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Challenges Faced During a Pandemic: Remote Ethnography and a Renegotiation of Ethics[1]

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This article addresses the ethical issues related to the necessary change in research strategy when investigating substance use services during the COVID-19 pandemic in Wales. The introduction of a lockdown following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic deferred the majority of face-to-face services, including substance use services, with some reduced to essential onsite personnel or re-located online. This created a barrier to traditional access for members of the service and challenged researchers to rethink research strategy. Substance use services began to occupy remote meeting spaces, such as Zoom, allowing the service to provide real-time support. This stimulated the development of a new research technique using remote participant observation. However, this restructuring was not a simple transition from physical place to remote space. Drawing on established digital and 'netnography' procedures, in this article I discuss the ethical implications of ongoing consent and visibility along with risks of inadvertent lurking. This novel provision of remote support both created barriers and provided opportunities. Remote meeting spaces require client knowledge and access to technology. This may exclude many individuals and may challenge the assumptions of a 'safe space'. Conversely, the use of online groups enabled improved access for those living faraway, and by using a microphone and camera, allowed the potential for less stressful exposure. Finally, the 'field' is considered in the context of the online domain. Participants live in both online and offline spaces, with overspill or contradictions occurring in the presentation of the self. Researchers often do not draw distinctions between the two domains, yet this is an important consideration when conducting remote ethnography.
Keywords: Addiction recovery, COVID-19, remote ethnography, online ethics.

Introduction

My research focuses on how identity is navigated when someone is in recovery from an addiction. Discovering how identity relates to addiction recovery is still in its early stages. Much of the sociological literature discusses how those with experience of addiction assert identities that are in alignment with their self and try to reduce the stigma felt by an addiction identity. Therefore, 'recovery' is treated as a positive identity change, moving from a stigmatised condition to a recovery identity (Fomiatti et al. 2017). Understanding recovery from an addiction in terms of repairing a stigmatised identity encourages a blanket interpretation and prioritises the role of individual agency in the recovery process (Neale et al. 2011). It also ignores the turbulent nature of recovery, which includes relapse and near-relapse experiences. The idea of distancing oneself from a former 'spoiled identity' as a binary reparation from addiction assumes identity as a singular and unified entity (Dahl 2015, Fomiatti et al. 2017, Neale et al. 2011). For my study, I employed an ethnographic approach, involving 12 months of participant observation at a substance use support organisation. I carried out participant observation both remotely and face-to-face within the context of the organisation, including

[1] I would like to acknowledge the members of DN, who took part in this study and spent time sharing their experiences with me. An earlier draft of this article was presented at the IUS Field Training School and Research Seminar on *Urban Ethnography and Theory* in July 2022 (https://www.internationalurbansymposium.com/events/2022-field-training-school/), I wish to thank the Seminar's participants for their comments and discussion, which helped me refine my ideas. I am grateful to my supervisors, Dr Rachel Swann and Dr Melissa Mendez, for their encouragement and guidance and the two anonymous reviewers for *Urbanities* for their critical reading and helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

support groups, casual meet ups and external activities that the service had organised. Given that the research focus was on recovery, I decided it was more appropriate to stay within the remit of the organisation rather than looking at the members' everyday social lives. The substance use support service provides support for all self-identified problems with alcohol and/or other substances. However, the majority of people who participated in this study reported polydrug use or a primary problematic substance of alcohol.

This ethnographic approach was complimented by photo elicitation conversations. The use of photographs as a research tool is established in social and anthropological sciences (Harper 2002, Rose 2016). The term 'photo elicitation' describes 'inserting a photograph into a research interview' and is used to elicit additional information and add new topics to the conversation (Harper 2002, p 13). Interviewing with images is primarily carried out in two ways. Either the researcher may produce photographs for the participant to comment on, or the participant may be asked to produce or bring photographs that represent experiences relating to the research question (Harper 2002; Pink 2021). In this study, participants were asked to bring along photographs which they felt were relevant to their identity and recovery journeys, to allow for an understanding of an experience in which I was unable to participate (Pink 2021). Those who experience addiction can have difficulty expressing less-tangible thoughts and emotions, and visual methods can be used to circumvent these difficulties and aid reflection (Pain 2012).

Ethnography originated from social and cultural anthropology in the 1800s. Malinowski (1922) was the first to use extensive participant observation to facilitate a deeper understanding of the community structures and cultural norms in New Guinea (Rees and Gatenby 2014). Around this time, Park and Burgess (1921), the qualitative sociologists of The Chicago School used ethnographic methods to carry out research in the city and established ethnography as a credible research methodology within the social sciences. Thus, anthropology influenced the social sciences and, in turn, the social sciences influenced anthropology (Prato and Pardo 2013). Although the definition of ethnography has varied over time and across disciplines, ethnographic data collection typically involves the researcher becoming embedded in others' lives over an extended period, allowing researchers to study the actions and accounts of people in everyday social context (Hammersley and Atkinson 2019).

The internet has provided a new community platform, and social restrictions put in place following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic further increased the requirement for online communication. Application of ethnographic methodology to new fields is not a novelty. In particular, due to geopolitical changes in the 1970s and1980s, ethnography expanded beyond the study of the anthropological 'traditional' settings in order to study the urban or 'at home' (Prato and Pardo 2013). In recent years, it has been suggested that ethnography is an appropriate methodology for capturing the social and cultural structures and norms that occur online (Pink et al. 2016). Yet, as with many adaptations of methodologies, this can be met with scepticism. We must be considerate of the criticisms arising from 'armchair anthropology', which question if the researcher is situated within the action. Therefore, we must consider the aim of the study and where the 'action' is. As social restrictions brought much of society online, this study's design rationally followed the 'action', aiming to explore and understand social practices within

this novel context. Hammersley and Atkinson (2019) did not define what constitutes a space, but state that the method should be appropriate for the phenomena studied. Thus, in this instance, online ethnography can be considered as the application of traditional ethnographic methods within a different conception of 'space'.

Most real-time participant observation has been conducted in person and few researchers have considered the implications of 'going online'. Recent literature reviewing the adoption of online qualitative methods in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has suggested that ethical considerations are equal to those of face-to-face research (Dodds and Hess 2021, Lobe et al 2020). However, the move to an online space can bring up new ethical concerns which need to be reflected upon and addressed, and a critical view on the use of information technology and how it may affect our social experiences is needed (Prato 2020). The majority of the emerging literature on remote research using videoconferencing software centres around the use of these platforms for interviews and/or focus groups. At the time of writing, the implications of using videoconferencing programmes for remote participant observation in real-time support groups have not been explored. This article hopes to fill this gap by drawing on existing literature and reflecting on examples from my own work, to address the ethical and methodological implications of moving participant observation online. Considerations include the renegotiation of ethics, insights into how moving online may re-conceptualise our idea of space, and how this may affect the research participants and data collected.

The Research Context

In March 2020, the UK government declared a lockdown in response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, implementing restrictions on people in order to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Non-urgent NHS appointments were suspended, 'non-essential' businesses were closed, and people were ordered to stay at home as the country was declared to be in a state of emergency. These restrictions continued for months, requiring businesses and organisations to adapt their service provision, which often meant moving online. Remote meetings allowed many people to work from home, enabled learning and academic sharing to continue via remote webinars and conferences, and facilitated contact between friends and family (Prato 2020). Measures under this 'new normal' may have been expected to cease when the government declared the lockdown period over. However, even as formal restrictions were lifted, personal responsibility and risk intensified by media and political outputs meant that people and spaces often did not return to their pre-pandemic state. Prato (2020) critiqued the narrative surrounding the implementation of the 'new normal' and questioned why restrictions continued following the aftermath of an emergency and what implications this might have on social relations. This emphasises the importance of evaluating the implications that restrictions and online communication have on city and social life.

Teti et al. (2020: 1) stated that the pandemic is a 'social event that is disrupting our social order', with a need for qualitative researchers to examine the resulting social responses and implications. However, lockdown restrictions limited access to spaces and changed how participants could be reached and interacted with. Consequently, this posed a challenge to

rethink research strategy and find alternative methodologies to prevent studies from ceasing completely. For many researchers and practitioners, this meant looking at digital and remote methods.

Originally, my research sought to carry out face-to-face participant observation at a substance use support service in South Wales. However, as restrictions continued and substance use support organisations remained remote or accessible solely to key personnel, I was forced to re-think and adapt my methodology. This adaptation was considered whilst in communication with the gatekeeper of a substance use organisation, Diwrnod Newydd (DN), who had moved their essential support service to remote meetings over Zoom and one-to-one phone calls. Although they did not know when the centres would re-open, they were happy for me to begin my research while they provided remote support. Initially, I was reluctant to do this. I was concerned whether remote interactions would influence my ability to immerse myself in the environment and engage openly with those who use the service. However, the necessary change of these service provisions felt important to observe and explore, and I anticipated that social restrictions would relax as time went on. At first, the remote meetings felt impersonal. Nonetheless, I was experiencing and occupying the same unfamiliar online environment as those in attendance. As time went on, I built a rapport with regular attendees, and talk became more familiar within small periods of downtime. As I became more familiar within the groups, I was invited to additional online groups which were facilitated by members, and I started to be treated as a 'regular'. With Marhefka et al. (2020), I found that as Zoom occurred in real-time the interaction and sharing of stories helped facilitate group cohesion and allowed others to share. Over time, I was surprised at how interpersonal certain groups became, as members bonded and built relationships with each other without ever having physically met. Moreover, I continued to ensure that my fieldnotes contextualised these interactions within the online space, as this influenced what could or could not be seen, and therefore, what could be deduced from the data.

'Space' is often defined as an abstract concept whereas 'place' is referred to as a cultural location. However, this theoretical debate is fragmented within ethnographic literature, with divisions over concept and their analytical and political implications (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003). The concept of 'space' and 'place', and what constitutes a 'field' creates further questions when social interactions move online (Murthy 2008), therefore it is important to define the research space within the context of this study. Pink et al. (2016) discuss the implications for ethnographers conducting observation remotely, and what 'being there' really means. This idea of 'being there' is unpacked and broken down in four fundamental ways. First, we can be there physically (face-to-face); second, we can be there remotely (Skype, Zoom, etc.); thirdly, we can be there virtually (third place; e.g., forum or real-time game); and fourthly, we can be there imaginatively (blogs, digital stories, social media) (Pink et al. 2016). Drawing on Pink et al. (2016), I describe the meetings attended at the substance use organisation as remote; nonetheless, this cannot be assumed to be a universal definition. It is probable that other notions of 'being there' may be helpful to draw on when addressing the construction of space.

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Ethical Renegotiations

The development of ethics in social science research stems from a combination of research which either caused harm or highlighted potential harm to participants, as it emerged, for example, from the ethnographic study entitled 'The Tearoom Trade' (Humphreys 1975). Therefore, social scientists and the institutions that support such research began to focus on the application of ethical guidance in order to reduce harm caused to participants. According to the British Sociological Association (BSA), 'Sociologists have a responsibility both to safeguard the proper interests of those involved in or affected by their work, and to share their analyses/report their findings accurately and truthfully' (BSA 2017: 4)

The BSA (2017) break down their report into 4 sections, Professional integrity, Relationships with Research Participants, Data storage and Archiving and Distribution and Publication of Research. However, this statement is not a prescriptive account of how to conduct research but should be used alongside reflection and engagement in the academic community. As well as the BSA guidance on ethical practice, other institutions and funders have requirements which may align or differ slightly. Although some ethical guidance is generalised, there is always a need for careful adaptation to a specific method. The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and the Commonwealth (ASA), specifically address ethical dilemmas that present within ethnographic research. They highlight the difficulties in obtaining consent (as typically defined by ethics committees), the need for transparency as a researcher and the avoidance of covert research (ASA 2021). Ethical guidance shapes the design of research, influencing how participants are recruited and engaged during studies and require the researcher to reflect on their research practice. Some of the difficulties that arise from social science ethical guidance are due to following the biomedical model of research, which however fails to incorporate the different needs of sociological or ethnographic disciplines (Atkinson and Delamont 2018).

In applying ethical procedures to my study design, and subsequently moving the initial research online, the notion of consent became an important factor that needed to be addressed. The traditional definition of 'informed consent', and how this can be achieved in ethnographic studies, is often debated due to the iterative and inductive nature of fieldwork (Atkinson and Delamont 2018). This requires careful consideration, with a clear explanation given to participants regarding this potentially unfamiliar method, without surmising what the outcome may be. Checklists provided by ethical review boards need to be accompanied by carefully thought-out processes that demonstrate how the principles have been interpreted (Iphofen 2011). Therefore, I present that negotiated ethics is useful in tailoring ethical procedures to contextual research practices, negating the 'one size fits all' approach.

Ongoing Consent

Platforms such as Zoom have created, encouraged and nurtured remote connections, which may not have occurred otherwise during the pandemic. However, spontaneous casual connections and conversations that may have arisen in a physical meeting space have reduced. This poses a challenge for ongoing consent, as the spatial move from 'physical place' to 'remote space'

changes the dynamics of casual conversation and visibility in which conversations of ongoing consent may occur. Convery and Cox (2012) proposed 'negotiated ethics' as a way to address ethical challenges that were specific to their study's context and design. 'Negotiated ethics' was defined as 'a situated approach grounded in the specifics of the online community, the methodology and the research question(s)' (Convery and Cox 2012: 50). The aim was to produce a more open and responsive ethical practice. This move to remote participant observation online posed a relatively new ethical challenge for conducting ethnographic research. Rahman et al. (2021) argued that remote participant observation should be distinguished from digital ethnography, as an observation of virtual events is different from immersion into the daily lives of people existing in the virtual world. However, digital ethnographies and 'netnographies' have been conducted on social media and virtual spaces for many years, and it is important to draw upon their expertise and experience.

When carrying out 'netnographic' research it is essential not to deceive participants, while recognising that the revealing of one's presence should not disrupt the normal activity which is being observed (Kozinets 2010). The normal structure of groups at DN required each member to 'check in' at the start to tell everyone how they were doing. This provided an opportunity to disclose who I was to those I had not met and explain the purpose of my presence. If anyone was uncomfortable with my presence, then I offered to leave the group, without any explanation being needed; however, this did not occur. Kozinets (2010) recommended that an ethnographer should offer an additional research explanation if requested and suggested using a separate webpage or email address to facilitate this. In this research, I felt providing an email address verbally during my check-in would not be accessible to all. Instead, I explained my study for as long as it seemed appropriate, then provided my email address verbally or via chat message, in case participants had further questions. Further discussion arose following breaks, when waiting for other members to join the group or during natural pauses in the conversation.

Visibility

I believe that the notion of ongoing consent was achieved by explicitly stating my intentions during the group meetings and providing an opportunity for the members of the group to access more information. Yet, consent would only be valid if my presence within the group remained visible. In offline spaces, a researcher remains visible within the situation that they are observing unless they make a conscious effort to hide. However, it could be argued that being online provides the opposite effect — a researcher is hidden unless a conscious effort is made to remain visible. Thompson et al. (2021) address the ethical considerations for digital ethnography when researching vulnerable populations. The authors pose the term 'virtually' to describe researcher's presence within a thread of conversation, such as a forum. Thompson et al. (2021) postulate that the researcher's presence can disappear within large volumes of postings, and, unless their presence is managed, data may be inadvertently collected covertly. This position of passively watching without interaction is often termed 'lurking'. Goffman (1971) addresses lurking, or 'lurk lines', primarily in reference to danger beyond our perception

in public spaces; however, he also discusses lurking in reference to the social rule of greeting, which, if avoided, allows an individual to be observed without their knowledge.

In offline spaces, taking field notes in a public space is predominantly viewed as unproblematic (Hammersley and Atkinson 2019); however, much of the literature discussing the ethics of digital ethnography debate the lines between the public and the private domain (Goralska 2020). This categorisation was straightforward for Zoom meetings at DN, which I believed would be understood clearly to be a private space, as Zoom requires login details to be sent to each attendee. Within these private meetings, verbal consent was sought for my presence as a researcher, with the aim to reduce potential harm by collecting data overtly. It might be assumed that remote Zoom meetings do not provide the opportunity for 'lurking'. However, Zoom does not always allow for all those in attendance to be on the main screen, and, if using a mobile device, it may be difficult to see the windows of the other participants (Lobe et al. 2020). Thus, if someone does not speak, their window is often put on a secondary page and their presence could be forgotten. If the researcher interacts, they contribute to the construction of the space and may interrupt flow; however, if they do not, they run the risk of unintentional exploitation (Thompson et al. 2021). Murthy (2008) proposes that in order to avoid lurking, the researcher must disclose their presence, inform participants about the research, and consistently and overtly interact with participants. I believe that the opportunity to 'check in' and purposefully engaging in the conversation has addressed the ethical concerns of consent and visibility when conducting remote participant observation.

Implications of Observation Over Remote Spaces

Access: Limitations

In-person field research can sometimes require the permission of a gatekeeper to access a participant group. However, when moving to remote observation, access to participants is also limited by the participant's access to the remote spaces. When using online methods, access to digital resources is well recognised. Participation requires the ownership of a computer or mobile device and internet access, which automatically excludes a proportion of the population (Lijadi and Schalkwyk 2015, Sy et al 2020, Watson and Lupton 2022). Even when participants have access to these resources, conversations can be interrupted by frozen screens or a dip in audio (Deakin and Wakefield 2014). Remote observation at DN involved a group that existed outside the research environment, therefore in this case I could do little to limit these concerns. Most important, the data collected must be considered in relation to who can access this online space. Participants were less likely to be street homeless but residing in stable accommodations with some type of monetary support. Consequently, the findings of this study cannot be applied to the experiences of all those who use substances. Furthermore, when writing field notes, dips in audio or a frozen screen were noted alongside responses to this. On one occasion during my fieldwork, a member of the group at DN unexpectedly disappeared from the screen and did not log back into the meeting. The members' responses and subsequent actions to the sudden disappearance were as important to note as (what we found out later to be) a drained battery which caused a premature departure.

As well as access to digital resources, participation in online research requires basic computer literacy and confidence in using the equipment and programmes. In their review of conducting virtual qualitative research on student homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic, Roberts et al. (2021) found that digital literacy and access varied greatly among participants. Thus, care was taken to prevent this barrier to participation. The COVID-19 pandemic shifted many people's communication online, with participants and researchers gaining confidence in using videoconferencing software (Dodds and Hess 2020, Watson and Lupton 2022). Watson and Lupton (2022) found that those who agreed to participate in their study of a video-call ethnography required little technical support. However, they noted that this does not mean that others were not put off from participating due to unfamiliarity or lack of confidence. At DN, technical support was offered to those who wished to join the online groups, including how to install and use Zoom. However, some members of the service still did not wish to engage online. Initially, willingness to engage online was difficult to assess due to Zoom being the only mode of delivery. However, as the service opened up and I met members face-to-face, not only was I able to observe and interact with those who did not engage via Zoom, but I was able to explore some of the barriers that prevented remote engagement.

Critical barriers to online access that arose during my study were the difficulty in predicting who would be in attendance before logging onto the meeting, and suspicions regarding the confidentiality and security of the data. When DN began to offer outdoor face-to-face meet-ups, I met for the first-time people who had been members of DN prior to the pandemic. When I asked why they did not attend the online groups, they mentioned lack of confidence and (in)ability in using computer software; however, other additional reasons were also given. One woman revealed that she had attended one group, but was put off, as the rest of those in attendance were men. In this group, she felt that her voice was overshadowed by others and found it difficult to engage in the 'banter'. Not knowing who else would be present became a barrier to further engagement in the online groups, and she felt more comfortable attending face-to-face meet-ups where she could see who was arriving before committing to attend. Another reason was that not everyone wished to communicate online, due to concerns about software security and who may be able to hear what was said. Therefore, face-to-face meet-ups were the only comfortable option for them. My role as a researcher was not to provide technical support and advice, but to acknowledge the implications that the move to online groups had for other potential members of DN, and the consequences for the data collected.

Access: Opportunities

In spite of the limitations outlined above, online groups have provided opportunities for attendance and inclusion. Digital methods have been proven to be more accessible to those with reduced mobility (Jenner and Myers 2019, Sy et al. 2020), living faraway and 'vulnerable' populations (Jenner and Myers 2019), and are shown to save time, money and a reduced carbon footprint due to an absence of travel (Jenner and Myers 2019, Rahman et al. 2021). Although Rahman et al. (2021) identified time and cost savings for themselves as researchers, this too

can be considered in relation to participants or attendees of remote groups as opposed to face-to-face meetings.

The geographical location of services within the city is important, as resources spent on travel may pose a barrier. When meeting face-to-face with a group at DM, one of the members required a two-hours train and bus journey. This person was not in a formal occupation and had a free bus pass, therefore could afford the time and money spent. However, this is not a viable option for everybody and the accessibility of travelling to treatment facilities presents a large barrier to both those living in the city and rural areas (Pullen and Oser 2014, Thomas et al. 2020). Thus, online meetings allow for greater access to support as time and costs are saved on travel (Eaves et al. 2022). This flexibility in accessing groups at DN allowed for movement and enabled members to access support when on holiday or during hospital stays (as long as the confidentiality agreements of the group were upheld, such as wearing headphones). In this instance, it could be argued that there was a lower barrier of entry as one's physical place became unimportant and, in theory, gaining access to the support group only required turning on a phone. Moreover, an effect of remote meetings, and the ability to access services and work from home, may have benefited the city environment by reducing travel and consequently a pollution reduction — also, lockdown brought reports of increasing nature into the cities. However, without physical workspaces being accessed, local businesses that rely on the 9am-5pm workforce footfall are vulnerable. Furthermore, humans are social beings who require physical social interaction, therefore although there may be short-term benefits to an online contact, we must be cautious of how sustainable this may be. Although the efficiency of remote support and decentralising access to substance use support services is beyond the scope of this study, the decentralisation of health equity has been debated (Abimbola et al. 2019).

Flexible access may mean that Zoom, and most videoconferencing software, can be used to create a less stressful environment. Dodd and Hess's (2020) study exploring youth alcohol consumption and family communication revealed that participants felt more relaxed in online group interviews, as they expressed feeling safe in their environment and supported by those around them. The researchers noted that some shy participants created a safety barrier by hiding out of view of the camera. Similarly, those who attended the group meetings at DN were able to come to a meeting and not 'reveal' themselves as they could keep their camera off. The ability to keep the camera off, or choose a virtual background, afforded those in attendance more privacy (Roberts et al. 2021). This ability to expose yourself slowly to the environment was meaningful and a sign of progression at DN. One member proudly told me that when they first accessed the support group, they attended with their camera off and their microphone muted. This was in stark contrast to subsequent meetings where they occasionally helped co-facilitate groups with a staff member. This gentle exposure allowed members to attend without revealing themselves, which allowed time for confidence and familiarity to grow. When the COVID-19 pandemic forced Howlett's (2022) study to continue online, there was a lesser degree of formality, and the conversations were more relaxed. Howlett (2022) speculates that with no one to overhear their conversations and donning less formal clothing, the participants became more relaxed and comfortable, and shared in more detail about their lives.

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Space: Limitations

How the field site is constructed and defined is important in understanding the phenomenon that is being studied. Research participants live both on and offline, therefore, the idea of space needs to be considered and analysed with consideration to what kind of data is gathered online (Thompson et al. 2021). We cannot assume to understand someone's offline life by what we observe remotely. Therefore, Thompson et al. (2021) posit that one of the main ethical considerations within digital research is critical reflexivity on the data collected.

Although the research space is brought online, participants still access this remotely from their own worlds and it cannot be considered a neutral environment. Ethical considerations concerning the privacy and confidentiality of the space are particularly important to consider in group meetings. Marhefka et al. (2020: 1985) identified early on in their implementation of videoconferencing software that their recommendation of a 'private space' needed to be defined. They set out clear protocols: participants must attend from a room where they are alone and could not be heard; if this was not achievable, then others in the room must be introduced and headphones worn so that others could not overhear sensitive information. Similarly, DN set out an agreement with those who attended the group to ensure that no one else could oversee or overhear the meeting. However, these protocols and agreements were made based on trust. In any online study, participants must be made aware of the limits to confidentiality, which cannot always be guaranteed as it is dependent on the compliance of group members.

As well as ensuring a private space, it needs to be considered whether remote research is an intrusion on a participant's personal space (Roberts et al. 2021). Participants will likely be in their own homes, with the potential that other members of the group could see a participant's surroundings. Lobe et al. (2020) pose that although for some group members this may not be an issue, for others, the option of a filtered background or attending without an active camera should be given. Whilst Roberts et al. (2021) and Lobe et al. (2020) propose that remote meetings may provide more privacy and physical safety for vulnerable groups, this did not always seem to be the case in my fieldwork. Although remote groups allowed increased protection against the spread of COVID-19, we must recognise that a person's home is not always a safe place (Bradbury-Jones and Isham 2020, Gurney 2020).

The social restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated vulnerability and risk of harm for those affected by domestic abuse, and reduced access to support (Bradbury-Jones and Isham, 2020, Usher et al. 2020). Refuge, one of the UK's leading domestic abuse organisations, reported a 61% increase in calls and contacts between April 2020 and February 2021 (Refuge 2021). On one occasion during a DN meeting, shouting could be heard coming from someone's screen causing that person to log off. This left the rest of those in attendance concerned about that person's safety. The facilitators reassured the group that they would check in on them, but due to confidentiality no more information was shared. This not only posed a concern for the person who logged off, but also presented a possible risk to the well-being of those who witnessed the situation. Furthermore, this overspill from the private domain to this remote space had to be managed by the individual later when they returned to

meetings. As the group was facilitated by DN, it was important that the staff members followed up on the situation and offered support to anyone witnessing this, if needed. However, this emphasises how vulnerability and safety in the home must be assessed in the ethical considerations when facilitating a remote group, and we must consider whether the construction of a 'safe space' is achievable when one cannot account for the physical place that someone is in.

When engaging in remote ethnography, researchers must acknowledge the reality of 'being here' whilst being aware of the dramatically different experience of 'being there' (Horton 2021: 99). Horton reflected on her remote ethnography and examined the difference between her experience and her participants, who were Latin American women living in the USA, who were doing essential work during the outbreak of COVID-19. These women experienced the loss of their job without state support and renegotiated their living circumstances in order to survive their increasing debt. All the while, Horton sat in the comfort of her own home remotely working in a secure job. Horton (2021: 105) argues that reflection allowed her to resist the illusion that she was immersed in the participant's worlds and brought to light the 'discomfort of disjunctive lived realities'. The remote or virtual field is not a new concept. In the past, researchers' field sites have been inaccessible due to war or natural disasters, and new ways were sought through media in order to continue their study. Postill (2017) argues that it is imperative to expand upon ways of 'being there' through triangulation, by way of gathering a rich variety of primary and secondary resources. Thus, remote observation helps researchers to observe things from a different perspective and understanding 'being there' from 'being here' is becoming more fundamental to everyday situations (Postill 2017).

Space: Opportunities

While there are limitations, like those addressed above, the use of reflection and ethical re-negotiation allow for opportunities within remote observation. The COVID-19 pandemic created a social event whose impact was experienced by everyone. Watson and Lupton (2022) found that this shared experience of suddenly being at home helped to develop a sense of rapport, informality and shared empathy, which may not have occurred if meeting face-to-face. Furthermore, it is argued that remote research reduces the power asymmetry between the researcher and participant, as participants become in control of the researcher's access to the online field site by deciding whether to answer a call and whether their camera is on (Howlett 2022). Participants are likewise invited into the researcher's life, with the ability to view their environment in return (Howlett 2022). Although Tremblay et al. (2021) drew concerns over the limited context that virtual modes provide, as researchers are restricted by what they see on the screen, I found that observing a participant in their own environment helped provide a bigger picture of who they were. During my fieldwork I was introduced to pets, shown meaningful personal items, and exposed to a greater degree of the environment in which the participants lived than if located at DN's premises. Although superficially insignificant, these glimpses into the participant's lives often facilitated in-depth discussion; and at a time when the government

lockdown severed many other social connections, these personal items (and pets) became a large part of their social world and therefore important to acknowledge and understand. Furthermore, Beaulieu (2010) argued the importance of 'co-presence' within ethnographic fieldwork, which decentralises the importance of space, as a shared physical location does not always provide a shared understanding within interactions. Therefore, mediated interactions, be that over a telephone or videoconferencing, should not be viewed as a barrier to interaction but viewed as a feature of our social world which can be assessed for co-presence through analysis of interactional routines and practices (Beaulieu 2010).

Currently, there are few research studies that explore remote participant observation. Rahman et al. (2021) critically reflected on their use of remote observation by way of attending remote conferences and networking events that occurred over webcast software. The researchers critiqued that it was hard to observe all attendees at an event due to large numbers, and also that there was limited inter-individual interaction. This suggests that interview recruitment may present a challenge at remote events due to fewer opportunities to interact (Maxwell 2009). In agreement with Maxwell (2009), I found that recruitment for further creative methods conversations was more successful with those I met face-to-face, rather than at remote observation, potentially due to fewer opportunities for personal interactions. However, Rahman et al. (2021) pointed out how interactions became easier as time went on and as those in attendance got used to the 'space', showing the need for persistence at remote events.

A further study that employed participant observation via remote groups was conducted by Eaves et al. (2022), who looked at how the rapid assessment of policy change during COVID-19 affected people with an opioid use disorder in the USA. Their essay describes the challenges faced when conducting rapid online ethnography. Some elements of their ethnography were effective; however, others did not accumulate the necessary depth of data. The researchers gathered an in-depth evaluation of policy change from the provider's perspective via online conferences and webinars, which saved time and did not require the use of travel. Conversely, the study was unable to provide a complete picture of client perspectives, as those in recovery were protected by privacy regulations. Therefore, the researchers were restricted in their contact to those who continued to attend in-person clinics and were not affected by the policy changes. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of who you are able to reach and engage with when conducting remote ethnography, and the implications this has on the scope of the research.

The ability to observe participants is not only dependent on the number of people in attendance but also on where participants are sitting in relation to the camera (Dodds et al. 2021) as facial expressions become hard to see and subtle, non-verbal cues may be lost (Deakin and Wakefield 2013, Dodds et al. 2021, Eaves et al. 2022, Lobe 2020). Despite this, Rahman et al. (2021) noted that interactions and reflections were easier to record over videoconferencing software. From their research, Rahman et al. (2021) concluded that the quality of the online observations was comparable to that of face-to-face; however, the types of data are different: body language was more difficult to observe remotely, but people engaged more in the seminars

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online. As with Rahman et al. (2021), I found that documenting field notes was easier when observing the online groups, as being less visible to the participants allowed me to make some notes in 'real time'. Furthermore, although subtle non-verbal cues were inevitably missed in my observations, I noted that some participants (as well as my own) facial expressions and gestures appeared slightly exaggerated. Examples of this were common during difficult topics of conversation; obvious nodding of the head would be combined with a furrowed brow to show concern, and many of the women emulated a hug by putting their arms out in front of them in a circle. These exaggerated expressions and gestures appeared to arise to ensure that these acts of support were felt. As Zoom does not allow for multiple people to speak at a time there was a conscious effort not to interrupt other people's audio.

Conclusion

The move from in-person to online ethnography is not a simple transition from a physical place to remote, online space. Early on in this research, it became apparent that the way in which videoconferencing software worked meant that there needed to be a new approach to the notion of ongoing consent and visibility in order to avoid collecting data covertly. It was not the aim of this article to offer a prescriptive account of the ethical principles necessary for conducting remote ethnography, but by drawing on Convery and Cox's (2012) 'negotiated ethics', this discussion has demonstrated how reflecting on current ethical practices is essential when moving online, and researchers should not assume that face-to-face ethical principles are sufficient.

The move online was essential in understanding the experiences of accessing remote substance use services during the COVID-19 lockdown; however, a critical view was necessary to assess the unique challenges that remote ethnography brings. Remote meetings created access when social restrictions were in place, enhanced access to support from varying geographical locations and allowed for gradual exposure to the service. Barriers to access to technology should be mitigated when possible. However, at times this was out of the control of the study, meaning that the depth of the data gathered needed to be considered alongside limitations of access, and triangulation with other resources and data sets was essential.

The assumption that an online space may be 'neutral' erases the physical space that the participants may be situated in. However, I found that people's private lives often spilt over into the remote space. This may be positive as personal items and homes could be shared to create a sense of familiarity and bonding. Conversely, being in one's own space meant that people needed to manage situations that occurred beyond their control, and set protocols needed to be agreed to in order to maintain confidentiality. By weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of remote ethnography, this article aimed to highlight the opportunities that remote ethnography can bring whilst mitigating potential ethical concerns through the use of reflection.

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Digital and Social Inequalities and the Post-Coronial University: A Greek Case[1]

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Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data from research carried out at a large Greek University the article reflects on issues of digital and social inequalities reproduced in higher education during the pandemic emergency online learning. Findings show that both performance and choices of candidates seeking admission to Greek universities are influenced by their social and parental background. Disadvantaged students tend to access less prestigious departments with lower prospects for employment and career advancement after graduation. The study indicates how the online learning experience highlighted pre-existing digital inequalities among students in terms of access and use of new technology, available digital tools, skills and appropriate space. Findings show a correlation between digital resources and skills with students' social background (gender, father's education and occupation) suggesting that social class and family educational capital still affect students' educational progress, hindering equitable learning and participation among them. Students' reflections on the future education system reveal that they prefer in class-teaching to online education and point out the risks of pandemic pedagogies in disrupting embodied and communal aspects of academic life in the physical environment of the campus-based university. However, most students advocate for greater digitalization of higher education and seem more inclined to adopt a blended post-coronial educational approach as an effective response to the needs of underprivileged students facing particular financial barriers and/or educational challenges.
Keywords: Pandemic crisis, emergency online learning, digital inequality, social inequalities, higher education.

Introduction

During the pandemic crisis, the social distancing measures that aimed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 affected all areas of social life, including higher education. Universities all over the world were forced to adapt to pandemic policies and students were urged to adapt to an emergency remote education model, marked by the extensive use of technologies and edu-platforms. In higher education, as in other institutions, social relations among individuals are marked by imbalance of power, status hierarchies and 'distinctions (and specific inequalities in means)' (Pardo 1996, quoted in Pardo and Prato 2021:8), which results in 'restrictions (cultural, economic and political) on their actions and access to resources' (Pardo and Prato 2021: 8). Pandemic pedagogies have shed light on and exacerbated digital inequalities that were less visible before, revealing that their roots are deeply entrenched in the systems of power and that the digital divide often overlaps and interlinks with wider forms of social inequality and dominance (Zheng and Walsham 2021). The experience of emergency online learning in higher education was seen as an 'important moment to support, regulate and design an inclusive digital future for us all', as part 'of a society that is more socially just' (Williamson et al. 2020: 111).

In times of rapid change, the exercise of criticism is considered more than essential. Students' experience of online learning can be a catalyst for re-imagining the future of higher education and may give rise to novel imaginaries including utopian hopes and dystopian fears (Eringfeld 2021). That said, examining students' perceptions of emergency online learning experience is of high importance in the discussion on social and digital inequalities and the role of universities in social mobility.

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Using both qualitative and quantitative data from research conducted during the spring of 2021 at the University of Crete (UoC), the article attempts to address issues of social and digital inequality and the role of higher education in social mobility in the context of the pandemic. The paper begins with an overview of the debate on social and digital inequalities focused on the experience of emergency online learning. The next section refers to the method of the research while the four following sections present the main findings: (1) social inequality and access to higher education, especially to the more prestigious university departments; (2) digital inequalities among students and their correlation with the parental educational and social background, as well as the department of study and students' gender; (3) students' evaluation of the two teaching systems; and (4) students' perspectives on a post-COVID University which include both their vision of a blended education system responsive to their changing needs and their dystopian fears for the disruption of the social and communal aspects of the 'real' university. The article ends with a reflexive discussion on the further digitalisation of education examining the significant role of the public post-coronial university either in enhancing inclusiveness and social mobility or in reproducing inequalities (Pardo and Prato 2021: 5).

On Pandemic Pedagogies and Social and Digital Inequality in Higher Education

In recent years a great deal of discussion has been held on digital equality in higher education and the complex relationship between technology and society. Furthermore, the implementation of emergency online learning during the pandemic has highlighted the issue of digital divide among students of public universities. Until the end of 20th century, the digital divide used to refer to a distinction between those who had access to digital technology (particularly the Internet) and those excluded from it. The inability of having access to information and knowledge and therefore to education through digital tools was perceived as a type of social exclusion, which accelerated or even reproduced pre-existing social inequalities. Those excluded from technology had lower access opportunities for education, work, welfare state services, political participation, social networking and other resources. This approach considered Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) neutral goods, which could be converted into other valuable goods, life outcomes and chances. Inclusionary educational systems could enhance access to communication technology and the Internet, which could lead to a greater sense of social inclusion, participation (Halford and Savage 2010).

However, over the last two decades, the discussion on the digital divide has shifted beyond the aforementioned framework. Recent studies focus on the lack of skills and competence in using digital tools and on the social and cultural advantages derived from access to ICTs systems (García-Martín and García-Sánchez 2022) revealing that digital exclusion is a dynamic phenomenon associated with the intersection and entanglement between digital technology, structural stratifications and the ingrained tendency of 'othering' in societies (Zheng and Walsham 2021). The acquisition of digital skills is not conceived in solely individual terms but is connected to wider social inequalities associated with education, class, gender and race and in terms of the context of use (whether educational, institutional or political) that may support or inhibit 'meaningful social use' (Halford and Savage 2010: 940). In this sense, factors such as the

cultural capital of the proper use of technology in educational settings, the ability to navigate quality communication networks, the quality of access space (for example, personalised access), the positive attitude towards technology and familiarity with Edu-platforms seem to have a significant impact on the quality of activities in digital learning.

A discussion has been triggered by the rise of emergency online learning during the pandemic, which reveals the socio-digital inequalities of students in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown, the influences of socio-educational level of the family and the rural or urban context (Sosa Diaz 2021) and the deeply rooted inequalities that are preventing participation in digital learning at individual, institutional and system levels (Laufer et al. 2021). Taking into account that participatory citizenship in the digital era involves the right to equal access to higher education (Willems et al. 2019), scholars have highlighted the linkages between the digital divide and social inequality (Tewathia et al. 2020) and the multiple factors that influence the availability of digital technologies for sustainable and equitable education (Rodríguez-Abitia et al. 2020).

Recent studies on students' satisfaction during emergency online learning suggest strong correlations between participants' attitudes and their social backgrounds, with the most privileged expressing more satisfaction with the e-learning experience (Adnan and Anwar 2020, Fujita 2020). They also reveal digital inequality among students in terms of digital skills, available private space and access to technical equipment (Zaimakis and Papadaki 2022). In this vein, it has been argued that planning the transition to a distance learning environment should ensure the access of all students to a supportive learning environment without exclusions (Thompson and Copeland 2020).

In the pandemic era, the discussion of digital exclusion has brought to the fore the further digitalisation of higher education. Some scholars welcome this prospect as a means to improve the quality of education by incorporating innovative technological practices into learning activities and offering different forms of socialisation in post-COVID era pedagogies (Bao, 2020, Zawacki-Richter 2021, Rodríguez-Abitia et al. 2020). It has been argued that the 'forced' digital learning experience could gradually give way to a harmonious integration of both physical and digital tools and methods for the sake of a more active, flexible and inclusive post-COVID education (Rapanta et al. 2021).

Other scholars tend to be sceptical about the techno-euphoric claim that the development of a learning system based on education platforms and digital technologies can be viewed as a ready-made pill whose use is likely to become the norm in the future university system. Williamson et al. (2020: 108) support the need for serious caution regarding the expansion of educational technologies during the pandemic underlining that many Ed-tech businesses have in fact been seeking to finesse the model of distance education for years. In the same vein, the increasing 'platformisation' of the education system brings to the forefront new forms of marketisation and formalisation of the learning process, undermining the broader social mission of public education (Hillman et al. 2020). Other studies stress that digital education risks exacerbating digital, gender and race inequalities (Malisch et al. 2020, Murphy 2020) and underline the digital gap between developed and underdeveloped countries or between rich and

poor, with the latter suffering from a lack of educational opportunities (Bozkurt and Sharma 2020).

Beyond digital inequality, the role of higher education in facilitating social mobility and the inequalities of access to universities are also explored in this study. Despite the increase in higher education enrolment rates for all social groups across the developed West, socioeconomic differences are still an issue of contention in inclusive education policies, since the most prestigious higher education programmes continue to be dominated by students of privileged family backgrounds (Boliver 2017, Marginson 2016). According to Pardo and Prato (2021: 1), socioeconomic inequalities 'grow increasingly strong, complex and ramified, and in many cases' —including the field of education — 'implicit or disguised, it is topical to understand their impact on associated life'. This study aims to contribute to the aforementioned debates utilising the findings of research that will be presented in the following sections.

Methodology of Research

Taking into account that social and digital inequalities in times of crisis 'need to be understood on the ground and in depth' (Prato 2020: 4), this study addresses these issues through a survey that was conducted from 6 April to 4 June 2021 across the 16 departments (5 Schools) of the UoC. The university is situated in the cities of Rethymno, hosting the Schools of Philosophy, Education, and Social Sciences, and of Heraklion hosting the Schools of Sciences and Technology and of Medicine. In the research, 13.61% of the university's students (2,372 validly completed questionnaires, n=2,372), who had enrolled in at least one course over three academic semesters of distance education (17,430 students), participated. Based on such a participation rate, the validity of the sample results is determined at a confidence interval of 95% and an error level of 1.9%. The research draws upon an online (web-based) survey targeting both undergraduate and postgraduate students, who were invited to participate by completing a self-administered questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part included eight close-ended items regarding the students' profile (gender, age, department and year of study) and their parents' educational level, working status and occupation. The second part consisted of three close-ended questions on the place of residence during online learning, the frequency of attendance and the reasons for not attending (if that was the case). The third part of the survey included: a) six close-ended questions on the evaluation of the online learning experience and technological equipment, frequency of access to suitable technological facilities, electronic media availability, time and place for attending online learning, and the students' digital skills; b) two closed questions regarding the comparison of traditional classroom-based education with the emergency online learning and on the preference of future educational modes in the post-era (in-classroom education, blended educational systems and distance online learning; c) two open-ended questions (following the last two closed questions) by which students were invited to freely express their views on the comparison of the two systems and their future model preference. The same part hosted a 16-point Likert scale with statements on the experience of online learning (levels of stress, interaction with their counterparts and teachers, sense of

isolation, level of performance, etc.). Collecting and intergrading complementary quantitative and qualitative data referring to the same topic (Mason 2002) offers a more profound insight into the students' teaching research. The quantitative data provides a statistical description of the phenomenon, whereas qualitative data (including 1,379 written comments) allow a better understanding of the students' perception on the emergency online learning. Through the aforementioned combination, qualitative research material may clarify, interpret and supplement the quantitative body of data (McGuirk and O'Neill 2016) offering a 'reflective understanding of social knowledge through the voice of actors as they experience the conditions of their existence' (Spyridakis 2022: 3).

Quantitative data from the close-ended questions were analysed with SPSS statistics (with both descriptive and inductive statistical analysis) while the answers to the open-ended questions were thematically analysed, offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across the data (Braun and Clarke 2012). In the quantitative part chi square tests were also performed, while cross-tables allowed us to observe the relations between the socio-demographic characteristics of the students and their answers. For the purpose of the present article, we have chosen to present only those findings focusing on socio-digital divides and inequalities.

Social Inequality, Access and Internal Stratification of the University

In Greece, the access to higher education depends on the university entrance examinations organised by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. Access to more prestigious university departments offering programmes with strong potential career prospects presupposes high scores in the entrance exams, whereas other institutions, often in regional and island areas, accept students with lower performances. Although the UoC ranking is high compared to other universities nationally,[2] its geographical location, on an island far from the mainland, makes it less attractive than those located in the big cities of Athens and Thessaloniki. Low attractiveness of distantly located universities was even worse during the economic crisis due to the reduced household income which affected not only the candidates' preferences but also their study conditions. As a result, many of the students had to combine working with studying or had to leave their rented apartments and return to their parental home. During the pandemic, dystopic conditions intensified, as 67.8% of the UoC students surveyed reported that they returned to their place of origin to attend online courses.

Aside from the university's location, studies have shown that middle-class students tend to enter more prestigious university departments and fields of study than working-class students (Sianou-Kyrgiou 2008, Sianou-Kyrgiou and Tsiplakides 2011). Despite the significant increase of higher education participation, all social classes do not seem to participate equally. Access to higher education remains highly selective since families turn to educational markets for supportive preparatory lessons, which benefits candidates from privileged social groups. In this sense we need to investigate the relation between the expansion of tertiary education chances and the internal stratification of higher education in Greece. To that end, our research attempts to examine the possible interrelations between students' social background (parents' educational

[2] See https://en.uoc.gr/research-at-uni/rankings.html

level, profession and working status) and their department and city of study. Cross-examining the city of study with students' socio-demographic data is considered of high importance, given that Heraklion hosts the most prestigious departments (i.e., Medicine and Biology) and students with superior exam admission scores than Rethymno.

UoC/Departments	**Admission Scores**		
	2022	**2021**	**2020**
Medicine/Heraklion	18.150	18.231	17.525
Biology/Herakliom	16.768	17.124	15.900
Phycology/Rethymno	15.905	17.135	17.075
Chemistry/Heraklion	15.874	16.106	14.625
Computer Science/Heraklion	15.617	15. 603	15.075
Primary Education/Rethymno	12.675	13,402	12.850
Physics/Heraklion	12.160	14.397	11.075
Preschool Education/Rethymno	11.360	10.803	10.600
Economics/Rethymno	11.040	10.384	10.150
Mathematics/Heraklion	10.860	10.829	8.975
Applied Mathematics/Heraklion*	10.580	10.102	6.250
Sociology/Rethymno	10.110	11.093	12.375
Materials Science and Technology/Heraklion	9.645	4.175	9.391
Philosophy and Social Studies/Rethymno	9.135	8.168	8.400
History and Archaeology/Rethymno	9.125	10.528	8.750
Philology/Rethymno	9.118	8.696	8.525
Political Science/Rethymno	9.075	9.546	10.375

*Mathematics and Applied Mathematics belong to the same University department. However, they have different admission scores and curriculums.

Table 1. Tertiary admission scores in the Departments of the UoC (2020-2021).

Findings from cross-examining students' social background and both the department and city of study are of high interest, since the parental social profile for the students studying in Heraklion (where the highest in demand departments are located) was higher compared to the departments of Rethymno. In more detail, 66.8% of the fathers and 62.3% of the mothers of those attending university in Rethymno did not have access to higher education, while the corresponding percentages in Heraklion were lower (50.5% and 43.5%). Particularly evident, for example, is the higher parental educational level for the students of the department of Medicine (Heraklion) compared to those of other departments: 63.9% of the fathers and 68.6% of the mothers of those studying medicine hold a university degree or even a master/PhD. Correspondingly high percentages (over 50%) are observed in the departments of Biology, Computer Science and Chemistry, all of which are housed in Heraklion. On the contrary, in Rethymno, the more characteristic example comes from the department of Preschool Education. Here, only 23.5% of the students' fathers and the 23.9% of the students' mothers seem to have had access to higher education or hold a master/PHD degree. The departments of Economics and Sociology are also in relatively low positions in terms of parental educational level. Similar discrepancies can be noticed in both the parental profession and employment status. For example, only the 25.5% of the fathers and the 8.8% of the mothers of those studying in

Heraklion belong to the low (working class) social-professional category, while the corresponding percentages in Rethymno are much higher. The opposite can be observed among the parents who belong to the highest socio-professional categories.

Parents' Professional Status	**Father**			**Mother**		
	City of Study			**City of Study**		
	Heraklion	**Rethymno**	**Total**	**Heraklion**	**Rethymno**	**Total**
High Socio-professional Categories	25.3	13.6	19.1	35.0	24.0	29.5
Middle Socio-professional Categories	49.2	45.4	47.2	56.1	61.5	58.9
Low (working class) Socio-professional Categories	25.5	41.0	33.8	8.8	14.2	11.6

Table 2. Parents Professional Status and the Students' City of Study (%).

Similarly, in Heraklion, 67% of the students' fathers and 54.1% of the students' mothers are permanently employed, while the corresponding percentages in Rethymno are from 7 to 10 percent lower (60.8% and 44.4%). There are also differences between the departments of the same city. In Heraklion, the single-department School of Medicine stands out in most categories of parental social background, followed by other high in demand departments, such as Biology and Chemistry. In Rethymno, the students with the highest educational and socio-professional parental status study in Psychology, the department with the highest admission scores which, to a certain extent, are linked to its strong scientific profile and to the graduates' high expectations of carrier opportunities and employability. In summary, findings show that the access of students from disadvantaged families with limited educational capital and lower professional and employment status is directed towards departments of lower demand. In contrast, students from privileged families participate to a greater extent in the most prestigious departments. Thus, Greek education system appears to reproduce the existing social and economic inequalities, limiting the students' social mobility.

Digital Inequalities Among Students During Emergency Online Learning

While the previous section addressed the issues of inequality in educational stratification and the effects of parental social and cultural capital on students' educational attainment, this section focuses on digital inequalities among the students who participated in the pandemic emergency online learning, examining the availability and quality of digital resources along with the learning environment. In evaluating the available technological resources three out of ten students (30.2%) characterised their equipment as average or below average, while the answers to the open-ended questions highlighted examples of disadvantaged distance learning participation due to insufficient equipment: 'I was excluded from the learning process for

almost a year since I didn't have neither a camera nor a microphone, while the shared computer broke down as well' (Computer Science student).

Examining the available participation tools used by the students to attend tele-courses (n=2,100) it appears that a significant percentage (13%) used inappropriate technological means (mobile phone, tablet, family/shared computer, borrowed computer from friends/acquaintances), which hindered their participation in the learning process. Access to the appropriate equipment and software along with a stable internet connection are considered necessary conditions for distance education attendance, as their lack leads to digital gap expansion (Hayes and Jamrozik, 2001). Our research findings show that many students do not always have the required technological equipment (15.1%) or the appropriate software (28.5%) and 64.1% do not always have a stable internet connection. Students' comments in the open-ended questions also highlighted issues of digital exclusion, connectivity problems and techno-stress:

> 'My permanent residence is on an island, where the internet connection is not the best. This, along with the other three family members taking online courses at home makes attendance very difficult' (Economics student).

> 'There are many connectivity problems which result in my inability to attend lessons and sometimes exams. This, in turn, causes increased stress' (Psychology student).

Another prerequisite for efficient online learning is the suitability of the space available for lessons' attendance (Aristovnik et al. 2020, Aguilera-Hermida 2020). However, in our survey only one out of four students reported attending courses from their own space/room — 13.7% of the students shared a room with other family members; 10.5% used a common space within the house; 1.1% attended lessons from outside home, conditions all considered unsuitable for a qualitative education. Study findings suggest that emergency online learning revealed digital inequalities among students, hindering learning opportunities for some of them.

For a more profound examination of digital inequalities among students and the factors they are linked to, we cross-analysed the students' socio-demographics with their answers concerning their distance learning experience. The cross-tabulation revealed a statistically significant relation between the fathers' profession (x^2=23.773, df=2, p-value=0), their employment status (x^2=14.964, df=3, p-value=0.002) and the students' answers for the available digital equipment. This relation entails that students whose fathers were of a higher professional status were more likely to have their own private equipment, necessary for online attendance, compared to the rest of the students. Regarding the father's employment status, cross tabulations showed that the lowest percentages of students who used private equipment were found among those whose father during the survey was unemployed or worked occasionally/was suspended from work. In both cross-tabulation cases, we were able to observe an inverse relation: As the socio-professional status of the students' father declined, the deficit in appropriate digital resources increased. Accordingly, as his job stability increased, the deficit decreased.

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		Private Equipment (desktop, laptop)	Shared Equipment (desktop, laptop), mobile phone, tablet
Father's Profession=1,252	High Socio-professional Categories	96.3	3.7
	Medium Socio-professional Categories	92.2	7.8
	Low (working class) Socio-professional Categories	85.5	14.5
Father's Status of Employment n=1,984	Permanent Employment	90.6	9.4
	Contingent Employment/Work Suspension	84.2	15.8
	Unemployment	83.0	17.0

Table 3. Father's profession and employment status and availability of the appropriate equipment for digital attendance (%).

Apart from digital resources, available digital skills are considered of high importance for the reduction of digital inequalities (Dodel and Mesch 2018, Hargittai et al. 2019). Research findings showed that distance learning contributed positively to the further cultivation of students' digital skills, as the 38.9% of the students in a Likert scale question strongly agreed with the proposition. The vast majority of students in a self-assessment question (n=2,092) thought positively of their digital skills (58.7% sufficient/29.4% probably sufficient) while 12% stated that their digital skills were of average or even below average level.

The level of digital skills, as seen by their cross tabulation with students' socio-demographic data, appears again to be statistically significantly related to the father's profession (x2=6.977, df=2, p-value=0.031) and his level of education (x2=11.768, df=4, p-value=0.019). Students whose father belonged to a higher socio-professional category or was of a higher educational level seemed to assess their digital skills more positively.

		Sufficient Skills	Insufficient/ Moderate Skills
Father's Profession n=1,249	High Socio-professional Categories	94.2	5.8
	Medium Socio-professional Categories	89.3	10.7
	Low (working class) Socio-professional Categories	87.8	12.2
Father's Level of Education n=2,033	Illiterate /not completed compulsory education	82.1	17.9
	Compulsory-education	86.2	13.8
	Secondary-school	88.5	11.5
	Tertiary-education	88.8	11.2
	Master's Degree/Phd	95.0	5.0

Table 4. Father's profession and educational status and students' digital skills (%).

From our research, students' gender appeared to show a strong correlation with the following variables: quality/appropriateness of distance education attendance equipment, availability of stable internet connection, digital skills necessary for attending distance learning and space availability for students to attend their lessons. Female students in all the aforementioned variables scored less than the male participants, while the differences between the scores were statistically significant.

	Without Stable Internet Connection N=1989	**Without Private Space** N=2044	**Without Sufficient Digital Skills** N=2041	**Without Private Computer** N=2048
Male	10,2	17,8	6,5	7,6
Female	17,0	28,2	13,9	12,3

Table 5. Correlation between Digital Resources and Students' Genter (%).

Our research findings confirm earlier studies on digital inequalities within Greek society (Bhandari 2019, Georgopoulou 2011) and the reproduction of various gendered discriminations evident in family habitus.

Evaluating Online Learning Experience Versus In-class Education

In recent studies of students' experiences and evaluations of emergency online learning, a general satisfaction has been noted, while at the same time, some weaknesses and concerns have been highlighted. A number of studies have shown the effectiveness of online education at saving resources, time and travel costs (Fidalgo et al. 2020, Hussein et al. 2020). At the same time, researchers have highlighted socio-psychological barriers, such as the risk of distraction and the difficulties of maintaining attention during the online courses (Adnan and Anwar 2020, Hussein et al. 2020), feelings of isolation, frustration and technostress and the lack of socialisation, embodied communication and interaction in the virtual courses (Adnan and Anwar 2020).

In our research, in the evaluating question of the online-learning experience (n=2,091) from a five-point scale (very bad/bad/moderate/good/very good), the positive evaluations (good/very good) of the learning experience were more than twice as negative (44.7% versus 19%), despite the emergent nature of the application of online learning and the deficit of the required preparation of the system. In spite of this positive evaluation, when students were asked to compare the experience of the online learning with the traditional face-to-face education, they favoured the latter; 63,3% stated that traditional education was better or much better than distance education compared to 15.6% of those who stated the same for distant education (better or much better than traditional education), while 9% (mainly first-year students who had no further experience) stated that they had not formed an opinion. The cross tabulation of the comparison between traditional and distance education with the students' year

of study showed that the preference for distance education was much higher in higher years compared to the first years of study.

Examining these findings in combination with the students' comments in the open-ended questions we found that although students considered the traditional mode of education significant and to some extent irreplaceable, they at the same time asked for the integration of more digital learning practices. After the two systems were compared, the open-ended question revealed a wide range of attitudes towards online learning: from scepticism and a focus on the advantages of traditional education to moderate attitudes that praised traditional education's superiority while stressing the importance of flexibility to attend lessons online during emergencies, and finally to more technophilic approaches that delineated digital education as an inclusive method of learning that responds to their educational and financial requirements.

Students often defend traditional education by problematising online learning and the politics of social distancing that can undermine the quality of education as well as the communal and embodied aspects of campus-based education including social 'sparks' and 'stimuli' from informal social interaction (Prato 2020: 8).

> 'Education cannot be limited to an auditorium, or now even worse, a computer screen. Education is the university itself with all its qualities and spaces: discussions with fellow students in the library or in the university canteen, contact with the teachers in their offices or after class, the stimuli from others' discussions' (Philology student).

On the other hand, positive evaluations came mainly from older students who considered online learning practices an effective 'medicine' to deal with the main problems arising during both the economic and the pandemic crisis. On this basis, the emphasis was placed on the benefits for families with financial difficulties, on saving high rental costs, travel costs and time, and on inclusiveness for students with disabilities, and so on.

> Online learning opened new horizons in education since we can study without any accommodation and travel expenses. We also don't spend unnecessary time on travel (nor money on food while on campus) so we have more time to organise our studies and reading and also save money. Online learning offers studying opportunities for those who cannot afford moving away from home (Physics student).

Students' Considerations Towards Post-Coronial Higher Education

While many of the students expressed their preference towards a fully in-class learning mode, the majority did not seem to want a complete return to pre-pandemic educational practises. More specifically, research findings regarding the preferred post-coronial education model revealed that many students indicated a fully in-class education mode (34.4%), while the majority of participants (61.12%) regarded the blended educational approach combining both in-class and online learning as the most desirable mode (48.3% preferred a blended approach

focusing on in-class education while 12.9% preferred a blended approach on-online education). Yet, only 4,4% of students preferred a fully distance education.

A critical factor influencing students' preferences was the year of study. Thus, the average year of study of the participants who reported their preference for traditional education was 2.4, those who supported a blended system with a priority on classroom education 3.3 and those who preferred the same system but with a focus on distance learning 4.2. The qualitative data shed light on these divergent considerations. Students, mainly in the early years of their studies, tended to regard education as a communal experience of embodied learning and interaction within the campus physical environments, which facilitate the building of students' identity and their sense of community, solidarity and belonging. In this vein, some students viewed distance education as a dystopic condition that disrupts the traditional values and qualities of higher in-class education:

> 'Our physical space is in classrooms and laboratories, and not sitting in front of a screen for hours' (Chemistry student).

> 'Online education treats learning in terms of production and thus fails to cultivate the sense of solidarity and comradeship that should characterise a scientific community' (Physics student).

From the supporters of the blended approaches, the vast majority recognised the positive role of the physical in-class learning environment but at the same time emphasised the enhanced flexibility offered by technological tools available in virtual classes and the role they could play in a more equal and inclusive education. They preferred a blended system, prioritising convenience over quality, and sought further integration of digital education in standard teaching practices in terms of enhancing and facilitating education access.

Analysis of the rich comments of students who preferred the blended system indicates that they elaborated multiple scenarios for the implementation of innovative educational practices in the post-COVID university. Some of them reflected on a better future university based on a blended approach that would incorporate digital technology and innovation, increasing flexibility and openness in the learning process. The following imaginary is exemplary of this discourse:

> 'A more open university, a space that harmoniously combine tradition with technology. A space that for the purpose of learning and research will use all the modern resources offered by technology and the internet, but also a university where the course in the auditoriums will stop being the traditional lecture and finally, it will be constantly active, a living organisation not limited to 2,4,6 hours a week but accessible to everyone every day, every hour' (Physic student).

However, the vast majority of blended learning supporters focused more on practical arrangements that meet the divergent needs of students in the context of the financial and pandemic crises. For them the incorporation of the online education format could increase flexibility and improve access for many students who have trouble completing their studies for various reasons (for example, because they are working or have left their residence in the

university city to reduce rent and commuting costs). The blended education system was considered flexible and, potentially, an effective way to address educational inequalities. In this vein, students elaborated various scenarios for the implementation of blended systems in the post-coronial University. For example, they proposed traditional face-to-face classes in parallel with virtual teaching to better meet the expectations of students who may have geographical or economic constraints; partial use of online learning in some categories of courses (for example, theoretical); further incorporation of digital learning in everyday teaching practices (for example, more open sources, lectures from other universities through Edu-platforms, more online meetings); and specific online courses for students experiencing economic hardships:

> 'Since I work, I would prefer online learning in theoretical courses and face-to-face learning in seminars, practical training and tutorials' (Chemistry student).

> 'Distance education could play a catalytic role in teaching in theoretical schools. Its implementation would provide the possibility for students who are facing financial problems, due to the long-term economic crisis and now the devastating economic effects of the pandemic, to continue or start their academic journey, seamlessly from their place of residence, without burdening their family budget. However, distance education cannot replace live learning completely: these two methods combined have proven to be beneficial for thousands of students' (History and Archaeology student).

Further Discussion

Critical times offer opportunities for reflection and re-evaluation. Online digital education was implemented as a temporary educational solution for the university community which tried to respond to the risks of the virus spreading. The experience of emergency online learning has, however, given rise to reflections on new horizons of the possible for the post-COVID University and brought to the fore the critical issue of social and digital inequality in higher education in western countries (Boliver 2017, Stich and Freie 2015).

According to our research findings, the increasing access to Greek Universities by working-class students is geared towards lower status and less-resourced institutions, which leads to the increase of class stratification and social hierarchy in higher education. It has been found that both performance and choice of candidates seeking admission to Greek universities are influenced by their social and parental background, and those from less privileged backgrounds are less likely to be admitted to the most prestigious departments. They have to deal with the increased costs of exam-preparation private tutoring, unaffordable for low-income families, especially in times of successive crises (financial crisis, pandemic, war in Ukraine). The financial and cultural capital of students' parents plays an influential role in candidates' studying choices. This is because private supplementary tutoring is crucial in achieving entry to prestigious educational programmes in higher education. These programmes offer better academic and career prospects for their graduates. The inability of the Greek education system to implement an effective supporting teaching mechanism for the students who need it — which would act compensatively in the market rational of private tutoring schools — reveals the

perennial problems of secondary education. Moreover, the problems of the non-privileged families are exacerbated by the difficulty of getting education school graduates employed by the public primary and secondary schools due to the cuts in public expenditures and thus the low number of teacher appointments. Similar problems face graduates of social sciences who struggle to join the labour market, usually in working environments beyond the subject of their studies in low-paid and precarious employment positions in times of crises (Zaimakis and Papadaki 2022).

Moreover, the online learning experience revealed existing digital inequalities among students. Our research findings are in line with Prato's view (2020: 5) that 'the stay-at-home policy is not the same for everybody; its effects on people's mental and physical wellbeing vary greatly' depending on a variety of factors including, in our case, their availability of access to a PC and unlimited internet, the appropriate space to attend e-courses, and the necessary digital tools and skills. The results of the study reveal a significant correlation between digital resources and skills and the students' socioeconomic background (gender, father's education, occupation), indicating that social class and privilege affect the educational progression of students, hindering equal participation in the educational process. Research findings highlight the reproduction of pre-existing educational inequalities, as disadvantaged and digitally excluded populations face significantly more difficulties during the learning process than those with better economic conditions and broadband internet access (Prata-Linhares et al. 2020).

Digital inequality has its roots in structural inequality and the deep-seated power relations in society. Education policy makers should address the unequal access of candidates from different socioeconomic strata to prestigious university programmes and the difficulties that families with a low social background face in supporting their children with out-of-school tutoring. Further studies need to focus on structural constraints and how they affect students' opportunities while social and educational policies need to minimise social and digital exclusion within a complex and intersectional system of power (Zheng and Walsham, 2021), and fight inequalities not only within the education system but across society as a whole.

Specifically with respect to the Greek educational system, policymakers need to focus on combating social and digital inequalities by developing a remedial learning system within public secondary schooling for most underprivileged students; developing wellness housing and food programmes for students from lower social strata; and developing a national strategy to ensure all students at public universities have access to digital technology.

Taking into consideration the voices of the students — sparking hope and fear for the post-COVID University — we observed a twofold concern. Many asserted a greater digitalisation of higher education, including a blended learning system that could adapt to their changing needs. At the same time, others underlined the risks of pandemic pedagogies and the further digitalisation of higher education (disembodiment, social isolation, loss of community and belonging, etc.). Qualitative findings revealed the concerns of those who feel that they struggle from a disadvantaged position in the traditional education system. This should be examined within the wider context of a society that has experienced successive crises (economic, austerity, pandemic). Many working-class students have been struggling to

complete their studies in an environment of economic hardship because consecutive crises have exacerbated the problems of small and medium social strata, including student housing costs and living away from home.

Education policies for the future university should take into account the hopes and fears of students. Increasing digital technology in higher education may provide new opportunities for inclusive education policies and innovative forms of learning. Nonetheless, we may promote critical engagement with questions regarding the commercial and instrumentalist use of technology that transforms universities into interactive digital platforms, promoting the process of 'learnification' away from on-campus culture and experience. Prato reminds us that 'humans are social beings and their sociality includes in-person physical encounters; it is made of symbolic interactions and sensory experiences, which extend to the natural world' (Prato 2020: 9). The university is a cornerstone institution for facilitating social values, mobility and justice and, thus, we need to go beyond the fashionable but nonetheless problematic idea that education is about learning and that teaching should be redefined so as to facilitate and create learning opportunities and 'deliver learning experiences' in the political economy of market-based educational policies (Biesta 2015).

The critical point here is how to enhance the further incorporation of digital technology into everyday educational practices without disrupting the social and communal aspects of campus-based education, including embodied communication, research and learning in physical environments. This fear is evident in a time when liberal reforms in public education have been reinforced by Ed-Tech industry policies of education that try to turn the educational space into a market (Ball and Grimaldi 2022). The pandemic has generalised the previously exceptional use of cutting-edge technologies in education and 'virtual classrooms are now considered as viable alternatives to face education' engendering the collapse of the boundaries between the public and the private (Türe and Diken 2020: 96). In a context of widespread social inequality and insecurity, the 'state of emergency' promoted teleworking and virtual interactions as a 'new normal' (Spyridakis 2020, Pardo 2020). Future studies may investigate the increasing significance of digital equity in education and examine to what extent a possible further digitalisation of the university would widen access, promote inclusiveness and enhance the university's role in promoting social mobility, or on the contrary, would exacerbate already existing social and digital inequality and hierarchy.

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Dissecting an Indian Immigrant's Holistic Experience of Postpartum Depression: A Medical Anthropology Perspective[1]

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Immigrating to another country is an arduous journey rife with many stressors. The obstacles only seem to grow larger once the individual reaches their new home. Feelings of despair and regret from leaving their treasured homeland, family, and culture may overwhelm the individual, in addition to having to adjust to a distinct environment. All of these hurdles can induce physical, mental, emotional, and social burdens, which can increase the likelihood of mental illnesses. Postpartum depression, along with other mental disorders, is shaped by numerous biological, and arguably more impactful, social factors such as race, income, and culture. Through a meticulous holistic analysis of an Indian immigrant's illness narrative, we find that immigration is an experience that can strain an individual in multiple ways. With a medical anthropology focus, this ethnographic research raises concerns, and encourages improvement, regarding the current state of mental health identification and treatment.
Keywords: Illness narrative, local biology, postpartum depression, biological reductionism.

Theoretical Background

> 'In my hometown of Bombay, I was very happy. I had a supportive family and friend group. After I got married, my husband moved to the United States for his job. I was encouraged to settle in the West because of its advancement, so I joined him […] The reality was distinct from the idealized picture foreigners have. Adjusting to the American life was a struggle.' ― Interviewee

Local biology, or how the environment can shape an illness, is of enormous relevance to immigrants. The entire process of leaving one's way of life in one's native country to settle in an environment riddled with unknowns can induce a plethora of stressors and corresponding illnesses. Not only is one leaving one's family and friends behind, but one faces the challenge of acculturating to new traditions which are distinct from one's homeland's beliefs.

The concept of local biology is relevant to postpartum depression (PPD), which is influenced by an array of local biological, economic, and social factors. This paper will focus on the illness narrative of an Indian mother currently in her 40s, who immigrated to San Francisco from Bombay in the early 2000s and experienced PPD similarly after each of her two childbirths. It is essential to clarify that, given the deeply personalized nature of illnesses, her experience cannot be generalized to all immigrants. Nevertheless, her illness narrative shares insights into the multifaceted nature of individual health. Moving to a new country can contribute to an immigrant's experience of PPD because acculturation is a journey fraught with

[1] Thank you so much to medical anthropologist Professor Katherine Mason and Graduate Student Sertac Sen from Brown University for advising me in this ethnographic research. Their constructive criticism and encouragement, along with their thought-provoking comments and suggestions, have been invaluable. Thank you to the editors of *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography* for guiding me throughout the peer-review process and providing insightful feedback. Most importantly, thank you to the interviewee who was selfless and gracious enough to share her personal story with me, and allow me to share my findings to guide others enduring similar struggles.

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social stressors; strained familial relationships induce psychological burdens; and the treatment of mental disorders is rife with structural deficiencies.

Social Stressors from Acculturation

> 'Bombay is a crowded city with a constant hustle and bustle. You are surrounded by friends and family, and people are always moving in and out of your home. Living in San Francisco was a lot different as people were more private […] Even after we moved to the suburbs, it was challenging to connect with neighbors as the homes were large and spaced out. In Bombay, you could talk to your friends who were steps away through the windows.' ― Interviewee

Acculturation, or the process of adjusting to a new environment and culture, can induce stressors that can contribute to mental illness. In the abovementioned extract from an ethnographic interview I had with her, the mother alludes to some of the social obstacles she faced when adjusting to life in the United States. She identifies the stark contrast between life in India and in America. While she considers the former as an atmosphere conducive to social interactions, the latter is considerably quieter and more reclusive. She believes that this is because Indian culture places a much greater emphasis on the community (collectivism) while America is largely focused on the person (individualism). Humans are social animals who crave interactions with other beings and may fall ill with lack of interactions, especially when they are accustomed to a previously social lifestyle.

This sentiment has been echoed by anthropologist Niccolo Caldararo. His research into the effects of social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic determined that psychological conditions often arose from the isolation spurred by a lack of vibrant communities. Moreover, Caldararo found that quarantining seemed to 'deprive human society of the "hum of the hive"' (Caldararo 2020: 19).[2] Consequently, it is reasonable to find that my interviewee experienced social stressors from being unable to mimic the social vibrance of a place like Bombay while residing in the Bay Area. The lack of a sense of community caused by the larger barrier in meeting neighbors caused her to feel isolated and long for the energy of her hometown.

Mina Qobadi, an epidemiologist investigating PPD, concluded, 'Similar to other studies, we found a dose–response relationship between stressful life events and the prevalence of PPD. Other studies have also found that the more stressful life events that occur in the perinatal period, the more likely mothers will experience PPD' (Qobadi et al. 2016: 168).[3] According to Qobadi's research, my interviewee might have had a greater likelihood of developing PPD because she was burdened with the social stress of struggling to find a social group she felt connected to. Bonding with friends is essential to one's well-being and allows for relaxation or leisure time outside of work and family. Being part of a close community

[2] Caldararo, a professor at San Francisco State University, focuses on medical anthropological research.
[3] Qobadi and her team from the Mississippi State Department of Health conducted an experiment on the potential causes of PPD.

enables us to share our struggles, learn from each other's experiences and support one another during challenging times. Hence, my interviewee's difficulty in acclimating to the individualistic American culture may have added additional social stress.

Local biology likely had a considerable effect on my interviewee's experience of PPD. The unique environment and cultural views in America did not seem to foster the tight-knit community that she experienced in India. It is important to note that throughout her time in America, she did sometimes feel alone, but never experienced depression. However, after she delivered her first baby (and two years later, the second baby), the social stress and isolation contributed to her PPD. Markedly, her struggle to acculturate to the individualistic American lifestyle made it difficult for her to raise children without the support of local friends and family.

Familial Relationships

> 'In my homeland, there would have been many friends and family members constantly visiting to check up on me and provide support […] I could only call my family on a monthly basis for minutes at a time, as international calls were expensive.' ― Interviewee

A few weeks after she had her first child, the postpartum depression began. Her feelings of isolation intensified and she suffered periods of anxiety and depression. In the interviews, she discusses how she felt more distant from her family members whom she was very close to before settling in the West. It was extremely challenging to raise a baby for the first time without a strong and accessible support system. She had lived with her parents and brother for two decades, and had been surrounded by other cousins, aunts and uncles, all of whom helped raise her since birth. Moving across the world inevitably strained these relationships because of the difficult communication. The weakened familial ties imposed psychological stressors on my interviewee which contributed to her PPD.

> 'Because we were foreigners from humble beginnings, my husband had to work grueling hours to make a living to support our growing family in a country with a higher standard of living compared to India. He worked full-time and traveled across the country during the weekdays, so he was only home for the weekend.' ― Interviewee

Throughout her time in America, my interviewee was not completely alone, as she had her husband with her. However, due to the demanding nature of his job, and his will to pave a better future for his family, he was absent most of the time. Hence, she was often alone at home, raising two babies single-handedly. She explains that this would not have been the case had she been in Bombay. In India, it is customary for the extended family and community to help a new mother with household tasks, so that she can rest and support the newborn. This again pertains to the first contention, as she did not have access to an intimate local community that could help her. She felt that she was not only growing apart from her parents but also her husband, due to the nature of his work.

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Virginia Schmied and her team from the Western Sydney University's School of Nursing found that postpartum depression is most common amongst migrants, 'particularly for women lacking family support, who have no employment, a precarious migration status and/or relationship conflict' (Schmied et al. 2017: 2).[4] Similarly, my interviewee faced all three of these circumstances: her only accessible family member was her husband who was justifiably devoting more time to his job to support the family, and she did not have time to work, as she needed to look after their two children. Connecting this to the first contention, having familial or community support in looking after the children might have enabled her to pursue a part-time job and thrive in a social and work environment. Consequently, the psychological stressors accumulated from strained spousal and other familial relationships could have increased her likelihood of developing PPD.

Structural Deficiencies in Mental Health Treatment

Social Stigma of Mental Illnesses

> 'In the weeks following my delivery, I experienced stronger bouts of depression which the doctors reassured were normal 'baby blues.' Even though the depression persisted for months after, I was in denial because of the social stigma of mental illness […] Mothers are always expected to be happy but this is just unrealistic given the hormonal changes and exhaustion that comes with raising a child.' ― Interviewee

While attitudes toward mental health have improved significantly in modern times, mental illness is not a topic freely discussed in the 2000s. There was little awareness about depression, so the uncertainties about the optimal treatment and what it was that she was feeling contributed to her delaying seeking help. Additionally, my interviewee shared how pursuing treatment was an extremely difficult first step to take as she was too worried about how others might negatively see her. Eventually, the depression worsened to a point where it was unbearable, so she began seeing a psychiatrist and taking medication after her two childbirths, which included similar experiences. All these points pertain to the social construction of reality which describes how society has standardized unrealistic expectations of mothers to always be content, which results in mothers feeling 'subpar' as they compare themselves to perfect beings with the consequence of harmful internalization.

Margaret Lock (2008) contends that disease is a subjective experience, with different cultures having varying attitudes toward a disease. Lock explains how Japanese women experienced *konenki*, the renewal of life corresponding with menopause, differently than Americans, although both conditions were similar. She shares a quote from a Japanese doctor which could explain the discrepancy: 'Why do Western women make such a fuss about hot

[4] Schmied's research group scrutinized trends in PPD among different demographic groups.

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flashes?'" (Lock, 2008: 13).[5] This cultural attitude points to a typical misconception, whereby Western women are more sensitive to suffering than Asian women. According to my interviewee, Indian culture, similar to Japanese culture, discourages medications and complaining about symptoms. She says that Asian cultures tend to have an attitude of 'Yes, you faced an obstacle. Now get over it. Move on'. While this belief can cultivate positive determination in some cases, it can also cause harm in some subjects such as mental illness. As indicated by the anecdote given by my interviewee, mental disorders are obstacles deeply rooted in the mind that cannot be dealt with solely through mental fortitude (which Indian culture advocates for). Indian culture's emphasis on dealing with problems naturally by 'toughening up' delayed my interviewee's seeking medication and the help of a psychiatrist, both of which were deemed 'unnatural' and harmful to the infant and mother.

The findings of Deepika Goyal, a nursing scientist from UCSF, and her colleagues strengthen this argument. They found that 'Indian women living in the United States are as likely to experience postpartum depressive symptomatology as white women […] up to 50% of women remain undiagnosed' (Goyal et al. 2006: 98).[6] Explaining how Indian women experience PPD similarly to white women, they debunk the myth that, due to their 'tougher' mentality, Asian countries do not suffer mental illnesses. My interviewee shares the Indian culture that adheres to traditional gender roles, according to which the woman's duty is to bear children and care for them successfully. Hence, she had reservations about pursuing treatment for depression because of cultural standards of maternal toughness and success that she thought she had to live up to. This is yet another example of a social construction of reality that pressures Indian women into bottling up their depression so that they can conform to misinformed societal expectations of being 'strong'. Due to cultural stigma, patients are often reluctant to seek professional help, explaining why half of women are undiagnosed with PPD.

Arthur Kleinman (1988) supports this notion in *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition*, arguing that most patients feel shame not because of their disease, but because of the negative societal perception which publicly discredits the individual.[7] My interviewee explained how she delayed seeking treatment for postpartum depression because of the social stigma of mental illness, which was prevalent in the 2000s. This is extremely harmful to the patient, as prolonging suffering can worsen their mental disorder and make depression unbearable. As with many instances, here, the phrase 'the sooner the better' is especially relevant to those wanting remedies to their suffering.

[5] Lock is a renowned academic in the medicine and anthropology departments at McGill University who focuses on the different cultural perceptions of health.

[6] Goyal received a Ph.D. in nursing education from UCSF and studies perinatal mental health.

[7] Kleinman is a Harvard psychiatrist and medical anthropologist who focuses on mental illness in Chinese culture.

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Oversimplification of Patients

> 'After I started taking medications and seeking professional counseling, I felt a lot better. But the improvement wasn't instantaneous. It took six weeks to test each medication that was recommended by different psychiatrists. This trial-and-error process was really tedious and had many side effects… It also took time for me to visit various doctors and see who I connected the best with.' ― Interviewee

Thus, my interviewee explains how she sought treatment for a while but did not get better until months later. The entire journey associated with taking various medications took time and was not successful until much later. She says that it was extremely difficult to raise children while coping with PPD and the added side effects of each medication. She sheds light on another flaw in the treatment of mental illnesses ― not all medical professionals are equally effective, and a patient can experience various degrees of success depending on their physician. At times, she felt like she was generalized and treated as 'just another person with depression'. As she poured out to a complete stranger her recollection of her intimate experiences during the darkest times of her life, she described as especially frustrating that some of the professionals dismissed the complexity of her story, forcing her to keep visiting new psychiatrists. Although the final combination of medications and psychiatric help eventually worked for her, it is important for those with mental disorders to seek treatment as soon as possible, considering that the treatment process is not a straight and fast path to betterment. My interviewee's experience strengthens the view that illnesses are best treated when the physician understands the deeply personalized story of each patient. As suggested by my interviewee's experience, psychiatrists strive to identify the core problems of mental illnesses in the various stages of patient's life since birth. So, the oversimplification of patient narratives is especially problematic in the case of mental illness, where much depends on the open dialogue between patient and physician, as opposed to physical impairments, which are not as dependent on the patient's life story.

Anita Jain and David Levy from the University of Sydney's Medical School found that Western countries fail to treat migrant women with PPD effectively because they do not 'develop culturally sensitive approaches to postnatal care'. They determined that healthcare providers often had biases and misinterpretations about immigrant mothers, and suggested that, in order to avoid treating immigrant mothers as a homogeneous group, doctors should become aware of 'details of specific cultural practices regarding the delivery environment, diet, and personal care' (Jain and Levy 2013: 966).[8] The insights of Jain and Levy are strengthened by the aforementioned research by Deepika Goyal et al., which found that 'only 50% of women who suffer from PPD are correctly assessed, diagnosed, and treated for this potentially devastating disease' (Goyal et al. 2006: 98). Consolidating both of these findings, it is clear that some American psychiatrists' lack of knowledge about foreign cultures could have bled into incorrect diagnoses and treatments for PPD. My interviewee described how some of the psychiatrists she saw were not effective because they failed to understand her circumstances,

[8] Jain is a homeopathic practitioner and Levy investigates ethics and law in medicine.

which were incompatible with the treatment plans. Consequently, she had to spend unnecessary time in the trial-and-error phase of testing various medications and psychiatrists because they did not grasp the importance of Indian culture to her story.

This pertains to the principle of biological reductionism, which refers to the oversimplification of an illness to only its biological abnormalities. This kind of myopic perspective is not conducive to optimal patient outcomes, as the treatment neglects the larger social and cultural factors that are at play (Jain and Levy 2013). For instance, the psychiatrists that did not take into consideration my interviewee's need for a vibrant social atmosphere would not foresee how medications might treat only the superficial problem. This explains why my interviewee had greater success with psychiatrists who were more understanding of her full story and, therefore, could recommend non-biological remedies like certain social support groups for mothers. Physicians employing a holistic view of medicine can expedite the recovery process for the patient by benefiting from a better understanding of the patient's non-biological circumstances, thus reducing their suffering during the trial-and-error process. Structural barriers to mental health treatment — including social stigma and oversimplification of patients — may have played a significant role in my interviewee's largely inefficient recovery.

Conclusion and Discussion

Moving to the West can shape an immigrant's experience of postpartum depression because acculturation involves social stressors, tense familial relationships induce psychological burdens and the treatment of mental disorders is fraught with numerous deficiencies. Evidently, individual health is determined by a multitude of factors, aside from biology. In my interviewee's story of immigrating to the United States, her PPD was shaped by various environmental, social and cultural factors.

Sara Harkness, a social anthropologist, argues this multifaceted relationship. Her research into PPD concluded that there are three primary models that explain postpartum depression: the biological, which includes hormonal and physiological changes; the psychological, which considers relationships with other family members; and the interactive, which includes general stresses in the mother's life (Harkness 1987).[9] My interviewee's narrative of PPD was a combination of all of these factors, as her experience pointed to several examples within each category. This consistency in academic research and patients' real-world experiences strengthens the argument that several illnesses are largely explained by factors aside from biology.

In order to tackle diseases (especially mental illnesses) successfully, society must acknowledge that non-biological factors can have a greater influence over one's health than biology itself. My own research sheds significant light on the intertwined relationship between the environment and individual health. It is important to restate that my interviewee's story was unique to her, and that other immigrants may have vastly different experiences of settling in America. Nevertheless, I suggest that this ethnographic material encourages future research into

[9] Harkness received her M.P.H and Ph.D. from Harvard, and focuses on maternal and child health.

immigrant health and into the multitude of obstacles that they may encounter, which can worsen their physical, emotional and mental well-being. Thus far, society has placed a huge emphasis on physical health and only recently has started to prioritize (and de-stigmatize) mental health. Looking forward, the United States need to allocate more funding to developing a preventative biosocial approach to mental illnesses. Additionally, healthcare providers need to be aware of cultural differences when providing treatment to foreigners. Only by providing care specific to the individual — instead of assuming that what works for the majority native population will also work for foreigners — can immigrant health be optimized.

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The Gender Face of Land Expropriation in the Rural-Urban Interfaces of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia[1]

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Ethiopia is one of the African countries where the right to land is tied to the issue of gender (in)equity. Apart from the cultural values attached to land as a resource for livelihood and as a means of identity expression, different Ethiopian regimes have used land as an instrument to legitimise their hegemonic power in both rural and urban areas. Since a change in political regime which took place in 1991, land has been commoditised within the rapidly urbanising Addis Ababa and its rural interfaces which pressurises women whose livelihood is entirely dependent on agriculture. This study, therefore, explores the gender aspect of land expropriation due to urban expansion in the Bole Arabsa neighbourhoods, where rural villages are encroached in the administrative boundary of District 6 of Lemi Kura Sub-City of Addis Ababa. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews with women, land administration officers, farmers' representatives, informants from the Sub-City Displaced Farmers Rehabilitation Office. Besides these interviews, legal and local government documents were consulted. The findings show that culturally-established marital authority has not been changed, although legal documents such as the 1995 Constitution have had gender-conscious components.

Keywords: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, expropriation, gender, land, urban expansion, rural.

Introduction

The question of women's property rights encompasses several dimensions, and the demand for gender equity in access to both urban and rural land is central. In this regard, Sargeson (2012: 3) asks, 'Why do women own less compared to men?' In Ethiopia, where the majority of the population is rural, access to land rights is a significant factor in the lives of women whose land is converted into built-up areas in the fast-urbanising cities such as Addis Ababa. Administratively, the city is divided into eleven sub-cities, each with their own smaller municipal units called *woredas* (districts). Bole Arabsa neighbourhood, where this study was conducted, is situated in Woreda Six[2] of Lemi Kura sub-city. The district is known for hosting development projects such as municipal low-cost house construction and private real estate developers. These urban development projects have dispossessed farming households of huge farmlands in the rural villages near the city, where a continuous land dispossession has impacted the livelihoods of many farmers, and especially women farmers.

However, this situation has not received little attention by urban ethnographers. In fact, some studies such as Feleke (1999), Abdissa (2005), Getahun (2007), Emana (2014) and Gashu (2014), have tried to explore the impact of urbanisation on different sections of the communities in urban and peri-urban areas in Ethiopia in general and in Addis Ababa in particular. However, they did not look at the gendered dimension of urbanisation, land expropriation and, relatedly, women's land rights. For instance, Gashu (2014: 16) argues that the 'rapid growth rate of urbanisation and the resulting compulsory acquisition and reallocation of land by the government has been precipitating a wave of dispossession and termination of the existing land

[1]The final version of this article has benefited much from the support given by Professor Italo Pardo, the Editorial Board of *Urbanities*, the two anonymous reviewers and the expert who edited the manuscript.

[2] *Woreda* is the smallest administrative unit in the present Addis Ababa city administrative structure.

rights in the peri-urban areas'. His study examines various dimensions of urban development and land expropriation practices. Emana (2014) also studied the impact of urbanisation on the livelihood of farming communities in a town near Addis Ababa. However, his data were not gender disaggregated to show the true picture of land expropriation and women's access to land. While disregarding the gender component, Feleke (1999) pioneered the exploration of the everyday life of farmers and their families who lost their lands due to the implementation of a real estate development project in the eastern part of Addis Ababa. Similarly, Abdissa (2005) and Getahun (2007) studied the extent of urban expansion and migration without considering the gender aspect of the processes. More recently, Debelo and Soboka (2022) have explored how Addis Ababa City has been creating and recreating its frontiers since its establishment. Their study shows that the expansion of the city has been politically and systematically supported by the country's successive regimes. A more relevant study was conducted by Hailu (2016), who explored the political economy of the rural-urban interfaces around Addis Ababa from a dependency perspective. He concluded that government policies are biased and that politicians had surrendered any real commitment to protect the rural edges of the rural-urban interfaces from exploitation by the metropolitan centre.

All the aforementioned studies overlooked the value of women's access to, and equity in, land ownership, although this aspect in the fast-urbanising contexts of Ethiopia deserves a careful examination from a cultural-historical and contemporary viewpoint. Culturally, many communities, including the Oromo farmers who are dominant in the present-day Addis Ababa and its surroundings, have never recognised women's access to land, with ownerships in their names but only through their husbands, on account of marital authority. Historically, Ethiopian regimes have never valued women's rights in land ownership. In the feudal system, land owners were male feudal lords and women had no ability to access land, and their names did not appear in land entitlements. The situation was no different among the farming communities who used to live in the areas where the present Addis Ababa was established in the late 19th century.

The present market-oriented urban development approach, under the pretence of public land ownership in the ever-expanding Addis Ababa City, fails to accommodate any improvement to women's access to land and land entitlement. Given the Constitutional (FDRE 1995) and other legal provisions by the city administration to ensure equity in land use rights and other property ownerships, women's access to land is far less visible than their male counterparts among the communities in Bole Arabsa neighbourhoods, which were originally peasant settlements. Women's invisibility in accessing land emanates from the rural patriarchal gender power relations and the present urban legal framework continuum which, in turn, has become a source of what Sargeson (2012: 3) calls 'durable inequality' between men and women. In this regard, Pardo and Prato (2021:1)[3] conceptualise equality as the quest for 'opportunity, of right to compete for whatever goal one chooses to pursue'. Here, women's

[3]This book brings together ethnographic works that explore displacement in urban spaces and the marginalisation of different communities irrespective of their geographical locations in the world. This widens our understanding of the magnitude of inequalities in today's urban spaces.

inequality extends to preventing their access to land in the fast-urbanising Addis Ababa. In this article, the concept of 'rural-urban interface' refers to a context where a continuous but unequal rural-urban development processes persistently meet, sometimes mix, and interact (Hailu 2016) with the inevitability of the transformation of the rural edge into urban space. Women have no viable means to challenge the gender-blind urban land governance as 'local land structures are often disadvantageous for women because of the inequalities in the social networks that men and women access' (Rurii and Smith 2010: 5).

Although the 1995 Constitution of Ethiopia (FDRE 1995) grants usufructuary rights to all citizens, the lack of a clear, gender-sensitive legal framework around urban development reinforces the traditional patriarchal structure in the fast-urbanising Bole Arabsa neighbourhoods where this study was conducted. This sustains the symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2001) endured by women because, in the process of land expropriation and payment of compensation, women remain unnoticed, having little-to-no material stake in the developing urban landscape. So, this study will address the question, 'How are these dynamics reflected in the everyday life of the women in the farming communities in Bole Arabsa neighbourhoods?'

Theoretical Points of Departure

The concept of land rights refers to the 'right to access to and control over land' (UN-HABITAT 1999: 10). Improving women's land rights is not only an issue of human rights but also key to the development of all people in the dynamic rural and urban economic systems across Africa. However, 'numerous cultural, legal, political, and social factors have systematically impeded' such important rights among women (Rabenhorst 2011: 6).

While studying the complex factors that impact gender power relations at family and societal levels, we may lack a single and comprehensive theoretical framework. Thus, the present discussion has benefited much from the concepts and theories developed in different academic disciplines such as anthropology, law, feminist political economy, and other social sciences. To begin with, by referring to the Boserupian (1965) notion which has to do with women's land and property rights, Yngstrom (2002: 22) argues that the '[…] complex and gendered historical processes can be examined within the evolutionary theories of landholding […]' because, under the customary laws in many African countries, '[…] ownership of land is anchored in patriarchy […]' (Kameri-Mbote 2005: 2).

Throughout the evolutionary process, customary patriarchal land ownership gave way to privatisation and foreign market control as is the case in access to urban land today (Rurii and Smith 2010: 3). The FAO (2011) explains that women across the developing world are steadily less likely to own land and have fewer rights to it, and how this becomes an impetus to advance the yet unaddressed debate in feminist political economy which connects political, economic, and social factors in examining gender equalities. In the context of urban development practices, a feminist political economy approach (Porobic et al. 2018) looks at access to and distribution of wealth and power in order to understand why, by whom, and for whom certain decisions are taken. This approach also examines how multiple co-existing domains of gender differences result in unequal power relations between women and men in

the context of access to resources (Ritu 2014). Ritu argues that the feminist political economy approach is useful in understanding how development discourses (the market, the state, the global forces, and multiple regimes of property rights) affect women's access to land. This argument is supported by the empirical evidence from the Bole Arabsa neighbourhoods where land is expropriated for urban development projects in which state political and economic actors play the role of 'middle agent' in order to catalyse the commercialisation of land and the politicisation of land rights in the rural-urban interfaces of Addis Ababa. These actors facilitate what Koechlin (2019: 231-232) calls 'the material transformation of urban areas to produce new spaces that urban actions are appropriating'. I argue that the new urban development narrative orchestrated by the state is shaping/reshaping the political economy of women's access to land. This reinforces the culturally-entrenched gender disparity in access to resources, such as land, in the area of study.

The property rights approach is also useful when examining the debate over the level of women's participation and position in the struggle for access to land and property ownership processes. This approach frames the decision-making processes regarding the use of resources such as land, economic behaviour (North and Thomas 1973), and control of benefits. In addition, North (1990: 5) argues that the institutional structure of a society in general, and property rights arrangements in particular, contribute to the improvement or deterioration of women's status in decision-making over property rights. This property rights approach is also instrumental in helping us explore the disparity in power relations between men and women in access to land, particularly in newly-urbanising rural areas such as the Bole Arabsa neighbourhood where land is highly commercialised. To put this in the words of Feder and Feeny (1991), the property rights approach helps to understand the gains and losses which follow from the actions of agents and the links between property rights and investment decisions linked to land expropriation (Alchian and Demsetz 1973). The FAO (2004) considers security in land ownership as a basis for women's security in relation to other rights, such as access to economic and social capitals in everyday gender relations.

From a human rights perspective, Scalise and Giovarelli (2020: 4) contextualise the property rights approach in terms of women's access to land and property, wherein reforms to urban and peri-urban land governance are directly connected to women's rights. Gender equality in access to urban land and to the benefits gained from land-transfer processes is a question of gender power relations. Thus, the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs 5)[4] aims '[…] to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls […]' in relation to urban housing and economic development.

In line with the above general frameworks, Article 35:1 of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution (FDRE 1995) explicitly states that 'Women shall, in the enjoyment of rights and protections provided for by this Constitution, have equal rights with men'. Similarly, Article 35:7 recognises women's equal rights to acquire, administer, control, use, transfer and administer properties. After all, land is a common property of the state and people of Ethiopia

[4] In addition to SDG 5, SDG 11 means to ensure sustainable cities and communities to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable by 2030.

(FDRE 1995, Article 40: 3). Yet much of the theoretical and constitutional recognition of gender relations in women's access to land and related resources remains largely rhetorical, especially when viewed from the everyday perspective of women in the rural-urban interfaces of Addis Ababa.

Methodology

This article is based on the qualitative data gathered from women who were purposively selected based on their encounters during processes of land expropriation led by urban development ventures such as the condominium development projects in the Bole Arabsa neighbourhoods in Addis Ababa. The approach is mainly ethnographic, with data gathered through in-depth interviews with women, farmers' representatives, local land administration officers, and informants from the Sub-City Displaced Framers Rehabilitation Office during the fieldwork conducted from May 2021 to June 2022 in Bole Arabsa neighbourhoods, an urbanising rural village in Lemi Kura sub-city of Addis Ababa. Despite the observable changes caused by development projects, farmers in the neighbourhoods were predominantly dependent on agriculture together with some forms of engagement in off-farm livelihood activities such as daily labour in the urban economy.

Until 1991 the area was sparsely populated, with land administered by peasant associations (partly as a result of the 1974 Revolution which nationalised rural lands with the Proclamation 31 of 1975). However, since the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front-led government (EPRDF, which evolved into the Prosperity Party in December 2019) came to power in 1991, the area has been subject to extensive development. Farmers' associations were dissolved, and land was distributed to individual households with mere usufructuary rights (see the 1995 Constitution, FDRE 1995). Thus, farmers in Bole Arabsa village continued practising their usual mixed agriculture by the traditional means of rearing animals and producing the most common crops such as *teff (Eragrostis tef),* barley, grass pea *(Lathyrus Sativus),* and wheat in the area and beyond until their land was gradually expropriated by the government and divided for both public and private urban development projects.

Today, the area is fast urbanising except for small pockets of traditional rural houses which await their turn to leave or adapt to the new urbanisation processes and urban way of life. When I first went to the neighbourhoods for preliminary observation in February 2021, there were a few cattle and sheep and piles of crops such as *teff* and wheat near the thatch-roofed traditional houses, and a few other urban-style houses. By then, a few households had started renting some rooms to other people, mainly to daily laborers who migrated from other areas in search of jobs. All these have contributed to the dynamism of everyday life for women farmers in the neighbourhoods.

As the changes were immense, however, only the major aspects connected to land expropriation and women's access to land were addressed in this study. The data is thematically categorised in terms of women's access to land resources, their participation in the decision–making processes, their power over controlling land resources, their access to information about the decisions that their husbands and the local government make, and their livelihood

opportunities and asset building mechanisms following the expropriation of land. As land matters are very sensitive both politically and culturally, the anonymity of the informants is secured as much as possible by using merely the initial letters of their names throughout the analysis and presentation of the data. As this article is a result of an ethnographic study, however, the findings will not be generalised to reflect the extent of the impacts of urbanisation on the land rights of the larger women population who have been affected by urbanisation in those rural-urban interfaces of Addis Ababa.

Discussion

Anyone who walks along the roads in the rural-urban interfaces of Addis Ababa will observe new buildings cropping up quickly because of the advancement of construction technologies, access to financial resources, and the supply of relatively cheap labour. These construction projects have created a significant number of job opportunities for the urban poor, the families of dispossessed farming communities, and for a large number of young rural-urban migrants from different areas of Ethiopia. The findings of this study reveal that this booming construction industry has affected the land tenure system of the communities in the rural-urban interfaces in the city. It has impacted women's access to land because women were victims of two systems of land property rights in those fast-urbanising rural areas. One is the continuity of the traditional patriarchal system of gender-biased access to land at community and household levels. Second, the rural-urban interfaces such as Bole Arabsa neighbourhoods were continuously incorporated into Addis Ababa City administration since the establishment of a nation-wide rural land registration and certification programme in 1998. The process of rural land registration and certification was clearly gender sensitive because of the legal requirement that a rural land certificate was written and issued in the name of both the husband and the wife. However, the area in this study was incorporated into urban administration before each rural family's landholding was measured and certified. As a result, land in the area was neither registered by the then rural land registration programme nor fully covered by the urban land laws which operated in the locale. As the new urban administration was conscious of the highly increasing value of land in those interfaces, it deliberately left the areas unoccupied as a 'vacuum to be filled by urban development' projects whenever the need arises. Amid this complex land administration and rapid land-commercialisation process, women's access to land is not fully recognised, partly because of the assumption that they would access it together with their husbands once they are married. Based on the field data, this part of the article presents the dynamic nature of women's access to land in the due process of land expropriation for urban development projects in Bole Arabsa rural neighbourhoods in Addis Ababa.

Access to Land and Control Over Resources

The context of land expropriation for urban development purposes in Addis Ababa encompasses a history of dispossession and discontent for the farming communities in and around the city. These trends are more acute for women because of the marital authority they live under and the gender dimensions of land expropriation practices for urban development

projects. Although existing literature shows that urbanisation would empower women in terms of better access to resources and improved skills allowing them to become earning members of their families and build assets, informants' personal experiences in this study show that there is no significant improvement in terms of resource control such as land and the income generated from it. The informants pointed out that several plots of their farm lands were taken with insufficient cash compensation. On top of that, they had no legal certificate for the remaining land after expropriation. From the opinions of the informants, this failure to certify farmers for the remaining plots seems deliberate, because the urban administration can expropriate additional lands with minimum confrontation anytime the need arises. The following opinion from a woman in the village supports the above argument, showing that the uncertified land at household level is under the control of the husbands on the basis of traditional marital authority. For instance, a 46-year-old woman said:

> 'It is 18 years since I married. We were farmers before they (the urban administrators) came and took our land for construction. Now we are left with this plot (they locally call it *qerxi*, which is approximately 0.5 ha) of land near our house. We have no land other than this. My husband goes to far places in the countryside to rent land for farming. How can we live without it? What can we do? My husband is registered by the district office here to get a certificate for this plot of land but we have not got it yet. They also promised to give us condominium houses which some farmers have already got. We are on the waiting list. God knows if it happens.' (Interview MK, 13 March 2022).

Later, I went to the land administration office of the district to learn more about the partially dispossessed farmers with regard to the status of their remaining plots of land. The land administration officer, Mr FK, a 48-year-old informant, told me that none of the farming households had land certificates. He said:

> 'They (farmers) simply pay rural land use tax, and this is considered legal. I know that land tax receipts are prepared in the name of the male house heads, the husband though they do not have certificates. I sometimes see some women who come to our office to settle their land issues. They may be widows or those who have got land from their parents.' (Interview with FK, 12 May 2021).

This highlights a policy contradiction between the property rights associated with rural land and urban land because, in the two phases of the rural land registration and certification programme which began in 1998, all farmers were required to register their land holdings, with all holdings certified in the name of both the husband and the wife. However, the urban land administration does not have a clear legal framework for managing farmers' land that falls within the boundary of an urban administration. This makes the issue more interesting because it is not bound up with just demand of the access to land by both men and women; it is also a matter of sustaining their livelihoods. This demands further evidence to bring the true picture of the context to the surface.

As a result, I continued exploring the feelings of the women informants to understand their perception of the land expropriation processes and their level of participation in the land resources management at family level. The following is a narration from the story told by BD, a 37-year-old woman, whom I first met in the compounds of the District 6 administration office.

> 'We owned the land for several years before it was taken away by the government. Thanks to them, they gave us some money after they took many plots. *Misooma jedhanii fudhatan* (they took it in the name of development). We also sold other plots for fear that they (people from the district office) may come and take it again. Then my husband bought a car to start a new business. Now we get some money from his daily engagement using the car in addition to what we get from the remaining plot of land. The car is registered in his (the husband's) name. Our first son is a taxi driver hired by someone in the city centre. These days he is thinking of buying his own car to work for himself.' (Interview with BD, 23 May 2021).

The above narration shows the complexity of matters related to land expropriation, changes in the farmers' livelihood, and gender relationships at family level. First it demonstrates how urban development narratives facilitate land dispossession from the farming households in the rural-urban interfaces of the city. Second, it shows how what Rabenhorst (2011) and Kameri-Mbote (2005) call 'cultural factors' favouring patriarchal land rights are surfacing in the control of land and related resources even after expropriation. Third, the story depicts that land entitlement is still made in the name of the husbands, even after their inclusion in the urban administration. Finally, the story indicates that transformation is inevitable, and that some households have started to look for alternative livelihoods (being encouraged by the urban administration). However, lack of a clear gender-sensitive legal framework, together with traditional rural patriarchal land ownership, could shackle women's land rights and their capacity to have control over the newly created wealth after their inclusion in the urban economic system.

Furthermore, this study shows that urban expansion and the introduction of development projects into the area do not significantly alter women's awareness regarding the benefits gained due to land expropriation. I asked some women whether they knew the amount of cash compensation their husbands had received. The following narration is from a 46-year-old woman who felt that she was neither informed by her husband nor by the local administration when the government dispossessed them of their land and how much cash compensation her family should earn.

> *Nangaafatin; maalan beeka. Silaa lafa fudhatani. Birrii isaa Abbaa warraa kootu fuudhe. Meeqa akka ta'e hinbeeku ani. Isatu beka. Kunoo immoo mana kana ijaarrranne, waaqa hagalatu. Ati garu maaliif wa'ee birrii nagafatta?* (Do not ask me; they have taken the land. It is my husband who knows how much money they gave us. I do not know how much it was. Thanks to God, we have built this house after that. By the way why do you ask me about money?').' (Interview with MD, 14 May 2021).

From this story we can see that there is lack of consultation and transparency between husbands and wives on the one hand, and between dispossessed families and local administration on the other. This, in turn, has become the main cause for dissatisfaction and distrust from the women's side, because the lack of transparency and consultation has affected their land rights and their negotiating power with respect to control of land and related resources at family and societal levels. This indicates that the traditionally engineered patriarchal land rights (Rabenhorst 2011, Bourdieu 2001, Yngstrom 2002) still exist in the rural-urban interfaces. Accordingly, I came to know that Addis Ababa city administration has developed a new approach for managing the cash compensation given to farmers whose land is expropriated. This new approach requires the cash to be deposited in bank accounts registered in the names of both the husband and the wife. However, the approach is facing hostility from the beneficiaries of traditional marital authority. This contradiction was illustrated in the interview I had with LG, a 48-year-old farmer, who was a member of the land measurement committee in the village. I asked him whether his wife knew the amount of cash compensation they were given. LG says, 'She does not have to know it. It is me who married her. I am the husband'. In the tradition, a man who has married a woman has a superior power over his wife to control all resources within the family. This informant also told me that he could withdraw any amount of money from the bank account without the knowledge of his wife. A divorced woman, TS, had confirmed the above argument saying,

> 'I was in marriage for many years. When they took our land, I did not know how much they pay us in cash. My husband knew that. In fact, we have been separated. I live with my daughter.' (Interview with TS, 23 May 2022).

Land Measurement and Compensation

Land measurement and valuation is one of the activities that should be carried out by the concerned government bodies to facilitate the execution of expropriation and payment of compensation (see Proclamations 455/2005, 721/211 and 1161/2019). Although the regulations demand the establishment of a land valuation committee comprising professionals and community members, I could see that these duties were undertaken by a committee formed by the top leadership of the sub-city administration. A common complaint related to the inconsistency between legally mandated processes and the way that decisions were taken by committees. My interviews show that women were not consulted during the estimation of compensation and land valuation, and there were no women representatives in the committee.

To learn more about this, I asked LD, a farmers' representative, if there were women committee members. This 62-year-old informant said, 'At first, we had a woman in the committee; but later, we left her out because she was not active' (Interview with LD, 23 May 2022).

On 23 March 2022, I asked GT, a 48-year-old female farmer, whether she knew the size of land her family lost as a result of the expropriation. She said, '*ani hinbeeku; maalin beeka*' (I do not know. I know nothing about it). *Eenyu akka fudhatesi hinbeeku*? (I do not know who took it) (Interview with GT, 23 March 2022).

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Management of Cash Compensation

As stated earlier, the male domination of land rights is also reflected in the management of cash compensation received upon land expropriation for development projects in the rural-urban interfaces. On top of that, sufficiency of cash compensation and awareness about its management is equally important in the life of the women in the study area. In relation to this, a 42-year-old informant said:

> 'We use the cash compensation to buy grains/food/ for our family since we do not produce enough now. The money they gave us is not enough.' (Interview with ZM, May 23, 2022).

A similar opinion was given by a 52-year-old woman, DG, who explained the situation by saying,

> 'Yes, we have taken the compensation and we have been using it. We do not have other assets. We always buy food and the cash is finished every day.' (Interview with DG, 12 May 2021).

The above interviews show that women's problems in the sphere of land rights are multi-layered and point to an unpredictable future. The above informant added another story in the middle of our discussion. The story concerned the gender aspect of land-related resources management. She said:

> 'I know a family whose land is taken and they are now left with a small plot. The husband has taken cash compensation in thousands of Birr for the large farm land they gave away for urban development. With the money, they built a house similar to other fellow villagers. But his wife always complains that she did not know the exact amount of money her husband spent. In addition, she felt that he wasted some of the money without her knowledge. Oh, we all are in problem; we are not sure, we may face more challenges in the future.'

The above account encompasses the interrelated issues of women's land rights and resource control. First, the interviewee complains that the cash compensation is insufficient to sustain her family's living. Second, she seemed to be in a state of liminality (see Turner 1969) in that she compared the past with the inevitable (but uncertain) future which her family would face in their new urban way of life.

I went back to the village on May 25, 2022 to talk to the head of the family. I introduced myself and told him why I was there. Soon he expressed his feeling about my being there by saying 'What do you want to know? Why did they (I guess the district officers) send you?' Finally, he cautiously accepted my request and began to tell me stories about the situation his family was in following the urban expansion into the village. He told me that he received cash, but he did not want to tell me the amount. I did not want to press the issue. He admitted that he did not use the money wisely, due to a lack of experience in managing considerable amounts of money. He told me that his wife realised he had spent the money for his own individual use

(drinking, buying clothes, and inviting his friends to hotels) and presented the case to village elders for hearing. But there was no final decision by the elders, except advising him to use the money more wisely and care for his family.

Women and Resource Registration and Certification

It is important to connect the gender dimension of land expropriation with women's legal access to land certification and other resources in the rural-urban interfaces of Addis Ababa. In Ethiopia's federal legal system, and more specifically in the 1995 Constitution (FDRE 1995), Addis Ababa City Administration has a legal framework for property rights ownership. The major resource that rural families have in Bole Arabsa rural neighbourhoods is land and land-related resources. Since the locality is within the urban administration boundary today, farming households expect to have a legal certificate for the plot of land they use. However, the land administration officer of District 6 told me that no farmer was given a land certificate, and that there was no plan to do so. Interestingly, though, farmers whose land was expropriated for urban development projects were eligible for condominium houses so long as they could submit the right evidence. Knowing this, I went to Lemi Kura Sub-City Displaced Farmers Rehabilitation office to ascertain more about this new approach to supporting the dispossessed farmers. Though not exhaustive, the following table shows the number of farmers who had received insufficient cash compensation and thus need additional support for rehabilitation (as of September 2021, 2014 Ethiopian Calendar).

No of farmers whose land was expropriated	Number	%
Male	8,314	64.2
Female	4,634	35.8
Total	12,948	100

Table 1. Source: Lemi Kura Sub-City Displaced Farmers Rehabilitation Office (May 2022).

Table 1 above illustrates the gender disparity regarding the number of farmers whose land was expropriated in the sub-city. The table may not clearly indicate who these men and women are, but it is possible to deduce from the legal practice that wives and husbands who live together are compensated as one family. However, their children who are above 18 years are eligible for such compensations separately. As a result, the list of women includes single mothers or unmarried and girls above 18 years. Similarly, the list of men includes both the male house-heads and male children above 18 years (as children below this age are legally minors). So, as I explain in the next section, married women do not have the right to claim compensation or any certificate in their names. All these interrelated factors have created a gender gap in access to land and other resources. As stated earlier, the major causes could be attributed to a combination of cultural, administrative, and policy factors. In terms of culture, the strong influence of tradition has made the present urban land administration system remain gender insensitive which, in turn, has affected women's access to land and other property ownerships in the rural-urban interfaces of the study area.

With regard to policy, the existing urban land policy of Ethiopia does not seem gender sensitive except for the fact that all citizens are given equal right to land and property rights in the general legal provisions (FDRE 1995, Family Law, Proclamations 455/2005, 271/2011, and 1161/2019). In the area of local urban administration, women are not given equal opportunity to claim their land rights and no couple has joint land certificates in the name of the husband and the wife. The cumulative effect of all these factors might constitute a response to Sargeson's (2012) question, 'Why do women own less?' Recently, however, after the 2018 reform in the Ethiopian political system, new politicians and urban land administrators come to power and established some legal frameworks to support dispossessed farmers. One visible approach entails allocating new condominium houses for farmers and their children above the age of 18 years, as discussed in the following section.

Condominium House Allocation: Mothers are Less Visible than their Children

About 70,000 farming households are located within the capital's boundaries (see *Addis Fortune*, 25 June 2022 and UN-Habitat 2017). These households have been at risk of displacement and dispossession because of urban development projects and the associated demand for land. In the meantime, these farmers have complained about the insufficiency of the cash compensation awarded in relation to the expropriation of land. Thus, the 2016-2018 land-related political and social unrest and resistance movements in Oromia Regional State in general and in the Oromia Special Zone Surrounding Finfinne/Addis Ababa prompted the Prime Minster Abiy Ahmed-led reformist government and the city administration to reconsider the livelihoods of the farmers in those rural-urban interfaces. Since then, a promising political initiative has been underway which favours the dispossessed farmers. Consistent with this, Fortune News Papers in its June 25, 2022 edition states that the city Mayor '[…] receives cabinet approval to compensate farmers'. Of course, some benefit packages were initiated long before the approval of this new initiative. One such action is allocating condominium houses for those households whose land was expropriated with nominal cash compensation which was as low as three Birr for a square meter of land. At present, all farmers who are above 18 years of age and who can produce evidence of losing land due to urban expansion are eligible for this benefit package. Table 2 below illustrates the number of people who are given condominium houses as of June 2022 (2014 Eth. Calendar).

Number of farmers who are given condominium houses		
Married men and boys above18 years	Single mothers and girls above 18 years	Total
6,623	2,998	9,621
1691	1631	3,327
8,314	4634	12,948

Table 2. Source: Displaced Farmers Rehabilitation Office, Lemi Kura Sub-City (May 2022).

This new approach is attractive for many farmers, despite complications in its implementation. In the process, married women are not given a separate house but receive one

with their husbands in common. The certificate is issued in the name of the couples. Yet, this study shows that gender disparity is extended to the new urban development benefit package. The underlying intention is to help the farmers develop an urban way of life, though, in the context of the plan, married women are less visible than their children. In table 2 above, mothers are included in the households represented by husbands, while boys and girls above 18 years of age are categorically included in the housing benefit package. In the long run, this practice might leave married women without assets in their own names. The house allocation package uses a lottery method where individuals have a single chance from a pool of different condominium sites in different sub-cities in Addis Ababa. So, it is likely that the farmers will move from their recent villages, where they have established enduring economic and socio-cultural ties with their relatives and other fellow farmers, to new sites where they are expected to start anew

In addition to the invisibility of married women in this new benefit package, the fear and uncertainty it has created has prompted many farmers to sell their newly acquired condominium houses. Thus, a 48-year-old informant in the Sub-City Displaced Farmers Rehabilitation office told me:

> 'This year we called some of the farmers to our office to bring the original copies of their (farmers) condominium house certificates for documentation purposes. However, none of them could do that. I think they have transferred the house together with the original documents to others illegally. We know that these farmers have signed an agreement with the municipality not to transfer the houses for at least ten years.' (Interview with FK, 22 May 2022).

The above informant also told me that farmers who were given houses had entered into an agreement with the urban administration that forced them not to transfer the houses to a third party for at least ten years. Though this agreement is indicated on the ownership certificate, many farmers have proceeded to sell the houses illegally. If the trend continues unchecked, it may lead to further displacement and threaten the farmers and their families with homelessness.

Overall Gender Sensitivity of Urban Development Plans

This study has explored the gender aspect of ongoing land expropriation tied to urban development. This part of the article explores whether urban development plans (projects) attempt to address the potential challenges that farming women could face due to land expropriation. In the available literature (UN-Habitat 2011, Jarvis et al. 2009), it is argued that urban development projects should be conscious of the living conditions of women and people from different social groups living in cities. Strategies and approaches that take gender issues into consideration in urban development planning often end with positive impacts, both at societal and household level (UN-Habitat 2011). But the informants in this study had contrasting views. Some hoped that urbanisation would come with opportunities for them, while others were sceptical. The following opinions were taken from interviews with some of the women in Bole Arabsa neighbourhoods. A 42-year-old woman said:

> 'We (women) are busy as usual with house chores. We care for our children; farm works are decreased; we do not go to many places for farming and cattle keeping as before; my husband rented a plot of land far away there outside the city; we expect some yield from there after some months for our own consumption. Except that we do not have any extra work which is non-farming? I am not sure whether we get better off-farming employment opportunities to diversify our livelihood activities in the projects such as the Industrial parks here next to us.' (Interview with ZM, 17 May 2021).

Another informant, 48-year-old, seemed to be convinced of the advantages/benefits which her family would get from the 'development' of her village. She said:

> 'I think there are some changes in our village. Some families are renting some rooms to get income. I also do some daily activities at the construction sites. My son is a grade ten student. He tries to sell some vegetables such as cabbage and potatoes near the cobble stone road there near the condominium houses. I think there is no way to pursue with agriculture after this. Our children will live a better life if they work hard.' (Interview with GT, 3 March 2021).

Officers at the district and sub-city level strongly believed that if the present urban development activities continued as planned, farmers will not face serious challenges in the future. The land administration officer in District 6, Mr FK, aged 47, told me that,

> '[…] farmers in this village are not the farmers you know somewhere else. They are totally different because they are rich. They have received several benefits such as land for urban agriculture, condominium houses, and better cash compensation. They are engaged in additional non-farming activities to increase their income now.' (Interview with Mr FK, 6 April 2022).

In the above stories there are two contrasting positions regarding the overall benefits of development projects for farmers in the neighbourhoods. One position is that there are some advantages brought by urban expansion into the area. Some informants indicated that the new urban development activities have given them the opportunity to diversify their means of income. On the other hand, some informants are sceptical about the benefits they are getting from the current urban development projects in that it has limited their ability to produce enough food for their families.

Conclusion

The rural-urban interfaces of Addis Ababa are always in flux. Urbanisation histories and current legal and practical activities show that there is a heated face-off between traditional socio-cultural values surrounding women and the intention of the current Ethiopian Constitution which seeks to ensure gender equity in all aspects of the lives of its citizens. This confrontation has impacted women's rights to access to land and other land-related resources amid inevitable transformation processes in the rural-urban interfaces of Addis Ababa. The problem exists at two levels: the family and the system. At family level, the traditional value system continues to

support the perception that the husband is in charge of managing a family's productive resources, including land, upon which women do not have a say. In the context of urban governance today, the system is unable to challenge this traditional perception of the status of women in resource control. During land expropriation and the associated processes of land measurement, determination and management of cash compensation, the voices of women were not heard.

The change in the registration and certification of condominium houses, which were allocated to farming households who surrendered their farmlands for urban development projects, seems to be a step forward, representing a challenge to traditional marital authority and deficiencies in the urban governance system. However, there is a disparity between married and unmarried women regarding the registration and certification of the condominium houses. In addition, although the 1995 Constitution guarantees equal rights for both women and men with respect to property ownership, there seems a deficit at the implementation stage of the various urban administration systems.

This may reassert the male domination of resource control in rural-urban Addis Ababa. In the meantime, new initiatives such as allocating condominium houses to dispossessed women and men, together with stronger gender-sensitive urban development policy frameworks and practices, appear to offer women in Addis Ababa's rural-urban interfaces the possibility of a sustainable livelihood by recognising their access to land. This would support Pardo and Prato's (2021) suggestion that old and emerging social and economic inequality in urban settings needs to be questioned in order to break the system that functions to sustain inequality.

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Changing Faces of Kolkata Periphery: Sonarpur Urban Fringe, India[1]

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Professional planners generally distinguish two major typologies of settlement, city planning or regional planning and town or country planning. The city and town planning deals with the location of economic activities and with the orderly arrangement of space for different uses at settlement levels. When planning any urban expansion, rural areas need to be brought under the urban sphere of influence in a balanced way. This is particularly important in the case of Asian cities, which over the last few decades have experienced an unprecedented population growth. This has been the case of Kolkata due to immigration from the then East Pakistan to India (during 1971), resulting in a tremendous shortage of shelter in the city, and the rapid growth of population in its periphery and the surrounding countryside. With specific reference to the case study of Sonarpur urban fringe, this article reports on the findings of research carried out in the periphery of Kolkata on the changes in land use, population growth and other socio-economic parameters.
Keywords: Urban sprawl, conurbation, agglomeration, land use, urban fringe.

'There is no point in the continuum from large agglomerations
to small clusters or scattered dwellings where urbanity
disappears and rurality begins'
(United Nations 1952: 24)

Introduction

Urbanism is defined as a characteristic way in which inhabitants of towns and cities (urban areas) interact with each other and with the built environment. In other words, urbanism encompasses the character of urban life, its organization and related problems, the physical needs of urban societies and city planning. In recent times, architects, planners and sociologists have investigated the way in which people live in densely populated urban areas and their level of interaction with the country-side. In an attempt to develop an adequate concept of urbanism as a mode of life, Wirth (1938) pointed out that it is necessary to stop identifying urbanism with the physical entity of the city. It is important to move beyond an arbitrary boundary line and consider how technological developments in transportation and communication have enormously extended the urban mode of living beyond the confines of the city itself. What follows is a report on a research project on significant changes at the periphery of Kolkata.

The Area of Study

The active delta of the Ganga, called South 24 Parganas, lies between $21^0 25' 30''$ and $23^0 16' 50''$ north latitudes and $88^0 01' 10''$ and $89^0 06' 15''$ east longitudes. The largest in West Bengal, it lies at the apex of the funnel-shaped Bay of Bengal and serves as the immediate hinterland of Kolkata. Some of the large marshes have been drained and rendered fit for cultivation by the construction of embankments and sluices. One such place is Sonarpur,

[1] I wish to express my gratitude to Dr Kanan Chatterjee, Professor and former Head, Department of Geography, University of Calcutta, without whom this study would have not been possible.

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located some 7-8 kilometres from Kolkata Metropolitan Conurbation, hence coming under its direct influence as urban fringe. The region is underlain by deep clayey soil and is marked by a preponderance of fertile loams on the north-western side. The site of my study is the Sonarpur urban fringe, which encompasses eight wards numbering 7 to 14 under the Sonarpur-Rajpur Municipality, called Sonarpur I, Sonarpur II, Sonarpur III, Kamarabad, Gorkhara, Ghasiara, Rajpur and Baikunthapur (Table 1).

WARD No.	WARD NAMES
7	Sonarpur I
8	Kamarabad
9	Gorkhara
10	Ghasiara
11	Sonarpur III
12	Sonarpur II
13	Rajpur
14	Baikunthapur

Table 1. Ward Profile of Sonarpur Urban Area.

This area is often referred to as Sonarpur Urban Agglomeration, given its population concentration and clustering nature. The objective of this report is to illustrate the social and economic setup of the region and its changing land use, which may give geographers and urban planners an idea of how it serves as alternative area of residence for the Kolkata city dwellers and beyond. Since 1947, when India gained independence, there has been a disproportionate and much haphazard increase of population into and near Kolkata. Consequent to the influx of refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and various other concurring socio-economic dynamics, the demographic characteristics of the southern periphery of Kolkata have been subjected to a noticeable change. Because of its location within the Kolkata Metropolitan Area and its nearness to the city core, people from the adjoining villages and localities had thronged into the Sonarpur urban agglomeration. Newcomers included high- and middle-income groups, the poor and the marginalized. Owing to the rapid pace of urbanisation, the fringe of Kolkata became extremely populated, too. Comparing the land use profiles of Sonarpur brings out a changing pattern; while in the past a wider area was used for agriculture, now the land use is typically urban.

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Methodology Adopted and Problems Faced

The research was mostly based on primary data from questionnaires and visits to educational institutions (schools and colleges). I also used secondary data from the decadal and annual statistics provided by the Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality and Electric Supply Houses and other offices. Initial difficulties in making people understand the purpose of this study were overcome as we met regularly and discussed the aims.

Historical Outline

Once a big water-logged area within the Police Station of Baruipur and Sonarpur, the area of study had been reclaimed since 1961 by draining out water with the help of the pumping station at Uttarbhag under the Sonarpur-Arapanch Drainage Project. During the subsequent 5-Year Plan periods, much emphasis was put on building the transport and communication systems via road to Sonarpur from Kolkata with the aim of decentralising Kolkata's population towards its southern fringes. As highlighted by the district Gazetteer of South 24 Parganas (Table 2), the evolution of Sonarpur could be traced back to 1800, when the region flourished and served as a main focal point for market activities.

NAME	DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT	ITEMS SOLD	AVERAGE CUSTOMERS
Rajpur Bazar	1853	Vegetables, Fruit	1500
Natunhat	1871	Green Coconut, Potato	1300
Tetulberia Bazar	1947	Rice, Vegetables, Fish	500
Gobindapurhat	1922	Vegetable, Fruit	1000
Sonarpur Bazar	1800	Fruit, Rice, Vegetables	750
Sonarpur Market	1800	Fruit, Medicines	500
Pratap Nagar Bazar	1752	Vegetables, Fish	700

Table 2. An Historical Market Profile of the Sonarpur Area.

Sonarpur: Urban Profile

The word Metropolis means dominant or large city in a country, state, or region (Dikshit 1997). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Kolkata was a million plus city, which demanded an integrated city planning approach to define the basis for a space planning that would drive the development by stages not only of the city space but also of its rural

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surroundings. While a mere less than 8,000 people resided in the study area in 1901, the local population reached over 30,000 by the end of 2011 (Figure 1). The noticeable increase in its inhabitants over the past few decades has underlined the fact that it remains an integral part of the Kolkata Conurbation, which extends over a vast tract, with the city of Kolkata as its pivot on either side of the river Hooghly. As a satellite township, Sonarpur highlights the demand for adequate urban infrastructures. Indeed, this particular *Umland* of the city in every direction and its long history of mass migration demands a balanced management of land occupation.

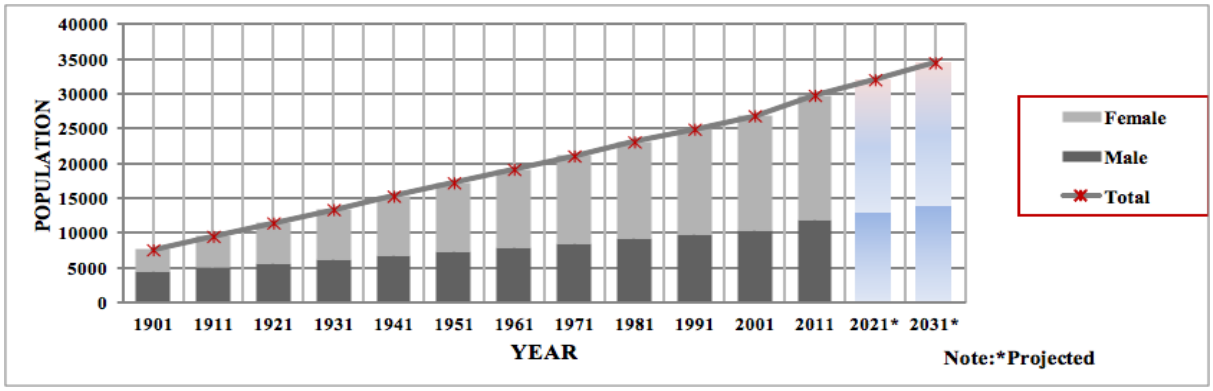

Figure 1. Decadal distribution of actual and estimated residents in the study area (1901-2021).

The occupational pattern in the eight wards of the study area includes a large percentage of people engaged in the service activities: the wards numbered 11, 12, 13 and 14 are service oriented. Wards like 7, 8 and 10 reveal an inclination towards the household industry. A moderate share of population in every ward remains engaged in trading and commercial activities followed by agricultural activities (mostly for domestic use). A small proportion of working people is engaged in transport activities, like rickshaw pulling and auto rickshaw driving (Figure 2).

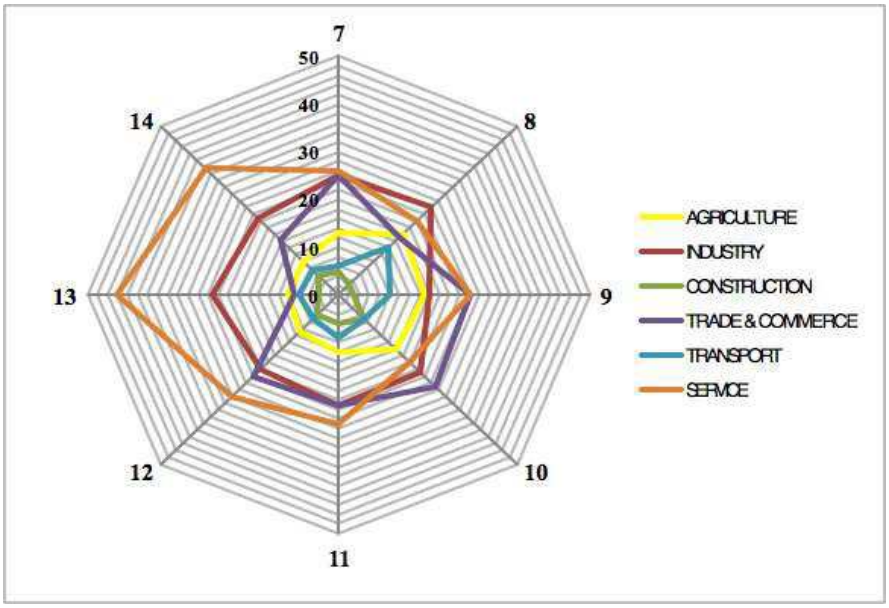

Figure 2. Occupational pattern in the study area in 2011.

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Sonarpur: The Changing Land Use

A land-use policy planning needs to be carried out simultaneously at national, regional and local levels with an integrated approach to development in each aspect — forestry, agricultural and non-agricultural use and areas unsuitable for productive use (Jaffrey & Bajpai 2007). The competitive demand for use in each category has to be optimized keeping in view social demand and the limited supply of land. The demand for land is mainly motivated by the need for the production of food, for shelter and for infrastructural uses, rather than by considerations of ecological balance and maintaining a healthy physical environment.

As mentioned earlier, Sonarpur has evolved through the years as a major urban fringe around Kolkata. Typically, however, it had sprawled haphazardly. The Garia to Sonarpur Station road is highly congested, and the urbanization process has been mostly unplanned. Much of the vacant green patches of land have been engulfed and ponds have been drained off for setting up the land for residential and industrial use, like the *Senbo* Industries and the Future Engineering College Campus. A rapid alteration in its land use had thus marked the beginning of yet another urban centre that shares the Kolkata's population but is already overpopulated. Following Singh (1996), it may be said that, since cities are dynamic human artefacts that constantly undergo structural change, redevelopment and re-growth, they involve visible changes in urban relationships with the surrounding territory, most conspicuously that on their outskirts. Gottman (1961) stated that that the problem of changes in land use caused by urban explosion become chronic in the case of the rural-urban fringes of Indian cities. A marked alteration of low lying agriculturally suitable land in Sonarpur into residential areas for housing and settlement accommodations has also meant that several vacant cultivable waste lands have been used to accommodate temporary shelters or squatters, thus hindering productive uses. According to Phillips (1999), two peri-urban zones can be typically identified: 1) a zone of direct impact, which experiences the immediate impact of land demands from urban growth, pollution and the like; 2) a wider market-related Zone of Influence, recognizable in terms of the handling of agricultural and natural resource products. In the case of Sonarpur, perhaps both of the above cases are applicable, for it comes under the direct impact of Kolkata Conurbation and, since it was already a market location, its urbanization got a steady momentum. Figure 3 below depicts land use in the study area that dates back to 1971, when the region was mostly under crop cultivation and the few settlements were discretely spread (Figure 3).

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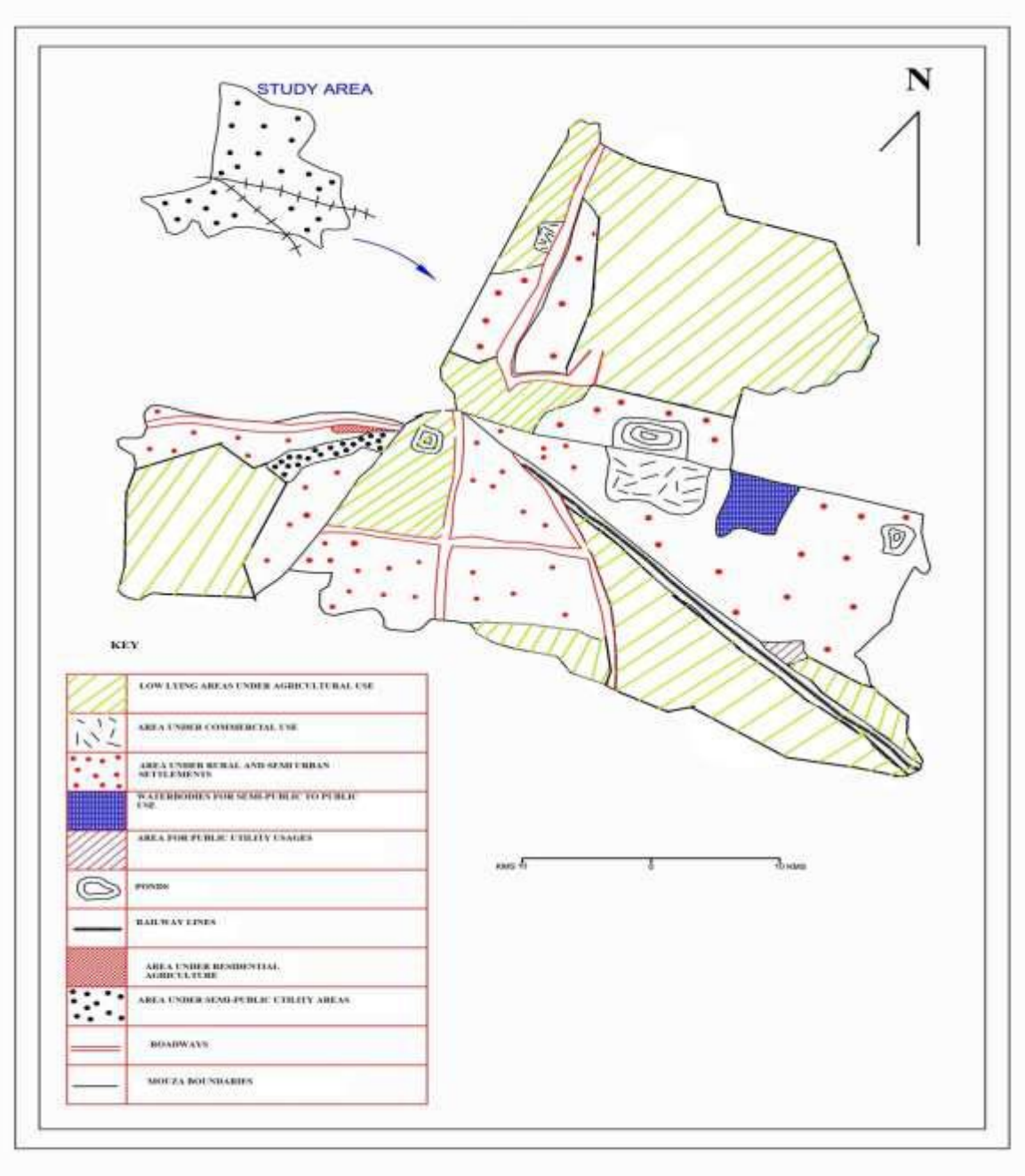

Figure 3. Land use profile of the study area 1971-1991.

Sonarpur: The Interrelationship with the Mother Town

Sonarpur has evolved through the ages, starting as a major centre of trading. Being a market area, it flourished rapidly in terms of commercial and settlement perspectives. Function-ability as one can define a region's identifying characteristics could be a well-defined determinant in this major peripheral settlement near Kolkata. The area of study, a favoured location of alternative settlement for the middle-income groups of the city, depends on Kolkata for the supply of finished industrial and commercial products and of building materials. While it acts as feeder 'town' to Kolkata for the supply of agricultural products, the

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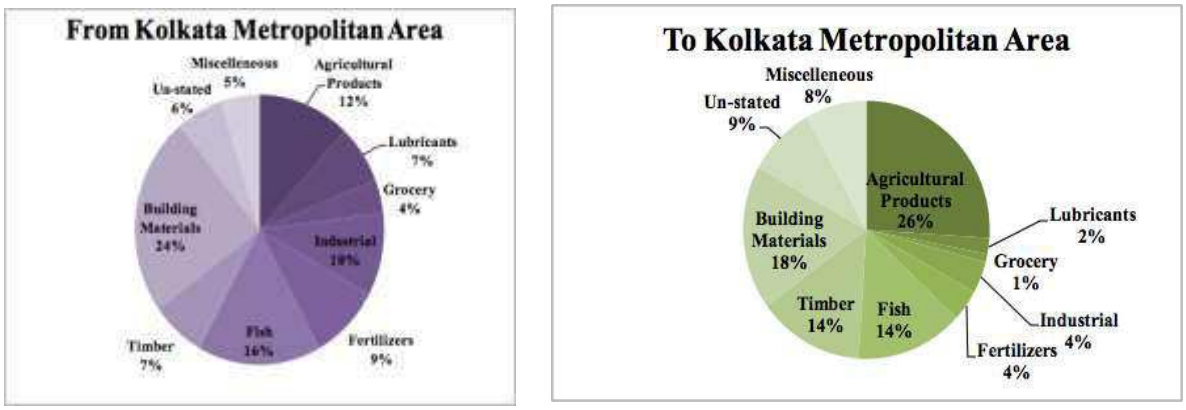
daily inflow of domestic, industrial and commercial products outweighs the outflow (Figures 4a & 4b, and Figure 5).



Figures 4a & 4b. Inflow and outflow of domestic, industrial and commercial products to the study area from Kolkata metropolitan area in 2010-2011.

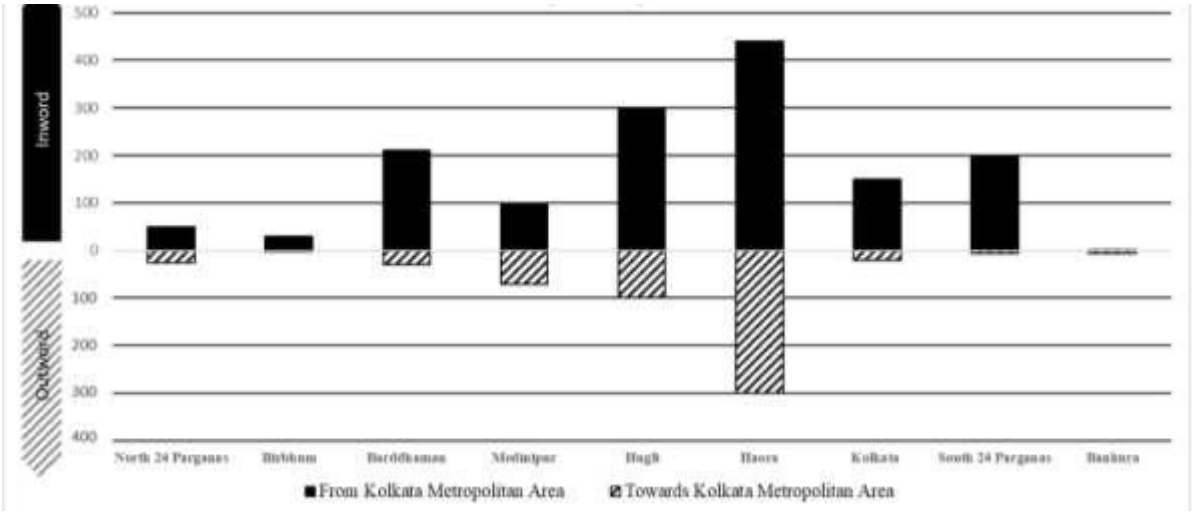


Figure 5. Traffic volume (inward and outward) in Kolkata Metropolitan Area from different districts of West Bengal in 2018-2020.

The surfaced roads in Sonarpur are mostly water-bound macadam type and few are actually covered and black topped (Figure 6a), which during monsoon increases the risk of over flooding of the surfaced roads of the former type. Although nearly 84% of the unsurfaced roads are motorable (Figure 6b), there is a lower percentage of fast-moving vehicles in and near the study area (Figure 6c). This has been tried to be tackled through links with the Eastern Metropolitan by-pass. However, as the road channels linking the Eastern Metropolitan by-pass and Sonarpur are narrow, they enhance traffic congestion.

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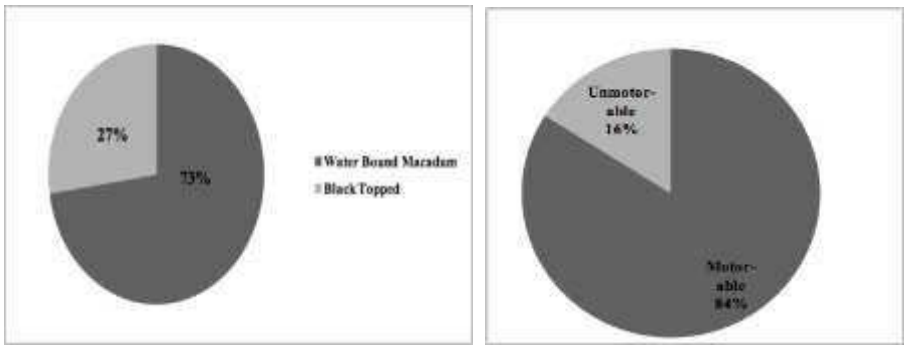

Figures 6a & 6b. Types of surfaced and unsurfaced roads serving the area of study.

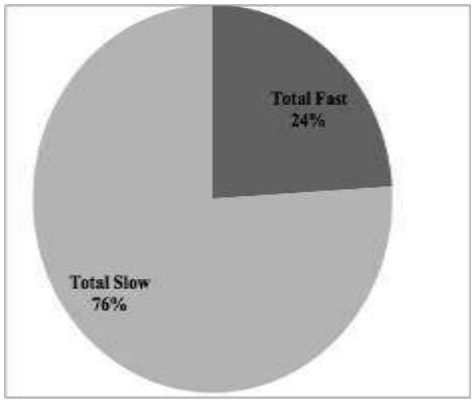

Figure 6c. Distribution of vehicles passing through and from the study area to Kolkata metropolitan area based on speed.

The diagram below (Figure 7) shows the types and volume of traffic flow from Kolkata to the study area and vice versa. The traffic survey report on the Sonarpur–Baruipur road linking the Kolkata Metropolitan Area to the study area highlighted that between 8 am and 8 pm (covering both the peak and slack hours) the number of vehicles moving form Kolkata Metropolitan Area to the study area outweighs that from study area to the city. This shows a greater dependency of the study area on its mother city for the transportation of goods and passengers, which underlines the typical relation between a city and its fringe. In this light, efforts are expected to be made to improve the existing roads to and from the study area by widening carriageway, and to establish separate bus bays and separate provisions for light and heavy vehicles, systematic signalling systems, and so on. This may ensure a speedy and smooth journey between Kolkata and its southern fringe area. Since land use planning and transportation planning are closely related, when identifying the area for residential needs a policy aimed at decongesting the central area and encouraging development in the outskirts through smooth and hassle-free commutation becomes a priority (Bhattacharya 2010). This Rural-Urban Symbiosis Approach advocates a symbiotic relationship between the city and its periphery in terms of their spatial interlinkages, exchange of products and numerous socio-economic services and amenities. There is always a tendency among the human population to cling to the growing urban centres, be it in a metropolitan city, a town or an urban unit where there is easy access to basic necessities. The impact of such polarisation may often cause

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considerable disparity between urban and rural areas, which is an unwanted consequence in terms of regional development.

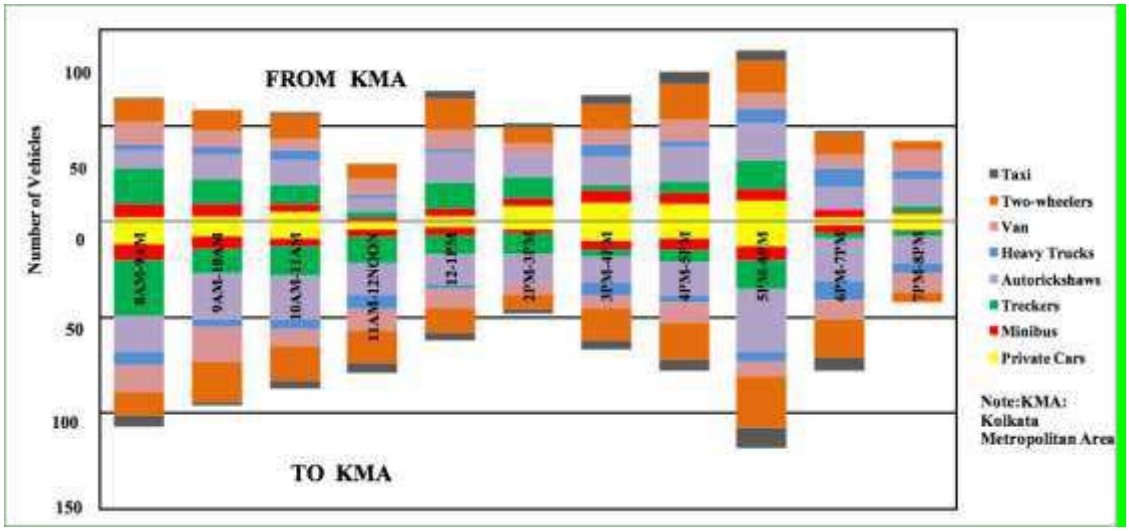

Figure 7. Distribution of classified traffic volumes on an average week day (8am-8pm)-2011.

Recommendations

Generally, the network of cities, towns and villages and their links to surrounding rural areas, becomes the key factor when determining how local economic functions are transmitted across geographical space. It is important to maintain the interdependence through balanced transmission of functions and activities between the city and its surroundings. The overall study of the Sonarpur Urban Fringe reported here suggests that the Kolkata region should engage in improving the transport routes and the availability of surfaced and paved roads, which would improve the speed of vehicles moving to and from the study area from Kolkata City. These improvements would help to address Sonarpur's heavy traffic congestion and achieve the major aim of minimizing the transport cost associated with slow-moving vehicles in terms of higher petroleum consumption. The 'urban functions' in rural-urban fringes need to be taken into account in the regional development strategies. Land use suffers from huge, abrupt and haphazard residential use. This trend needs to be checked by the Municipality through better regulations, and the agricultural fields that have been discretely established, mostly for domestic production, should be protected from future non-agrarian use.

Conclusion

Much needs to be further studied on the specific issues outlined in this Report. The area under study covers a very small part of the urban settlements and their social patterns. The region is rapidly becoming a major agglomeration of the Kolkata Metropolitan Region. If the twentieth century is often remarked as the *Urban Century*, the twenty first century could be called the Century of *City Planning*. According to a United Nations report (UN-DESA 2022), the period between 1950 and 2050 would witness a dramatic shift in the world population from 65% rural to 65% urban. Also, it remarked that the global population has already increased three-

fold than what it was in the middle of twentieth century. Such dramatic growth may be attributed to rising number of global populations surviving till reproductive age and more, gradual increase in human life-span, urbanization and migration from rural areas to cities.

In line with this pattern, Asian Cities experience a symbiotic assimilation of People-Space-Function (Sharma 2007) as they undergo a geographical expansion beyond their periphery that involves their rural counterparts becoming urbanised. In short, I would suggest that, in order to let the City of Kolkata 'breathe', its fringe areas should be designed rationally to sustain both urban and rural land uses as once mentioned by Rajagopalan (2010). Infact, the changing land use pattern and the growing needs of population residing in such fringe areas focus on the immediate need of formulating in-situ planning for the urban areas, rural regions and what lies within (Ravindra 1996).

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Locating Cultural Practice: Territorialisation and Legitimisation in Prague's Cultural Centres[1]

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Based on ethnographic research, this article explores how space territorialisation is practised by cultural producers and, in particular, Prague's cultural centres. Fieldwork began as insider research. Conducted in two popular venues — Fabrika in the city centre and Kotelna in a peripheral socialist modernist housing estate — the fieldwork is examined through a perspective combining the spatial dimensions of cultural practices legitimisation and Kärrholm's concept of territorialisation. I argue that such a strategy enables an observer to identify basic regimes of belonging, professionalism and sustainability whereby the competence of local 'cultural intermediaries' and their right to occupy space is demonstrated, shared, contested and negotiated.
Keywords: City of Prague; cultural industries; cultural capital; space; territorial (re)production.

Introduction

It was an evening in early November 2020. The second wave of the pandemic was on the rise in the Czech Republic, and I was interviewing Samuel, the unofficial head of Fabrika,[2] a cultural centre that has legally rented, settled and transformed the courtyard and garages of an abandoned industrial building in the centre of Prague. Samuel — a philosophy graduate and the project's spokesperson — leads a fluid collective of more than 60 people. The interview was online. Samuel was sitting in front of his laptop on the floor of the former workspace that Fabrika uses for exhibitions. We mostly discussed Fabrika's current plans and negotiations with the owner of the building — the Czech state. For Fabrika, being forced to leave was an omnipresent threat. But Samuel also reflected on his production team, its social and cultural background and on general relations with other venues.

Our interview was interrupted several times when Samuel's phone rang. Each time it was the same staff member asking Samuel for advice about buying wooden materials for the maintenance of the cultural centre. After the third call, I asked a final question: 'Where would you like to see Fabrika in two years?' Samuel replied, 'That's a good question […] Would you mind if I interrupted our interview for a moment? I really need to write down a shopping list for the guy I was speaking to. I'm really sorry'. 'Of course, no worries', I said. And for the next several minutes, we shared our quiet 'online office', sitting calmly in front of our cameras. A few minutes later, Samuel made his final phone call and dictated to his colleague all the things that needed to be bought. He then added, 'I chose a four-metre stick so you'll be able to fit it into the car.' He said goodbye and, shifting his attention towards me, started to answer the question I had almost forgotten:

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2 The names of individuals and venues are anonymised.

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> ‘When local urban planners asked me for a crucial recommendation concerning a public tender for Depo[3], I repeatedly emphasised the contract length. It makes a big difference if you can count on a one- or two-year contract as we now have at Fabrika. Altogether we’ve had five years of rent-free contracts. The owner is still threatening us with a commercial tender, which can start whenever they want it to. An ideal contract is for ten years. In my opinion, a decade enables you to create a serious strategy, including a coherent and meaningful business plan as well as a project with a vision of sustainability. I would sincerely love to stay here for ten years. But that is only one point. The second point is that the current situation prevents us from engaging in any long-term planning. Luckily for us, we’re hardworking, handy and smart. We are able to transform waste material into usable stuff. We use things ten times. We use them again and again, and that is the reason we haven’t fallen apart. What’s more, we are developing […]. I would really love to plan several years in advance, to be able to decide that next year we’re going to have a big screening or a particular concert. Safe planning in advance helps to avoid devastating consequences, such as what happened with last year’s concert by the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. It cost us a lot of effort, and, in the end, the outcome was so bad that we had to cover the expenses through earnings from beer and other stuff. The Prague Philharmonic Orchestra did not turn out to be an ideal partner for such an unusual outdoor performance.
>
> What is also crucial is being able to maintain the whole building. The owner, the Czech state, should allow us to repair and maintain the rest of the complex, at least for some time.[4] It would be a win-win situation for us as well as for the state. For us, there will be more options to fulfil the potential of the building both spatially and conceptually. For the state, it increases the likelihood of taking it back in far better condition. If we had ten years to be able to get the building into good shape and transform it into a coherent complex again, we would make meaningful use of every last square metre of the barracks. We are already prepared for that.’

Samuel always has a plan, and he seems to do everything in Fabrika. Later, as we continued talking, it became more and more clear that Samuel was already thinking of his postponed duties, so I wrapped up the interview in order to let him go.

A few days later, when I went through the recording and notes, I realised that this part of the interview revealed his practice, roles and relationship to Fabrika in multiple analytical contexts. His eclectic performance and concepts uncovered important aspects of creating, maintaining and negotiating the care and operation and legitimacy of a cultural centre through both physical labour and cultural production knowledge and skills. Therefore, his actions and ideas can be interpreted (perceived) as an interconnected set of territorialisation practices which require and demonstrate a certain level of cultural competence.

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3 Depo is a former tram and trolleybus depot. The Prague Transport Company has not used it for nearly twenty years. The city recently introduced a plan to transform it into a cultural centre.

4 The rest of the industrial building includes forty thousand square meters of abandoned rooms and offices that were vacated in 2001.

* * *

In what are referred to as the cultural and creative industries (Gibson 2003, O'Connor 2010), factories and other industrial buildings and centres remain an important feature of contemporary modes of urban entrepreneurialism (Florida 2002, Harvey 1989, 2005, see also DeMuynck 2019). The creative industries are therefore based on claims that they bring life back to the city's abandoned or neglected areas through leisure time activities, concerts, cinema, exhibitions, workshops and so on. In critical urban studies, those processes have been explored using terms such as gentrification (De Sena and Krase 2015, Huse 2014, Lees, Slater and Wyly 2008, Slater 2021, Smith 1979), art-washing (Tunali ed 2021), displacement effects (Marcuse 1985, Atkinson 2015), the creative class (Florida 2002, 2017) or authenticity in public spaces (Zukin 2010). Such venues shape urbanites' relationship both to leisure time in the city and the consumption/experience of the omnipresent, commodified cultural production. In this way, they therefore create a framework for their legitimisation through the (re)production, sharing and spreading of particular cultural tendencies. This is why I would like to explore which features of (un)conscious demonstrations of individual and collective appropriation can be identified in the processes of the socio-material production of cultural centres. In other words, I seek to demonstrate how and why a place or space is territorialised and legitimised through the production of cultural activities and programmes, that is, through specific cultural practices.

For the purpose of this article, two cultural centres are analysed as one strategically-situated urban field: the previously mentioned Fabrika and the Kotelna community centre, located in a modernist housing estate on the periphery of Prague. I assume that both cultural venues are physically and symbolically spatialised (Lefebvre 1991, Soja 1989) and territorialised (Kärrholm 2012) by their participants' conceptualisations and practice originating in a wider field of values and tastes. This means that the producers, the maintainers and other such individuals act consistently with their origin and status as well as the constellation of their actual social and cultural competence created around/within/among those collectives and venues.

Fieldwork, Methodology and Theory

The data used for this article come from fieldwork conducted in Prague between 2017–2021. Within this period, I was able to realise hundreds of hours of observation as well as more than twenty unstructured or semi-structured interviews. The findings presented are part of the research project 'Cultural Capital: Legitimisation Mechanisms and the Reproduction of Cultural Hierarchies'. The interdisciplinary research team is based at Charles University and consists of two sociologists and two anthropologists carrying out interviews, media analysis and fieldwork among young urban citizens.

My research develops in the context of urban anthropology (Pardo and Prato eds 2012, Pardo and Prato 2018) and the mainstream literature on legitimacy and the complex dynamics of legitimisation (Pardo and Prato eds 2018: 1-8; 2019); in particular, I describe the use of cultural practices to 'legitimise' the appropriation of urban space. This context provides a suitable framework for deeper insight into these complex urban phenomena. In other words, ethnography in the city represents a fruitful way of recounting current issues in urban

environments through an emphasis on the intersectionality of such phenomena. Within these processes, the city itself is almost impossible to define. In her search for an appropriate definition and perspective on the urban, Prato (2015) suggests that city should be taken rather as urban community, a Weberian 'ideal type' that consists of multiple spheres: *urbs*, *polis* and *civitas*; that is, the physical built-up space, the social association of citizens and the political community (Prato 2015: 19-20). Within this epistemological position, one is easily able to trace partial yet multiple connections between cultural practices (on the level of *polis* and *civitas*) and the territorialisation of space (level of *urbs*).

My fieldwork focuses on two niches in this ideal-typical city and methodologically refers to what Marcus labelled strategically-situated (urban) ethnography (Marcus 1995: 110), a softer 'foreshortened' version of multi-sitedness where the time-space scale is not so geographically dispersed. However, the ethnographer's task is still to follow the phenomena, to be virtually present 'there, there and there' (Hannerz 2003). It is designed to allow the researcher to shift among the fieldwork sites and follow strategies, practices, concepts, things or ideas while crossing spatiotemporal boundaries and to incorporate macroprocesses as well (see Falzon ed 2009). It opens a meta-space where all significant findings that originate in spatially detached urban places can be put together. It creates a new space for examining what the socio-material fields surrounding Fabrika and Kotelna community centres have in common.

Both centres were the loci of some of my previous research activities. Thus, my research in these places can be defined as insider research. Close fieldwork relationships can bring both conceptual and ethical benefits as well as problems, especially when it comes to issues of intimacy, trust and the question of publicising some findings.[5]

My decision was however not simply instrumental. I chose Fabrika and Kotelna primarily because both venues are (trans)locally recognisable, and they represent a typical and visible example of mainstream cultural meeting points which fuse together a wide range of cultural supply. My fieldwork in Kotelna started in 2014 when I was hired as community coordinator. The goal of the applied researcher position was to analyse local practices and report on the cultural needs of local communities to Kotelna's production team. When the project was finished in 2016, Kotelna remained a long-term focus of my academic interests.

The inner world of Fabrika's production was opened to me in 2018 when we chose the former factory's workshop as a venue for an anthropological exhibition focusing on migration to modernist housing estates in Prague. My current ethnographic research into both urban spaces started in early 2019. Its theoretical setting revealed new perspectives on the sharing and negotiation of cultural competences within and through the occupied spaces of cultural production. Let me briefly then describe the stories of Fabrika and Kotelna.

Kotelna Community Centre

Kotelna, located on the modernist estate of Dlouhé Lávky, was established in 2013. The building itself is a boiler station which was designed as a heating source for the surrounding prefabricated buildings but was never used for its intended purpose. Throughout the 1990s and

5 Hence why both the toponyms and names of my communicative partners are anonymised.

2000s, it was used as a storage and car service facility. In 2012, the new mayor of the local municipality started to implement a vision of cultural development based on strategic community development, creative placemaking policies and participation. As a result of this new cultural strategy, the municipally-owned building was chosen to be transformed into a community space.

The pioneers of Kotelna's cultural production came from two different backgrounds. The first group gathered around skateboarding subculture and the production of local sporting events. In 2013, they had been locally active for more than five years. The second group consisted of incoming cultural producers and staff gathered around the designated director of a new cultural organisation established by the municipality to ensure stable funding and the development of local cultural centres. Together these groups made a coalition which predetermined Kotelna's further development and also its future instability.

Kotelna was projected to be the cornerstone of the cultural facilities to be located in the municipality. Nonetheless, the first years of its existence could be best described as a struggle to reconstruct a neglected building while, simultaneously, desperately trying to establish a good relationship with the local inhabitants. In 2016, the reconstruction was finished. The cultural centre opened and experienced a few years of local acclaim and relative stability. Things changed again in 2018. After the municipal elections, the long-time director left his position in the cultural organisation for a political career elsewhere. Kotelna's staff was therefore left with an interim director who was immediately forced to negotiate with a new municipal council. Disunity within the local cultural milieu then started to reappear, which in early 2020 led to significant changes in Kotelna's cultural direction.

Fabrika Cultural Centre

Fabrika started to transform a former industrial factory on the edge of the Prague city centre in 2016 when a group of cultural producers — who had previously led another successful but unstable venue—negotiated a peppercorn rent of 1 CZK for two years with the Czech Ministry of Justice. From then on, a diverse group of people around Samuel and his wife Delilah started to use, reconstruct and maintain part of the factory, especially its spacious yard, workshops and garage. The fluid production team consists of people who produced a previous venue, a few student scouts, former drug addicts and other people recruited via the snowball effect. After a pivotal year, Fabrika established itself as one of the most popular cultural and recreation centres in Prague. The large and flexible factory building offered a multifunctional space that satisfies the needs of several target customer groups. Inclusivity, affordability and a low threshold is the main cultural framework of Fabrika's production ideology. This influences its financial sustainability model, which is 95% based on income from food, drinks, services and programme. Only 5% of Fabrika's budget comes from public subsidies. At the city-wide level, the cultural centre has become widely known as an example of a successful and inclusive venue that eventually also became a destination sought out by tourists. In 2018, this story of success was interrupted by a new series of events. Without prior notice, the Ministry of Justice handed the building over to the State Property Maintenance Office (ÚZSVM), which later launched a tender for a new commercial operator. Fabrika's team was put under pressure because the proposed rent for the building was around 100,000 CZK (2,600 EUR) per month. For them,

such a monthly rent is unaffordable. Therefore, for the last three years, Samuel and his friends have been trying (so far without any visible effect) to negotiate with the state, the city and other institutions, advocating for the centre's contemporary and future (trans)local importance.

Tracing Similarities: Territorialisation and Legitimisation of Cultural Practice

We might seem to be looking at two separate cases. Fabrika and Kotelna, after all, have different institutional origins. Kotelna is funded by the municipality and located on the periphery of Prague, whereas Fabrika is an entrepreneurial venue in the very heart of the city. But there are several similarities which make simultaneous analysis of both centres extremely productive.

The first analytically important circumstance is that both centres were, from their very beginnings, led by people of similar social and cultural status. These actors can easily be labelled members of a 'creative class' (Florida 2002, 2017). These ideal-type inhabitants of post-industrial cities are best defined by variable work strategies, progressive liberal and globalist values and production strategies oriented towards various modes of cultural production (in the art, design or marketing industries). Recent research also identifies these individuals as significant agents within the processes of gentrification and displacement (Lees, Slater and Wyly 2008, Florida 2017). Despite the trendiness of the creative class label, one has to note also the broader and more neutral Bourdieuian expression 'cultural intermediaries', which represents a 'group of taste makers and need merchants whose work and parcel is part of an economy that requires the production of consuming tastes and dispositions' (Bourdieu 1984 quoted by Smith Maguire 2014: 15). Scott (2017) sees it today as an ephemeral group that disseminates symbolic goods (ibid: 61). These symbolic goods are usually co-demonstrated materially in physical space and intertwined with the broader phenomena of the previously mentioned gentrification, displacement, art-washing and the like. In other words, individual or collective agency lies in variable modes of production and labour, which are demonstrated and (re)produced socio-materially in the specific contexts of each cultural venue.

Secondly, both Fabrika and Kotelna must contest and legitimise their values, practices, strategies and conceptions, even their (non)materialised taste against both 'internal' and 'external' cultural (economic, social, etc.) forces. In accordance with Chan, it is not only cultural consumption but also production that is differentiated and stratified (Chan 2010). From a critical distance, the position of those collectives is extremely complex. On the one hand, they can be considered gentrifiers, while on the other, they live under high risk of being gentrified (Huse 2014) or even physically (Marcuse 1985) or symbolically displaced (Atkinson 2015). They can also take part as (un)conscious agents in art-washing strategies performed by private stakeholders or developers. Moreover, they face the internal discrepancies and politicised efforts of official institutions, which put into question their ideological and cultural orientation and even their formal existence in the building.

These processes create a specific set of individual and group practices and competences that enable us to grasp their embeddedness in the cultural consumption economy. In other words, no matter whether actors identify themselves with (or are aware of) the broad labels 'creative class' or 'cultural intermediaries', they identify themselves with a space that is defined and

territorialised by cultural practice, competence and expertise.[6] It can thus be shown that those individuals and groups share and publicly contest their everyday practices and concepts, arising from not only their origin and social background but also from features of cultural practice that are adopted and (re)produced spatially in both the physical and symbolic sense.

The origins of these perspectives can be found in Bourdieu. He simply claims that we tend to transform our cultural abilities into various forms of profit (Bourdieu 1984: 12). Parts of this profit are materialised and physically demonstrated. The framework of cultural practice is therefore always spatialised and territorialised. In this context, Glevarec and Pinet (2017) go beyond Bourdieu's theory while emphasising various levels of contemporary eclecticism — put simply, the ability to recognise relevant cultural trends in a wide range of activities which, rather than a sign of distinction, are a matter of differentiation. While examining the spatial dimensions of such processes, the notion of eclectic differentiation can be easily connected with social space (re)production and spatial turn concepts (Holston 1989, Lefebvre 1991, Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003, Soja 1989). More recently, it resonates with Kärrholm's notion of territorial complexity (Kärrholm 2007, 2012; Mubi Brighenti and Kärrholm 2020), which enables the researcher to grasp the broader impacts of cultural practice within the territorialisation of space.

To be precise, this perspective helps us to grasp the processes of territorialisation and space appropriation via cultural practice. Within this context, it should be emphasised that space is being socio-materially produced (Lefebvre 1991) so as to be appropriated culturally. This is revealed through the individual and collective spatial-cultural capacity to claim either symbolic or physical space. These competences are essential for one's orientation in the local cultural milieu. In other words, we need to turn to the (re)production of cultural fields, to what Doreen Massey rightly sees as 'essential to an adequate theory of spatiality' (Massey 2005 cited by Savage 2011: 511).

In order to illustrate these processes on multiple levels, it is suitable to see territorialisation and space appropriation via cultural practice as part of what Mattias Kärrholm describes in his concept of territorial complexity (Kärrholm 2007, 2012). He claims that territories are a network of spatially defined, controlled and conceptualised socio-material practices that are (in)visibly inscribed into particular spatial configurations (Kärrholm 2012:12). Kärrholm sees the making of territories as subfields—processes which (re)produce a landscape of relations (Kärrholm 2012: 137). Actors and objects are actively (re)producing this landscape in the background of their everyday lives. Instead of focusing on demonstrations of hegemony or dominance, Kärrholm wants to observe the positionality and relationality of both human and nonhuman actors. For example, (in this way) Kärrholm would refuse to classify physical displacement simply as a negative process connected with gentrification, he would trace the neighbourhood change as a set of social and material forces (or vectors) which

6 In my interpretation, cultural practice and competence stand for an assemblage of actions, strategies, narratives and discursive or even material features which help an individual to demonstrate and claim his/her cultural 'literacy' and ability to (re)produce cultural traits that are in some way attractive/consumed (at least for/by a few members of society) in order to achieve a certain goal (e.g., operation of a cultural centre).

(re)configure the spatial organisation and the landscape of relations while taking gentrification's push and pull factors as input features.

In accordance with Kärrholm, my goal is to observe the relationship/contestation of an individual's efforts and practice in interplay/cooperation with their surroundings. I want to demonstrate that territorial networks are constantly (re)produced by cultural practices, strategies, appropriations and associations (Kärrholm 2007: 441). These categories are overlapping and orientational; in fact, some territorial (re)production can be labelled using each of the four subtypes at the same time, depending on the perspective. For greater clarity, I will use the framework term territorialisation because it encompasses the fluid character of cultural practice legitimisation features.

Territorialising the Space of Cultural Practice

Conceptualising territorialisation and legitimisation as intersectional processes within the wider context of gentrification, displacement and other current urban phenomena enable me to show how the space of cultural centres is changed, settled, negotiated and contested by their producers. Let us now empirically demonstrate how both the symbolic and physical space of Fabrika and Kotelna is territorialised and legitimised through cultural practice.

Kotelna and Fabrika opened after negotiations with official stakeholders in 2013 and 2016 respectively. In each case, the cultural venues were 'settled' and operated by a group of people with different backgrounds but with a similar view on what should be done with neglected and abandoned buildings: buildings like these should be transformed into places that can bring new life to their surroundings, the city and so on. Most of these people had previous experience with placemaking and cultural or sports events production, whether in the vicinity or elsewhere. Although today the recruitment of new people differs according to the status of each centre — Kotelna has an official hiring procedure, whereas Fabrika's human resources are recruited more organically — in the early years, both places assembled production teams informally. Willy, a former production manager at Kotelna who grew up in the surrounding housing estate, reflects on it thus: 'I was one of the first people to be addressed because I had five years of experience producing my festival'. Similar to others, Willy also sees the pioneering years as a time when everything was loose and punk, and things were done with lots of enthusiasm and open-mindedness.

At Fabrika, people are still hired in a similarly casual and open way. Lou, a 30-year-old social scientist and former bartender at the cultural centre, came to Prague from Slovakia and tried several social work jobs. He describes the typical way of becoming a member of Fabrika's team:

> 'I didn't have previous experience as a server, but I considered that option. When Fabrika had been open, I think, for a half a year, my friend forwarded me an advert that they were looking for bartenders […] It was written in such a human way that I said, okay, I'll try it. I worked there for at least a year and a half, and they treated me well because I was still able to study at university.'

These pivotal months and years of existence in both cultural centres were not only a time of team consolidation. The staff had to immediately make contact with various groups of

potential users, visitors and, of course, detractors. Being new in the locality, they had to carefully introduce their cultural skills and plans in order to build a base for further territorialisation. Team members needed to search for a scheme that would attract people. They tried cinema, theatre performances, concerts, subcultural activities, festivals, workshops, hobbies and so on. The programmes were also filled with ad-hoc activities. A rigorous strategy was continuously evolving. The biggest threat at the very beginning was predominantly the negative feedback from people living around the cultural centres. Willy sees it as an important and formative part of his experience, one that increases an individual's cultural practice resilience:

> 'It was me and Youri [leader of the local skateboard community] who earned recognition for Kotelna among the public. It was we who were sworn at because people felt it was a place for Gypsies. We were to blame for displacing the car service centre and destroying its business and for building a den for junkies.'

Fabrika's situation was similar. Employees and producers were aware that they needed to be absolutely strict and careful about night-time noise. Its proactive attitude led to a situation where, today, most of the neighbours are satisfied with Fabrika's impact on its surroundings. Similarly, continuous complaints about Kotelna's noisy operation (caused especially by music events and skaters) resulted in the official creation of a local taskforce consisting of local councillors, police officers, citizens with complaints and members of the cultural centre production team. From a long-term perspective, this strategy calmed the situation, and the relationship between Kotelna and its surroundings grew closer.

The situation of both cultural centres therefore seems to be gradually stabilising. Obviously, this was not only a matter of time but also of the producers' territorialisation — becoming more accustomed to the local space and more attuned to the local habits and sociocultural needs. Tamara, a cultural-studies graduate and former interim director of Kotelna, put it like this:

> 'A significant change came when we started to offer draught beer [...]. It was at this time that social housing was discussed at a participatory planning meeting for three hundred people. The situation had changed. They didn't yell at us anymore. On the contrary, we became a shelter where they could yell at the mayor. For me, it is a big result—from an island of deviation to a place where problems are solved.'

One might get the impression that beer and time are all that are needed to help a cultural centre and its producers to accelerate its legitimisation and public recognition in Prague. But Fabrika's Samuel puts it in a very similar manner when referring to searching for consumers in a heavily gentrified neighbourhood:

> 'For a year or so, we wandered around the neighbourhood […] In the end, we realised that there are still a lot of long-time residents, but they have no places to go. Here, it's one bistro after another, apartments rented on Airbnb and traditional shops such as locksmiths or ironmongers have disappeared [...] And here we are. People tell us, 'It's fantastic you have beer for 29 CZK.' So, if you're a student with empty pockets and you only tip 1 CZK, you can be sure that our bartenders won't be offended.'

In fact, Tamara's and Samuel's reflections illustrate that neither local centre wants to be an 'island of deviation'. Rather, they want to be part of the neighbourhood and react to broader issues. Thus, we can identify two separate but interconnected ways of being able to understand the impacts of structural phenomena such as gentrification: (1) that it is experienced in the city centre by Fabrika and defined by Samuel through issues of affordability and displacement of people, services and so on and (2) its consequence in the form of a need for social housing in Dlouhé Lávky's modernist settlement for the displaced (possibly from the surroundings of Fabrika) mentioned by Kotelna's Tamara. Part of the cultural competence and practice of Kotelna's and Fabrika's staff can be seen as a reaction to similar problems, no matter what one's physical or symbolic position is towards the displacement. In other words, part of each venue's territorialisation and legitimisation practice is an ability to demonstrate that it understands the struggles of its surroundings.

Beyond those proclamations, there lies a synchronous layer of strengthening the position of cultural practice. Within this layer, sets of strategies and conceptualisations of physical and symbolic territorialisation can be reduced to three 'contextualised' (Pardo and Prato eds 2019: 2-3) legitimising categories: (i) sharing, (ii) contesting and (iii) negotiating cultural competence. These are, in turn, connected with particular sets of social phenomena: (a) mutual care and belonging, (b) demonstrations of professionalism and (c) practices and claims focused on sustainability, growth and pre-occupation.

Sharing Cultural Practice: Closeness, Belonging and Mutual Care

Samuel once told me with genuine excitement that he had bought all the members of his team a Fabrika-branded hoodie and that 'all the kids were really happy about it'. He also referred to the local collective as a 'nomadic theatre company' or 'family enterprise' that has 'a particular flow that grabs you and brings a strong feeling of belonging'. A similar sense of closeness, loyalty and belonging can also be observed when we turn our attention towards Kotelna's affiliates' and employees' practice and its general narrative. Some of the observed cultural producers — mainly those in higher positions — tend to refer to the venues, employees or even their visitors as if they were their children or relatives. Along with this strategy, it is stated and believed that every feature/member of the whole operating mechanism needs proper care, and they must be dealt with even when employees' personal issues come into play. Thus, short-term observers can get the impression that local production collectives are coherent organisms, and the ties among their members are similar to kinship. People are very close, and everyone tends to be sensitive to each other so that they can share a common view on making a cultural centre. This closeness consists of a quasi-intimacy: if an individual wants to profit from that closeness, he/she must adopt a certain set of informal social/cultural competences.

Although it differs from a regular contractual employer/employee relationship, a lot of beneficial workplace relations are offset by (and, at the same time, strengthened by) a great deal of precarity. Personal precarities differ mainly according to the status of each of the centres. After several years of existence, the position of people working for Kotelna became more formalised. During the early days, it was common for pioneer affiliates to be paid informally or even off the books for a particular task such as cleaning or another manual activity. Those strategies were later accompanied by part-time jobs, external partnerships or internships, which

were, in the end, replaced by stable part-time or full-time jobs similar to the contracts that officials of the municipality have.

Fabrika's situation and status allow its producers to combine a pioneer and semi-formal strategy. The nonmonetary part of Fabrika's staff reward system is based on improving both individual and collective know-how about cultural production and offering the opportunity to be part of a collective in the position you want to be. Similarly, in the early years, the pioneers of Kotelna, Willy and Youri, spent most of their time taking care of the newly opened cultural centre. The underpayment for their loyalty was non-monetarily 'repaid' via benefits, such as the opportunity to borrow a sound system or to organise birthday parties at Kotelna.

From time to time, individuals tend to raise the question of possible exploitation: They ask how the budget or earnings are allocated. But those rare suspicions and accusations do not become public. Therefore, most of the time, staff members demonstrate that being part of it is more than building loyalty through money. This rather symbolic level of territorialisation and legitimisation shows the role that cultural practice plays when it comes to the self-esteem of a particular cultural production group. Individuals' cultural competence and collective integrity is therefore strengthened and demonstrated by strong affiliation with an ensemble, place and ability to understand and produce culture whenever and wherever in the future.

Contesting Cultural Practice: The Issue of Professionalisation

The previous section introduced symptoms of another feature of territorialisation and (self-) legitimisation: sets of practices and strategies oriented towards conceptions of professional cultural production. They are co-defined by consumer needs and competition practices and strategies.

Based on this, three interconnected spheres of territorialisation can be identified: (1) the ability to attract wide audiences, (2) the way someone or something happens to be too alien/unskilled/unfriendly to be part of the centre's production milieu and (3) the distinction of sociocultural differences and position that is held by the cultural centre in the wider field of local cultural production. Put differently, these are the ways through which cultural producers seek to prove that they deserve the 'ownership' of 'their' space.

Firstly, both Kotelna's and Fabrika's ambition is to be literally for everybody. Although it is not explicitly stated, both places are designed and produced for the non-existent but ideal-typical cultural omnivore (Peterson and Kern 1996) — they perform cultural eclecticism (Glevarec and Pinet 2017). Through this strategy, Fabrika and Kotelna demonstrate their broad cultural knowledge and ability to commodify countless variations of taste. The scheduled programmes, features and leisure time opportunities prove how sincerely the producers work to attract and care about all kinds of consumers. The programmes therefore consist of offering a variety of drinks and food; activities such as cinema, open-air screenings, exhibitions, theatre, concerts, hobbies and sports; activities for parents and their children as well as for socially-marginalised people; clubs or programmes for elderly people; free playgrounds for kids and more. Everyone can find a place in the plethora of attractions.

Secondly, this wide range necessitates course rationalisation and the professionalisation of cultural production and basic team operation. It means that each centre has an internal and external operation scheme, a shift schedule and a subordination system. The disciplined modus

operandi puts pressure on individuals who, in the end, do not fit the ethos of the 'family', its dynamics and the cultural scheme of the venue. The demonstration of insufficiency differs. We can observe innocent claims that some people on Fabrika's staff did not fit in and were forced to leave the team because of their slowness, laziness or unreliability. Likewise, similar stories of 'lazy' and 'incapable' workers were identified in the conceptualisations of Kotelna's pioneers.

Those stories inform staff members and ensure they realise that it is extremely crucial to perform the activities necessary for a stable operation — bartending, cleaning, doing what one is supposed to do, being on time for one's shift and so on. Obeying the rules is the main framework that enables those who cannot keep pace to be distinguished. Lou, a former bartender at Fabrika, told me that the main principles of the centre's operation were based on hygiene, production skills and reliability. Anyone who repeatedly failed to achieve a certain level of competence in any of those categories would sooner or later be forced to leave the space because such a person increases pressure, in turn, on his teammates, the shift and the team as a whole. Internal mutuality and closeness thus cannot be established without obeying the operation's rules.

Instances which have the character of cultural contestation and legitimisation are the third sphere of territorialisation and legitimisation. The stories of Willy and Youri, Tamara and Margaret offer a suitable illustration of conflicting strategies and conceptualisations. Their story shows that, sometimes, differences based on locating oneself within a cultural practice can remain unnoticed for a long time and later escalate.

As I described earlier, Willy and Youri are locals whose activities played a key part in the upheaval of cultural life in the Dlouhé Lávky modernist housing estate. Among others (who are no longer locally active) they were the first locals to introduce the vision of community development based on Kotelna's activities in 2012/13. For some time, Willy worked for Kotelna as a cultural producer, and Youri led a skateboard club and took care of the technical operation. For them Kotelna was simply fun. They really admired the punk vibe and the contingency of its initial operation. But as the municipality wanted Kotelna's operation to become more and more formalised, its directors found themselves in conflict with pioneers such as Willy and Youri. Both men grew up on the housing estate and became visible members of the local skateboard and street subculture. They felt that Kotelna was somehow stolen from them; they became symbolically displaced, de-territorialised and delegitimised. The alienation grew so strong that they started to claim that Kotelna had become dull and was no longer for the local community. On many public or semi-public occasions, they expressed significant anti-gentrification qualms, such as the following example from Willy:

> 'Kotelna's current vibe and label are that it was never led by people from Dlouháč[7]. The building was always lent to someone specific; there was never any opportunity to give space to Dlouháč people, even if this was the original idea. This was meant to be a cultural centre for Dlouhé Lávky […]. They established a board of girls who do not respect us, and they take lots of things personally. You still had to beg for

7 Local nickname for the Dlouhé Lávky socialist modernist estate.

> everything. [...] It was too much pressure. It was not suitable for an estate. You know, I understand that they have a hipster vision, but when you're on a housing estate, plenty of other visions have to be taken into account.'

On many occasions, I asked Tamara, Margaret and other members of Kotelna's staff about their perspective on that problem. It turned out that they saw it as a clash based on cultural knowledge and practice. Tamara and Margaret negotiated their position as professionals in cultural production and emphasised that they changed the cultural centre into a well-functioning and formalised organisation. In fact, in the last five years, they became extremely popular locally, and, indeed, their professional skills became specifically territorialised. As they became more and more oriented in production, their conceptions of cultural practice gained a broader structure. Tamara once told me that besides their 'ordinary programme' oriented towards locals, they are able to produce events of 'cultural excellence'. When I asked her what this meant exactly, she said it was a cultural programme that goes beyond the social and cultural boundaries of a housing estate. For Kotelna's 'gentrifying hipsters', Tamara and Margaret, locals such as Willy and Youri held the culturally subaltern position of people unable to produce and achieve such excellence, although both men had plenty of experience with big nationwide events. In other words, Willy and Youri held a local subcultural mindset with its loosened attitude towards production and leadership, whereas Tamara and Margaret claimed themselves to be professionals and labelled the collectives and individuals around Willy and Youri as a 'bunch of losers'.

No matter who the winners or losers are or which type of production is more suitable for Kotelna, similar territorial (re)productions can be observed when members of Fabrika's team talk about their relationship with other centres. When talking about the Cyclo_Shrine venue, a nearby club that combines a bike repair station with a pub and progressive music club, Samuel mentioned that the individuals gathered around Cyclo Shrine called Fabrika 'brown', because they were 'sissies who aren't capable of causing a proper commotion'. He later stated, 'We would cause a commotion if we wanted to make a living from that commotion, but we don't want to because we're in a residential locality.'

When I discussed this distinction with another person close to Fabrika, Lou told me that the counterpoint to this tension emerged when they occasionally helped in Cyclo_Shrine as bartenders. The level of organisation there was much too loose and disorganised:

> 'You don't want to be on a shift when you're suddenly out of beer [....]. Places such as Cyclo_Shrine are fine, but actually they force you into some kind of posse, like that there's a coherent group of people.'

Again, we see that the logic of good or bad cultural production and practice lies in cultural/subcultural recognition. This sphere is defined by cultural practice, which is connected with and demonstrated through an ability to territorialise and legitimise their use of place thanks to authentic know-how and a specific and coherent level of declared professionalised skills.

Negotiating cultural capital: Sustainability, growth and pre-occupation This contestation illustrates the varieties of territorialisation within a wider cultural field. But this significantly changes when an official institution comes into play.

So far, Kotelna and Fabrika have illustrated the great variety of ways in which cultural practice acts as a territorialisation and legitimisation feature for individuals and collectives as

well as for ideologies inscribed in a socio-material space. Both teams have built their strength and reputation on close internal team relations, a sense of belonging, solidarity and shared beliefs in nonmonetary rewards. When Samuel said that Fabrika 'does not want to cause a commotion', the same goes for Kotelna: Both centres have been able to feed the cultural and leisure time demands of the urban masses in order to demonstrate that they understand what it means to be culturally skilled and eclectic enough. Their operations became professionalised, allowing them to recognise practices and strategies that would weaken their collective abilities. Last but not least, they were prepared to strike back when their cultural competences were put into question by their teammates or rivals.

The situation significantly changes when a state institution is the judge of the cultural centre's future. Official institutions have the exclusive right to decide on Fabrika's and Kotelna's existence. Suddenly, we realise that the strength and persuasiveness of claimed and practised territorialisation and claimed legitimisation are limited and much more open-ended.

Fabrika faces a long-term threat of being forced to abandon the part of the factory in which it operates. Despite frequent negotiations, the state property office remains relentless, unwilling to officially appreciate Fabrika's merits. Instead, in 2020, the state launched multiple tenders for a new tenancy. Due to the COVID-19 situation, two tenders have not been finished as the winner could not afford to pay a monthly rent of approximately 100,000 CZK. Fabrika refused to take part in both tenders, publicly claiming that a rent of around 100,000 CZK was too much for them.

The longer the Fabrika team stays, the more the physical shape of the barracks is materially transformed and therefore heavily territorialised, not only symbolically but also because the space has been changed by financial investment and the force of Fabrika's cultural practice. Samuel and his teammates' strategy is to fill the space that has been rented to them and demonstrate that they are able and willing to extend it in the near future and potentially make use of the whole building complex. As he mentioned in the introduction, the only thing they need is time and a fair contract. Part of Fabrika's unspoken anti-eviction strategy is therefore to adjust its claim to being a suitable long-term renter of the space by showing that Fabrika's collective is capable of successful operation and good maintenance. At the same time, the culturally-driven material transformation of the physical space and heavy installations (such as a sauna, pieces of contemporary art, a beach, children's playground, open-air cinema screen, stages, exhibition hall, etc.) illustrate a strategic physical pre-occupation. Although Samuel is openly critical of the local squatter's movement, which, in his opinion, worsened the position of everyone 'who wants to enter abandoned buildings formally', it still seems that his strategy of maintaining neglected buildings has several quasi-squatter features which work as a reliable territorialisation strategy for everyone not in an ownership position.

The things that happened in Kotelna from spring 2020 onwards show rather different territorialisation consequences. The conflict between the producers and pioneers seems to be finished. In March 2020, a new director took the place of Tamara. The lack of transparency in the tender and the new director's perceived lack of competences created a backlash. The professional skills of Kotelna's leadership were again a frame argument against the newly established board. By the end of 2020, most long-term employees more or less voluntarily quit their jobs at Kotelna as a demonstration of disagreement with the new cultural direction. The heavily territorialised

space and its surroundings (yard, gym, community henhouse, urban garden) became, in quick order, a place without people occupying it. Although Tamara and Margaret took it as a predominantly political decision and the destruction of their 'baby', it is clear that the public critique of Kotelna's operation and cultural direction cannot be basically overturned by an emphasis on professional competences. Local authorities therefore showed that the strongest position in the territorialisation and legitimisation of space is held by the creator and owner: the municipality. Indeed, the centre survived, but its cultural practice is being reframed.

Conclusion

Both stories demonstrate that any example of the territorialisation and legitimisation of cultural practice remains unstable and dependent on the structure of the local sociocultural field. I have tried here to demonstrate that efforts to prove the capability of becoming a competent 'cultural intermediary' must be put into the context of urban life's multiple spheres. Tracing the processes of territorialisation and legitimisation as regards Kotelna and Fabrika using the urban ideal-type triad — the *urbs, polis* and *civitas* (Prato 2015) — can help us to demonstrate how cultural practice is materialised, shared, contested and negotiated.

Firstly, people such as Samuel, Lou, Tamara and Willy must constantly prove their ability to *understand* and address local problems from the wider perspective of contemporary urban phenomena. Besides these basic skills, teams at Kotelna and Fabrika must demonstrate and practice their ability to create more or less a coherent collective of people based both on *sharing* and commitment to the cultural values their venues seek to embody. These values include closeness, belonging and mutual care. Such internal cultural practices are accompanied by a layer of contestation on the ground of the local cultural field, both on individual and institutional levels. Within this layer, cultural market tensions and competition becomes immanent as a way of territorialising and legitimising cultural practice through proclamations of professionalism, reliability and implicit demonstrations of eclecticism.

Things change when an external actor, such as the local municipality or state institutions, able to displace temporarily territorialised and legitimised cultural practices, such as those of Kotelna and Fabrika, enters the process with its formal powers and political force. In these situations, the Kotelna and Fabrika collectives faced the issue of communicating their cultural practice within the context of pre-occupancy, growth and sustainability.

Given these circumstances, we can identify two interesting modes of territorialisation: (a) Although Fabrika's territorialisation is heavily demonstrated in a physical space that has pre-occupation features, the collective does not fully depend on this physical space. Despite not being publicly stated, Fabrika's 'nomadic theatre company' is ready to take off and land somewhere else. Before they do so, however, they will try whatever it takes to preserve their spatially territorialised and 'legitimised' cultural practice. (b) Kotelna, contrariwise, has remained in place, but the people who gained locally-embedded cultural practice and competence have almost entirely disappeared. Although Kotelna's cultural direction seemed culturally dominant and allegedly legitimate, it was, for a long time, weakened by its formal structure and political tensions. The departure of Tamara therefore led to the departure of many others. A collective which seemed deeply devoted to its mission was destroyed and scattered within a few months. Thus, we see that the territorialisation and legitimisation of cultural

practice is a tricky process (Pardo and Prato eds 2018, 2019). Kotelna's collective was displaced because its cultural competence lost political legitimacy, while Fabrika's only certainty is—no matter where they are currently settled—the independence, tightness and coherence of its cultural practice. Who is then going to answer what comes first? Substance or idea?

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Labour Migration During the War: State Regulation, Integration into the Economic System and Migration Policy[1]

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In the socio-political upheaval caused by Russia's full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine, all sectors of the Ukrainian and regional economy, including the labour market and employment, are undergoing significant changes. The movement of people within Ukraine and abroad is the largest in Europe since the Second World War. These processes require scientific understanding, and an assessment of their scale and consequences is becoming extremely important. The purpose of the present study is to analyse the functioning of the labour market in Ukraine under martial law and the consequences of migration processes for the Ukrainian economy. Drawing on research methods that include dialectical, logical, systematic, legal statistical and sociological comparative analysis and synthesis, we examine the migration policy of Ukraine and the EU looking at migration management and regulation. In the conclusions we formulate recommendations that may help to address problems of labour migration and stabilize the domestic labour market and the country's economy.
Keywords: Migration, population displacement, war in Ukraine, migration policy, population employment, labour migration.

Introduction

Migration processes are important objects of research because of their impact on national economies, quality of life and education, welfare and the development and stability of nation states. In the context of expanding international economic ties, international migration is becoming increasingly important for the development of society (Liubchenko et al. 2019). As this concerns, on the one hand, the internationalization of the economy, and, on the other hand, the uneven development of countries, labour migration has acquired unprecedented socio-economic and political significance in the modern world.

In today's Ukraine, military actions are the main driver of migration, including labour migration. The events following the outbreak of full-scale war on 24 February 2022 triggered a new large-scale migration (Yaroshenko et al. 2021). The military aggression by the Russian Federation, which began with the bombing of a large number of settlements across Ukraine, caused the massive destruction of civilian infrastructure, primarily housing, and led to a large-scale displacement of people to safer western areas in the country and beyond (Gerlach and Ukrainets 2022). This was the largest migration crisis in Europe since World War II.

In the future, the issue of returning these people to Ukraine could become a serious problem, further complicated by the simplified regime of residence for Ukrainian citizens in the European Union (EU), the United States, Canada and other countries. According to the United Nations High

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Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 8 million people are temporarily displaced in Ukraine; by the end of 2022, this may increase to 8.3 million, and the number of internally displaced persons to 8.7 million. This would be a disaster for the country (CNN 2022).

Once the war ends, it will be integral to Ukraine's reconstruction to encourage people to migrate back to the country (re-migrate), establish intergovernmental agreements, and draft plans for the reintegration of Ukrainians and the restoration of the functioning of the Ukrainian community and the rebuilding of institutions (Refugees Operational Portal 2022, Yaroshenko et al. 2022). Awareness among a significant part of the population, including entrepreneurs, of the risks associated with the proximity of the borders of an aggressive neighbour would be likely to lead to massive population movements to the western and central regions. This would inevitably cause in these territories several problems related to the lack of jobs, housing, social infrastructure, and so on (Khrystova and Uvarova 2022). Developing a sustainable economy, which, in addition to investments, will require labour for construction and for other economic activities, and maximum protection from the risks and threats associated with the actions of an aggressive neighbour will be of paramount importance.

The problems of labour migration are being studied by Ukrainian scholars, such as Borshchevskyi (2022), Chichirina (2022), Mulska (2021), Suptelo (2020) and Libanova (2018). The importance of this topic is highlighted by the increase in its scale caused by the war. The specifics of the labour market in wartime require new approaches to the state regulation of employment and unemployment and to the provision of labour for migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The purpose of this ongoing work is to examine the consequences of the current migration processes for the Ukrainian economy, study the migration policy of Ukraine and the EU with a focus on the management and regulation of migration, and formulate recommendations to address the problems raised by labour migration and the issues pertaining the stabilization of the domestic labour market and the country's economy.

Materials and Methods

Our research draws on modern economic and legal theory, as well as on domestic and foreign scholars' work on labour migration. The dialectical method, one of the main methods for the study of labour migration, has contributed to the analysis of the development of interrelated and interdependent determinants of labour migration in Ukraine. The logical method has been used to investigate the current state and problematic aspects of labour migration in Ukraine, including the functioning of the labour market under martial law. The application of the systematic method has allowed us to identify ways to overcome the migration crisis caused by the outbreak of the large-scale war. Statistical and sociological methods have been used to substantiate the theoretical conclusions regarding the legal regulation of labour migration and the consequences of the migration processes for the country's economy. Using the comparative legal method, we analyse the complexities of regulating the labour migration and devising a migration policy and develop proposals for improvement in this area. We address the migration processes, identify the peculiarities of state regulation, study the migration policies of Ukraine and the European Union and investigate the issues of migration management and regulation.

Structural and logical analysis has helped to formulate methodological approaches to the study of migration processes and their relationship with the socio-economic development of the country. The method of systematic approach has been used to substantiate the strategic priorities of the state regulation of migration processes and formulate recommendations for solving problems in the field of labour migration and stabilize the domestic labour market and the country's economy. Logic and semantics have helped to define the concepts of 'migrant' and 'refugee'. Structural and functional analysis helped to identify the economic risks that arise in wartime as a result of extensive migration. Methods of formal and dialectical logic have helped to substantiate the theoretical basis of the state regulation of labour migration. A comprehensive analysis has addressed the concept of 'labour migration of the population', and helped to develop recommendations for improving the migration policy. Economic and statistical methods have been used to investigate migration factors and processes in Ukraine, assess economic losses from external migration and forecast the prospects in the field of economy and labour relations. Through the historical approach we have studied the processes of migration of the Ukrainian population over time, while the method of 'generalization' has been used to examine the international experience of migration policy.

Results

The Problem of Labour Migration in Ukraine: Impact on the Country's Economy

Let us now look at the legal categories of 'migrant' and 'refugee'. Migrants are among the most numerous people involved in displacement processes. Article 11 of the international Convention concerning Migrant Workers and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment of Migrant Workers defines migrant workers as follows: 'Migrant worker means a person who migrates or has migrated from one country to another to obtain employment, other than at his own expense, and is any person who has lawfully entered a country as a migrant worker' (International Labour Organization 1975).

It is worth emphasizing that, while the current Ukrainian legislation does not contain a definition of 'migrant', the law 'On Refugees and Persons in Need of Complementary or Temporary Protection' defines a 'refugee' as a person who is not a citizen of Ukraine and who, as a result of well-founded fears of being persecuted on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, citizenship (nationality), belonging to a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her citizenship, cannot enjoy the protection of that country, or does not wish to enjoy such protection due to the listed fears, or, not having citizenship (nationality) and being outside the country of his/her previous permanent residence, cannot or does not wish to return to it due to the above fears (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2012).

The difference between 'migrants' and 'refugees' needs further attention. First, a migrant can move both within and outside the country. Second, a migrant's may have changed his or her permanent residence in order to obtain education (training), medical care, change of employment, etc. Third, a migrant may be either a citizen of Ukraine or a foreigner, a stateless person who is legally on the territory of Ukraine. On the other hand, refugees can only be foreigners and stateless persons who are legally on the territory of Ukraine; second, refugees change their permanent place of residence due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted on the grounds of race, religion,

nationality, citizenship (nationality), membership of a particular social group or political belief; third, a refugee must be outside the country of his or her nationality and cannot enjoy its protection or be outside the country of his or her previous permanent residence. The category of 'refugee' should also include such subtypes as 'persons in need of temporary protection' and 'persons in need of complementary protection' (Bogatyrets and Gaina 2019).

Today, demography and migration are inseparable from a country's economic development. In the case of Ukraine, the functioning of the labour market under martial law is accompanied by several threats:

- Rising unemployment, deterioration of the financial situation of the population and a decrease in people's purchasing power, and a narrowing of the domestic market;
- Increased pressure on the social infrastructure, due to the need for social support for internally displaced persons;
- Increased pressure on the domestic labour market and increased competition for jobs in the host regions, due to the growing number of internally displaced persons, which especially distorts the labour market in regions that were previously characterized as having a limited number of jobs (in the western Ukrainian regions, these are Zakarpattia, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk and remote and mountainous areas of Lviv region);
- Weakening of the human resources potential in the business sector and the emergence of a shortage of certain specialists; in particular, in the areas of trade, logistics and pharmaceuticals;
- A tendency to relocate businesses and highly qualified specialists abroad, in particular, during the war and after the relevant restrictions are lifted at the end of the war.

Undoubtedly, there are negative features of labour migration that can threaten the efficient functioning of the economy and the stability of the domestic climate; above all, the dependence of the state's economy on foreign exchange earnings. Then, there are the negative demographic indicators, as the population decreases due to people moving abroad and having children in other countries. Social orphanhood is a widespread phenomenon, as children grow up without the direct care of their parents (Karpachova 2021). Another problem is that the elderly are left without proper care and need more than just financial assistance. Unfortunately, the issue of abandoned parents due to people's moving abroad is currently not taken into account by the state. The consequences of migration processes in Ukraine include:

- The leaching of intellectual human capital and labour force;
- People leaving to work on labour-intensive goods instead of knowledge- or capital-intensive ones leads to a lower status of Ukrainian workers for foreigners and, in general, to a kind of degradation of the population;
- A decrease in the GDP. For example, in Poland, over the past few years, the contribution of Ukrainian labour has contributed to up to 13% of the country's economic growth (Dzyuman and Lomakina 2022).

When comparing Ukraine's migration policy with other countries', we see that Ukraine is losing significantly in the struggle for labour resources, mainly because the country does not

conduct annual or at least periodic assessments of its need for labour. (Libanova and Pozniak 2020). Canada, for example, has a long-standing system for the assessment of its labour needs, including those of migrants. There, those interested in additional labour (businesses, social services, municipalities, etc.) submit their applications to the state territorial districts, and the provinces forward the applications to the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, which drafts a three-year Immigrant Attraction Plan. For 2022, this plan addresses about 430,000 people. In Ukraine, the plan for 2022 (the so-called immigration quota approved by the government) provides for only 8,400 people, which is about 50 times less, in spite of the fact that the population of Canada and Ukraine is almost the same (Crossing the state border under the legal regime of martial law 2022).

This raises the issue of finding ways to balance the labour market, improve the social protection system for the unemployed and promote employment, especially in those industries that are working to restore lost residential complexes, critical infrastructure, humanitarian facilities, and the military-industrial complex to strengthen national security. However, these challenges go beyond Ukraine's domestic interests, as they also affect external development vectors. The stabilization of Ukraine's labour market during the war, as well as during its post-war recovery, is likely to take place under three possible scenarios:

1. Pessimistic: the level of development lagging behind the standards of the European Union (EU) countries with a huge 'leaching' of human resources, shadowing of employment and deterioration of the quality of jobs;
2. Realistic: rapprochement with the labour markets of the main recipient countries of the Ukrainian labour force based on proactive employment policy;
3. Optimistic: the rapid growth of competitiveness of the national labour market due to the 'economic charade' in the period of post-war recovery of the state.

The third scenario has fairly clear prospects, as Ukraine is strategically oriented towards attracting the latest technologies from Europe, which will be used to restore the destroyed infrastructure and to modernize industry and develop new branches of mechanical engineering, electronics, industrialization and the military-industrial complex (Borshchevskyi 2022). An 'economic miracle' with optimistic prospects can be achieved through the rapid pace of socio-economic and technological progress, the introduction of high-tech innovations into the real sector of the economy, the integration of activities in the state-science-industry system through the creation of new well-paid jobs and the transformation of the migration risks into positive migration effects (Mulska 2021). The basis for such a 'leap' should be a flexible, competitive labour market and an effective employment policy in the post-war reality of social development.

It should be pointed out that the problem of migration existed in Ukraine even before the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation, due to unregulated and imperfect legislation and the lack of a policy to attract migrants and citizens who have migrated. However, with the outbreak of the war, the scale of the problem has grown to a level never seen before in Ukraine and across the modern world. The situation is complicated by several occurrences related to Ukrainian refugees in other countries. Ukraine needs to create its re-migration vector, with the participation of host countries, international organizations and the migrants themselves. Re-migration will be a complex, lengthy and multi-stage process; yet, without its implementation, Ukraine risks losing a significant

share of its citizens and, at the same time, the existence of an independent state with its own national identity.

The Strategy of Ukraine's Migration Policy

The current military operations in Ukraine are destructive for the economy and the labour market. The real damage is difficult to assess. The Russia Will Pay project has estimated that the total losses of the Ukrainian economy as a result of the war range from $543 to $600 billion. This estimate includes both the direct losses and indirect losses, such as the falling GDP, the stoppage of investments, the outflow of labour, additional defence and social support costs, and so on (CES 2022).

Russia's war against Ukraine has led to a drop in Ukrainian grain exports. The reorganization of supplies from other countries will not compensate the loss of supplies from Ukraine, for Ukraine produces a significant share of the world's food market, which is estimated at $120 billion. In normal times, the country produces about 27% of sunflower seeds, 5% of barley, 3% of wheat and rapeseed and 2% of corn, but the war has caused a record fall in the harvests; for instance, grain exports are currently limited to 500,000 tons per month, compared to 5 million tons before the war. According to the Ministry of Agrarian Policy, this is a loss of $1.5 billion. Importers from North Africa and the Middle East are particularly dependent on Ukrainian and Russian supplies and are trying to find alternatives. The International Grains Council estimates that global grain trade, excluding rice, could fall by 12 million tons this season, the largest decline in at least a decade. Record-high global food prices could rise by another 22%, as Russia's war against Ukraine halts trade and destroys future harvests (*Economic Truth* 2022a).

A migration policy is an element of demographic policy and a means to achieving the desired population size, while the labour force is a part of socio-economic policy, a tool for achieving its goals. Clearly, when stating or predicting a population shortage due to an unfavourable demographic situation, the government's role will be to attract immigrants, reduce the outflow of foreign nationals and encourage the return of the population. It is also necessary to address people's distribution on the territory in order to expand production, develop natural resources and increase labour resources in certain industries or regions.

The mechanisms for implementing a specific migration policy include programmes which aim to facilitate the planned, systematic implementation of the process of migration and provide the necessary assistance to its participants. The International Organization for Migration distinguishes between humanitarian and development programmes. Humanitarian programmes include refugee assistance programmes and programmes for the voluntary return of migrants (including illegal migrants) who have been unable to adapt to life in another country. Regarding irregular migrants, many countries use regularization programmes. Integration programmes for migrants are coming to the forefront, providing loans for housing and employment assistance, especially assistance to obtain the qualifications necessary to work abroad. Labour-supplying countries have programmes that support migrants' remittances to their home countries, their return, and the investment of knowledge gained abroad and savings made for the country's development (Smutchak et al. 2020).

Civil society actors are also involved in the management of migration, including the media, which inform people about migration, reflects public attitudes towards it, and shapes public opinion;

the church, which performs both ethnocultural and social roles; non-governmental organizations, and associations of people. In addition to human rights organizations, associations of migrants are of great importance, as they represent the interests of these people before the state and society and provide feedback to the authorities on the results of their activities in the field of migration (IOM 2018). The role played by a wide range of state measures not directly aimed at migration management should also be noted. Economic and social policies, security provisions and education and housing policies have their own goals, but they change the environment to which people decide to migrate. It follows that the indirect impact of migration behaviour on the population should be taken into account when planning and implementing relevant measures (Pudryk et al. 2020).

The goal of migration policy is not to collect as many refugees as possible, but to select the most active and employable among them. Germany facilitates the employment of Ukrainian nurses. They are helped to pass the language exam and settle in. French and Polish organizations invite skilled immigrants to learn the language for free and introduce them to the local culture. Ukrainian refugees say they have better living conditions abroad than at home. This means that Ukraine will have to fight for the return of its citizens ('re-migration'), and that patriotism alone will not help (Libanova 2018).

The unprecedented wave of migration in recent decades has also sparked unprecedented solidarity among EU citizens and governments. For the first time, EU countries have quickly activated the Temporary Protection Directive, which provides access to protection and services for refugees from Ukraine. The European Union (EU) has granted Ukrainian IDPs the right to live and work in all 27 EU countries for 3 years. They are also entitled to social benefits, medical care and access to school education. Published on 8 March 2022, the Commission's proposal on 'Cohesion Action for Refugees in Europe' (CARE) aims to increase the flexibility of the cohesion policy by establishing rules that allow EU member states to provide emergency support to people who fled Ukraine after Russia's invasion. Through amendments to the Regulation that establish a common provision for the use of European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 and the Regulation on the European Fund for the Most Disadvantaged, CARE proposes four changes to the Cohesion Policy rules in order to speed up and simplify the provision of EU funding to countries hosting Ukrainian refugees.

It is also worth adding that on 21 April 2022 the United States announced an assistance programme that fulfils President Biden's commitment to welcome Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion. The programme, called 'Uniting for Ukraine', is the largest private US sponsorship programme for refugees in decades. 'Uniting for Ukraine' and other programmes provide an opportunity to accept up to 100,000 Ukrainian citizens in the United States and their immediate family members (European Parliament 2022).

To create jobs, the Ministry of Economy has developed a programme to stimulate entrepreneurial activity. It will provide grants of up to 250,000 UAH to help people start a business and restore the processing industry. The government plans to bring people back to work by creating a large government order. If a person returns to his or her hometown and cannot find a job, the government will provide 'socially useful work' with a minimum wage (6,500 UAH); at the same time, employment centres will endeavour to find a job that matches the individual's specialty.

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Another way to save jobs is through a programme to relocate businesses from the war zone. The government helps businesses relocate to safe regions and transfer employees. Since the start of the programme, about 700 companies employing 85,000 people have relocated. All these plans are costly for the national budget, their implementation depends on raising funds from international partners. It is not only the government's responsibility to return people. Large companies will play an important role in this, and in keeping people from emigrating, as they must create comfortable living conditions for their employees (*Economic Truth* 2022b).

We believe that a labour market policy should focus on both internal and external migrants; that is, migrants who have been forced to leave the country. Obviously, during the reconstruction period, there will be a demand for the labour associated with overcoming the consequences of economic destruction and restoring territories, enterprises, and housing stock. This will require the relocation of labour. In parallel, the structural transformation of the economy must take place with a corresponding transformation of the labour market.

The key to a rapid economic recovery is to provide jobs and decent employment opportunities (Luchko and Shesterniak 2021). This alone requires renewed employment policy for the post-war economy, which should include three main areas. First, it should focus on emergency employment and income generation while stabilizing security and social and humanitarian stability for war-affected groups. Second, the conditions should be created for the recovery and reintegration of the local economy of host communities. Third, the creation of jobs should be based on the concept of decent work and include the development of the institutional capacity of the labour market and social dialogue at the national level.

It should be noted that facilitating the return and reintegration of migrants is the least developed area of Ukraine's migration policy. The Ukrainian authorities pay attention to it only because of the prospect of a visa-free regime with the EU. The Visa Liberalization Action Plan, which was devoted to migration management, set out to approve legislative documents that would provide, among other things, measures for the reintegration of Ukrainian citizens returning voluntarily or by the EU-Ukraine readmission agreement. At the end of 2015, the Law 'On External Labour Migration' was adopted in Ukraine as part of the package of documents required to fulfil the conditions for obtaining a visa-free regime with the EU. Thanks to the activity of civil society, primarily migrant associations, whose representatives participated in the drafting of the law, for the first time in Ukrainian legislation we find 'creating conditions for the return to Ukraine and reintegration into society of labour migrants and members of their families'.[2] A separate article of the Law is devoted to reintegration (Article 14) and identifies the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine as the central executive body responsible for the reintegration of labour migrants (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2015). Thus, the first step was taken to formulate policy and legislation in the field of return and reintegration of migrants. Yet, despite the importance of introducing the relevant provision in the Law, the procedure for its implementation remains unclear. The Law 'On External Labour Migration' suffers from a declarative nature and does not contain

[2] This is in addition to the existing protection of migrants' rights and international agreements on combating illegal migration.

direct action provisions. Its implementation will depend on the adoption of bylaws and amendments to existing legislation.

Let us now look at key points for the post-war recovery of Ukraine's economy.

First, Ukraine must gain full access to the markets of the G7 and the European Union. The governments of these countries should abolish all quotas and import duties, including protective and anti-dumping duties for Ukrainian goods. Thus, Ukrainian producers would be able to export freely their products to markets covering 54% of the global economy (Xu et al. 2019). In the past, access to the markets of developed countries allowed countries such as South Korea to recover successfully from the war.

Second, Ukraine's full accession to the European Union, expected in 2024, is the country's path to true democracy and freedom.

Third, a complete deregulation and minimal government interference in business would be needed. Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, the government has started a large-scale deregulation, transferring 48 permits, 19 licenses and about 500 other public services for business to the declarative principle. Businesses should focus on their core production processes, not on their relations with the state. Therefore, where possible, inspections should be replaced by insurance or other similar mechanisms.

Fourth, fast logistics should be developed. It should take no more than 72 hours from Ukraine to Europe. Due to the Russian aggression, Ukraine has limited logistical capabilities. It is already clear that in the future, goods will move mainly to the west, to the European Union, which is why road crossings and checkpoints towards the EU should be expanded as much as possible, and rail logistics through dry ports and narrow-gauge trans-shipment hubs should be increased. Even ports will resume work, better logistics with the EU will become the foundation for Ukraine's economic integration into the European economy.

Fifth, the country's is betting on the export of processed products in industries, such as food and metallurgy, where it has a competitive advantage in global market. At the end of 2020, Ukraine was the sixth largest exporter of food in the world, with 74 million tons (Tipayalai 2020). Corn and wheat are the country's main export products. Given the limited logistics, it is necessary to optimize the tonnage of exports by converting them into exports of finished products; that is, move from a large volume in tons to a large volume in currency. Processed products cost two to three times more than raw materials and create more jobs in the country: the positive experience in processing sunflower into sunflower oil we can extend to corn and wheat. There are opportunities to start processing corn into bioethanol, alcohol and starch, and as feed for poultry, pork, beef and eggs. The production should be increased of niche high-margin products from corn and wheat, specialized proteins used in the cosmetics, pharmaceutical and food industries. Thanks to the opening of the EU market and the construction of new facilities, Ukraine would process most of its ore into metals, which will be processed into finished products. This is how the country would achieve economies of scale. Ukraine is the world's ninth-largest metal exporting country (19 million tons per year). It exports a large quantity of ore that needs to be processed domestically. After all, a ton of ore costs $100-150, a ton of metal costs $500-1000, and a finished metal product costs $1,500-2,000. If these metal products are used to make power machines, the price goes up to

$15-20 thousand per ton. Modernization of metallurgy would also contribute to the decarbonization of the economy in the region, in particular through the introduction of modern ore processing methods that reduce the carbon footprint along the entire production chain. Ukraine's security depends only on us. Ukraine has demonstrated to Europe and the democratic world that it is capable of defending itself. But to do so, it needs weapons, which it needs to produce. For this purpose, it has established military-industrial enterprises and it is asking its Western partners to transfer military technology to enable it to start producing as soon as possible all major types of weapons, from air defence to armoured vehicles, missiles, small arms, ammunition, aircraft and ships (Colas and Ge 2019).

Sixth, Ukraine's task is to build a powerful military-industrial complex that will become the basis for the further development of aerospace technologies. IT would play an important role in this sector, as Ukraine would rely on military tech. In this regard, Israel can serve as a role model, demonstrating how high military technology can be the engine of the civilian economy.

Seventh, to implement this programme, Ukraine needs to increase its energy capacity. Electricity, in Ukraine, is cheap by European standards. The country has great competence in nuclear energy, which can be used to build more nuclear units and increase clean energy. Ukraine can build nuclear power plants on its own, from design to production of power equipment, except the reactor vessel; but the necessary skills can be developed using existing industrial facilities.

Eighth, the next step in the energy sector would be to achieve energy independence. In record time, in 3-5 years, the country should be fully self-sufficient, based on its own production of gas. This is an achievable goal because Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe in terms of deposits of natural gas. At the same time, a thermal modernization programme would help to reduce the energy consumption of the country's economy. Refining facilities of petroleum products should be built in order to cover fully the country's needs. The experience of Brazil should be taken as an example to produce a significant part of fuel through agriculture: by adding 15% bioethanol to gasoline and 20% biodiesel to diesel fuel (Parreñas at. al. 2019).

Ninth, climate modernization should become the central idea of economic transformation. This is a clear concept for Ukraine's Western partners. Under this programme, significant financial resources are available to Ukraine. In addition, the construction of new industrial facilities in metallurgy, food processing and energy is immediately possible on the principles of a green economy; that is, minimal carbon footprint and low dependence on fossil fuels. It is important to understand how to make this happen. Ukrainian companies need two things: partnership with Europeans and Americans in the form of technology transfer; and access to financial resources.

In a narrow sense, we propose a 'Marshall Plan 2.0' for Ukraine's recovery. In the original Marshall Plan, the U.S. government bought specially issued shares of European companies to provide them with capital to invest in their production in Europe. Given that the global financial market has moved on in the last 70 years, Ukraine can offer its European and American partners a new approach. Partner governments could issue state guarantees to their companies to raise funds for investment in Ukraine. Such guarantees would cover the country's risk and allow investment in the implementation of major industrial projects in Ukraine. The concept of nearshoring is promising — turning Ukraine into an industrial zone for Europe. This will also stimulate the development of

the service sector. It is imperative to ensure the maximum restoration of Ukraine's transport and social infrastructure within 24 months; it is essential for further development to rebuild within this proposed period of time what has been destroyed during the war.

The last key requirement is that Ukrainians need to be involved in the reconstruction, maximizing the use of domestic resources, such as building materials, cement and metal. Ukraine insists that Russia must pay for all the destruction it has caused. Russia's violations of international law are so significant that its frozen assets should be confiscated; given that the Russian Federation supplies mainly commodities, this will not burden the buyer, and the aggressor country will have to reduce the price of the supply. The funds thus collected can be transferred to finance recovery projects in Ukraine.

The economic part of the recovery plan should include the full opening of the G7 and EU markets for Ukrainian goods. It should also envisage the large-scale development of the military-industrial complex through technology transfer and military-technology, a focus on exports of finished goods in the traditional agricultural and metallurgical industries and the rapid development of energy and logistics based on the principles of the green economy.

Discussion

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal has recently called on businesses to move to a martial law economy in order to 'Restore the effective work of all necessary enterprises, mobilize resources, create new logistics'. A programme was launched to relocate production to the western part of the country. More than 700 companies have taken advantage of the relocation, and 500 of them have resumed operations. According to the Prime Minister, the government has been placing orders with companies to cover the most critical needs (Khamidov 2022).

In general, with the outbreak of the large-scale war, Ukrainian businesses found themselves in an extremely difficult situation: supply chains were disrupted and seaports were blocked. Ukraine tried to establish exports by rail, but this transport option could not meet the volume handled by seaports. The situation posed a huge worldwide risk of famine, as Ukraine is the largest grain supplier. Only in late July 2022 an agreement was reached in Istanbul that unblocked the ports in the Black Sea. However, the export of metal, which provided a significant inflow of foreign currency to the country before the war, is still impossible.

The Ukrainian government had to take emergency measures. Due to fuel shortage, the excise tax on fuel was abolished and VAT was reduced from 20% to 7%; this helped to provide fuel at affordable prices to the general population and to farmers during the sowing season. With the outbreak of the war, labour market activity practically stopped. For some time, businesses tried to retain staff. To prevent mass layoffs, the government paid 6.5 thousand UAH to entrepreneurs and officially registered private sector employees living in the war-torn areas. However, as the war continues and the economic situation does not improve, businesses have started to optimize costs, including payroll. The ranks of the unemployed have been joined by Ukrainians forced to move from the areas where the hostilities are taking place. As a result, according to the NBU, the unemployment rate has reached 35%. To provide employment, the Cabinet of Ministers launched

the eWork programme, under which it has disbursed 52.7 million UAH to help 227 entrepreneurs start their businesses.

The monthly deficit of the state treasury is $5 billion. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the sources of financing for the state budget have been military bonds, loans from international financial organizations, bilateral loans and grants. From the beginning of the full-scale invasion until July 27, the NBU printed 240 billion UAH.

Ukraine's current economy is organized according to market principles. The public sector generates only about 9% of the country's GDP. With such an economic organization, the state cannot directly order enterprises what to produce and how to do so and can influence them only through the system of public procurement, preferential loans, preferential taxation, and so on. Of course, state order in the defence sector increased during the war. Some enterprises that used to produce civilian products have partially or completely switched to manufacturing military products. However, it cannot be said that the economy has undergone dramatic changes and reoriented itself to the needs of the army. The Ukrainian Institute for the Future believes that the country needs to conduct an audit of the ability of enterprises to produce military products and repair equipment.

Development projects that are supposed to stimulate employment through the micro grants are questionable. Allowing men to go abroad to work is still debatable. On the one hand, this would help to increase foreign exchange earnings; on the other hand, it would reduce pressure on the budget. At the same time, a new tax reform is being discussed, which envisages the introduction of a 10% income tax, 10% personal income tax and 10% VAT (a significant reduction in rates); it also envisages a 3% increase in military expenditure and the abolition of the unified social tax. The question would, therefore, arise: how will the budget and the Pension Fund be filled? There is, experts say, probably no alternative to international assistance for Ukraine's wartime economy, and austerity — the abolition of bonuses, allowances and development projects — is inevitable (Inventure 2022).

Ukrainian migrants bring benefits to the economy and help the stability of the currency; after all, investments in Ukraine are small, and imports far exceed foreign exchange earnings from exports. Migrants' remittances to their home countries are growing dynamically. It should be noted that the growth rate of remittances is much higher than the corresponding increase in the number of migrants. Indeed, remittances are increasingly accounting for a significant portion of gross domestic product and are a constant source of foreign exchange earnings for developing countries. Thus, migrants and their remittances offset economic crises and provide better living conditions for households in labour-donor countries (Liu et al. 2020); for example, in 2019-2021, migrants' remittances contributed to a balance of payments surplus of plus $8 billion.

While addressing the current problems, the state should also develop strategic plans for the return of Ukrainians to their homeland, as economic recovery will require a significant amount of labour. In this regard, we can look to the experience of other countries, such as India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Mexico and Sri Lanka, which have created a special infrastructure for the training and temporary resettlement of people who need or want to work. The authorities supply migrants with legal, banking, insurance and mortgage instruments during the migration cycle and, then, encourage them to return home. In these countries, the authorities have information on 99%

of their migrants and can therefore offer them appropriate return programmes. In Ukraine, more than 90% of emigrants are 'illegal' for the authorities — in 2020, out of more than 5 million Ukrainians abroad, only about 450,000 were registered with the consular authorities in their countries of employment (Kravets 2021a).

The central government should work with local authorities, businesses and migrants. Some programmes involve all participants. For example, in Mexico, a social programme called TresperUno (3x1) is being successfully implemented in small towns to restore or build roads, schools and hospitals. The government, the state and the municipality add a dollar to each migrant's dollar, which is periodically expanded to 4x1 or 5x1: the fourth dollar can be provided by a donor (for example, USAID), and the fifth by a financial institution (in Mexico, the Western Union regularly provides such support). Of course, migrants or their representatives in their home countries take the initiative in choosing the facilities to be built. They come with a ready-made project to submit to the local authorities. Banks, as project partners (and not only as settlement institutions), must participate in the implementation of all three areas because both clients and financial resources are involved (Kravets 2021b). Unfortunately, none of the four state-owned banks in Ukraine specializes in banking services for migrants.

The government only needs to provide a vision and parameters for the country's recovery, and businesses will work out options.

Conclusions

The problem of migration existed in Ukraine before the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, due to unregulated and imperfect legislation and the lack of a policy to attract migrants or re-migrate its citizens. With the outbreak of the war, the scale of the problem has grown to a level never seen before either in Ukraine or in the modern world as a whole. This problem is complicated by several issues related to the assistance given to Ukrainian refugees in other countries, which may discourage them from returning home. Ukraine needs to create its own re-migration vector, with the participation of countries that host its citizens, international organizations and migrants themselves.

For the post-war recovery of the economy, Ukraine must gain full access to the markets of the G7 and the European Union. As a consequence, the governments of these countries should abolish all quotas and import duties, including protective and anti-dumping duties for Ukrainian our goods. There should be full deregulation and minimal government interference in business operations. A focus would be necessary on exports of processed products in industries where Ukraine has a competitive advantage in global markets (food and metallurgy). The basis of the country's industrial policy should be to stimulate processing of raw materials to be exported; there are opportunities to start processing corn for bioethanol, alcohol, starch, and as feed for poultry, and pork, beef and eggs. The production should be increased of niche high-margin products from corn and wheat, specialized proteins used in the cosmetics, pharmaceutical and food industries.

It is important to build a powerful military-industrial complex that will become the basis for further development of aerospace technologies. IT would play an important role in this sector, with a central role played by military technology. In this regard, Israel can serve as a role model,

demonstrating how military technology can be the engine of the civilian economy. To implement this programme, Ukraine needs to increase its energy capacity and achieve energy independence.

It is also important to work with Western partners to create an effective post-war reconstruction plan. Partner governments can issue state guarantees to their companies to attract funds for investment in Ukraine and allow the implementation of major industrial projects. The concept of nearshoring is promising, turning Ukraine into an industrial zone for Europe, which will also actively stimulate the development of the service sector.

Ukrainians should be involved in the reconstruction, maximizing the use of domestic resources: building materials, cement and metal. Russia must pay for the destruction it has caused. The economic part of the recovery plan should include the full opening of the G7 and EU markets for Ukrainian goods, large-scale development of the military-industrial complex through technology transfer and military-tech, a focus on exports of finished goods in the traditional agricultural and metallurgical industries and the rapid development of energy and logistics based on the principles of the green economy.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Krase, J and DeSena, J. N. 2023. *Covid-19 in Brooklyn: Everyday Life during a Pandemic*. London and New York: Routledge.

Ethnography has taken on many shades and meanings during the past decades with the introduction of auto-ethnography, urban ethnography and the recordings of everyday lives and collective actions in the public sphere. With the pandemic, anthropology and anthropologists faced a new challenge, of not being able to do fieldwork in close physical proximity to their subjects. This particular work done jointly by two qualitative sociologists living in the same urban area of a city, is addressed to some of these theoretical issues, namely what ethnography implies, what can be treated legitimately as data, how does one engage with urban ethnography, especially in a situation of crises like the pandemic and finally how one can theorise on the everyday vignettes of experiences both individual and collective. Rightly, the work sees theorising as critical insights into the power plays, the resistances and resilience of those who are marginal and disadvantaged and whose disabilities multiply in crises situations such as that of the pandemic. The key theoretical approaches focus on risk and uncertainty as well as questions of social justice. The analysis is directed towards a deep examination of how the impact of the virus was filtered through existing relations of hierarchy and inequality. Given that the virus was neutral to social conditions, how the latter intervened in the actual impact of the disease. Questions raised and answered are with respect to disproportionate impact on already marginalised people, income and age being critical variables but which intersected with ethnicity to indicate that black and Hispanic regions were most affected in terms of numbers of dead and ill; correlating poverty and ethnicity in obvious ways. A moot methodological issue is the study of the upper class and privileged to uncover the nuances of inequality from the analysis of advantages rather than only looking at disadvantages faced by the marginal.

However, the approach from the top has not excluded the collective response of those on the margins. For example, the politics of vaccines has been highlighted with the insight that rejection of vaccines by the very populations that were most affected was because they did not trust and had historically no reason to trust those in power, indicating also that political affiliations were less important than economic marginalization in this respect. The key areas of theoretical analysis are largely auto-ethnographical drawing upon the experiences of the authors such as those related to school education, supplies and being part of community solidarity. Since I, too, had been part of the common experience of lockdown in New York, it was an eye opener for me to know that private schools allowed in person schooling even as parents and guardians (including myself) were struggling with online education of small children as public schools had closed their doors. Not only were most children in public schools not well equipped to study from home, many of them were deprived of their primary source of nutrition as school meals were no longer available. From the beginning the authors

have indicated their privileged social and economic positions, and in this sense certain dimensions of the social effects of the pandemic have not received much attention although they have been mentioned. Significant in this respect is the absence of a feminist perspective, a focus on not-so-privileged women and on domestic violence that had been termed (and the book mentions it), the 'shadow pandemic'. The authors have drawn a parallel, between the have and have-nots and focussed on certain key areas of deprivation and community activity, like the open kitchens and generalized sharing of the public refrigerator, such as the highly decorated Hispanic refrigerator. What is missing is the daily lives and domestic lives of the under-privileged, understandably as the authors had no access to these.

There have been many papers on the pandemic, but this is one of the few comprehensive ethnographies that has encapsulated an entire urban neighbourhood and described the impact of the pandemic using such variables as the impact of urban poverty, gentrification and its impact on the marginal, the deepening of existing forms of inequality and mistrust at the time of a crises and the political economy as well as power play that became evident in a critical time. However, the most significant contribution of this volume comes at the end in the form of a series of superb visual capturing of the pandemic situation. It will be an understatement to say that these photographs speak a lot more than the text, even though it is a comprehensive written account. This volume is a valuable addition to the series floated by the publishers to document the Covid-19 experiences globally. It is also a significant methodological breakthrough that demonstrates how an ethnography can be produced at the time of crises, especially when there has been a redefining of the body and space equation contrary to primary ethnographic techniques of close physical proximity to the field. Here, situational contact has been replaced by a long-term immersive relationship afforded by continued residence in the neighbourhood pointing to alternative possibilities of doing urban research.

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Sadana, R. 2022. *The Moving City: Scenes from the Delhi Metro and the Social Life of Infrastructure*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

A few pages into *The Moving City*, I instantly realised how Rashmi Sadana's book on the Delhi Metro is a perfect read for metro rides. Sadana's encounters with the Metro itself and the vibrant publics that use these trains are written up as breezy vignettes that follow an 'episodic narrative' (p. 22), making it an ideal companion that punctuates one's morning or evening commute. *The Moving City* exemplifies the creativity of ethnographic writing that can capture the effervescent experiences of commuting, as well as grapple with the sheer scale of a large urban transit network. This book is undoubtedly an ethnography of New Delhi as a city — from the congested streets of Old Delhi and stately boulevard of Lutyens Delhi, to its commercial malls and rapidly urbanising outskirts. Yet, this book imagines the city as being mobile — it is not

only people, but objects, aspirations, consumption, politics and so forth, that also flow through the Metro. 'It is a built environment and a moving one' (p. 3).

The introduction effectively situates the reader within the historical and geographic context of New Delhi and the wider National Capital Region (NCR) by following the development of the Delhi Metro since the 1990s. In this way, this book is 'an examination of the points of connection between grand-scale planning and the thinking behind it, and the daily movements and activity of Metro commuters' (p. 10). In particular, this book explores gendered dimensions of commuting, where the Metro both produces and reproduces certain forms of urban sociality, one that is both surveilled and liberatory (p. 73). This point is especially salient as questions of safety and violence deeply inflect the discourses around, and lived experiences of, women in New Delhi (these discussions were foregrounded when the New Delhi government made the metros free for women in 2019).

The rest of the book is divided into three parts — Crowded, Expanding, and Visible — which are composed of ethnographic vignettes rather than conventional chapters. As mentioned above, these vignettes include nuanced descriptions of commutes and conversations with people, as well as critical reflections on the urban form. Read in a linear manner, these three parts chronologically document the development of the Metro's ongoing expansion, signified by the colour-coded lines (Red, Yellow, Green, Orange, Blue, Pink, Violent, Magenta, Grey). These fluid vignettes are supported by detailed endnotes that ground them in engaging scholarly discussions — a writing convention that, upon closer thought, inventively reflects the contiguous aboveground-underground nature of the Delhi Metro.

Though these vignettes largely consist of self-contained stories, Sadana occasionally follows up with some key interlocutors and interviewees. Many of Sadana's interlocutors are women — students, professionals, divorcees, grandmothers, patients — whose mobilities have been profoundly impacted by the Metro. In particular, the Metro's ladies coach is 'not merely a container for women; rather, it allows them to enact their own urban practice' (p. 95). At the same time, several vignettes are composed of Sadana's interviews with transport researchers and activists like Dunu Roy, Dinesh Mohan and Geetam Tiwari, who have critiqued the Metro for not being accessible and cost-effective, especially compared to the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses, which have a considerably higher ridership compared to the Metro (p. 67). Yet, the influence of E. Sreedharan, the former director of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) who was also known as India's Metro Man, deeply inflects the narratives of both riders and DMRC officials, including the insights of the former Chief Minister of Delhi, the late Sheila Dikshit.

A conceptual and methodological strength of this book is how Sadana simultaneously studies the Delhi Metro and the city's diverse publics and mobilities, addressing how the Metro is both standalone and integrated (p. 7). This point is supported by Sadana's descriptions of

other forms of transport, like buses, cycle rickshaws and e-rickshaws, which are vital in making the Metro accessible to commuters but are marginalised and neglected in policy and public discourse (pp. 187–88). In particular, Sadana resists the ways that popular and policy discourses see the Metro as 'a darling of the city' (p. 145), even as her own work is subsumed under this celebration. On the one hand, several narratives view the Metro as organic or spontaneous (p. 93), whilst still bringing order and discipline to Delhi's unruly crowds (p. 140). On the other hand, Sadana clearly shows how the Metro was implemented in a top-down manner and produced neoliberal logics of consumption and reproduced hierarchies of class and caste (pp. 168-69).

In spite of the vibrant vignettes and sharp discussions that examine the meaning of 'public' in public transport (p. 165), I noticed some thematic and conceptual shortcomings in the book. For instance, the politics of public transport became salient when the Metro stopped running during the protests against India's discriminatory citizenship laws in 2019 and the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020-21. However, I believe that this book could have taken steps to interrogate the way that metros have become a paradigm of urban development that privileges top-down, state-implemented, public-private partnerships (i.e., transit-oriented development policies, p. 128). This new vision of Indian cities — which include megacities like Mumbai, and smaller cities like Jaipur and Agra — privilege consumption over citizenship, and aesthetics over accessibility. With that said, this book is nevertheless an expansive, nuanced and grounded account of how the Delhi Metro is simultaneously an infrastructure and public space. Sadana's prose and clarity of writing is enviable; it is something that many ethnographers (including this reviewer) would find inspiring. This would be an engaging read for scholars and students in urban anthropology, especially for those interested in Global South cities, infrastructures, and public transport.

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Taylor, Mary N. 2021. *Movement of the People: Hungarian Folk Dance, Populism, and Citizenship*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

In *Movement of the People*, Mary Taylor investigates the neo-populist movement known as the urban dance clubs (t*áncház*, 'dance-house') in Hungary, identifying the many threads that make up this curious but not uniquely Hungarian phenomenon. The historical narrative is divided into seven chapters with notes, maps, black-and-white photographs, literature and copious notes. After the first two introductory chapters, in which she outlines the reasons how and why artistic movements, especially dance and folk music, are intertwined in making a nation, both historic and new, Taylor turns to the institutionalization of state youth culture anchored as it was to 'socialist cultural management' and 'civic cultivation' during the socialist period of the 1950s and 1960s. In Chapter 4, Taylor ably summarizes how the urban dance club emerged in Budapest and, subsequently, spread throughout the country and

eventually into the Hungarian diaspora in neighbouring Romania. In the next chapter, she interrogates the contradiction between the community-building potential of the dance clubs and the definition of community per se. By introducing the concept of 'collective memory', she sees the institutionalized dance clubs 'as a movement that is both transformative and transforming in broader processes of state formation'. The key to understanding this has to do with the Transylvanian connection: an exported village tradition of dance houses from Transylvania, Romania. By treating the dance clubs as sites of national memory, she offers an anthropological lens into the essentialist views of Hungarianness and tradition one can rarely find among nationalist-minded fans of dance clubs.

Interestingly and somewhat surprisingly, in her treatment, she spends considerable time and attention to 'late socialism', a period outside her knowledge and fieldwork. Her familiarity with the dance clubs relates to the year she spent in Budapest, mostly in the nation's capital with occasional visits elsewhere throughout 2004-2005 and 2008, the time of her original Ph.D. research there. Strangely, she also felt the need to focus her energies on the inter-war period, a time when an equally large-scale artistic and folkloric theatrical movement occurred in Hungary, known as the Pearly Bouquet (and not 'Bouquet of Pearls', as she uses the phrase). Since she spends a good deal of time on inter-war nationalism, especially populism, it is regrettable that she did not rely on important references that would have saved her from repeating well-worn facts (Némedi 1985). Her treatment of the Hungarian scout movement of the same period is equally cursory, those interested in a truly detailed scholarly treatment of the inter-war youth movement will have to use the original sources (Bodnár 1989, Cornelius 1998).

The best part of Chapters 6 and 7 is when Mary Taylor treats the pioneer intellectuals and artists who created and maintained the dance house institution since the 1970s, her interviews and personal knowledge of the early years of 2000 are revealing how steadfastly they struggled against the odds. Yet, reading *Movement of the People* I constantly missed a sound critical and dialectical history throughout the book; strangely she dedicates her grand narrative to 'Bill Roseberry'; that is, William Roseberry, an anthropologist best remembered for his knowledge and historical materialist treatment of politics and Latin American peasantry. Yet she does not afford such framing to several key concepts, one of which is the internationalized and essentialized nature of Roma/Gypsy music and performance (Lemon 2000, Malvinni 2004); the new governing ideology of Viktor Orbán known as illiberalism (Pap 2018); or urban tourism with specific reference to Budapest (Hill 2017). Another startling one is youth. There is not a single discussion of this term either in its general historical or specific cultural context, areas that are important in scholarly pursuits (see, for example, Gillis 1981). Do we take this age category for granted? Are all youth the same? How was this term understood by politicians and cultural workers throughout the 1930s and, more especially, in the 1970s and 1980s when urban dance clubs flourished in

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Hungary? Not all Hungarian 'youth' went to the dance clubs, the majority took part — and still do — in the international and mediatized pop culture industry. Apropos informants, I yearned for more contextualization of Taylor's informants, their lives and backgrounds, for not counting the major figures and artists she cites, her interlocutors only pop up as impersonal 'táncház-goers'.

There are many native Hungarian terms and names in *Movement of the People* but a lack of careful proofreading resulted in many misspellings. There is no such word in Hungarian as 'narodnyizmus' to refer to the Russian populists of the 19th century, the correct word is 'narodnyikizmus'; there is no 'turismus' but 'turizmus'; the name 'Gergély' should be spelled Gergely, other misspellings are just too numerous to mention. I also found some sources she utilized rather baffling and outdated. She cites Vitányi's book of 1969, but there is no such to be found in her references, and we never find out what are the 'Papers of the Katalin Landgráf collection' mentioned in Chapter 6. For instance, she accessed the site of the European Folklore Institute (http://www.folkline.hu/efi/index_e.html) but such an address does not exist. She often writes about dance camps she 'visited' while conducting fieldwork, but does not detail them with first-hand ethnographic insights. In the final chapter, several of the major political developments since her fieldwork period are mentioned cursorily but lack thorough background research and up-to-date scholarly literature. Given what occurred since the early 2000s, and how state politics captured this neo-folkloric movement by making it into a governmental nationalist program (Kürti 2019), it is mind-boggling how early fieldwork experiences relate to a period fifteen years later with no follow-up visit and considerable updating. It would have been a nice touch if the author offers explanations for the many photographs and maps included; also, too often, she cites excerpts and fragments from her interviews with no critical analyses.

All in all, this book reads like a delayed PhD dissertation. Most of the many figures of classic theorizers from Walter Benjamin to Pierre Bourdieu, plenty of notes, and explanatory digressions in each chapter — obviously to please her advisors who themselves were not specialists in Hungary, that remained should have been abbreviated or simply discarded. Instead of providing novel insights into the major cultural transformations in late socialist and post-socialist East-Central Europe, not to forget their anthropological analyses (Cervinkova, et al. 2015, Giordano et al. 2014, Kürti and Skalnik 2009), these tend to distract from the book's otherwise notable highlights. Even though I was looking forward to reading this book, I concluded that there is little novelty in it, it should, however, be useful for different people for different reasons. *Movement of the People* provides a useful introduction to neo-populism together with a nationalist artistic movement in one of the post-socialist states in Eastern Europe. Scholars will find well-known facts and a few intriguing aspects, graduate students will be glad to discover ideas they can rework or challenge, while frustrated undergraduates may drop it after they meddle through a book of over 300 pages. But those in Hungary who tirelessly

work and support this nationalized tourist and commercialized neo-populist industry will enjoy it for revealing just how grand, and resilient their invented tradition has become. The 'táncház-goers', both in Hungary and abroad, have a good reason to celebrate.

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Werthmann, K. 2023. *City Life in Africa: Anthropological Insights.* Abingdon: Routledge.

This book provides an outstanding synthesis of ethnographies of urban Africa from the 1930s through the early 2000s. It is especially strong concerning the earlier years when the very idea of urban research was innovative. By the early 2000s, when anthropology in urban Africa had become commonplace and varied, it was more difficult to synthesise the field. The book is organised around the central activities carried out by urban inhabitants: moving (primarily rural-urban migration), connecting (making ties with others), governing, working, dwelling, and wayfinding (how people find their way literally and figuratively). Each chapter is organised by main insights. In some chapters, at least one insight is explicitly linked to gender — for example, moving to the city means different things for men and women (Ch. 2) — although all chapters address gender. As each insight is supported by extensive presentation of relevant ethnographies, readers are introduced to classical and more contemporary works in African urban anthropology. The text is complemented by 29 pages of references to works from the 1930s to the present.

In addition to presenting major anthropological insights about people living in African cities, Werthmann emphasises the important role of female and African anthropologists. She notes work of early black African anthropologists, including Kofi Busia, Archie Mafeje, Maxwell Owusu, Absolom Vilakazi, and Bernard Magubane, and refers to many more recent researchers. She was particularly concerned

to highlight the pioneering role of women in the field. Researchers from the Rhodes-Livingston Institute had pursued urban themes since the late 1930s, even though they only gained renown for urban work in the 1950s. Even earlier, in 1922, Winifred Hoernlé had carried out research in an African neighbourhood in Windhoek (now Namibia). By 1926, as a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, she trained multiple urban anthropologists of Africa, including other women. In addition to presenting their research throughout the text, Werthmann outlines the careers of several female anthropologists, including Hortense Powdermaker, Ellen Hellmann, Suzanne Bernus, and Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain, in text boxes. Information on individual anthropologists is complemented by the intellectual lineages of some researchers, illustrating links, sometimes across different academic traditions. For example, both Elliott Skinner and Claude Meillassoux were funded by a 1960s grant to Paul Bohannan at Northwestern University.

This incredibly rich presentation of African urban anthropology is accompanied by relatively light analysis, despite the author's statement that one goal of the book is 'a critical appraisal of anthropology's contribution to understanding everyday life in urban Africa' (p. 1). Given the focus on 'knowledge created by means of anthropological fieldwork' (p. 3), it is notable that many early urban anthropologists did not do traditional fieldwork, often because they could not legally reside in areas where black Africans lived. Moreover, prominent anthropologists, like Georges Balandier and Max Gluckman used both anthropological and sociological approaches (p. 12). Thus, it is somewhat unclear what the particular contributions of anthropology have been, especially as other social scientists (sociologists, cultural geographers, and historians) may use methods similar to those of anthropologists. It would have been nice if the author had addressed more directly the particular insights of anthropologists about urban Africa.

Like anthropologists elsewhere, researchers of urban Africa were motivated to address theoretical issues of the larger discipline and were limited in their perspectives by their own backgrounds and positionality. This was true of ground-breaking women researchers, among others. Many of them idealised rural life and had middle-class expectations about the appropriate role of wives. Nevertheless, female anthropologists wrote on many innovative topics, including women's work, marriage, family, intergenerational relations, and others (p. 174). A more extended analysis of their particular contributions would have been useful.

Many of the challenges to African urban dwellers were not unique, but were echoed in other parts of the world, especially those with colonial histories. Werthmann notes in the introduction, 'African perspectives on city life […] (were) not fundamentally different from peoples' views on city life in other epochs and parts of the world' (p. 15). In the conclusion, she says, 'In many ethnographies of urban Africa, there was a remarkable lack of comparison with historical urbanisation in European

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societies and with contemporary forms of rural–urban migration in other world regions, or with works in urban sociology' (p. 179). This comparative framing within global urbanism is useful, but it was not always present in the intervening content chapters.

Finally, one of the main themes is the precarity of life in African cities, due to exploitative governments and shortages of resources, including infrastructure. Ethnographic examples often suggest continuity between the colonial and independence eras. It would have been useful if the text had addressed more directly the reasons for this and the paucity of post-independence improvements.

Routledge seems to have positioned this book as a textbook. Their web page says 'This book introduces readers to the anthropology of urban life in Africa, showing what ethnography can teach us about African city dwellers' own notions, practices, and reflections'; it offers instructors the option to procure an e-book inspection copy. The e-book platform, VitalSource Bookshelf, touts itself as 'the world's leading platform for distributing, accessing, consuming, and engaging with digital textbooks and course materials'. Although this book would be useful in more advanced classes, it is not an introductory textbook. It assumes a certain knowledge about anthropology and African studies; it is dense and full of information, with an emphasis on historical developments. It lacks colour photographs, so it is easy to include in an e-book.

This book is instead a great tool for more advanced researchers and specialists, for whom a specialised knowledge of African urban development and change is essential. Even though I have worked many years in urban Africa, this book broadened my understanding and offered me new insights. These readers may find the e-platform, which does not easily yield exact page numbers for citations, somewhat unwieldy. Get a paper copy and encourage your libraries to do so.

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FILM AND VIDEO REVIEWS

A Conquista do Oeste [How the West Was Won]. Directed by **Isabel Joffily**. 2023. 27 minutes. Colour.

The west side of the city of Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, has experienced a rapid and unique urbanization process over the past six decades. *How the West Was Won* is a documentary that explores the transformations undertaken in the area with the imaginaries and promises to turn Rio's hinterlands into the modernist utopia of the Barra da Tijuca neighbourhood. Alternating illustrations of the countrified spaces with videos of the new high-rises and condominiums that replaced them, the film takes us through the contradictory images of the creation of a global suburb on top of the faraway emptiness of a chaotic city.

Following the social life of an unsuccessful housing condominium, the film presents the history of the occupation of Rio de Janeiro's west side, from the eyes of its residents, planners and administrators. From the wilderness to a neighbourhood of enclaves, massive infrastructures and large avenues, Barra da Tijuca expresses the ideas of progress being taken by the real estate market and the search for sameness and security. With the use of historical archives mixed with present day cinematography on what the neighbourhood has become, the documentary successfully demonstrates how the Brazilian 'gold rush' for the progress transformed urban planning utopia into a reproduction of an unequal and segregated city.

The Ilha Pura [Pure Island] condominium, around which the screenplay orbits, represents the local take on the global phenomenon of building exclusive cities. In a neighbourhood that has a Statue of Liberty facing its main avenue, ideas of progress and modernity are confronted by imaginaries of chaos, emptiness or stagnation to present opportunities for the real estate market to produce a global suburb in a country striving for an accelerated growth.

While the images of the Bellagio's water show give way to the empty promises of its cheap imitation, Ilha Pura's grandeur is confronted with its failure. Opposing the substantial projects of preeminent urbanists, the ruins of the city-to-be puts in question the paths of large urbanization processes in the Global South. For those inquiring about the effects of urbanization and the limits of urban planning, the Brazilian version of 'how the west was won' is a relevant example. And as the night falls and the lack of light in most of the thirty-one residential towers of the Olympic legacy indicate emptiness, the question of the future of cities remains.

Through the voices of those responsible for the urbanization of the hinterlands, the documentary sheds light on what is at stake in the process of city making. As an intriguing yet relevant contribution to urban studies, *How the West Was Won* takes us to the backstage of how profit, segregation, ruins and condominiums also produce a neighbourhood.

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The Joker. Directed and produced by **Todd Phillips**. 2019. 121 min. Colour.

The film *The Joker*, set in the early 1980s, tells the story of Arthur Fleck, a failed party clown and aspiring stand-up comedian whose descent

into madness and nihilism inspires the lower social classes to launch a violent counter-cultural revolution against the upper classes in a decaying fictional place called Gotham City. The aesthetics of Gotham City, which is actually New York, add a sense of decay and misery to the plot. This place appears to be always dark and gloomy in order to symbolize the presence of criminality and evil. Arthur, otherwise the Joker, is depressed, and he also suffers of a serious mental disorder that brings him to laugh uncontrollably when he becomes anxious. This condition causes almost everyone in society to reject and look down on him, despite the fact that all he wants is to be accepted by his fellow citizens. In some cases, he is also tortured by people, such as in the scene when he is assaulted by a baby-gang while performing a street show dressed as a clown.

The reduced public investment in health care, a topic that has recently piqued the interest of anthropologists, is highlighted in the film. The Gotham City government's health-care budget cuts resulted in the termination of Fleck's therapy sessions at a public mental health facility. Arthur cannot afford private health-care, and he no longer receives treatment for his psychological problem, which was brought on by his mother's former partner, who molested him when he was a child. Meanwhile, the tycoon Thomas Wayne (the richest man in Gotham) decides to run for mayor promising to restore the funding for public health care and to counter the rise of urban crime produced by social inequalities. Following the assault by the young delinquents, Arthur decides to carry a pistol, which he unintentionally drops on the floor while working as a clown at a children's hospital. After learning about the incident, Arthur's boss fires him. As if that weren't enough, while Arthur is travelling home in his clown outfit, three 'yuppies' from Wayne Enterprise harass and abuse him in the railway underground. He retaliates by shooting and killing the trio. Arthur is initially heartbroken for his reaction, but this marks the beginning of his transformation into the Joker. As word spreads of the three murders committed by a man dressed as a clown, some interpret the incident as a slur on the wealthy, while others applaud the crime. Thomas Wayne speaks out against it, referring to the working class as 'clowns', a symbol that they quickly adopt. Following this murder, the police investigate, and a violent movement led by people wearing clown masks erupts against the wealthy elite, resulting in Wayne's murder in the last scenes of the film.

Arthur receives an unexpected call from the creators of The Murray Franklin Show, his favourite television programme, asking him to appear in one of the episodes. Arthur, however, has the feeling that he was invited not for his comedic abilities but for Murray (the presenter) to continue to make fun of him for the benefit of increasing TV viewers. In a previous episode, Murray had shown footage of Arthur's underperforming at some unknown comedy club and uncontrollably laughing at the worst possible times while attempting to tell jokes. Murray introduces Arthur as the Joker, who enters the show dressed as a clown and is greeted with a large applause. During the show, Arthur who feels exploited and ridiculed, confesses the triple assassination of Wayne's employers in the underground. When the programme's audience turns against him, the Joker, who had originally planned to commit suicide during the episode, shoots Murray multiple times, killing him. As his criminal act is broadcast on national television, for the first time in his life, the Joker laughs genuinely. The gesture enrages the crowd even more against the rich, setting the city on fire. The

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Joker is arrested but he becomes a symbol of social protest and upheaval. The film had an impact on real-life demonstrators as well. Following the film's release, protesters around the world wore Joker's masks at various demonstrations against governments, most recently in Hong Kong. For some critics, the Joker represents the new anti-capitalist hero.

When assessing the film's meaning, four major social and cultural considerations emerge. The film begins with elements that are common in Hollywood production and US cinematography, particularly the ideology of the 'American way of Life' based on Puritanism and Calvinism since the time of the Pilgrim Fathers in the 17th century. This ideology which has survived in today's secularized American society is built on unbridled individualism, a world of great loneliness and abandonment in which society's single atoms (individuals or families) must rely solely on themselves and where success, materialism and career are extremely important. This is Arthur's story, where he aspires to be a famous showman despite being abandoned in his mental illness and lacking the strength to rise up and fight in such an individualistic society. It is not surprising that the greatest serial killers in history — often individuals who feel alone, unsupported and resentful — are produced in extremely atomized individualist societies, where growing economic inequality and social immobility are evident as effects of strong market liberalization policies. According to well-known crime agencies, the United States has produced the highest number of serial killers in the world, followed by England.

Another significant factor to consider is the decrease in public health care spending, which has a negative effect on both the quality of life of those receiving social services and the population as a whole, due to the additional financial, physical and mental strain, which can also lead to antisocial behaviour. It is, therefore, crucial that academics continue to promote the fundamental human right known as the *Right to Health*.

The third point that the film's creator intends to underline is how child maltreatment leads to psychologically unstable and deviant people. According to the WHO, around 1 billion children are abused annually on a mental, sexual, and physical level, which makes it critical to offer public health care for children who are experiencing abuse.

The fourth factor to consider is how this movie invites us to think about a current debate addressing the consequences of mentally unstable peoples having easy access to fire-weapons.

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El Lado quieto (The Still Side). 2021. Mexico/Argentina/Philippines. Directed by **Miko Revereza**, **Carolina Fusilier**. 70 min.

During a conversation with anthropologist Lévi-Strauss in 1998, I, Carmen, heard the statement: 'Documentaries are boring, I like black and white American movies from my youth'. This came to mind as we watched *El Lado Quieto*, a film that explores the ruins of a resort on the coast of Mexico. While some documentaries can be dull, this film is anything but. The use of a naturalistic aesthetic or a narrating voice that knows everything can make a documentary unappealing, as can the use of talking heads in interviews. *El Lado Quieto*, however, is peaceful and calming. It features images of the sea, stones, and even a slug leaving its trail, with no human presence for the first nine minutes except for a cap. As the film progresses, traces of human presence

gradually appear, revealing the profile of tourists who came to this 'all inclusive' island resort. This is a narrative about a once effervescent past that now lies in ruins, and how tourist ventures have become disjointed as a result. It explores the fragility of human existence through the lens of memory, which is punctuated by moments of forgetfulness that are brought back to life through the act of storytelling.

El Lado Quieto takes its audience on journey, exploring a mythology while surveying the afterlife of a long-abandoned holiday resort on the Pacific coast of Mexico. The fable of the Siyokoy sea creature serves as propellant to examine the themes of life and decay that unfold in this post-human landscape. The Siyokoy, carried by strong currents from the Philippines, navigates the spectral remnants of this once-thriving resort, providing a unique perspective on the ruins left behind.

The film's soundtrack is also noteworthy, with well-crafted sounds of the sea and music, and a smooth dialogue between the director and the narrator. In the end, the abandoned hotel is shown in slow tracking shots. The deserted hotel's skeleton brought to mind Sophie Calle's exploration of similar ghosts in her exhibition 'Grand Hôtel Palais d'Orsay'. Broken chairs, dusty sofas and armchairs, and beds are just a few of the objects that still bear the shadows of those who used them. The film explores the traces and ruins that serve as reminders of the delicate balance between remembering and forgetting, which Walter Benjamin referred to as 'fringes' decorated by the ornaments of forgetfulness.

El Lado Quieto proposes to dramatize the political and ethical importance of remembrance, highlighting the necessity of keeping the past alive in our collective consciousness. Like Calle's exhibition, the deactivated hotel in *El Lado Quieto* offers a poignant reminder of the transient nature of human existence and our impact on the world around us. The slow tracking shots of the hotel are particularly effective, revealing the empty and silent spaces that were once filled with life and activity. The film's attention to detail and its use of sound further enhance this sense of emptiness, creating an atmosphere that is both haunting and meditative. As the film draws to a close, we are left with the narrator's thoughts on the possibility that marine creatures may someday replace us on the planet, a dystopian bet on the duration of an ecosystem not necessarily including humans. It is a sobering reminder that everything we build will eventually fall into decay and that we are not as permanent as we may sometimes believe. Without really having it as its main objective, the film leads us to think about today's mass tourism, the practices and values of tourists, and their consumption — drinks, cosmetics, plastic surgeries.

The film is a stunning exploration of a post-human landscape, and it left a lasting impression on the viewer.

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Rolê - Stories of Brazilians protests in malls. Directed by **Vladimir Seixas**. 2021. 82 min. Colour.

With their air conditioners, escalators and security guards, shopping centres seek to offer their clients a familiar and safe space for shopping without the inconveniences and insecurity of modern city streets. In a society established and maintained through racism,

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like Brazil, security generally means monitoring and, whenever possible, keeping out non-white people from the spaces, especially when they are not working. Across Brazil, there are frequent cases of racism against black people by mall employees: security guards that pursue teenagers who were just having ice cream, a cashier that falsely accuses a woman of stealing the products that she had just paid for, a seller that makes racist jokes on the hair of a black girl who was passing by the store.

As we can see in the documentary *under review,* for black people in Brazil, the simple act of shopping can be transformed into a traumatic racist situation. The film shows new forms of protest against the racial discrimination daily perpetuated in those establishments by occupying shopping malls.

The word *rolê* is a usual slang used in São Paulo. It means *to hang out,* and its diminutive; *rolêzinho*, is used to describe the meetings of teenagers, mainly black and peripheral, in shopping malls, especially in the São Paulo metropolitan area in 2013 and 2014. These meetings were organized through the social media and their objective was to gather, make friends, listen to funk music and flirt. However, when the youth arrived at the mall, they were usually received by stores hastily closed and police forces who were there to contain them.

From the protest in the 2000's of activists of the MTS (Landless Worker's Movement), who occupied the Rio Sul Shopping Mall located in a high middle class neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro, to the *rolezinhos*, occupations in malls of São Paulo in 2013 and 2014, to the most recent performance and protest promoted by the artist Priscila Rezende with a black women collective, also in Rio Sul, the documentary explores how a new generation of black Brazilians is thinking and producing, stemming from the past, new ways of being in the city and making politics. Through a wealth of material, including statements, news, archive videos and performances, the documentary portrays the trajectories of three black young Brazilians that took part in recent protests in shopping centres: Thayná Trindade, Priscila Rezende and Jefferson Luís.

Although the title suggests that the main topic of the film is the *rolêzinhos*, the film explores other types and forms of protests against racism in malls. The *rolêzinhos* bear similarities with other forms of black youth occupying malls but also have relevant specificities as a movement deeply linked to funk culture that appear tangentially in the movie. It should be noted that, initially, the *rolêzinho* was not exactly a protest. In its ambition to talk about many things, the documentary fails to focus on the specific characteristics that makes the *rolêzinho* a particular cultural and political movement. Nonetheless, the documentary offers an interesting perspective about new black urbanites and racial conflicts in Brazil.

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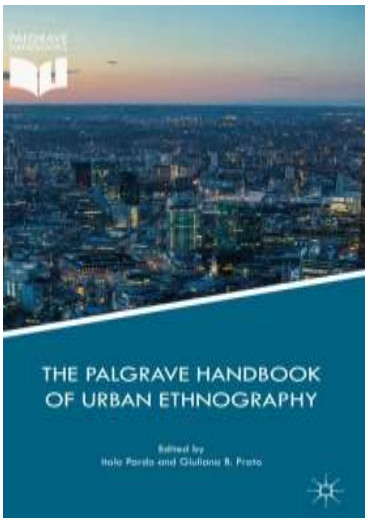

Italo Pardo and Giuliana B. Prato (Eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*

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