering certain officials' assurances that no document had been stolen or transferred, inferences about some periodic transfer of documents from that archive to another one, the ignorance of some about the existence of the archive and how this was managed. None of this information led me to know the facts, forcing me to fully re-evaluate my project and deal only with the documentation available to me. The complexity of the events relating to the transfer and dismemberment of the archival complex should be attributed to a real neglect of the great historical value of the documentation that has been protected exclusively through custody. There was a real lack of respect for the historical heritage of the

archive. Ironically, this is the legacy of the Judicial Asylum and of the way in which its inmates/patients were treated and guarded, but (almost) never cared for.

Conclusion

In spite of all the difficulties, contradictions and narrowness, my experience at the Barcellona P. G. prison progressed by small steps and, thanks to an infinite perseverance, with a fair success. Apart from all other factors that I have described, I am certain that the period in which my research took place was wrong, due to the limitations to which we were all subjected from March 2020. The unexpected advent of the Covid-19 global pandemic has indelibly influenced our way of conceiving relationships, education and work. For us researchers it involved a stop in our activities.

The prison reality, closed by definition, was sealed in order to protect the health of the operators and the inmates, but above all in an attempt to manage the unmanageable. The Italian prisons were real hotbeds of revolt, caused by prisoners' fear for their lives, with the consequence that more rights were denied, such as meeting family members. The Barcellona P.G. prison context, full of all the aforementioned idiosyncrasies and marred by undersized staffing, faced a plurality of difficulties and critical moments linked to intolerance, fears and increased constraints. For example, when two cellmates were diagnosed to be Covid-19 positive, the violent protest that broke out was immediately put down by the prison police (Messinaoggi.it 2020). As I have explained, my presence had never been facilitated before. Now, in such a challenging, new and difficult to interpret framework, the presence of an external subject with external purposes was unthinkable. Furthermore, even if I had wanted to take the risk of going to the institute and had been welcomed there, I would have nonetheless encountered the same difficulties as before (now, perhaps tripled) given that my contact person was not there, being engaged in remote work to protect a fragile partner. A perfect conjunction of events affecting negatively the conclusion of my work at the prison.

In conclusion, is it possible to do research in prison institutions? Given my personal experience, it would seem impossible. However, it is also true that it is not common to come across a global pandemic, just as it is not common to do fieldwork in place undermined by ongoing changes and populated by people who are reluctant to participate in social research. It is possible for the researcher to carry out a good study in Italian prisons, provided that one is aware of the limits and difficulties. According to Lavanchy (2014), successful social scientists rely on their innate capacities to weave friendly and useful relationships, which in turn reinforces the idea that 'the field' must be experimented with but cannot be learned. I believe that a commitment to do research in this difficult sector is indispensable. In Italy there is no lack of total institutions of excellence where to carry out good research. Perhaps, however, it is precisely where there is greater reticence that the work of the anthropologist should focus, with the aim to acquire knowledge and investigate an absolutely confidential system, which is often so because it is too inefficient and ineffective. Afterall, if there was not some small difficulty in doing field research, what fun would there be?

References

Beccegato, P. and Marinaro R. eds. 2018. *Rifarsi una vita. Storie oltre il carcere*. Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane.

Bitto, G. 2020. "Nel senso, chi l'ha mai vista?" La percezione della mafia nei detenuti per 416bis della Casa Circondariale Catania Bicocca. *Illuminazioni. Rivista di lingua, letteratura e comunicazione*, 52 (1): 87-112.

Bitto, G. 2021. Narrare al di là delle sbarre. Progetto di scrittura tra i detenuti per mafia della Casa Circondariale Bicocca di Catania. *Peloro. Rivista del Dottorato in Scienze Umanistiche*, 7 (1): 105-124.

Bruno, L. 2019a. Messina: nuovi guai ma stessi cronici problemi per la Casa circondariale di Barcellona. *Quotidiano di Sicilia*. 8 June; available at http://www.ristretti.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=80330:messina-nuovi-guai-ma-stessi-cronici-problemi-per-la-casa-circondariale-di-barcellona&catid=220:le-notizie-di-ristretti&Itemid=1, accessed 1 September 2021.

Bruno, L. 2019b. Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto (Me). Detenuto 20enne muore suicida nell'ex Opg. *ilsicilia.it*. 17 September; available at http://www.ristretti.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82929:barcellona-pozzo-di-gotto-me-detenuto-20enne-muore-suicida-nellex-opg&catid=220:le-notizie-di-ristretti&Itemid=1, accessed 1 September 2021.

Casale, G. 2019. Le difficoltà di accesso al carcere e i limiti alla ricerca qualitative. *Culture e Studi del Sociale*, 4 (1): 77-93.

Chauvenet, A., Rostaing, C., Orlic, F. 2008. *La violence carcérale en question.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Chiappini, C. and Baglio, M. eds. 2019. *Frammenti autobiografici dal carcere. Laboratori di scrittura sulla paternità tra uomini detenuti e uomini liberi.* Milan: FrancoAngeli.

Clemmer, D. 1940. *The Prison Community*. New York: Holt.

Combiesse, P. 2001. *Prisons des villes et prisons des campagnes*.. Editions de l'Atelier, Ivry-sur-Seine, 1996 - Sociologie de la Prison. Paris: La Découverte.

Corazza Padovani, N. ed. 2018. *Sobre casos e casamentos: Afetos e "amores" através de penitenciárias femininas em São Paulo e Barcelona*. São Carlos: Edufscar.

Dingley, J. and Mollica, M. 2007. The Human Body as a Terrorist Weapon: Hunger Strikes and Suicide Bombers. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30 (6): 459-492.

Editorial Board. 2019. Tentata evasione dal carcere di Barcellona: i dettagli sulla cattura. *Poliziapenitenziaria.it*. 15 July; available at https://www.poliziapenitenziaria.it/tentata-evasione-dal-carcere-di-barcellona-i-dettagli-sulla-cattura/, accessed 1 September 2021.

Editorial Board. 2020. Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto (Me). Covid in carcere, rivolta dei detenuti. *Messinaoggi.it*. 22 November; available at https://www.messinaoggi.it/website/2020/11/22/detenuti-con-il-covid-rivolta-a-barcellona/, accessed 1 September 2021.

Forster, W. and Forster, B. 1996. England and Wales: The State of Prison Education. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 47 (2):101-105.

Foucault, M. 1975. *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison*. Paris: Editions Gallimard.

Fox, R. 1977. *Urban Anthropology: Cities in Their Cultural Settings.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Geertz, C. 1973. *The Interpretation of Culture*. New York: Basic Books.

Geertz, C. 1988. *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Genders, E. and Player, E. 1995. *Grendon: A Study of a Therapeutic Prison*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Goffman, E. 1961. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. New York: Doubleday.

Herzfeld, M. 1997. *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics and the Real Life of States, Societies, and Institutions.* London: Routledge.

Irwin, J. 1970. *The Felon.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Irwin, J. 1980. *Prisons in Turmoil.* Boston: Little Brown.

Irwin, J. 1985. *The Jail*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jacobs, J. 1977. *Stateville: The Penitentiary in Mass Society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jorgensen, D. L. 1989. *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

King, R. D. and Liebling, A. 2008. Doing research in prison. In R. D. King and E. Wincup (eds), *Doing research on crime and justice.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

King, R. D. and McDermott, K. 1990. "My geranium is subversive": some notes on the management of trouble in prisons. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 41 (4): 445-471.

La Caisne, L. 2000. *Prison. Une ethnologue en centrale*. Paris: Editions Odile Jacob.

Lavanchy, A. 2014. *Doing and Undoing Fieldwork: A Case of Participant Observation in a State Institution.* London: SAGE Publications.

Leeds, A. 1972. Urban anthropology and Urban Studies. *Urban Anthropology Newsletter*, 1 (1): 4-5.

Leeds, A. 1973. Locality power in relation to supralocal power institutions. In A. Southhall (ed.), *Urban anthropology: cross-cultural studies of urbanization*. New York: Oxford University Press

Leeds, A.1980. Towns and villages in society: hierarchies of order and cause. In Collins T. (ed.), *Cities in a Larger Context*. Athens: Univ. Georgia Press.

Liebling, A. 1992. *Suicides in Prison*. London: Routledge.

Liebling, A. 1999. Doing Research in Prison: Breaking the Silence? *Theoretical Criminology*, 3 (2):147-173.

Malcom, X. 1969. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. London: Penguin Books.

Mathieu, L. and Rostaing, C. 1998. La relation carcérale. Identités et rapports sociaux dans les prisons pour femmes. *Revue française de sociologie*, 39 (4): 799 – 803.

Nadelson, R. 1972. *Who Is Angela Davis?: The Biography of a Revolutionary*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Pardo, I. and Prato, G. B. 2010. Disconnected Governance and the Crisis of Legitimacy. In I. Pardo and G.B. Prato (eds) *Citizenship and the Legitimacy of Governance. Anthropology in the Mediterranean Region.* London: Routledge.

Pardo, I. and Prato, G. B. 2012. The Contemporary Significance of Anthropology in the City. In I. Pardo and G.B. Prato (eds) *Anthropology in the City: Methodology and Theory*. London: Routledge.

Pardo, I. and Prato, G. B. 2018. Urban Ethnography Matters: Analytical Strength, Theoretical Value and Significance to Society. In I. Pardo and G.B. Prato (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Prato, G. B. 1993. Political Decision-Making: Environmentalism, Ethics and Popular Participation in Italy. In K. Milton (ed.) *Environmentalism: The View from Anthropology*. London and New York: Routledge.

Prato, G. B. 2000. The Cherries of the Mayor: Degrees of Morality and Responsibility in Local Italian Administration. In I. Pardo (ed.) *Morals of Legitimacy: Between Agency and System*. Oxford: Berghahn.

Prato, G. B. 2009. Minorities in Italy: The Cases of Arbëresh and Albanian Migrations. In G. B. Prato (ed.) *Beyond Multiculturalism: Views from Anthropology.* London: Routledge.

Prato, G. B., Pardo, I. 2013. "Urban Anthropology". *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 3 (2): 80-110; https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/docs/tableofcontents_5/7-Discussions%20and%20Comments.pdf

Redfield, R., Linton, R. and Herskovits, M. J. 1936. Memorandum for the study of acculturation. *American Anthropologist*, 38 (1): 149 – 152.

Rideau, W. and Wilkberg, R. 1992. *Life Sentences: Rage and Survival behind Bars*. New York: Times Books.

Ross, J. I. and Richards, S. eds. 2003. *Convict Criminology*. Toronto: Thomson Learning.

Rostaing, C. 2014. L'ordre négocié en prison: ouvrir la boîte noire du processus disciplinaire. *Droit et société*, 87 (2): 303 – 328.

Santoro, E. 1997. *Carcere e Società Liberale*. Torino: Giappichelli.

Sparks, R., Bottoms, A., Hay, W. 1996. *Prisons and the Problem of Order*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Spyridakis, M. 2006. The Political Economy of Labour Relations in the Context of Greek Shipbuilding: An Ethnographic Account. *History and Anthropology*, 17 (2): 153-170.

Spyridakis, M. 2010. Between Structure and Action: Contested Legitimacies and Labour Processes in Piraeus. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds.) *Citizenship and the Legitimacy of Governance. Anthropology in the Mediterranean Region.* London: Routledge.

Sugden, J. 1996, *Boxing and Society: An International Analysis.* Oxford: Manchester University Press.

Sykes, G. 1958. *The Society of Captives: A Study of a Maximum Security Prison*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Vianello, F. and Sbraccia, A. 2016. La ricerca qualitativa in carcere in Italia. *Etnografia e ricerca qualitativa*, 9 (2): 183 – 210.

Vianello, F. 2019. *Sociologia del carcere.* Rome: Carocci Editore.

Vianello, F. and Sbraccia, A. 2010. *Sociologia della devianza e della criminalità.* Rome: LaTerza.

Vianello, F. and Degenhardt, T. 2010. Convict criminology: provocazioni da oltreoceano. La ricerca etnografica in carcere. *Studi sulla questione criminale*, 6 (1): 9 – 23.

Wacquant, L. 2009. *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity.* Durham: Duke University Press.

BOOK REVIEWS

Bjork-James, C. 2020. *The Sovereign Street: Making Revolution in Urban Bolivia.* Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

According to Carwil Bjork-James, the author of the work under review, 'revolution has become a Bolivian tradition' (p.51). However, this nation with a modern history grounded in collective struggle, is deeply divided across lines of, amongst others, race, class and geography. Those who dwell within the confines of Bolivia's cities are insinuated to be either *'creole'* or *'mestizo'*, wealthier and Spanish speaking. Conversely, Bolivia's indigenous population, who have predominantly lived in rural settings — although this historic division has become less stark owing to the trend of rural to urban migration — embodying different cultural practices and speaking *Quechua* or *Aymara.* This historically embedded divide between the predominantly urban, wealthier, Spanish speaking and traditionally rural indigenous residents is a theme coursing through Bjork-James' work.

This divide substantively exists today. A manifestation of this is the chewing of coca leaves, a practice which is deeply entrenched in indigenous identity. Coca leaves, coincidently, are the central ingredient of cocaine and as a result, Bolivia has been placed under significant pressure from the U.S. backed war on drugs to eradicate not only the plant, but vicariously, those livelihoods which depend upon its cultivation. As a component of his ethnographic research, Bjork-James attended a 'chew-in' protest, organised in conjunction with efforts by the government of Evo Morales to revise international drug laws which, according to the author, view coca chewing as 'an illegitimate vestige of the past which must be eliminated' (p162). This demonstration was held outside the U.S embassy in La Paz.

The significance of this protest is the act of 'being indigenous in public space'. Not the coincidental use of space by those of indigenous heritage, but rather a 'performance of indigeneity' which takes place beyond its usual place, thrust upon the urban realm and, subsequently the symbolic seat of power. Amongst the demonstrators, Bjork-James identifies a range of signifiers utilised, such as 'ethnically marked dress', the 'use of indigenous languages' and the flying of the Wiphala, an iridescent checkered-flag which symbolises the native peoples of the Andes. The author argues that the protestors are 'refusing to act in a way that accepts traditions of creole/mesitzo presentation as necessary to interact with the state' and as a result, the protestors are 'taking steps to redefine who may be considered capable of government and political self-representation' (p. 164).

The seizing of public space is a tactic utilised across the Bolivian activist left. Bjork-James conducted his field work across 2010-2011, temporally situating it in and amongst the global wave of public space occupations, embodied by the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street. However, the purpose of occupying public space within the Bolivian context is not homogenous. Whilst the Occupy movement centred upon the seizure of

symbolic space, the indigenous activists of Bolivia lay claim to not only symbolic space, but also spaces which are central to the functioning of the city as a whole. In the chapter titled '*The Power of Interruption*', Bjork-James claims that 'space-claiming protests make an impact by seizing spaces where goods and people flow and changing them into spaces of protests and blockage' (p. 101). Here the author cites the protest handbook *Metodos de Lucha*, within which it is argued that the force of these blockades emanates from 'their implications for the overall unfolding of economic and productive activities' and is seen to be a 'tool for winning concessions from the state' (p. 102).

Although not referenced within the text, this insinuation of 'blockage' recalls Bruno Latour's notion of the 'intermediary' and the 'mediator', where the former 'transports meaning or force without transformation' and the latter 'transforms, translates, distorts and modifies the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry' (Latour 2005: 39). By strategically blocking a targeted intersection or street (or multiple), the protestors are able to effectively lay siege to an entire city by slowing the flow of goods, services and, most importantly, food. They turn the quotidian intermediary of a traffic intersection into a rupture within a system, a mediator which imbues everyday consumption patterns with scarcity, only to be alleviated by authorised force and violence or by concession to the demands of the protestors.

By viewing the urban realm as both symbolic and systemic simultaneously, the indigenous protestors of Bolivia are able to demonstrate their legitimate claims to greater representation in the former, whilst turning the screw in the latter. To this end, Bjork-James cites the work of Victor Turner and argues that the seizure of public space opens up a theoretical rift in between the actual and the potential future of political life in Bolivia, overlapping uncertainties regarding the future of the physical and political space in a manner which renders social values and structures malleable. Through claiming urban space, the arena upon which the possible is enacted, is erected.

The Sovereign Street investigates the urban realm as a means of instigating revolutionary, or at least, transformative politics, rather than as an entity to be studied in and of itself. However, through this rich and erudite ethnography, which not only introduces the reader into the complex and world of Bolivian politics, but also inducts them in the realities of indigenous struggle, the reader stands to view the city from the perspective of those on the periphery, where the city is not an identity or something to be fought for, but rather something to be utilised as a means to an end.

Reflexively speaking, this work raises questions of contemporary urbanism beyond the plazas and blockades of La Paz or Cochabamba, encouraging the reader to ruminate over who or what claims legitimacy within the urban realm. Whilst this reviewer would like to have seen more concerning the legitimacy of some of the tactics used by the protestors, the potential one-sidedness of the ethnographer's

allegiance has afforded intimate access to a transformative period of modern history, brought to life vis-a-vis a vivid, well informed and highly captivating piece of work which will be of interest to any reader interested in the art of urban protest and the often-volatile politics of South America.

Reference

Latour, B, 2005, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Will Brown
Loughborough University, U.K.
w.brown@lboro.ac.uk

Garth, H. 2020. *Food in Cuba: The Pursuit of a Decent Meal.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Garth spends a lot of time with residents of Santiago de Cuba as they try to acquire food to feed themselves and their families, and ultimately, as she argues, to nourish and sustain their identities. It's not easy. We are introduced to several families and individuals who are stranded somewhere between food poverty and 'a decent meal,' or what Garth calls 'the politics of adequacy'. Here struggles with the availability of food have less to do with the caloric intake necessary to get through the day, as she notes, 'mere survival', and more with the social and cultural dimensions of food and eating, or the 'good life'. Essentially, she is arguing for the availability of culturally appropriate food. While this argument is frequently made on behalf of immigrant groups in urban areas, the context here, Cubans in Cuba, is novel to say the least.

Part of the issue of the politics of adequacy is that the majority of Santiago's food system exists somewhere between the state-controlled communist bodegas, where monthly rations are available, and the black market, where vendors, many of which operate illegally selling stolen or pilfered foodstuffs, sell to close friends and neighbours. Preparing a decent meal therefore relies on spatial and familial networks, but also, for most, a *doble moral* (double morality) or a *doble conciencia* (double consciousness). One must stay true to Guevara's 'New Man' ideology, putting others, especially family and neighbours, ahead of one's self, which for many still represents *Cubanidad* (being Cuban). Cubanidad, though, also entails eating correctly. This both involves acquiring and cooking certain foods, but also doing so in the 'correct way', which in today's Cuba, especially for marginalized populations, involves making use of those stolen goods often at the expense of neighbours and even family members. Thus, being correct and being Cuban involves implicit contradictions and numerous workarounds. Garth shows how this creates constant anxiety and stress, especially for women, who despite ideals of gender equality, are largely responsible for what is eaten.

Food is thus part of *la lucha* (the struggle) to maintain identity and to feed others. La Lucha, as Garth notes, is solved both at home and in the labour of 'being in the street'. At home, women come up with solutions to make decent (read 'Cuban') meals, often on a tight budget, often without access to the necessary foods, and often while working outside of the home. Then

they take to the street to put plans of food acquisition into play (though sometimes there are exceptions as husbands will also help source food). Thus, 'the tensions of the politics of adequacy are wrapped up in particular socialities of food provisioning and gendered subjectivities' (p. 84). These socialities are mediated by class and race, but also by urban assemblages.

These assemblages involve keeping tight social networks to help one score deals and look for opportunities across the city; the bodega that receives 100 pounds of fruit that will go bad in a day or two and thus must unload it quickly throughout the neighbourhood; the neighbour that 'finds' 10 pounds of rice; co-workers who look the other way or whom also steal only their appropriate share; or the shop owners who will kick back to close customers meat scraps for a soup. It also involves dependency on neighbours. Other urban issues, however, complicate these assemblages. For one, la lucha often involves illegal assemblages (people who take some of those pounds of rotting fruit and sell them on the street). Likewise, blackouts and refrigeration issues make food storage problematic, so la lucha becomes a daily event. This is especially true for the marginalized, but as Garth shows us with several vignettes, middle-class Cubans are also constantly confronted with the politics of adequacy. While 'the ethics of acquisition' differ for lower and upper-income households (the *nivel de cultura,* one's economic place in the city), and thus community obviously matters, geography also matters, as the ability to make dense networks increases the number of opportunities to make a decent meal.

Garth's work is a beautiful ethnography. While the stories feel somewhat redundant, the redundancy eventually culminates in the last few chapters into a palpable frustration that every day becomes mired in *la lucha* for culturally appropriate food. Here the build-up of the cacophony of marginalized voices gives way to a breaking point, where, while pessimistic, residents nonetheless wait for the past (the nostalgia associated with the satiation of the past) to become present.

I have only a few minor complaints of *Food in Cuba*. At times Garth hints at the global industrialization of food as a reason for food poverty and the changes in Cuban diets, but we only get glimpses into how non-Cuban foodways are replacing traditional foodstuffs. Also, while the blame seems to fall squarely on the Cuban economic system's inability to keep up with wages, how much of *la lucha* is due to the American embargo and 'payback politics' is not known. Other issues, such as commodity fetishism are playing some part, and she notes the need to be well dressed rivals the need to eat in a specific way, but again, the reader is not left with a good idea of how much other issues are to blame. Likewise, there are many structural barriers that receive scant attention.

Ultimately, though, Garth's study of marginalized Santiagueros and their 'ingestive practices', portrays a particular kind of living, involving intimate socialities and intimate performances, where one is constantly negotiating the fine line of acting ethical and losing one's Cubanidad. It is an

important part of a larger body of work in anthropology that portrays the urban precariat making do in the grey zone. It should be widely appreciated by those working at the intersection of urban and food studies.

Daina Cheyenne Harvey
College of the Holy Cross, U.S.A.
dharvey@holycross.edu

Özden-Schilling, C. 2021. *The Current Economy: Electricity Markets and Techno-Economics*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

In *The Current Economy*, Canay Özden-Schilling interrogates how and why electricity gave way to new markets in the United States over the past three decades. Throughout the book it becomes clear that this process was exceptional, as electricity has long been considered a good that is particularly unsuitable for privatization. Our general dependency on electricity, its price inelasticity, the high buy-in and maintenance costs of electricity networks and the regulatory frameworks introduced over the first half of the 20th century did not provide an ideal environment for free-market competition. The book provides an ethnography that depicts how scientists, regulators and other workers imagined and realized electricity markets despite these restrictions. In doing so, Özden-Schilling provides a fresh take on the ways in which technological and economic expertise shape and change contemporary capitalist markets while purposefully refraining from 'taking neo-liberalism as an all-encompassing context' (p. 112).

Özden-Schilling gives her perspective its theoretical backbone by marrying notions from Anthropology, Science and Technology Studies (STS) and Sociology to conceptualize what she calls *work cultures*. The concept draws heavily on the work of sociologist Ann Swidler (1986) and her concept of *tool kits*; the repertoires of habits and skills by which people devise strategies of action. More specifically, work cultures consist of the work-related habits and skills that are shaped by and shape, maintain and sustain specific fields of techno-economic expertise and the markets in which they figure. Building on the concept of work cultures, the key proposition of the book is that the inception and expansion of electricity markets in the U.S. is not only the product of political choices, but also that of ordinary workers bringing together heterogeneous techno-economic expertise as to imagine and realize new ways of energy provision; whether it be the expertise of the scientists who invented more efficient ways of distributing energy in the 1970s or the engineers who operate, maintain and innovate the electricity network.

Each proceeding chapter discusses a significant work culture and the building blocks it provides for the current electricity economy in the U.S. The first building block, that of regulation, is mostly attributed to policy makers, who in the 1980s, used their regulative power to create a more fruitful environment for electricity markets to thrive. Rather than understanding deregulation as a removal of rules to give market logics free reign, Özden-Schilling insists deregulation means

just the opposite, arguing that it was changes to, and the introduction of, (new) sets of rules that made electricity markets possible. Chapter 2 takes us to the work floor of a data company whose primary task revolves around forecasting electricity's demand and supply mechanisms for electricity traders. This chapter thus demonstrates how electricity markets, like many other contemporary ones, are represented by data collection, the workers who compile them and the traders who use them. In chapter 3, it becomes clear that engineers imagine a completely different electricity market compared to its current form. They strive for optimization of the grid to efficiently balance supply and demand in real-time, rather than a market based on forecasting using yesterday's data. An engineer's pipedream, it seems, as it proves hard to incorporate human agency into an otherwise calculable non-human system. Finally, the penultimate chapter discusses protest around changing electricity markets. We follow activists who, not unlike the engineers, contend with the current electricity economy by actively, yet sometimes unknowingly, pursuing similar optimizations to force down prices and stop the construction of new visible infrastructures like wind mills or power plants.

All-in-all, the book succeeds in its main objective by convincingly arguing and describing that it takes 'a number of groups, steeped in particular work cultures, to make, maintain, transform and populate new economies' (p178). Although only alluded to in the book's epilogue, this conclusion seems particularly relevant in light of current calls to realize more sustainable forms of electricity provision. All too often, approaches and debates around such a transformation overlook the intricate interplay between the social, political, technological and economic aspects of electricity provision, which leads to reductionist methods and quick-win solutions for change (Kenis and Lievens 2017, Savini and Bertolini 2019). Yet, especially because Özden-Schilling acknowledges that current electricity markets centre around pluralistic techno-economic visions, it seems overly optimistic when she concludes that people could simply step out of their work cultures to find consensus on new forms of electricity provision. Transition studies, albeit from a macro-perspective, theorize how path dependencies, political interests, sectoral boundaries and uncertainty prevent may prevent us from bridging the gap between different visions on the future of electricity, and have not yet found a solid solution to overcome such barriers (see e.g., Grin et al. 2010, Avelino et al. 2016, Castán Broto et al. 2019). From this perspective, *The Current Economy* opens up promising avenues for future researchers to theorize and investigate up-close Özden-Schilling's claim that such barriers could indeed be traversed, and how this could in some way unite current techno-economic visions to realize another much needed paradigm shift in electricity provision.

References:

Avelino, F., Grin, J., Pel, B., Jhagroe, S. 2016. The politics of sustainability transitions. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 18 (5): 557-567.

Castán Broto, V., Trencher, G., Iwaszuk, E., Westman, L. 2019. Transformative capacity and local action for urban sustainability. *Ambio*, 48 (5): 449-462.

Grin, J., Rotmans, J., Schot, J. 2010. *Transitions to sustainable development: New directions in the study of long-term transformative change*. London: Routledge.

Kenis, A., Lievens, M. 2017. Imagining the carbon neutral city: The (post) politics of time and space. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 49 (8): 1762-1778

Savini, F., & Bertolini, L. 2019. Urban experimentation as a politics of niches. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 51 (4): 831-848.

Swidler, A. 1986. Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. American Sociological Review, 51 (2): 273-286.

Darren Sierhuis
University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
d.sierhuis@hva.nl

Xu, F. 2021. *Silencing Shanghai: Language and Identity in Urban China*. Washington DC: Lexington Books.

Given the current, and occasionally disturbing, fascination with the People's Republic of China, Fang Xu's *Silencing Shanghai: Language and Identity in Urban China* is a welcome addition to the limited, non-ideological, scholarship about the world's largest country that continues to suffer from ideological bias and related western exoticism. Employing a wide range of multimodal methods, quantitative and qualitative data, and linguistically-informed rich ethnography, Xu describes, discusses, and gives close up examples of the impact of a century of intensive Chinese nation-building, and subsequent neoliberal globalization of this great city on the everyday lives of its native and increasingly non-native (internal and external) migrant populations.

As a claimant to being a *Shanghairen* (native Shanghai person), Xu is especially concerned with what she sees, and records, as their marginalization in what essentially is their own hometown. As the title announces, the main focus, I would call tool, for the analysis is the sociolinguistic narrative of the increasingly rapid loss of the ages-old Shanghai 'dialect'. Actually, from an historical point of view this dialect would (as did Sicilian, Catalan, etc.) qualify as a unique language itself. The unique Shanghai 'dialect' was the product of centuries of economic, cultural, and political cross-currents. This, I believe, is one of the most important core lessons to be learned about China from this book which focuses on the evolution and revolution of only a single ancient to modern city. As complex as Shanghai's story is, how much more complex is the four-millennial history and contemporary reality of a country with 1.4 billion people and a powerful and growing (currently second largest, global) economy?

Based on her own personal, as well as excellent scholarly preparation for conducting this on-going study, Fang Xu critically examines the changing local and national power relations which affected the emergence of Shanghai, first as a cosmopolitan metropolis and, now, as what I would classify as a complex megalopolis of almost 25 million inhabitants. She pays particular attention to how the linguistic and other more and less authoritarian policies of the centralized Chinese state

attempted to guide Shanghai's metropolitan development and many subsequent redevelopments. Of major importance have been attempts to control and direct migration within the country; for example, in the granting of legal resident permits (*hukou*). As Xu notes, migrations have had powerful effects on the relations between resident cohorts of the city, especially as to who can claim to be a Shanghairen as opposed to *Waidiren* (Outlander). Migrations, of course, have also affected changes in what once was a more cohesive local dialect. She also gives many examples from her extensive interviews of how the spoken language newer and older residents use, almost determine, and in most cases affect, the tenor of social relations.

Ironically, and in contrast to the stereotype of The People's Republic of China as being a 'communist' society in which hierarchical social classes do not exist or at least are restrained, Xu pointedly notes how many of the policies set by the national, regional, and local states actually favour the variously advantaged groups such as the highly educated professional classes and successful entrepreneurs. As the valued resources of every society are limited, the working-classes and the poor suffer as a result.

The key to Xu's analysis is the promotion of the Mandarin Chinese language to the exclusion of other methods of oral linguistic expression. The power of this state-building or cultural cohesion-building policy all but forces people not to use the dialect in most common social intercourse and requires the use of *Putonghua* (Mandarin) in legal as well as other governmental services and administrative matters. Although she describes a much more complex local linguistic universe between variously defined 'insiders' and 'outsiders', the common thread is, with a few recent attempts at cultural revivals, the accelerating disappearance of the Shanghai dialect, which she bemoans in her title as 'Silencing Shanghai'.

> 'In the re-globalizing process, the city has regained its status as a cosmopolitan metropolis, though one tightly controlled by the central government. To achieve this, Shanghai's own urban linguistic heritage has been sacrificed, the built environment had been remade, millions of Shanghairen are displaced and dispossessed, and millions of internal migrants have adopted the city as their new home.' (p. 201)

I have conducted a great deal of visual research in China during which I focused in the disappearance of urban vernacular landscapes as a consequence of the state-led global city-building processes in Shanghai as well as in other major cities such as Beijing, Xi'an, Shenzhen, Nanjing, Suzhou, and Hangzhou. Although not as personal, I appreciate Fang Xu's feeling of 'loss' in the linguistic vernaculars. During my visual work in China, I have also captured, in images of impressive residential and commercial buildings, the architectural realization of the 'China Dream'.

> '"China Dream," is an idea introduced by President Xi Jinping in a speech in November 2012. In his speech, he used the phrase to mean

> the 'rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,' but the exact implications of this political ideal remained vague, without clear parameters. This, a practical explanation of what exactly the "China Dream" means for the lives of ordinary people remains elusive, aside from the idea of upward mobility similar to the former Chinese Communist Party Secretary Deng Xiaoping's vision for achieving Xiaokang, or middle-class standard of living.' (p. 67)

I must note at the end of this review, that despite its modest 276-page length, *Silencing Shanghai: Language and Identity in Urban China* covers much more territory than I would be able to cover, even in a long review essay. In essence, it is a book that ought to be read in its entirety. As to the future of Shanghai, and by extension, China itself, Fang Xu firmly ties it to the potential success of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative to create a Greater China on the international stage.

Future research is needed to investigate the potential impact of BRI on the fates and futures of urban and regional languages along the Road, the potential of Putonghua rising to the status of global language to compete with English, and the possibilities of new global cities in the global south fighting to preserve and revive their vernaculars, so that they are not plastic fake after all, but authentic and unique in beautiful audible ways (p. 216).

Jerome Krase
Brooklyn College CUNY, U.S.A.
jkrase@brooklyn.cuny.edu

FILM AND VIDEO REVIEWS

Barstow, California. Directed by **Rainer Komers**. 2018. 76 minutes. Colour.

There are no happy endings or serendipitous moments in Barstow, California. Barstow is portrayed as a city whose narrative escapes the viewer, an assemblage of a myriad individual stories in a Route 66 stop that reference a struggling middle class. A work of nostalgia, around its 30th minute the documentary focuses on a woman, in a tiki bar heavily taxed by roads diverting away from its location, testifying to the disappearing 'history of Americana[.] You forget places like this, you forget an art form and that is a tragedy'. The documentary is the third of director Rainer Komers' The American West Trilogy, following Nome Road System (2004) and Milltown, Montana (2009).

While the director's camera assumes the semblances of a wanderlust projection, moving between the vast landscapes of the Mojave Desert and the documentary's namesake town, Stanley 'Spoon' Jackson recites from his memoir, *By Heart* (New York University Press, completed in collaboration with Judith Tannenbaum). In addition, the superimposition of the words of an imprisoned man and the memories of his family and friends against the high desert landscapes brilliantly reference Baudrillard's conceptualization of space in California in his *America*. According to the author space, and landscape more specifically in this case, constitute 'the very form of thought (Baudrillard 2010: 16)'. Of particular interest for urban studies scholars, but also truly scholars from any discipline that engage with the urban form, are the portrayal of the views that the place offers and the town's characterization as a transportation hub. Here again, Barstow, California extends a poignant angle, which Baudrillard has only foretold:

'Driving is a spectacular form of amnesia. Everything is to be discovered, everything to be obliterated. Admittedly, there is the primal shock of the deserts and the *dazzle* of California, but when this is gone, the secondary brilliance of the journey begins, that of the excessive, pitiless distance, the infinity of anonymous faces and distances, or of certain miraculous geological formations, which ultimately testify to no human will, while keeping intact an image of upheaval.' (2010: 10).

Similarly, the documentary's commitment to watching and listening to the landscape, completely avoiding sound effects, extends to people watching and listening. Thus, an interview to a tourism operator, a series of tourists to nearby mines, and tourists to the Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, where a re-enactment of a grotesque instance of war supposedly situated in Central and South Asia occurs, provide an idiosyncratic perspective to the failings of poorly replicated cultural practices in peripheral spaces. Along these lines and to summarize considerations apropos the film's stylistic fidelity, it can be said that another loop of examination that the documentary lays out for scholars could be that of Lefebvre's rhythm analysis.

Lastly, Komers' uses of landscape and landscaping work to situate the

documentary as an urban historical composition.

Reference

Baudrillard, J. 2010. *America*. London: Verso Books.

Arba Bekteshi
arba.bekteshi@gmail.com

Atieno. Directed by **June Ndinya, Effie Awino, Ruth Njoki, Lavine Atieno, Dorcas Akin**. 2018. 64 minutes. Colour.

Atieno is a fictional film that tells the story of a young girl from a fishing village named Atieno who goes to work for her aunt in Nairobi. Harassed by customers in the bar where she works, she runs away and does odd jobs to earn a living. She ends up running a small street food business. In parallel, we are told of the life of one of her friends — a young boy who stayed in the village. The film ends with a phone call; we don't know who is calling or why.

The aim of the film is clear: On the one hand, it shows the journey of a poor young girl (her father is sick and she must leave for the capital to be able to support him and her little brothers) who discovers the harshness and violence of urban life in a poor area of the capital. On the other hand, it tells the journey of a young boy who, not having won a scholarship, will use his bike to earn a living and slowly gain his independence. This subject of rural exodus and of the opposition between rural and urban life is not new in African filmography. Here the editing, which alternates short sequences in the countryside with short sequences in the city, does not allow for the complexity of the situations and characters. It is almost caricatural.

The city of Nairobi is only present through the poor neighbourhood of Mathare, where we see tin houses overhanging the street. The parallel editing strikingly shows the contrast between life in the fishing village and the bustling life of the densely populated neighbourhood of Mathare, where men are all presented as 'dredgers', thieves and brawlers. The relationship between Atieno and her aunt — who tells her when they arrive in Nairobi that she is no longer her aunt, but her mother — could have been explored in greater depth. Generally speaking, the social relations among the different characters are not sufficiently developed.

It should be added that this film was written, acted and produced in collaboration by DreamGirls, a group of teenage girls and young women from Nairobi and Kisumu, and is used by the Community Media Trust as an educational outreach tool to facilitate discussions on HIV, transactional sex and entrepreneurship. Using an animated guide, the audience is invited to discuss the film's open ending. The international funding of the film may explain the high quality of the images and sound (although the musical soundtrack is not always appropriate in some scenes). The target audience is not documentary filmmakers or specialists of African studies, as the story is (unfortunately) banal in its narration and interpretation. The transmission of HIV-AIDS comes late and not in the urban sequences, but with the male character in the countryside. Note that the Ivorian director Kitia Touré made four short films

in 1993 *Les gestes ou la vie: au nom de l'amour*. The film *Atieno* would certainly have benefited from being either shorter or divided into several short films. We would have liked to follow the implementation of the film with the actors (non-professionals?), especially the young people, to gain a better understanding of the different issues in what is commonly called a participatory film.

Let's hope that the screenings of the film in front of different audiences (in Kenya and other African countries) have been recorded or even filmed; they represent precious documents on the reception and the different uses of such a film.

Additional information:

- the DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe) partnership is a public-private partnership aimed at reducing rates of HIV among adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in the highest HIV burden countries.
- 1993 – *Les gestes ou la vie*, Kitia Touré, a series of four short films to inform and sensitize Africa for the fight against AIDS; Promaco Prize for the fight against AIDS and Telcipro Prize for technical quality at FESPACO 1993; Special Jury Prize at the Scientific Film Festival of Paris-Tour Eiffel, 1993.

Véronique Duchesne
Université de Paris, France
veronique.duchesne@ceped.org

Suspension. Directed by **Simón Uribe**. 2020. 75 minutes. Colour.

Suspension presents a cinematographic approach to the construction of roads in Colombia, with a special attention given to the technical work of measuring and clearing areas in the jungle, hammering rocks and setting the iron and concrete to build. The film tells the story of two roads in the state of Putumayo that play a central role in connecting the capital, Mocoa, to the national railroad system. Mocoa is located in the middle of the Amazon jungle. It is surrounded by huge mountains and has a considerable annual volume of rainfall.

The first road was built in the forties and is called 'Trampolín de la Muerte' (Springboard of Death) due to the risks it poses for those who need or dare to drive along it. Known as one of the most dangerous routes in the world, it connects Mocoa to the city of Pasto through a very winding, narrow path that, in some places, only one vehicle can pass at a time; Otherwise, the risk of falling off the edge of the cliff is high. Despite the unfulfilled national state promises of looking after the road after a series of accidents over the decades caused by the precarious infrastructure combined with natural disasters (landslides and floods), it still used by trucks and cars. The second road is a glimpse of hope for better days for the population of Mocoa and those living in its surrounding areas. Construction seems to have started around 2014 and was interrupted a few years later due the alleged lack of money just after finishing a huge bridge going around a mountain and suddenly ending somewhere in the middle of the jungle. Abandoned, it became a kind of local tourist attraction, although the builders had put a closed gate and a sign authorizing only their own personnel. The

film shows people going there for a walk with the family on the weekend, taking pictures of the stunning view of the jungle; youngsters riding motorcycles, taking advantage of the great quality of the road. As it has been said in the anthropological literature that it is not rare for users to distort the planned use of a particular piece of infrastructure.

One of the characters in the film is an old man who worked on the construction of the unfinished road. Living with his family in a place that seems to be close to the construction site, he talks about his low expectations in seeing the road completed in his lifetime. This is one of the ways in which the film offers a historical perspective of the dramas experienced by the inhabitants of the area. Generation after generation wait for a solution to mobility problems that never comes. In this sense, *Suspension* is a fitting title for a context in which the dream for better integration is always on hold.

Guillermo is another central character in Uribi's film. A railroad construction engineer and resident of Mocoa, he takes the spectator through the 'Trampolín de la Muerte' as he talks about how his concern with mobility in that part of Colombia as a young man led him to pursue involvement in politics as well as seek historical and technical knowledge about the road. Guillermo seems also to be an important informant in Uribi's ethnographic research on infrastructure and roads in Colombia, as the relation of this character with the camera and person behind it displays subtle informality. The use of Guillermo's video archives of the situation of the road in the mid-1990s (after the huge disaster in 1991), the presence of a dog along for the ride in what seems to be Guillermo's car, images of his house and the announcement of his death in the 2017 flood at the end of the film are some elements that seem to display aspects of the ethnographer-filmmaker/informant relationship.

Three elements of the film narrative are important to highlight. First, it follows a historical process of road construction. It starts showing pictures of the workers building the 'Trampolín de la Muerte', followed by some sequences of the disasters in 1991, Guillermo's videos mentioned above and continues with Uribi's own images from 2014 and 2017, capturing interviews and the construction site of the long-awaited bypass to reach Mocoa.

The second element is a sensorial perspective in which sound plays an interesting role in creating an ambiance. Some sequences show the mountains surrounded by clouds, the constant rain and details in the forest. It also exhibits a sensorial vision of the building process and the abandoned construction site with its materials being taken over by nature. In this sense and as the third element, Nature seems to be the main character in the movie due to its resilience, mystery and unruly power.

Yuri Rosa Neves
Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brazil.
nevyuri@gmail.com

palgrave
macmillan

Series Editors

I. Pardo, Ph.D. (i.pardo@kent.ac.uk) is Honorary Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Kent, U.K. and serves as President of the International Urban Symposium (IUS). Prof. Pardo, a well-known specialist in Urban Anthropology, is the author of several books and peer-reviewed essays.

G.B. Prato (g.b.prato@kent.ac.uk) is Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Kent, U.K. Widely published in anthropology, she serves as Chair of the IUAES Commission on Urban Anthropology and as Secretary and Treasurer of the IUS.

Recently Published:

Mollica, M and Hakobyan, A. 2021. ***Syrian Armenians and the Turkish Factor***

P. Kuppinger, Ed. 2021. ***Emergent Spaces:*** *Change and Innovation in Small Urban Spaces*

I. Pardo and G.B. Prato, Eds. 2021. ***Urban Inequalities:*** *Ethnographically Informed Reflections.*

M. Bell and A, Armstrong. 2021. ***A Social History of Sheffield Boxing.*** 2 volumes.

J. Krase and J. DeSena, Eds. 2020. ***Gentrification around the World***, 2 volumes.

M. Istasse, 2019. ***Living in a World Heritage Site:*** *Ethnography of Houses and Daily Life in the Fez Medina.*

N. Caldararo, 2019. ***An Ethnography of the Goodman Building:*** *The Longest Rent Strike.*

I. Pardo and G. B. Prato, Eds. 2019. ***Legitimacy:*** *Ethnographic and Theoretical Insights.*

Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology

Half of humanity lives in towns and cities and that proportion is expected to increase in the coming decades. Society, both Western and non-Western, is fast becoming urban and mega-urban as existing cities and a growing number of smaller towns are set on a path of demographic and spatial expansion. Given the disciplinary commitment to an empirically-based analysis, anthropology has a unique contribution to make to our understanding of our evolving urban world. It is in such a belief that we have established the Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology series. In the awareness of the unique contribution that ethnography offers for a better theoretical and practical grasp of our rapidly changing and increasingly complex cities, the series will seek high-quality contributions from anthropologists and other social scientists, such as geographers, political scientists, sociologists and others, engaged in empirical research in diverse ethnographic settings. Proposed topics should set the agenda concerning new debates and chart new theoretical directions, encouraging reflection on the significance of the anthropological paradigm in urban research and its centrality to mainstream academic debates and to society more broadly. The series aims to promote critical scholarship in international anthropology. Volumes published in the series should 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.

Previously Published:

C. Védrine, 2019. ***The Spirit of Capitalism According to the Michelin Company:*** *Anthropology of an Industrial Myth.*

J. Rosbrook-Thompson and G. Armstrong, 2018. ***Mixed-Occupancy Housing in London:*** *A Living Tapestry.*

M. Spyridakis, Ed. 2018. ***Market versus Society:*** *Anthropological Insights.*

I. R. Örs, 2018
Diaspora of the City: *Stories of Cosmopolitanism from Istanbul and Athens.*

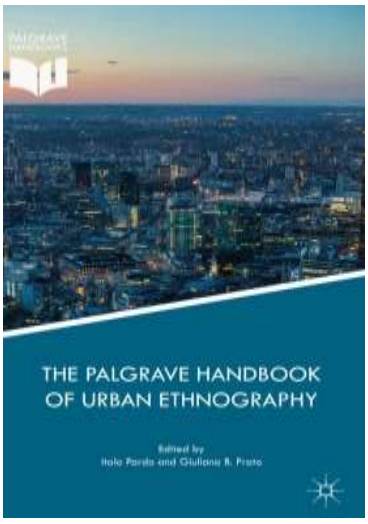
J. Krase and Z. Uherek, Eds. 2017
Diversity and Local Contexts: *Urban Space, Borders, and Migration.*

T. Kuldova and M. Varghese, Eds. 2017
Urban Utopias: *Excess and Expulsion in Neoliberal South Asia.*

M. Papp, 2016
Shichigosan: *Change and Continuity of a Family Ritual in Contemporary Urban Japan.*

A. Vailati and C. Rial, Eds. 2016
Migration of Rich Immigrants: *Gender, Ethnicity and Class*

I. Lindsay, 2014
Living with London's Olympics: An Ethnography.



Italo Pardo and Giuliana B. Prato (Eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*

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

ISBN: 978-3-319-64288-8. DOI: 10,007 / 978-3-319-64289-5.
www.palgrave.com/book/9783319642888

- Presents a range of topics, such as work, employment, and informality; everyday life and community relations; marginalization, gender, family, kinship, religion and ethnicity; and political strategies and social movements in historical and transnational perspectives
- Encourages reflection on the significance of the anthropological paradigm in urban research and its centrality to mainstream academic debates
- Points to new topical debates and charts new theoretical directions

These ethnographically-based studies of diverse urban experiences across the world present cutting-edge research and stimulate an empirically-grounded theoretical reconceptualization. The essays identify ethnography as a powerful tool for making sense of life in our rapidly changing, complex cities. They stress the point that while there is no need to fetishize fieldwork—or to view it as an end in itself —its unique value cannot be overstated. These active, engaged researchers have produced essays that avoid abstractions and generalities while engaging with the analytical complexities of ethnographic evidence. Together, they prove the great value of knowledge produced by long-term fieldwork to mainstream academic debates and, more broadly, to society.

Submission information at the series homepage (http://www.springer.com/series/14573) and springer.com/authors
Order online at springer.com or for the Americas call (toll free) 1-800-SPRINGER or email us at: customerservice@springer.com
For outside the Americas call +49 (0) 6221-345-4301 or email us at: customerservice@springer.com

Abstracting and Indexing

Please visit http://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/, "Abstracting and Indexing Information", to view the full list of databases in which this Journal is indexed.

To Advertise in *Urbanities*

Please visit http://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/, "Advertise", for information on our Journal and Web Advertisements.

Submitting to *Urbanities*

Detailed instructions on how to submit to the Journal can be found on the "Information and Guidelines" page of the journal's web site: http://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/.

If you have any queries that are not answered by the "Information and Guidelines" page, please contact the journal editors at: urbanitiesthejournal@gmail.com.

Copyright and Permissions