



# NEW DIVERSITIES

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## The Infrastructures of Diversity: Materiality and Culture in Urban Space

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Stefan Höhne (Technische Universität Berlin)  
AbdouMaliq Simone (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen)

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Editor: Marian BURCHARDT  
Guest Editors: Marian BURCHARDT  
Stefan HÖHNE  
AbdouMaliq SIMONE  
Language Editor: Sarah BLANTON  
Layout and Design: Birgitt SIPPEL

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# The Infrastructures of Diversity: Materiality and Culture in Urban Space – An Introduction

by MARIAN BURCHARDT (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen) and STEFAN HÖHNE (Technische Universität Berlin)

## Introduction

In August 2013, several hundred Muslims gathered at the *plça major* in the center of the small town Mollét del Valles, located about 20 minutes by train outside Barcelona. Since the beginning of Ramadan, the *Al-Huda* community had begun assembling right beside the municipal administration to carry out their five daily prayers. They did so in order to call public attention to their lack of a place of worship and to protest the city administration's decision that interdicted their use of a locale as a mosque. However, behind the presence of Muslims in public space was no anti-mosque campaign, but instead planning directives, building codes, and use regulations. In other words, the city administration mobilized elements that formed an infrastructural regime that was premised on making the existing built environment collectively inhabitable for diverse populations. Yet while infrastructures became central to the visibility and dynamics of religious diversity, they did not become less political (Burchardt 2016).

Arguably, most scholars would agree that cities are made up of material assemblages and diverse human populations – of “stone” and “flesh” in Sennett's (1996) famous rendition. However, in contemporary scholarship both aspects – materiality and human diversity – constitute two largely disconnected ways of thinking about urban space. Scholars interested in materiality are loosely connected and inspired by the “infrastructural turn” while those focusing on human diversity work within the “diversity turn”. Contrary to that, this special issue is based

on the premise that materiality and diversity are entangled, mutually shape one another and should thus be studied in conjunction. Therefore, we argue that bringing research on urban infrastructures and on urban diversity into dialogue opens up new avenues for thinking about the politics and meanings of space. Spanning distances between Rio de Janeiro, London, Manila and Ankara, the contributions to this special issue ask how socio-material assemblages shape encounters with diversity in urban life in relation to concrete social problems.

We begin with the observation that the key processes that organize difference in urban life (social polarization; ethnic and cultural segregation; functional differentiation; subjective fragmentation) are always articulated with particular spatial expressions and regimes. These spatializations of difference are facilitated, shaped, and, to some extent, produced by material infrastructural formations. Transport infrastructures – roads, sideways, railways, buses – connect certain urban populations and simultaneously disconnect others. They sometimes come to be seen as belonging to particular groups that may actually even own these systems and monopolize management and use (Angelo and Calhoun 2013). How do these infrastructures enable, circumscribe or constrain interactions between specific ethnic groups across the often invisible boundaries that crisscross contemporary megacities? How do they enable practices of ethnic or religious commuting that create networks of people spanning different spaces? In urban India, access to water and sanitation systems are often

mediated by caste membership and ethnic or religious affiliation. What Björkman (2015) calls “pipe politics” is thus largely inseparable from the politics of ethnic and religious diversity. In addition, religious buildings and architectures are commonly subject to complex infrastructural norms such as buildings codes and zoning laws that contribute to distributing religion in urban space and spatializing religious differences (Becci, Burchardt and Giorda 2016). But they also constitute infrastructures in their own right in that they facilitate particular practices and exchanges and are material symbols meant to speak to diverse urban audiences.

In Western cities, the use of infrastructures of urban policing and surveillance is sometimes concentrated in high-density neighborhoods with high levels of migration-driven diversity and operates through racial and other kinds of profiling. How do such infrastructures realize the visibilization of particular groups of migrants as delinquents, suspects, etc.? How do other technologies and practices of cultural categorization of diverse classes of people interact as assemblages that have particular effects on perceptions and realities of hierarchy and difference?

These examples illustrate the need to explore the multiple ways in which urban diversities unfold and are performed and governed in relation to sociotechnical systems, ranging from infrastructures of mobility, the provision of energy, water and sanitation, to communication technologies, architectural formations, and many more. As these infrastructures consist of much more than just cables, tubes or built environments, they have to be addressed as socio-material assemblages, linking administrative practices, knowledge, resources and policies, thereby incorporating normative ideas, ideal subject formations and specific modes of place-making. In doing so, they shape both the urban environment as well as the everyday practices of its dwellers. Among others, they mediate participation, formality and informality as well as inclusion and exclusion, predominantly along the lines of race, gender, class, religion and ethnicity.

It is thus clear that studying *infrastructures of diversity* in terms of the mediations of technology, materiality and culture calls attention to particular penetrations of things and humans and to unexpected ethnographic constellations. But it also entails new theoretical engagements and confrontations. Most scholars studying urban infrastructures are committed to post-humanist epistemologies that come together under the label of “New Materialism”. Students of urban diversity, by contrast, are mostly inspired by phenomenological, cultural sociological and post-structuralist theories. Therefore, our concern goes beyond identifying a new range of empirical phenomena and involves theoretical questions as to what conceptualizations of human agency are actually adequate for the phenomena under scrutiny.

This introduction is organized as follows: we begin by outlining key features of the “infrastructural turn” and the “diversity turn” and highlight the theoretical advantages and challenges of bringing both literatures into conversation. We then develop elements for a theorization of infrastructures of diversity and explicate how the articles in this special issue contribute to this agenda.

### **The Infrastructural Turn**

During the last decade, we witnessed a growing literature that addresses urban space from the viewpoint of the technological organization of the material environment. Here, the urban space is seen as constituted by technologies and infrastructures, framed as physical matter that serves particular urban functions. This fruitful approach has been pursued, amongst others, by scholars such as Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift (2002), AbdouMalik Simone (2004 and 2006), Filip de Boeck (2011), Ignacio Farias (2010), Stephen Graham and Colin McFarlane (2015) and many more.

All these studies explicitly or implicitly draw inspiration from social-philosophical thought that began with Durkheim’s proposal of “social morphology” and was continued by Gilbert Simondon, Ernst Kapp, Deleuze and Guattari,



and Donna Haraway. From the 1980s onwards and with the rise of Laboratory Studies and Science and Technology Studies, Bruno Latour, Madeleine Akrich and others, under the label of “Actor-Network-Theory”, became highly influential in many fields, including Urban Studies. Moreover, thinkers such as Manuel DeLanda (2006) and Jane Bennett (2010) developed an approach called “Assemblage Theory”. Others pursued similar endeavors under the label of Material Semiotics or New Materialism. Despite conceptual and methodological differences, we suggest the umbrella term “Infrastructural Turn” for these approaches, as they all aim to rethink the role of materiality and technology in social life. In doing so, they aim to overcome the established notion of materialities as mere expressions or representations of social orders (Höhne 2012). Instead, these studies emphasize the constitutive role of technologies in society, especially in the urban realm.

#### *What is Infrastructure?*

The term infrastructure is more imprecise and ambiguous than it may seem. In many cases it is, for example, difficult to distinguish between urban architecture, technology, and infrastructure. Classical perspectives in sociology, history or cultural studies lack a strong theoretical and methodological approach on infrastructure in the urban sphere – a circumstance perpetuated in contemporary urban studies. The problems already started with the history of the term *infrastructure* itself. As the German historian Dirk van Laak (2001) pointed out, the concept harkens back to the implementation of the railways in the nineteenth century. First verifiable in France in 1875, it was used to describe railroad beds and later also other immobile components that allowed mobility. From the 1950s onwards, it was used by NATO in the context of military logistics and economic integration. Later its use expanded into the field of development aid. Following that, it became part of the vocabulary of political economy and found academic application in economy, political studies and urban

planning. Moreover, it sometimes also refers to social services like hospitals and schools, while in other cases the term “symbolic infrastructures” is applied to memorials or museums. Therefore, as many scholars wearily state, no comprehensive definition of the term can be given.

For our context here, however, we suggest an understanding of infrastructures as socio-technical apparatuses and material artifacts that structure, enable and govern circulation – specifically the circulation of energy, information, goods and capital but also of people, practices and images in the urban realm and beyond. Therefore, infrastructures mediate both integration and disruption. We further suggest that these technologies are constitutive of many elements of “the social”, such as subject formations, modes of production and consumption as well as the many routines of everyday life and the ways people encounter and interact with each other. As a consequence, infrastructures mediate social relations.

Understanding infrastructure in this way demonstrates that socio-technical networks are hardly neutral. While they often appear depoliticized, they carry highly political or normative ideas of their ideal users and their transformative power to improve cities, communities and so on. As urban historian Thomas Bender once quipped: “There are democratic and there are republican sewage systems.” Understanding these political functions of urban material forms is also central to the analysis of urban diversity and to questions of how infrastructures help to discipline, exclude or include segments of urban populations. Scholars have observed how infrastructures are becoming increasingly militarized or privatized in the ways in which they participate in the making and unmaking of public realms and social struggles (Graham and Marvin 2001; Graham 2011). Along these lines, there is also a growing interest in how, and to what extent, infrastructures shape urban practices, bodies and encounters.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See for example the inspirational contributions in the Special Feature: Interactions with Infrastructure as Windows into Social Worlds: A Method for Critical

While analyzing urban socio-technical systems allows us to address everyday relationships in new ways, they also allow us to relate these dimensions to changing modes of production and global accumulation regimes. These connections have been pursued rather sparsely and definitely need more attention. This holds especially true for question how infrastructural systems are used to “manage” the development of built and social environments “elsewhere”. Also, these studies have rarely engaged the cultural dynamics of cities as nodes of transnational social processes.

Post-Marxist theory and the critical urban scholarship of David Harvey (2009), Neil Brenner (2004), Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) has the potential to address these blind spots. These approaches supply a salutary broadside against the dangers of the aesthetization, black-boxing and fetishization of technologies and infrastructures. Socio-technical assemblages are not only powerful actors and institutions in the context of urban diversities, but they are also the product of human labor. Therefore, addressing working conditions, modes of exploitation and self-organization should also be a central focus of our inquiries. Incorporating these perspectives improves our understanding of urban infrastructures as sites of struggle over resources and recognition.

Furthermore, especially in the studies following Latour and his colleagues, the notion of a radical symmetry of human and non-human actors has led to a somewhat simplified understanding of agency (Höhne and Umlauf 2015). Scholars have objected that the way objects are treated in Actor Network Theory is too abstract and historically vacuous. In fact, objects never circulate in unqualified ways in social life. As Navaro-Yashin (2009: 9) has argued, “objects are not involved in relations with humans in a symbolically or linguistically neutral arena. Objects are, rather,

qualified through language.” This observation directly runs up against the anti-deconstructionist and anti-poststructuralist spirit of these theories. It also matters to us, since most cultural sociologists of urban diversity many of whom are committed to poststructuralist notions of meaning and practice probably find new materialist descriptions of humans wanting. We now turn to these perspectives on urban diversities.

### The “Diversity Turn”

There is a rich literature on diversity and urban space that is interested in space as both premise and outcome of situated encounters and urban interactions of ordinary people (Berg and Sigona 2013: 348). In contemporary cities, because of their nature as hubs of migration and cultural differentiation, these encounters involve people of different kinds. Simmel (2010 [1903]) offered the classical definition of the city as a place where different people can live together. Today, however, because of planetary urbanization on the one hand, and massively increasing transnational migration on the other, diversities have multiplied and intensified. Differences refer to economic or class status, ethnicity, religion, country of origin, legal status, first language, and gender identities. The complex interactions between these differences are what Steve Vertovec (2007) called super-diversity.

Encounters between people whose subjectivities are organized along these axes of difference can acquire different kinds of intensity and routine. Susanne Wessendorf (2013) talks about “common-place diversity” to refer to difference as a taken-for-granted feature in social life in a London borough, a kind of diversity that characterizes places that belong to no one and to all. Diversity is a feature of urban space understood here as the terrain of the micro-politics of everyday life that rework notions of solidarity, connectedness, and competition. Importantly, diversity is an aspect of urban experience – the experience of difference in routine urban socialities – but also a condition, as Meissner and Vertovec (2015) underline. In more paradigmatic perspec-

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tive, we note with Berg and Sigona (2013) that the job done by “intersectionality” in feminist research has been done by “diversity” in Migration Studies.

In addition to the “diversity turn” in the study of migration, we note the increasing interest in diversity in the study of religion, and of late, articulations of religious diversity in urban space (Becci, Burchardt and Casanova 2013; Eade 2012; Gomez and van Herck 2012). Scholars explored how religious diversity is deployed as a key category for ordinary social classifications in urban encounters, how religious diversity is spatialized, and how religious diversity materializes through places of worship.

However, there is still a lack of attention to the material mediations of diversity in most studies as scholars hesitate to explore larger material formations such as infrastructures. Contrary to that, we suggest that the “new materialist” perspectives in urban studies provide potential for doing precisely this by focusing on how material objects, or networks of objects, assemble collectives.

At the same time, we note that while diversity is a social reality tangible for people in multiple social contexts and on diverse social scales, it has also developed a life of its own through its transformation from an academic into a political and administrative concept. Diversity has been adopted as a term by law makers, policy-makers and planners, and to the extent it has come to shape law and policy it also contributes to creating the very reality it aimed to describe. We thus gesture towards an understanding of diversity as a form of governmentality that contributes to rendering populations legible for administrative purposes. As a consequence, diversity makes its appearance on multiple sites within the research field and is a prime example of the double hermeneutics of social science categories (Giddens 1987).

In the literatures on urban diversity, only very few studies explicitly address the way the diversity of populations is actually taken into account when infrastructures are conceived, planned,

and designed. Nevertheless, one can witness a growing importance of diversity in the realm of the built urban environment. In the following, we describe some of these uses of diversity in relation to (1) public space, (2) urban planning and design, and (3) urban economies, capital and bureaucracies with a view towards developing ideas and elements for a theorization of “infrastructures of diversity”.

### *Diversity and Public Space: Difference “from below”*

First, as mentioned, diversity is a feature in everyday life interactions between groups of all sorts. Infrastructures can connect or disconnect social groups; they enable and, in fact, largely structure access of different social groups to particular urban spaces. They make possible and probable that certain people can meet, or will never meet. But urban infrastructures can also be owned and managed by particular ethnic groups who monopolize the resources of control and thus set in motion particular patterns of interethnic or interreligious contact (Burchardt 2013). All these aspects point to a notion of diversity “on the ground”, of diversity emerging “from below”. Being the prime reserve of social anthropologists and cultural sociologists, studies interested in “difference from below” constitute what we call the paradigm of “diversity in public space”. These studies are often organized around a focus on meaning, knowledge and practice. From this perspective, material urban space and artifacts are seen as collectively produced by human beings, or else, as chiefly to matter for scholars only inasmuch as they are interpreted and thus become meaningful to social actors through processes of signification and negotiation. However, the very objectness of objects and thingliness of things that mediate formations of diversity is not often taken very seriously or is seen as peripheral. However, if we agree that infrastructural assemblages are central to the formation of urban subjectivities and that urban subjectivities are shaped by diversity as condition and experience, then it seems crucial to better understand

how material assemblages, made up of artifacts, nature and humans facilitate the emergence of such “conditions of diversity”.

Kim Knott’s article on *Walls and other unremarkable boundaries in South London* is an exemplary contribution in this regard. Her article discusses sites such as a boundary wall separating a Cathedral from a market or a disused development ground behind a local Islamic center “in order to assess how spatial phenomena enable or disable encounters with difference” (Knott 2015: 15-34). Paying close attention to otherwise unremarkable uses and human movements, Knott shows how material edges and boundaries inadvertently provide opportunities for new socialities and visibilities in each of the sites she studied. For instance, consumers of the market cross the open gate of the Cathedral to have lunch in churchyard. When the Islamic community residing next to the disused development ground wished to extend their building, it was obliged to financially support to archeological excavations that urban authorities had commissioned. They did so by drawing on volunteer labor whereby local Muslims actually recast the archeological excavations as a citizens’ project. Drawing inspiration from Simmel as well as from DeLanda’s theory of assemblages, Knott demonstrates how the built environment becomes the site for reworking, negotiating and enacting everyday urban diversities, especially through practices that breach existing ideas about separation and openness.

Similarly, the contribution of Suzanne Hall, Julia King and Robin Finlay engage with everyday habitations of the built environment of the city by looking at how the street, in particular. Stapleton Road in the British city of Bristol functions as an infrastructure in two ways: first, they observe how “the street appeared as a loose cohesion of bodies and spaces, coalescing into what we might call a ‘collective urban infrastructure’” (Hall, King and Finlay 2015: 59-72); second, they project the street as a particular kind of “‘migrant infrastructure’; as a shared urban resource for lively economic and social transactions across

residents from many countries of origin” (Hall, King and Finlay 2016). Through a hugely innovative methodological intervention, the authors combine this analysis with an exercise in drawing. Drawing the street and the migratory routes of its inhabitants allows them to visualize and “depict diversity” (Vertovec 2010). It also allows them to visualize how migrant infrastructures emerge in relation to complex urban sorting mechanisms that rank racial and ethnic identities in relation and distribute them in urban space according to economic hierarchies and values. Importantly, while migrant infrastructures emerge “from below”, this does not mean that they are only locally embedded. Instead, as Hall and her collaborators greatly show, they are also embedded in global geopolitics, both past and present, and the ways in which global politics affect migratory patterns, trajectories and contributions to infrastructures as collective resources.

These complex entanglements also become apparent in Anderson Blanton’s compelling analysis of the iconographies of the Jeepney, a central mode of informal public transport in the megacity of Metro Manila. Originally left behind by American troops after World War II, Jeepneys in the Philippines were not only modified to serve as important public transportation vehicles used by thousands of residents every day, but they also became canvasses of a huge variety of images and symbols ranging from Filipino folk art to American popular culture and Christian iconography. Especially in the last three decades, the motifs and vernacular styles on the Jeepneys have been heavily influenced by new evangelical and charismatic Christian movements. In analyzing these opulent religious representations, Blanton vividly shows how Jeepneys function as infrastructural proliferations of pious visual culture within urban public spaces. Furthermore, these informal infrastructures of public transportation become productive apparatuses of urban belief as well as media of how visual and religious diversity is inscribed into the urban landscape.

*Planning and Designing for Diversity*

Parallel to these “diversities from below”, in recent years urban planners and designers have begun to pay attention to the technical and architectural dimension of urban diversity (for example, Talen 2008; Wood and Laundry 2007; Tarbatt 2012). In exploring ways of “designing for diversity”, or “planning for diversity”, they aim to reformulate these phenomena as “problems” solvable via designs, plans and technologies, thereby neglecting the political and often conflict-laden ways diversity is enacted in urban everyday life.

However, when taking a closer look on the proposed strategies of these books, one finds surprisingly traditional ideas. On the one hand, there are small-scale approaches aiming to foster mixed uses of indoor and outdoor spaces. On the other hand, the proposals still basically propagate the ideal of “social mixing”. In this line of reasoning, the central problem is the spatial concentration of underprivileged groups and their lack of contact with established and successful households. In dispersing these so-called *problematic groups* or *problem neighborhoods*, diversity planning and design aims to foster social cohesion, integration and an upward mobility. However, as many critical urban sociologists have pointed out, there seems to be no (or very little) evidence that this strategy of social mixing actually improves the living conditions of these groups (Arthurson 2012; Holm 2009). Instead, studies suggest that this strategy of “social mixing”, now revamped as “diversity planning”, mainly results in the erosion of social connections and rising poverty due to growing rents.

Stephen Read’s compelling analysis demonstrates that it is often the urban spaces spared by these administrative planning efforts that potentially foster heterogeneous, welcoming and liveable neighbourhoods. For Read, the built environments of cities can themselves be understood as infrastructures for diversifying or homogenizing urban populations. This becomes especially apparent when looking into patterns of urban migration and the ways in which new-

comers become urban dwellers. Drawing from a variety of historical cases in which urban environments have fostered diversification, from medieval Paris to New York in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Shenzhen in the last decades, Read demonstrates that the ways in which streets, public spaces and neighbourhoods are built and organized play a crucial role in constituting interactions, mixings and partitions of social groups in the city. Furthermore, urban spaces can also be understood as infrastructures of the political, organising and framing interactions, actions and relations between people and communities. As Read also shows, as soon as urban spaces come into the focus of large scale planning from above, such as in the cases of the Haussmannisation of 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris and the notorious renewal by Robert Moses in 1950s New York City, urban diversities tend to give way to homogenisation.

Emily Bereskin’s essay powerfully shows that the impact of infrastructures on everyday life interactions of heterogeneous people and communities becomes especially apparent when looking into divided cities. In her in-depth-analysis of Nicosia, Cyprus, and Belfast in Northern Ireland, Bereskin shows that the ethnic, national and religious divisions in these cities are constituted by a plurality of division infrastructures: from barriers, fortifications and watchtowers to surveillance technologies and checkpoints. These materialities not only create landscapes of fear and anxiety, but their maintenance and operation in many cases relies on cooperation between otherwise uncooperative groups. Furthermore, contrary to common belief, Bereskin shows that separation barriers can incite conflict and, at the same time, play an active part in fostering social mixing and community organizing as well as activate of peace-building. Serving as contact zones and targets of socio-material interventions, these barriers and walls are sites of aesthetic and regeneration activities as well as catalysts for group interactions and spaces for negotiations as well as shared use. In critically discussing the limits and possibilities of



these dynamics, she makes a compelling point that that urban infrastructures might best foster diversity-building and encounters in cities beset by social divisions. Furthermore, she demonstrates that in many cases, “barriers serve as a material catalyst through which the people, policies, mindsets, attitudes, and regulations that uphold division can be challenged and contested” (Bereskin 2015: 35-58).

Along these lines, Jeremy Walton’s contribution draws attention to the ways in which “planning for diversity” plays out in the development of architectural infrastructures meant to showcase and promote religious tolerance and pluralism. With his comparative analysis of the public discourses surrounding the construction of the New Mosque in the Croatian port city of Rijeka and the mosque-cem house project in the Turkish capital of Ankara, he explores how these infrastructures of religious diversity serve to envision particular types of depoliticized and deracinated tolerance. Interestingly, while these two places are conceptually different – the Croatian mosque housing one religious community and the mosque-cem house being a multi-faith site bringing together Sunnis and the religious minority of Alevis – they present very similar, if not identical, discourses on religious pluralism, which have served to legitimate both spaces as exemplars of *multiculturalist places*. At the same time, these discourses achieve their infrastructural ends by deploying different types of spatial practices: the spatial separation of Islam in the case of Rijeka’s mosque, and the spatial mixing of religious communities in the mosque-cem house. Walton’s article creatively draws on crucial insights from the infrastructural turn while remaining committed to a cultural sociological perspective, seeking as he does to show how discourses fix the meanings of infrastructural sites.

Stephan Lanz’ article too centers on the complex intersections between religious diversity and infrastructure by focusing on the spatial politics in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro and especially the *favelas* as its particular type of

shantytown. Building his study on the dynamics in four favelas, Lanz describes how favelas historically emerged as marginalized urban spaces. As they were mostly subjected to the twin pressures of forced assimilation and far-reaching exclusion from regular infrastructural provision, favela inhabitants crafted what Lanz describes as a self-made urbanism, that is, a series of practices geared towards making urban ends meet that are based improvisation and informal solutions. Lanz then shows how the power relations both between city officials and favela elites as well as within the favela itself are related to the changing panorama of religious diversity characterized by the rise of Pentecostalism and the decline of Afro-Brazilian religion forced upon them by the former. Pentecostalism’s rise resonates with the broader infrastructural dynamics in that its gospel of prosperity was perceived as a way out of economic and infrastructural crisis that left people to depend on themselves. Moreover, the very material basis of independent Pentecostal churches – the recycled, cheaply bought or found wood and corrugated iron out of which these churches are built – itself resonates with the self-made urbanism developed before. “The new religious diversity”, he concludes, “with its break from the dominance of the Catholic Church, is thus as much an expression of emancipation from the paternalism of authoritarian apparatuses as it is an expression of the evermore precarious social-economic situation of the favela residents, who are increasingly forced to eke out a living as self-entrepreneurs” (Lanz 2015: 103-117). Lanz creatively deploys the term infrastructure to analyze authoritarian top-down projects and the favela’s improvisatory practices of collaboration just as to religion as belief, practice and belonging.

#### *Diversity and Capital*

Another way in which concepts of diversity are mobilized in the urban sphere is in relation to capital: With the growing importance of cities as nodes of economic innovation and the ineradicable belief that cities are in competition with each

other, diversity has increasingly become a factor in urban economic development strategies. This holds especially true in the context of the so called “creative industry”. Notoriously, Richard Florida put this belief into a nutshell stating that: “Diversity and creativity work together to power innovation and economic growth” (Florida 2002, p. 262). The core belief is that diversity will bring potential benefits such as better decision making, improved problem solving, and greater creativity and innovation, which leads to better urban development and prosperity for all.

Contrary to this widespread assumption, Boris Vormann’s essay vividly demonstrates that ideas about the mutual enforcement of cultural and economic notions of diversity are in fact flawed. In situating the ideology of diversity in the historical genealogy of liberal thought, from Smith and Alfred Marshall to Jane Jacobs and Robert Fishman, Vormann not only demonstrates how diversity has become a dominant paradigm in urban planning and city branding, especially in “post-industrial” cities of the global north, but he also shows that these notions of diversity have reinforced a normative understanding of urban cultural and economic diversity as a unified and unquestioned development goal. In short: diversity has become a cipher for marketization. This new paradigm actually tends to work against fostering an inclusive and heterogeneous urban population and becomes especially apparent when focusing on urban infrastructures. Under the neoliberal paradigm, the modes of urban infrastructural provisions actually enforce social inequality and therefore act against the creation of diverse and inclusive cities. As Vormann demonstrates, the shift to the language of diversity could thus be understood in market terms: diversity has commercial value and can be used as a way not only of marketing cities but of making every aspect of urban life into a potential economic resource. At the same time, this term has the potential of obscuring notions of class under the identity paradigm of diversity.

### **Governing through Infrastructure and Diversity: Theory and Agenda**

This last point – the channeling of diversity into the workings of urban administrations and economic development programs – leads us to our final part. We note here that in many studies, diversity is construed as a feature of people and social life happening “on the ground” and emerging “from below” that apparatuses of power – the capitalist economy, state bureaucracies, courts of law – seek to control and order. They do so in order to create citizen-subjects that conform to uniform notions of citizenship and uniform understandings of hegemonic, homogenized national culture. But as we have briefly demonstrated, diversity operates in more complex ways, at least since the last two decades, and has itself become a premise of government, management, urban planning, etc. (Fainstein 2005).

In fact, all large organizations – from companies to universities – are today enjoined to tackle, promote and govern diversity, and as we suggest: to govern through diversity.<sup>2</sup> The concept of diversity recognizes the huge variety of cultural features of populations and thus their chaotic make-up, and simultaneously renders them legible to power by organizing this chaos into discrete, meaningful, and intelligible categories. Diversity is at once the problem as well as its own solution. It is this rendition of diversity that has turned it into a major category within the vocabularies of political rule in contemporary neoliberalism.

The intricacies of diversity as a concept that draws together recognition and rule, emancipation and enforced alterity had already been noted in debates around multiculturalism, a term which diversity has partially displaced. In a well-known critique, Slavoj Žižek (1997) argued that multiculturalism was the ideal form of ideology of global capitalism. He saw multiculturalism as the “attitude which, from a kind of empty global position, treats each local culture the

<sup>2</sup> For a similar approach see Matejskova and Anton-sich (2015).



way the colonizer treats colonized people – as ‘natives’ whose mores are to be carefully studied and ‘respected’.” He went on to say that “in the same way that global capitalism involves the paradox of colonization without the colonizing Nation-State metropole, multiculturalism involves patronizing Eurocentrist distance and/or respect for local cultures without roots in one’s own culture” (Žižek 1997: 44).

In a related critique, Bauman (2011: 46) observed that multiculturalism as the theory of cultural pluralism that postulates the support of liberal tolerance for identities is a conservative force.

“Its achievement is the transformation of social inequality, a phenomenon highly unlikely to win general approval, into the guise of ‘cultural diversity’, that is to say, a phenomenon deserving of universal respect and careful cultivation. Through this linguistic measure, the moral ugliness of poverty turns, as if by the touch of a fairy’s wand, into the aesthetic appeal of ‘cultural diversity’. The fact that any struggle for recognition is doomed to failure so long as it is not supported by the practice of redistribution gets lost from view along the way.”

As states and cities recognize cultural diversity, they increasingly address people on the basis of their membership in groups, organized as categories of allegiance. They thereby increasingly incite people to view themselves and their own form of being on these same terms. There has been a trenchant critique of the essentialisms that come with these ways of governing people. Other scholars, in turn, have defended multiculturalism against these critiques (Kymlicka 2013). Yet as a regime that handles the effects of transnational mobility, diversity is clearly linked to the operations of multinational capital, as Žižek showed. While remaining agnostic in regard to causal directions, we note here the parallelisms between the rise of neoliberalism, the rise of multiculturalism, and the subsequent rise of the diversity regime and the ways in which they are premised on the idea that people have identities.

Intervening in this debate, we suggest that diversity may be profitably approached in Foucauldian terms as a regime of governmentality.

In other words, we suggest to look at diversity in urban space as a form of governing populations through practices of classifying, categorizing and naming, in a word: of ‘making up people’ (Hacking 2006). This perspective is also central to our understanding of urban infrastructures. As a way of mediating between power and the everyday, addressing infrastructural regimes allows us to focus on both governing *as a* technology and governing *through* technology.

In fact, there is an interesting way to look at infrastructures in terms of the ideal consumer or user they envisage or consider the ways which they function. It may seem that the very existence of such images of “ideal users” homogenizes populations according to standards, subjecting them to processes of normalization. Infrastructures thus contribute to the graduated regimes of urban inclusion that articulate one’s abilities to enjoy and be in urban space with economic resources and class status. The outcomes of these articulations may even fashion graduated regimes of infrastructural urban citizenship – a form of citizenship that occludes many of the categories of people with which it operates. There are today many attempts to counter such unwarranted homogenizations and envision infrastructures in more democratic ways. Participation in infrastructural planning has recently become a major concern for cities across globe – albeit realized to divergent degrees. Infrastructures are key issues for urban activists.

Conversely, diversity is also a key issue in terms of participation in this activism, in terms of the imaginaries of populations on whose behalf they mobilize. We suggest that in the same way that the recognition of diversity disrupted homogenized images of the nation-state it also disrupts homogenized images of the “ideal user” of urban infrastructures. As a consequence, among other things we propose to explore how the organization of urban space and urban infrastructures function as particular instantiations and materialization of projects of state-formation and nation-building and how diversity reconfigures this nexus between infrastructure and nation-states.

Against this broader backdrop, we will sum up by stating that we are chiefly intrigued by these two research questions: How do infrastructures mediate the working and formation of diversity? And what are the processes that turn infrastructures into sites of contestation around diversity?

Along these lines, in his reflective commentary on this special issues on infrastructures of diversity, AbdouMaliq Simone starts from the observations that, in many places of the so-called “Global South”, political statements on issues of diversity, such as gender roles and religious identity, have themselves a kind of infrastructural quality. They inscribe boundaries as well as mobilizing and materializing forms of propriety, inclusion and exclusion. These functions are also attributed to material infrastructures in a more narrow sense, as they can be understood as normative embodiments of social orders and materializations of political accords. Furthermore, these urban material assemblages not only allow for the movement and passing along of things, capital flows or people. They themselves can be addressed as forms of movement, as they are a result of past dynamics of territorialization, creating path dependencies while also allowing for open trajectories into the uncertain future of urban daily life. For Simone, bringing these complex temporalities of often capital-driven urban development into focus means that one has to incorporate an infrastructural perspective in order to address urban spaces as decentered, shifting and multiple. While these assemblages have a sense of definitiveness, they point towards turbulence, openness and ephemeral transformations. Or, as Simone puts it: “Infrastructure is never complete—either in its closure to further articulations or in its process of immediate decay. It may be repaired, expanded, and updated and, as such, it constantly shows the evidence of not only what it bears and extracts, or the force that it imparts, but of the limits of its anticipation. It never fully (or only) does what it says it will do” (Simone 2015: 151-162).

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### Note on the Authors

MARIAN BURCHARDT is a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Göttingen, Germany. His research is chiefly concerned with the links between diversity, power and subjectivity in the age of globalization, and especially with how they play out through spatial practices. He is the author of *Faith in the Time of AIDS: Religion, Biopolitics and Modernity in South Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015).

STEFAN HÖHNE is a researcher and lecturer at the Center for Metropolitan Studies at Technische Universität Berlin. His research fields include critical urban history, historical anthropology of machines as well as cultural and social theory of the 20th and 21st century. Currently, he is preparing a publication on the relations of luddism, technology and revolt during the cold war.



# Walls and Other Unremarkable Boundaries in South London: Impenetrable Infrastructure or Portals of Time, Space and Cultural Difference?\*

by KIM KNOTT (Lancaster University)

## Abstract

Seemingly impenetrable, urban walls, fences and other hard surfaces of the city do not seem likely contenders for social and cultural innovation and interaction. Generally, they remain unnoticed and unremarked upon. Yet broken, traversed, entered or excavated, they become visible and open to narration and imaginative (re)construction. These inconspicuous man-made structures, crucial for the management of urban life, for ensuring the efficient flow of people and traffic, and for securing public and private property, have counter-cultural potential. As boundaries for keeping people and objects out or in and for separating human activity on the surface from what is below ground, they may permit access to previously hidden times and places, and may allow new encounters to take place. Drawing on data from a research project on “Iconic Religion”, I eschew London’s iconic sites for the forgotten infrastructure in their shadows, and ask what new social relations and cultural imaginaries are generated by the wall separating a church from a market, a construction site behind a mosque, and a gate to a disused graveyard on land owned by Transport for London.

**Keywords:** social interaction, religion, boundaries, London, infrastructure

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present  
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder:  
And through Wall’s chink, poor souls, they are content  
To whisper, at the which let no man wonder...

Wall. In this same interlude it doth befall  
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;  
And such a wall, as I would have you think,  
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,  
Did whisper often very secretly.

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act V, Scene 1*

What role is played by walls and other unremarkable boundaries in social and cultural encounters and transitions across time and space?

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\* This article draws on research conducted in association with the project, “Iconic Religion”, funded by

Humans often overlook the contribution of objects in their environments, imagining that action is solely a function of organic processes, a consequence of human or animal life. However, as Shakespeare intimated in this comic scene, a wall – which both prohibits and allows social interaction – may be part of the action, in this case a player in a romantic entanglement. In this article, I will consider how seemingly impenetrable boundary objects, “edges” as I will call them, gather people and things together, and

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either inhibit or enable their physical, social and mental transitions. My particular interest is in the unexceptional edges associated with religious sites (not the buildings themselves), and I will argue that such edges and their openings, by their very nature, have the capacity to achieve what religious buildings do not. Although such buildings clearly have the potential to generate encounters with religion, they are rarely entered by outsiders. Unless they operate as tourist sites, what goes on inside generally remains undiscovered and mysterious to those outside their walls. Exterior walls, gates and other surfaces, however, are taken-for-granted boundaries that, when breached, open up the possibility of unexpected interactions.

The location for this study is Southwark, a socially and religiously diverse borough in South London, and the subject of research conducted as part of a European research project on “Iconic Religion”. I begin by situating my initial question in the recent debate about meaningful social encounters, where these might occur in a super-diverse context like Southwark, and under what conditions. This is followed by a theoretical discussion of the boundaries and entanglements associated with city infrastructure. I refer to the work of the urban design theorist, Kevin Lynch (1960), in particular his model of the elements by which city dwellers experience and describe urban form. I also draw on the ideas of the archaeologist, Ian Hodder (2012), whose account of “entanglement” offers a useful language for exploring those dynamic human/thing relations – of dependence and dependency – that emerge at points where people and the built environment come into contact with one another.

In order to assess how spatial phenomena enable or disable encounters with difference, I then turn to three case studies, of different edges, the bi-products of South London landmarks: a boundary wall separating Cathedral from market, a gate bordering land belonging to Transport for London that contains a pauper’s graveyard, and disused ground for development behind a local Islamic

Centre.<sup>1</sup> In each of these cases, I examine how these edges – and the spatio-temporal breaks or openings that occur at points within them – lead to encounters with difference. In the final section, I suggest that different types of breaks or openings, which I call “vents”, “portals” and “holes”, permit differing relationships and patterns of encounter.

### **Diversity and the religious and urban context**

Critical examination of the theory and practice of multiculturalism has led in the last decade to new empirical research and the articulation of fresh concepts to account for the changing nature of urban diversity and its potential for new ways of living together. The complexity of global cities and their populations has been encapsulated in the concept of “super-diversity” (Vertovec 2007), which addresses the “multiplication of social categories” under specific local conditions (Wessendorf 2014: 2), and the consequences for public policy and service provision. Further questions have arisen, however, about how and where people relate to one another in super-diverse contexts, and what constitutes meaningful social interaction (Valentine 2008). Given the speed and mobility of contemporary urban living, people are thrown together, but encounters in public space are predominantly fleeting and superficial, and often people continue to lead parallel lives. Are such encounters beneficial for good relations and the avoidance of stereotyping, stigmatization and racism, or is more sustained and deliberate contact necessary to bring about these ends, and, if so, where is that possible?

Reviewing recent research on these questions, Valentine and Sadgrove (2014) stress the impor-

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<sup>1</sup> Research was conducted in Southwark between April 2014 and December 2015. Sites were selected as part of a larger study of religious iconography in Amsterdam, Berlin and London (Iconic Religion 2016). Documentary research and participant observation were undertaken by Steph Berns and Kim Knott; semi-structured interviews were conducted by Berns (with participants, leaders and professionals) who also maintained a photographic record.



tance of the scholarly turn to *everyday life* for understanding the potential that routine contact in public spaces has for producing “cosmopolitan sensibilities and competencies as a by-product of socially diverse individuals rubbing along together as they go about their normal lives” (2014: 1980). Valentine and Sadgrove focus on personal biographies to examine “when contact with difference matters” (2014: 1993), but others have assessed the value of encounters with diverse others in everyday public locations such as cafés, markets, streets, parks and neighbourhoods (e.g. Hall 2015; Hiebert et al 2015; Vertovec 2015; Watson 2009; Wessendorf 2014). The importance of people “processing diversification” through routine interactions (Vertovec 2015: 255) has been stressed, but other points have been made, too, such as the impact of the duration, frequency and repetition of contact, the value of private separation for public coexistence and, increasingly, the nature of the physical space and material conditions for the nature and quality of the interaction that may take place there. With regard to the latter, Mayblin et al (2015: 79) have observed that “surprisingly little attention has been paid to the physical configuration of space in work on encounters”. In response to this, they conducted a spatial experiment to generate “meaningful contact across difference”, in part to examine the effect of spatial arrangements on encounters, but also to allow participants “to escape the normative conventions of everyday life” (79) as they engage with others.

In this literature, the spaces of routine interaction have been investigated for their capacity to allow for or facilitate meaningful encounters, but the question of whether everyday practices and spaces impose debilitating “normative conventions” has also emerged. Getting different people participating collaboratively to generate shared micro-spaces of intimacy and inclusion (Mayblin et al) is one way of generating positive meaningful encounters and learning from the process. Most encounters, however, will not be generated by such creative interventions; they just happen, either because people “rub along together”

(Valentine and Sadgrove 2014; Watson 2009), or because the spatial, material or social conditions of their everyday locations require them to engage in some way (Hall 2015; Vertovec 2015). The important question arising from Mayblin et al’s experiment, though, is whether the “normative conventions of everyday life” have to be broken, challenged or escaped in order for meaningful encounters to occur. If that is the case, can this happen in the unremarkable places I have in mind here? It is not my intention, after all, to discuss organised interfaith dialogue or ecumenical partnership, but rather the possibilities for cross-cultural encounter at the boundaries of religious sites.

In the Iconic Religion project we have asked how and where religion takes place in the city, and to what extent its material presence structures urban space and generates positive or negative encounters (Iconic Religion 2016; Knott et al 2016). As a result of global migration and religious pluralisation in Europe’s major cities, material religion has become publicly important in a variety of ways, e.g. for urban tourism, cultural heritage, community engagement, welfare provision, identity politics, and for debates about equality and diversity (Dodsworth & Watson 2013; Garbin 2012; Oosterbaan 2014). In addition, religious place-making and other forms of religious production have been significant for minority communities and individuals in marking identities, staking public claims, forging relations with others, and being seen to be different (Garnett & Harris 2013; Stringer 2013; Vásquez and Knott 2014). Various tensions have emerged as important: for example, between the inconspicuousness and visibility of urban religion, its historic presence but also new forms, and its local specificity and global interconnections (Knott 2016; Knott et al 2016; Beekers and Tamimi Arab 2016). Furthermore, it is clear that religion in the city is in no way a settled matter, with processes of decline and decay, but also innovation and growth at work, and with the boundaries of “religion” and the “sacred” constantly open to negotiation.

Despite these tensions and shifts, if you ask people to identify religion in an urban context most will point to a building. From this perspective, encounters with religion and religious others become subject to human-object relations, public access, opening times, the readiness of insiders to welcome strangers within, and of strangers to cross the threshold. The barriers to interaction may be substantial; worth overcoming perhaps, but demanding of effort, courage and determination on both sides.

But what of those interactions generated at the external boundaries of such sites? Can these edges produce meaningful encounters with difference? Can they facilitate crossings or open up spaces that might seem closed or unwelcoming to outsiders?

### **Theorising Infrastructural Boundaries and Entanglements**

I turn my gaze then from religious buildings in the urban environment to their external boundaries, the walls, gates and the ground underfoot, those edges that connect religious sites with the world outside or below ground. In doing so, I also shift the academic focus from economic and demographic zoning and the institutional organisation of urban localities [two of three socio-spatial approaches (Merriman 2015) to have dominated urban studies from the early days of the Chicago School] to a consideration of unremarkable physical boundaries and their social and cultural affordances. Simultaneously, such boundaries are common elements in the built infrastructure, hence part of other systems, *and* things or places in their own right. The edges I am interested in variously facilitate entrances and exits, protect property, enclose people or keep them out, and operate as material surfaces on which things can be placed. They exist in time as well as in space. Furthermore, such material boundaries create opportunities for relationships to develop.

In *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch (1960) analysed the responses of a sample of residents of Boston, Los Angeles and New Jersey to ques-

tions about their cities. He asked them to draw maps and to give “complete and explicit directions for the trip that you normally take going from home to where you work” (1960: 141). He encouraged them to picture themselves making the journey, to describe their emotions and to identify distinctive features. As a theorist of urban design, he was interested in how people represented their own places, and in how these views might contribute to the design and development of good, effective and dynamic cities. His analysis led to the development of a model of five types of elements – paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks (46). He understood these to be “the raw material of the environmental image of the city scale” (83); they were the building blocks through which urban dwellers could imagine a satisfying city form. Pre-empting later developments in urban studies arising from spatial, cultural and actor-network theory, Lynch gave credence to the materiality of these elements, the emotions they generate, their relationship to human actions and decision-making, and their mutuality and interdependency in the production of urban infrastructure.

Of particular interest here are Lynch’s “edges” and, to a lesser extent, his “paths” and “landmarks”. Following his own order, “paths” (1960: 49-62), which are often the principal elements in people’s city maps, are the channels along which they move. They include streets, walkways, railway lines, rivers and so on. They have various spatial and functional characteristics, such as width or narrowness, dis/continuity, alignment, intersectionality, directional quality and concentration of use. “Edges” (62-66) – which I will discuss in more detail below – are those linear elements that are not path-like. They often constitute the boundaries between different areas. “Landmarks” (78-83) are external points of reference, “usually a rather simply defined physical object: building, sign, store or mountain” (48). They may be near or distant, large or small. They are useful for orientation, but their key feature is their “singularity” (78), and the extent to which they stand out from their background. In moving

away from religious buildings to external boundaries as sites for study, I am not only shifting my gaze from the iconic to the mundane, but from “landmarks” to “edges”.

This everyday urban infrastructure, though taken for granted, imposes its presence in order to regulate the flows and behaviours of citizens. Unlike waste (ostensibly worthless, spent and valueless), about which Lynch (1990) was writing at the time of his death in 1984, his “edges” are useful. Although they are bi-products of paths, private property and public spaces, they have value and consequences, both intended and unintended. They generate other places – insides and outsides, and something to lean or sit on. They interact with these other places, and are *entangled* (Hodder 2012) with the things and humans that gather around them.

What does it mean for these material boundaries to be entangled in this way? In explaining his conception of entanglement, Hodder focused on relations of dependence and dependency: “There is ... a dialectic relationship between dependence, often productive and enabling, and dependency, often constraining and limiting.” (2012: 89) Humans depend on things; things depend on other things; things depend on humans; and humans depend on other humans (Hodder 2012: 88). In the case of Shakespeare’s “play within a play”, the two lovers, Pyramus and Thisby, were separated by the wall, but were nevertheless dependent on it – or on the chink within it – for communication with one another. Their relationship with the wall was one of dependence because it brought them together, but also of dependency, in so far as it limited their relationship with one another by reminding them of their distance. Furthermore, the identity and role of “Wall” within the play was given character and substance by the lovers and their speech and actions. Such entanglements are variously understood and experienced from different standpoints. They have a tendency to be unstable, and they change over time as the dialectics of human/thing dependence/dependency changes.

In addition to their entanglement with proximate people and things, “edges” of the kind identified by Lynch are apprehended and imagined as commonplace boundaries. Edges, such as walls, gates and other surfaces tend to be taken-for-granted unless something occurs to draw attention to them. They are:

boundaries between two phases, linear breaks in continuity: shores, railroad cuts, edges of development, walls... [They] may be barriers, more or less penetrable, which close one region off from another; or they may be seams, lines along which two regions are related and joined together. (Lynch 1960: 47)

This perception of them as barriers or seams hints at how they are used or imagined by those who come into contact with them, whether as custodians, planners, traders, visitors, artists, or simply passers-by. Barriers halt progress and prohibit crossings; they constitute a decisive break such that any sense of continuity between two regions is disrupted, even forgotten. Seams achieve the opposite, but not at the expense of the boundary itself. They invite reconnection across it, but do not erase it entirely. As Simmel noted in 1909, in his analysis of two other boundary objects, bridge and door, “We are at any moment – in the immediate or symbolic, in the physical or mental sense – beings who separate what is related and who relate what is separate” (Simmel in Kaerns 1994: 408). The bridge, he suggests, emphasises “unification” above separateness (1994: 409). The door emphasises the latter, more so even than a wall: “Exactly because the door can be opened, its being shut gives a feeling of being shut out, that is stronger than the feeling emanating from just a solid wall.” (1994: 409) It draws attention to discontinuity.

As cognitive and physical boundaries, all such boundary features (a) signal two regions or sides, often an inside and outside; (b) they either frame a site, thus drawing attention to it, or block or obscure it from view, thus making it invisible to those who pass by; and (c) they denote limits that have the capacity to be transgressed. Furthermore, some physical and



Figure 1. Southwark Cathedral amidst the transport network © Steph Berns, 2014

social boundaries are held to be sacred (Knott 2008; Knott 2013). These are generally clearly marked because of their associated prohibitions and rituals. The immediate thresholds of places of worship, for example, may entail the removal of shoes, covering of heads, washing of body parts and so on, and the boundary around holy ground may be denoted by signs, objects, and in some cases by stalls selling material for offering and souvenirs. These are not the commonplace edges intended by Lynch and to which I will refer below. Nevertheless, as we shall see in one case, the dynamism of urban space and the ingenuity of actors ensures that, through a process of entanglement over time, “edges” have the potential not only to become “nodes” or “landmarks”, but to be transformed into sacred boundaries.

### Southwark and the Three Edges in Question

The London Borough of Southwark, in which my three edges are situated, lies to the south of the river Thames. Its population of nearly 300,000 is ethnically diverse, with

some 300 languages spoken (Southwark Council).<sup>2</sup> Half the population is white British, with the remainder from a variety of black and minority ethnic groups, with the largest being black African. Young people predominate, with nearly 60 percent under 35 years old. The Borough is also religiously diverse, although Christians are the majority, at 52.5 per cent of the population.<sup>3</sup> Mainstream Christian denominations (Church of England, Roman Catholicism, Methodism, the Baptist Church and so on) are joined by some 240 black majority churches, representing possibly the largest concentration of African Christianity outside Africa (Rogers 2013). This makes the Christian majority in Southwark quite different to the white mainstream Christian majority in most other parts of the UK.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200088/southwarks\\_facts\\_and\\_figures](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200088/southwarks_facts_and_figures), accessed 17 January 2016.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200559/public\\_sector\\_equality\\_duty/3859/religion\\_and\\_belief](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200559/public_sector_equality_duty/3859/religion_and_belief), accessed 17 January 2016.

<sup>4</sup> At the time of the population census of 2011, the Christian majority in England and Wales was 59.3 per





Figure 2. Crossbones in the shadow of the Shard © Steph Berns, 2014

Self-professed non-religious people constitute nearly 27 per cent, Muslims 8.5 per cent (twice the national average), with smaller percentages of Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and Sikhs. Southwark has a Multi-Faith Forum which brings together those of different religions and beliefs. The mainstream Christian denominations participate in Churches Together in South London, with some Evangelical groups collaborating in Southwark for Jesus. Southwark is historically and culturally rich, as the three case studies below will show.

To find the first of the three sites, you must alight from the underground at London Bridge Station, and head west towards Southwark Cathedral, turning to note the impenetrable steel and glass skyscraper – the Shard – rising up behind you. It towers above Southwark's office and apartment buildings, its many historic churches, its cultural institutions, bridges, sta-

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cent, 25.1 per cent “no religion”, 4.8 per cent Muslim. Hindus, Sikhs, Jews and Buddhists and other religions together made up about 4 per cent, with the remainder “not stated” (Office for National Statistics 2012).

tions and shopping areas. In terms of height and visual effect, the Shard has displaced other buildings to become Southwark's iconic centrepiece, embodying the architectural role once played by the Cathedral. In seeking to achieve the developer's vision of becoming a “vertical city”, it dominates too in terms of function, evoking both the practice and power of global capitalism.

Southwark Anglican Cathedral once held the position of architectural prominence within the area, combining this with spiritual power, in its role as mother church of Southwark Diocese. The oldest Cathedral in London and on the site of a 7<sup>th</sup> century church, it is close to London's earliest river crossing and hemmed in by the Thames to the north, by railway lines above, a major road to the east, and a major food market to the south-west. Borough market, established by an act of Parliament in 1756 but dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, is a retail market selling food and drink from all over the world. The two places – church and market – are separated, and indeed brought together, by the Cathedral's boundary wall. This is my first edge.



Figure 3. Baitul Aziz Mosque at the corner of Dickens Square © Steph Berns, 2014

The second lies to the south-west of the Cathedral, on Redcross Way on the other side of the railway tracks. As you make your way down the road you walk in parallel with the boundary fence (on your left) of land belonging to Transport for London. Before the road junction you reach a locked gate. You have arrived at Crossbones Graveyard. You can glimpse it through the ribbons and tokens that adorn the gate; behind it, the Shard looms. The gate is the second of my edges.

To reach the third, you must keep walking south, past Borough underground station to the corner of Harper Road and Dickens Square. There you cannot miss the Baitul Aziz Islamic Centre, set at an angle to the road, with its metal dome and coloured tiling. Although the recognisable edge here is the boundary fence, my focus will be on what until recently was disused ground behind the mosque, with my edge being the surface which separates what is above from what is below ground.

### **The Boundary Wall: Formal Crossings and Fleeting Encounters**

In the quotation with which I began, Pyramus and Thisby, those ill-fated characters in the play within a play, by turns cursed and heaped praise on the wall that separated them but allowed them to glimpse and speak to one another. As “edges”, Lynch (1960) noted, walls may be barriers or seams, and more or less penetrable. Snout, cast in the role of Wall, suggests a further truth about such man-made boundaries – that they too are part of the action. They are entangled in relations of dependence and dependency (Hodder 2012).

The southern boundary wall enclosing the graveyard of Southwark Cathedral separates the church from the market, consecrated ground from the territory of secular consumption and exchange. It is the property of the Church of England, and overseen by the Cathedral Chapter. On the market side, it is bordered by stalls selling a variety of world foods (from English pasties and pies to Asian, Middle Eastern and Latin meals and





Figure 4. Diners relaxing in the Cathedral churchyard © Steph Berns, 2014

snacks). On the Cathedral side of the wall is an earthen bank – once covered in grass – sloping down to a path with benches which runs in parallel to the wall.<sup>5</sup> There is an access gate to the west end of the wall. Until the summer of 2015, when the gate was closed to allow the renovation and replanting of the grounds, there was free access on most days of the year, allowing people to pass freely from the market to the churchyard and vice versa. Throughout the day, but especially at lunchtime, the wall, bank and benches provided somewhere for diners to sit once they had purchased food. The view from their temporary resting place took in the outer wall of the Cathedral nave and the main entrance to the south side, a large wooden cross, and some graves and important memorials.

<sup>5</sup> This describes the situation prior to the renovation of the grounds, in the summer of 2015.

When asked her opinion about people eating in the churchyard, one parishioner commented:

I think that's good. It brings people closer to the Cathedral and its providing something for the world at large; the people who work in the neighbourhood who might otherwise have to have their lunch at their office desk ... And for a lot of people who live in these surroundings, they've got no gardens ... [It] is part of us caring for other people. (Cathedral borderer, retired)<sup>6</sup>

This view, shared by some other parishioners, accords with the Cathedral Chapter's commitment to be an inclusive church. The Cathedral claims a congregation that reflects the social diversity of the neighbourhood and the capital more broadly in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation, and "is not only a place of worship but of hospitality to every kind of person: princes and paupers, prelates and

<sup>6</sup> Interview conducted by Steph Berns.



prostitutes, poets, playwrights, prisoners and patients have all found refuge here” (Southwark Cathedral 2016). The open gate is a sign of such hospitality, but also a reminder of the power vested in the Cathedral as property owner. What is open can be closed, and this tension was expressed by another Cathedral worker:

[E]verybody feels they have a right to be there. Where in fact... they don't have a right to be there. By invitation, we have the gates open so they can come in but ... We could have the gates closed permanently. I think it wouldn't do us any good in PR terms. I don't think it would be desirable, but we could. It's our space, but I think we need to keep those boundaries ... We're about making special space. (Pastor Auxiliary, female, 60s)<sup>7</sup>

This worker refers to the complex dependence and dependencies implicated by the wall, its gate, the grounds it encloses and the two institutions it connects. The market's customers – and thus its producers and traders – rely on the hospitality of the Cathedral for respite and a place to sit away from the urban bustle; they depend on the physical properties of the wall and bank, and the openness of the gate. This enables the market to live up to its stated values, not only of quality and diversity, but also of connection: to be “a place where people come to connect, share food and awaken their senses” (Borough Market 2009). Many regulars who have become accustomed to eating lunch in the churchyard take the access for granted; they have become reliant on this routine and consider it a right rather than a gift (with all its associated obligations and dependencies). As the interviewee noted, however, the Cathedral is also constrained in this entanglement, as a result of its own commitment to hospitality and the management of its public relations. The importance of this to the institution was highlighted by the Cathedral's Development Director (in a review of the renovated church grounds by a venue hire company):

I would like to encourage those in the creative industries with a keen eye on experiential market-

ing space to come down and see it, as well as, of course, party organisers researching locations for drinks and canapé receptions... [It is] most certainly a place-maker now with not just one but two wonderful outdoor areas at opposing compass points, the River side and Borough Market side – we are very lucky (Rose Harding, Southwark Cathedral Development Director, quoted in Shane 2015).

Tidying up the churchyard and renting it out for events – which required closing it to visitors – is important not only for the Cathedral's public image, but for its economic sustainability: charging some users to enable free access for others has become a common strategy for London's cultural service providers.

Like Pyramus and Thisby, Cathedral and market connect across the wall that divides them, but with the access gate a constant reminder of the alternation of unification and separateness (Simmel in Kaerns 1994: 410). There are formal crossings: an annual civic service, for example, is hosted jointly by the Mayor of Southwark, the Cathedral and the market for those who live and work in the area. The 2015 event commemorated the 1,000-year presence of a local market in Southwark. Other joint events include Apple Day and a Christingle Service. Although it would be possible to sustain this longstanding reciprocal relationship without a “chink” in the boundary wall, it would be extremely difficult. Without its gate, the wall would be more barrier than seam. Given its height, it would block the Cathedral from public view (from the market side), making it far less likely that market goers and traders would ever visit it.

Walls and the land that abuts them are subject to planning and building regulations and to various laws and by-laws. From the 12<sup>th</sup> century in London, rules were in place for the height, width, shared costs and so on of party walls, including advice for the courts in settling disputes between neighbours (the Assize of Buildings, in London Record Society). Walls that are part of the domain of Anglican cathedrals and churches are also subject to Ecclesiastical Law in so far as they form the boundaries of consecrated land (Jones 2012), in the Southwark case, the church-

<sup>7</sup> Interview conducted by Steph Berns.

yard. However, walls regulate as well as being regulated. As O'Meara (2007) intimates, "walls do more than border the passageways. They form them. Were there no walls, there would be no paths and alleys". They regulate flows and – with the help of doors, gates and other breaches – facilitate crossings. They also mark and separate regions, in this case dividing consecrated from secular land. In these ways, they produce effects and help to shape and represent space to those who interact with them. In this sense, they are vibrant material in an open-ended and dynamic assemblage or entanglement (Hodder 2012). Time and space are interconnected here, with routine Cathedral/market relations and visitor encounters subject to changing laws, regulations and customs as well as the physical closing and opening of the gate.

When the Cathedral unlocks the gate in its wall, a vent is opened allowing workers, traders and visitors to flow from the secular market to the consecrated ground of the graveyard. No transgression is required as this is a permitted crossing point. It is nevertheless an opportunity for encounter – however unsought this may be – with the sacred, in its Anglican Christian form, with the external fabric and symbols of the Cathedral, and with its values of hospitality and openness. The possibility of encounter arises from fleeting interactions, "route-ines" as Vertovec (2015: 17) calls them. An invitation to cross the Cathedral threshold is made, if not accepted. Closing the gate inevitably risks creating a "corridor of dissociation" (Vertovec 2015: 17) in which the crossing is controlled and outsiders are only welcome when explicitly invited. Although the motivation for closure may not in itself arise from any negativity towards diverse others, in seeking to set apart the space and keep it special, the effect may be to limit encounters with the church and liberal Christianity more generally.

### **The Locked Gate: A Meeting Point for People, Objects and Memories**

In Southwark, residents and visitors, whatever their religious inclinations and ethnic heritage,

come into passing contact with diverse Christianities and Christians as they go about their daily lives. Christian bodies of various persuasions – mainstream Anglican, Catholic, Methodist and Baptist, Black-majority Evangelical, Pentecostal and Holiness, and new Christian expressions – make claims on public space in the Borough. Their signage adorns all kinds of purpose-built but more often recycled buildings, and their material representation – in dress, music, books, language and symbols – manifests in various times and places on the street, in parks, stations, bookshops and other open places. Public events and processions may offer a deeper engagement, through the offering of a leaflet, a brief conversation, or a few minutes of focused observation. When Southwark's Anglican parishioners go out on the streets to Beat the Bounds, or get together with other local Christians for the Good Friday ecumenical Walk of Witness, their public walking, reading, prayer and performance (marking the bounds or carrying a heavy wooden cross) attract attention.<sup>8</sup> Setting out from the Cathedral, the procession makes one of its first stops at Crossbones Graveyard, at which prayers for the dead are said.

Accounts of Crossbones are plentiful, and most rehearse what is known, guessed and imagined about its history (e.g. Berns 2016; Crossbones Graveyard 2016; Harris 2013; Hausner, 2016; Slade 2013). Had you walked down Redcross Way before the 1990s, you would not have known it was there (it was closed to burials in 1884). Any signs would have directed you to London Transport (Transport for London as it is now), the owner of the disused land behind the boundary fence. In fact, it was when London Transport sought planning permission to erect an electricity substation on land for the new Jubilee underground line that a partial archaeological excavation was necessitated (Slade 2013: 51-52). This led to the discovery of a burial site, from which

<sup>8</sup> "Beating the Bounds" is a custom dating back to the Anglo-Saxon period in England in which clergy and parishioners walk the boundaries of the parish to mark and show the extent of parish jurisdiction.

remains from 148 bodies were removed. Subsequent historical and archaeological research, with supporting evidence from John Stow's *A Survey of London* [1598], has shown that this was an unconsecrated burial site for paupers, many of whom were "single women", prostitutes in other words, who were forbidden the rites of the church. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the north part of Southwark had been designated a "Liberty", under the secular authority of the Bishop of Winchester (Slade 2013: 15; Crossbones Graveyard 2016), and had remained so for some five hundred years. Activities were permitted within the bounds of the "Liberty of the Clink" (so called after nearby Clink prison) that were forbidden within the city walls. It became known for its taverns, theatres, bear pits and brothels. Although the historical details are sparse, the archaeological evidence suggests that this site accommodated some 15,000 skeletons, including the syphilitic bodies of prostitutes, their unborn and young children, the plague dead and other paupers who died without the means for a Christian burial (Slade 52-53).

It was in the late 1990s that the burial ground came to public attention with a Museum of London exhibition of the archaeological finds, the publication by a local poet and playwright (John Constable) of *The Southwark Mysteries*, and the first Halloween ritual at the gate of the disused site. Since that time the ground has remained in the property of Transport for London, and inaccessible to the public. Despite this, thousands of people have engaged with it, its myths and rituals, and with the "outcast dead" who are commemorated by a plaque and remembered in ribbons, tokens and testimonies tied to the boundary gate.<sup>9</sup> Although Bankside Open Spaces Trust signed a lease in 2014 to work with the Friends of Crossbones to develop an open garden on the

site, the gate remains the focal point, drawing visitors on local walking tours and ghost tours, as well as participants to the regular vigils held there and volunteers who tend the space, organise the events and contribute to the making of Crossbones (Bankside Open Spaces Trust 2016; Berns 2016; Crossbones Graveyard 2016). John Constable – also known as John Crow – Crossbones luminary, ritual dramatist and urban shaman, calls visitors to renew the shrine and keep alive the memory of the outcast dead.<sup>10</sup>

In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre (1991: 209) discussed transitional objects, such as mirrors and windows, and invited readers to consider a "door":

Its surround makes a door into an object. In conjunction with their frames, doors attain the status of works, works of a kind not far removed from pictures and mirrors. Transitional, symbolic and functional, the object "door" serves to bring a space, the space of a "room", say, or that of a street, to an end.

The Crossbones gate, forming as it does part of the edge that runs parallel with Redcross Way, shares the characteristics of Lefebvre's "door". It has become a "work". It is transitional in so far as it marks the separation of two very different spaces of street and graveyard, the one of movement and flow, the other of depth and stasis, an underground of layered human remains now rich in cultural meaning and memory (see also Simmel in Kaern 1994). As a locked gate in an impenetrable boundary fence, its breaches are generally imaginative, though physical transgressions were made over a number of years by an "invisible gardener" who made stone sculptures, placed objects, pruned bushes and tended the site and the bones emerging from the eroding surface (Slade 2013: 34-37). The gate, itself symbolic, permits glimpses of the graveyard beyond, and together they constitute both shrine and portal to an unrecorded past and the spirit world of the outcast dead.

<sup>9</sup> The plaque reads: "Cross Bones Graveyard. In mediaeval times, this was an unconsecrated graveyard for prostitutes or 'Winchester Geese'. By the 18th century, it had become a paupers' burial ground, which closed in 1853. Here, local people have created a memorial shrine. The Outcast Dead. RIP."

<sup>10</sup> For further information about John Constable, see "John Constable" and "John Crow", in Crossbones Graveyard (2016).





Figure 5. The gate with the graveyard beyond © Steph Berns, 2014

The gate gathers people, spirits and objects. Through drama, ritual and imagination, it unlocks the memories not only of the outcast dead of the past but those who died more recently as outsiders (sex workers, asylum seekers, those who took their own lives) (Berns 2016; Hausner 2016). It is considered to be a healing place, where once closed pathways of memory are opened up; it is also a door to the next world (see interviews with Lisa and Jen, in Harris 2013: 166). The gate, whilst remaining an “edge”, has been transformed into both a “landmark” and “node” (Lynch 1960), connecting times and lives. It allows imaginative encounters with the dead as well as the living. A new spiritual space on both the ecumenical/interfaith route and the tourist trail, it is to some degree routinized whilst its practitioners simultaneously resist such an appropriation (Berns 2016; Harris 2013).

An assemblage may have “components working to stabilize its identity as well as components forcing it to change, or even transforming it into a different assemblage” (DeLanda 2006: 12; cf.

Hodder 2012). They may encourage homogenization and territorialization, or the reverse. The locked gate on Redcross Way, from the 1990s onwards, during which it has gathered together assorted people, things, ideas and practices, has been the focus of these twin drives towards de/stabilization. Various human actors have sought to give it substance and ensure its longevity, whilst the graveyard has continued to represent processes of decay and death (Berns 2016). The outcast dead themselves “embody” both tendencies: they require naming and remembrance and yet seem to speak of other worlds, of the past and of spirits.

What does this edge allow, what is gathered together by this potent boundary? Before the 1990s, it was unnoticed, unknown, disused, the fence and gate an impenetrable border. Since then, diverse objects – things chosen for their symbolic or sacred value by visitors – have accumulated, from the statue of Red Cross Mary, to the bones which continue to emerge from the soil and the photographs of those who have

died and are lovingly remembered (Crossbones Graveyard 2016). They are imaginatively drawn together by John Constable in a ritual bricolage of elements from Native Shamanic, Christian, Tibetan Buddhist, New Age and popular Mexican performance and practice (Hausner, 2016). Diverse people pass by or assemble at the gate, with remembrance, ritual or tourism in mind. Their encounters with one another may well be brief, but the memory of the place is likely to linger for longer, and to be accompanied by unsought thoughts and emotions.

### **Waste Ground: An Opportunity for Disclosure and New Relationships**

Is the ground an edge; is it part of a city's infrastructure? Or is it only as "path", as part of the transport network, or as a surface below which pipes, cables and other underground systems run that it can be understood as such? And what about waste or disused ground? Has it passed from being a useful foundation to something worthless, spent and valueless for human purpose (Lynch 1990)? As Crossbones revealed, however, what was once wasteland owned by Transport for London was transformed through ritual process and commercial and legal negotiations into a sacred place and memorial garden; from a mundane and unnoticed "edge" to a significant "landmark".

In this third case, I will show how ground ripe for physical redevelopment became a site for the unexpected generation of new relationships that cut across social boundaries.

In 2006, the purpose-built Baitul Aziz Islamic Centre was opened on the corner of Harper Road and Dickens Square in Southwark, replacing a smaller, temporary mosque on the same site. Despite the new building catering for some 2,500 people, it was not long before prayer mats were being laid down in the grounds and car park for Friday prayers and festivals. Planning permission obtained prior to 2006 made provision for the building of an extension on ground behind the new mosque, but only subject to an archaeological excavation being carried out.

The opportunity afforded by such a survey for breaking through the surface and reconnecting Southwark past and present is something this case study has in common with the previous one, but there the similarity ends. The spatial regime of the Baitul Aziz mosque, whilst being regulated by the same planning framework as Crossbones, was subject to different conditions because of its status as a place of worship (Vásquez and Knott 2014). Moreover, it was impacted by other forces, driven by identity politics, Islamophobia and popular anxieties about migration and extremism.

Unlike Transport for London, a publicly funded body, how was the Islamic Centre, a charitable trust financed largely by donations, to pay for a legally-required archaeological survey? The company responsible for carrying out such excavations, Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA), resolved the problem by drawing on the human capital of the Islamic Centre. Volunteers from the community, with some willing Muslims from elsewhere in London, were trained and then helped to dig the site between November 2013 and February 2014 (Maloney 2014). This was an innovative solution which gained positive endorsement from both sides. PCA benefitted from diversifying "community archaeology", known to be largely white and middle class, and no doubt by fulfilling its diversity targets. The Islamic Centre trustees and local Muslims benefitted by reducing the cost of their building extension and by finding new ways to engage with the wider public.

A blog was established to record the work and the views of those involved (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2014). Here, Ahmed Uddin, a Centre trustee, explains his motivation for being involved:

I'm actually from around here ... My Dad, my brothers, my uncles, they all worship at this mosque. Consequently, my affiliation to this mosque is, principally, through worship and then through family ties, etc. The reason for my involvement is in the way of Allah, as a form of worship, because when you undertake to do something for the mosque, for the community at large, it's something that you are doing in the name of the religion, Allah ... (Uddin 2013).





Figure 6. Looking out from the mosque to the excavated site © Steph Berns, 2014

For Ahmed, it was spiritual, communal and familial obligation and service, rather than an interest in local history or archaeological excavation that drove his involvement.

After the survey had been completed, the finds were displayed in a Museum of London exhibition (*Dickens Square: Great Excavations*), and the Islamic Centre held an Open Day, to bring local people into the Centre to see what had been discovered. According to the Marketing and PR Manager of PCA:

The trustees and members... expressed their fervent wish to engage with their neighbours and the local community at large. They very much wanted to break down any barriers and to show that the mosque was a place of learning and worship with a welcome for everyone (Maloney 2014).

This was endorsed by the volunteers themselves, not least because of the climate of fear in which they had found themselves living since 9/11. As Ahmed Uddin remarked, “it only takes one bad headline to whip up fear for a week. That’s why we’ve talked about an Open Day for people to

come to the site and to the mosque, to hear about the religion and our backgrounds,” as well as about the project and the finds (Uddin 2013). He imagined a community celebration: “I remember street parties in 1977 when I was a kid and lived in Vauxhall and they were great. The locals they’ll come, they’ll see they’ll listen and they’ll see we’re ordinary people, not people planning the next atrocity!” (Ibid).

The Open Day – the first of several “Tea and Tour” events – was attended by community members, local people and the press. Neighbours in particular valued the opportunity to see inside the mosque, a building they had only previously experienced from the outside (London SE1 2015). Local media too produced positive and enthusiastic coverage, with stories about the unusual partnership between professionals and Muslim volunteers, and information about the finds, which included four Roman inhumations (including a child), with grave goods and the remains of a wooden coffin, three mid-18<sup>th</sup> century burials of whole cattle probably infected with rinderpest

disease, and two late 18<sup>th</sup> century wells containing a variety of household goods (London SE1 2015).

It may appear to be stretching a point to derive this compelling story of the entanglement of diverse people and things from a piece of waste land, a surface awaiting a use, separating the world of human activity above ground from the silent and unknown darkness below. But just as Wall had a role to play in the drama of Pyramus and Thisby, so the ground was part of the drama in this one. Ground – in this case, land for development in the hands of a religious community – is subject to regulation and is dependent on planning decisions made by local authorities. Furthermore, this particular ground is within an Archaeological Priority Area: the likelihood of remains being found is high, and excavation is therefore required. So, in order to develop its own property and extend the mosque, the Baitul Aziz Trust found itself in a network of dependent relations (Hodder 2012) with Southwark Council and the heritage company, PCA. However, the involvement of Muslim volunteers and the objects that were excavated generated the possibility of opening up and connecting outwards to local non-Muslims, to whom the mosque, its worshippers and their activities appeared impenetrable, mysterious and even frightening.

In places of “commonplace diversity” (Wesendorf, 2014), people briefly encounter one another without generally having much opportunity to get beyond superficial interactions. Whilst such encounters are valuable for normalizing everyday multi-cultures and generating good relations, from time to time occasions arise when people are able to break through the apparent barriers – physical, social and mental – that separate them from others. Thus it was that, as a result of their cooperation with PCA, local Muslims were able to make the best of the opportunity afforded by the requirements of the planning process to open their doors, show that they were “ordinary people”, and thus challenge media-generated stereotypes.

Could this tale could not have been told from a different perspective, with the mosque, its congregation, Dickens Square, community archaeology or the found objects as its starting point? What special claim did the ground have for being the focus? As an “edge”, in Lynch’s terms, it is a boundary “between two phases”, and – in this case – it transitioned from being a barrier to a seam. Previously, as a barrier, what was beneath ground was closed off from what was above it; once the site had been dug, the two regions above and below were reconnected. Humans (archaeologists, volunteers, visitors, and even the earlier inhabitants of the site) and things (finds, the mosque and its material culture) were disclosed to one another and brought into new relationships, both social and imaginative. Through the breaching of *terra firma*, local Muslims and their mosque became temporally connected to the unravelling saga of historical Southwark (Southwark Council 2016), inhabiting shared physical and narrative space with Roman settlers, Chaucer’s pilgrims, Shakespeare and his audiences, the Pilgrim Fathers, Charles Dickens, his characters and readers, and the prisoners of Southwark’s many gaols. The ground was where this process began, and its breach was what made the disclosure and new relationships possible.

### **Infrastructure and Diversity: Edges, Openings and Encounters**

These three edges – boundary wall, locked gate and waste ground – all part of the built infrastructure of Southwark, have become sites of interaction and change. They have fulfilled their role as boundaries, and have transitioned variously from barriers to seams or vice versa, either separating and closing off social spaces from one another or opening them up and reconnecting them. Whilst all three have gathered together diverse people and things, the entanglements they have generated, their dependences and dependencies have differed. Focusing in more closely, three distinctive spatio-temporal openings may be identified, leading to different types of encounter.



“Edges”, according to Lynch (1960: 47), constitute breaks in continuity and are more or less penetrable. Over many centuries, the Cathedral boundary wall had separated church from market, its gate enabling or disabling the flow of people and goods between the two. This kind of opening is best described as a *vent*. The locked gate at Crossbones was quite different: it was impenetrable to all but human gaze and imagination. It had become a *portal* between worlds, connecting living and dead, past, present and future. The third edge, a disused surface awaiting development behind a mosque, was an “open and shut case”, a *hole*, the digging of which generated new human-object and human-human relationships, albeit temporary in nature.

Vents, portals and holes are different types of spatio-temporal opening. A vent allows something to flow through or pass out; over time it may become subject to closure or blockage. A portal is a “work” in its own right (Lefebvre 1991), a grand entrance often to a special or sacred site or to another world. Access – whether physical, virtual, visual or spiritual – may be ritually managed. The term “hole” may signal two different types, the first an opening *through* something (a tunnel or passageway), and the second, an opening *into* something (a cave or hollow). It is in this second sense that it is used here. A *hole* is an opening into the ground, whether permanent or temporary; in the case of an archaeological dig, one that cuts through layers of soil to connect past and present. Because of their particular characteristics, these three types of spatio-temporal opening permit different relationships and patterns of encounter.

As a *vent*, the gate in the Cathedral’s wall allowed large numbers of people to flow through into the space of the churchyard, forcing them to rub along together. The wall further permitted temporary respite and fleeting opportunities for social intercourse and an encounter with the material presence of the church (and sometimes its religious representatives). The regulation of this activity by the church was supplemented by an open invitation to cross the threshold. With

the Cathedral dedicated to hospitality, and the market to connecting people to and through their senses – and both committed to diversity – it is fair to say that the gate facilitated commonplace multicultural contacts, with the potential for deeper engagement on offer. With the Cathedral having rights over both vent and edge, however, such encounters were dependent on its decisions and goodwill.

The history, representation and management of Crossbones remain highly contested. In legal terms, the site belonged to Transport for London, with part of the land leased in 2014 to Bankside Open Spaces Trust, in collaboration with the Friends of Crossbones, for a “meanwhile garden” (Berns 2016). But, despite issues of proprietorship, its edge and locked gate remained a potent boundary. On “the other side”, the burial ground and the “outcast dead” were the focus of an imaginary and sensory surplus for visitors whose relationships with the dead took material form in left objects and tokens. This opening is best described as a *portal* because the gate has been “fabricated” (Meyer 2012: 22) as a sacred boundary between worlds, separating the mundane here-and-now from a quite different temporality that is experienced variously as historical past, afterlife or spirit world, or all three. For those who passed by on tourist trails, the encounter was limited, with this site only one among many. But this was no ordinary opening: for those who attended vigils and cared for Crossbones as volunteers, the relationships – with living and dead people and diverse sacred things – were transformative.

What happened at the Baitul Aziz Islamic Centre might best be described as a hiatus, or break in the normal pattern of dissociation between Muslim worshippers and outsiders. Despite the readiness of local Muslims to engage with local people and challenge negative stereotypes, openings were needed to bring this about and to allow normally hard and fast barriers to be breached. The need to fulfil the legal requirement for an archaeological survey provided such an occasion.

*Holes* are associated with confinement and even closure, but they may also intensify action, experience and relationships. When the archaeological surveyors came up with the idea of reducing the cost of the work by using Muslim volunteers, the way was cleared for the site to be excavated. The activity was time-limited, the ground only opened up for a few weeks, during which close relationships developed between professionals and volunteers. The subsequent Open Day allowed local people to cross the threshold of an otherwise intimidating religious building and to come into meaningful contact with their Muslim neighbours, themselves ethnically diverse. And that was it: the hole was filled in again. But some things had changed: the Islamic Centre could proceed to build its mosque extension; volunteers had gained experience and training in a new field; a company had diversified the practice of community archaeology; and neighbours from different backgrounds had had a chance to meet and talk. Furthermore, local Muslims and their mosque ensured their place in the historical narrative of diversity in Southwark, connected through the hole's material remains to earlier populations. Despite the dependencies faced by minorities as they subject themselves to the planning regime and compete for space in London's overcrowded, competitive and expensive built environment, opportunities nevertheless arise for religious place-making that simultaneously permit the outward expression of identity and values.

## Conclusion

My aim in this article has been to consider taken-for-granted edges in the built environment, and the entanglements and encounters that occur, particularly when they are breached. Religious landmarks, despite a discourse of openness, are hard to enter; assumptions about religious identities, communities and boundaries make encounters difficult to initiate. What if we refocus instead on the periphery rather than the centre, on edges like walls, gates and surfaces rather than landmarks? They are the subjects

of everyday routines, forces and practices, and act variously as barriers or seams that separate or entangle places, people and things, in time as well as space. But, however unremarkable they seem, they are not just passive sites that permit human-to-human interactions. Rather, they participate in complex relations of dependence and dependency in which people and things productively support and rely on, or limit and constrain one another.

In all of the cases I examined, the boundaries in question were penetrated. Whilst impermeable edges may also invite creativity (graffiti, for example) or new relationships (at designated junctions or signs), crossings or access points permit people, objects, ideas and even spiritual substances to pass through. Such transitions allow things to be (re)assembled and (re)connected. Furthermore, different spatio-temporal openings – vents, portals and holes – make possible encounters and other effects in accordance with their characteristics and duration. Vents, which allow the flow-through of people and rarely inhibit movement, may be less likely than holes, in which people and things are temporarily enclosed and bound together, to lead to meaningful contact, albeit brief. And portals, which mark a significant threshold, announce the special, even dangerous nature of what is on “the other side” and its power to transform people and their human, material and spiritual relationships.

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### Note on the Author

KIM KNOTT is Professor of Religious and Secular Studies at Lancaster University, and Deputy Director of the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats. Employing a socio-spatial approach, her current research interests are religious/secular relations, ideology and the sacred, and religion, diversity and security. Recent publications include *Media Portrayals of Religion and the Secular Sacred* (with Poole & Taira, 2013), *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities* (with McLoughlin, 2010) and *The Location of Religion* (2005). Email: [k.knott@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:k.knott@lancaster.ac.uk)

# Infrastructures of Partition, Infrastructures of Juncture: Separation Barriers and Intercommunal Contact in Belfast and Nicosia\*

by EMILY BERESKIN  
(Technische Universität Berlin)

## Abstract

Through an analysis of Belfast, Northern Ireland and Nicosia, Cyprus, this article considers how separation barriers catalyze social mixing and cooperation in ethnonationally divided cities. Due to their highly visible and symbolic nature as well as their physical location at the interface between communities, I argue that the barrier is a critical infrastructural element whose management and symbolic interpretation can motivate intercommunal cooperation – just as it can incite conflict. This article analyzes four socio-material interventions designed to ameliorate spatial and social divide: 1) the regeneration or aestheticization of barriers; 2) the negotiation of border openings; 3) the use of the border as a catalyst for intergroup activities; and 4) the creation of shared spaces at the boundary line. I discuss the possibilities and limitations of these practices both as confidence-building measures and as activities that foster social mixing. The article concludes by querying if barrier projects may inadvertently funnel funding away from more localized, single-community peacebuilding activities.

**Keywords:** barrier, reconciliation, social mixing, Belfast, Nicosia

## Introduction

This article focuses the discussion of infrastructure and diversity on a city “type” defined by a staggering lack of diversity: the ethnonationally partitioned city. I examine Belfast, Northern Ireland and Nicosia, Cyprus, two cities similarly characterized by legacies of violent intercommunal conflict and enduring socio-spatial segregation.

To varying degrees, social mixing occurs in the partitioned city just as it does anywhere else. However, divided cities like Belfast and Nicosia are structured, experienced, and understood above all in terms of *separation*. Residents are grouped according to ethnonationalist identity, and this classification regulates all aspects of daily life: work, leisure, relationships, schooling, shopping, and so on. Moreover, this strong identification with a collective ingroup (whether it be along religious, ethnic, or national lines), and its totalizing impact on day-to-day life is experienced through its opposition to an outgroup. This article considers what infrastructures might best facilitate encounter and diversity-building in cities beset by social division.

Indeed, a distinct infrastructural setup underscores and perpetuates ethnic segregation – a

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complex concoction of the separation and doubling of infrastructure on one hand, and its negotiated sharing on the other. Division begets its own infrastructure as well: walls, barriers, fortifications, watchtowers, checkpoints, surveillance mechanisms – all of which are designed to maintain security and order, but which also create landscapes of fear and anxiety. The management of these systems often requires cooperation between otherwise disobliging communities. Electrical fields, water supply lines, roads, telephone networks, and other infrastructural systems do not neatly adhere to political boundaries and cooperation on these issues is often comparatively easy, as they are seen as technocratic as opposed to political matters (Kliot and Mansfield 1999; Bollens 2000; Calame and Charlesworth 2012). A pressing issue with Nicosia's sewage system, for instance, could only be solved through cross-communal partnership. Thus, four years after the city had been physically and politically split into two municipalities, the city's two mayors gathered Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot engineers and planners together to collectively solve the problem. Lellos Demetriades, the mayor of the Greek Cypriot community, writes of the significance of this endeavor in light of prevailing social attitudes:

All of this took place just three years after 1974 when the country was in enormous turmoil, when all the traumas were fresh, emotions were running high, there were the dead, the missing, the refugees and it was not considered the cleverest idea in those times to even meet with Turkish Cypriots, let alone discuss something with them like sewerage. But somehow both myself and Mr. Akıncı [the mayor of the Turkish Cypriot community] had a feeling that whatever was taking place, it was equally important that we should do something about our town. This town had Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots who were entitled to some kind of reasonable life and we had to do something about it, if we could (Demetriades 1998).

Infrastructural collaboration is often lauded as a positive means or instance of rapprochement; indeed, it typically has beneficial ramifications for those involved as they learn to interact and

cooperate with one another. The political sensitivities surrounding partnership means, however, that successes are rarely publicized and, more often than not, are downplayed or kept secret. Thus, such instances of joint effort have little impact on the broader climate of group relations. For a technical project to have a lasting impact as a confidence building measures, it has to involve a wide population base, not only politicians or the technical elite (Steinberg 2004, 281).

This article argues that, in partitioned cities, one infrastructural element in particular influences social mixing and confidence building across a broad population swath, and paradoxically, it is also that which most conspicuously divides communities: the separation barrier. Although (or perhaps because) they undoubtedly perpetuate division and mistrust, separation barriers play a vital role in stimulating intergroup interaction and ultimately building positive peace. Surrounding barriers is a social material constellation of actors, policies, legalities, and social practices; interventions therein, I argue, can facilitate diversity building by shaping freer mobility patterns, deterritorializing ethnically controlled space, and stimulating intergroup contact. All of these interventions can help transform protracted conflict both before and after political resolution.

This article proceeds as follows: after briefly introducing the case studies, I first consider the materiality and genesis of barrier infrastructure and the role it plays in conflict escalation. Then, in making the argument for the barrier's importance in creating social juncture, I examine four types of "barrier interventions": the mollescence of border infrastructure, the opening of checkpoints, the use of walls to encourage intercommunal activities, and the creation of shared spaces at borderlines.<sup>1</sup> I argue that barriers serve

<sup>1</sup> The following arguments stem from fieldwork conducted in Belfast and Nicosia in intermittent, recurrent periods between 2005 and 2015. Fieldwork in Belfast was conducted in: April – August 2005; September 2007; December 2010 – June 2011; and August – September 2013. Fieldwork in Nicosia was con-





Figure 1. 1978 Political cartoon depicting Lellos Demetriades and Mustafa Akıncı cooperating on Nicosia's sewage project. Source: Author's photograph of cartoon displayed in the Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, 2016

as a material catalyst through which the people, policies, mindsets, attitudes, and regulations that uphold division can be challenged and contested. However, their convenience as a material peacebuilding tool and their highly symbolic value means that peacebuilders – both local and international – risk focusing their efforts too strongly on these walls; this can be to the detriment of other issues, less symbolic, less tangible, and perhaps only located in one community rather than both.

ducted in December 2011; September – November 2013; and May – August 2015. Information was gathered through expert interviews held with community workers, civil-society employees, architects, planners, councillors, politicians, academics and other professionals working either in the field of urban development or that of peacebuilding. In addition, I also conducted architectural, spatial, and site analysis of the barriers in question, analyzing not only the physical makeup of the barriers, but also observing behaviour around the peace lines and the Buffer Zone for days at a time, at multiple times of day, and at various times of year. Other observations and arguments stem from participatory observation in “barrier activities” and in the case of Nicosia, at the Home for Cooperation.

### The Case Studies: Belfast and Nicosia

Although Belfast and Nicosia similarly faced periods of protracted conflict that led to internal partitioning, the political situation, pattern of segregation, and type of separation barriers used all differ emphatically between the two cities. While a more comparative analysis of these differences is a worthwhile project, my analysis here focuses on similarities that I have observed in the two capitals. In that sense, including a discussion of two cities in this article is meant to counteract any overgeneralization and to highlight related experiences. That is not to say I am making universalizing claims, and the experience of other divided cities might be wholly different still. Among the many differences between the two cases, particularly significant is that the Northern Irish conflict has reached a political agreement, while a solution to the Cyprus problem remains elusive. Yet, both societies are following related interventions in helping populations move closer. Analysing the two cities in comparison emphasizes the myriad of ways in which barriers function and that many of the interventions made by peacebuilders in promot-

ing the social-psychological transformation of conflict is similar regardless of the state of political settlement.<sup>2</sup>

Belfast was founded by English and Scottish settlers who arrived in Ireland in the early 1600s as part of the Ulster plantation. The native Catholic population largely stayed away from the city, continuing to make their living in the rural hinterland – until the 19th century, Catholics accounted for less than five percent of the city's population (Boal 2006, 72). During the 1800s, significant numbers of Catholic families moved to Belfast, seeking work in the city's growing linen and rope industries. Urban historian Frederick Boal suggests that these early settlements were already segregated (Ibid., 73). Relations between the two groups were contentious from the start. Violent clashes occurred periodically, usually in relation to rebellions and uprisings against the colonial regime (1601, 1641, 1798, 1848, 1919–1921) and the expansion of the Republican movement (Ibid.). Each outburst caused further division and the tightening of communal enclaves, thereby escalating segregation rates via a “ratchet effect” (Smith and Chambers 1991).

Sectarian infighting escalated in August of 1969 in response to a Catholic civil rights march. A week of riots in Belfast culminated in the burning of Catholic residences and businesses and the displacement of thousands of families (Mac Goill et al. 2010). This massive innercity migration pushed Catholics and Protestants into firmly knit enclaves and the British army erected the first “peace wall” (also called “peace line”) to prevent further violence. The barriers were designed as protection measures against inter-communal violence, vandalism, and projectiles and, unlike Nicosia's Buffer Zone, were not (initially) intended to curtail movement or separate

communities. From 1969 until today, segregation rates have continued to rise and walls have continued to be erected throughout the city to separate Protestant and Catholic neighbourhoods. In 2012 (the date of the last survey), ninety-nine different barriers could be found in the greater Belfast area (Belfast Interface Project 2012, 13). The Department of Justice manages the majority (58), while others are owned by housing authorities, other government departments, as well as private owners (Ibid., 12).<sup>3</sup> Almost all barriers, however, are erected at the request of residents.

Belfast is segregated in a patchwork pattern. The peace lines encase areas of varying size and layout: some encircle just a few homes, whereas others, such as the Cupar Street Wall, extend for kilometres. Some parts of the city, such as West Belfast, are bifurcated, whereas other districts, such as North Belfast, are a jumble of buttressing enclaves. The walls are made of various materials including fencing, barbed wire, corrugated steel, and brick. The peace lines are the most enduring physical manifestation of “the Troubles,” as the army posts, watchtowers, and paramilitary murals have been almost completely dismantled. In fact, since the passing of the Belfast Agreement (1998), the number of peace walls in the city has continued to rise, a fact that indicates the continued unrest between the communities despite the conflict's official “resolution.” According to a 2012 survey, 75% of residents living near peace lines reported that the walls made communities feel safer and 69% believed that they were necessary to prevent violence (Byrne et. al. 2012, 13). Moreover, from 2012 to 2015, the number of people surveyed who preferred that the peace walls remain in place rose from 22% to 30% and the number of people who preferred the peace walls remain “for now, but come down sometime in the future” decreased from 44% to 35%

<sup>2</sup> Here I am referencing the work of Kreisberg, Lederach (and others), who argue for a long-term approach to handling intractable conflicts. They use the term “conflict transformation” to designate a process by which the underlying beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that support a state of conflict can be transformed into beliefs, attitudes, etc. supportive of a state of peace. (See Kreisberg, 1989; Lederach, 1997)

<sup>3</sup> During the conflict, the Northern Ireland Office was responsible for their management and maintenance; this job has been redirected by the Department of Justice following devolution (Belfast Interface Project 2012, p. 12).





Figure 2. Bisected neighbourhood, North Belfast. Source: Author, 2013



Figure 3. Enclaved neighbourhood, East Belfast. Source: Author, 2011



(Byrne et. al. 2015, 26).<sup>4</sup> In 2013, when the Office of the Prime Minister and Deputy First Minister issued a target that all peace lines should be removed by 2023 (Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister 2013), the news was met with a serious backlash from anxious residents.

Unlike Belfast, Nicosia's population was historically mixed. Although degrees of social separation did exist, the island's Christian and Muslim communities (as well as the Armenians

social antagonism (Bryant 2004). Following a "divide and conquer" strategy, the British advanced ethnonationalist identities for "Greeks" and "Turks," which became deeply problematic once the Greek Cypriot struggle for *enosis* (political union with Greece) threatened the Turkish Cypriot community and drove a political and social wedge between the two groups.

Intermittent fighting began in 1955 and lasted five years until the independence of the island



Figure 4. Buffer Zone demarcation, Nicosia. Source: Author, 2015

and Maronites) lived relatively interspersed and cooperated in matters of business, commerce, and administration (Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, accessed 2016). Communities shared social settings and enjoyed similar social practices. It was only under British colonial rule that social difference came to mean

and the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. Three years later a breakdown of the constitution caused fighting to resume and Nicosia's Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities began to segregate, barricading themselves behind makeshift barriers of barrels, sandbags, furniture, barbed wire, and other found material. At the height of the conflict in 1963, Peter Young, the major general of the British peacekeeping force in Cyprus, officially split the city in half.

<sup>4</sup> The two questions regarding safety from 2012 were not part of the 2015 survey.





Figure 5. Buffer Zone demarcation, North Nicosia. Source: Author, 2015



Figure 6. Buffer Zone demarcation, South Nicosia. Source: Author, 2015

For the following eleven years, the city was bifurcated by what was known as the Green Line – so named after the line of the map that Young drew to carve up the city. This demarcation took on a new political meaning following the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus. The United Nations Security Council then created a demilitarized buffer zone across the island, which in Nicosia ran roughly along the old Green Line. Today, the Buffer Zone splits Nicosia into two capitals of two political entities completely segregated along ethnic lines. Lefkosia, the Greek Cypriot southern half, is the capital of the Republic of Cyprus, a full EU member state. The northern half, Lefkoşa, is the capital of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a political territory unrecognized by any state other than Turkey.

Across the island, the Buffer Zone varies in size and shape: some sections are less than a meter wide, others are multiple kilometres. Some segments are physically barricaded; some appear open apart from patrol vehicles; many, unfortunately, remain studded with landmines. From 1974 to 2003, no movement was allowed across the Buffer Zone. Since 2003, however, seven checkpoints have opened, three of which are located within the capital. The lack of human activity in the Buffer Zone has given rise to multiple exceptional landscapes (Solder et al., n.d.). In rural areas, new ecosystems have been created; in Nicosia's urban centre, the buildings, which once formed the most dynamic market in the city, have fallen into disrepair, creating a ruinous (now near-mythical) terrain that no one is allowed to enter.

### **The Materiality of Separation Barriers**

Separation barriers are constructed out of numerous sorts of materials and are designed and laid out in innumerable configurations; they vary in size, shape, and the degree of permeability. Barrier form is often determined by security needs, but it can also reflect more mundane matters, such as the locally available materials. Symbolic issues also play a role. Yiannis Papadakis, for instance, argues that Nicosia's Buffer Zone

demarcations reflect the two sides' divergent conflict narratives and political aspirations (see figures 5 and 6). In the north, where the government initially strove for the permanent separation of the island, the Buffer Zone walls are made of solid concrete. In the south, where the division was seen as a temporary, illegal action, the government constructed the barricade out of barrels, fences, and other materials that could be removed easily following a political solution and the reunification of the island (Papadakis 2006).

Both sides of Nicosia's barricades are decorated with flags, banners, and graffiti. Checkpoints in the south are painted the blue and white of the Greek flag, whereas the fences in the north are studded with Turkish military symbols every ten feet. The peace lines in Belfast are similarly decorated, with territorial markers such as flags, murals, and curbstone paintings that also expand "inward" to cover all streets in a particular neighborhood. Such symbols play a fundamental role in prolonging and escalating identity conflicts (Kaufman 2001): they strengthen ingroup identification and chauvinism, while simultaneously provoking and threatening outsiders. By claiming ownership over place and discouraging trespassing, these symbolic displays turn space into *territory* and should thus, I argue, be considered an integral part of separation infrastructure.

Material barrier infrastructure is complemented by human, intangible – or even invisible – components. Barriers may be patrolled, or the former presence of patrollers may create internalized social controls that inhibit or prohibit cross-border movement. Free movement can be obstructed by laws and regulations; even if laws that once forbade movement are relaxed, regulatory practices such as searches or permit-issuing may discourage residents from attempting to cross borders. In Nicosia, for instance, the annoyance that comes from having police officers check purchases and shopping bags is enough on its own to discourage people from crossing. Even casual social practices and social norms can deter or stigmatize passage across boundaries.





Figure 7. Gable end mural adjacent to peace line, Cluan Place, East Belfast. Source: Author, 2011



Figure 8. Territory marking, Nicosia. Source: Author, 2015





Figure 9. Peace line reinforcements, South Belfast. Source: Author, 2011



Figure 10. Cafe adjacent to the Buffer Zone, Nicosia. Source: Author, 2015



Barrier infrastructure evolves over time and its diachronic/archaeological study can illuminate changes in security concerns and political situations. Many peace lines in Belfast clearly evince multiple refortifications: Concrete structures are topped with metal paneling, which are then crowned by chain link fencing. This layering is indicative of residents requesting further fortifications in response to increased interface violence and, in particular, the throwing of projectiles. By extension, one could read the gaping holes and crumbling frame of Nicosia's Buffer Zone as an indication of waning security concerns. However, arguably, it may also speak to the psychological internalization of the barrier. Whereas for years after 1974, residents feared to even enter neighbourhoods close to the Buffer Zone, the number of bars, cafes, and souvlaki restaurants that have opened literally on the barrels and sandbags of the Green Line indicates a diminishing sense of concern and an acceptance of the border's presence in daily life. While some enterprises cheekily capitalize on their Buffer Zone location – the Berlin Wall No. 2 Souvlaki bar for instance – repeat observations and discussions with bar owners and customers indicate a resigned acceptance of the barrier as part of the landscape – as nothing exceptional, but merely a surface to put to use.

### Barriers and Social Conflict

Barriers in Belfast and Nicosia – as in most partitioned cities – are built in response to security concerns, either to ensure physical safety or to protect communal cohesion. Segregation walls are often – although not always – designed as temporary solutions that then become permanent over time (Calame and Charlesworth 2009). As Brand (2009, 37) argues, partitions have a certain “degree of agency and momentum” and once erected, various social, political, and technological knock-on effects follow that escalate not only social *division*, but social *conflict* as well.

For one, partitioning can worsen material disputes. Physical partitioning decreases property values, spreads blight, and generates economic

deprivation on both sides of the divide (Calame and Charlesworth 2009, 231). However, distinct material inequalities can develop between the two groups that stem either from structural arrangements, the location of service provisions in the city, access to employment and education, and connections to wider transport systems, among other factors. For example, urban segregation has disproportionately impacted the unemployed youth in Belfast's Catholic community, as there happen to be more employment opportunities in Protestant areas (O'Hearn 2000; Shirlow and Shuttleworth 1999). The economic disparity between the two sides of Nicosia is severely pronounced. The southern half of the city's EU member status means that the municipality benefits from EU structural and investment funds and from wide, varied trading options. The northern half of the city, on the other hand, can only legally trade with Turkey and is economically isolated from the rest of the world (Görgülü 2014). This inequality is starkly visible in the built environment. Lefkosia has modern infrastructure, refurbished housing, flagship development projects, and a thriving daytime and nighttime economy. Lefkoşa's architecture is crumbling, the streets are in disrepair, and the street furniture in the parks (benches, trashcans) are hand-me-downs from Ankara. Such horizontal inequalities exacerbate resentment between groups and can stagnate political negotiations – or even incite violence – when parties insist on restorative material distribution or new structural arrangements to rewrite balances (Østby 2008).

Segregation that curtails access to public resources can also problematically aggravate feelings of social exclusion and anger toward the state. To contain violence during the Troubles, not only were walls built between Catholics and Protestants, but larger spatial and infrastructural designs – namely roads and highway networks – severed the more violent housing estates from the rest of the city. In the “post-conflict” city, this has meant that the neighbourhoods that suffered the most from the conflict remain largely cut-off from the central business district and the city's

economic core, leaving these neighbourhoods poorer and higher on the social deprivation list than they were before the start of the conflict (Murtagh and Keaveney 2006). This forced exclusion continues to have repercussions in the form of dissident paramilitary activity and resurgent violence against the state (Ibid.).

In addition to strengthening the material dimensions of conflict, physical barriers also greatly aggravate its psychological dimensions. In ethnic conflicts, where concerns about identity are among the key claims at stake, the salience of zero-sum, oppositional identities emphatically protracts conflict (Ashmore, Jussim, and Wilder 2001). Physical separation only strengthens the essentialisation and polarization of difference (Silberman et. al. 2012). The longer groups remain separated, the more they grow fearful of one another and of social interaction. Increased fear furthers the cycle of social division, but most problematically, can spark security crises that lead to violent outbursts. Identity conflicts spatialize into territorial conflicts at multiple geographic scales. The defense of one's space becomes the defense of one's identity, and likewise, any attack on one's territory is seen as an attack on one's identity (Jarman 1998; Murtagh 2002; Shirlow and Murtagh 2006). Psychological division is incredibly difficult to overcome and can remain for generations after physical partitions are removed (Volkan 2001).

On occasion, barrier infrastructures themselves provoke violent reactions and outbursts. The clear material demarcation of a division makes its transgression all the more visible and provocative. Groups can feel justified or entitled to protect their territory and themselves from trespassers who have not respected a "clear" delineation. Indeed, in Cyprus, the first death after twenty years of non-violence occurred in 1996, when a group of Greek Cypriot protestors unlawfully entered the Buffer Zone, and one man, Tassos Issac, got caught in the barrier's barbed wire and was beaten to death by the Turkish Grey Wolves. In addition, in Belfast where Molotov cocktails, stones, and other small projec-

tiles are often thrown over the peace lines, the infrastructure paradoxically provides anonymity and defense for violence actions. Moreover, the physical expression of the interface turns the border into a taunting challenge. An interviewed community worker claimed that the peace lines are clear and visible targets, and that the higher they are built, the more determined youths become to transgress their defenses with projectiles (West Belfast Community Worker, interview with author, April 12, 2011).

### **Barriers and Social Juncture**

In order to build social cohesion, psychological barriers need to be addressed and overcome; zero-sum attitudes, goal, and identifications must give way (at least partially) to shared visions for the future (Kreisberg et. al. 1997; Lederach 1997; Broome 2004). These obstacles are made even more difficult in that they lie in an intangible realm of attitudes, beliefs, and emotions. It is hard for people to discuss and negotiate – let alone understand or self-articulate – abstract concepts such as faith, trust, and safety. People respond more readily, and strongly, to the material, the physical, and the symbolic, and therefore, peacebuilding must work through these tangible realms (Ross 2007). I argue that in the partitioned city, the separation barrier itself serves as a material catalyst for policies and interventions that can encourage social convening and dialogue. Other conflict artifacts may also be mobilized for similar purposes, yet barriers have a particularly fundamental impact.

First and foremost, barriers are shared between the two sides and, as a common element, communities have a mutual interest in their management and regulation. Given that they cause physical blight and economic devastation, as well as attract violence and crime, if safety can be assured, then both sides have a motivation to work together for their removal (North Belfast Program Office, interview with author, October 10, 2013). In Belfast, the issue of the peace lines has provided an impetus for open (although usually thirdparty-led) discussions among resi-

dents living at interfaces, many of which have proactively demonstrated shared concerns and other commonalities on both sides of the divide (Ibid.). Moreover, their policing, administration, and management have brought members of interface communities into sustained contact and cooperation. Community activists, many of which are former political prisoners, work collectively to deter interface violence and deter “recreational rioting” (for one example, see: Hall 2003). Interface management has come to have significant government and civil society support, with numerous policies, programmes, and dedicated organizations (both local and international) supporting group exchange and cooperation on this issue.<sup>5</sup> Border management in Cyprus is a highly contentious issue that necessitates constant cooperation and negotiation regarding all aspects of border management, from access to demining to legal disputes, forces people into dialogue and communication.

Partitions are also instrumental in reconnecting communities for the very reason that they are located at the territorial junction of those communities; therefore, they become the safest and most convenient meeting area if parties want to begin interacting. While residents may view interface areas with trepidation, given their proximity to home territory, these areas are still considered safer than the middle of an outgroup’s territory. Even if people do not feel physically unsafe when entering an outgroup’s territory, other emotions such as anxiety or sadness could pose prohibitive psychological obstacles. After the border opening, many displaced Cypriots chose not to return home because it was too emotionally straining (Bryant 2011). Interface areas therefore constitute the most “neutral,”

non-threatening space, particularly when under third-party supervision.

In Cyprus, as well as other politically divided societies, “neutral” spaces are also crucial not only due to safety or psychological issues, but also from a legal perspective. When the border was closed, the Buffer Zone was the only space legally available to both communities. Early bicomunal activities, such as the aforementioned Master Plan or social events and peace-building workshops hosted by the UN and the Fulbright organization, had to be held in the Buffer Zone at the UN’s Ledra Palace headquarters. In the 1980s and 1990s, these events laid the foundation for a bicomunal civil society on the island (Wolleh 2002). Today’s ever-growing and influential bicomunal movement would have been impossible without this initial meeting space. Although Cypriots may now move across the island freely, certain immigrant groups are still prohibited from crossing. Others refuse to cross for political reasons: many Greek Cypriots consider showing their passport to cross to the north to be an act of political recognition for a territory they consider illegitimate and “occupied.” During fieldwork, I met many Greek Cypriots interested in bicomunal contact, dialogue, and socialization, who nevertheless remained adamant about not crossing, but would happily socialize with Turkish Cypriots in the Buffer Zone. Thus, even after the opening of the checkpoints, this “no man’s land” thus remains the most inclusive area on the island.

Neutral spaces other than interface areas do exist. Economic diversification, in particular, can create zones of limited neutrality. The restaurants, cafes, and shops in Belfast’s commercial centre are generally considered “a-territorial” – although many critique that the shops’ and eateries’ price point makes the district inaccessible to the city’s working-class populations more impacted by the conflict (Neill 1993; Bairner 2003; Neill 2007). In the past two years, the southern half of Nicosia’s walled city has likewise become more open despite the fact that it is legally “Greek Cypriot.” The cafes along *Ledra* and

<sup>5</sup> For instance, the Belfast Interface Project, Groundwork NI, the City Council’s Good Relations Unit. International funding for barrier activities comes from the International Fund for Ireland, the EU’s PEACE program, and other private organizations. The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister has launched a policy commitment to see that the walls are removed by 2023.



Figure 11. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon visits the European Union funded renovation measures of the Lokmaci Crossing, 2008<sup>6</sup>

*Onasagorou*, the two streets right off the main checkpoint, are filled with customers from both communities – sitting separately, but nevertheless equally welcome to enjoy this part of the city. In addition, in both Northern Ireland and Cyprus, groups often meet out of town or out of country for intercommunal workshops and activities.

However, barriers tend to attract much more activity than other sites, as their high-profile nature lends any endeavour a heightened symbolic value. Politicians looking to increase the impact of a redressive action tend to hold press conferences or symbolic meetings at the border. The current leaders of the two Cypriot communities, Mustafa Akıncı and Nicos Anastasiades, are often seen shaking hands in the Buffer Zone or

crossing the border to have coffee together in an effort to drum up popular support for the peace process. Visiting dignitaries often make site visits, announcements, and speeches directly at border zones. Barrier activities also appeal to international funders likewise concerned with good press and symbolic outcomes. Even private companies have sponsored peacebuilding activities across borderlines to gain attention for their brands. During the 2014 World Cup, for instance, Carlsberg sponsored their Border Football campaign in Nicosia, Belfast, and Kosovo, using, “what divides people – borders, walls, and fences – to bring them closer.”<sup>7</sup> In short, barriers are highly appealing sites for parties hoping to increase the impact of a redressive action or a confidence-building measure. Their high visibility and emotional charge means that their management has a broader symbolic impact than other types of infrastructure: dismantling a wall is likely to have a stronger ripple effect than, for instance, the project connecting underground sewage lines. As will be argued below, the symbolic successes of barrier interventions and the attention they gather may ultimately have a negative impact, detracting funding and attention away from other, equally pressing issues.

### “Softening” the Border

As conflict societies transition to peace, urban managers struggle to provide opportunities for social mixing and reconciliation while still meeting security needs. Physical alterations designed to “soften” barrier infrastructure are common first-stage arbitrations. This could mean weakening securitization measures, removing offensive symbols, or regenerating surrounding blight. For instance, the Lefkosia municipality used money from the EU and USAID to repair building facades along the Buffer Zone. Lacking the funds to fully

<sup>6</sup> Source: Eskinder Debebe, United Nations. [https://www.flickr.com/photos/un\\_photo/5473938615/in/photolist-9kHndV-9kHneZ-9kLqyU](https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/5473938615/in/photolist-9kHndV-9kHneZ-9kLqyU) Licensed under Creative Commons: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/legalcode>, accessed June 21, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> This quote is taken from the website of the advertising company, Duval Guillaume. The advertisement is also viewable at the same page. See: Duval Guillaume, Border Football, <http://www.duvalguillaume.com/news/2014/carlsberg-border-football>, accessed April 6, 2016.





Figure 12. "Aestheticized" barrier, North Belfast. Curbstone painting reflects the obduracy of territorial practices. Source: Author, 2013



Figure 13. Facade repair on Ermou Street, adjacent to the Buffer Zone. Source: Author, 2015

restore the buildings, the façade repair was an emergency measure to prevent building collapse. At the same time, these superficial changes are intended to improve the look and feel of the neighbourhood in order to encourage the regeneration of neighbouring streets (Nicosia Municipal Worker, personal communication with author, August 2015). The Belfast city council as well as the Northern Ireland and British government have sponsored multiple projects designed to remove antagonistic symbols and divisive imagery from barrier areas, often nestling these programmes under environmental concerns. Within neighbourhoods, community groups have replaced divisive structures with more aesthetically pleasing versions, changing concrete walls to smaller brick borders with decorative openings and shrubbery.

Given the reluctance with which people approach interface areas, these blighted areas tend to spread outward. A barrier can easily create blocks of dereliction and emptiness, turning the no-go zone into a wider area of multiple blocks. Physically improving or beautifying barriers can limit the spread of dereliction, which in turn curtails the level of repair necessary should the barriers eventually be removed. Nevertheless, a barrier is still a barrier, and aestheticizing its infrastructure will not necessarily encourage movement. Moreover, the aestheticization of a barrier can serve to normalize the partition, enabling the acceptance of a status quo and making it so that parties are less inclined to push for the removal of the barrier.

### **Opening of Checkpoints**

Creating a more permeable border through the opening of passageways and checkpoints is a far riskier, yet potentially more beneficial, measure. Opening a checkpoint requires a certain level of security and political will, and has the potential to serve as an effective confidence-building measure that can ameliorate relationships both before and after resolution.

In the past decade, many peace walls in Belfast have been refitted with gates that remain

open during certain times of the day. This change required careful negotiation between community members. The impact of these openings on patterns of movement has yet to be fully determined. Fieldwork indicates that the number of people using these openings remains small; the majority of residents see no need to travel from one area to the next, or prefer to use their usual paths to third locations in the city, even if it means a longer commute. (Gates open to car traffic see a relatively high amount of use in comparison to pedestrian passages.) However, there are certainly many for whom these openings are helpful, including the aforementioned community workers who work across the divide to manage relations between youth in both communities. Even if use remains limited, the negotiation process essential to the creation of checkpoints is advantageous, as it stimulates dialogue about group fears and presents an opportunity for acknowledgment, exchange, and collaboration.

The opening of checkpoints has had a major impact on the Cyprus peace process and is arguably one of the foremost confidence-building measures linking popular experience with elite-led political negotiations. The Cyprus peace process is a classic example of conflict resolution in which all negotiations and decision making have traditionally occurred at the track-one level amongst political elites. Initially, civil society and grassroots movements were entirely absent from track-one negotiations and have only become largely significant within the past decade (Charalambous and Christophorou 2016). This absence has been strongly criticized, because any solution ultimately has to be voted on by the population in a referendum.

The relationship between bordering practices, elite-level negotiations, and popular support for peace has been particularly apparent since the beginning of the past round of negotiations in May 2015. At this time, Mustafa Akıncı, who was the mayor of Lefkoşa during the bicomunal cooperation on the city's sewage plan, was elected as the new leader of the Turkish Cypriot community. Akıncı ran on a pro-reunification plat-





Figure 14. Gates in peace line, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast. Source: Author, 2013

form and since his time in office, has done much to push the negotiations forward. One of his first acts in office was to abolish the symbolic “entry visa” for the TRNC. Unable to issue an actual stamp in passports, upon entry the TRNC would traditionally stamp a white slip of paper, which would then be pressed into a passport. For members of the Greek Cypriot community, who did not recognize the legality of the TRNC, this was a deliberate provocation. As previously mentioned, even following the opening of the border, many Greek Cypriots still refuse to cross for this reason. Akinci only abolished the visa policy, he did not do away with checking passports; it therefore remains unclear if his action was enough to convince reluctant Greek Cypriots to cross.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, it was a powerful symbolic gesture that lent credence to Akinci’s asserted commitment

<sup>8</sup> At the time of publication, no statistical data on this issue had yet been published.

to finding a solution. The Greek Cypriot community overwhelmingly viewed this change as a positive gesture and the action created feelings of trust and goodwill between the Greek Cypriot community and the Turkish Cypriot leadership, ushering in what has been one of the most optimistic periods in Cyprus in the past decades.<sup>9</sup> Following this gesture, which set the stage for negotiations, one of the first confidence-building

<sup>9</sup> I arrived in Cyprus for my third round of field work on May 15, 2015, the day this change was instituted. At midnight, when the policy officially went into effect, Greek Cypriots organized a celebratory crossing into the north. In the following months, this change was a frequent topic of conversation. In both interviews and casual conversations, expressions of hope and goodwill, usually with direct reference to the visa issue, were articulated constantly by academics, UN employees, civil society workers, ambassadors, friends, and casual acquaintances – even shop owners and service employees. Local media picked up on this shift in attitude, and ran headlines announcing optimism for the peace process.



Figure 15. Bicommunal mural project, 2003, Madrid Street. Source: Author, 2011

measures presented to the public was the opening of four new checkpoints across the island.

### Intergroup Contact

Peacebuilding organizations frequently use barriers as the location or material catalyst for cross-communal social events aimed at building trust or promoting reconciliation. These events can be open, but typically they target groups particularly inimical to mixing (e.g., youth, women). Types of activity vary, but often include some form of cultural or social expression, such as sports, theatre, or dance. The thinking behind such events reflects the larger peacebuilding community's engagement with social psychology, in particular Gordon Allport's contact hypothesis (Steinberg 2013). Allport hypothesizes that quality contact between groups is the most effective method for improving conflictual group relations (Allport 1954). Contact is intended to decrease fear and anxiety about the other, and personal inter-

action is meant to combat negative stereotypes involved in conflict, e.g., outgroup inferiority and outgroup threat, as well as outgroup essentialism more generally.

Psychological pressures can be a stronger deterrent to intergroup contact than spatial constraints. Thus, as demonstrated by the previous examples, the weakening of barrier infrastructure and the opening of checkpoints does not necessarily facilitate quality contact. Residents may traverse boundaries more frequently, and the benefit of such movement should not be understated. Territorial traversal, however, is not always commensurate with social mixing. Orchestrated encounters are typically required in order to coordinate significant contact. Scripted activities take place in controlled environments, often coordinated and supervised by a third party intervener. As previously argued, such activities often occur at interface areas due to their mid-point location and symbolic value. Often the



infrastructure itself becomes a focus, serving as a material point of departure that encourages groups to reflect, interpret, and respond to division. Such events can be discussion-based or may involve altering the infrastructure in some way, for instance through mural painting or performative re-interpretation.

Almost all of those who participate in such cross-communal events, even people who are highly anxious about partaking, report positive experiences (see, for instance: Hewstone, Hughes, and Cairns 2008; Hewstone et. al., 2014).<sup>10</sup> At one such event in Nicosia, a bicommunal dance party, I observed groups of teenagers laughing and exclaiming about the various things they found they had in common. Many of the younger Cypriots that I interviewed (usually age 15-20) recalled in amazement how wary they had been about people from the other side until they actually met someone. However, as the activities usually depend on outside funding and coordination, they tend to be one-off occurrences. While these singular meetings may reduce individually-held stereotypes, the lack of sustained quality contact prevents participants from developing strong intergroup relationships or overcoming ingroup stigmatization when it comes to outgroup socialization. Interviewees in Belfast and Cyprus frequently reported that after such events, they would return to their own communities with no real means to further new friendships, and the positive repercussions of the experience eventually languished.<sup>11</sup> One

problem here stems from funding constraints that prevent sustainable initiatives. Even repeat activities typically only last through one to two funding cycles, meaning that many programmes fizzle before they gain enough steam to be thoroughly effective (Bicommunal NGO Worker, Nicosia, interview with author, July 2015).

### Permanent Shared Space

For this reason, in the past decade, peacebuilding practitioners in both cities have worked to build stable spaces at interface areas to house activities that facilitate sustained contact between communities. Cyprus' Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, a non-profit housed in Nicosia's UN offices, spent years campaigning to create a bicommunal space within the Buffer Zone. The group first had to convince UNICYP to allow a stable structure in the area. Until that point, the peacekeeping mission, which itself only receives a remit every six months, did not allow any permanent infrastructure to be erected in the "temporary" buffer zone. The only building that existed was the UN's headquarters at the Ledra Palace Hotel. The one NGO that received permission to "set up shop" on the hotel grounds had to be housed in a temporary corrugated steel shed so that it could be easily removed. However, the AHDR specifically wanted to create a space that would combat the temporary nature of cross-communal meetings. It took two years for them to receive the necessary permissions, and another two years to secure funds for the project, eventually receiving them from the European Economic Area grants and the Norway grants (Home for Cooperation Board Member, interview with author, October 20, 2013). For their new endeavour, which they called the Home for Cooperation, they chose a site across from the Ledra Palace Hotel, a building owned by an Armenian family who had been forced to abandon it during the war.

The venue provides office space for numerous NGOs, public space for events and conferences, and a cafe. The Home's architecture is exceptional in its reversal of prioritization between

<sup>10</sup> Allport's contact hypothesis has inspired decades of research and debate. For one overview, see: (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). The nuances of if, how, and why contact works in reducing prejudice are outside the scope of this essay. Here, I merely emphasize the positive response I witnessed of participants at these events, while acknowledging the limitations both of my insight into their feelings and emotions, as well as my knowledge of the outcomes of these events.

<sup>11</sup> In Belfast, I did not interview any participants in these events. This problem was explained to me by various community workers and program officers. Similarly, employed people in Nicosia repeated the same problem, which was also reaffirmed statements made by the interviewed participants themselves.



Figure 16. The Home for Cooperation across from the United Nations headquarters at the Ledra Palace Crossing. Source: Author, 2013

securitization and approachability, particularly when considered in dialogue with the heavily militarized Ledra Palace across the street. Rather than sandbags and barbed wire, guests are meant to feel secure by the building's glass walls, wide veranda, potted plants, and outdoor seating.<sup>12</sup> These architectural "comfort" elements have been added to since the centre first opened in an effort to subvert negative associations that many still have of the area (Home Café Employee, Interview with Author, May 26, 2015).

The Home for Cooperation has been very successful since its inception. During the first few years, the home developed an educational programme to bring people in for discussion-based events. However, after two years, workers were complaining that they only saw the same people again and again at their events. For that reason, staff members have been trying to transform the Home's identity, from a venue exclusively devoted to bicomunal events to a venue that happens to be located in the Buffer Zone, even re-terming the space as a "community centre" (Home for Cooperation Employee, interview with author, June 8, 2015). They have begun offering workshops on everything from composting to creative writing to breastfeeding. During fieldwork in the summer of 2015, the most well-attended events were a salsa night and a break-dancing party, both of which brought in many people who had never been to the Home

for Cooperation before, and had no interest in attending a bicomunal event *per se*, but were attending out of interest in salsa or break dancing respectively. Many had had no prior contact with individuals from the other side and casual conversations with the participants indicated that most found the experience overwhelmingly positive; the latter event ended with groups of teenagers begging the organizers to make the dance-offs a monthly event.

In Belfast, community development organizations as well as aspiring individuals have created shared spaces designed to serve the economic and commercial needs of interface neighbourhoods. One of the city's most successful initiatives is the Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project. This centre is located at the interface of the Catholic Lenadoon and the Protestant Suffolk districts in West Belfast, which during the Troubles was one of the most violent areas in the city. The two areas are separated by multiple security barriers. In the 1990s a city-wide initiative called the Belfast Interface Project helped form a joint-community group from representatives of both neighbourhoods, the Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Steering Group. The cessation of a government-funded employment scheme in the area and the failure of a local shopping centre provided motivation to find alternative means of employment and economic opportunity (Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group 2015). In single-community and cross-community meetings that lasted multiple years and in spite of years of sectarian and paramilitary intimidation, a regeneration company managed by both communities was eventually formed to create a commercial corridor along

<sup>12</sup> I am grateful to Rosaleen Hickey for first drawing this observation to my attention. Rosaleen Hickey, "Shared Space in Belfast/Nicosia: Security versus aesthetics," Conference Presentation. Critical Legal Studies. Queen's University Belfast, September 6, 2013.



Figure 17. Beats 4 Unity Break dancing festival, Home for Cooperation. Source: Author, 2015

the interface road. Now with multiple shops, a community centre, office space, and a day care, the interface has been transformed into a shared space serving both communities. Those involved in the area's regeneration stress the importance of economic need to ensuring the project's success – even saying that the vocabulary of “good relations” was intentionally avoided. However, if communities were to be sold on the initiative through the use of economic language, outside funders such as the International Fund for Ireland and Atlantic Philanthropies were surely pitched a peacebuilding project – this is indicated by the language they use in their own publications, which clearly refers to the project as one related to peace and reconciliation (International Fund for Ireland 2016; Atlantic Philanthropies 2016).

Just like the Home for Cooperation, not only the location, but the architectural design of the building as well is integral to its success. However, in its initial layout with two entrances, and twin

office spaces for both communities, the design of the Stewartstown Road Centre is based more on principles of equal duplication as opposed to singular shared space. These design decisions are nevertheless appropriate and well-designed for the physical location of the building (there would be no way to have only one door for instance) and for the addressing local concerns and anxieties about safety and security (Brand 2009; see also: Donovan 2013).

### Limitations

All of the strategies discussed in this article – softening border infrastructure, opening checkpoints, creating mobility, organizing cross-communal activities, and building shared spaces – are beneficial in the arduous process of transforming protracted conflict. However, like all peacebuilding programmes they face limitations. Here again, I would argue, many of these limitations have to do with a strict relationship to border infrastructure. Specifically, there is an overemphasis on



barrier activity and cross-communal activity. This overemphasis can detrimentally detract from funding for programmes aimed at empowering or building confidence *within* a given community. Research increasingly indicates that cross-communal activities reach their full potential only after single-identity community building and social cohesion work have taken place, or in combination with such programs (Church, Visser, and Johnson 2002). Recent fieldwork in both cities confirms these theoretical positions. During interviews, community leaders in Belfast lamented that they are frequently forced to conduct bicommunal activities at interface barriers. In their views, what is needed more urgently are confidence-building measures within communities, particularly the Protestant community, which tends to be more insecure (Shankill Community Workers, group interview with author, April 14, 2011). Likewise, the success of activities in the Ledra Palace crossing has discouraged third parties from funding single-community work in other parts of Nicosia. One interviewee recounted that his proposal to host activities at two locations within the Old Town of Lefkoşa and Lefkosia was rejected; he was told instead to hold it at the Home for Cooperation, which would be easier for the bureaucrats and politicians processing his application. As he stated, although he is a fan of the Home, it gets very little foot traffic compared to either of the downtown cores, and he felt that holding his event there would significantly curtail its impact (Artist, interview with author, July 28, 2013). Buffer Zone activity has also significantly diverted funding for peacebuilding measures in other cities and villages on the island. This is especially problematic because these areas receive the least benefit from reunification, and as a result it is likely that residents would vote against any referendum supporting peace.<sup>13</sup> Thus, barriers can inadvertently create an institutional pathway that precludes money and support from reaching other geographic

areas. Peacebuilding measures will be less successful if they remain dependent on barrier infrastructures; instead, they have to be paired with confidence-building measures in other areas.

### Conclusion

The transformation of conflict is a protracted process that can last multiple generations. Identity conflicts, such as those in Belfast and Cyprus, are especially difficult to transform; socio-segregation has led to the hardening of oppositional identities and “us” vs. “them” attitudes. Although it has been a common field of inquiry and practice for the past few decades, the idea that peace builders should aim at promoting social mixing and reconciliation is still relatively new compared to the traditional approach that only focused on top-level negotiations. Specific solutions remain elusive, and the determination of best practices is a slow, arduous process that involves many different interventions on the social, spatial, symbolic, and psychological levels.

As I have argued, many of these interventions are mediated through barrier infrastructure itself, so that barriers become a filter through which the activities of peacebuilding take place. Barriers go up in an instant, and they can take generations to remove. The types of interventions detailed here occur at a particular moment in the conflict cycle, one independent from resolution. This period demands a careful policy shift between security and integration.

Belfast and Nicosia face particular problems that arise when the mixing of diverse identity groups is impeded by physical, social, and psychological obstacles – perhaps none more severe than a history and recurrent threat of violence. However, extreme as they may be as case studies, the analysis of these cities indicates lessons for fostering social mixing across groups in which intergroup fear or anxiety may play a deterrent role. Groups often avoid mixing, not because they feel physical threatened, but also because they feel economically threatened, or even just anxious about possible misunderstandings, miscommunications, or other social misfires. Con-

<sup>13</sup> In interviews, members of the UNDP-ACT acknowledged this problem and discussed proposals and programs currently underway to address it.



tact and communication can be restored or cultivated through tangible and material infrastructures of concern to both communities. In partitioned cities, the dividing interface is obvious; in other cities, we may have to look more closely and analytically at the barriers that might be used to bring together divided populations.

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### Note on the Author

DR. EMILY BERESKIN is a research associate at the Center for Metropolitan Studies, Technische Universität Berlin. Her current research project applies an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of urban development and conflict transformation, with a focus on highly territorialized cities. Additional research interests include tourism development in conflict societies, heritage politics, and sociologies of architecture.

[emily.bereskin@metropolitanstudies.de](mailto:emily.bereskin@metropolitanstudies.de)

# Envisioning Migration: Drawing the Infrastructure of Stapleton Road, Bristol\*

by SUZANNE M. HALL, JULIA KING, and ROBIN FINLAY  
(London School of Economics and Political Science)

## Abstract

This paper is an exploration of the different ways drawing can be practised to understand how migration shapes the infrastructure of the so-called 'British' high street. The research emerges from a cross-disciplinary study of migrant economies and spaces on Stapleton Road, a high street in a comparatively deprived and diverse part of Bristol, UK. Our primary aim is to contribute to discussions about the role of drawing as a critical visual practice in social research, highlighting methodological and substantive potentials. The second aim of our paper is to elaborate on the relationships between urban migration, urban marginalization and 'migrant infrastructure' (Hall, King and Finlay 2016), and we visualize through four drawings, how power, materiality and place constitute the infrastructure of Stapleton Road. We engage with infrastructure as a lively system of shared resources that situates migrant entrepreneurs in the city, and is configured by an array of migration processes across time and space. We suggest that drawing is an exploratory and critical visual practice, providing us tools to see socio-spatial relationships in temporal and scalar dimensions. To 'envision' migration is to encounter and re-present the varied dimensions of street life in relation to the structural production of urban migration, marginalization and diversity.

**Keywords:** drawing, critical visual practice, migration, marginalization, infrastructure, street, Bristol

## Introduction: Why we draw

We started our research of the micro-economies on Stapleton Road in Bristol by walking the street – an architect, human geographer and sociologist – together exploring a densely packed retail strip shaped by long histories of migration to Bristol in the UK. A clear methodological question was how we could utilize our cross-disciplinary skills to comprehend the everyday inhabitation of

Stapleton Road in relation to the geographies of migration across time and space. Another question, one less typically pursued in the social sciences (Wheeldon and Ahlberg 2012), was how we could experiment with drawing the street, not simply as a way of illustrating our conclusions, but as a means of encounter and discovery; a way of engaging with the diverse economic life of the street. Our starting point to walking Stapleton Road was initiated by a face-to-face survey with proprietors along the stretch of street. The survey with respective proprietors, frequently lasting no more than ten minutes, allowed us short entry to the interiors along the street. We gained a bit-by-bit insight into how the street, while composed of repetitive terrace units typical of

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\* This research emerges from a larger research project on 'Super-diverse Streets: Economies and spaces of urban migration in UK cities' supported by the ESRC (ref: ES/L009560/1). Detailed research data and further visualisations are available from:

<https://lsecities.net/research/data/cr/phase-1-super-diverse-streets-survey-comparisons-2015/en-gb/>

urban high streets across UK cities, is highly variegated in its economic and spatial dimensions. In this early process of looking and listening, the street appeared as a loose cohesion of bodies and spaces, coalescing into what we might call a collective 'urban infrastructure' or spatial system of economic and social transactions. We spoke with 77 of the 100 retailers on Stapleton Road, recording over 11 countries of origin amongst them (Hall, King, Finlay 2015). This street infrastructure therefore, while constituted in a comparatively deprived and ethnically diverse part of Bristol, is saturated with goods and practices brought from across the planet. The question of how we could explore – through drawing – the intimate and planetary dimensions of the street, arose in the early stages of our analysis.

Unlike the use of *in situ* photographs of people and places (Back 2007) or drawings elicited from research participants (Mair and Kierans 2007), our drawing of the street largely happened once away from the field and back at the desk, making our research enquiry not so much 'of' but 'through' the visual. The first challenge of our paper, therefore, is to engage with Ingold's (2011) call for a greater appreciation of drawing in anthropology, less as an instrument of representation in the first instance, and more as an exploratory method of finding out. We found that by starting with rough drawings, often by correlating one point in space to another, our vision of the street began to expand. As a highly exploratory process, drawing added a layer of enquiry rather than simply representing an additional layer of data. The images, once they emerged, frequently presented a view of socio-spatial relations that we had not anticipated. We made drawings at many scales, sometimes marking out the texture of thresholds, objects, and divisions of street interiors, as culture made manifest from the inside out. Bourdieu described this way of looking as 'the world reversed', encapsulated in his drawing of the precise habitation of the Kabyle house in Algeria (1960 [1977]). Here, Bourdieu's microcosmic drawing of the position of entrances, rooms and utensils both spatializes

the social relations of gender and religion, while connecting human bodies to the material life of surfaces and objects. We also made drawings beyond intimate dimensions, spanning across from the human to the global sphere, mapping the politics of bodies in space. Kurgan (2013) describes this in her own practice of visualization as drawing social relations 'close up at a distance'. Kurgan expands her drawing practice to trace ties between bodies, positions in space, and power, revealing in her prison admissions maps of Brooklyn, how an 'urban exostructure of prisons and jails' is ingrained in the racialized structure of the city (2013: 204). In this sense, drawing is a relational act, allowing for a careful consideration of what appears in place, as well as tracing associations between places and processes separated by distance.

Our emphasis on drawing as encounter is not detached from the understanding that drawings, as products of social research, are mediated constructions of social reality. Seeing, as Berger suggests (1972: 8), is a highly selective act; 'The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe [...] To look is an act of choice. As a result of this act, what we see is brought within our reach.' By way of example, Stapleton Road was recently referred to by an article in *The Mirror* as 'the worst street in Britain' (Sunday People 2011). The journalist depicting the street clarified the fleeting *modus operandi* of a single Friday night visit to the street to purportedly uncover 'the shocking truth about what's really happening'. In this visit, the journalist reports to having seen 'dozens of hookers ... plying their seedy trade'; 'Drug-pushers with their faces masked with scarves'; 'Gangs loitered outside a phone box'; and 'hooded yobs on street corners' (<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/forget-home-office-crime-mapping-1695400>). In this instance, seeing is not separated from representation, and the process of describing the pejorative 'other' in a public sphere is a political act. Urban sociology is not immune to limited portrayals of marginalized urban environments, where prejudice, morality or romance



masks the rich and varied dimensions of life-worlds connected to the structural production of poverty, race and ethnicity. In the process of drawing our research, our concern is not how to avoid the construction of a research object, but the reduction of it through a parochial rendition of 'a' people or 'a' place (Desmond 2014; Auyero and Jensen 2015). We explore the processes of power that sort people and places in deeply hierarchical ways, and are particularly interested in how the geopolitics of migration are related to the everyday life of the street.

As architect, human geographer and sociologist, we have also explored what kind of visual production (and consumption) through which our drawings emerge. We think about the visceral look and feel of our drawings and how they might resonate with a wider public audience that can freely access our drawings on the web by the click of a mouse. We think about how much complexity an abbreviated drawing can contain to capture the short attention span of the web surfer, or of how our drawings might translate on the street or in a planning or policy department. With pieces of paper strewn across our shared worktable we talk over our own conceptions and disciplinary reference points for how we might see and draw, bringing together highly differentiated software for enumerating, geographically locating, and digitizing social life. Evans and Hall (1999) refer to the 'cultural resources' available for visual 'meaning-making practices' as a whole repertoire of visual culture. Our visual practice, tightly contained in this paper in four key research drawings, therefore intersects our own disciplinary perspectives as we see and make drawings. Our visual repertoire includes the ever-increasing range of technologies to transfer drawings from sketch to 'finished' product and the immensely wide distributional network of the web, transmitting our drawings to audiences we can only partially anticipate. As we engage in our research there are daily reminders of the prevailing discourse resonating across the UK and Europe, as to how contentious a subject migration is. We are therefore especially mind-

ful of the significance of presenting our research visually, and take care to connect our drawings of the street to the much longer and wider *durées* of migration across time and space.

### **Drawing the Infrastructure of the Street**

If the first challenge of the paper is to engage with drawing as a way of probing at and disrupting what we think we know from the field, the second challenge of the paper is to connect what drawing processes might reveal about the everyday manifestation of urban migration on a multi-ethnic street in Bristol. Here, we expand on the notion of the city street in comparatively deprived urban localities as 'migrant infrastructure'; as a shared urban resource for lively economic and social transactions across residents from many countries of origins (Hall, King and Finlay 2016). Our analysis of Stapleton Road is part of a multidisciplinary, comparative ESRC study on '*Super-diverse Streets: Economies and spaces of urban migration in UK Cities*' (<https://lsecities.net/objects/research-projects/super-diverse-streets>) that aims to explore how urban retail economies in precarious urban localities are shaped by and shape migrant transactions. The project focuses on high streets within the UK's most diverse cities by country of origin, including Birmingham, Bristol, Leicester and Manchester, and also engages with why certain kinds of diversity are produced in marginalized urban localities.

At the core of this paper is the question of how to connect the techniques of drawing to an exploration of the street as an infrastructure that both embeds and is reconfigured by migrants. Specifically, drawing allows us to engage relations of scale and time with the long duration of migration to UK cities. These migrations resonate with historic colonializations and more recent political disruptions that connect the apparently local street to global asymmetries. In the four key drawings that form the empirical core of the paper, we draw the intimate, urban and global *scales* of the street, and the *temporalities* of migrant inhabitation of the street over extended

time frames. We literally draw the connections between the diverse histories of migration and countries of origin amongst the shop proprietors, their range of retail activities and practices, and the spaces that support and are altered by their endeavours. This paper, therefore, is an exploratory essay, engaging with the use of drawings for understanding the infrastructure of the migrant street. The aim of the essay is to contribute to discussions about the role of drawings and visualization in social research, highlighting their methodological and substantive potential. Specifically, we envision how power, materiality and place constitute the 'migrant infrastructure' of the city street.

The relationships between infrastructure and diversity is central to this special issue, and at this point we would like to expand on how we engage with literatures on urban infrastructure as the active sharing of resources, as well as incorporate our recent theorization of 'migrant infrastructure' (Hall, King and Finlay 2016). Central to our approach is the underlying notion that through the embedded qualities of infrastructure, it is deployed as a political and cultural resource (Barry 2013). We contend that unlike the notion of a static pipe below the ground, infrastructure only becomes installed when it is practised as both a technical and cultural system. The process of bringing infrastructure to life is referred to by Amin (2014) as 'lively infrastructure', and Amin focuses on the capacity of marginalized groups to organize around access to infrastructure. In this sense, infrastructure is at once political and material. Through an extended ethnographic process, Bjorkman (2015) integrates these political, cultural and material practices of accessing, sharing and regulating infrastructure at neighborhood and metropolitan scales in Mumbai. 'Pipe politics', as Bjorkman shows, is an infrastructural practice that intersects the particular *locality* of a tap for multiple users in an informal settlement; the specific *dimensions* of valves and pipes that permits water to flow with or without pressure at any given time; and the *regulatory* and illicit ease with which water pipes can be truncated

and relocated. In its material configurations, infrastructure reveals both pervasive hierarchies and everyday modes of resistance.

In engaging with the relationships between infrastructure and diversity as core to this special issue, Burchardt and Höhne (2015 this volume) challenge the researcher to consider what kinds of subjectivities are produced through accessing and inhabiting infrastructure. They refer to 'the different kinds of intensity and routine', highlighting the significance between bodies, spaces and temporality. Diverse urban citizens are already spatially positioned by the specific infrastructure to which they have conditional access. These citizens also simultaneously reconfigure infrastructure through their inhabitation of it over extended periods of time. Our understanding of 'migrant infrastructure' expands through the analysis of three interrelated properties including *historic depth (power)*, *socio-spatial texture (materiality)* and *locality (place)* (Hall, King and Finlay 2016: 6-7):

- i) *Historic depth* encourages the analysis of how global systems of power and regulation endure in the formation of infrastructure. The presence of proprietors on the street are connected to the globalizing reaches of the former British Empire and its colonizing imperatives, and more recent migratory propulsions including the global financial crisis of 2008 and political re-orderings in North-East Africa and the Middle East. We explore the temporal dimension of street infrastructure through drawing the multiple flows of migrations that have arrived on Stapleton Road over a period of forty-five years, and how this shapes the entrepreneurial rhythms on the street.
- ii) *Socio-spatial texture* provides the cues for why certain migrants 'land' in certain parts of the city, connecting racialized and ethnicized patterns of social ranking, to enduring spatial morphologies of marginalization. This dimension of urban analysis prompts us to recognize how the material aspects of infrastructure co-constitute social relations



Figure 1: World to Street: A survey of proprietors on Stapleton Road by country of birth (2015).

(Barry, 2013). The migrant groups that occupy this street come from different parts of the world, and are emplaced in Bristol and on Stapleton Road, through a plethora of urban sorting mechanisms that rank racialized and ethnicized bodies relative to place.

- iii) *Locality* situates Stapleton Road as a street outside the city centre within a marginal but not explicitly enclaved neighborhood. The street emerges in a locality where official scrutiny of entrepreneurial practices is not particularly high, land values remain generally low, and formal regeneration efforts, where they exist, are lacklustre. Stapleton Road is located in an area as markedly poor, as suggested by a high indices of deprivation (see the Indices of Deprivation 2010). However, these varied migrants groups also operationalize the street,

their variegated practices co-producing both stable and precarious aspects of Stapleton Road.

#### *Drawing 1 – World to Street*

Our first drawing (figure 1) comprises a world map juxtaposed with the layout and units that make up Stapleton Road. From the unit of each respective proprietor that we surveyed, a line is drawn to their country of birth, demonstrating the highly global nature of this high street. The image provides a visualization of Massey's notion of a 'global sense of place', which she describes as, 'a sense of place, an understanding of "its character", which can only be constructed by linking that place to places beyond' (1991: 29). These lines drawn between a global and local sphere collectively provide an emphasis of the



variegated constitution of the so-called 'British' high street. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, England, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Nepal, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan are all in some way embodied on the street, as a migration of people and ideas, reconstituting the spaces of Stapleton Road. The street converges an array of diverse migratory routes over time, including those who have entered the UK through former colonial ties, asylum processes or as economic migrants. In this drawing, migratory routes are drawn in a linear fashion, but in the drawing that follows, it becomes clear that migratory routes, alongside immigration legislations, are increasingly elaborate. The emergence of 'super-diversity' conceptualised by Vertovec (2007) as a pronounced increase in the range and number of migratory routes into the UK, in combination with long-established migrations connected to histories of the former British Empire and Commonwealth, has clear resonance in this drawing.

A particular set of lines emanate from established migratory routes connected with Empire, such as Pakistan and Jamaica, but a multiplicity of lines also emanate from less established routes, such as Somalia and Sudan. These lines of multiple migrations are therefore also temporal, exposing the *historic depth* of the street. The flows emanating from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean were initiated in the post Second World War period and are integral to the colonial histories of Britain, exhibiting how the global reach of power endures in the formation of Stapleton Road. The drawing essentially highlights the relationship between who trades on the street, and where they have come from. If drawings can reveal the spatial manifestation of power through people and place, then we must also refer to the drawing for absence: who is not there, and why? The drawing registers the notable presence of enduring ties to former colonies, while it also signifies a correlation between Stapleton Road and many countries in the so-called developing world. Absent is any register of North and South America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Australia. This national topography further aligns

with a racialized topography, where the visualization provides a mapping or inference of the *socio-spatial texture* of the street. It raises questions as to why certain migrants 'land' in certain territories of the city, and helps to recognize the embedded nature of infrastructural conditions. Where infrastructure is located has significant consequences for who will access it, and under what conditions. We learn from this drawing that Stapleton Road connects racialized and ethnicized patterns of global distribution to enduring spatial morphologies of marginalization.

This first drawing of Stapleton Road, encompassing a view of 'World to Street', helps us to recognize that street infrastructure is simultaneously embedded in particular local and global geographies. Power, and the organizing principles of who 'fits' where, is inculcated in space. The geo-political texture of Stapleton Road visually combines the effects of the former British Empire, with the effects of an increasing unequal world, generating mobilities from the developing world to places like Stapleton Road. Through the drawing we are also able to see that the formation of the street in relation to migration emerges from many differing migratory journeys. This composition of drawing the space of the street in relation to the world is the first we generated from our survey data. From the drawing, many questions were raised around "Why this combination of people on this particular street?", providing cues for further lines of enquiry. In this sense, the 'World-to-Street' drawing is not unlike the process of first picking up binoculars and fiddling with the dials to see what comes into view. It gives us a tool to seek out other elements that gradually come into the frame. Our next drawing directly follows the first and provides more detail on the multiple lines of travel proprietors are required to take in order to ultimately arrive on Stapleton Road.

#### *Drawing 2 – Multiple Journeys*

In our second drawing (figure 2), rather than show solely the place of birth of respective proprietors, we chart the multiple migratory jour-

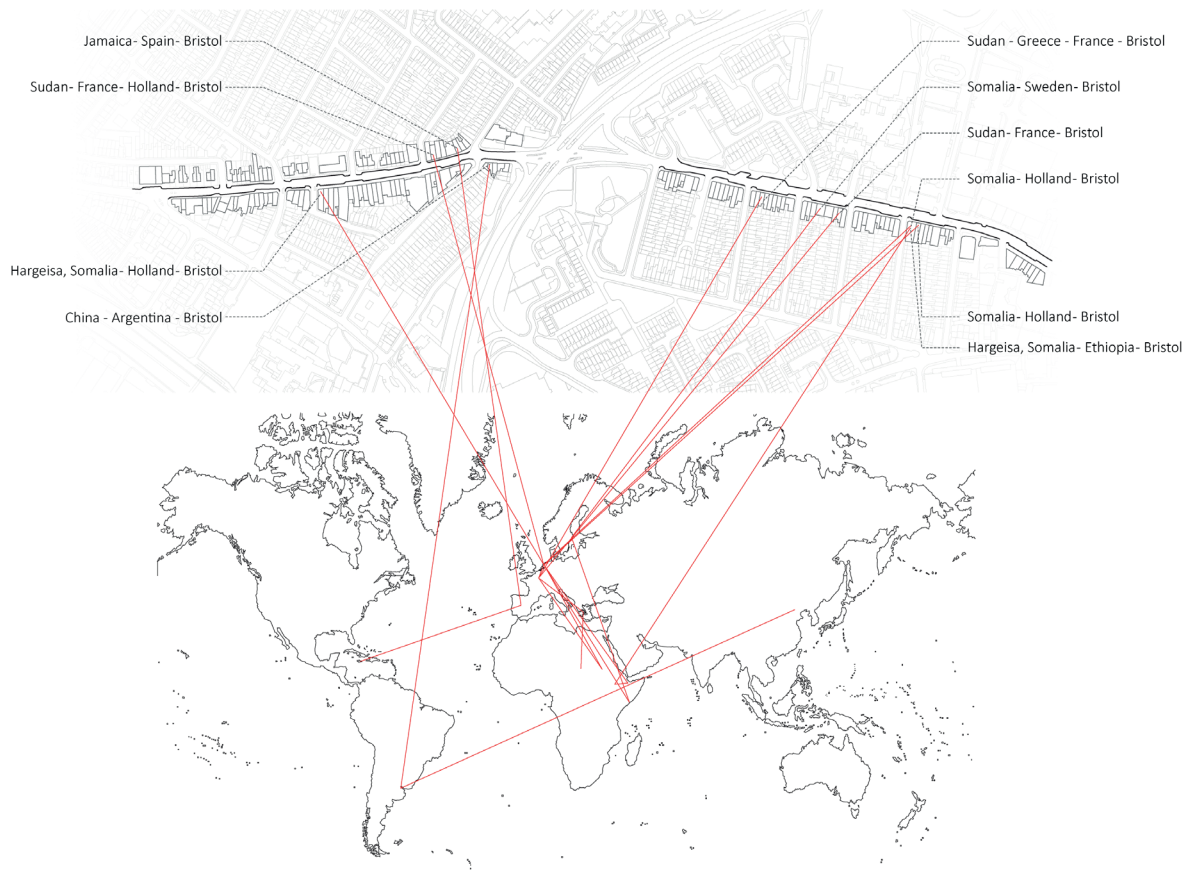


Figure 2: Multiple Journeys: A survey of proprietors on Stapleton Road and their multiple migratory routes (2015).

neys of proprietors before they reach Stapleton Road. Here, we drew lines from city to city and finally to the street, revealing the complex routes undertaken by respective proprietors. Not all proprietors articulated their extended journeys to us, but of those who did, a compelling narrative emerged of the kinds of energy and agility required in becoming multiple migrants. Their contorted journeys are captured in red zig-zag lines that cover vast distances: China-Argentina-Britain; Jamaica-Spain-Britain; Sudan-France-Holland-Britain. Following the trace of these lines, we see migration trajectories that include examples of ‘twice migrants’ as those who migrated to one other country before arriving in Bristol, as well as the emergence of ‘thrice migrants’ as those who migrated to two other countries before settling in Bristol. The image encapsulates the complex and arduous journeys and multiple relocations undertaken by proprietors on Stapleton Road. It refutes the notion of a linear migrant movement from one place to

other, and emphasizes that migrants often, and perhaps increasingly, have to negotiate an array of immigration regulations, mobilities and spatialities across many national borders.

In this graphic depiction of multiple borders and mobilities, the drawing partially begins to open out the resourcefulness demanded of the contemporary migrant. The image probes at the emergence of an ‘extended migration regime’ comprised of the multiple inter and intra-national borders encountered by the migrant and the repertoires required to undertake extended journeys across space and time. But to tease out the nature of multiple journeys and migrant resourcefulness required us to engage further with individuals to explore the details. Here both image and voice are required to give the narrative of multiple mobilities both depth and detail. Through the narratives of proprietors, we became aware that an ‘extended migration regime’ and the process of settling in across numerous locations required a highly adaptable

bodily infrastructure. The changes in circumstances encountered with each border crossing often demanded of the migrant distinctive shifts in occupation and in training. At times the extended journeys produced a process of skilling, where, for example, migrants acquired proficiencies in multi-lingualism, as well as developing networks. Forty-one percent of the proprietors on Stapleton Road were competent in three languages or more, and frequently these language proficiencies extended beyond regional or national borders.

However, these multiple journeys inflict a deskilling process on the migrant, where existing or newly acquired work skills were either not recognized or where formal employment opportunities were restricted. We spoke with Caleb, a proprietor born in Somalia who moved to France and learned to be a baker. He then moved to Holland where he found it hard to set up a business due to restrictive business regulations, compelling his final move to Bristol. Caleb now runs a French bakery. While Caleb's account of his multiple journeys portrays a narrative of both restriction and resourcefulness, in other instances the extended journey results in the effective deskilling of the migrant. We spoke with Biyu, who was the only family member who spoke English and could recount their journey to Stapleton Road. Biyu described how her father, Chaoxiang, had left China to migrate to Argentina, where he had learnt to speak Spanish. He subsequently left Argentina and moved to Bristol setting up a take-away. In Bristol, Chaoxiang no longer used Spanish as a skillset for his everyday life and livelihood, and had not yet learned to speak English. Such levels of required mobility and adaptation on the part of the migrant, demand significant levels of determination in negotiating space, language and work.

The resourcefulness involves mobilizing infrastructure, both bodily and grounded, in persistent and various ways. In the process of journeying the multiple migrant confronts an extended migratory regime as the increased density of liminations that are part of having to cross numerous

national borders over a lifetime. With each crossing skills are both acquired and made redundant by regulatory constraints, and limited access to formal employment structures. We learned from sample surveys that 50% of proprietors on Stapleton Road had some form of tertiary education, while 42% had experience of some other form of work or occupation before setting up shop. The narratives within this drawing and the complex nature of migration challenges the idea that assimilation is a process readily available to all migrant citizens, as dependent on the hard work of integration. It suggests that with the elaborate nature of internal and national border mechanisms, the process through which migrants skill up through acquiring additional languages, or upgrading occupational or educational status, does not necessarily secure stable work prospects.

### *Drawing 3 – Diverse Uses*

In our third drawing (figure 3), we shift the scale of focus to the street level, and explore how long traders have had their respective shop units on Stapleton Road, as well as what core area of retail or service they are engaged in. Through overlaying the data of time and use, we began to unpack the variegated nature of the street infrastructure, discovering a wide range of inhabitations over time. The street is drawn as a reference point that sits at the bottom of the drawing, where each unit we surveyed is linked to a vertical or 'y' axis that extends over a forty-five-year period, from 1970 to 2015. This period captures the range from the longest to the newest proprietor on Stapleton Road. The temporal occupation of the street reads almost like the graphic of a heart beat on a display monitor, suggesting that the rhythmic life of the street is sustained by both long-established retailers, as well as very recent arrivals. We see that approximately a quarter of the proprietors have been on Stapleton Road for twenty years or more. In contrast, the density of lines at the bottom of the drawing shows that a large proportion of proprietors – 47% – have been on the street for five



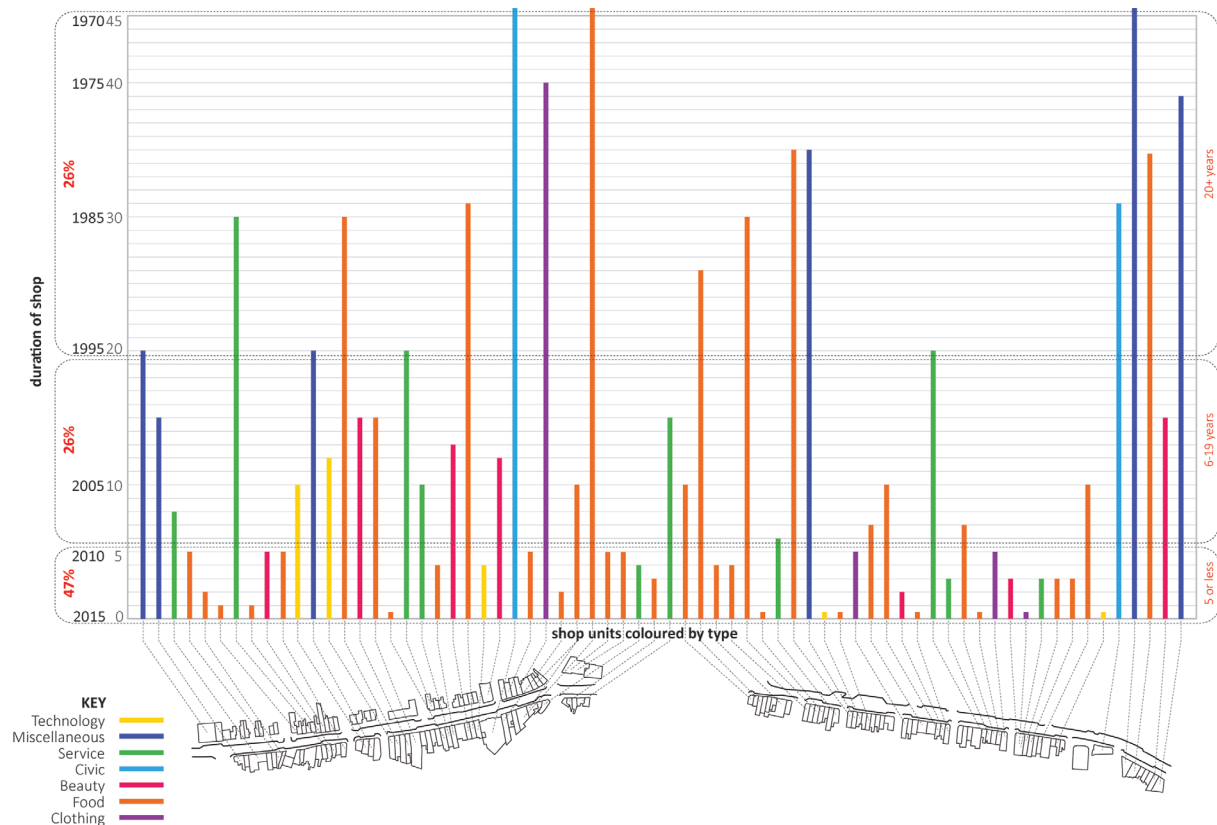


Figure 3: Diverse Uses: Rhythms of activity on Stapleton Road over time (2015).

years or less. This prompts questions as to what the connections and relationships are between long-established and recently arrived proprietors and respective retail economies, and whether the vitality of the street is reliant on having both groups present in the formation of its livelihoods.

The shops are also classified by seven types of use represented by different colours. The array of colours on the drawing demonstrates that Stapleton Road is made up of a wide array of retail activities as well as services. What is specifically apparent is the prevalence of food-related retail units, which dominate at half of all units (50%). The orange lines on the 'y' axis indicate the duration of the shop on the street and show that food is a prominent form of retail business on Stapleton Road. The selling and making of food also registers significantly on the drawing over the period from 2010 to 2015, further suggesting it is a viable entry point into the retail business for many migrants who have recently set up shop on the street. The relatively short duration of this group of food outlets on the street also reflects

their precarious nature, with businesses frequently opening for a brief period, only to close within a year. In reflecting on field notes, closure is most common in the sector of fast food outlets. Nonetheless, a significant number (23%) of food outlets had been on the street for 20 years or more, indicating that livelihoods on Stapleton Road are simultaneously stable and precarious. We also see the gradual emergence of new activities on the street, highlighted, for example, by the yellow lines that refer to new retail uses connected to technology, including mobile phone shops and internet cafes. Retail enterprises on the street both endure and fail.

It remains relevant to take a view of these retail precarities in light of limited access to capital and formal accounting procedures as well as market saturation in low entry barrier areas (Jones et al. 2015). However, the graph also suggests a more rhythmic and varied sequence of street occupation over time, revealing a 'trial-and-error urbanism' from and of the urban margins. The incremental nature of this 'migrant infrastructure'

emerges precisely because land values are relatively low and official scrutiny is lack-lustre (Hall, King and Finlay 2016: 18). In this drawing of the diverse uses along the street over time, we begin to comprehend the street as an aggregation of differentiated practices. Variegation is evident not only in the differing uses or activities along the street, but also in its rhythmic composition of who arrived on the street at what point in time.

The drawing not only underscores that the shared infrastructure is practised in a rhythmic way, but that street infrastructure itself is highly variegated, shaped by many differing uses in close proximity to each other. This aspect of variegation is analytically useful in itself, but it also allows us to consider, add to and challenge other frames for exploring migrant enterprise in the city, specifically the frame of 'ethnic minority entrepreneurialism' (see for example Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). It is not explicitly apparent that street-based trade is a cultural disposition that belongs to particular ethnic groups. Rather, self-employment in retail, particularly retail in areas of low entry land markets, is historically available to many varied migrant groups who are otherwise more likely to be excluded from formal employment sectors (Jones et al. 2015). By looking at the street as a varied infrastructure, we are

therefore encouraged to engage with and move outside of categories of analysis such as ethnicity, to consider the 'roll of micro-global networks sustained by migrants in ongoing urban transformations' (Hall 2015: 857). The particular *locality* effect of Stapleton Road means that the street is already positioned in Bristol within an area categorized with a high indices of deprivation, and amongst the most deprived 10% in England (Bristol City Council 2010). However, the process of drawing how street retail is practised suggests that infrastructure is effectively operationalized by migrants on the ground, in far more complex and variegated ways.

#### Drawing 4 – Interiors

Our last drawing (figure 4) brings us up close to the material dimensions of a single shop along Stapleton Road. Here we draw how a meeting space is ordered by the preferences and practices of its largely male congregation. The shop is leased by Alimah, who arrived on Stapleton Road from Darfur in Sudan, via Greece and France. Alimah currently studies electrical engineering at Coventry University, and set up the shop with his friend two months prior to our interview in August 2015. The shop is drawn in plan, revealing how the space is composed of five distinct but

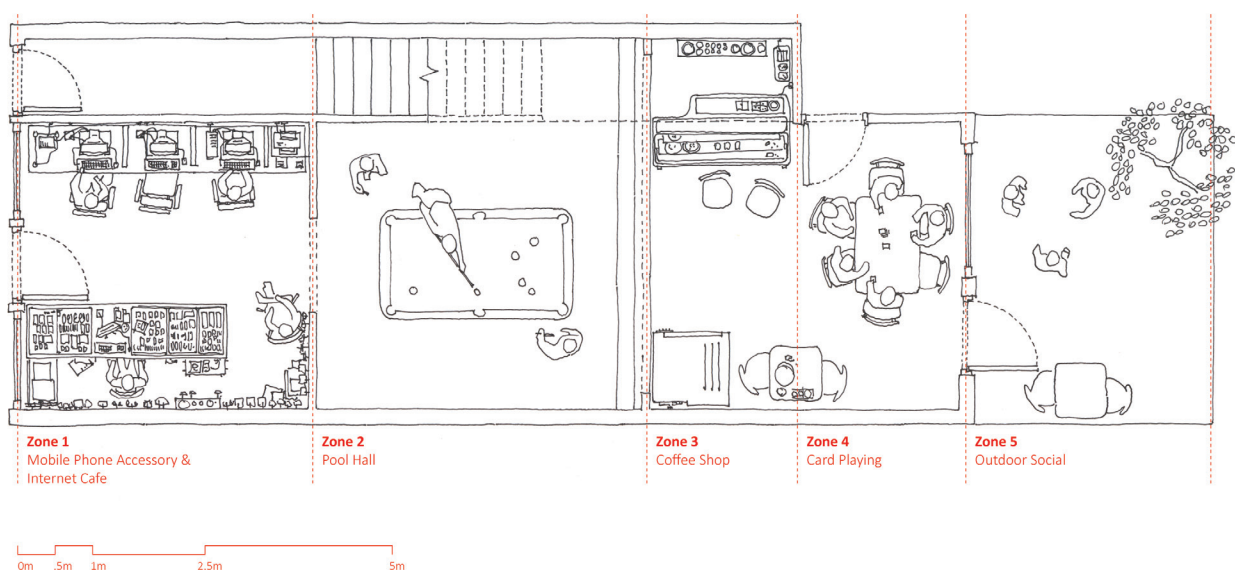


Figure 4: Street Interior: Dimensions, divisions and texture of a shop on Stapleton Road (2015).

related social zones. The first zone, which fronts the street, comprises an internet café on one side and mobile phone accessories on the other. The row of computers with internet access – a not uncommon feature of shops along Stapleton Road – suggests a demographic of users without regular, affordable access to either a computer and/or an internet contract. Phone covers, batteries, cables, printer cartridges and mobile phone cards adorn the opposite wall and every inch of space is covered with inexpensive goods. Above the row of computer terminals, walls remain clear, painted orange and yellow, absorbing the white light from the fluorescent tubes that run the full length of the ceiling. The rafters are spray painted in a dotted orange pattern, and the distinctive aesthetics distinguish this shop from others along the street.

A dividing wall with a meter-wide opening marks a clear threshold between the first zone and the rear spaces. Like a threshold into someone's living space, the shop transforms at this point from a mercantile to a more semi-public setting. The second zone is dominated by a pool table which is placed in the centre of the room, and is activated by bodies playing and observing the game. The third zone, comprises of a coffee area with a vending machine, a couple of plastic chairs and a small table, and a food display. The shop reconfigures east African coffee-drinking street culture within the confines of the terrace house. Two men sit reclined in their chairs drinking coffee, hardly paying attention to the card game happening just behind them in the fourth zone. The fourth zone, the most removed from the street, is dominated by a single large table, and offers a semi-private setting to play cards. Last in this progressive sequence of social spaces, is an outdoor space hidden from the street and only accessible through the shop, and this is where the smokers gather. The shop itself offers a differentiated interpretation of socio-economic transactions, offering multiple business and social activities within the depth of the 60 square meters of space.

The plan as a form of drawing is useful in this instance because we can both draw and read the space as a graduated sequence of sociability. The plan is purposefully drawn as 'non-hierarchical' in the sense that a wall is given the same line thickness as a computer keyboard, or a chair. The ambition is to show from the several combined spaces, including the smallest increments, how the shop functions as a differentiated whole. Doors and windows, tables and counters, all contribute to the small clusters of situations, from playing cards to checking e-mails. We encourage the viewer to hold both the card and the structural envelope of the shop in the same gaze, as part of a composite social order. The drawing denotes one particular moment in time and space, capturing the practised and material culture particular to Stapleton Road and the people who inhabit it.

The process of drawing interiors sets out a spectrum of public life and *socio-spatial texture* that exists on the street. We suggest that the very nature of the street and the attached and still-affordable terraced units that line its edges accommodate the possibilities of designing in, and of living with, difference. The spatial skeleton or frame of Stapleton Road supports a particular kind of high-street, which in this case is about transactions that are at once economic and social (Simone 2004). The capacity for Alimah to experiment with the incremental making of his shop interior, is supported by the street infrastructure in two key ways. Primarily, the aggregation of individuals along this seemingly banal stretch of street provides a space that is shared, although much of the visible public life of the street occurs within specific networks of kin (Somali and Sudanese) and gender (men). Secondly, the materiality of the street, with its narrow-fronted shops and deep extension to the rear, arguably accommodates the alternative and creative forms of encounter and exchange that run along the depth of the unit. Transactions are differentially paced, from the commercial and highly visible space at the front of the shop, to the more obscure, semi-



private spaces at the back. These incremental experiments are also accommodated by the comparatively low land values along the street, as well as the loose regulatory frames that allow for interior alterations, provided fire and safety rules are not contravened. Drawing the life and space of street interiors is particularly useful in this context because it is the richness of urban topography and civic life that is always so hard to both quantify and qualify. Simplified representations such as the “failing British high street” or the notion of “migrant enclaves”, on which policy and planning decisions can be based, fail to grasp the deep and richly textured orders of the street that exists beyond the street façade.

### Conclusion: Envisioning Migration

Drawing itself is a form of critical visual practice, a way of encountering the field through seeing and marking out possible relationships and connections across histories and geographies. In the first instance, the aim of drawing the migrant infrastructure of Stapleton Road is exploratory. We make our drawings to try things out, to test a hunch, to expand or eliminate a hypothesis. We sit with our drawings on our desks and walls and discuss them together around a table. We look at them over long periods of time, to then discard them, fine-tune them, or to add a previously unrecognized layer. Drawings are core to our research process, as well as to the challenge of communicating the complexity of our research to varied audiences. As a critical visual practice, drawings not only re-present social relations, but as Weizman shows us in his project on ‘forensic architecture’ drawings redirect the gaze. In Weizman’s (2014: 9) detailed visual scrutiny of the relationship between violence and trauma, drawing brings ‘new material and aesthetic sensibility to bear upon the legal and political implications of state violence’. In our paper, ‘envisioning migration’ serves to redirect the intensely focused view of the ‘crisis of migration’ as constituted at the national border, to the long-standing histories, varied journeys and interiors made across and within mobile and unequal societies.

In his extraordinary book on *Envisioning Information* (1990: 9) Edward Tufte evokes the possibilities of drawing as integral to an imaginative and measured research process:

‘The world is complex, dynamic, multidimensional; the paper is static, flat. How are we to represent the rich visual world of experience and measurement on mere flatland? [...] To envision information, is to work at the intersections of image, word, number, art’.

The inspiration for making all four of the drawings in this paper comes primarily from envisioning the street. While the first mark on the paper inevitably *locates* one thing or one aspect in space, the next mark is always *relational*; it positions one aspect relative to another. If drawing is both spatial and relational, then it is never simply technical, or innocent of how the drawing-maker sees and sorts the world (Berger 1972, Evans and Hall 1999). Our processes of drawing described in this paper begins by walking, the kind of walking that is intentional and partly programmed. We stop in at each unit on the street, and wait for the proprietor’s agreement as to whether we may proceed with our questions. We arrive with a set of questions, each preselected in advance to allow us to learn about migration in relation to trade, origin, skill and the street. Although the survey is about the street, we refer to our disciplines and our own views of the world to shape the survey. As we go on, we refine our surveys in response to the answers and questions from the field. In our process of walking and looking, we are less the abandoned *flâneur* or the psycho-geographer, and more the dutiful surveyor, our access limited or expanded by what we ask, who responds to us, and how.

Envisioning the street and its inhabitation by migrant proprietors, is, as we have discovered, to work at the intersections of power, materiality and place (see also Hall 2010). In particular, what we have learnt by making the four drawings that are highlighted in this paper, is that Stapleton Road is a lively system of infrastructure that both situates migrant entrepreneurs in the city, and is actively reconfigured by an array of border

crossings from across the planet. The diversity of migrant proprietors on the street manifests with respect to a number of important regulatory, spatial and social processes. The first is the important differences between historic and contemporary flows of migrants, including whether entry occurs via the regulatory regimes of asylum, conditional visa or citizenship. The second aspect of diversity lies in the variety of the respective countries of origin amongst the proprietors on Stapleton Road, converging multiple nations on a single street. The particular convergence on Stapleton Road suggests the racialized and ethnified global topography of migrant geographies and how these intersect with the composition of marginalized urban neighbourhoods. Finally, in the side-by-side arrangement of shops on the street where land values remain fairly affordable and regulatory regimes for regulating business remain fairly unrestrictive, a range of uses and activities emerge in a side by side fashion. Our drawing of the shop interior shows a highly adaptive and incremental form of urbanism where economic and social transactions overlap.

Infrastructure emerges as an embedded yet highly variegated resource, differentially accessed by individuals and groups over extended time periods. We have further shown that 'migrant infrastructure', while embedded in a local place, is simultaneously embedded in specific global geopolitical relations. In drawing the combined countries of origin of proprietors on one street, we gain a view of how imperial domination asserted by colonial rule and global divisions upheld by sustained inequality, are reflected in who 'lands' on Stapleton Road (and who does not land there). By moving across scales through drawing, we have aimed to capture how infrastructure is practised as a cultural and material process. What constitutes a public or a private interior is marked as much through distinctive practices of 'hanging out', as by how chairs, counters and televisions are placed, each increment reflecting cultural preferences. Drawing can be used to unsettle our sense of what we think we know, and also to challenge more lim-

ited or over-simplified narratives of urban marginalization. Here, we show the street as an infrastructure that forms in relation to migration that, because it is lived, is both highly situated and variegated. 'Migrant infrastructure' eludes the singular articulations of 'failure' or 'success' that are endemic to limited notions of urban vitality and regeneration. In drawing the migrant infrastructure of Stapleton Road, emerging practices of economic life are brought into view, relating the processes of migration and marginalization to the spaces of world, street, shop and body.

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### Note on the Authors

SUZANNE HALL is an urban ethnographer at LSE Cities and the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and has practised as an architect in South Africa. Her research currently focuses on the micro-economies and spaces of urban migration. Suzi is Principal Investigator on an ESRC grant for a comparative project on 'Super-diverse Streets: Economies and spaces of urban migration in UK cities' (ref: ES/L009560/1). Email: [s.m.hall@lse.ac.uk](mailto:s.m.hall@lse.ac.uk).

JULIA KING is an urban researcher and architect at LSE Cities. She was a researcher on the 'Super-diverse streets' project, and also works on sanitation infrastructure, urban planning, and participatory design processes in developing countries. Email: [j.king7@lse.ac.uk](mailto:j.king7@lse.ac.uk).

ROBIN FINLAY is a human geographer, and was a researcher on the 'Super-diverse streets' project. Robin is based at Newcastle University. His research interests are in the intersections of migration, diaspora, culture, economics and urban space. Email: [r.n.finlay@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:r.n.finlay@newcastle.ac.uk).



# The Sacred Diesel: Infrastructures of Transportation and Religious Art in Manila

by ANDERSON BLANTON

(Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen)

## Abstract

This paper describes the development of a vernacular form of religious art upon the surface of the Jeepney, one of the most popular modes of public transport in the Southeast Asian megacity of Metro Manila. Through a focus on the pious visual culture of the crowded streets of Manila, the essay proposes a new way to describe and theorize *paratransit*, or informal modes of urban transportation. By examining the Jeepney and its religious images, the paper demonstrates how this form of paratransit has refashioned the urban landscape into a mobile network of miraculous appearances, communal prayers and divine blessings.

**Keywords:** art, Christianity, infrastructure, Jeepney, Southeast Asia, paratransit, pollution, prayer, urban transit

The majority of public transportation in Metropolitan Manila, a densely populated South-Asian conurbation, is carried out by the Jeepney.<sup>1</sup> The Philippine Land Transportation Office (2007) estimates that there are around 55,000 Jeepneys maneuvering through the crowded and narrow streets of Metro Manila. The Jeepney is a small bus carrying around 20 passengers seated facing one another on two benches running parallel to the length of the vehicle. In the urban

transportation literature, the Jeepney has been categorized as a form of *paratransit*. This term emerged in the early 1970s to describe unconventional forms of transportation that opposed to city buses and commuter trains, operated outside the conventional fixed-route genre (Cervero 2000; Kirby 1974; Rimmer 1984, 1986). The individual Jeepney operator is not beholden to fixed routes or predetermined stops, but is contingent upon the special “stop requests” and transportation needs of the passengers. At its most basic level, paratransit describes creative forms of mobility that emerge when large bureaucracies and their concomitant infrastructures of transportation fail to meet the demands of the commuting public. With the increasing inefficiency of state sanctioned systems of bus and light rail, the Jeepney has flourished to become a ubiquitous presence on the extremely congested streets of Manila. Over the last three decades, a great deal has been written on the role of paratransit in Asian cities; however, because these studies have

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<sup>1</sup> A version of this paper was presented at the international conference, “The Infrastructures of Diversity: Materiality and Culture in Urban Space” sponsored by the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Göttingen, German (July 9-10, 2015). I would like to thank the conference organizers, Marian Burchardt, Stefan Höhne and Abdou Maliq Simone for their insightful comments and suggestions on the topic of infrastructure and its relation to visual culture. A recent report issued by the Philippine Land Transportation Office (2007) estimates the number of Jeepneys operating within Metro Manila to be around 54,868. No doubt there has been a significant increase in this number over the last decade.

focused on financial feasibility and transport efficiency, they have neglected the religious dimensions of informal modes of transportation such as the Jeepney. This paper takes a closer look at what might be called pious infrastructures of transportation, in order to describe the Jeepney as a vibrant vehicle of religious representation upon the crowded streets of Metro Manila.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of its historical background, the Jeepney represents a creative re-assemblage of components of the American war machine. More specifically, thousands of all-terrain vehicles known as “jeeps” were abandoned as surplus throughout the Philippines after the Second World War (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Jeep driving up the steps of U.S. Capitol, archival image; unless stipulated, all other photos by author

With remarkable ingenuity, these surplus vehicles were modified with an elongated bed and a new roof in order to provide much-needed public transportation vehicles for a country whose infrastructure had been decimated by the war. Yet, what was only meant to be a temporary fix



Figure 2. Jeepneys queue on Aurora Blvd., Manila

to the infrastructural woes of the Philippines not only persisted throughout the second half of the twentieth century, but the general form of these early Jeepneys still persists as the most popular form of public transportation throughout the country. In terms of historical residues and the religious resonances of the Jeepney, it is interesting to keep in mind that many commentators on the origin of the name “Jeep” cite not only the military abbreviations “GP” or “general purpose” vehicle as the etymological origin of the popular name, but reference “Eugene the Jeep,” a popular cartoon character who first appeared in the Popeye comic strip in 1936 (fig.3).<sup>3</sup> By the time the early prototype of the general purpose vehicle was being tested in 1940, the cartoon character Eugene the Jeep would have been a familiar character on the landscape of American popular culture.

For the purposes of the present analysis, it is important to keep in mind that Eugene the Jeep was quite a curious little dog, not only because he could climb seemingly impossible obstacles

<sup>2</sup> A useful introduction to the anthropology of infrastructure can be found in: (Larkin 2013).

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance: (Dumalo 2011).



Figure 3. Eugene the Jeep cartoon (1936)

and barriers upon the urban cartoon landscape, but because he demonstrated preternatural capacities to discern the future and become a spectral entity with the ability to cross over into other dimensions. In many ways, the contemporary Jeepney carries on this earlier legacy, not only for its ability to deftly maneuver through the narrow streets and obstacle the ridden terrain of the metropolis, but because it can also be seen as a liminal figure that traffics between the sacred and the everyday. At the very least, many contemporary Jeepneys are covered with fantastic images borrowed from popular comic book characters and animated figures, and thus display a historical continuity with the early naming of the vehicle itself.

### The Divine Realm

The Jeepney is not only the dominant mode of public transportation in Manila, but a crucial representational vehicle in the religious life of the city. Since at least the early 1950s, the exterior body of the Jeepney has been an important site of Filipino folk art, featuring symbols of speed and masculinity, such as abstract representa-



Figure 4. Archival image

tions of rooster wings that are creatively “split” around the exterior panels of the vehicle (fig. 4).<sup>4</sup> This essay describes the development of representational styles and thematic motifs upon the exterior surface of the Jeepney, focusing upon the specific religious aspects of this history of vernacular art. Over the last three decades, developments in the subject and style of Jeepney folk art has been significantly influenced by new charismatic Christian and evangelical religious movements. These new forms of charismatic religious practice packed large coliseums and enlivened new communities of collective effervescence in Manila in the mid-1980s. Directly coincident with these new religious movements, the metallic surface of the Jeepney became filled with brightly colored spray paint lettering proclaiming pious slogans such as “Praise the Lord!”, “Prayer Warrior” and “Power of Prayer” (fig. 5). Likewise, these movements signaled an increasing orientation of the Jeepneys’ exterior space of visual representation around the themes of the Virgin

<sup>4</sup> For the now classic study of the Jeepney and its folk art, see: (Torres 1979). My project extends a body of work in the field of folklore and art history on the visual culture of the Philippine Jeepney to include an analysis of a significant representational shift that occurred upon the surface of this popular vehicle of urban mass transit after many of the classic interpretations of the “Jeepney as Folk Art” had been published. Although this paper focuses specifically upon the Jeepney as seen and used by the passenger or pedestrian, future studies might include interviews with the Jeepney operators and artists in order to get a more expansive sense this artistic practice.





Figure 5. Phrases of charismatic Christian praise (paint on steel)



Figure 6. Marian apparitions on passenger side door (airbrush on steel)

Mary [Roman Catholic] (fig. 6), biblical characters (fig. 7), and prayer [predominantly evangelical and charismatic Christian] (fig. 8). The increasing prominence of religious vernacular art upon the surface of the Jeepney suggests that this form of “mobile piety” has refashioned the urban landscape of Manila in significant ways.

While this paper explores the religious dimensions of Jeepney vernacular art, it should be noted that the pious images herein described coexist alongside a vibrant assemblage of artistic representations depicting secular scenes of power, family relations, sports figures, and, as

previously mentioned, images from American popular culture. As if to mimic the mechanical capacities of the vehicle itself, many Jeepneys prominently display illustrations that evoke the theme of technological power and instrumental control. Glistening images of polished motorcycle engines and zooming fighter jets connote speed, while illustrations of massive container ships evoke remarkable carrying capacity and the global movements of the Philippine sailor and “overseas” worker. Alongside the scintillating image of mechanical power, one might find the warm and gentle hues of a child’s face smil-



Figure 7. Biblical story on side panel (paint on galvanized steel sheeting)

ing above the windshield, an outward reminder of familial relations and the daily struggle on the streets to provide for the family. In a country where the sports of basketball and cock fighting reign supreme, a pedestrian often sees images of muscle-bulging basketball stars soaring to the hoop or furious feather-ruffled roosters brandishing their razor sharp spurs. Finally, images from American popular culture are also prominent themes upon the Jeepney, especially wild, macabre characters, such as the Joker from the popular comic book and movie series, *Batman*. While religious images are some of the most popular visual motifs found upon the exterior of the Jeepney, these pious images often comeingle and interact with the other popular figures just described. On the streets of Manila, the sacred image of piety subsists within a visual assemblage of images creatively gleaned from popular culture, family life and technologies of mobility.

These mobile Marian apparitions reflect the shrines located just to the side of the road in residential neighborhoods throughout Manila (fig.6). Many of these shrines display a ceramic statue of Mary adorned with silk flowers and surrounded by the residual traces of wax from the burning of votive candles. From her niche of cobblestone and mortar, Mary casts a plangent gaze toward the crossroads. At night her shrine is anointed by the sallow luminescence of a soot-stained light bulb: a sacred beacon on streets prone to accident, contingency and breakdown.



Figure 8. Manual gestures of charismatic prayer (paint/spray paint on steel sheeting)

As a vehicle of religious representation, the Jeepney marks the proliferation of pious visual culture within urban public space. Through the mobile surfaces of the Jeepney, the presence of pious imagery has transitioned from the private devotional shrine of the domestic interior and the candlelit space of the Cathedral and, quite literally, has taken to the street. As an apparatus of mobile piety, the Jeepney takes the annual festival procession of the saints and plunges this pious imagery into the vibrant circulation of *everyday* life.

This urban transit research describes how these new forms of pious imagery are not merely a passive reflection of religious movements occurring around them in the spaces of churches, cathedrals and public coliseums; rather, these vibrant images themselves actively refashion the urban landscape into an enchanted mobile network of miraculous Marian apparitions, fervent communal prayer, and pious exhortations. In this



way, the infrastructure of public transportation becomes an apparatus of urban belief, mapping the grid and the informal economies of everyday life that take place upon its asphalt surface with sacred visions shrouded in plumes of dust and diesel fumes.

In terms of infrastructure and materiality, the Jeepney is not only a 'vehicle' of representation, but the form of the technology is itself 'quickened' or actuated by the force of religious community and the experience of sacred presence. For an example of the way religion is fabricated into the very materiality of the infrastructure, we could take the flying dove, a symbol of the immanent power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian tradition, descending through the polished steel surface of a Jeepney side panel (fig. 9).

In this instance, religious representation and instrumental function become indistinguishable within the shimmering form of "stainless" steel. Thus the idea of divine communication and the miraculous traffic between the sacred and the everyday has become so sedimented within the history of the Jeepney that it is now "fabricated" into the structure of the machine in the independent manufacturing and assembly garages located around the city. This "stainless" steel suggests a promising method to describe and theorize urban infrastructure in many developing countries, not merely as an assemblage of bureaucratic practices and technical instrumentalities whose functions can be calculated, consciously managed and rationally controlled, but as a machine ensemble whose "functioning" is undergirded by an excessive underbelly of miraculous appearances, prayers, and prestige.

A passenger hoisting him or herself up into the rear entrance of the Jeepney would grip the stainless steel bar located just below the image of multiple hands superimposed in a charismatic gesture of communal prayer (fig. 8). This technique of prayer, also termed the laying on of hands, or manual imposition, is performed within Charismatic Catholic and Pentecostal spaces of worship throughout Manila. Combined with the vocal articulation of prayer, this intimate



Figure 9. Stainless steel side door panel with dove

communal experience of tactility organizes powerful experiences of healing and consecration within the charismatic milieu. By strategically placing this image above the pull-up rail of the passenger entrance, the designer of this Jeepney has refashioned the mundane experience of entering a vehicle of public transit into a gesture of prayer and divine intercession. The everyday gesture of "hoisting up" becomes reinscribed within a communal performance of prayer that, like a leaking oil pan, anoints the street with an unction of blessing and divine protection.

The placement of this image is significant not only because it implicates the experience of urban transit on a basic level—the space that one must move through to enter the vehicle—but also because the layered hands are arranged just above the brake lights of the vehicle. In this way, the staccato rhythms of stop-and-go traffic on the streets of Manila also become enmeshed in the prayer-performance of manual imposition. The red-flashing of the break light (if indeed it is functioning) draws attention to this image, and communicates a sentiment of solidarity and "psychological momentum" with other drivers, pedestrians and passengers on the road (Mauss 2006). In terms of traffic and the mechanized rhythms of the street (stop lights, break downs, traffic jams, police check points, and so on) the strategic positioning of the praying hands provides a striking visual example of the way practices of charismatic prayer structure the flow of everyday life on the street. This flow of urban mobility



is constituted through the punctuated rhythm of *prayer brakes*: the morning prayer voiced by the Jeepney driver before he begins his route; the hoisting up onto the vehicle carriage; the grabbing of a rosary dangling from the rearview mirror as one passes a significant shrine; the gesture of crossing oneself when passing a Cathedral.

As an element of public visual culture and a performance of communal prayer, the image of the superimposed hands illustrates what some scholars of Charismatic Christianity in the Philippines have recently termed “populist religion.” Through their analysis of the explosive growth of Charismatic Catholic organizations such as El Shaddai in the early 1980s, Kessler and Rüland demonstrate how popular religious movements in the Philippines have adopted strategies of political mobilization. Through media spectacles broadcast over radio and television, and an anti-elitist orientation emphasizing the everyday needs and interactions of the masses, charismatic groups such as El Shaddai provide a framework for their members to engage the modernization process and negotiate the precarious terrain of the neoliberal city (Kessler and Rüland 2006; Tremlett 2014). The surface of the Jeepney has become a significant public space through which this new style of populist religious mobilization reclaims the increasingly privatized and gated spaces of the metropolis. Likewise, the Jeepney has become an important site of pious *mobilization* that re-enchants urban space through a mechanized network of communal prayer. It is in this seemingly mundane or unremarked space, just above the pull-up rail and the brake light of a popular vehicle of urban transit, that charismatic communities have begun to refashion the urban landscape.

This methodological focus on the quotidian gestures of street prayer reflects a broader trend in the study of Philippine Catholicism, what Jayeel S. Cornelio terms “the turn to everyday authenticity” (Cornelio 2014). As a concept, “everyday authenticity” attends to the ways in which religious communities and pious performances are mobilized on the ground in order to

provide frameworks for political activism, the cultivation of the self, and economic activity. Like the proliferation of paratransit, everyday authenticity highlights robust religious practices that are enlivened outside or beyond the official strictures and orthodoxy of the Catholic church. Cornelio’s promising method for the study of everyday religious practice in the Philippines marks that moment when devotion leaves the orthodox space of the cathedral and, so to speak, *takes to the street*.

Recent scholarship in anthropology and urban studies has identified the automobile as an important site of everyday religious practice. In his beautifully illustrated *On Wings of Diesel: Trucks, Identity and Culture in Pakistan*, Jamal Elias describes how elaborate religious paintings on trucks in Pakistan refashion the automobile into a “mobile talisman” that protects the driver and his livelihood from theft, accident, breakdown and other misfortunes (Elias 2003, 2011). Similarly, in a project describing “vehicular religiosity” in Nigeria and Ghana, the sociologist Ebenezer Obadare explores how everyday religious practices flourish in urban traffic conditions prone to both deadly accident and boredom-inducing traffic jams (Obadare 2013; Klaeger 2009). Although in different urban environments and religious traditions, all of these studies emphasize the theme of religious mobilization, or the specific ways in which everyday religious practice becomes intimately intertwined with the vehicles of urban transportation.

In a much earlier study, the folklorist Munro S. Edmonson explored the proliferation of pious phrases on Mexican trucks during a research tour through the country in the early 1950s (Edmonson 1968). Interpreting phrases of “bumper mottoes” hand painted in gothic lettering, the folklorist concludes that the preponderance of mottoes such as “Faith in God and Mary” and “Pray for us” suggest that the truck driver in this country is, in general, “immensely pious.” The Philippine Jeepney was becoming popular during the period of Edmonson’s research, and given the colonial intimacies between Mexico and the

Philippines, it should come as no surprise that the pious phrases painted upon the Mexican truck would, in some way, portend the proliferation of religious iconography upon the surface of the Jeepney years later. Prophecy aside, it is interesting to consider the similar ways in which everyday piety is expressed upon the surface of the truck in these seemingly disparate settings.

### Down to Earth—Everyday Transactions

After the boarding passenger has climbed into the narrow rear opening of the Jeepney and negotiated her way through a sea of knees and the baggage of seated travelers, she takes a seat on one of the two crowded rows and exclaims “byad po!”, (meaning “take it, friend”), extending a fist of coins – usually no more than 15 pesos per person (about 33 US cents), depending on the trip – in the direction of the driver. If the payee is not located within reach of the backwardly extended hand of the driver or his front seat assistant, other passengers will assist in the passing of the coins to the front of the vehicle. In an age when the collection of transportation fares and tolls is mediated by sophisticated systems of analysis and calculation increasingly abstracted from the communal experience of the passengers (electronic swipe cards and remote barcode scanners, for example), the collection of fares within this space initiates a unique form of urban sociality through exchanges of hand.<sup>5</sup> Not only are 3-5 individuals physically involved in this payment process of passing coin to and from the payee, but this communal payment structure elicits the attention of the other passengers not directly involved in the process – who are so cramped and facing one another on the opposed benches that they cannot help but observe this transaction. This gesture of payment, and the concomitant act of grasping and letting go, culminates in the clinking sound of coin as it falls into a hand-made box located in the center of the dash board (fig. 10).



Figure 10. Black cashbox, with driver I.D. located beside the driver's elbow (note the numerous Catholic icons located on and near a rearview mirror)

Guarding over this coin box is a reliquary of devotional objects: rosaries swaying to the rhythmic ensemble of combustion engines and traffic lights, a small statue of the *Santo Niño* in his gesture of divine blessing, perfumed garlands of freshly-blessed flowers, printed images of the saints, and small woven curtains featuring pious phrases such as “God is Love.”<sup>6</sup> As previously mentioned, the communal practice of fare collection culminates at the base of this shrine, an offering that not only ensures that one maintains a legitimate space within the Jeepney, but a metaphysical insurance of safe passage on urban streets prone to accident, breakdown and contingency (fig. 11).

Moreover, in this space of mobility saturated with the theme of divine blessing, can we not see the metaphysical presence of money and its promise of miraculous accumulation? If these silent witnesses and sacred objects of the shrine are not enough to dissuade thieves and passengers who would attempt to elude the honor system of fare payment and jump off before they have fulfilled the rite of coin passing, one often finds a written warning located in the space between the driver and the passenger. Ever attuned to word play and the force of allusion, the phrase forcefully reads: “God Knows *Hudas*

<sup>5</sup> For a useful introduction to the history of systems of fare collection see: (Miller 1960).

<sup>6</sup> An analysis of the remarkable history of the *Santo Niño* in Philippine devotion and political movements can be found in: (Bautista 2006, 2010).



Figure 11. Close-up of shrine located above cashbox



Figure 12. Urban surveillance (paint on steel)

Not Pay” [Spanish-Tagalog word play on the biblical character Judas]. – Is there any need for a transportation security camera when a form of automobility such as the Jeepney is surveyed by an all-seeing divine eye (fig. 12)?

The explosion of pious Jeepney imagery in the 1980s coincided with the proliferation of outdoor advertising media such as the billboard. During this time, large-format print technology enabled the production of gigantic images of scantily clad bodies, glistening alcohol bottles and frost-covered milkshakes. Just as the proliferation of the pious Jeepney image facilitated the emergence of new charismatic Christian publics, authors such as Gomez describe how the prodigious increase of billboard advertising signaled a new appropriation of urban space through the “aggression of private commercial interests” (Gomez 2013: 190).<sup>7</sup> With over 8,000 large billboard advertisements crowding the skyline of Metro Manila, many politicians and academics have lamented the “billboard blight” that has

flourished within circumstances of bureaucratic graft and lack of governmental regulation.

Although the pious Jeepney image and the billboard have both emerged within the same historical period of increasing urbanization, it is interesting to contrast these two instances of urban visual culture in regard to the everyday realities of life and movement on the street. While the billboard draws the visual attention of the urban commuter “up” into a skyline populated with images strategically designed to organize desire for middle class commodities, the representational surface of the Jeepney circulates on the level of what might be called “street vision.” As opposed to the elevated gaze, street vision is immersed in the buzz of the urban crowd, at one moment frenetically scanning the landscape and its mobile images, pedestrians and automobiles, while in the next arrested in the crowded confines of stalled traffic and congested pedestrian flows. The billboard organizes its capitalist desires above this flow of everyday life while the Jeepney’s images weave in and out in precipitous proximity to other bodies and machines in motion on the street. Likewise, the billboard is

<sup>7</sup> For another insightful account of billboards and morality in Manila see: (Cornelio 2014).



visibly accessible through the windshield of the middle-class car or private taxi, while the majority of the 12 million daily commuters in Manila are crowded within Jeepneys, whose small windows and crowded orientation allow for limited visibility outside the cab.

In addition to this visual orientation, the images featured on the Jeepney are, so to speak, able to “fly under the radar” of state censorship, a tactic that is impossible for large stationary billboards. Although much controversy has been fomented as of late from large outdoor advertisements featuring images of “sexualized” bodies and verbal sexual innuendo, these visual examples pale in comparison to the highly eroticized images of women often featured on the side panels of the Jeepney. In fact, the voluptuous images of anime cartoons and other figures of male fantasy often appear alongside images of the Virgin Mary. In a kind of surrealist profanation, the ecstatic countenance of the erotic cartoon image suggests an expression that is also visually depicted on the face of many Jeepney images of the Virgin. These basic differences in the visual orientation of urban visual culture emphasize the power and intimate proximity of the pious Jeepney image within the vibrant networks of everyday life on the street. Unlike the billboard, the Jeepney image does not inhabit a static space above the crowd; it circulates in traffic and presses close to life on the street.

The remarkable public exposure of the Jeepney to thousands of pedestrians, commuters and street vendors each day has also been identified by professional advertising agencies. In this regard, miniature billboards advertising cellular phone service plans and providers have begun to appear on the roof of some Jeepneys. The presence of professionally produced advertising upon the exterior of the Jeepney suggests the ways in which the pious imagery upon its surface can be seen as “mass media.” Just like the mass distribution of a newspaper or magazine, the pious images of the Jeepney are physically circulated to thousands of metropolitan spectators each day. Like an illuminated or flashing billboard,

these “moving images” organize their own special effect as they careen through the crowded networks of the city belching smoke and projecting amplified music as well as sounds of chirping, howling, and cackling. As a form of mass mediation, both in terms of moving images and the physical movement of bodies, the religious imagery of the Jeepney signals another development in the recent history of Charismatic Catholicism and Pentecostalism. More specifically, the miraculous appearances upon which these new religious movements subsist have become intimately and inextricably linked with media technologies such as radio, television and cellular phone (De La Cruz 2009, 2014; Wiegele 2005). The mass medium of the Jeepney and its surfaces of visual representation re-enchants urban space through religious images whose mobile agency exerts an attentive demand upon street vision.

Viewed from this perspective, the pious visual culture of the Jeepney marks a struggle to reclaim an urban public space that has become increasingly organized by private advertising and development interests (Tremlett 2014). In terms of the organization of the metropolis on a basic perceptual and attentive level, the spray-painted images of the Jeepney mobilize a “prayer warrior” in a contest to reinscribe diversity into a public space whose very atmosphere and visual horizon is becoming dominated by massive billboards. In terms specifically related to the infrastructures of diversity, the surface of the Jeepney marks a forceful medium of political critique. Through everyday forms of artistic production and informal transit, new attentive demands are organized on the street in order to create a space of mobilization—both in terms of politics *and* public transportation. From her mobile shrine in the street, the blessed Virgin gazes out upon a smoggy horizon dominated by billboard advertisements. In this contested space between the vision of miraculous appearance and the magical spectacle of advertising, many city dwellers locate a space of critical momentum to negotiate the current neoliberal reorganization of the urban landscape.

### The Underworld

The threat of thieves and dangerous accidents takes this analytical trip down into the darker, more subterranean aspects of the Jeepney. Like a traveler descending into Hades, a look under the Jeepney's hood reveals a mythical landscape of heat and flame, strange bodies transformed by the blackness of oil, grease and soot, and the noxious sulfur-tinged smell of death. Indeed, it is heat itself, or the constant threat of an overheated engine that reveals these dark worlds, forcing the driver to pull to the side of the road and bathe the boiling, steaming radiator in a steady stream of water (fig.13). Here, in this fiery underworld, sits the king in his unction of grease and soot – the Isuzu 4BC2 diesel engine (fig.14).

Already expired and outmoded when they reach the Philippines, these second-hand engines have been imported from Japan and have been rebuilt multiple times. These motors are a remarkable testament to creative ingenuity and resourcefulness in the face of poverty and the failure of state organized infrastructures. Yet the extreme inefficiency of these outmoded engines, coupled with the use of low-quality diesel fuel whose sulfur content is many times that of diesel standards in Europe, unleashes a deadly pall of particulate matter upon the urban landscape. This particulate matter, or “black soot,” is not only the direct cause of the premature death of thousands of city inhabitants each year, but it creates an occupational environment for the Jeepney driver that places his life expectancy among the lowest of the city dwellers (Balanay and Lungu 2009; Fabian and Vergel 2001). Moreover, this black soot has recently been identified as the second most important contributing factor to global warming. As a crucial mode of urban transport in Metro Manila, the Jeepney traffics between two worlds – while significantly contributing to the vibrancy of urban life by delivering millions of poor and middle class commuters to their place of work each day, it also belches deadly pollutants into the metropolitan environment.



Figure 13. Cooling the engine



Figure 14. Isuzu 4BC2 diesel

### Resurrection

Recently there have been many strategies proposed by the transportation agencies of the Philippine government and various NGOs to help ameliorate the environmental crisis created in part by the Jeepney and its outmoded diesel engine. Given the exigencies of both the commuting public and the current environmental crisis, one immediate and practical response to the Jeepney and its noxious soot would be the implementation of an inexpensive system of exhaust pipe capping. This simple device can be attached to the end of the exhaust pipe and is capable of filtering up to 40% of the particulate matter that is emitted into the atmosphere through the diesel combustion engine (Gallardo 2003; Krupnick et al. 2003). In addition to the strategy of exhaust filtration, the immediate situation of environmental pollution in Metro Manila calls for new diesel fuel standards with greatly reduced sulfur content. This higher-quality fuel will decrease the amount of particulate matter that is created through the process of outmoded diesel engine combustion. These immediate pollution control strategies may not instantiate the kingdom of heaven upon earth, as they say, but they will provide the first necessary steps toward a more sustainable transportation infrastructure in this expanding Asian megacity.

In conclusion, I have attempted a novel description of urban transit infrastructure as powered not only by outmoded engines and low-quality diesel fuel, but greased through the gestures of prayer and enlivened by the appearance of the miraculous in a reflection of stainless steel. The current proliferation of religious vernacular art upon the surface of the Jeepney suggests the ways in which everyday practices of piety on the street are literally *mobilizing* new public spaces. These informal infrastructures of transit and artistic production, in turn, can be read as a critical contestation of the current reorganization of urban public space by neoliberal economic



Figure 15. “Resurrection” Jeepney parked on the side of Aurora Blvd., just below the overcrowded light rail transit elevated railway line

forces. Viewed against the massive backdrop of the billboard, the surface of the Jeepney has become a space of critique against the increasing visual and attentive organization of the metropolis by private advertising firms (fig. 7). In this way, the stainless steel canvas of the Jeepney has become a representational space where visual diversity is reinscribed into the urban landscape. At very least, the Jeepney has become a prominent space of religious representation upon the crowded streets of Manila. This new form of mobile piety not only “represents” the presence of new charismatic movements in the urban context, but it actively performs a sooty benediction upon the everyday life of the street through the sacred gaze of Saints and the healing gestures of Pentecostal prayer. Mimicking the Jeepney drivers’ creative capacity for world play, we might begin to theorize the informal networks of transportation in Manila not in terms of paratransit, but *prayer-a-transit*.



## Reference Information

Figure 1 (jeep on Capitol stairs): first published in an article by Katherine Hillyer, „Jeep Creeps Up Capitol Steps“ Washington Daily News, February 20, 1941

Figure 3 (image from wikipedia)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene\\_the\\_Jeep](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_the_Jeep)

Figure 4 (archival image) located in the American Historical Collection, Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines

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### Note on the Author

ANDERSON BLANTON is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. His most recent academic works include *Hittin' the Prayer Bones: Materiality of Spirit in the Pentecostal South* (UNC Press, 2015) and the *Materiality of Prayer* collection sponsored by the Social Science Research Council.

[blanton@mmg.mpg.de](mailto:blanton@mmg.mpg.de)

# Large-scale Urbanization and the Infrastructure of Religious Diversity in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro

by STEPHAN LANZ  
(European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder)

## Abstract

This article argues that the diversification of the religious landscape in the favela of Rio de Janeiro is closely linked with its historical and current governance constellations, the production and regulation of its infrastructures, and the materiality of its urban spaces. To this end, this study first lays out how the modes of regulation governing the favela and its infrastructures have developed historically in the dynamic interrelationship between residents, local actors, and state apparatuses. Using four adjoining favelas as an example, I analyze the religious transformation in recent decades as it is reflected in the history of the favelas as well as in the precarious nature of its infrastructure and socio-economic conditions. I suggest that the entrepreneurial self-made religion created by ordinary favela residents should be understood as an infrastructure, in the sense that it works as a platform that provides for and reproduces life in the favela. Finally, I will show that the authoritarian implementation of a large-scale public infrastructure program within this configuration not only further entrenches a historically developed power structure based on violence but also specifically curtails those religious infrastructures that the inhabitants have created themselves in accordance with their needs.

**Keywords:** Rio de Janeiro, favela urbanization program, pentecostalism

For almost a century, the residents of Rio's irregular favelas, which have their origin in land occupations, had to fight to get their settlements recognized as official neighborhoods and granted the right to regular infrastructure services. Not until the municipal master plan of 1992 and the implementation of the urbanization program Favela-Bairro, which was in effect until the mid-2000s, did the preservation and regular urbanization of the favela become official government policy. Since 2007, Brazil's Growth Acceleration Program (PAC) has been investing billions into the creation of urban infrastructure in some select favela complexes. Eventually, in 2010, in anticipation of the 2016 Olympic Games, the municipal government created 'Morar Carioca', "the country's largest favela urbanization pro-

gram", whose aim was to promote "social inclusion through the complete and permanent urban and social integration of all favelas in Rio by the year 2020" (Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro 2011). Simultaneously, an extensive security program was launched that was supposed to permanently "pacify" the favelas, beset as they were by the (drug) war between equally murderous gangs, militias, and military police forces.

In a parallel development, the favelas, which have historically been dominated by a popular Catholicism, have seen the emergence of a new religious diversity. They play a central role in the dramatic transformation of religious life in Brazil, which has brought with it an enormous increase in religious diversity. The proportion of evangelical Christians in the country has risen



from 6.6 percent in 1980 to 22.2 percent in 2010 (IBGE, 2012), and in the first decade of the 21st century alone, the proportion of Catholics in Rio decreased from 61.2 to 51.2 percent of the population (IPP, 2013).

In the favela, where the majority of inhabitants are Afro-Brazilian, the transformation of the religious landscape was an ambivalent process in that the new diversity of Christian communities was accompanied by the disappearance of the afro-syncretic religions. Until the end of the 1990s, the saints and supernatural beings of Candomblé and Umbanda were part of the favela's religious everyday life under the umbrella of a Catholicism which, albeit predominant, was theologically rather lax. It was primarily the rise of Pentecostalism that ended this religious coexistence because „the new Pentecostal churches refuse[d] to accept the status of a minority and syncretic religion under the protection of a wide and powerful Catholic identity” and “demand[ed] a new form of religious pluralism” that would grant “all religious groups equal rights before the state” (Birman and Leite 2000: 274). In addition, they refused a peaceable coexistence with the Afro-Brazilian religions in particular, which they regarded as Satanic cults.

Today, the religious landscape of the favela is dominated by a large number of highly dynamic and often independent (neo-)Pentecostal church communities that compete with each other for believers. They have embedded themselves into the material, social, and symbolic space of the favela and have become an integral element of its urban everyday life. The Afro-syncretic religions, in turn, were aggressively attacked as pagan by the Pentecostal churches and ousted from the favela. Their priests were forced to either renounce their religion or leave the favelas and reopen their places of worship on the periphery of the city (cf. Birman 2009, Vital da Cunha 2009). Many of their former adherents converted to Pentecostalism. The Catholic Church, for its part, hardly plays a role anymore in the everyday life of the favela.

Against the backdrop of these two parallel processes, this article attempts to show that the diversification of the favela's religious landscape is closely linked with its historical and current governance constellations, the production and regulation of its infrastructures, and the materiality of its urban spaces. To this end, I will first lay out how the modes of regulation governing the favela and its infrastructures have developed historically in the dynamic interrelationship between residents, local actors, and state apparatuses. Using four adjoining favelas as an example, I will then analyse the religious transformation of recent decades as it is reflected in this history as well as in the precarious nature of the favela's infrastructure and socio-economic conditions. I suggest that the entrepreneurial self-made religion created by ordinary favela residents should be understood as an infrastructure in the sense of a “platform that provides for and reproduces life” in the favela (Simone 2014a: 408). Finally, I will show that the authoritarian implementation of the government infrastructure program PAC within this configuration not only further entrenches a historically developed power structure based on violence but also curtails specifically those (religious) infrastructures that the inhabitants have created themselves in accordance with their needs.

Following Birgit Meyer, I understand religion as “a mundane as well as world-making social-cultural phenomenon” that in the city has “a strong material presence via objects, pictures, sounds, styles of dress, buildings” (2014: 595). Processes of religious diversification have transformed the religious landscape of the favela into a “terrain of micro-politics of everyday life that rework notions of solidarity, connectedness, and competition” (Burchardt and Höhne 2015: 4). As an urban experience and condition, I understand diversity, for the purposes of this paper – following Susanne Wesendorf –, as “common-place diversity, referring to ethnic, religious and socio-economic diversity being experienced and perceived as a normal part of social life [...] by local residents, and not as something particularly

special" (2010: 8). Historically, the favela may have been largely homogeneous on a national scale; nonetheless, it has always been marked by a highly dynamic diversity of ethnic and racial positionings, ways of life, and socio-economic statuses, all of which find their expression in everyday life.

In addition to the religious dimension, I will also analyze – taking my cue from Steve Graham and Colin McFarlane (2014) as well as AbdouMalik Simone (2004a, 2014) – the role and significance of urban infrastructures from an everyday perspective. The term 'infrastructure' is taken here to mean not only "socio-technical apparatuses and material artifacts that structure, enable and govern circulation" (Burchardt and Höhne 2015: 3) but, in a broader sense, a "complex social and technological *process* that enables – or disables – particular kinds of action in the city" (Graham and McFarlane 2014: 1). I will analyze this process for the favela by way of looking at the interaction between religion, modes of governance, and urban materiality with regard to the question of "how people produce, live with, contest, and are subjugated to or facilitated by infrastructure" (ibid.: 2).

Investigation of this question reveals that "the distinction between infrastructure and sociality is fluid and pragmatic rather than definitive. People work on things to work on each other, as these things work on them" (Simone 2014: 33). The favela, too, is – as Simone has noted with regard to African cities – „characterized by incessantly flexible, mobile, and provisional intersections of residents that operate without clearly delineated notions of how the city is to be inhabited and used" (ibid: 2004a: 407). Historically, the favela inhabitants have been forced to produce their urban environment in a self-organized and collective manner beyond official patterns of urbanization and socio-technical infrastructures. It was this informal collaboration that generated the diverse conjunctions between the social, the economic, the political and the material, between spaces, objects, technologies, people and practices that "become an infrastructure –

a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city" (ibid.: 408). It makes sense, therefore, "to extend the notion of infrastructure directly to people's activities in the city" (ibid.: 407).

### Governing and Urbanizing the Favela

The institutions of the modern city have always treated the irregular favelas – which today are home to 23 percent of Rio's inhabitants – as alien (IPP, 2012). Historically, they have responded to its existence with two complementary governing techniques that have constructed the favela as 'other' and that, according to Zygmunt Bauman (1999: 37 f.), are characteristic of "a war of attrition against the strangers and the strange" in the modern state: The "strategy of assimilation" seeks to eliminate all differences through absorption; it was enacted by the state and the Catholic Church in the form of authoritarian re-education programs geared at assimilating the favela residents without granting them full civil rights. The "strategy of exclusion", by contrast, aims to annihilate or exclude the 'other'; it expresses itself in the state of exception to which the favela residents are subject. Until the 1980s, it manifested itself in recurring attempts to methodically erase the favela. Later, the strategy of exclusion survived particularly in its guise as lethal police tactics in the 'war on drugs' (Lanz 2012). To this day, the processes of the favela's democratization, juridification, and urbanization are accompanied by the violent rule of drug cartels, police forces, and militias. In addition, the relationship between state and favela is still dominated by a clientelism exercised by corrupt authorities. The status of the favela as a regulated squatter settlement is thus shaped by "multiple and competing sovereignties", by "fiefdoms of regulation or zones of 'no-law'" (AlSayyad and Roy 2006: 1).

The favela's right to urbanization was to be realized, beginning in 1994, through large-scale urbanization programs which invested massively into the infrastructure of many favelas (cf. Freire-Medeiros, 2013). The introduction of "pacifying police units" (UPP) in several dozen favelas since December 2008 promised a significant change

from the hard-line strategy of exclusion that the state government had employed in the 'war on drugs' But in many favelas, it turned out to mean months of military occupation and an authoritarian state presence reminiscent of a police state.

All these programs cooperated with the residents' associations and organizations that have their roots in the favelas' fight for survival. These associations have established essential infrastructure in collective self-help efforts and have enabled the inhabitants to act as subjects with autonomy over their day-to-day lives – subjects who have produced cultural practices and economies in their own right and self-governed their living environment employing an informal normative system outside the realm of civil society (Lanz, 2012). This informal mode of self-governance was then co-opted by the authorities, who made use of pre-existing clientelistic structures to involve these associations in state programs that opened new possibilities for corruption and obstructed the development of formal local democracy (Machado da Silva, 2002: 232). This process was further exacerbated by the fact that the heads of these associations, who acted as informal mayors, were increasingly installed by the drug lords (who, since the 1990s, had ruled most of the favelas) and coerced under threat of violence to represent their interests vis-à-vis the state. The drug gangs (so-called *comandos*) thus became secret partners of the municipal administration in the implementation of the urbanization schemes (Lanz 2012). According to Elmar Altvater and Birgit Mahnkopf, these technologies of power can be understood as part of a neoliberal governmentality in which the state deforms itself in a regular as well as an irregular way. In this manner, "informal policy and illegal practices of violence go together" (Altvater and Mahnkopf 2002: 301).

Informality in the favela can, on the one hand, be understood as an "urban way of life" (AlSayyad 2004) that engenders new forms of urban citizenry or politics. Following Simone (2004b), we can understand it as an infrastructural practice by which the inhabitants of cities

with insufficient resources make use of all means available to them to generate those resources themselves. Bayat (2004: 90) calls such forms of self-governance, by which the "urban informals" seek to enhance their living conditions, the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary." Such quiet encroachment encompasses all kinds of individual and collective struggles and activities that in situations of urban marginality aim at "the redistribution of social goods and opportunities" and the attainment of autonomy "from the regulations, institutions and discipline imposed by the state" (ibid.). On the other hand, as rightly argued by Roy (2009), urban informality is not merely a grassroots phenomenon but a power relation. For even in informal settlements, the state is a central actor with its own interests and actively sets in motion informal urbanization processes through selective regulatory mechanisms. To the extent that the state itself acts as an "informalized entity", "the formal and the legal are fiction rather than the norm" (ibid.: 84).

This dual meaning of informality is useful for gaining an understanding of the ways in which the favela is produced and governed and of the infrastructures and materialities that shape it (cf. Lanz 2016). In the shadow of an arbitrary rule by state institutions which, on the one hand, subject the favela to a state of exception while on the other seeking to integrate it into the urban fabric by means of large-scale urbanization programs, a self-made urbanism is unfolding that is marked by precarity, self-organized regulation, and the above-mentioned "quiet encroachment of the ordinary" (Bayat, 2004).

#### **Four Favelas: History, Materiality and Local Power Structures**

At the time of my research (2010-2012), the four closely interconnected favelas of Nelson Mandela, Samora Machel, Mandela de Pedra and Nova Mandela (the latter two of which have since been torn down) were located an hour's bus ride from Rio's tourist landmarks, in the city's Zona Norte, and home to a total population of up to 10,000 people. This part of Rio is characterized



by simple residential areas and heavy industry or, in many cases, merely its remnants in the wake of massive de-industrialization. The four communities are part of Manguinhos, a favela complex consisting of 15 settlements that has its origins in an illegal land occupation almost a hundred years ago. Today, Manguinhos, whose Human Development Index score is one of the five lowest in Rio – which makes it one of the lowest in all of Latin America – has approximately 31,500 inhabitants (cf. Peçanha da Trindade et al. 2008, Cavalcanti 2014)<sup>1</sup>.

The cluster of four favelas discussed here was located next to a refinery and bordered by two foul-smelling canals and an arterial road that had been the site of innumerable drug gang shootings and had a reputation for being one of the most dangerous places in Rio. The settlements of Nelson Mandela and, a bit later, Samora Machel were established in the 1990s and were initially conceived as municipal social housing complexes designated to house workers and homeless people from the neighboring high-risk flooding areas. The new estates and their infrastructure were designed to comprise a bit under 800 duplex houses. Within a few years, they became “favelized” through irregular extensions, the appropriation of vacant spaces, and the organized occupation of adjacent wasteland. Before long, the now high-density settlements were dominated by multi-story brick buildings with a rudimentary infrastructure whose maintenance the authorities no longer considered themselves responsible for and whose administration in effect passed over into the hands of the residents’ associations. Mandela de Pedra, by contrast, which had its origins in the organized occupation of adjoining vacant land, remained an extremely makeshift community to the last, with basic brick buildings and shacks put together from found materials leaning into each other to form a labyrinthine

structure. The settlement had no sewage system and was crisscrossed only by a few footpaths. Conditions were similar in the newest of those squatter settlements, which sprang up in 2005 on the premises of a stripped factory and was named Nova Mandela.

All four of these settlements organized themselves in residents’ associations, *associações de moradores*, which – if they are officially registered, as was the case here – represent the favela vis-à-vis the authorities. Technically, their presidents, informal mayors of sorts, have to be democratically elected, but in a favela ruled by a drug gang, they will in effect be appointed by the gang. This was the case in all four of these communities, which were ruled by the *Comando Vermelho* (CV), the oldest drug gang in Rio. Since the chief (“*dono*”) of the local drug clan was serving a long prison sentence, he had appointed a second-in-command who ran local business and ruled the four favelas. This man saw himself as in charge not only of the drug business but of the entire favela (personal interview, 2010.18.05). He claimed that his “administration” was based on a business management approach to the drug trade that entailed avoiding, to the degree possible, random violence and clashes with the police that were bad for business. In his view, his role as the CV’s acting number two involved dispensing as well as enforcing local justice according to his own understanding of justice and order. The majority of residents considered him a “good bandit” and a level-headed ruler (cf. Lanz 2016).

During the time I was conducting research, the official representative of all four favelas was the president of one of the four residents’ associations, who at an earlier time had been involved in the drug trade himself and had been appointed by the imprisoned *dono*. Only one of the other associations was not under his direct control; its president was married to the imprisoned drug lord’s brother, who ran a minibus company for the *Comando*. This means that the favela’s three most powerful men – the *Comando*’s second-in-command, the operator of the minibus company owned by the *Comando*, and the official repre-

<sup>1</sup> This text is based exclusively on the situation as I found it during the period of my empirical research, which was concluded in March 2012. In October 2012, the four favelas were occupied by military police and the UPP, which ended the rule of the drug gang.

sentative of the residents' associations – were directly accountable to the drug lord.

The only self-organized political association, apart from the residents' associations, was the *Fórum Social de Manguinhos*, which had been established in 2006 with the purpose of representing the residents' interests vis-à-vis an urbanization program that was taking shape at the time and later came to be implemented under the name PAC. Supported by the Osvaldo Cruz Foundation, which supports public health and social development in Brazil academically and politically, the *Fórum* emerged from residents' initiatives that had sprung up around CCAP, a local social and cultural center which for years had been exploring development options for their settlements through meetings and school children's action groups as well as through local history, mapping and video projects.

### Religious Diversity as a Favela Infrastructure

As in other favelas, the most obvious change in the religious landscape of Manguinhos has been the steadily growing number of (neo-)Pentecostal church communities and their adherents over the course of the past few decades. In the four communities discussed here alone, the number of non-Catholic churches grew from three Christian communities founded shortly after the establishment of Nelson Mandela and Samora Michel to 27 in 2009, i.e. within a single decade. While the churches founded earlier were official parishes of the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* and the *Assembleia de Deus*, the majority of the later ones were independent, founded by local religious entrepreneurs who were often lay people with no theological training. Since many of them did not succeed in gathering enough members or resources to survive, these churches came and went.

The only Catholic church in the four communities was in Samora Machel, but since it was part of a parish located in an official urban district nearby, even long-time favela residents had never met the *padre* in charge. As in other favelas, the temples and rituals of Candomblé and

Umbanda that had still existed in the 1990s had been banned, their previously ubiquitous public presence thus obliterated. The traffickers ruling the favela had forbidden at least two priests (*mães de santos*) to practice their religion. In line with a general tendency in Rio's favelas within the last decade (cf. Vital da Cunha 2009), the drug bosses had begun to consider themselves Pentecostal believers and to 'help' the churches expel the possession cults.

Although most of the new congregations did not belong to one of the established evangelical churches (such as the Baptists) but to the Pentecostal movement, they differed in terms of their organizational structures, their affiliation with larger mother churches, their degrees of formality and autonomy, their position vis-à-vis the drug complex, and the religious programs they offered to their members. Some of them disseminated the Prosperity Gospel preached by neo-Pentecostalism, among them two parishes of the globally active *Deus é Amor* and one of the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*, the flagship of Brazil's neo-Pentecostalism, founded in Rio in 1977. Various congregations operated under the umbrella of the *Assembleia de Deus* (Assembly of God), which has been present in Brazil since 1910, or affiliated themselves with one of its many splinter groups. In the four communities, affiliation with the *Assembleia de Deus* could take either regular or irregular form. In the former, the mother church either sent a trained minister from outside the favela to an official favela parish or gave lay preachers the option of completing some basic clerical training and have their already existing parishes officially recognized. The latter, by contrast, usually consisted of a lay person founding their own church as a mini-enterprise and trying – since they had no theological education – to give it more credence by wrongly claiming affiliation with the high-profile *Assembleia de Deus*.

Their different stances towards the ruling drug gang split the churches into two camps: official parishes usually refused contact with active gangsters, while irregular entrepreneurial church

communities tended to maintain some form of contact, ranging from blessing “drug soldiers” for a fee to receiving regular financial support from a drug lord (cf. Lanz 2016).

Location marked another difference. The official churches were usually located along the main roads of the established favelas of Nelson Mandela and Samora Machel, while seven of the eight operational churches in Mandela de Pedra and Nova Mandela (which were later to be razed) were extremely precarious establishments. Their pastors were lay people who, driven not least by economic motives, had appointed themselves church founders. They all had between 20 and 30 members and competed for adherents – who would provide the pastor’s livelihood by paying the Biblical tithe – in an increasingly embattled religious marketplace. This competition brought with it the constant risk of failure but also the continuing establishment of new church communities and hence a high degree of dynamic religious diversity.

In the favela, religious interpretations traditionally “arise to provide meaning for concrete day-to-day problems” (Birman and Leite 2000: 277). The favela’s governance constellation has always forced the residents to earn their living as ‘self-made’ entrepreneurs, drawing on a combination of all resources and options available to them. Especially in neighbourhoods with very precarious living conditions like Mandela de Pedra and Nova Mandela, the mini-entrepreneurial practices of neo-Pentecostal lay churches fit seamlessly with their adherents’ reality: the preaching of the Prosperity Gospel offered an option of self-empowerment and autonomy that furthered the merging of religious and economic agency. Thus, the favela’s religious dynamics were directly connected not least with the entrepreneurial agency of many of the pastors, who not infrequently closed down shop when their expenses exceeded their profits or when they hit upon a more promising business venture. Their parishioners, in turn, often changed churches if, for example, a newly opened church in the vicinity promised pastoral care that better met their

everyday needs. For many of the entrepreneurs of faith and their adherents, these church communities served certain functions in their efforts to improve their living conditions (materially and otherwise), and that they would eventually cease to serve these functions, regardless of whether they succeeded or failed, gave them a highly provisional character.

Mapping the power structure in the four favelas onto this diversified religious landscape revealed that all their dominant actors had ties to independent Pentecostal communities. Almost all the presidents and vice presidents of the residents’ associations identified as active Pentecostals. The wives of the official presidents and the minibuss operator, for example, paid ‘their’ pastors a salary of sorts. Even the *Comando* representative had his “soldiers” regularly blessed by a pastor friend who in the past had been involved in drug trafficking himself. In exchange, he financially supported his independent church. Ironically, this pastor used the money to provide basic assistance to the same homeless crack users who scored their drugs from the local *Comando* dealers. Turning to a Pentecostal church was, in fact, one of the few options available to a trafficker who wanted to leave the ‘path of death.’ While the Pentecostal faith does regard drug criminals as the epitome of the Devil, it does – in contrast to the police – not seek to physically eliminate them as enemies but to save them by ‘guiding them to Jesus’ (cf. Lanz 2016).

Within the spatial structure of the four favelas, the micro-entrepreneurial autonomous churches in particular – which were closed during the day – were only recognizable at a closer look. Like the many stores and workshops, they were located either on the ground floor of a residential building or in inconspicuous one-storey structures that were only distinguishable from adjacent buildings by their often homemade signs. Only in the evenings or on Sundays, when services were held, did these churches become highly visible and, above all, audible. This was when the believers flocked to the services, usually dressed up and with Bible in hand. The church doors were



opened, and bright neon light flooded the streets. The service was always electronically amplified, even if only a handful of people attended. The “holy noise” of the sermons and the musical performances dominated the favelas’ soundscape on weekday evenings (cf. Oosterbaan, 2008).

Generally speaking, affiliation with a musical style and its attendant subculture is important to the favela residents’ sense of social identity. In addition to Samba and Pagode, these styles include the Carioca Funk that dominates youth culture. The weekly Carioca Funk parties, whose deafening noise reached into every last corner, were co-opted by the drug gangs, not least as a symbolic marker of their territorial rule (cf. Lanz 2013). It was these funk parties with their enormous drug consumption, sexualized atmosphere, pornographic lyrics glorifying the drug gangs, and display of gun-toting gang culture that, to the Pentecostals, more than anything epitomized “the Devil’s work” in the favela.

In the Pentecostal congregations of the four favelas discussed here, too, music played a central role. Even the smallest congregation had its own band. In all of them, a strict line was drawn between religious music and secular music, which the faithful were not supposed to listen to, since it supposedly enticed them to sin. The favela’s narrow, dense spaces with their fluid boundaries between the inside and the outside created particular soundscapes. Different kinds of music leaked from the open buildings into streets and corners, overlapping, competing, and renegotiating the social boundaries signified by different kinds of sound: between *funkeiros* and *sambistas*, between the secular and the religious. The battle among the churches for visibility and believers was fought by means of electronically amplified gospel songs and sermons. During services, the church doors were open; often, the pastors put a loudspeaker in the street. In the evenings and on Sundays, streets densely lined with churches were transformed into religious sonic spaces where distorted electronic beats and singing, shouted prayer and speaking in tongues competed with and blended into each other. Here

was direct physical evidence that urban Pentecostal preachers owe their charismatic appeal not least to their ability to employ electro-acoustic technology to disseminate trans-local gospel sounds into urban space (cf. Oosterbaan 2009).

The Pentecostal churches interpreted the battle between secular and ‘godly’ sounds for the acoustic domination of space as a manifestation of the cosmic ‘war’ between God and the Devil. They engaged in sound wars with nearby drug sales points whose dealers were blasting the streets with deafening gangster funk, or with bars whose outside speakers blared ‘worldly’ pop songs. Outside the favela, proselytizing by way of a battle of sound would be hard to imagine. It was only here that no official authorities existed that would curb the noise, and only the favela’s narrow, labyrinthine character and the open structure of its buildings made it possible for the electronically amplified sounds to reach every last corner of urban space.

Not only did the favela’s self-made urbanism make this space-pervading manifestation of religious diversity possible; at least in the case of the entrepreneurial mini-churches, it provided the very basis for its existence. Most of the founders of these independent church congregations had very little financial means and aimed to make a living from their congregation members’ donations. Very few of them were in a position to pay rent on a church building. As a consequence, many of them, drawing on the informal help of neighbors and friends, built their own church from a variety of materials – recycled, cheaply bought, found, or swiped from construction sites. Others moved into a vacant commercial space or an unoccupied apartment, bar, or store. One church founder who, prior to her conversion, had been a drug user herself and lived in a shack built from found materials in Nova Mandela, described to me how she had squatted on a piece of industrial wasteland, erected a modest brick building with the help of friends, and opened a church in it. Another pastor in the same favela, equally penniless and self-appointed, had

only been able to open his church because a pastor friend of his had closed shop for lack of success and passed on his church room to him. The space, an irregularly erected residential building, had already been consecrated and hence did not have to be spiritually purified, and it came with an altar, Bibles, and the usual assortment of monobloc chairs.

Embarked upon with complete independence and without financial means, both these church-founding projects could only succeed by making use of every option available to generate the necessary resources – an illustration of the favela's self-made urbanism corresponding with its self-made religion of local Pentecostalism. Any resource available was used in the founding of a new independent church: it was provisionally established in an irregular building and furnished and equipped in active self-help with the most basic necessities; the pastoral profession was learned in self-study, and the first church members were recruited among relatives. If the enterprise failed, the space was easily reconverted to worldly use, leaving no trace of its formerly religious purpose.

The socio-material and governmental expression of this new religious diversity thus turns out to be the product of an infrastructure – in the sense of a “platform that provides for and reproduces life” that already existed in the favela (Simone 2014a: 408). Especially in the case of the independent and entrepreneurial newly founded churches, this infrastructure was largely created by ordinary residents themselves. The emergence of these churches in Manguinhos coincided with the gradual closing down of 56 nearby factories, which had employed a large number of favela inhabitants and were not replaced with other employment facilities. As a result, the work and income situation became dramatically more informal and precarious. In 2010, one third of the residents of Manguinhos – and, it is to be assumed, many more in its most precarious communities of Mandela de Pedra and Nova Mandela – were forced to get by without an independent income and had to piece together a liveli-

hood from a flexible combination of all resources available (Pivetta et al. 2011: 115).

The Catholic Church with its paternalistic apparatus was no longer seen as being able to control and satisfy the everyday needs of the economically precarious and socially fragmented favela. After all, the residents' subordination to an assimilation strategy which relegated them to second-class citizen status and to an exclusionary strategy – which subjected them to a rule of violence that even government institutions and their own representatives were subsumed into – is countered today by milieus within the favela that are upwardly mobile and emancipating themselves.

The new religious diversity, with its break from the dominance of the Catholic Church, is thus as much an expression of emancipation from the paternalism of authoritarian apparatuses as it is an expression of the ever-more precarious social-economic situation of the favela residents, who are increasingly forced to eke out a living as self-entrepreneurs. In this context, independent churches are to be understood as infrastructures that collaboratively generate, even under the most difficult circumstances, resources for the pastors and their congregation members alike and serve to secure the reproduction of their lives. The result of the “quiet encroachment” (Bayat 2004) of ordinary people and the resident-generated infrastructure of the “entrepreneurial religion” (Lanz and Oosterbaan 2016) reflects the favela's highly heterogeneous spatial structure and ways of life. This is the case with regard to both the agency of its actors and the technologies and materialities they employ: it is poor, precarious, provisional, improvised, flexible, self-empowered, self-governed, pragmatic, inventive, collaborative and irregular, and it mixes the economic with the social, political and religious.

### **Urbanization as an Authoritarian Top-down Approach**

In January 2007, Brazil launched the growth acceleration program PAC (*Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento*), whose aim was to boost

the economy through large-scale infrastructure projects. In addition to the energy and transportation sector, the program invested into urban infrastructure with the aim of remedying structural deficits in selected poor areas. In Rio, the PAC focused on the three largest favela areas, among them Manguinhos (cf. the analysis of the PAC Manguinhos in Cavalcanti 2014). The PAC invested approximately € 140 million into this favela alone over the course of a few years. The public infrastructure projects in the technical, social and health sectors were realized as part of this first joint venture towards favela urbanization between federal, state and municipal governments. These projects included a local rail transit line, a road and sewage system, schools, daycare centers, a library, and recreation facilities. The focus of local debate, however, was the construction of officially 1,048 new apartments designated to house the former residents of the two settlements of Mandela de Pedra and Nova Mandela, which were razed completely. A large number of the new buildings, erected on the sites of the two torn-down favelas, were inaugurated with great fanfare by Brazil's president in 2012. By and large, the residents' verdict on the new housing was positive. But the program's authoritarian top-down approach reproduced the traditional pattern of clientelism, entrenched the violence-based power relations, and destroyed the seeds of democratic self-organization (cf. *ibid.*).

One year after the launch of the PAC Manguinhos, the *Fórum Social de Manguinhos* (2009) published a dossier on the project which stated that it entirely ignored the civil rights granted to every resident affected by an urbanization scheme by the federal City Statute (*Estatuto da Cidade*) – beginning with the initial master plan, which had been drafted by commissioned architects who had never set foot into the favela or talked to the residents and assessed their needs. The authorities stonewalled the *Fórum Social*, whose criticism threatened to delay the construction process, and only negotiated with the presidents of the official residents' associations. This was apparently done – as an official involved

in managing the project confirmed to me – with the full knowledge that they were in the pockets of the drug boss and had their own gain in mind (personal interview, 2010.05.06).

The state authorities quickly lost control of the project. It stipulated that, following an official registration process, all residents of the areas to be demolished were entitled to a free apartment in a new building in exchange for their torn-down homes. When word of this spread, an illegal building frenzy began on the land. In order to score an apartment, hundreds of people tried to get a shack built before the registration process got underway. This entailed using all means at their disposal to delay the registration process and using the rubble from shacks that had already been torn down to build new ones at night, covertly trying to establish them as yet unregistered plots. In response, the authorities put the presidents in charge of organizing the registration of the shacks through the residents' associations. This opened the door to large-scale racketeering on the part of the ruling drug lords and the presidents themselves. The associations secretly charged commissions and even let non-locals register as shack owners in exchange for bribes. In addition, all drug gang and association members in positions of authority got their hands on several apartments by paying straw men to register for them as shack owners. As a result, the approximately 300 shacks in existence when the program was launched quickly mushroomed to a final number of over 1,200 whose owners eventually received compensation. In order to put an end to the rampant theft of buildings materials, the city contracted local 'entrepreneurs' to guard the building sites, thus handing them over, for all intents and purposes, to the drug gang. At this point, opposition to the project was no longer tolerated. The sentence ascribed to one of the residents' presidents, "whoever opposes PAC will die" was on everybody's lips, made even more poignant by the fact that one person caught stealing from a building site had already been executed. The residents' associations were forced into line, and in exchange, their officials



received apartments or jobs on construction sites. When the most notable *Fórum Social de Manguinhos* activist was driven out of the favela under threats of death, the *Fórum* effectively ceased to exist.

### Large-scale Infrastructure and the Infrastructure of Religious Diversity

So what effect does the dichotomy between the authoritarian, modernist infrastructure established by the PAC and the traditional favela's provisional infrastructure have on the religious diversity that constitutes an infrastructure in its own right in the favela? Over the course of the 2000s, quite a few churches sprang up and disappeared again in the settlements of Mandela de Pedra and Nova Mandela (which were later to be razed by the PAC). In 2010, many buildings that had long since been converted to other uses still showed traces of their former use as prayer spaces. Walls covered with peeling paint still showed the faintly visible remnants of a crucifix, a dove, or the name of a church; a dilapidated building still displayed the words "*Igreja Pentecostal a Glória de Deus*", along with the promise: "We are beholden to the truth." At this time, eight churches were still in operation and offering services several times a week; only one of them was affiliated with a mother church, the *Assembleia de Deus*. The other seven operated out of buildings as makeshift and precariously put together as their surroundings and carried names such as *Igreja Fonte Eterna* (Church of the Eternal Fount), *Igreja Pentecostal Templo do Espírito Santo* (Pentecostal Church Temple of the Holy Ghost) oder *Igreja Pentecostal Deus Proverá* (Pentecostal Church God will Provide). All of them were independent enterprises headed by entrepreneurs of faith who had appointed themselves pastors without any clerical training. Some of these churches had been founded long after it had become common knowledge that the PAC was going to raze the entire area and offer all business owners and pastors compensation for the loss of their irregular property. Eventually, even those pastors who had built their churches ille-

gally after the PAC-imposed official deadline for building registration managed to get compensation for their demolition.

Seven of the eight pastors subsequently disbanded their now homeless congregation and joined another Pentecostal church in Nelson Mandela or Samora Machel, most of them as ordinary congregation members. Accordingly, the number of church communities in the four favelas decreased from 27 in 2010 to 20 in 2012 following the implementation of the PAC. This was partly the result of the "quiet encroachment" strategy employed by the self-appointed pastors, some of whom managed to seize the day by realizing early on the opportunity that the PAC afforded them to benefit financially (albeit not exactly legally) from establishing a new church. There were many attempts at profit maximization: a pastor could, for example, set up a worship room in his living space and try to cash in twice by claiming compensation both for the loss of his family home and the loss of his church.

Only one pastor used his financial compensation to open a new church, but it took him two years to find affordable – i.e. irregular – premises in Samora Machel. The fact that all other congregations disappeared and no new ones were founded in their stead was not only due to the pastors' own premeditated decisions but also to the nature of the PAC: the razed areas, like all favelas, had been home to a wealth of business activities and contained not only residential buildings but stores, workshops, and, of course, churches as well. But the PAC made no provision for commercial space. Instead, under the banner of homogeneity of use, housing estates were built to largely identical floor plans, and even the use of ground floors or corner apartments for small stores or church spaces was prohibited. With the deliberate exclusion of the political residents' organization, the *Fórum Social de Manguinhos*, from the planning process, the PAC planners were in a position to simply ignore the vital need for mixed-use buildings. In this way, they not only deprived the most disadvantaged residents within the regular labor market of

more informal income opportunities, they also obstructed the further development of their self-made Pentecostalism and with it, local religious diversity in general.

It was not only the materialities and functionalities of the infrastructures created by the PAC that had an impact on the development of local religious life, but the corrupt manner in which they were implemented. When government institutions, acting every bit as informally and irregularly as all other actors, clandestinely cooperated with the local elites involved in the drug trade who violently suppressed all criticism and lined their own pockets, they lost all legitimacy. Many residents responded to this culture of corruption by turning their backs on worldly things entirely. In conversations, locals expressed a longing to abandon 'worldly affairs' altogether and dedicate themselves to 'God's work.' The politicians' and public institutions' complete loss of legitimacy was one important factor in this sentiment; yet more than anything, it was the role of the residents' associations, whose officials had been appointed by the *Comando*. These officials excluded the residents themselves from any political participation, and filled their own pockets at the expense of those they purported to represent.

## Conclusion

The authoritarian implementation of a socio-technical system of infrastructure is in diametric opposition to the traditional infrastructure of the favela, where the residents' collaborative agency and a heterogeneous, makeshift urban space lends itself to multiple uses that constantly (re-) create each other. If we view urbanization as "a thickening of fields, an assemblage of increasingly heterogeneous elements into more complicated collectives" (Simone 2004a: 408), a homogenizing program like the PAC is more aptly interpreted as a de-urbanization program. Like a bull in a china shop, its modernist, grand-scale logic tramples underfoot the very heterogeneity that is vital in urban configurations in which people depend on as many opportunities as possible to

procure resources or an income in self-entrepreneurship (cf. Simone 2014: 33). The traditional favela infrastructure, which can be described – quoting Graham and McFarlane (2014: 4) – as the "materialisation of anticipation – that sense of timing of knowing how to make a 'next move', of the incremental accretion of capacity and possibility", is obstructed or even partly destroyed by the infrastructural behemoth of the PAC.

I am by no means arguing here that there was more democracy and solidarity in the favela prior to the implementation of the PAC than after. After all, as described above, most earlier state interventions into the favela were based on an arbitrary, clientelistic rule that followed a logic of informality and relegated the residents to second-class citizenship (cf. Holston 2008, Machado da Silva 2002). Moreover, for more than two decades now, all regulatory modes existing in the favela have been dominated by the violent rule of the comandos, military police and militias, which brook no democratic negotiation on matters of concern to the residents. The problem with the state urbanization program, then, is twofold: For one, rather than combating the existing structures of violence by democratic means and in accordance with the rule of law, it has entrenched it further through its collaboration with gangsters and the residents' presidents installed by them. Secondly, the logic of the PAC has completely overridden the incrementalism that marks the favela's self-made urbanism (Simone 2014: 24) – the resource-saving step-by-step proceeding that strengthens social networks and enables the residents to constantly adapt provisional structures to changing conditions and a resource-poor environment. Master plans and architectural designs for social and recreational spaces were drafted without consultation of the residents, whose desires and democratic aspirations were repressed. Housing complexes were built to a single cookie-cutter design, their flexible use was prohibited, and the diversity of household types was stifled by floor plans that were not only identical for all buildings but also too small for bigger households and, in any case,

unable to accommodate household sizes that are often constantly in flux.

Put more succinctly, the government's infrastructure concept responded to the favela's heterogeneity, diversity, organizational flexibility and de-centered nature – which is reflected in its traditional infrastructural assemblages – with the authoritarian centrality and leveling logic of a “single development agenda [...] in an overarching maneuver of completion” (ibid.). Its content, form and regulatory apparatus breathes the spirit of the paternalistic re-education program inherent in the assimilation strategy. They actually constitute a (modernist) step backwards compared to, for instance, the needs- and resources-oriented sites and service programs of previous decades, the adaptability of the original state-built duplexes of Nelson Mandela and Samora Machel, or the Favela-Bairro program of the 1990s with its distinctly greater emphasis on participation and self-governance. In this manner, the approach has literally cemented the modes of subjection that the favela inhabitants have been exposed to throughout history.

All these processes set in motion by the PAC, as well as the materiality of the infrastructure systems they have generated, have acted upon the processes of dynamization and diversification of the religious landscape. Within the specific urban environment of the favela, religion does not manifest itself as unidirectional ‘incorporation,’ but as manifold interactions and references, as dynamic processes of appropriation and borrowing. The production of a new multifaceted and entrepreneurial religious infrastructure in the favela – largely created by its inhabitants – interacts with all its urban dimensions: the materiality of its dense and self-built settlements, the ongoing processes of precarization and social fragmentation, the informality of making a living, the lack of public infrastructure, the imposed self-governance beyond civic norms and the violent dominance of the drug complex, the authoritarian implementation of a large-scale urbanization project, and corrupt public institutions and

residents' associations that enrich themselves at the expense of the poor.

The forms of manifestation of these interactions between religious diversity and favela urbanity confirm Simone's (2014: 33) assumption that “the distinction between infrastructure and sociality is fluid and pragmatic rather than definitive.” These interactions cannot be understood as linear causal relationships. Case in point: The production of a religious infrastructure on the part of the entrepreneurs of faith described above is determined *in part* by economic considerations, responding both to the opportunities and the obstacles concomitant with the authoritarian implementation of a centralist urban infrastructure system. But the specific nature of the modes of religious governance – the character of churches, services and pastoral leadership, a particular pastor's appeal, success or lack thereof in the religious marketplace, and so forth – cannot sufficiently be explained by external factors. Nor is it possible to construct causal relationships from these phenomena. The sole unifying principle behind these modes of interaction is that of “co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a ‘sympathy’” (McFarlane, 2011: 653).

In order to do justice to all the diversities, temporalities and ambiguities that characterize the infrastructure of religious diversity in the favela, we have to understand it as a specific “assemblage of material, social, symbolic, and sensual spaces, processes, practices, and experiences in which the religious and the urban are interwoven and mutually produce, influence, and transform each other” (Lanz, 2014: 30). In this way, it is possible to investigate the relationship “between the possible – the unstable flows of materials and substances – and the prescribed – the imposition of functional stable structures [...] – between code and singularity, expression and content” (Simone, 2011: 357) that not only marks the city and its infrastructures in general, but the specific relationship between the urban and the religious as well. This analysis, then, requires a dense description of the agency apparent in urban everyday life and of the inter-



laced processes, materialities and practices that generate an infrastructure of religious diversity in a specific urban space such as the one discussed here.

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### Note on the Author

STEPHAN LANZ is an Urbanist and a Lecturer in Cultural Studies at the Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder). Between 2010 and 2014, he was the academic director of the international research project 'Global Prayers · Redemption and Liberation in the City'. His main research interests are urban governance, urban cultures, migration and urban development. In the last several years, he has been conducting research in Berlin, Rio de Janeiro and Istanbul.

Email: [lanz@europa-uni.de](mailto:lanz@europa-uni.de)





# Architectures of Interreligious Tolerance: The Infrastructural Politics of Place and Space in Croatia and Turkey<sup>1</sup>

by JEREMY F. WALTON

(Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen)

## Abstract

Drawing on research conducted at a mosque in the Croatian port city of Rijeka and an integrated space of worship (a “mosque-*cem* house”) for Sunni and Alevi Muslims in the Turkish capital of Ankara, this essay traces the divergences between discursive practices and spatial practices in relation to infrastructures of religious diversity. After developing a theoretical model based on Michel de Certeau’s distinction between place and space, I examine the shared discourse of interreligious tolerance and pluralism that framed both Rijeka’s New Mosque and Ankara’s mosque-*cem* house. Following this, I analyze the radically different spatial practices choreographed by the two projects: the spatial “mixing” of distinct religious communities and forms of worship in the case of the mosque-*cem* house, and the spatial separation and sequestration of Islam in relation to the city and nation at large in the case of the New Mosque. I argue that the contrast between the politicization of the mosque-*cem* house project and the near-unanimous approbation for the New Mosque stems from this contrast in spatial practices. The essay concludes with a vignette from the neighborhood near the mosque-*cem* house that draws attention to the potential contradictions between infrastructures of diversity and more protean forms of social, cultural, and religious plurality.

**Keywords:** politics of tolerance, spatial practices, Muslim minorities, Islam, Croatia, Turkey

## Introduction: Discursive and Spatial Practices of Infrastructures

In recent years, the promises and discontents of religious pluralism have taken center stage in an ensemble of academic and political debates surrounding liberal democracy. With the end of

the Cold War and the decommissioning of its ideological polarities, hosannas to the world historical triumph of liberal democracy as a political economic system (e.g. Fukuyama 1992) have been shadowed by recognition of the contradictions that undergird liberal democracy itself (e.g. Mouffe 2005). Multiculturalism<sup>2</sup> as a political

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the essay, I follow Charles Taylor’s (1994) definition of multiculturalism, and, in particular, his insistence that multiculturalism entails legal, political, and social “recognition” for a variety of (ethnic, religious, gendered, sexual, etc.) identities. On the other hand, I part ways from Taylor by emphasizing how multiculturalism produces reified, essentialized images of identity through its advocacy of recognition – more precisely, multiculturalism presupposes the primordial existence of (ethnic, religious, gendered, sexual) differences as a social fact (see also Walton 2013). When I use the phrase “religious pluralism,”

project for organizing religious difference within the nation-state has become a focal issue in this regard, especially in the wake of 9/11 (the recurrent sense of *déjà vu* that accompanied responses to the Paris attacks of 13 November 2015 and the Brussels bombings of 22 March 2016 illustrates how entrenched this logic remains). Religious pluralism constitutes a fault line that bifurcates the political field. Tolerance of religious plurality is an object of desire and testament to the capaciousness of liberal democracy for many on the Left; conversely, the prospect of a political settlement that ratifies a multiculturalist model of religious pluralism is a bugbear for many on the Right. Within this broad ideological landscape, both political and scholarly evaluations of religious pluralism have pivoted on two intertwined issues: the place of religious minorities within liberal democratic nation-states, on the one hand, and the disciplines, effects, and varieties of secularism as a principle for the governance of religion, on the other.

My panoramic aim in this essay is to extend the themes and insights of recent literatures on multiculturalism, pluralism, religious minoritization, and secularism by shifting their perspective. In general, debates over religious pluralism, secularism, and religious minorities have focused on the nation-state as the privileged institutional and discursive site for the production and management of religious difference, and with good reason. As Talal Asad (2003), Winnifred Sullivan (2007), Saba Mahmood (2005, 2015), Hussein Agrama (2012), and Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (2015) have powerfully demonstrated in various ways, secularism is inseparable from the monopoly of the modern state over the domains of law and politics. While my own argument integrates the lessons of this body of critical work on secularism, I redirect ethnographic and theoretical attention to the ways in which specific spaces

and places simultaneously constitute and complicate secular logics and attendant projects of religious pluralism. In seeking a more “phenomenological” perspective on religious pluralism, I draw inspiration from a largely separate field of recent ethnographic and theoretical inquiry, the study of infrastructure(s). More specifically, and in keeping with the aspiration of this edited volume to probe “the processes that turn infrastructures into sites of contestation around diversity” (Burchardt and Höhne 2015: 11), I explore how specific “infrastructures of diversity” both cultivate and confound discourses and practices of religious pluralism and tolerance. I do so in reference to two specific sites that have staked their legitimacy on the principle of liberal-pluralist tolerance for religious diversity, specifically in relation to Muslim minority communities: a new mosque in Croatia and an intersectorian house of worship in Turkey. As my analysis illustrates, the very spatial characteristics of these two sites render and refract the abstract discourses of religious pluralism and interreligious tolerance in divergent, even contradictory ways.

In contrast to the relative abstraction of nations and states, infrastructures are resolutely “embedded” (Björkman 2015) and contextual. The quotidian ubiquity of infrastructures in modern life has encouraged their naturalization, often placing them at a vanishing point of epistemological and political awareness. Infrastructures “comprise the architecture for circulation, literally providing the undergirding of modern societies, and they generate the ambient environment of everyday life” (Larkin 2013: 328). Like Marx’s commodities, infrastructures abound with “metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties” (Marx 1977: 163). As anthropologist Brian Larkin observes, infrastructures are definitively double in a way that echoes Marx’s analysis of commodity fetishism: “Their peculiar ontology lies in the fact that they are things and also the relation between things” (2013: 329).<sup>3</sup>

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I have in mind a multiculturalist mandate for the flourishing and recognition of a diversity of religious communities, practices, and identities. For broader debates on multiculturalism, pluralism, and minority politics, see, among others, Kymlicka 2000, Connolly 2005, Modood 2007, and Mahmood 2015.

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<sup>3</sup> Marian Burchardt and Stefan Höhne share this emphasis on the relational, mediating feature of infrastructures in the introduction to this volume:

Take, for instance, the mode of infrastructure that concerns me in this paper: architecture, in particular religious buildings. The two specific structures that I will discuss are clearly material objects, “things” in and of themselves, yet they are also spatial forms that project and constitute relations among people, both practitioners and others who inhabit their spaces. Larkin points out another signature duality of infrastructures: They are both pragmatic “networks that facilitate the flow of goods, people, and ideas” (Ibid.: 328) and symbolic objects whose aesthetic and poetic qualities are resources for representation and argument. This second, Janus-faced quality of infrastructures is especially crucial in relation to questions of religious pluralism. As we will see, the embedded spatial practices that inhabit religious architectural infrastructures do not necessarily correspond to the symbolic valences that architectural projects acquire in broader discursive realms.

In order to structure the presentation to come, I marshal a distinction that mirrors Larkin’s analysis of infrastructures as both networks and symbolic objects: infrastructures as nexuses for spatial practices and infrastructures as objects of discursive practices. This distinction also draws on Michel de Certeau’s pioneering theorization of the relationship between space (*espace*) and place (*lieu*); it is therefore worth quoting his discussion at length:

At the outset, I shall make a distinction between space (*espace*) and place (*lieu*) that delimits a field. A place (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. It thus excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location (*place*). The law of the ‘proper’ rules in the place: the elements taken into consideration are *beside* one another, each situated in its own ‘proper’ and

distinct location, a location it defines...A *space* exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements...in short, *space is a practiced place*. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. (de Certeau 1984: 117, emphasis in original).

De Certeau’s intervention – in particular, the simultaneous contrast and mutual constitution of the “street of the planners” and the “street of the walkers” – suggests a powerful model for theorizing infrastructural practice, and it is curious that his work has remained largely untapped in the recent “infrastructural turn” in anthropology, sociology, and urban geography. Architectural infrastructures are clearly both places, defined by their discursive abstraction and “the law of the ‘proper,’” and spaces, pragmatically inhabited and transformed by specific actors, with their “vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables.”

Space and place also express different modalities of power. Like the other contributors to this volume, I comprehend “diversity in urban space as a form of governing populations” (Burchardt and Höhne 2015: 11). My approach to diversity as a principle of governance draws inspiration from Wendy Brown’s interrogation (2006) of tolerance as an instrument of governmentality in the Foucauldian (1991) sense. Yet I am also attentive to the modes of spatialization that mediate tolerance as a technique of governmentality. While inhabitations of space and discourses of place may both frame “the conduct of conduct” (Lemke 2001: 2) – the classic shorthand definition of governmentality – there is also a necessary gap between the orders of space and place. Indeed, as we will see, “tolerance” as a principle of urban governance is often far more troubled and contested at the level of embedded spatial practices than it is at the level of discursive abstraction; space involves complications and contradictions, rooted in the “intersections of mobile elements” (de Certeau 1984: 117), that the uniform “properness” of place does not.

The two infrastructural sites that anchor my argument evince contrasting relationships

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“We suggest an understanding of infrastructures as socio-technical apparatuses and material artifacts that structure, enable and govern circulation – specifically the circulation of energy, information, goods, and capital but also of people, practices and images in the urban realm and beyond....As a consequence, infrastructures mediate relationships” (Burchardt and Höhne 2015: 4).

between spatial and discursive practices. The first site is a recently constructed mosque, the New Mosque (*Nova Džamija*), which serves the Bosniak<sup>4</sup> community of the Croatian port city of Rijeka. The second site is an ongoing project to construct an integrated space of worship for Sunni and Alevi<sup>5</sup> Muslims, a so-called “mosque-*cem*”<sup>6</sup> house” (*cami-cem evi*), in an impoverished district of Ankara. I have chosen these two sites strategically. In the case of Rijeka’s New Mosque, spatial and discursive practices have not contradicted each other in any overt manner. On the other hand, the Ankara mosque-*cem* house presents a dramatic, deeply politicized divergence between spatial practices and discourses of interreligious tolerance and pluralism. Although I have analyzed these two sites in relation to each other in another context (Walton 2015b) vis-à-vis discourses of “cultural intimacy” (Herzfeld 2005),

my argument here foregrounds the contrasting relationships between space and place – the orders of spatial and discursive practice – that differentiate these two infrastructural projects.

Some readers might object that Rijeka’s New Mosque and the Ankara mosque-*cem* house constitute an awkward pair – that, in essence, I have set out to compare apples and oranges. After all, the New Mosque is devoted solely to a single religion, Sunni Islam, while the mosque-*cem* house is explicitly an intersectorian, interreligious site. But it is this very contrast that subtends and fuels my argument. The New Mosque and the mosque-*cem* house suggest a provocative comparison precisely because a shared discourse of religious pluralism and tolerance has enfolded and served to legitimate both sites, despite the divergent religious and spatial practices that inhabit the two spaces. Accordingly, my overarching theoretical aim is to illuminate how different infrastructures embody and complicate common discourses of religious pluralism and interreligious tolerance. For this reason, my exposition does not focus exhaustively on the historical, sociological, and political situation of Islam in Croatia and former Yugoslavia or the relationship between Sunnis and Alevis in Turkey. While these two contexts are clearly crucial to my intervention, I address them principally as backdrops to my conceptual, theoretical argument.

My presentation begins with an analysis of the discourses of tolerance and interreligious pluralism that heralded both the opening ceremony of the New Mosque and the groundbreaking for the Ankara mosque-*cem* house. Following this discussion, I consider the contrasting spatial practices of each site and argue that the divergent political fates of the two infrastructural projects partially stem from this contrast. Finally, the essay concludes with a vignette from my second ethnographic foray to the Ankara mosque-*cem* house, an encounter that suggests that pragmatic negotiations of togetherness across social, religious, and political-economic fissures may occasionally benefit from an absence of infrastructure, rather than its ubiquity (cf. Butler 2015).

<sup>4</sup> “Bosniak” is the standard term for Bosnian Muslims, as opposed to Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats. While “Bosnian” alone refers to citizenship, and can thus apply to a member of any of the three communities, “Bosniak” refers specifically to the Bosnian Muslim community.

<sup>5</sup> Alevis are a minoritized religious community in Turkey, whose distinctive beliefs and ritual practices include elements drawn from both Twelver Shi’a Islam – for instance, reverence for the *Ehl-i Beyt* (the holy family of Muhammad, Fatima, Ali, Hasan, and Hüseyin) and lamentation over the martyrs of Karbala – and shamanistic Central Asian traditions. Because the Turkish state refuses to recognize any theological or sociological distinctions within Islam, census figures do not exist for Alevis; most estimates place them at between ten and twenty per cent of the population. For comprehensive studies of Alevism, see Shankland 2003; Dole 2012; Massicard 2012; Dressler 2013; and Tambar 2014.

<sup>6</sup> The *cem* is the definitive Alevi ritual practice, a form of ritual circumambulation (*semah*) that involves both male and female participants and is set to musical accompaniment. Frequently, *cems* are held in commemoration and mourning of figures from Shi’a communal history such as Ali, Hasan, and Hüseyin. In rural contexts, *cems* are typically convened in private homes; the designation of a specific architectural space and structure, the *cem* house, solely to the performance of *cems* is an effect of rural-urban migration on the part of many Alevis in the past half-century or so. See Erdemir 2005 for a thorough discussion of these issues.



### Discursive Practices: Religious Infrastructures as Multiculturalist Places

In his assessment of the recent infrastructural turn, Brian Larkin stresses that infrastructures “are not just technical objects...(they) also operate on the level of fantasy and desire. They encode the dreams of individuals and societies and are the vehicles whereby those fantasies are transmitted and made emotionally real” (2013: 333). This relationship between infrastructure and public fantasy is especially prominent in the context of architectural projects. From the moment that the first stones were laid for the Pyramids of Giza, if not before, architecture has served as a preeminent expression of a variety of modes of power. Buildings are erected to embody the puissance of deities, the sovereignty of states, and the vainglory of private citizens. In pursuit of these lofty aims, discourses about architectural infrastructures attempt to “freeze” their meanings, to fix them as one or another type of “place” in de Certeau’s sense.

Recent years have witnessed the emergence of a peculiar, new type of place within the broader domain of architectural infrastructure: *the multiculturalist place*. In her critique of the governmentality of tolerance, which inspires much of my analysis in this section, Wendy Brown discusses an exemplary multiculturalist place: The Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles (2006: 107 ff.). From Brown’s perspective, the Museum of Tolerance functions as an infrastructure for the depoliticization of alterity, precisely because it extolls “difference as itself the essence of humanity” (Ibid.: 125). She describes the museum as a monolithic place, where all spatial practices are oriented toward and subsumed within a single, hegemonic image of depoliticized, tolerated differences. Because the Museum of Tolerance is defined by and oriented toward a fetishized vision of multiculturalist difference, it denies any spatial practices that would be “improper” to this vision.

Like the Museum of Tolerance, both the Rijeka New Mosque and the Ankara mosque-*cem* house have been hailed as multiculturalist places: infra-

structural sites that inculcate tolerance for religious diversity. In Rijeka, the New Mosque has been inscribed in local, national, and international narratives of tolerance for Croatia’s Bosniak residents and Islam in general. Its opening was greeted as evidence of Croatia’s commitment to religious pluralism, a commitment sanctioned by broader European discourses and institutions (not coincidentally, the opening of the Rijeka Mosque occurred less than two months prior to Croatia’s accession to full EU membership in July 2013). Similarly, the groundbreaking for Ankara’s mosque-*cem* house was acclaimed as a decisive intervention within the fraught history of tension, suspicion, and violence between Sunnis and Alevis in Turkey, a gesture that sought to overcome the wounds of the past with the balm of contemporary tolerance. The discursive practices that framed both the Rijeka Mosque and the Ankara mosque-*cem* house sought to fix them as multiculturalist places, infrastructures of diversity and tolerance.

The opening ceremony for Rijeka’s New Mosque on 7 May 2013 was an unprecedented pageant of public religion (Casanova 1994) in Croatia. Islam is a decidedly minoritized religion in Croatia – there are approximately 63,000 Muslim residents in the country, comprising about 1.5 percent of the population, while just over 86 per cent of Croatia’s inhabitants identify as Catholic (Croatian Bureau of Statistics 2011), and Catholicism is deeply intertwined with post-independence Croatian national identity more generally (Perica 2000, 2002; Pavlaković 2001; see also Grubišić et. al. 1993 and Shaw and Štiks 2013). The New Mosque is only the second major mosque in Croatia, after the Zagreb Mosque (*Zagrebačka Džamija*) in the capital; a third, smaller mosque is located in the eastern town of Gunja, near the border with both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia (Pavelić 2013).<sup>7</sup> Like the Zagreb Mosque, Rijeka’s New Mosque serves as

<sup>7</sup> The relatively small literature on Islam in post-Yugoslav Croatia includes Čičak-Chand 1999; Kolanović 2004; and Mujadžević 2014.

a communal space of worship for Bosniaks who first moved to the city during the socialist Yugoslav era (1945-1991), and continue to reside the surrounding area.<sup>8</sup> The festivities that accompanied the mosque's opening, however, were not principally a local matter – rather, they were an event on a national and international scale, with participation and implications that stretched far beyond Rijeka's Bosniak community. Among the dignitaries in attendance were Bakir Izetbegović, the Bosniak member of the tripartite (Bosniak-Croat-Serb) Bosnian-Herzegovinian presidency; Ghaith bin Mubarak al-Kuwari, the Qatari Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (the Emir of Qatar sponsored and partially funded the mosque); Paul Vandoren, president of the EU delegation to Croatia; and Ivo Josipović, the president of Croatia at the time. A host of lesser luminaries joined these speakers to deliver encomia to the mosque as a triumph of interreligious tolerance and moderation.

The congratulatory remarks that saluted the mosque's opening were unanimous in their interpretation of the structure as a symbol and place for tolerance of religious diversity. Like multiculturalist discourses at large, the discourse of tolerance in the context of the Rijeka mosque necessitated an abstraction from specific contexts to general principles: Islam as practiced by Rijeka's

Bosniaks stood as a placeholder for “religious diversity,” and tolerance for the mosque community counted as a commitment to religious pluralism in general. President Josipović extolled the complementary relationship between Croatia and Islam, rooted in tolerance of the latter by the former. He proclaimed that Islam and Muslims form “part of Croatian history and, together with other minorities, enrich Croatian cultural identity” (Ibid.); in doing so, Josipović tactfully avoided any allusion to the political histories that undergird, and potentially destabilize, this “enrichment” of the Croatian majority by the Muslim minority in favor of a salute to deracinated tolerance. Bin Mubarek al-Kuwari gestured to the geopolitical lessons offered by Rijeka's New Mosque, claiming that the Center will help to “correct false pictures about Islam and Muslims” (Ibid.). Finally, EU ambassador Verhoven stressed that the mosque represents Croatia's adherence to “multiculturalism and diversity (which) are among the basic values on which the European Union is built” (Al Arabiya News 2013). Taken together, the garlands of praise that discursively decorated the New Mosque's opening aimed to transform the architectural infrastructure of the mosque – a striking building based on a space-age design by the famous, now-deceased Croatian-Macedonian architect and sculptor Dušan Džamonja – into a symbol and instantiation of interreligious tolerance, a definitive multiculturalist place.

Similar discursive labors were evident some four months later, on 9 September 2013, in the Turkish capital of Ankara. Like the opening of the New Mosque, the groundbreaking ceremony for Ankara's mosque-*cem* house was a carefully choreographed public spectacle that foregrounded participation from a variety of politicians and civil society activists, Sunni and Alevi alike. Among the roster of speakers and participants were prominent Alevi civil society leaders, MPs from both the governing Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*; AKP) and the opposition Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*; CHP), the mayor of the district of Mamak, where the project is located,

<sup>8</sup> According to the Croatian Census of 2011, the county of Primorje-Gorski Kotar, which includes Rijeka, is home to 10,667 self-declared Muslims, the second-largest Muslim population in Croatia after that of Zagreb (Croatian Bureau of Statistics 2011). The census data on ethnicity reports that some 4,877 Bosniaks and 2,410 Albanians reside in Primorje-Gorski Kotar (Ibid.). Although we should be wary of conflating ethnicity and religious identity (not to mention religious practice), these statistics suggest that the Muslim community of Rijeka is far from homogeneous. Nevertheless, all of my informants at the New Mosque asserted unequivocally that participation in Friday prayers and other mosque activities is overwhelmingly Bosniak. It is also worth noting that the predominant language in the mosque, used for the Friday sermon (*khutba*; *propovijed*) and for all administrative matters, is Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian. I thank the anonymous reviewer of this essay for drawing my attention to census statistics on ethno-religious identification in Primorje-Gorski Kotar.



Figure 1. Rijeka's New Mosque (*Nova Džamija*), based on a space-age design by Dušan Džamonja (photograph by author)

and the chief mufti – in Turkey, a state-appointed interpreter of Sunni-Hanafi Islamic jurisprudence – of this same district (Zaman Gazetesi 2013). The chief institutional and financial supporters of the project included the Cem Foundation (*Cem Vakfı*), one of the largest Alevi NGOs in Turkey, and the famous Sunni theologian Fethullah Gülen and his global Hizmet network (Turam 2007; Hendrick 2013; Walton 2014, 2015c).

The comments made by advocates of the project echoed the proclamations of interreligious tolerance, reconciliation, and goodwill that accompanied the opening of Rijeka's New Mosque. One participant in the ceremony, a parliamentarian from the governing AKP, underscored the importance of the project's status as a civil society initiative by dismissing criticisms levelled against the mosque-cem house as misplaced. He averred that "if this had been a state project, perhaps the (negative) reactions would be justified" (Şahin 2013: 1), thereby implying

that infrastructural projects within the sphere of civil society are inherently free from the problematic instrumentalism and co-optation that define state-based political projects, a utopia of civil society that I have elsewhere described as "the civil society effect" (Walton 2013). İzzetin Doğan, the famous Alevi public intellectual whose Cem Foundation partially sponsored the project, offered the most explicit articulation of the mosque-cem house as a multiculturalist place of interreligious tolerance: "This project (is part of) the same garden in which all members of our society, both Alevi and Sunni, both Shafi'i and Hanbali,<sup>9</sup> both Christian and Jew...were able to meet their (religious) needs – in this garden, different flowers were able to blossom (*Bu projenin, halkımıza Alevisi ile Sünnisi ile ve Şafiiisi Hanbelisi ile, Hristiyanı Musevesi ile...ihtiyaçların*

<sup>9</sup> Shafi'i and Hanbali are two of the four authoritative schools of jurisprudence in Sunni Islam; the other two schools are Maliki and Hanafi.



*giderilebileceği aynı bahçede başka çiçeklerde açabilirdi*)” (Zaman Gazetesi 2013, my translation).

In both Rijeka and Ankara, discourses of inter-religious tolerance and pluralism sought to fix the meaning of new architectural infrastructures as multiculturalist places. As Wendy Brown (2006) predicts, the discourse of tolerance in both instances “silenced” other pasts (Trouillot 1995) by depoliticizing histories of violence. In Rijeka, the discursive framing of the New Mosque whitewashed the fraught, recent history of intercommunal and interreligious violence in the Western Balkans, in particular the inordinate violence that Bosniaks suffered at the hands of Bosnian Serb, but also Bosnian Croat,<sup>10</sup> military forces during the war following the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, in Ankara, predictions of harmony and tolerance between Alevis and Sunnis threatened to depoliticize both the long, asymmetrical history of violence suffered by Alevis at the hands of Sunnis<sup>12</sup> and the ongoing, obdurate refusal of the

Turkish state to recognize Alevism as a religious minority, defined by a distinctive theological and ritual tradition (in particular, the practice of the *cem* ceremony) (Dole 2012; Dressler 2013; Tambar 2014). Like the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, both Rijeka’s New Mosque and the Ankara mosque-*cem* house celebrate diversity as a depoliticized, deracinated good in its own right; in doing so, they exemplify the discursive practices that characterize infrastructures of diversity and multiculturalist places. As we will see in the next section, however, the discursive status of these two projects as multiculturalist places does not presuppose the same constellation of spatial practices.

### **Spatial Practices: Infrastructural Mixing vs. Infrastructural Separation**

By uniting de Certeau’s theorization of place with Brown’s critique of the governmentality of tolerance, the previous section traced the discursive practices that have aimed to fix both Rijeka’s New Mosque and the Ankara mosque-*cem* house as infrastructural *places* of diversity, what I have dubbed multiculturalist places. In this section, by contrast, I attend to the radically different political reactions that the two projects provoked: near-unanimous approbation in the case of the New Mosque, and vocal condemnation and protest in the case of the mosque-*cem* house. My basic argument is that the contrasting spatial practices entailed by the two infrastructural projects partially determine this political contrast. More specifically, I argue that the envisioned “mixing” of distinct confessional communities and modes of worship in the mosque-*cem* house has incited anxieties that the relative separation of the New Mosque, and, by proxy, Islam as a whole, from majoritarian Croatian Catholicism has avoided.

On the day of the groundbreaking ceremony at the Ankara mosque-*cem* house in September 2013, a demonstration against the project

<sup>10</sup> As recently as 2013, the UN war crimes tribunal in the Hague convicted six Bosnian Croat leaders of ethnic cleansing and persecution of Bosniaks during the war (Corder 2013). The most notorious violence against Bosniaks by Croatian Defense Council (*Hrvatska Vijeće Obrane*) forces occurred in April 1993 in the Lašva Valley of central Bosnia, where some 120 Bosniaks were killed in events now known as the Ahmići Massacre (Mojzes 2011: 174).

<sup>11</sup> A fascinating material instantiation of this depoliticization of the war is located in the courtyard of the New Mosque: a monument in honor of Bosniaks who died fighting alongside Croat forces against the Serbian-Yugoslav Army military in the Croatia’s “Homeland War” (*Domovinski Rat*). This memorial consists simply of a roster of the names of the dead, and makes no reference to the broader context of the war, in particular the massive, politically complex bloodshed in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hockenos 2003: 17 ff.; see also Bringa 1995 and Ramet 2006: 436 ff.).

<sup>12</sup> Key events in this history of violence include the conflagration of the Madımak Hotel in the city of Sivas in 1993, which was started by a “mob” of right-wing Islamists and resulted in the deaths of some thirty-five Alevi intellectuals who were participating in a conference there; pogroms against Alevis that occurred in a number of provincial cities, notably Kahramanmaraş and Çorum, in the late 1970s; the disbanding of the Bektashi Janissary corps by Sultan Mahmut II in 1826;

and, the depredations of Sultan Yavuz Selim “the Grim” carried out against Anatolian Kızılbaş Alevis in the early 16th Century.



erupted in the surrounding neighborhood of Tuzlucaýır. To some extent, this street demonstration was a site within the broader geography of protest that emerged in the wake of Istanbul's Gezi Park protests in summer 2013 (see Walton 2015a).<sup>13</sup> Beyond this national terrain, however, the protest also focused on two issues central to the infrastructure and spatial practices of the mosque-*cem* house itself: the impoverishment of the immediate neighborhood surrounding the construction site and the potentially treacherous effects of the simultaneity of Alevi and Sunni worship within the same physical space.

As I observed during my first visit to the mosque-*cem* house construction site in March 2014, the district in which it is located, Tuzlucaýır, is a shantytown, a *gecekondu*.<sup>14</sup> The residences near the construction site are all informal structures, built without the required municipal permits; the owners of such homes typically lack property deeds or other forms of certification that would provide protection under the legal regime of private real estate.<sup>15</sup> During interviews conducted with local residents in March and September 2014, I was frequently told that the legal invisibility of the shantytown – the fact that *gecekondu* homes are not certified and recognized as private property – was crucial to the selection of the construction site in the first place. According to my informants, it was relatively easy for the backers of the mosque-*cem*



Figure 2. A scene from the protest against the Ankara mosque-*cem* house, March 2014 (photograph by author)

house to obtain title to land from the municipality because, from a legal perspective, the neighborhood was “empty,” despite the many shanty homes and small businesses that occupied it. Residents of the district also told me that several homes had been unceremoniously bulldozed in order to clear space for the project. The ramshackle, broken brick walls that ended abruptly at the margins of the construction site testified to this history of dispossession. Furthermore, as in shantytowns the world over, infrastructural goods such as plumbing and electricity, which are mediated by both market and state mechanisms in Turkey (cf. Björkman 2015), are often difficult to access in Tuzlucaýır. A blacksmith who spoke with me in his atelier only a few meters from the construction site identified this infrastructural precarity and neglect as a key cause for the protests against the mosque-*cem* house: The project to create an infrastructure of interreligious diversity in a neighborhood so egregiously lacking in more basic infrastructural goods and services was interpreted as an insult. A graffito on the wall of an abandoned shanty home near the con-

<sup>13</sup> As the summer protests sparked by Gezi continued into the autumn, it seemed that each subsequent victim of police violence in response to the demonstrations was Alevi. In particular, the police murder of a young Alevi man, Ethem Sarısülük, in Ankara on 14 June 2013, and the death of Berkin Elvan, an Alevi adolescent who fell into a coma after being hit in the head by a tear gas canister during the June protests in Istanbul, stoked the impression that Alevis were specific targets of police and state violence during the Gezi protests.

<sup>14</sup> *Gecekondu* – literally “put up at night” – is the catchall term for extralegal constructions, shantytowns and squatter settlements in Istanbul, Ankara, and Turkey's other cities (Keyder 1999).

<sup>15</sup> For an accessible survey of the global pandemic of informal housing, shantytowns, and slums, see Davis 2006.



Figure 3. “We want a church, too (*kilise de istiyoruz*)” (photograph by author)

struction site made this same point wryly with an ironic petition: “We want a church, too (*kilise de istiyoruz*).” In such a blighted area, the mosque-*cem* house is as irrelevant as a church would be.

The sardonic request for a church also highlighted another key feature of the neighborhood that residents consistently raised in conversation: demographically, the area immediately surrounding the mosque-*cem* house construction site is predominantly Alevi, with only a handful of Sunni families. This demographic fact incited suspicion on the part of most of my interlocutors. Who, they collectively asked, were the envisioned worshipers in the mosque section of the project?

On a local level, the construction of the mosque-*cem* house merited disdain because it ignored both the demography and the more urgent infrastructural needs of the neighborhood. More broadly, Alevis throughout Turkey expressed skepticism over the project due to

the specific spatial practices and configuration of worship that the mosque-*cem* house proposes to choreograph. The shorthand for this criticism was “assimilation,” a term that expresses a ubiquitous anxiety in Alevi public discourse generally. Ercan Geçmez, the president of the Ankara-based Hacı Bektaş Veli Anatolian Culture Foundation (*Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı*), one of the largest Alevi civil society institutions in Ankara, unequivocally summarized the doubts, suspicions, and cynicism of many Alevis in a statement to the daily newspaper *Radikal*: “There is no such thing as a mosque in the Alevi tradition... the project is a program of assimilation (*proje asimilasyon programıdır*)” (Şahin 2013: 7; my translation). Geçmez expanded on this point during an interview with me in March 2014. In particular, he stressed Alevis’ deep discomfort over the prospect that daily prayer (*namaz; salat*), the cardinal Sunni form of worship, and the *cem* ceremony, the definitive Alevi ritual, would be con-



ducted in the same space. In his estimation, the simultaneity and proximity of Sunni and Alevi forms of worship inherently entailed the risk of assimilation of the latter by the former – he could not envision a scenario in which Sunnis and Alevis could worship side-by-side without Sunni practices dominating Alevi practices. For Alevi critics of the project such as Geçmez, the spatial practice of “mixing” between Sunnis and Alevis, which constitutes the basic infrastructural logic of the mosque-*cem* house project, amounts to an imminent threat to the distinctiveness and autonomy of Alevism in the first instance. From this perspective, discursive attempts to fix the meaning of the mosque-*cem* house as a place of tolerance and diversity are alibis for spatial practices that aim to assimilate Alevi difference. And it is this anxiety over spatial practices of mixing and assimilation that has fuelled the thorough, on-going politicization of the project.

In contrast to the agonistic political debate over the Ankara mosque-*cem* house, the opening of Rijeka’s New Mosque was greeted with an absence of dissent on municipal, national, and international levels alike. This contrast between the political trajectories of the two projects corresponds directly to a sharp contrast between the spatial practices that characterize each infrastructure. Unlike the prospect of spatial “mixing” and the consequent threat of assimilation that has incited anxiety over the Ankara mosque-*cem* house, an infrastructural spatiality of separation and sequestration defines Rijeka’s New Mosque. In de Certeau’s terms, the New Mosque is a relatively homogeneous *space* despite its symbolic status as a multiculturalist *place*. Although the New Mosque has been hailed as a place of tolerance and pluralism, it is not an infrastructural space of interreligious plurality and mixing in the manner that the mosque-*cem* house aspires to be. Only one form of religious practice, Sunni worship, occurs within the New Mosque. As in mosques throughout the world, the principal religious and spatial practice in the New Mosque is the collective Friday prayer, accompanied by a sermon delivered by the resident imam. The

mosque also hosts a variety of other activities, of course: A restaurant offers halal Bosnian cuisine, and a conference hall hosts occasional symposia and seminars. During an interview with me at the mosque in January 2014, the imam’s son described the most recent event hosted by the mosque, a regional competition in Qur’anic recitation (*tajwid*) – with a proud blush, he added that he had placed first in the contest. Notably, however, none of the activities and spatial practices that inhabit the New Mosque entail the interreligious spatial mixing that defines the mosque-*cem* house.

This point applies on a broader spatial scale, as well. Within the cityscape of Rijeka, the contrast between the visibility of the mosque and its relative inaccessibility reflects a divergence between place and space, between discourses about the mosque and the spatial practices that define it. Dušan Džamonja’s postmodern structure is a prominent feature within the built environment of the city, visible at a distance from multiple vantages – indeed, it can be seen from as far away as the seaside promenade in the resort town of Opatija, some fifteen kilometers to the west of Rijeka across the Gulf of Kvarner. Yet this public visibility is also a matter of separation. The mosque is located in a peripheral, relatively poor neighborhood, at a remove from the city’s central historical core. On my first visit to the mosque, I was frustrated and befuddled by the difficulty that I had in reaching it. Although the mosque looms conspicuously over the motorway that connects Rijeka to the Istrian peninsula, one must navigate a non-intuitive labyrinth of alleyways and backstreets in order to reach it. Clearly, the premium placed on the mosque’s visibility does not imply accessibility – there is a stark disparity between the mosque as a public sign of tolerance for Islam and as a space of quotidian Muslim worship.

Within Croatia at large, tolerance of both Muslim Bosniaks and Islam in general has entailed the articulation of specific places – mosques – that are defined by their spatial separation from the unmarked ethno-religious majority of Catho-

lic Croats. Rijeka's New Mosque embodies this logic of separation and sequestration, as does the Zagreb Mosque. In contrast to the spatial practice of intercommunal mixing that defines the mosque-*cem* house, the mosque's spatiality of separation encourages a depoliticized mode of tolerance. Islam has achieved a *place* as a tolerated religion within Croatia – one that, as former President Josipović rather patronizingly asserted, can “enrich Croatian cultural identity” – precisely because its *spaces* and *spatial practices* exist at an inoculated remove from the national public at large. Like the New Mosque, Islam in Croatia is visible as an object of tolerance, but not easily accessible.

### **Conclusion: A Moment to Complicate Infrastructures of Diversity**

On my second trip to the Ankara mosque-*cem* house, a sweltering September day in 2014, I wandered through the dusty alleys of the shantytown ensconced by an eerie silence; the demonstration that had produced such sound and fury on my first visit six months earlier had dissipated, and I was one of the few pedestrians braving the midday heat. As I snapped photographs of the mosque-*cem* house from below – substantial work had been completed since my previous visit – a middle-aged man emerged from a nearby *gecekondu* home and beckoned to me. He invited me to join him and his friends, all local residents, for a drink in the shade of his ramshackle veranda, and I was soon enjoying a glass of *rakı* (Turkey's de facto national liquor, an anise-flavored grape brandy similar to ouzo) accompanied by melon and feta cheese. I sat with my host and his friends for several hours, discussing both the mosque-*cem* house and the vicissitudes of Turkish political and social life more generally. The owner of the house narrated his Sisyphean legal battle to obtain legal recognition of his property rights from the municipality, and several of the other men described the struggles of a mutual friend whose property had been destroyed to make way for the mosque-*cem* house. Above all, we discussed the prospect

of Alevis and Sunnis interacting on the basis of the mosque-*cem* house. My interlocutors were unanimous in their skepticism. Our host summarized their mutual opinion: “We're all here already, even in this small group: Alevi and Sunni, left-wing and right-wing, rich and poor. We don't need some ‘mosque-*cem* house’ (*cami cemevine filan ihtiyacımız yok*).” On cue, each of the raconteurs identified himself according to religious, political, and socioeconomic background to illustrate the protean diversity of the drinking circle.

As I have argued over the course of this essay, infrastructures of diversity articulate and achieve definition through both discursive and spatial practices. Following Michel de Certeau, I have theorized these two modes of practice through the distinction between place and space. In conclusion, however, I pause on this brief encounter, which occurred in both the literal and figurative shadow of one particular infrastructure of diversity, because it draws attention to the manner in which infrastructures of diversity and quotidian forms of plurality complicate, and potentially contradict, each other. From the perspective of my drinking partners in the shantytown of Tuzluca, infrastructures of diversity such as the mosque-*cem* house neglect and fail to recognize the protean forms of social and religious plurality that already exist in urban environments such as Ankara. By reifying “difference” and “diversity” through both discursive and spatial practices, infrastructures of diversity – multiculturalist places – not only fail to attend to these more protean modes of interaction; they actively threaten them.

When sitting at a table, shielded from the heat with a glass of milky *rakı* in hand, it is seductively easy to succumb to a romantic vision of the authenticity of the urban poor and the inherent diversity of the city street (cf. Jacobs 1961), and it is therefore worth flagging this romance as an ethnographic and analytical pitfall. However, one does not need to assent to such hyperboles in order to argue that the shantytown residents who welcomed me at their table articulated a more nuanced perspective on questions of





Figure 4. The Ankara mosque-cem house in September 2014, with a *gecekondus* (shantytown) home in the foreground (photograph by author)

“diversity” and “plurality” than many advocates and mouthpieces for infrastructural projects for diversity and tolerance. They recognize the divergence between the mundane, improvisational “diversity” that animates their own interactions and the reified forms of “diversity” that are summoned to projects of power – what, with Wendy Brown (2006), we might call techniques of liberal governmentality. This difference is of paramount importance to assessments of infrastructures of diversity, whether in Rijeka, Ankara, or elsewhere. Even more panoramically, it suggests that new perspectives on many of the “big” questions of liberal democracy – secularism, religious pluralism, and the situation of religious minorities – demand insight into spaces, times, and contexts where contemporary infrastructures of diversity, whether state or civil society, do not monolithically determine social practices, forms of citizenship, and modes of intimacy.

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### Note on the Author

JEREMY F. WALTON is the research group leader for the project "Empires of Memory: The Cultural Politics of Historicity in Former Habsburg and Ottoman Cities" at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Göttingen. He received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Chicago in 2009. A monograph based on his initial research on Muslim civil society and secularism in Turkey is under contract with Oxford University Press.





# Urban Diversity: Disentangling the Cultural from the Economic Case

by BORIS VORMANN

(John-F.-Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, Berlin)

## Abstract

For many planners and city branders a pluralistic urban society, variation in architectural styles and mixed-uses render cities creative, competitive and more livable. Diversity, as the new orthodoxy in urban planning and policy, embodies the opposite of earlier, top-down modernist planning ideals. Reading diversity as a cipher for the market, as I set out to do in this article, lays bare the normative trajectories of these discourses of diversity. In so doing, I make two arguments. First, while it is often assumed that urban diversity makes cities more cosmopolitan and more economically productive, I contend that the cultural and economic logics of diversity are not mutually re-enforcing, but can often contradict one another. The same regime of market rule that supposedly leads to more diverse and livable postindustrial cities, produces increasing spatial inequalities. Second, I suggest that a perspective that highlights the structuring force of physical urban infrastructures sheds light on these path-dependent patterns of segregation, thereby allowing us to understand struggles over place and meaning in ways that move beyond the current limitations of diversity discourses.

**Keywords:** diversity, spatial inequalities, infrastructure, urban planning, Cosmpolitanism

## Diversity's Terminological Ambiguities<sup>1</sup>

In the imaginaries of many city planners, branding agencies and urban designers, cities are breeding places of a new public sphere. In these dominant accounts, diversity is one of the main features of a nascent postindustrial public, deemed to live more leisurely, creative and sustainable lives. As a panacea for all social ills and as a new "planning orthodoxy" (Fainstein 2005), urban diversity is regarded both as a new urban condition and as a desirable outcome of urban development

(see e.g., Florida 2005; Marshall 2007; Glaeser 2011).

The term 'diversity' usually denotes a situation of multiplicity and heterogeneity, but often one in which the recognition of difference and the integration of migrants have been successful. As spaces of agglomeration and intersection, cities are often at the center of debates on diversity.

As I contend in this essay, the case for diversity has both a *cultural* and an *economic* dimension. The ambivalence of the term is what makes it both so appealing and ultimately self-contradictory. The problem with such a conflated understanding of diversity is that it renders what are essentially social questions of equality and justice into debates on discourse and identity politics. Trading off redistribution for recognition distracts from the actual issues at stake and, more than that, offers a legitimization strategy for processes

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that even aggravate the situation for urban residents.

The sanguine understanding of (urban) diversity has its origin long before the most recent wave of globalization that began in the late 1970s. The concept of diversity, as I seek to show in the first part of this article, has implied cosmopolitan hopes from the late 18th century. As such, it has also served from the modern beginnings of liberal thought and (neo)classical economics as a cipher to advocate for the superiority of market rule.

However, as I contend in the following part of this essay, the *economic* logic of the market contradicts the cosmopolitan, *cultural* argument for diversity. The same rule of markets that supposedly leads us to more diverse and sustainable postindustrial cities, leads to increasing inequalities and segregation. The two arguments for diversity are not congruent. They do not add up. Instead, they often stand in opposition.

As I will argue in the final part of this essay, the best way to render this contradiction visible in the urban context is by taking an infrastructural perspective. I am not referring to a Marxian base-superstructure binary here. Rather, I argue that by viewing the city through the prism of its actual physical support structures, we can better understand the struggles over place and meaning that diversity discourses tend to gloss over. A look at the often invisible enabling conditions of public life shows how the discourse of successful urban diversity management clashes with the realities of infrastructural inequalities and the ways they fall into patterns of racial and class segregation.

### **Diversity as a Good in itself**

In planning circles and public discourses on the city, particularly in North America and Europe, diversity is accepted as the new urban condition—and a positive one at that. Diversity, like sustainability, livability, and resilience has become one of the top- trending buzz words that appear in cities' self-representations and development plans.

The term diversity implies several meanings that are often left undifferentiated. As Susan Fainstein has noted, it alludes to contexts as far-ranging as a varied physical design, mixes of uses, an expanded public realm and a mixture of “multiple social groupings exercising their ‘right to the city’” (Fainstein 2005: 3). When the term is used in the media, it mostly refers to the latter: ethnic or cultural diversity—two terms which in themselves are equally vague. These very different aspects of diversity, however ambiguously defined, are supposed to inform one another and are generally viewed, in these discourses, as desirable.

What exactly is it that makes diversity so appealing? Akin to the imprecise use of the term, the normative claim as to why exactly diversity is something virtuous is often left equally unexplained in such statements. What is emphasized, however, is that economic diversity can engender cultural diversity, essentially insinuating that exchange and circulation are necessarily worthwhile social goods.

A recent report published by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), for instance, cements this broader intuition. According to the authors, societies with higher “cultural diffusion” adapt better to technological change, industrialize more rapidly, and grow faster (Ashraf and Galor 2011: 54). The European Union (EU) project *Diversity* equally assumes that “socio-economic, socio-demographic, ethnic and cultural diversity can positively affect social cohesion, urban economic performance and social mobility of individuals and groups suffering from socio-economic deprivation” (Diversity 2015). In a similar vein, UN Habitat's urban planning and design principles emphasize the need for “optimizing the population and economic density of urban settlements,” and by “promoting mixed land use, diversity and better connectivity” (UN Habitat 2012). In all these examples, diverse urban agglomerations are supposed to increase exchange and thereby foster cosmopolitanism and productivity.



The terminological ambivalence of the cultural and the economic case makes the notion of diversity so compelling for different sides of the political spectrum. *Culturally*, diversity is often viewed as a (postmodern) condition and regarded as an aspect of a world closing in on itself. Seen as a consequence of purportedly inexorable globalization processes that integrate peoples and cultures across national borders, the term diversity resonates with hopes for a more cosmopolitan society (Beck 2000; Held 2003, 2010). While this cosmopolitan dimension of the concept of diversity might appeal to the left of the political spectrum, more conservative liberals make an *economic* case for diversity.

They stress that diverse cities are economically more successful than more ethnically and culturally homogenous cities. We can identify two often-cited reasons as to why this is supposed to be the case. For one, diversity attracts economically powerful groups to the city. Diversity has thus become a cultural branding tool for outward representation which, in the fierce competition with other cities, serves as one among other labels to increase the attractiveness of a city for young mobile professionals (for exemplary analyses see Donald et al. 2009). Second, in recent years, diversity has undergone a crucial epistemological shift in the way that it has been used by urban administrations. As Mathias Rodatz astutely observes for the case of Germany—which equally holds true for the US and other North Atlantic states—municipal authorities are beginning to “view migrant districts as productive sites of ‘diversity’ featuring resources for the ‘local economy’ and ‘civil society’” (Rodatz 2012: 70). In other words, diversity has come to be seen as the extension of the low-pay urban labor market to new populations.

In both the cultural and the economic use of the term, diversity appears to us as a public good into which urban societies can tap. Both dimensions seem to feed off from and to inform one another. The underlying idea of this supposedly synergetic relationship is that, by adhering to the principle of diversity, cities offer cosmopolitan

lifestyles *and* increase productivity. The assumption is one of a cosmopolitan presence in the city which offers the best of all possible worlds: variety, mixture, *and* economic growth.

This type of argument is not as new as one might think. It has a long lineage that I will seek to trace in very broad brush strokes in the following paragraphs. As we will see, the innocent, cosmopolitan term ‘diversity’ comes with heavy baggage. But its underlying assumptions do not hold up to scrutiny. Let me stress right away, that I am not arguing against diversity. Indeed, I will even argue that we need to re-discover the emancipatory potentials of a diverse society. However, the blurring of different categories and objectives too often leads to implicit value statements about the form of social and economic organization which, upon closer inspection, are self-contradictory. In great part, then, this essay is an exercise in rendering those normative claims explicit that underlie diversity discourses.

There is no good reason why cultural and economic diversity are mutually reinforcing and why one should naturally follow from the other. That economic and cultural diversity do not causally correspond is also the reason why we should not simply argue in favor of diversity as though it was a good in itself. Thus, it is not merely that the uses of the term diversity are unstable over time (Lammert and Sarkowsky 2010), but that upon closer inspection, the economic and cultural dimensions of diversity discourses are incommensurate.

### How Diversity Became a Buzz-word

Both aspects of diversity discourses are firmly grounded in liberal and neoliberal thought from Smith to Hayek to Friedman. The *locus classicus* of these two lines of argumentation is Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*. For Smith, too, spatial proximity and close interaction were the keys to social progress. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith argues that the division of labor, the “extent of the market,” determined the degree of labor specialization and thereby the advancement of society (Smith [1776] 2003: 27). In cit-

ies, where transportation and communication is safe and cheap, markets can extend, labor can specialize, and productivity increases. Commercial exchange—the economic side of the argument—, in turn, also produces “improvements of art and industry” and “cultivation.” (Smith [1776] 2003: 29-30) Cities, because they facilitate interaction between merchants, are the nodal points of social progress, according to Smith. In essence, more cosmopolitan and diverse cities—even though he did not use these exact terms—are more resonant with their citizens, more civilized, more democratic, and more productive. The economic and the cultural case for diversity are deeply entwined from the start.

The first one to outline the economic advantages of urban agglomerations in the context of modern economics was Alfred Marshall in his *Principles of Economics* (1890) and *Industry and Trade* (1919). He adds the importance of size to the debate on diverse cities.<sup>2</sup> In urban agglomerations, according to Marshall, the market is closer to its ideal of efficient resource allocation and increased productivity because of scale economies, reduced transportation costs and shared economies. Note that this argument for urban productivity, while it picks up essential elements of Smith’s argumentation, has little to say about the cultural or civilizational dimension of urban agglomerations. This is perhaps less surprising given that his was the era of professionalization of economics as a discipline and of a more positivistic understanding of economic processes to be examined in econometric models detached from cultural context. The more normative, cultural reason, —why diversity is a good thing and why it follows from economic diversity—is only gradually re-introduced after World War II.

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, liberal thinkers highlight the superiority of market rule, addition-

ally, by contrasting it to the shortcomings of the public sector. Complexity, proponents of public choice theory argued in the 1960s and 1970s, when the Fordist regime entered its terminal crisis, was best met by the mechanism of supply and demand. This mechanism, in turn, was described as more adaptive to individuals’ needs, socially just and responsive to difference. The market is not only more efficient, it is also more democratic and drives innovation from the bottom up. It is not merely that local governments were acting out of bad faith, as public choice theorists argued. And Hayek, like Friedman, too, insisted that even the most benevolent and clear-sighted public official would intervene in the market too late, with the wrong assumptions, distorting expectations and market outcomes. Markets are simply too complex to be governed and central planning can offer no solution. Indeed, centralized planning is the very problem—even more so because, as Hayek believed, such concentrated power promotes tyranny and totalitarianism.

Therefore, markets are not just efficient and productive agglomerations, they are also more apt to accommodate complexity and to prevent and diffuse the concentration of power. It is for these reasons that the government needs to relinquish all responsibilities to market flows. This is the intellectual climate in which Jane Jacobs writes: “sprawling municipal government’s separate administrative empires” do not fail to deal appropriately with metropolitan complexity out of bad faith—“there is no villainy responsible for this situation” (Jacobs 1961: 407). With their organizational setup, they are simply incapable of managing a qualitatively new type of complexity. In addition to catering to the diversity of urban populations, then, markets help to reign in irresponsible and incapable government. Cities are engines of growth when they are diverse, and when markets can rule uninhibited by state intervention. Cities are more democratic when they avoid central planning and adhere to what Jacobs called the forces of self-diversification.

Indeed, the most obvious point to trace the recent emergence of ‘diversity’ as an unques-

<sup>2</sup> Building on his insights, economists over the course of the decades that followed identified four ways in which diversity and size impact economic growth: scale economies—that facilitate collective consumption—, shared inputs in production and consumption, reduced transaction costs, and more resilience vis-à-vis external shocks (Quigley 1998: 131-133).

tioned and undifferentiated guiding principle in urban planning are the writings of Jane Jacobs. She was the most explicit advocate of diversity as an overarching ideal, bringing the economic and cultural dimensions of the term together in a way that few others in urban planning had done before. Jacobs' tradition of thinking has had an overwhelming impact on city planning—Robert Fishman even calls her work the “most powerful intellectual stimulus to the revival of the American planning tradition” (Fishman 2000: 19)—and it is certainly worth taking a closer look at her understanding of diversity.

For Jacobs, great cities are concentrated, diverse, and attuned to the (real) needs of their inhabitants (Jacobs 1961: 15). Unsurprisingly, they face urban complexity not with paternalistic central planning approaches but flexible solutions on the micro-scale. This is because of what she calls a “ubiquitous principle”, something that Adam Smith would have described as the division of labor and others, simply, as the market. This principle indicates “the need of cities for a most intricate and close-grained diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support, both economically and socially” (Jacobs 1961: 14). Rather than getting in the way of the “spontaneous [...] force of self-diversification”, the “new aristocracy of altruistic planning experts,” according to Jacobs, needed to step back (Jacobs 1961: 289). Planners, she insisted, had to yield to the forces of “self-diversification” which she saw as “possibly the greatest regenerative forces inherent in energetic American metropolitan economies” (Jacobs 1961: 290).

I am certainly not arguing that Jacobs is a proto-neoliberal. But her example shows us that even a critical mind that sought emancipatory potential in the urban arena embraces the very same set of ideas that mark the rise of neoliberalism, and this should give us pause to reflect. For Jacobs diversity is a supreme good because it accounts for difference, systemic complexity, spontaneity and individual needs and desires. The argument, at the outset, is a cultural one that contains the seed of an economic line of argumentation.

Her staunch position against government planning, her belief in self-healing forces of diversification, and the focus on the micro-scale neighborhood are matched by the decentralizing tendencies of markets.

What she sees as the main problem of modernist planning, per counter, are “routine, ruthless, wasteful, oversimplified solutions for all manner of city physical needs (let alone social and economic needs)” that are “devised by administrative systems which have lost the power to comprehend, to handle and to value an infinity of vital, unique, intricate and interlocked details” (Jacobs 1961: 408). It is unnecessary to belabor the point that Jacobs orients her critique against modernist planning ideals and, for this reason alone, her argumentation in favor of more diversity harbors strong affinities with neoliberal discourses against the state. But I mention it here, because this consonance of “urban diversity” and liberal thought can be traced back much further, as we saw, and still echoes in today's planning discourses. It is this overlap that confuses causality and correlation. It is the original fallacy of equating market rule with cosmopolitanism.

With the fall of the wall and the rise of liberal capitalism as the seemingly last standing alternative to organize societies in the 1990s, this ideological nexus of capitalism and democracy was extended by a new-found (or newly re-found) cosmopolitanism. The expected end of the nation-state and hopes for a postnational moment (Ohmae 1995; Beck 2000; Held 2003, 2010) implied a normative trajectory: free markets lead not just to more democracy, but also to more diversity, and thereby to more cosmopolitan cities and societies. This is of course not the place to unpack the rich history of contemporary ideas of diversity in their myriad inflections.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to state for the purpose of this argument that cities, as the nodal points of globalization, were to be the stages on which these cosmopolitan hopes of the post-Cold War era were to

<sup>3</sup> For such a history of ideas (in German language), see Monika Salzbrunn (2014), especially parts I and II).

be dreamt and enacted. The cultural and economic dimensions of urban diversity, envisioned by Adam Smith and sometimes lost out of sight during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were finally re-united in arguments in favor of urban diversity toward the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Increasingly, this discourse has turned into a tautological loop: markets create economic diversity—through specialization—and cultural diversity—through the exchange between people with different backgrounds. The circle is closed on two hypotheticals; both these potential outcomes *can* lead to increases in productivity and cosmopolitan solidarities—and this is why markets are the best mechanism to organize societies. Upon closer inspection, then, the coupling of the economic and cultural dimension of the term diversity is a legitimization strategy for marketization.

As such, the two dimensions of the term still echo in urban planning discourses and municipal branding efforts today. Richard Sennett, for instance, argues for a more democratic cosmopolitanism that reflects and accounts for cultural difference and complexity in his work on the “open city.” Sennett forcefully contends that cities need to be open systems, unencumbered by central planning and reflective of “system[s] in unstable evolution” in order to adapt to social change (Sennett 2006). The most visible proponent of the economic argument is perhaps Richard Florida who insists that “places have replaced companies as the key organizing units in our economy” (Florida 2002: 30) in which “diversity and creativity work together to power innovation and economic growth” (Florida 2002: 262). If these two thinkers reflect the polar ends of discourses on diversity—and again, like with Jacobs, I have chosen them not as apologists of neoliberalism but as articulators of deeper currents of contemporary thought—the economic and the cultural dimensions of diversity remain intricately linked. So much so, that it almost seems impossible to have cultural diversity without economic diversity. The former seems to necessarily flow from the latter. This is why the

cultural dimension of the argument for diversity is so impoverished: it is always derived from the economic argument. Through this lens, cosmopolitanism becomes a side effect of markets. It is turned from an ideal worth pursuing in and of itself into a by-product of a much more powerful economic line of argumentation.

One might want to ask why exactly this is problematic. The most important reason, in my view, is that it creates a unified, unquestioned understanding of urban development. From this liberal perspective, accepting diversity is simply the most pragmatic thing to do, even if there was an alternative. Why? Because it is more democratic, makes economic sense and fosters solidarity. Who could question these ideals? From this vantage point, that does not discern the economic from the cultural case for diversity, the remedy to stagnation and decline always becomes circulation and flow. Diversity is a state, a snapshot, in the inexorable and unsurpassable process of *laissez-faire*.

This theodicy of market rule ultimately depoliticizes discussions about possible urban futures because it relegates all political questions to the seemingly neutral domain of the market. In so doing, discourses on diversity hollow out the concept from its implied cosmopolitanism, which remains only as a strategy of legitimization for seemingly natural and unmediated social relations governed by external global forces. Through this discursive legerdemain, relations of private vice inevitably are transformed into public virtue.

### Urbanization's Infrastructures

Though we like to think of the economic and cultural dimension of diversity to be intertwined for some of the reasons outlined above, actually they often stand in direct opposition. For one, it is by no means clear that diversity is a good thing in the first place—or at least making this point requires a different type of argumentation. Neither is it said that, second, the right kind of diversity ensues from the right kind (read: market-type) of economic organization.



The first point is a theoretical one to make. Cultural and ethnic diversity can be, but do not have to be, a good thing. The notion that diversity is something desirable implies certain *a priori* assumptions about what humans are and how they interact under specific conditions. But opinions on the inherent value of the idea diverge. Federalism, for instance, is seen by some as the most democratic political form, because it allows for a certain type of diversity of opinions and backgrounds—and therefore balances power and interests, creating egalitarian social structures (Gagnon 2014; see also Vormann 2014). But diversity can equally lead to less favorable, indeed opposite, social outcomes, such as increases in inequality, according to others. Those would argue, for instance, that a lack of welfare institutions in the United States and other multicultural societies is in large part a consequence of distrust between different ethnic groups. Diversity creates a “progressive dilemma,” these authors highlight, because immigration undermines the functioning of the welfare state (Phillips 1999; Pearce 2004; Goodhart 2013—while again others argue exactly the opposite, e.g., Kymlicka and Banting 2006).

Not only is diversity not a good in and of itself, comparative research also shows us that the success of urban diversity heavily depends on geographical and historical context. It entails both the possibilities for “social stress and [...] social innovation” (Stren and Polèse 2000: 8; see also Pestieau and Wallace 2003; Kihato et al. 2010). Diversity as a good depends on other goods such as equality, justice or upward mobility. As an auxiliary good, the term diversity points beyond itself, raising different questions: diversity of what kind? Of ethnic origin? Of tastes? Of class? Of gender? Of building styles? And, just as importantly: diversity for what purpose?

In sum, the most diverse society does not necessarily have to be a good society—and neither does an ethnically and culturally homogeneous society, if that category makes any sense in the first place, need to be a bad one. One of the central reasons why diversity is nonetheless regarded as

a good thing in itself is because it implies that different voices are heard and that strangers meet in a diverse society so as to formulate the public good. And I think that there is indeed a strong case to be made as to why a diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, and interests can improve democracy and the quality of life for all.

But even if we took this positive normative gist for granted, and if we accept the assumption that a certain diversity of backgrounds, traditions, and interests is something desirable for cities and for their politics, it is by no means sure if this type of diversity evolves from the physical presence of different people in the same place (Wessel 2009). More to the point, it is even less clear why the market should provide this type of diversity, given its tendency to concentrate capital and to privilege the already more powerful. Quite to the contrary: the market, instead of bringing strangers together in a public realm, can equally drive them apart and segregate them from one another.

Assuming the superiority of market rule, dominant discourses on diversity have articulated a cosmopolitan and egalitarian fantasy for processes that can indeed work to produce the opposite of such a utopia: spatial fragmentation and urban splintering. An infrastructural perspective, as I suggest it here, helps us to make this final point.

If the liberal position naturalizes social development as an inevitable result of globalized flows, if it assumes a transhistorical perspective of social situations, and if it limits the perspective to one presentist dimension—that of pragmatism and practicability starting from where we are—then infrastructures as an analytical perspective can help us to concretize social practices in the context of processes of uneven development, to broaden the horizon of action both temporally and scale-wise, and to point to political decisions and alternative, more emancipatory trajectories of city-making.

I am therefore proposing to shift the view from the superficial and ambivalent discourse on diversity to the infrastructural materialities

and inequalities that it helps legitimate. Infrastructures are congealed social relations. They are crystallizations and material manifestations of social struggles and political decisions taken in the past that shape social relations in the present. In line with Hillary Angelo and Craig Calhoun (2013), I understand infrastructures as material subsystems that facilitate large-scale social organization. As sunk costs and enabling conditions, they create trade-offs and empower certain social groups and uses over others.

As I have argued, the discourse of urban diversity is so powerful because it absorbs different political positions by making both a neoliberal case for increased productivity and a social-democratic case for cosmopolitan multiculturalism. An infrastructural perspective reveals to us that the market case for diversity is not congruent with the cosmopolitan notion of diversity. Put in different terms, these positions are only reconcilable to a limited degree.

By tracing the congealing of market rule into urban infrastructures, we can point out the discrepancies between the rhetoric of free flow and circulation and the limitations of exchange. Marketization, if not politically controlled, leads to an unequal access to infrastructure and thereby to unequal opportunities. This is precisely what happened in the past four decades in which many different types of infrastructure have been privatized in North Atlantic states. Public transportation, shipping, communication, and energy infrastructures were marketized because procurement through that mechanism was deemed more efficient. But the triumph of the market by no means created a more open or diverse society. Quite the contrary: segregation and limited access has often occurred along racial, ethnic, cultural, and class lines.

As Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin argue in their work on splintering urbanism, affluent social groups have started, after the neoliberal revolution of the late-1970s, to demand 'fiscal equivalence' (Graham and Marvin 2001: 234). The emphasis on freedom of choice in the market place, rather than on more redistributive

local politics and the 'modern public infrastructure ideal' of equal access, has led private firms and local governments to "construct networks and spaces that are customised specifically to the needs of the upper-income social and economic groups who are the target users" (Graham and Marvin 2001: 235). This selective targeting of well-funded customers by private providers, coupled with the ending of infrastructure cross-subsidies, has restricted access to public infrastructure for less well-off residents. In other words, more markets have meant less exchange between different parts of the population, not more.

Examples for this mechanism are many, from the privatization of public spaces to the marketization of the water supply, from tolled private highways to the privatization of streets. This commodification of previously public goods, in turn, yields similar effects: a segmentation of markets, the targeting of valuable customers by private firms under the promise of offering more efficient services at lower prices and greater choice, and the restriction to access based on wealth. Often times, especially in the case of the United States, these poorer populations, underserved by the market, tend to be racial and ethnic minorities and live in areas that are segregated from the more visible parts of the city (Vormann 2015).

In sum, public works, once considered part of the basic rights of social citizenship have become exclusive commodities for specific groups. The market has not served as an engine of diversity but has instead functioned as a driver and amplifier of inequality.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In outlining the reduction in access and the detachment from public space, grid erosion as described by Albert Pope serves as a palpable symbol of the privatization of formerly public goods in other spheres. Streets, once a symbol of the public sphere, accessible for everyone, have been turned through marketization into exclusive goods with restricted access. Albert Pope's work on the changing urban fabric of North American cities examines the decline of the functionalist urban planning paradigm in more depth and from a slightly different perspective. Pope sees

If we take 'diversity' at face value and see it as a good in itself that freely flows from marketization, as do the dominant discourses, we take it as a starting point rather than the end point of crucial social processes. All historical and larger-scale forces leading to this present full of potential are eclipsed and naturalized. The state of diversity is an end of history shrouding its political past. A look at the infrastructures of urban life helps us to reverse this view. Examples of infrastructural inequality show us that urban diversity should be viewed as a question of class, not of discourse and identity.<sup>5</sup> Diversity is not the decisive variable of whether a neighborhood is doing well or not. The question is one of economic inequality, not identitarian difference.

### Diversity as Cosmopolitanism

Susan Fainstein importantly emphasizes that diversity is just one among other capabilities and that an over-emphasis on diversity distracts our view from other capacities such as equity, growth, and sustainability which stand in a trade-off relationship and are up for political, not technocratic debate (Fainstein 2005). Others, such as Mathias Rodatz, have raised the important point that diversity is sometimes employed by municipal officials as a euphemism for cheap labor in an overall context of sharp and rising inequalities (Rodatz 2012). Yet others draw on research outside urban theory to argue that diversity in physical proximity does not necessarily lead to more tolerant inter-group behavior, but can even have the contrary effect of reinforcing divisions along cultural and ethnic lines (Wessel 2009).

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the modernist ideal reflected in the open grid structure of North American cities. What he calls 'grid erosion' (Pope 1996: 94), by contrast, is the creation of 'ladders'—streets that are detached from the grid, and hence from the public, and that serve to link two exclusive terminal points: 'whether the cul-de-sac housing tract, a peripheral slab city, a gutted, skywalked CBD, or an upscale suburban office park, the traditional open urban grid [...] exists in fragmentary form as the remnant of a recognisable order.' (Pope 1996: 58)

<sup>5</sup> For similar arguments on a more conceptual level see Benn Michaels 2007 and Arapoglou 2012.

In this essay I have sought to complement this emergent, more critical lineage of debates about urban diversity with a further dimension. I argued that diversity is an expression of a particular set of social relations and that a look at urban infrastructures can grant us insights into longer-standing inequalities engrained in space and spatial uses that prevent cities from becoming truly cosmopolitan. The cultural dimension of the term diversity has been eroded and replaced by an economic argument. Under the illusion that diversity could produce both a more cosmopolitan *and* a wealthier city, diversity has become a cipher of the market, shifting all things political to an abstract force of self-diversification.

As such, the concept of diversity can even work to reinforce inequalities. The term operates on a discursive level that forecloses political change by implying the desirability of the status quo. The concept of 'urban diversity' has become part of a legitimization strategy for market rule. Rather than creating public spaces of democratic interaction, increased marketization has led to segregated urbanization patterns and unequal access to public goods.

And yet, redistribution remains at least as important as is recognition. As a window of analysis that integrates social relations on various scales and temporal horizons, an infrastructural perspective can help us see through the normative dimension of diversity discourses, and formulate a broader critique of their implications. These material support structures enable certain social uses over others. Costs and benefits incurred by infrastructures are unevenly distributed and reinforce pre-existing vulnerabilities. A look at infrastructures therefore refines our understanding of the value that a society attributes to the public good and what it deems to be the rights of its (social) citizens.

The critical intervention of this paper has been to decouple the economic from the cultural argument for diversity. Cultural diversity is a defining feature of every city, and its success has little to do with the marketization of the city. From Simmel to Weber, from Arendt to Habermas the interac-

tion of strangers has been identified as a crucial feature of cities, one that can foster democracy and cosmopolitanism. How to deal with diversity economically is another question. It needs a different debate. As long as the emphasis remains on human resources, not human capabilities, though, the cultural argument will remain co-opted by the economic argument.

Instead of underlining the economic importance of diversity, then, why not rethink the desirability of cosmopolitanism and the rights of people in the city, regardless of their national background? Diversity, in a cosmopolitan sense, means more than just an extended labor pool. Instead, it is a chance for these diverse populations to actually have a voice and an impact on the political and social development of the city—and to participate in its public life.

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### Note on the Author

BORIS VORMANN is currently a visiting professor at the John-F.-Kennedy Institute for North American Studies' Dept. of Political Science and an associate researcher at Harvard University's Mahindra Humanities Center. His most recent book publications are *Global Port Cities in North America: Urbanization Processes and Global Production Networks* (Routledge 2015) and the *Handbuch Politik USA* (Springer VS).



# Cities as Infrastructures of Diversification and Homogenisation: Constructing Multiformal Spaces in Paris and Shenzhen

by STEPHEN READ  
(Delft University of Technology)

## Abstract

Cities have made urban people. Cities are the material condition of complex urban societies and people have been actively formed in them as products of and complements to the politics and economies that cities have engendered. Urban identities and economic roles have formed and massively differentiated and complexified beyond those of pre-urban and rural societies. People have diversified as economic roles especially have divided and formed them around organising and integrating cultures and practices. Cities have, at times and under particular conditions, been diversifying infrastructures, but cities have also, in different times and under conditions of modernisation, industrial rationalisation and the rescaling and financialisation of economies, become infrastructures of homogenisation. In historical and at least partly contingent processes cities have complexified and opened rich and diverse opportunities for livelihoods in particular times and places and decomplexified and closed and diminished opportunities in others. The paper will take the reader on an historical journey through a number of iconic cases, starting in medieval Paris and finishing in contemporary Shenzhen to demonstrate that processes of diversification continue, still today, to open urban lives and livelihoods to urban newcomers, while modernising and homogenising processes threaten those lives and livelihoods.

**Keywords:** urban diversity, urban economy, relationality, Paris, Shenzhen

## Introduction

There were 232 million international migrants in 2013 according to the UN International Migration Report (UN 2013). Millions more made shorter journeys from rural to urban places within national borders. China now has 260 million domestic itinerants shuttling between urban jobs and rural homes (Ma 2015). But migration is not just a factor of contemporary mobility and change. The movement of people to cities, and their transformation from rural into urban people, is a process and phenomenon that belongs historically with cities and their emergence and growth. Migration is a necessary corollary to the formation of cities with its urban societies and

economies. Cities have induced or seduced over the last 7,000 years a stream of more or less willing supplicants into a movement of urbanisation. And cities have been the fonts of innovation that have produced modern people and societies. Cities have added key attributes to our basic existences, starting, according to Aristotle, with the ways we relate to one another and the ways we find our identities and well-being (Aristotle et al 1998; Arendt 1963).

We might begin by imagining cities as passive containers for displaced souls and urban migrants as rooted in and by their pasts, dependent on and protective of communities and iden-

tities under threat by processes out of their control. Migrants might be seen, then, as couriers of culture and other forms of local authenticity to global cities, or as passive victims of global processes beyond their reach, stubbornly or heroically resisting processes that homogenise and destroy local specificity. But understanding displacement as a loss of authentic self and place ignores the positive motives people may have for displacing themselves and may feed a narrative of disempowerment and victimisation. It may also elide the potentials of urban places for positive forms of empowered change beyond mainstream debates about integration or assimilation (Chiswick and Miller, 2009; De Palo et al, 2007; Manning and Roy, 2010).

I would prefer to start in another place, understanding urban places as themselves community and practice forming. Cities may be doing much more than containing the people drawn to them or the activities that animate them. They may set up key relations that make urban places active and complicit in the sorts of things urban people do. They may give form to and condition significant activities, situating people and things in those activities in ways that identify them and start to remake who and what they are. Cities may contextualise strongly, may indeed be *ontological* devices, generative of the identities of people and things in their new urban situations. People may change in new places so that ways we have understood this question in the past – particularly in relation to ethnic and other intrinsic forms of diversity (Vertovec 2007) – may be thrown into question by positive forms of in situ re-identification and re-diversification, in learning new situations, finding livelihoods, coping with problems and exploiting opportunities.

The origins of cities marked the origins of politics and economies so that cities have played an active role in the formation of us as people and societies. This has included a process of diversification as divisions of labour have massively complexified and differentiated beyond those of pre-urban societies. Diversification may

indeed be thought of as as intrinsic to cities as writing and numeracy. But urbanisation may not be a consistent process or consistently a force for progress or for the good. Migrants have not always achieved what they came to cities for, and we should not take urbanisation as some sort of quasi-natural occurrence or a reliable answer to big problems we may face.

What there may be, however, are answers contingent on the details of specific relations in specific situations, and strategies may be built by being attentive of the fact that migration and urbanisation is necessarily a question of the arrival of people in real urban places. Henri Lefebvre sought ways to engage more directly with urban objects and relations in situ through what he called ‘metaphilosophy’ – by engaging with not just the object but also the conditions that produce or create it (Lefebvre 1991: 113; Read 2013). People emplace themselves in new situations and become subject to new sets of relations between specific others and within specific processes. We can look at where they find themselves situated, what happens to them, between what urban things and urban others. We can observe and analyse what gets made and changed in situations that impose demands, establish imperatives and present possibilities and opportunities that people engage with in ways that form them. Differentiation, integration and identification may be processes that happen not in theory or in the abstract, but in specific urban situations.

The intention in this paper is to begin to explore questions of the making of viable local communities and economies as factors of the activity of people in urban situations. Cities have served historically as generators of livelihoods. They have been places of a primary innovation in the creative re-differentiation and re-identification of new populations as these people have found their ways in a new urban world. However, they have also been the places where they have been exploited and coerced into abandoning self-sufficient livelihoods for dependency on wage labour (Perelman 2000).



The paper is intended also to begin to make a contribution to a neglected area by taking up an often overlooked methodological challenge – to plot how urban relations organise social and economic processes at urban – that is, street, neighbourhood and city – levels. It builds from key moments in the history of the city, taking the position that cities are essentially historical and contingent constructions. They could have been built in other ways, but they were – or some of them were – built in this way and to this general effect. Of course, there is theory behind this and I try to give at the same time the beginnings of a theoretical framing of political and economic spaces, framings that will be developed further elsewhere.

The longer aim this effort points to is a reconsideration of the idea of urban development. Enthusiasts for the city, like Henri Lefebvre and Jane Jacobs, have argued that urban spaces at the street level are complex and *ordered*, and support productive embedded social and economic activities as well as everyday and street lives. These processes have obvious social value; they also have value, however, in that they are a legitimate and indeed essential part of the whole urban picture. What I will suggest is that cities are built from the ground up. The scales in the city support one another, higher scales pointing towards opening, in terms of action and communication, to further places, and lower scales pointing to a closure and community that is inclusive and productive.

The choices regarding development are often presented in simplistic single-dimensional terms, where one has to take sides between the economic and the social, formal or informal, one form of (inclusive) social order or an (exclusive) other. I would argue that the nature of the problem is, potentially at least, more complex and interesting than this in that the city presents different issues related to different structures at different scales, and these issues and structures can, when joined up, add up to significant increases in the capacities of the whole to both resolve problems or to superimpose issues that

they may be creatively or abductively opposed as ongoing agonistic challenges in situ. There are different economic and political valences at different levels and while we may continue to argue the legitimacy of the one or the other there is no necessary reason why, with the necessary institutional adjustments in place, multiple of these may not be implemented simultaneously. We could take seriously the proposal that cities are multiple and contradictory, and instead of thinking formality vs. informality or this order vs. that, we may think of a *multiformality* as different agendas are pursued at different levels (Deng 2010; Deng 2015).

### Urban Infrastructure

Urban relations shape and organise urban life, not through enclosure or control but through providing the conditions for people to act. They are capable of *empowering* the people caught up in those relations by putting them in productive enabling situations and opening them to productive opportunities. Our capacities for action as humans are linked to these relational and material conditions and their spatialities. We can think of this convergence of material, relational and spatial conditions very broadly as *technology*. The etymological roots of ‘technology’ are in the Greek *techne* (τέχνη) which refers to that which is made by people. The notion suggests also the material, relational and spatial *environment* that is more than just surroundings, that is an integral part of everyday life that opens people to their worlds of action and facilitates action. It draws on the ecological proposal that all creatures are active in the strategic making and adaptation of *environment-worlds* (*Umwelten*) (von Uexküll 1992). *Umwelten* comprise sets of socially significant and material objects or elements which act as equipment and as ‘marks’ in the active lives of creatures (see Agamben 2004: 40).

Environment-worlds are *spaces* that capture the lives of these animals in the particular ways they do things. They are limited, discrete material distributions and integrations of the things

animals engage with in activity, that *mediate* activity. They are also of *communities* as social creatures share the things and the marks that are significant in collective lives. Humans are no different in this regard and have crafted cities and urban spaces in order to facilitate urban lives. Where they do differ is in that over historical time humans have constructed new spaces and have, through these constructions and the new objects and elements and social organisations that have accompanied them, extended the capacities and ranges of their actions so that they are capable of travelling, communicating and acting non-locally.

Urban spaces are *technological* in the broad sense given above. They are built in patterns that organise – that is, distribute and integrate – material elements significant in urban lives and therefore human lives themselves. Renate Mayntz and Thomas Hughes noted the social significance of “modern transportation, communication and supply systems, which one might subsume under the heading infrastructural systems, since their primary function consists in enabling a multitude of specific activities to take place” (Mayntz, 1988: 233-259, quoted in Joerges 1996). These “spatially extended and functionally integrated” systems like electrical power, railroad, and telephone systems have made significant changes to cities and urban lifestyles (Mayntz and Hughes 1988). They described these systems as socio-technical – which would raise issues regarding the definition of both the social and the technical if we regarded these terms and the relation between them as universal (Joerges 1996: 55-72). The point is that neither term is a category in its own right and the relation between them is situation-specific. Technology is enrolled to specific social ends in specific situations, to the equipping (and legitimisation) of places for specific action.

Technology is the stuff we surround ourselves with in order to do things and spaces are those technologies in their organised states. The urban situations I describe are constructions in which social and technical relations are organised in environmental-worlds, as spaces of organised

material and people, and we could think of these as urban infrastructures.

But human lives and societies change over time. Urban change, often in the form of ‘renewal’, has historically been provoked by crisis and correlated with new phases of urbanisation and urban growth. These phases define urban histories as cities, connected in regions, tend to go through analogous processes of change and expansion at the same or similar times. The development of cities has been a layering of new spaces as existing urban societies and the significant elements and spaces that mark and shape them have been overlaid with new ones. These new spaces consist of new distributions and integrations of elements that remake the city and its daily life together.

But old spaces do not disappear. They remain and the relations between new spaces and old is itself organised so that people can move between the different modes and capacities their lives encompass in cities. We are neighbours as well as urban citizens and walk to the corner shop as well as taking the tram to the station and the train to the next city. Space here is not a geodetic surface over which humans move but a structured set of discrete internally coherent domains, the relations internal to and between which establish patterns of everyday life and activities. New urban spaces have tended to add new capacities for action – associated with technologies of the city tram and the motorcar, for example – and to scale up over time. But these scalings-up are not unproblematic in that they have to do with relations of power and, as we will see, this can mean the loss of power of the least powerful.

Space and its ‘community’ is a scalable term that may refer to neighbourhood, city, region, and nation. We tend to naturalise these spaces but each one was constructed and each has an origin. The constructions of new ‘communities’ like those of the nation or of the metropolitan region are themselves significant events in urban and social history. Even the neighbourhood, which in a form that did not derive from pre-existing villages, was invented in the indus-

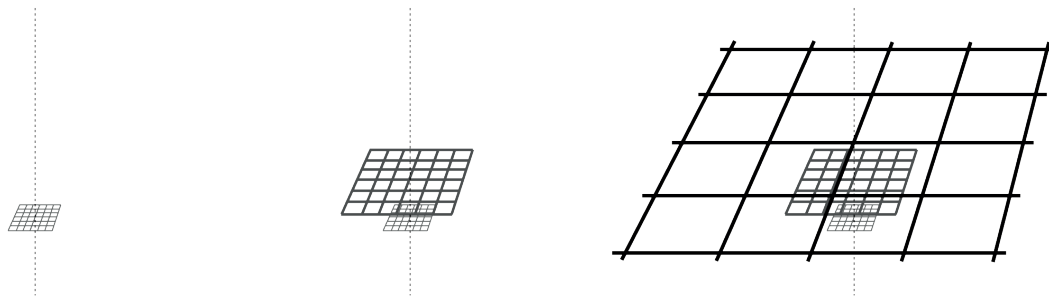


Figure 1. A schematic of the layered growth of a city through two technological transformations. In European urban history, for example, this could represent the 'progress' from the medieval or mercantile city, through the industrial city to the 'post-industrial' metropolitan city. 'Borders' between these spaces are articulated in the vertical rather than horizontal axes

trial city. Cities and city systems don't have structure so much as they have history (Read 2012). Larger scaled spaces – of regional or global trade or of imperial government, for example – have been around a long time. They may have more abstract 'communities' but are understood here to be part of this layering of space.

These layerings and foldings of inter- and intra-urban relations have formed cities, creating differentiated domains of everyday life with borders over which social and economic processes and interrelations take place. These processes have differentiated the city over time, not just into different places with different characters across the urban surface, but also across scales – as cities and regions have grown they have also differentiated into structured configurations of districts, neighbourhoods, centres, sub-centres etc.

The city with its social and economic relations and characteristics is defined and redefined in this process. An early modern mercantile city was established around divisions and differentiations that produced the spatialities and conditions that underlay the blooming of an urban commerce and *petit bourgeoisie*. Further divisions in the industrial city separated working from middle classes and created spaces of consumption separate from those of production. New constructions and divisions in today's regionalising and globalising city further fragment the urban surface and differentiate and facilitate new modes of power. The 'structure' created by these his-

torical divisions is built by and into the everyday spaces of neighbourhoods, suburbs and centres and by and into technical infrastructures. Space depends on the social for its completion but this basically artefactual and constructed – technical and material – structure *shapes* the social, affecting everything in the city, defining movement and retail patterns for example with precision.

Urban space and social organisation are both hierarchic and heterarchic. Space distributes and integrates people in their relations with the people and the things they are involved with 'locally' – within the 'community' the space represents. It creates urban communities by holding people together in urban orders of association and sets up borders between different scales of social organisation and action. It organises by collectivising spatially around socially significant elements, marking these things out as being of common concern, objective and communicable in the 'community' and significant in what people do. It is this 'structure' of 'layers' stacked hierarchically that distinguishes and makes operationable different normative orders of human association ('communities' at neighbourhood, city, metropolitan and national levels, for example). It is to the 'rights' of urban forms of organisation of association and livelihood that Henri Lefebvre referred when he spoke of the 'right to the city' (Lefebvre et al 1996). And it is the struggle over urban space and the powers it distributes that make up the politics and drama of urban development.



Figure 2. Expansion of Paris: maps 1180, 1223, 1383 (Nicolas de La Mare & Antoine Coquart)

### Political Space

The public space of medieval Paris was “no coenobitic place created by common labour” (Sennett 1994: 193). Nor was it held together by kinship or ethnic bonds. A migration to the city was underway as peasants exchanged a precarious rural existence for what they hoped would be a less precarious urban one. A diversity of previously unrelated people were arriving through the gates and found their first points of contact with the city and its people in the markets of the city and in the main streets and back streets of the neighbourhoods. They would have been thrown together by the circumstances of their arrival in the city – especially concerning the dwelling places and work or livelihood they managed to find and would have used urban space to associate with others and find livelihoods.

The arrivals swelling the neighbourhoods were mostly from the rural provinces, but they would have included intercity migrants from provincial centres around Paris as well as from further afield. The urban community is in its beginnings a gathering of strangers. The city, meanwhile, is a construction that frames relations between people in their economic and social lives. These relations have an economic dimension which is also the reason many of the migrants come, but they have also a political which is to say a community or collective dimension.

The three maps in figure 2 show the development of Paris over 200 years. They show an evolving street grid of the city growing around villages (*communes*) on the routes from outside the city. These *communes* were enclosed into

the city proper, with the original *cite* and *bourgs* of Paris, in two stages, first by Philip Augustus in the early 1200s, and then by Charles V before the 1350s. The new quarters or *faubourgs* of the city were divided along the lines of the access routes to the centre (*cite*) and the *commune*-neighbourhoods grew around these.

Land was owned by the crown (the *cite*) and by the various religious orders that clustered around the *cite* (the *bourgs*). Village (*commune*) land was owned by the parish. Parish land was brought under the jurisdiction of the religious orders who also took over the expanding charitable functions of the parishes as the city expanded. In the city, building rights on (usually church) land was transferred to individuals or corporations for a fee. Richard Sennett describes how little control was kept over how collective space around buildings was organised so that there was little concept of or attention given to public space (191). Not even access to buildings was protected and disputes were sometimes settled by force. The street emerged in neighbourhood space as a by-product of aggressive contestation of individual building and collective accessibility rights.

Building on or over the main thoroughfares through the *faubourgs* raised the most public resistance and these routes began and remained the most coherent, binding the expanding city together from *cite* to gates. As the *communes* grew, what identified them as discrete entities was not bounding at their edges but an effect of the difference in scale of movement and action



between the street-grid of the neighbourhood-*commune* and that of the *faubourg*-to-centre route on which it was structured. What ‘closed’ neighbourhoods as social spaces was not edges – which, over time, join with other edges to create a continuous fabric of streets and blocks – but *centres*, on the major thoroughfares to which neighbourhoods attach and are socially and economically oriented.

The deficit of urban design noted by Sennett is overstated in that the fabric is already clearly articulated into major and minor spaces by the difference in scale and intensity of use between common neighbourhood backstreets and the *faubourg*-centre routes between gate and centre. These routes formed in fact a border condition between a space of the city as a whole and the more local and intimate neighbourhood spaces centred on these main routes. This ‘structuration’ of urban space delivered central places along the main routes, as active and significant places in the city, which were at one and the same time centres of neighbourhoods.

The polis makes people urban; new arrivals in Paris were changed by their encounter with the city. Aristotle understood the city as a ‘political community’, the highest form of community, set apart from other forms like the household or the village. The polis also makes people *political* by relating them one to another. More to the point, it organises and frames them in their relations. By imposing its own framing, cities frame people in a way that makes them equal who come to the city non-equal. The key for Hannah Arendt in understanding the space of urban community was a property called ‘isonomy’<sup>1</sup> which indicated equality of political rights. Urban community was predicated on a putative right to be there and on living in (relative) peace once one was there. It set up a synthetic equality of differences: “the equality of the Greek polis – its isonomy – was an attribute of the polis and not of men, who received their equality by virtue of citizenship, not by virtue of birth” (Arendt 1963: 31).

Arendt describes the politics of Periclean Athens taking place on the Agora and between free men, each of whom could participate directly in the political affairs enacted there (Arendt 1958). Arendt’s example of the Agora shows a space of relations of appearance and speech between different but equal people. Community here is not a bond of affinity or similarity but of relations between differences (see Derrida 1976) that have equal chances or rights to be heard. It is in this space and in these relations, according to Arendt, that power and action is born. Power here is the power to act but it is also Arendt’s contention that no action is possible *before* it is mediated through the heterarchic, isonomic structure of a political community.

The Agora has been seen as an ideal case of direct democratic politics, but as such it elides some significant points, the first of which being that the political space of the Agora did not exist on its own, nor was it the only space affected by the discussion taking place there. Athens was at the time the most powerful of a cluster of Greek city-states, and the politics of peer-polity (heterarchic) relations, of alliances, trade, tribute and warfare between Athens and the others (Ma 2003) were a major part of the political discussion on the Agora. Closer to home, the space of Athens itself included the bonded and ‘unfree’ – slaves and women for example, deemed to not be part of the political body of the city but over whom the word from the Agora had dominion.

Far from being an ideal model of politics, what this wider conflation of differently scaled political institutions started to represent was the scaled and layered hierarchical form of interrelated heterarchical polities. This form can be understood as the basis of a calculus of power relations within and between polities and informs an understanding of how power shifts occur and under what conditions various power distributions work (see Crumley 1995).

Paris of the 12th century was a disorderly and power-hierarchical space and it would not do to suggest it was any kind of ideal space of measured argument and democracy. The point is that

<sup>1</sup> ἰσονομία: ἴσος, equal; νόμος, custom, law

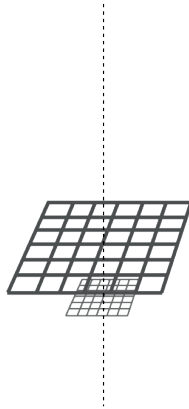


Figure 3. Making polities 1: the neighbourhood and the city in medieval urban space

isonomy does not indicate democracy here at all but rather the property of *heterarchy* in space. Herodotus understood isonomy as a condition of no-rule, of being without a division between rulers and ruled. It was precisely in isonomic conditions that the rough ‘negotiation’ of building and access rights in the emerging neighbourhoods of Paris occurred – as a contingent instance of this ‘politics of no-rule’. The neighbourhood was a heterarchy – a flat, equal space which inter-related the people and things of the neighbourhood without an overruling authority.

In medieval Paris the heterarchical space of neighbourhood connected with and was centred on another space, that of the city – carried on the *faubourg*-centre route. The form is of two scaled political spaces or *polities*, constitutively neighbourhood and city and interrelated precisely where they overlap. People would have been situated and even *constituted* as neighbours and as citizens in these spaces, their political (community) and economic (market) relations with one another articulated and centred by this situational nexus. Where they are not only determines what they can do but also who and what they are. People *become* something in these sorts of situations. The same could be said of the objects people emplace around themselves and that mark their activities. What these objects are is a factor also of where they are.

There is an openness about these spaces in that they may be adjusted and manipulated. The significances of people and things are given in relations. But they are also changeable and the agents of change may, at this scale, be the people themselves, not just by themselves but in negotiation with others. People may build these spaces out, elaborating them, putting in place agents and equipment to some or other end. The processes and operations are never complete and never completely secure, they need to be maintained and developed, and adapted to changing conditions, instituting new processes and operations as these become necessary. Spaces that support these kinds of dynamics are learning environments, where people learn from what goes on around them, negotiating themselves into and out of what is happening. They may also be innovative, allowing changes and initiating new customs and practices that consolidate change.

### Economic Space

Public space was more than the space left over after buildings were constructed (contra Sennett 1994: 193). It may have been crowded, noisy, and dangerous but it was not without order. The streets and neighbourhoods of medieval Paris created on the one hand the *closures* that defined urban communities (neighbourhoods in



Figure 4. A Paris market, from *Le Chevalier Errant* by Thomas de Saluces (1403)<sup>2</sup>

this case) and on the other the *openings* of urban practice and action oriented to the rest of the city and the world beyond. Neighbourhoods were centred on the main routes, and these neighbourhood centres coincided with the locations of markets and other economic activities, which also accounted for concentrations of activity.

These urban and geographical structures were political, defining how people and things were ordered in relation to other people and things, and defining conditions for both acting and interacting. These same spaces provided the conditions for urban economies. There is strong evidence cities were initially established as political entities – as part of an infrastructure of government to administer territories – or as centres of the larger-scaled trade or distribution of strate-

gic goods and materials. But cities are not self-sufficient. The relation between cities and their surroundings is a dependant relationship and once cities were established it became necessary to organise reliable supplies of food and other products into the city. Yoffee describes how urbanisation entailed the building of the logistics of these supplies in the concomitant ‘reconstruction’ of the rural as “new villages, towns and hamlets arose in the backdraft of urbanisation” (Yoffee 2005: 60).

It was in cities that both commerce and agricultural market systems were centred. If we look at agricultural markets, these are structured hierarchically. Markets connect to other markets. Small local markets connect upwards to larger and more central markets. The main Parisian markets would have stood at the top of this hierarchy in the region, with smaller markets in towns and villages being the first stops for agri-

<sup>2</sup> Thomas III de Saluces, *Le Chevalier errant*, France (Paris), vers 1400-1405. Paris, BnF, département des Manuscrits, Français 12559, fol. 167.



cultural products for local townspeople, but also for trading up the hierarchy and ultimately to Paris. Once food was in the city it would have also been traded down from central city markets to neighbourhood and street markets. This last hierarchy is coincident with the basic city-neighbourhood structure of city fabric I have just outlined.

The economic space of medieval Paris was a simple hierarchy of markets in a mixed economy. Food would have been sold alongside craft and manufactured goods, cloth and clothing. Some goods and produce was made or prepared and sold from shops lining especially the main route to the centre, but commodities were also made in household workshops, or imported via agents and middlemen from the provinces or from even further off and warehoused in the neighbourhood to be sold from stalls and pavements along the busy routes. Artisans, traders, money lenders and other service providers, agents, middlemen and the labourers, clerks and porters that served them, mixed with new migrants, seeking out roles in these processes, producing new diversities of urban people specialised into and even defined by roles that their urban situation facilitated.

What was produced was an urban division of labour. Urban situation offered opportunities, and produced roles – which is to say urban identities – for all manner of people who sought out and embraced them. These roles proliferated as economic and political relations proliferated in a context of urban communities and economies of provision and exchange. The city was the place where innovation happened in social, technical and industrial organisation. The making of things and the exchange of goods and services for money or barter was a flexible and expanding means of securing livelihood in urban conditions. But the scope of this urban economy also went beyond industry and commercial exchange. The presentation of oneself and representation others, the making of contacts, business, social, and personal as well as the search for and exchange of knowledge would have happened through the same structures as local encounters in the streets

of the neighbourhood were supplemented by wider ones in the *faubourg*-to-centre routes and still wider and perhaps more formal ones in the centre or central market. The net result was that it was possible to learn, to gain knowledge and profile and to gain economically from one's location at boundaries of the spaces of the neighbourhood and the city and of the city and wider region.

Viable livelihoods were consistently secured in the space of the neighbourhood from economic exchanges where that space met the space of the city – which would have meant a net economic flow from the city to the neighbourhood. Such a flow represented the economic productivity of the political and economic organisation of the neighbourhood and the economic viability of its community. Power was in the hands of those who negotiated a position for themselves in this space.

There is nothing to suggest that any of this was planned. Indeed, there is reason to believe that this proliferation of new and diverse identities was a contingent effect, an accident of space and history. The knowledge of these processes started as a common and a minor knowledge, emergent out of the potentials space afforded, held in the customary doings and practices of people, held in the spaces and in the situations in which they happened rather than coming from 'authoritative' sources. People acquired roles in their new urban situations and roles and 'places' in the urban societies that emerged around them. These 'societies' were themselves a contingent outcome of the encounter of people in urban space. The production of diversity was not a natural or inevitable outcome however. Public order issues and the poor urban image with the ruling classes of what was sometimes not more than an "inextricable tangle of wooden stalls and mud-walled shacks, occupied by a crowd of petty trades" (Alfred Delvau, *Les Dessous de Paris* 1862, quoted in Hazan) provoked intervention from those classes, and these interventions led to a quite different configuration of power.





Figure 5. Haussmann's spatial interventions in Paris, 1853–1870. (Wagenaar 2000)<sup>3</sup>

### Haussmannisation

A reconfiguration of the space of Paris by Louis-Napoléon and Georges-Eugène Haussmann radically altered the way these spaces worked. Haussmann began developing the centre of Paris during the 1850s using innovative methods of financing. However competition for State funds from the building of the railways, an economic down-turn and the fact demand for the kind of high-rent housing this development produced peaked quite quickly (Harvey 2003: 130-133) meant that the direct impact of his interventions may be less than is sometimes claimed. His interventions however, including the development and construction processes themselves, decimated the fine-grained neighbourhood-to-city economic relation. It did this first of all by reducing urban structure to land and real estate for surveying, calculation and financial specula-

tion. Then the new city space Haussmann created supported other developments to consolidate effects that were not explicit in his original strategy.

Haussmann connected new modern cultural, public and commercial places and buildings into a highly integrated central city space through a redesigned network of boulevards lined with middle-class housing. He also linked this remade urban space directly to the new railway stations, connecting directly with the regional and national spaces that were being consolidated at the same time. Haussmann's motivation was predominantly to do with public space and public order issues. There was wide support amongst the ruling classes for improving the image of the city and taking back control of the streets for

<sup>3</sup> Michiel Wagenaar Townscapes of power *GeoJournal* 51: 3-13, 2000.

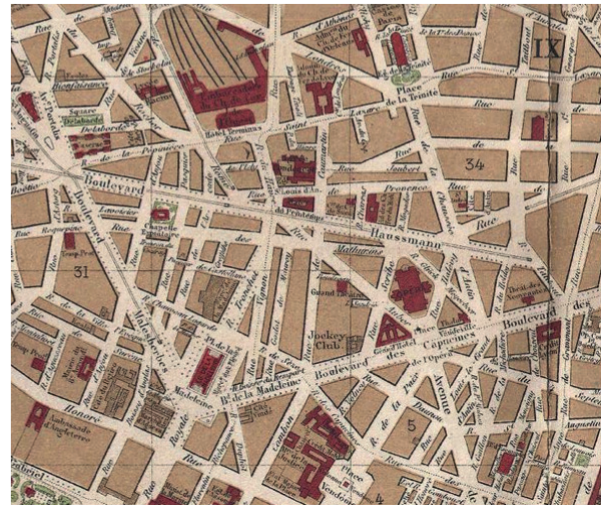
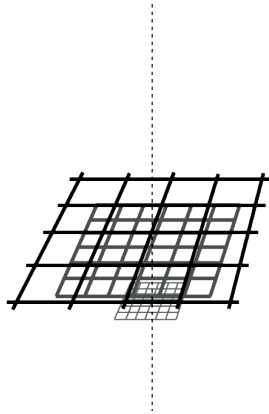


Figure 6. Making politics 2: Haussmann's rescaling and reconfiguration of Paris

consumerist and middle class pursuits. In the process he introduced a new urban scale into the city of Paris, shifting social and economic relations decisively to this scale and devastated the street life and petty commerce of the *communes*.

The redevelopment coincided with a rising property market and easy availability of capital, both actively supported if not engineered by the state, so that the project stimulated on-going rounds of speculative property development which traded on the steeply rising land prices on the new boulevards and waves of land price rises towards the periphery (Harvey 2003: 133-136). The effect was to provoke property speculation and to raise rents to levels beyond the reach of the small artisans, craftspersons and manufacturers, *petit bourgeois* shopkeepers and small-time middlemen and entrepreneurs. The users (shopkeepers and artisans, liberal professions and commercial interests) owned more than 80% of land before the Second Empire. By 1880 their share of the total had been reduced to a little more than 20% by a new *haute bourgeoisie* of landlords and large commercial interests and *rentiers* (Harvey 2003: 124).

The change defined not just a new aestheticised, commodified city, stripped of the orders that benefitted its inhabitants, but also a new social dependency concomitant on the disabling of social and economic processes these

orders represented. The result was a massive homogenisation of people that created a working class for the new industries emerging beyond the centre. Haussmann's interventions coincided with the increased demand for labour in industry so that those who were effectively swept out of the new centre and beyond the ring of stations by rising rents were available, demoralised and dispossessed, as labour. Class divisions consolidated and were inscribed in urban space. Later waves of migrants have been delivered into these peripheral spaces, which have become ever more segregated from the mainstream life of the *bourgeois* city.

The redevelopment plans contributed in this way to facilitating (and fixing in real estate) new flows of capital, establishing a new 'spatial fix' (Harvey 2001) for a new phase of industrial capitalism and bourgeois consumption. It was finally this and the '*embourgeoisement*' (Gaillard 1977) or gentrification of Paris that were the achievements of Haussmann's plans (Harvey 2003: 135). The new space itself asserted the scale of the city over that of the neighbourhood so that urban strategies shifted from the securing of strategic economic position in the streets and neighbourhoods to the exploitation of the increasing value of urban land as neighbourhoods became resources to be exploited for their rents (Smith 2002: 427).

A new *rentier* economy profited from returns from spiralling values of land and the financialisation of urban space. It is largely on these precarious foundations that contemporary financial economies still stand (Smith 2002). Retail had not gone as a product of the structure of main and back streets but the new space and rent rises had shifted the emphasis from the small shops, backstreet workshops and street vendors to the *Bon Marche* and its like which had opened their doors to middle class shoppers coming in from the region as well as from Paris. Cultural (like the Opera) and government (like the Hôtel de Ville) facilities were more large scale functions oriented to the region inserted into a fabric which had previously mediated the relation between neighbourhood and city.

The power of people in the neighbourhoods to adapt and change things was lost as power shifted to city and regional spaces, to owners of land and the technologies of order and policing that controlled the new spaces and access to it. Knowledge of what was proper or allowed came from a 'higher' source than the everyday space and activity of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood lost some of its autonomy as it lost the power to define its life and significance in what was customary and everyday.

The neighbourhoods had been recast as land and real estate and the very role and meaning of the city was shifted away from a complex structuring of locally productive forms of association and exchange. This was a dispossession of the 'rights' to association and livelihood of those who had most relied on them. An 'informalisation' of these older urban strategies of small-scaled production and exchange – a new 'moral order' – was imposed as dominant strategies of the capitalisation of land assumed the right to discount all others. This also achieved Haussmann's explicit aim of a 'reclaiming' of the space of the city for the middle and upper classes. This space was now one where a *bourgeois* "dawdling on a cafe terrace ... was disconnected from the street ... the people on the street now appearing as scenery, as spectacle (Sennett 1994: 346).

The sort of dispossession of 'rights' of livelihood this represents has been called 'Haussmannisation' (Jordan 2004; Merrifield 2014). A regime of social control and dependency was instituted and a social diversity that was non-standard, non-rational, never pre-planned or calculated but also productive, that added complexity, creativity and resilience, was lost. The strategy was carried out again in another iconic case, that of the 'renewal' of New York by Robert Moses after the Second World War. In this case a rich heritage of small businesses and local livelihoods had been built by migrants arriving in the city from Europe. Again the initiative for renewal coincided with state supported availability of capital and Moses built, creating the space and setting up the conditions that lead to the outcome.

In this case the reorientation of the city Moses effected was to a regional grid of highways he had begun building in the 1930s using funds that had become available with the New Deal. Again private developers made use of easy credit made available after the war and a fine grain of society and commerce was decimated by rising land values. Moses direct responsibility was limited to a few projects. The building of the Lincoln Centre for example, oriented to the larger region, laid waste to a small-scale commercial area while on the other end of the new regional connectors tracts of suburban housing were being built for people who would commute to work by car. But it was again waves of speculative development by private developers, supported by a liberal regulatory regime that was behind the gentrification of areas like the Lower East Side whose working and *petit bourgeois* classes were pushed out as their houses were turned into apartments for a new consumerist class who enjoyed the local character while relating beyond the city through the enhanced connections to the region and to the world.

Jane Jacobs was a vociferous opponent of Moses' 'development by gentrification' arguing for affordable housing and workplaces as a condition of an urban order of small-scaled diversity



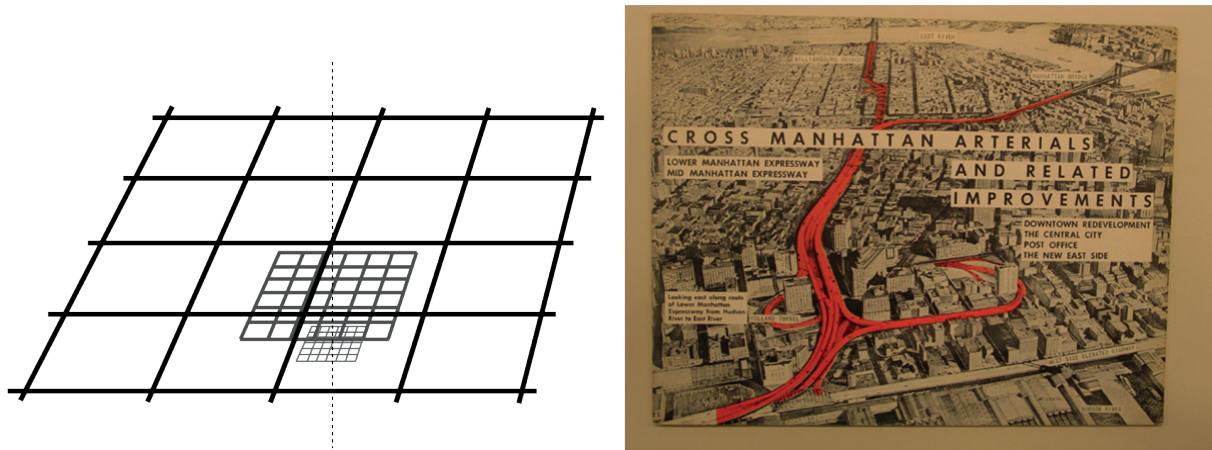


Figure 7. Making polities 3: Robert Moses' metropolitan rescaling and reconfiguration of New York

and creativity she identified as 'organised complexity' and located on the streets and pavements of neighbourhoods (Jacobs 1993).

### **Shenzhen: a 21st Century City of Migrants**

Shenzhen in the Pearl River Delta represents perhaps the most striking example of urbanisation in the world today, growing from 1980 to the present at an average rate of 27% per year. Shenzhen was built after 1980 as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) with preferential policies for foreign investment. The influx of young migrant workers to fill the demand for labour was facilitated by the changing of the agricultural collective system in the late 1970s which exposed the scale of rural underemployment. With the lifting of restrictions on migration after 1983, rural youth began migrating to the SEZs *en masse* working for the most part in factories. A share, increasing today, however found employment in petty retail trade and construction. It is estimated that 20-25% of migrants are self-employed. The city became known as the 'workshop of the world', exploiting the cheap labour and investment allowances to make commodities for the global market. Government kept migrants tied however, administratively and in terms of social welfare, to their places of origin and the result was the emergence of a 'floating population' of rural commuters. Today the number of people travelling regularly between work in the SEZs and rural

areas in China is estimated to be 260 million (Ma 2015).

The original population of the area was 300 000 living in agricultural and fishing collectives. This group had retained part title to their land and had in the years immediately after reform used skills developed in the collectives to participate in industrial development on their own account collaborating with industrial partners mainly from Hong Kong. Land has again played a primary and pivotal role in economic development and growth. The original vehicle was the expropriation of agricultural land and its reclassification as urban land. What was dispossessed was agricultural rather than urban productivity, and then the rights to use the land of the village itself left for at least a time with the original owners. Government and collectives had in some cases come to agreements regarding development rights according to a so-called Guangdong model (Chung & Unger 2013), in others they had exploited legal loopholes and grey areas and in still other cases developments were simply illegal. The collectives have still the use of 42% of potential development land (Caixin 2012) in Shenzhen. These 'urban villages' are under continuous threat of 'legalisation' by expropriation due to the potential redevelopment value of the land.

George Lin's study of local development in Guangdong demonstrates the connections





Figure 8. Making polities 4: Shenzhen: the village exuding the city (Sze Tsung Leong)

between urban expansion and rural land expropriation. Capital produced elsewhere (in industry for example) has not been the primary means of accumulation in urban circuits, rather land expropriation has produced capital to finance development. The original 'urban villagers' soon however made something urban of this. The collectives were the most active of all parties in early development which started with low-skilled manufacturing contracting and the building of migrant housing. A corps of military engineers had installed an urban grid over the land of what is now the central city in the 1980s. This grid was organised (and curved sometimes) to avoid the villages. The new industrial or housing buildings the villagers built at the perimeters of their villages joined up with this grid, forming edges to the new streets. The villages in a sense started exuding the city around themselves and for the most part found themselves left in the interiors of the blocks in an 'urban village' pattern while the new buildings oriented to the new fabric of the city (see O'Donnell 2013 for a different interpretation).

High-tech industry replaced the low-tech industry of the early industrialisation in the 1990s and the collectives have for the most part moved out of industrial development and settled into a role as landlords to the city's ever-growing migrant population. The original village buildings have been replaced with so-called 'handshake buildings' developed on collective housing land. These house the migrant tenants while the villag-

ers themselves have built more luxurious housing and facilities for themselves and run commercial ventures on the edges of the villages where they meet the grid and the space of the new centre.

The construction of this relation between the new urban grid and the village is different to Paris in that the fabric and structure of the city was engineered much later around long-existing villages soon to become neighbourhoods. But the orders of city and neighbourhood, though different to Paris in scale, were nevertheless established by the relations the urban villagers set up with this grid.

Another time, another commune: in Shenzhen the beneficiaries of this first round urban space making were a group empowered by a negotiation of their 'rights' based on the customary claims that farmers had on the use of land going back deep into Chinese history. The collectives were allowed to draw on their own resources in exploiting not just their land but also organisation skills developed in the Peoples Communes. They were also innovating by pooling their assets into joint-owned management and development companies and participating on their own account at multiple levels of the urban economy from their participation in street-edge commerce to the establishment of small industries, to renting of low-cost housing to migrants and on to their development of properties for industrial and higher-end residential rent or sale.

The Nanshan district of Shenzhen is within this original urban grid but some distance to the west



Figure 9. The Shenzhen master plan of 1982. The Nanshan district is the second pink area from the west. (Shenzhen municipality)

of the main centre and with lower rents than the centre. Today Nanshan hosts a burgeoning technology sector. But this is not the only 'creative' factor in the area. At the same time, it is the site of a string of three adjacent villages that used to sit on the waterfront of the Pearl River. Today the river is a kilometre away and the original road that linked the villages like three beads on a string tracks through the middle of three blocks of urban grid. The villages are less prosperous than those in the centre proper but the villagers have established a vibrant and very mixed local economy at the interface of the villages and the city.

The original coastal road can be accessed where it crosses the city grid and along it we find the main food market serving the whole area as well as a number of lines of small shops, some of them quite smart but most of them serving both everyday and small industry needs, as well as small industrial premises. The villages themselves are made up of low and medium-rise rental housing while on the urban grid and facing the city they have built better apartments, occupied also by the villagers, small hotels and malls, strings of small shops and light industrial premises. The area is occupied by shop-keepers (some of them the original villagers), shop-workers, industrial workers, mechanics, bakers, sheet metal workers, food vendors, barbers, and

agents and sellers for all manner of goods from household and shop and hotel-fitting equipment, industrial machinery, chemicals, industrial and building materials and from plastics to packaging and foodstuffs.

Migrants rent small apartments and work either in the area or in larger factories or offices in the neighbouring industrial and business areas. Some of them will live in the villages and work on their own account from the lower rent premises along the old road or the adjacent main roads. Urban villagers will own some of the shops and local enterprises or work in the management of the village properties. Many of them will lounge in the smarter public spaces, or in the tea shops, chatting and playing cards. The villagers have secure livelihoods and the affordable rents they charge migrants contributes to making migrant livelihoods relatively more secure. Many migrants will be working on their own account in small industries or as shop-keepers and will themselves employ other migrants.

By now many areas of Shenzhen are into their third phase of development, each regeneration producing land price and rent increases. The city's economy has doubled between 2009 and 2014 with a new emphasis on "innovation and finance" (Bloomberg 2015) and migrants today also include people working in professional and other higher-skilled roles. Some of the growth is



Figure 10. a. Nanxin Road curves to avoid an urban village b. Looking into the urban village

fuelled by start-ups of mainly technology companies and the growth of established ones. These are the cases that are in the news today but the diversity of business, industry and commerce in Shenzhen is quite staggering and it and the productive urbanisation it engenders and the livelihoods it supports defy easy summary. But we have to see this relative success against the fact that rather than being an outcome of economic growth urbanisation today is for the most part strategised as a means to mobilise and accumulate original capital (Lin 2009: 4) by dispossession.

### Conclusion

Cities have at multiple times in history supported the lives of the steady stream of migrants who have urbanised them. People commit themselves to migration not in order to protect or project their rural identities but to be part of a process that has diversified and productively complexified both the city and the identities of the populations that have inhabited it. It is in the multiplicity of opportunities, underwritten by an associational structure and practical community that a diverse urban community and economic life emerges. This is a community founded not on kinship or ethnicity but on shared situations and situated points of view on a practical world. The process is at one and the same time socially and economically productive, productive of distinctive local social places, and socially reproductive,

constructing livelihood and community in place of dependency.

The situated, community based small-scale livelihoods we see in medieval Paris and on the Nanxin Road in Shenzhen are created in and create distinctive and productive places of exchange and interchange between neighbourhood and city. It is these processes that in the first place underwrite the attraction of urban places for rural people. These are fundamental processes of both livelihood and urbanisation that are today devalued as 'informal'. Petty capitalism and commodity production was a bedrock of the political economies of early agrarian societies (Gates 2005). They have been regularly reinvented since as a strategy of survival and prospering. Today they are the entry point of East Asian firms into global markets (Gates 2005) and we see some of this happening in Nanshan's technology boom today. But they are also the means of a wider and more everyday social production and reproduction in countless urban communities who rely on these basically urban processes.

There are dangers lurking behind this process. Haussmannisation is a strategy connected to class struggle. The gentrifying city managed for a short time to deal with its own contradictions but the urban question concerning social reproduction formulated in 1977 by Manuel Castells is replaced today by a new urban question (Merrifield 2014) which reflects a serious



crisis concerning the question of reproduction in relation to the development agenda. Part of this concerns the fact life becomes increasingly precarious in formal employment (Saunders 2016) and it is increasingly difficult for formal waged employment to be the foundation of social welfare policies. According to James Ferguson so-called informal income will be the new reality (Ferguson 2010). What we need to enhance are capacities of small-scaled productivity and non-dependent livelihood. Paris showed us that cities can do this and Shenzhen shows us cities still do it. The forces arrayed against this form of local creativity are considerable but the possibilities it offers in terms of the enhancement of ordinary lives and for the policy aims of alleviation of and managing dependency justify our continuing interest in and research on it.

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### Note on the Author

STEPHEN READ is associate professor in the chairs of Architectural Theory and of Spatial Planning and Strategy in the Faculty of Architecture, TU Delft. His interest is in the relational structures of cities and how they support urban societies and economies. Relationality, phenomenology and the history and philosophy of technology inform his approach. His research now looks at urban development in challenging situations finding strategies to empower communities and support everyday livelihoods.

<https://tudelft.academia.edu/StephenRead>



# Passing Things Along: (In)completing Infrastructure

by ABDOUMALIQ SIMONE

(Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen)

## Abstract

Infrastructure not only concerns the movement of things, but also is itself a movement. It is a movement that gathers up remnants, the disparate, and that which has been cut loose from discernible modes of belonging. This is the case even though we may acknowledge its concretized and stalwart features, its violent inscriptions, heavy sunk costs, and ephemeral architectures of financing. Infrastructure is a movement in perception, not simply by constituting multiple vantage points or lines of articulation, but by pointing out how things are constantly coming undone, playing with a risk that it is really able to hang together across actual and potential perturbation, that it can displace the possible salience of highly localized conditions, triggers, and alterations by always shifting loads, acting as if it is always somewhere else than it is.

**Keywords:** social aesthetics, acceleration, the technical, mobility, affordances

## Prolific Statements

An increasing number of statements seem to be issued in the African and Asian urban districts where I have worked for many years. The proliferation of statements encompasses many factors, from the democratization of urban space, the ready access to social media, as compensation for disorientation, and as a reflection of a growing compulsion for individuals to repeatedly “announce” themselves. These statements are about many things. They profess, condemn, claim, elicit, and disclose. They test the waters; they provoke other statements. Statements seek and deflect attention. Statements are lines drawn in the sand, inscriptions that mark distance and progression. Sometimes they attempt to sum up what ought to be done, posit themselves as contracts and conditions for the willingness or capacity of persons to be part of specific kinds of places and relationships.

In Jakarta, for example, over the initial months of 2016, it seemed as if all kinds of residents

were preoccupied with issuing statements about LGBT, as if those four letters constituted some kind of coherent entity, some kind of imperial force that needed to be addressed, something which the majority of statements sought to differentiate themselves from, as if the absence of a statement could be construed as complicity. It was as if some kind of invasion was underway, which had to be identified and then combatted. In some respects such statements are an extension of others concerning the what some jokingly refer to as the “happy Muslim family” – where young middle class households self-consciously attempt to consolidate their presence within particular districts of the city through the rubric of Islamic propriety and then constantly employ various social media to share images reflecting household exuding a contented normativity. The viability of congealing such residential urban space appears then predicated on the continuous issuing of statements concerning appropri-

ate dress, behavior, gender roles, and consumption practices – both material and religious.

Statements delineate criteria for eligibilities; they seek to define the spaces in which individuals operate. Thus, statements act as an infrastructure, inscribing boundaries, mobilizing and materializing evidence of specific conditions. Statements draw lines among those considered worthy, eligible, and common, and inscribe divides among bodies and spaces. Statements are lines of delivery and articulation; they seal deals, define memberships, and incite antagonisms.

I reiterate these common understandings of statements, and portray statements as infrastructure, in order to reflect just how heterogeneous the compositions of households have been over time in the districts of Jakarta from which many statements about propriety are now being issued. Everyone seemed to know that many households were composed of adults who were not married, and in many instances not heterosexual. So-called popular neighborhoods of poor, working and lower middle class residents lived in all kinds of situations *with* one another even as official narratives of demarcation might express some overarching adherence to a set of specific gender and cultural norms. This living-with each other, however, was also predicated on residents making few if any statements about what they were.

As long as statements were not made identifying a range of transgressions from what was commonly assumed as the norm then such transgressions were not only tolerated but viewed as wedges, opening up spaces for maneuvers of all kinds, as well as oscillating alliances of sentiment, practice and viewpoints provisionally concretized as specific projects shared among various sets of residents. Potentially, transgressions – kept away from such designations in practice – reflected recognition on the part of residents that urban life required various “forays” into larger surrounds. It reflected recognition that individuals differentially positioned in relationship to structures of residence, occupation, and alignment with prevailing norms infused the district with a

broader array of capacities that potentially could be called upon.

Here the choreography of social relations – the deployment of power necessary to coordinate the living-with and the sculpting of local relationality – was more a matter of coming up with the aesthetic forms capable of modulating contact among residents, shaping the ways in which residents witnessed and engaged each other. This is what Strathern (1988) would call the capacity of ‘elicitation: how particular kinds of responses, predictabilities, commitments, and indifference can be extracted. How can people and their actions appear in ways that enable them to be relatable but at the same time where the differences brought into relationship do not necessarily implicate the bearers of those differences as either culpable or dependent? How can residents in a district enact their ways of life such that they are “known” by others, but where that knowledge is not construed as a commentary about the manner in which specific lives are conducted? Again, this is a matter less of statements, less of lines of articulation that implicitly calculate the “weightings” each componential element brings to or bears from being in a particular relationship. Rather, it is finding an aesthetics that enables things to become simultaneously visible and invisible to each other, where a definitive line between them is not possible to discern. It is as if one sees something going on without seeing it, and therefore has no basis from which to issue statements about it.

Such an aesthetic is not only visual but aural as well. It is a matter of generating rhythms and waveforms that emanate from the densities of heterogeneous activities and forces elaborating multiple registers of sound impacting upon neurophysiological circuits that modulate affect, sympathy, and a preparedness to act. Such sonic atmospheres act as infrastructures for the enunciation of the exaltation required for collaborative practices – the sense of wonderment and ease required to live-with the ebbs and flows, the constraints and traumas of everyday life (see McKittrick 2016).



These efforts remain the work of representation, something which the clamor to make statements in the immediacy of social media tends to circumvent (Morris 2016). This work of representation may not have come up with specific ideals or forms capable of positing the concepts of more judicious, productive existences. Yet by sculpting motile sociability, particular practices and arrangements that on the surface could not easily settle with one another, which would be expected to induce rifts and accusations, were melded into proximities, orbits of mutual attentiveness that kept open the possibility of a collective voice.

### A Spiraling Aesthetic

The built environment of these districts was critical to such aesthetics. Not only was the physical demarcation of plots, households, and functions often intentionally made ambiguous but the intensive compactness of the distribution of built forms with their wildly divergent materials, angles, architectural vernaculars, and uses rendered whatever took place intensely public and singular at the same time. As many districts began their existence with a homogenous outlay of measured plots, basic service provision, and uniform houses, they quickly became almost indistinguishable from those districts where land was entirely “self” allocated, built and serviced. These were districts where there were limited opportunities to withdraw or hide the critical features that might define the appearance of any resident, which also attenuated the need to make statements about definition since everything appeared more or less in some “common view.” At the same time, what appeared in such a public perspective was constantly contingent upon the particular positions that bodies assumed while being viewed, and given that these positions were so materially and architecturally diverse, it was never clear just exactly what was being seen once it was seen.

While there were certainly well known norms and values at work in aggregating a collective identity in these districts, the heterogeneous

way in which they were built to accommodate various trials and errors as residents sought to improve their living conditions meant that summation statements about where the district was headed, what could be legitimately experimented with or not, could never be definitively tied down. The built environment was open to successes and failures of all kinds, provisional settlements and accommodations, things being shifted around in a process of constant re-doing. An aesthetic of incompleteness signaled not so much a specific stage in some aspirational development trajectory as much as an incessant gathering up of what was at hand in order to make something often without clear precedent. An atmosphere was generated that enabled a living-with not predicated on a living-for, as in an integration of effort and sensibility.

The relative absence of statements of propriety perhaps also has something to do with the ambiguity of property within many of these districts. For an unequivocal status of private property did not exist. Land in Indonesia in the last instance cannot be completely alienated. It is registered according to varying statuses that allow it to be *de facto* bought and sold, allowing exclusive rights to attain to an “owner”, but which are also all subject to various forms of contested claiming and use rights. The enforcement of propriety thus had no material “back-up” in a definitive notion of property, so no matter how much residents might view residential status as a matter of eligibility according to particular norms of propriety, the very “property” of a district was replete with so many statuses and contestations that it was difficult for statements about any kind of propriety to be issued.

Returning to the notion of “gathering up” as the corollary in an aesthetics of incompleteness, a group of Haitian writers popularly known as the “Spiralists” exemplify a process of saying something without statements, of saying being a gathering up of whatever is around to forge a world to live in with both has everything and nothing to do with the apparent terrain, its morphological or political features. It is a gathering up in an

expression without hesitation or plan, as things circle each other, move with and away from, and where nothing rules anything out.

Beginning in the mid-1960s Frankétienne, Jean-Claude Fignolé, and René Philoctète began writing projects invoking the form of the spiral as an aesthetics which attempted to both “bore into” the political dread of living in Duvalier-ruled Haiti and as a way to exceed all of the trauma of Haitian post-revolutionary culture as if the potential of a revolution traumatic to the rest of the world, thus “inviting” years of repression, could be lived differently in place. Unlike many of their literary compatriots, the Spiralists never left Haiti. Fignolé in fact served for many years as mayor of Abricots. The literary work avoided statements, instead opting for cultivating landscapes full of remains, full of detached details not easily integrated into any program. The spiral was the antithesis of articulation; the gathering up in its equilibration between centrifugal and centripetal forces is not an account, not a line of valuation, not a device that places things in a respective or respectable position.

As the foremost commentator of this literary moment, Kaiama Glover, puts it, these works are full of:

Long-suffering zombies, allegorical wanderers, century-hopping, institutionalized former slaves, and headless young housewives, the Spiralist characters seem to exist without reference, fragmented and unpredictable. Like musical passages in textual symphonies, they literally and figuratively bounce off, echo, double and reflect one another. They are signposts, harbingers, and rest stops – so many parallel or contradictory building blocks that contribute as much to the form as to the content of a given text. (33)

Take this selection from Frankétienne’s *Ready to Burst* (1968):

Who is calling to Raynand in the tentacled darkness? Jungle of invisible arms. Sharp edges of flattened voices. Viscosity of hairy hands. Forest of vines and glutinous intestines. Piles of ripped-out fingernails. Emaciated faces. His nerves, his senses on high alert.

Raynand feels them on his heels. Close. Far too close. Stumbling against a piece of broken concrete, he falls down at the intersection of Jean-Jacques Dessalines Boulevard and Fronts-Forts Street. Face-first. He keeps rolling. Then comes to a complete stop. On his back. His body, a blazing torch. His limbs, bursts of flames. His head on fire, a flaming mass filled with exploding shells. Eyes open, he looks at the corner of the street whizzing by like wagons jam-packed together, mounted on rails like a high-speed train, an express train to the sea. It’s funny ... I’m taking the midnight express. It’s beautiful, this aboveground landscape of neon signs! The sky chopped into ragged pieces. Neon flowers light up ... shut off ... light up again ... Blue ... red ... green ... yellow. How quickly it goes by, this silent, free-wheeling train to the dock! Blue-green ... blue-red ... deep yellow. Stereophonic surge in the middle of the night. The street lets out a long trumpet blast between the two rows of sealed-up houses. Brains crushed. Head aflame. Torchlight tattoo. Carnival. Mask. Fear ... dead silence ...

(<http://www.warscapes.com/literature/ready-burst-excerpt>)

Here is a city as nervous system bearing and throwing off excessive loads as a resident is surrounded and extricated, jungle converted to city converted to jungle, the place of capture on a fast train to who knows where, everything incomplete, shocked open, ready to be refigured, to pass on.

### Infrastructure Passing On

Besides statements, then, infrastructure constitutes a distributed view upon that which is normatively rendered as “near” or “far”, “proper” or “improper.” It is a viewpoint constituted in motion as infrastructure not only concerns the movement of things, but also itself as a movement. This is the case even though we may attend to its concretized and stalwart features, its violent inscriptions, heavy sunk costs, and ephemeral architectures of financing. Infrastructure is a movement in perception, not simply by constituting multiple vantage points or lines of articulation. For if any piece of infrastructure is to be read as coherent entity from a vertically inflected gaze, a bird’s eye view, its existence is predicated on a risk. This is a risk that it is really

able to hang together across actual and potential perturbation, that it can displace the possible salience of highly localized conditions, triggers, and alterations by always shifting loads, volumes, accelerations, traffic, and intensity somewhere else. The landscape through, over, and on which infrastructure runs is an oscillating entanglement of entities of all kinds – flora, fauna, bacterial, viral, material – which never stand still, and are incessantly recomposed.

If infrastructure is about passing things on, it then cultivates a perspective on a surrounds that is multiple, decentered, and shifting. As a method of formatting, of bringing form into existence and informing matter, infrastructure may seem to be informed by linear visions, clearly demarcated lines from “here” to “there” or a geometric arrangement of materials in space. But infrastructure also restitutes potentials that had been subtracted by subject-centered ways of seeing and making statements (Deleuze 1989), which are largely aimed at consolidating a specific position or colonizing particular angles on things. Infrastructure is never complete – either in its closure to further articulations or in its process of immediate decay. It may be repaired, expanded, and updated and, as such, it constantly shows the evidence of not only what is bears and extracts, or the force that it imparts, but of the limits of its anticipation. It never fully (or only) does what it says it will do.

Infrastructure can be read as the embodiment of specific instantiations of capital flows, the aspirations of various kinds of articulation, the concretization of political accords, strategic devices for socializing bodies and places, and as technologies for “throwntogetherness” (Massey 2005). Yet equally important, infrastructure can be seen as a gesture toward the uncertain stabilities that exist in and as a result of the territorialization of space into discernible points, units, tangents, and vectors. Instead of a constantly expansive hardwiring of metabolism, atmosphere and geomorphology, infrastructure is also an increasingly frenetic signaling of volatility. Each suture, hinge, circumvention or agglomeration is insufficient to

the uncertainty infrastructure both registers and constitutes.

Creative destruction makes infrastructure a plaything in the recalibration of value; exhaustion acts as a crisis that prompts repairs and renovation, and aesthetic incompatibility to prevailing sentiments subjects infrastructure to radical makeovers. But from its inception, infrastructure seems to point to the simultaneous presence of many temporalities – all of the actions never quite constellated as event, all of the intersections and transactions that either could have happened somewhere but didn’t or that did but didn’t go anywhere specific or didn’t leave enough of a tangible trace from which to point back or move forward.

### Technical Life

Whatever infrastructure does relies on recording techniques, narrative devices, architectural forms, and modes of visual and cognitive display – all of which filter, transmit and generate data and information in ways that are neither neutral nor transparent. This is not just about plans and tools, written-down or improvised. The technical is a way in which things come together, with and without us, in a process of energetic transmission, where new functions and operations kick-in in the coming together of specific elements and conditions.

We may make these technical devices or have a hand in them but the way in which they impact each other is outside of anyone’s control. All these instruments bring their own temporal grammars and imaginations to bear upon the imaginative and affective horizons through which time, memory and durations are indexed, validated and taken forward. They create an entirely new set of possibilities. They are not the outgrowths of striving bodies but collisions of materials and processes that generate impacts far from their initial sites and “steady-states.” As Hansen points out, technical operations configure environmental conditions of sensibility “not to confront perception with the transcendental sensible content that comprises its virtual con-

dition...but to expose as experience that (which) occurs without directly yielding any perception whatsoever” (page #). The individuated form of persons and collectivity draws from a stratum of multiple and incompatible energies and forces, swirling frictions, and irruptions from which individuals emerge as a provisional solution. Such a stratum possesses an infinite set of possibilities, and these are continuously replenished and reformed by the particular ways in which things, persons and social entities are actualized. Any actualization entails the coming together of elements, crystalized in a coordinated “body” that is coupled to an associated milieu, a set of conditions that have no other unity than that of a system put together with a given individual or collective (Hansen 2012). As a result, any reality that is part of such a milieu could enter into other relations. So any actualization posits its own potential re-assemblage elsewhere and in other terms.

A crucial supplement to this process is what Simondon (2009) calls the *transindividual*, a form of individuation that “bypasses the individual while still prolonging it” through the substantiation of environmental sensibility and capacity that creates a new individual reality. In other words, the *transindividual* is the domain of technical operations that work on the pre-individual stratum to create specific fields of potentiality and sense for individuals that come into being. These operations intensify human individuation by exposing it to forms of sensory experience, ways of experiencing the world that do not produce any kind of perception and that remains outside of consciousness. Technical operations generate forms of individuation that by-pass the particular association of an individual or collective with a given milieu and impacts directly on the sensibility of the overall environment, generating a subjectivity that is not bound to any particular subject (Hansen 2012). So technical operations (*technicity*) are a way of mediating between the pre-individual dimensions of the subject and *transindividual* individuation as a displaced subjectivity (Hansen 2012).

Whatever happens in a given location – a location in large part given, even gifted, as a by-product of an infrastructure which enables it to have a sense of definitiveness – ramifies in all kinds of directions. It is replete with tensions, potential maneuvers and actualizations of virtual scenarios that go many different ways. Any action may have its intended audiences, but it spills over. Even if not witnessed directly, it can be the subject of reports and rumors. Environs are replete with what Massumi (2015) calls “bare activities”, imperceptible adjustments and immediately lived hypotheses about what is about to happen that incline persons to attend to particular textures, pathways in the landscape at hand. A thickly configured affective field pulsates with tensions constantly worked under any radar or conscious deliberation. Infrastructure intervenes not only to constitute starting positions from which to trace webs of causation, relevance, and impact but also to etch out channels of evacuation. Infrastructure is channels for passing things, for passing us on.

It is not only important what infrastructure brings together, how it connects actions, bodies, and sites, but also how it provides channeled lines of flight that enable people and things to exit from concentrations – a way to get away from having to absorb or be the bearings of work, home, institution, or place. Infrastructure seems also to “run away” from the intense simultaneity of multiple temporalities – the prospects that many things could and did happen somewhere. So the burden of bearing the weight of such intensity is displaced through the connective tissues of infrastructures. We largely know what the vast multiplicity of activity taking place concurrently and incipiently means for us in terms of their likely causations and impact on our lives through infrastructure. But, but we are constantly reminded about what we don’t know by it as well.

Our everyday routines and itineraries constantly skirt on the interface between habituation and improvisation, where improvisation entails knowing from where we set off from but



always raises that question about how to get “home.” Imagine how it is possible to leave your house and set off and keep going without having any destination in mind other than the next step. If you are sufficiently funded you can keep on going indefinitely. Without map, plan, or anticipation, the itinerary becomes an entanglement of memory, impulse, desire, and calculation.

To continue constantly without a destination in mind is the implicit premise of infrastructure. Even as it orders and structures discernible courses of action and conveyances of cause and effect, it also seems to set things loose, pointing to how turbulent whatever seems stable actually is. We are confronted with a world of impersonal forces indifferent to our existence and forces propelled as the unforeseen consequences of prior actions. As such, we largely navigate this world indirectly, rather than confronting such forces head-on. Infrastructure itself tries to elide and circumvent these same forces, constituting a bet that by enfolding materials, places, and bodies into various connections the responsibilities for engaging these forces will be reciprocally distributed among the “connected”. That as recipients of what infrastructure does we become complicit with the bet that we can dodge bullets coming from unseen directions. By offering to tie things down, to make things relate, to bring what is far near and to transport what is near to further regions, infrastructure becomes a confidence game.

This doesn’t mean that things and people are not stuck in place, stuck in routines, stuck in dead end futures. Infrastructures can function as traps, promising to enable and facilitate only to prey on our aspirations and then manipulate or immobilize us. At the same time, statements are often necessary as the boundary drawing mechanisms that enable specific “cuts” (Strathern 2011) in the unyielding streams of relationality that urbanization seems to posit. Statements do enable provisional moments and operations of cohesiveness and coordination among an ensemble of various materials and powers. They are inscriptions of boundaries that constitute recognition of

commonality, of things being in the same place together, of administrative jurisdictions, regulatory apparatuses applicable to a coherent territory, even as territories of course overlap, veer off, intersect and dissipate.

As Keller Easterling (2014) puts it, infrastructure embodies particular dispositions, particular capacities to operate on and effect users in specific ways as a kind of power in readiness. It lures and inclines, and we, in return, are inclined toward it so that a holding takes place. So captivation can become capture. Held in place we are subject to the extraction of our attention and energies.

Yet, infrastructure can also render itself expendable. In Jakarta the problems that infrastructure attempts to address have largely come about through overbuilding and through the attempts to direct the rhizomatic flows of heightened rivers and creeks into structured channels of evacuation, a maneuver which, in the concomitant diminution of flood basins, exacerbates floods.

It is increasingly difficult to ascertain just what infrastructure does articulate. The intricacies of information economies configure new spatial dimensions of the vertical and the horizontal. In what Benjamin Bratton (2016) calls “the stack,” promiscuities of all kinds are superimposed on each other – the confluence of interoperable standards-based complex material-information systems. Each place, person, or locale is the superimposition of proliferating signifying systems. What something is or could be, what it can do, and where and with what it can relate is something increasingly multiple, all over the place. It takes place in such a way that no place belongs to any particular “sovereign decision”.

There can be no easy or even arbitrary declarations of what belongs or what does not, about who is friend or enemy. The various ways in which entities are located and addressed, in various networks of information, means that there can be many layers of sovereign claims over the same site, person or event. Bratton includes the

example of ubiquitous computing, which will soon be capable of assigning unique addresses to a near-infinite variety of shifting forms of relationships between things. Also, he cites the ways in which augmented reality directly projects a layer of indexical signs upon a given perceptual field of vision, and literally dislocates it from any single set of coordinates.

### The Rush to Build

If infrastructure also operates as a means of passing on, to what extent does it contribute to its own disappearance? To what extent is it a tool that seeks to make itself obsolete, or rather, to actively maintain a sense of incompleteness? It is possible to see how these questions play out in the rush to build things that currently sweeps across many cities of the Global South.

Infrastructure always seems to promise something, and so often it seems as if it is a promise intended to be broken. Whether this is a matter of intended deceit or an ingenuous miscalculation as to how infrastructure will actually be used and the costs entailed to keep it going, those responsible for its care often run to keep up or simply disappear from view. Public housing, for example, has long seemed to promise that even the poor could have access to a livable environment, and no matter how much residents may take pride in their surroundings and learn to manage seeming unworkable densities of occupation, housing authorities ended up being the actors that underestimated the work involved, or more maliciously sought to constrain the potentials of their own creations.

Infrastructure can't really promise anything. Even as infrastructure emplaces capital flows, the specificities of materials, actors, and technicalities are not definitively tied down as evidence of macro-structural maneuvers. They are also their own things and constitute their own *alliances*. Here, alliances refer to *what might be going on* without the obligation to marshal specific forms of verification (Castro 1992, Lury 2012).

Across the region of Jakarta there is a rush to build. Politicians, developers, investors, bureau-

crats, and ordinary residents seem to talk of little else but the need to build things – from new freeways, transit systems, luxury sub-cities, flood canals to thousands of small houses and commercial buildings.

While infrastructural products may be replete with technical specifications, the enactment of infrastructure entails a complex process of assembling sentiment, authorization, finance, and labor. It has to disrupt and implant, anticipating as much as possible the ramifying implications of this duality. As an assistant to one of Indonesia's major property developers aptly puts it, "it is a constant effort to keep things from slipping away." Urban infrastructural development not only constitutes a guess on where the city is "going", it also elicits the possibility of being part of a cascading and lateral chain of significations and realignments not necessarily imprinted with the weight of particular causations or history.

But it also instigates a temporality "set loose" from calculation – a process of associating place, people, institutions, finance and politics that ramifies in unanticipated ways. This instigation can be materialized as the disentangling of landscapes, ecologies, and territories; it can be materialized as the regeneration of places otherwise considered dissolute or beyond repair; it can be materialized as the redemption of past efforts and histories, the realization of long-held aspirations, or the concretization of the possibility of another way of living.

This instigation is something that encompasses and exceeds speculation. It not only operates within the rubrics of the financialization of risk as a means of hedging a multiplicity of probable futures for how a specific infrastructure will operate and the value it will have. This instigation also aims to posit infrastructure as *detached from reason*, within a scenario that cannot be fully calculated now, and which imbues it with an adaptability to futures where no matter what happens there is possibility of recouping something which itself cannot be specified.

Even if contracts, policies, projects, technicalities, and brute force hold the constitutive com-

ponents of roads, rails, housing developments, flood mitigation conduits, water reticulation, or sanitation treatment systems in place, each of these components are also enmeshed in a plurality of other relationships and statuses. In Jakarta, and in many other cities of the so-called “South”, the rush to build tries to outpace escalating land prices, labor shortages, changing policy frameworks, cost overruns and widening disparities in interest rates incurred by borrowing in different currencies. It tries to outpace a creeping diversification of options in the housing market as both available and anticipated stock remain unaffordable to 70% of the population looking for accommodation.

In the commercial property market, developers try to outpace the intense competition waged at the level of occupancy rates, a byproduct of which is for owners to offer attractive long-term leasing arrangements or leases with flexible escape clauses, but which are paid for in U.S. dollars. As many new commercial buildings are being built on the sites of a first generation of office towers, the rush to build also tries to maximize the locational advantage of no longer appealing, half-empty commercial stock. But in order to do so, developers face the prospect of waiting out long leases to existing tenants or compensating for early termination. The rush to build is also rooted in the fact that almost all developers have to offer their own so-called “cheap payment” plans because of prohibitive bank mortgage rates. These payment plans require a nominal down payment and anywhere from 12-48 subsequent monthly payments prior to the completion of the project, money that is immediately re-invested in new construction projects. As the value of an apartment appreciates on average 30-35% between the time of sale and its completion, many sources of financing are applied to the acquisition of such property in order to attain eventual rental income or simply play the game of capital appreciation. While real demand seems to be sustained, developers still rush to outpace possible bubbles and oversupply.

The rush to build is also shaped by the recent opening up of perpetual leaseholds to foreign investors at the high end of the housing market, which has the effect of extending the territory of the luxury property market into solidly entrenched working class districts. The rush to build is also related to the fact that only a minority of new apartment owners actually occupies the premises, instead renting them out in all kinds of tenancy arrangements. The initial round of providing so-called affordable vertical living has demonstrated the complex everyday politics that can ensue as a large base of heterogeneous residents with no prior history with each other try to consolidate particular spaces and styles of operation. It is not clear what kind of contested or accommodating atmospheres this is going to produce in the long run, so developers rush to build before particular negative impressions take hold.

All of this rush to build, in aggregate, creates the very conditions that developers seek to outpace. In their very efforts to stabilize they introduce intensive instabilities in the system that has to be continuously reformatted. On a broader level there is the widespread conversion of residential into commercial property, but largely under the radar, so there are efforts to stabilize this trend without prompting rezoning or commercial licensing that would increase costs, and these efforts entail maintaining the accouterments of a residential façade. Older, largely vacant commercial buildings are surreptitiously refurbished as large-scale rooming houses in order to maintain some viable income flow.

Variegated and rapidly shifting land use patterns, speeded up circulation of residents across different housing locations, the formation of growth boundaries in the form of massive industrial land estates at the urban periphery, the youth demographic that floods the market with new workers every year, the accelerated roll-out of flyovers, bypasses, and rail systems, the uncertain morphological and ecological implications of massive concentrations of new developments in particular parts of the city – all impact upon each

other in ways that amplify the sense of exigency to deploy infrastructure as a marker of stabilization.

But this deployment requires its own twists and turns. It entails complicated negotiations as to the extension of road widths, the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of workers who use roads, sidewalks, verges, riverbanks, rail lines, and underpasses as places of residence and employment. It entails the consolidation of land replete with various histories, ownership structures, entitlements, and functions. It entails negotiations with different kinds of authorities who derive their power from the mobilization of different interests and constituencies frequently living and operating side by side, but often in very different worlds.

It means responding to the demands of a more politically involved middle class that wants a better quality of life and the realization of particular imaginaries about what a functional city looks like. It means staying under the threshold of potential antagonisms that might slow down progress of projects producing the prospect of substantial financial loss. It entails trying quickly to establish particular facts on the ground, which even if deemed to be violations later on are too sizeable to be removed or substantially altered. So infrastructure here is a politics of modulation, of bringing volatility to a workable standstill so that particular projects can materialize. And then pass on.

### **Affordances**

An aesthetics of living-with based on incompleteness and on the entangling of public witnessing with singular perspectives was critical for enabling popular districts to avoid the need to generate statements about eligibility, status, and propriety that might precipitate the exclusion of specific kinds of residents. Nevertheless, statements need to be made about the basic capacities of such districts to provide such affordances. For how they are themselves afforded opportunities in a larger urban system is increasingly a matter of staking claims within

overcrowded fields of needs, aspirations and demands.

These districts are rapidly being transformed through disentangling the material supports of this aesthetics and displacing residents to more highly individuated residential situations at the periphery of urban regions. Here they accrue increased levels of indebtedness for assets of uncertain value and longevity. Already, residents living on the outskirts are trying to find ways to get back to the center, but now in a manner that is much more precarious and devoid of the supportive relationships cultivated over many years' duration.

A critical question is how "big stories" of transformation can be put together – knowing the limitations of what statements do – and yet still remain cognizant that cities are replete with intricate complexions and visibilities – where much of what intersects and impacts upon each other remains out of view or calculation.

It is not exactly clear how to assess the ways in which the relationships among infrastructure, mobility, the biophysical processes of the city, and its larger ecological footprints will reach some critical tipping point. It is not certain just how the absolute emergency will make itself known in a way that compels some kind of action. Finance capital has not yet figured out modalities sufficient to the guarantee the profitability of low carbon production and infrastructure. As the terms of viability for the new horizon of energy consumption are yet to be invented, there is a time-limited window of opportunity to execute infrastructural transitions that promote more egalitarian citizenship and sustainability.

What we do know is that the elaboration of a viable risk profile for climate adaptation is nearly impossible in a situation where decisions about the kinds of technologies, prices, and investments entailed remain so uncertain. Current debates about the fiscal instruments needed to drive the transition to green infrastructure are bogged down in multilateral discussions still locked into the language of integrating nation-states. This means that in situations where



substantial investment in *basic* infrastructure is urgently needed, the relative absence of viable regulatory frameworks makes transactions costs prohibitive. It also makes little sense for cities to become overly preoccupied with the terms of international cap and trades, emission reduction mechanisms, and the harmonization of distinct bands of warming into aggregate measures. Yet, since infrastructure investments largely generate profit at the urban scale, cities need to be doing something.

Yet, cities experience widespread institutional inertia; few of the basic preconditions exist for city governments to put building blocks in place. There is the need to more explicitly understand the political institutional gridlock that characterizes most cities. Despite these limitations, whilst knowing the systemic nature of the gridlock *and* the degrees and types of uncertainty involved, the material base of cities will need to be radically restructured. Initially, this involves engaging and reworking existing policy networks that cut across national divides, as well as forging interconnections among stylistically divergent local activist civic projects.

But with few exceptions, how cities facilitate, produce, and absorb new material conditions is not yet apparent. Fifteen to twenty years will be needed to build the economic platform, institutional intelligence and networks capable of adhering to the efficacy standards specified in international agreements. The massive population dispersals that will ensue if adaptation strategies are not implemented requires making the urban infrastructure conundrums explicit, as well as the potentials to link social justice and green agendas. The trajectories of adaptation and restructuration are highly contingent, and so there are various ways to respond to these imperatives.

The objective is to posit how it might be possible to move beyond the current orientations of “progressive” urban politics. These current orientations either emphasize neoliberal misery, green revolution salvation, repeated attempts to mobilize sufficient numbers and design mecha-

nisms to make participatory planning and decision-making effective, or the overly pragmatic realism of corporate associations of the urban poor which concentrate on building a semi-autonomous safety net that is recognized as inadequate in the long run but capable of making significant improvements in the present. These orientations are limited in that they do not constitute the sum total of the political imaginary at the level of urban districts and neighborhoods.

While Colin McFarlane’s (2011) important monograph *Learning the City* might suggest otherwise, learning how to use the urban, rather than simply strategically working within it remains something undernourished by most social movements. Part of the work of being in the city entails a range of literacies that have to be honed over time. The popular practices of the past require updating in new forms. Part of the importance of everyday urban practices is that it constitutes a repository of urban learning, with important skills required in how to forge and conduct new relationships among people, places, and things. An important role for public policy, then, is how institutions can effectively pay attention to the logics and dynamics of everyday in order to creatively animate a broader public awareness of the larger issues concerning the relationships between justice, redistribution, climate adaptation and infrastructural change. Recasting urban life, then, is at the core of such a pedagogic, social learning project.

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### Note on the Author

ABDOUMALIQ is a professor of Global Urbanism at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, as well as Visiting Professor of Sociology at Goldsmiths College, University of London and Visiting Professor at the African Center for Cities, University of Cape Town.

# Attitudes Towards State Languages versus Minority Languages in the Contemporary World: The Case of Catalan in Sardinia

by JOSÉ MARÍA SANTOS ROVIRA  
(University of Lisbon)

## Abstract

The dichotomy of state language versus minority languages is a well-known subject among linguists. However, there are several competing perceptions of the role that minority languages play in society. In Italy, Catalan is a minority language and has been spoken for centuries in the Sardinian city of Alghero. Today, however, its survival is uncertain. Why have Algherese people progressively abandoned the Catalan language over last few decades? To answer this question, we begin by reviewing the range of scholars' interpretations of the motivations and attitudes that lead people to reproduce or abandon minority languages. In this article, I argue that there is an unavoidable link between social systems and linguistic practices that determines the consolidation or extinction of some languages, as has happened in Alghero, where the traditional language is at risk due to changes in social structure.

**Keywords:** Algherese, Catalan, Sardinia, state language, minority languages, linguistic attitudes

## Introduction

The dichotomy of state language versus minority languages has been thoroughly covered by linguists (Bradley & Bradley, 2013; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Fasé *et al.*, 1992 & 2013; Fishman, 1991; Gorter *et al.*, 2012; May, 2000 & 2011). It is commonly agreed that minority languages suffer different processes of language shift and, in extreme cases, extinction, when faced with the power of a national state language that inevitably surpass them in prestige, social and economic value, and normative notions of usefulness. A thorough account of the global situation of minority languages around the world will exceed the scope of this paper, so I will focus on the European context, wherein "European language activists have successfully campaigned for the right to use regional or minority languages in a range of social contexts. Despite this, such

rights are rarely exercised" (Madoc-Jones & Parry, 2012: 165). In Italy, as in other European countries, minority languages enjoy legal protection, but at the same time, their own native speakers avoid using them in formal situations. As Gules *et al* argue, "To have a real understanding of specific language problems we need to study how people react to language varieties spoken in their locale" (1983: 81). In Alghero we have found that the local language is rarely used. Even when foreigners ask locals questions in Catalan, they prefer to reply in Italian.

UNESCO considers Algherese, the variety of Catalan spoken in the Italian city of Alghero, on the west coast of the Mediterranean island of Sardinia, to be an endangered language (Moseley, 2012: 19). The reasons for this situation are strongly tied to the social and economic situation of the local Catalan-speaking community. Social

systems and linguistic practices are closely linked to each other, and the development of Catalan in Sardinia is no exception. As I will explain in the coming pages, the social and economic changes that took place in Alghero in the last century provoked a decline in the number of Catalan-speaking members in the area, and displaced Algherese speakers from the upper class to the middle-lower class. Algherese switched from being the most prestigious language any citizen from Alghero could speak, to just a mere symbol of tradition and local folklore or, even worse, a burden for the younger generations who seek to find a place in a hostile monolingual society.

### Algherese from a Linguistic Perspective

Algherese is traditionally recognized as part of the Eastern Catalan division of languages, following its original appraisal by Milà i Fontanals (1861), although common opinion among scholars today is that Algherese cannot be classified as an eastern dialect of Catalan but as an eclectic one (Caria, 2006: 40). This paper, however, maintains the more common viewpoint that Algherese is a dialectal variation of Catalan, although with larger differences in comparison with other varieties. This makes it an isolated, idiosyncratic, and *consecutius*<sup>1</sup> dialect. With a seven-century history, and thanks to its own historical details, it deserves the honour to constitute a unique group.

Algherese has its roots in the fourteenth century, when Catalan was the official language of the Sardinian administration and the language spoken by nobles and tradesmen. Catalan was used widely across the entire island from the fourteenth until the eighteenth century, when the city was transferred to the House of Savoy. However, the only part of Sardinia where Cata-

lan has been continually spoken up to the present is Alghero, as it disappeared from the rest of the island (Sendra, 2012: 18). Consequently, Algherese became an isolated testimony of the island's Catalan-speaking past. Mapping its origins is important to help us understand the heterogeneity and distinctive features of Algherese. The new settlers who arrived in the second half of the fourteenth century came from almost all the corners of the Catalan-speaking regions, including Barcelona, Cervià, Collioure, Majorca, Perpignan, Tarragona, Valencia and Vilafranca del Penedès, (Armangué, 2008: 7), and they brought their own idiosyncratic dialectal features with them. Indeed, Algherese was born as a hybrid of the four greater varieties of Catalan (Central, Valencian, Northern and Balearic), between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century (Caria, 2006: 41). The result was a kind of *koiné* influenced by all these dialects, which spread throughout the island for centuries.

One of the reasons why scholars do not agree as to whether Algherese became a distinctive language is that, since its arrival in the fourteenth century, there has been no documentation that shows any linguistic diversification of an endemic dialectal variation in the Catalan used in Alghero. It is only in the second half of the sixteenth century where we begin to find some lexical and morphosyntactic variations. However, these are not unique to Catalan; rather, they are the same variations that we find in Valencian documents, (Caria, 1990: 35), although the changes occurred separately in each place.

The isolation of Sardinia as an island, as well as its remoteness and political division from other Catalan-speaking enclaves for centuries, are the main causes of Algherese's divergent evolution from other forms of Catalan. Moreover, all the substrata, adstrata and superstrata it has so far been in contact with have deeply influenced its phonetics and lexicon. During its rule by the Spanish, Sardinia was a linguistically diverse island and linguistic influences were mutually constitutive (Krefeld, 2013). Algherese was there-

<sup>1</sup> In Romance linguistics, *constitutius* dialects are those that emanate from original locations caused by Romanization and evolved from the Vulgar Latin spoken in those areas, whereas *consecutius* are those that reached those areas due to conquest or massive repopulation. Algherese is therefore a *consecutius* dialect (Caria, 1990: 34).



fore influenced by the multiple languages that it came into contact with, and Catalan influenced other languages in turn (Musso, 2013: 34). At the moment, influences of Sardinian, Spanish and Italian in Algherese have been thoroughly studied, but not the influences of other languages that also contributed to form it, such as Corsican, Gallurese, Ligurian, Piemontese, Sassarese, Sicilian, or Tuscan.

### Origins and Historical Evolution

In 1354, Peter IV of Aragon conquered the island of Sardinia and integrated it into the Crown of Aragon. The city of Alghero<sup>2</sup> was appointed as the new capital, becoming “el confí de l’expansió medieval catalana per la Mediterrànea” [the confine of Medieval Catalan expansion through Mediterranean Sea] (Bover, 2002: 111). The new sovereign had to deal with numerous uprisings from locals, and after twenty years of repressing them decided to expel the original inhabitants, repopulating the city with Catalan speakers. This action was not a revenge against local villagers, but a previously planned decision as part of a strategy of colonization (Armangué, 2011: 504).

Thanks to its strategic position on the trade routes crossing the Mediterranean Sea, the city became a rich and well-developed centre. As its economy flourished, the Catalan-speaking community began to develop a strong sense of pride and prestige. At this point, they could already be considered a minority (according to the traditional definition of a linguistic minority as a community that uses a language different from the one spoken by the majority), with their own language and culture separate from the rest of the Sardinians and Italians on the island. Consequently, Sardinian-speaking immigrants from neighbouring villages began to settle in the city, attracted by the job opportunities it offered. Due to the city’s wealth and the predominant use

of Catalan among its wealthy, the new arrivals viewed the host language as more prestigious than their own. They made efforts to become integrated into the community, including learning Algherese.

As a part of the Crown of Aragon, contact with other Catalan-speaking communities continued and the language became well-developed and established. For centuries, Catalan was the language used for official documents, especially once the Crown of Aragon joined the Kingdom of Castile. De facto, historical evidence shows that Catalan was the language of all official documents until 1602. Afterwards there began a period of transition during which Catalan and Spanish were both official languages. From 1702, the administration excluded Catalan as an operating language, although Spanish continued in use for a few more decades (Sendra, 2012: 26).

Contact with other Catalan-speaking regions came to an end in 1720, when the island of Sardinia was handed over to the House of Savoy. Linguistically, this was the point of no return. All official domains ceased to use Catalan, and no more documents were written in it. Even so, Catalan continued to be the most spoken language in the city and the natural way of communicating among its inhabitants. From the eighteenth century, diglossia became an intrinsic part of daily life in Alghero. Italian became the language of administration and official institutions, and Catalan maintained its status as the medium of communication among Algherese people, who retained a strong sense of community and pride for their linguistic diversity.

This situation changed dramatically at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The impact of the recently created new state of Italy, and of its national language, Italian, had a tremendous effect on the island, its society, and its languages. With the establishment of a powerful bureaucracy, common citizens began to feel their identity ignored and undervalued by the State (Strubel, 1991: 201). As a result, at the beginning of the twentieth century it was already clear that use of Algherese

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<sup>2</sup> The name of Alghero comes from Romans, who gave it the name of *Algarium*, stemming from the myriad of seaweed (*algae*) in its coastal areas. In Sardinian it is known as *Aliguera* and, in Catalan, *l’Alguer* (Caria, 2006: 31).

had decreased enormously when compared with a few decades previously. The Catalan-speaking scholar Alcover (1912: 349) described his sad impression of the dialect's impoverishment of the dialect among the inhabitants of Alghero, in which he lamented that only some citizens still spoke it on any given occasion.

The period of cultural flourishing known as *Renaixença* (second half of the nineteenth century), which brought a sense of unity and pride throughout all the Catalan-speaking areas, had a particular manifestation in Alghero. In this city, different cultural groups began to emerge, some trying to recover the ties they had in the past with other Catalan-speaking regions; others trying to break those ties in symbolic recognition of Algherese's exclusive cultural characteristics. Conflict also emerged with respect to the language's properties. Some thought that Algherese was a dialect, a local variation of a main language, Catalan. Others opposed, saying that Algherese was a different language to Catalan. In fact, two incompatible grammars of Algherese were published simultaneously (Leprêtre, 1995: 61). As a result, all the efforts made by both groups to revitalize it failed. Not everyone supported the revival of Algherese; Italian was, after all, the language of progress, culture, modernization, and utility, and thus it was supported by the upper class. Moreover, Catalan, as well as Sardinian, were considered to be strongly tied to tradition, offering no practical value in contemporary society. Simply put, these languages were considered mere folklore.

When the island of Sardinia was industrialized, the dominance of the traditional local elite was challenged by the rich newcomers from the Italian peninsula, who established their factories within the municipality and bought most of the properties in the historic centre of the village. The old inhabitants had to move into the recently created apartments in the outskirts and, consequently, broke their traditional ties, becoming isolated from what was the heart of Alghero. Social networks are extremely important in order to maintain language loyalty in a society sur-

rounded by different languages (Castelló *et al.*, 2013: 21), and when they disappear the process of language shift begins.

Furthermore, the Catalan-speaking community passed from being *bourgeoises* and owners of their own businesses and ateliers to being almost exclusively employees of the Italian factory owners. With this alteration the prestige associated with their language ended. Instead, prestige shifted to Italian, which was now the language of the market, the rich, and the new elite. The loss of the old economic structure heralded the breakup of the traditional social balance (Lepêtre, 1995: 60) and the spread of Italian as the main vehicle of communication. In practice, Catalan had no place in the new job market. Subsequently, widespread changes in the economy lead to changes in the traditional way of life, which implied the fall of the long-established means of communication, Algherese (Argenter, 2008: 212).

Using the definition of social class as "a group of people within a society who possess the same socioeconomic status" (Social class, 2014), the old Catalan-speaking inhabitants of Alghero fell from the upper to the middle-lower class, as has been documented by Argenter (2008), Caria (2006), Chessa (2011), the European Commission (1996), Leprêtre (1995), Querol *et al.* (2007) and Tosi (2001). The dominant idea presented by these analyses is that the minority Catalan-speaking group descended the social scale due to several reasons. First, entrepreneurs from Italy came to Alghero and began to buy properties in the city centre; consequently, the united and well-established community that had been living for centuries in the heart of Alghero broke apart and moved to the outskirts of the city. Second, the new industries that began to emerge in the municipality made traditional ways of life looked old-fashioned and unable to compete neither in quantity of goods produced, nor in their variety or price. As a result, owners and members of the *petite bourgeoisie* began to give up their jobs and become employees of the newcomers. Catalan, the language that was the heart of the city and of

the *bourgeoisie* for centuries, developed into the language of a minority comprised of peasants, fishermen, and factory workers. Italian arose as the language of the new rich and became the most demanded within their business.

The social and economic fall of the Catalan-speaking Algherese precipitated their insecurity regarding the use of their now minority language, a phenomenon very well described by Labov (1966). Although “concepts of social class and status have been absorbed into linguistic and sociolinguistic theory from different and often conflicting sociological perspectives creating substantial debate” (Brown, 2009: 952), our position on class and linguistics is very clear. We consider that in any developed society several groups, or classes, can be identified: the upper class, who possess political and economic power; the middle class, who keep a balanced economic situation thanks to their jobs; and the lower class, who struggle on a daily basis, working the hardest tasks in the labour market and receiving the lowest salaries. As a result, social class can be described as “a system of inequality” (Marshall, 2006: 34), evinced in the fall of the Catalan-speaking members of Algherese society.

Language attitude is “a defining characteristic of a speech community” (Cooper & Fishman, 1974: 5). Since the social and economic changes of the previous decades produced changes in the linguistic behaviours of Alghero residents, their linguistic attitude towards Catalan also changed. Moreover, as has been described in Argenter (2008 & 2010), Chessa (2011), European Commission (1996) and Tufi (2013), that Algherese transmission to the next generations faced problems. As Italian replaced Catalan as the language needed to progress in life, Catalan became “a mere symbol of local identity” (Chessa, 2011: 263) with no economic or practical value. Parents ceased to place importance on teaching their children Catalan. The linguist Perea concluded, “we can see a lack of interest in transmitting it, considering that the language has no social value and does not help to get a job” (2010: 145). As a result, intergenerational transmission broke and,

accordingly, what was for centuries a vibrant language became an endangered one. Whereas the entire society had spoken Algherese since its establishment in the fourteenth century, including non-natives who had to learn it to become accepted in the host community, today the daily use of the language among new generations, defined as people under thirty years of age, is non-existent or simply testimonial (Caria, 2006: 37).

New problems began to arise, however. When children educated in a language different from the one spoken by their parents, relatives, and other members of their community grow up and realize that they are considered second class citizens by the dominant elite, a feeling of frustration emerges. They are not purely part of the dominant society, but at the same time they are not fully integrated into their own community, due to their lack of competence in its language (Navarro, 1999: 64). Whereas the older generations are used to speaking in Catalan, Sardinian, or Italian among themselves, the only common language they have with new generations is Italian.

### **Algherese today and its Sociological Implications**

In the second half of the twentieth century the situation became even worse. During the 1960s and 1970s, around half of the traditional Algherese population had to relocate due to expanding industrialization in the areas in which they lived. Some moved to the new quarters of the city, some to continental Italy, and others to foreign countries. (Argenter, 2010: 130; European Commission, 1996: 40; Leprêtre, 1995: 60). This migratory displacement was so high that it is estimated that between 1955 and 1975 “around 43% of the island’s population moved to a new place of residence” (European Commission, 1996: 35). The most radical changes were those that affected the traditional economic structures of the city, which moved from an economy based on agriculture, cattle raising, fishing, and handicrafts to industrialization and services such

as tourism. The Catalan-speaking Algherese lost their sense of unity and pride for their divergent origin and tradition, and so the linguistic cohesion was broken and Algherese lost its symbolic power (Chessa, 2007: 19). Italian became “the socially prestigious language, associated with modern urban life, power and social advancement” (European Commission, 1996: 38).

On the other hand, numerous Sardinians, Neapolitans, and Sicilians moved into town. In 1977, only 20% of parents spoke Catalan with their children (Chessa, 2011: 131). Now, at the turn of the twenty-first century, only 2% of parents in Alghero speak in Catalan to their children (Chessa, 2011: 131). As a result, only people over forty are able to maintain fluent conversation in Algherese. Perea (2010: 145) illustrates the situation in similar terms: “the number of speakers committed to the use of Algherese is very low and generational transmission no longer takes place.” Simon (2009: 37) confirms this viewpoint: “The natural everyday language of these young people or the language in which one can address them, is Italian, and not the local variant of Catalan.” Caria (2006: 59) corroborates this view, writing that “les noves generacions des de fa 30 anys són monolingües en la sola llengua italiana, i només una estricta minoria és bilingüe passiva” [the new generations, since thirty years ago, are monolingual in Italian and just a selected minority is passive bilingual], as well as Tosi (2001: 34) saying that “today the new generations seem less committed and sometimes have receptive competence only... Catalan is currently under pressure from Italian.” Crystal (2000: 17) explains clearly that “a rise in average speaker age is a strong predictor of a language’s progress towards extinction” and, accordingly, Algherese is at the point of death.

An official report published by Generalitat de Catalunya (2004) found that 90% of the population in Alghero understand oral Algherese, although only 60% are able to speak in it, and while 46.5% of citizens understand written Algherese, just 13.6% can write in it. In addition, they report that 22.4% of Algherese people have

Algherese as their first language (almost 60% have Italian as their first language), and 13.9% use it frequently (while 83% use Italian on a daily base). A very important point is that 14.6% feel identified with Algherese, whereas more than 80% feel identified with Italian. According to their survey, it is quite clear that Algherese is a language in decline. Only 14.6% of the population identify with it and just 7.2% use it at home. But there is a detail that clearly shows the lack of real use of Algherese: in Alghero, the questionnaires given to residents were in Italian and not in Catalan as is usual in other Catalan-speaking regions (Querol *et al.*, 2007: 14). These data confirm that Algherese is more associated with old people, as well as with jobs linked the primary sector of the economy. It has no use at all among members of the city’s new upper class or within any employment linked with the tertiary sector.

More recent works confirm the negative view that Algherese has evolved from being the most popular dialect in the area into one that is in a state of diglossia with Italian, and which will almost certainly end with Italian monolingualism (Caria, 2006; Chessa, 2011; Gambini, 2007; Juge, 2007; Loporcaro, 2008; Perea, 2010; Sari, 2010). Compared to some decades ago, in Alghero there is now a total indifference from native speakers regarding transmission of their language (Arenas, 2000: 50), resulting from varied sociological and psycholinguistic causes as well as the view that it is a useless tool in contemporary life. This is not an isolated situation in Alghero, as other studies of Italian bilinguals demonstrate that they “rate their languages according to three idiosyncratic dimensions only partly ascertained in the literature: attractiveness, superiority and efficiency” (Santello, 2013: 1). In fact, “la percepció que els algheresos tenen de l’alguerès (i dels qui el parlen) es podria descodificar en termes de baixa categoria, baix nivell social, impediment per a l’èxit escolar i semblants” [the perception Algherese people have of their language (and of the people who speak it) could be described as low category, low social level, and a burden for educational success] (Chessa, 2007: 74).



Today, some individuals and groups blame official institutions for abandoning the local Catalan by failing to promote or support it. The first to bring charges to official institutions for their lack of defence and encouragement of Algherese was one the most respected local scholars, Rafael Caria, who writes: “tot i el que es fa a l’Alguer a favor de l’alguerès és ineludiblement testimonial!” [despite what is done in Alghero in favour of Algherese, it is inevitably testimonial] (2006: 33). His complaint is addressed not only to local institutions, but also to ones from Catalonia, which theoretically should support language preservation in the furthest Catalan-speaking enclave: “afirmo que s’assisteix a una mena de deriva de l’alguerès de la seva llengua mare per part de les institucions catalanes, en la qual pesa particularment l’abandó de l’Alguer al seu destí, per part de la secció Filològica de l’Institut d’Estudis Catalans” [I confirm that we are witnessing a kind of drift of Algherese from its mother language due to Catalan institutions, particularly the defection of Alghero to its own destiny, by the Philological Section of the Institute of Catalan Studies] (Caria, 2010: 120).

However, the reasons behind the situation are more complex than they may appear. In legal terms, there are three different laws promoting minority languages:

- Municipality By-Law from Alghero, 1991.
- Regional Law, 1997 (*Promozione e valorizzazione della cultura e della lingua della Sardegna*).
- Law 482, December 15, 1999 (*Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche*).

According to these laws, the support of linguistic diversity is legally required, but this recognition alone is not enough, as it “does not guarantee the preservation of minority languages and does not necessarily lead to wider value put on multilingualism” (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2006: 181).

We assume that there is a widespread tendency towards abandoning minority languages in favour of national or global ones. Certainly, from a reductionist and materialistic point of view, this is the easiest choice to gain access to

better education and to the global market. But speakers of minority languages must not resign themselves to the theoretically inevitable death of their languages. There are many counterexamples of languages which have been able to keep their position and pride, even without being the state language, such as in Quebec, in Wales, and, obviously, in Catalonia (May, 2005: 325). Globalization leads to cultural and linguistic homogeneity, undervaluing diversity. Nevertheless, as defended by UNESCO (2002: 4): “as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature... The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity”. Consequently, we defend the intellectual enrichment of the individuals who, through their two or more languages, are open to different visions of the world, confronting the homogeneity of those with one language only. The great writer Ambrose Bierce explained how differently two languages can see the world around us: “Belladonna, n. In Italian a beautiful lady; in English a deadly poison. A striking example of the essential identity of the two tongues” (Bierce, 2000).

Furthermore, language is not just a way to see the world from a different perspective; “language is the primary index, or symbol, or register of identity” (Crystal, 2000: 40). All human communities are defined by their language, along with their history, traditions, heritage and culture. As a result, “preservation of linguistic diversity and respect for the cultural heritage of members of a society is an important and much needed task” (Ginsburgh & Weber, 2011: 10). Within this context, Algherese, as a threatened language with just 20,000 speakers (Salminen, 2007: 224) that is part of a unique people, needs to be preserved. The studies carried out in recent years (Adell & Balata, 2012; Argenter, 2008 & 2010; Armangué, 2008 & 2011; Boix, 2008; Caria, 2006; Chessa, 2007, 2008 & 2011; Parisi & Fadda, 2013; Perea, 2010; Querol *et al.*, 2007; Sari, 2010; Simon, 2009 & 2011; Tufi, 2013), show that new generations are not very interested in keeping Algherese alive,

and “although we can be optimistic, all the indications suggest that the children of the children of current Algherese speakers will no longer use their dialect” (Perea, 2010: 146). If the process of language shift is not hindered, in a few decades we will no longer be able to speak of an Italianized Algherese, but of an Italian with Algherese substratum (Boix, 2008), because these will be the only traces left.

It is unfair to encourage members of minority groups to leave their cultural and linguistic values behind when the members of the dominant ones remain attached to theirs (May, 2005: 33). Those “monocultures first inhabit the mind and are then transferred to the ground. They generate models of production that not only destroy diversity, but also at the same time legitimize the destruction as progress, growth, modernization and improvement” (Romaine, 2009: 127). If we agree that “the assertion that speakers only make decisions on purely instrumentalist grounds, or at least that instrumental reasons are the only valid or rational choice available to minority language speakers” (May, 2005: 330), then Algherese people may abandon their language in favour of Italian, because the latter provides more opportunities for a better education and a bigger job market than the former. Under these premises, Italian people may also be encouraged to abandon their language in favour of English.

We agree, as is evident, that Algherese people must become proficient in their national language, since they are Italian citizens. Failing to do so would lead them to isolation and marginalisation. But sticking to the dichotomy of Algherese versus Italian is too simplistic. People would have more benefits from a wider vision of linguistic diversity through mastering both languages, rather than agreeing with the monolithic assumption than keeping Algherese alive and interacting with it on a daily basis would imply the loss of their proficiency in Italian: “Resistance is not through monolingualism in the minority language, but rather through bilingualism. Proficiency in both languages is the successful strategy of resistance” (Suárez, 2002: 515).

Maintaining their cultural and linguistic heritage is not the only benefit Algherese people would receive from preserving and continuing to speak their language. As covered by an extensive literature (Bradley & Bradley, 2013; Cummins, 2003; Parisi & Fadda, 2013), bilingualism and biculturalism “give speakers intellectual, emotional and social advantages over monolinguals, in addition to situational and sometimes economic advantages resulting from a knowledge of several languages” (Bradley & Bradley, 2013: 16). If bilingualism were extended to the education of both minority and majority children living in Alghero, those benefits would be accessible to the society as a whole (Cummins, 2003: 65). In fact, a study conducted by Parisi & Fadda in 2013 in Sardinian and Scottish schools that included monolingual and bilingual children from both places showed that the latter outperformed the former, and that the Scottish students, who received a formal bilingual education, outperformed Sardinian children who only speak their minority language at home (Parisi & Fadda, 2013).

The main problem, however, is that native speakers do not agree on any point, neither the language they should cultivate (standard Catalan or local Algherese), nor how to promote it. There have been some projects oriented to extend the use of Catalan among new generations, but they have not achieved the expected results. From the beginning, the promoters realized that a satisfactory outcome was not guaranteed. As a matter of fact, as Caria describes, previous promoters who attempted to teach Algherese in primary schools became frustrated: “quan la mare o el pare s’adreçava en alguerès al fill, aquest li contestava en italià i recorda molt poques coses del que se li havia ensenyat” [When the mother or the father addressed their son in Algherese, he replied in Italian and remembered just a few things of what he was taught] (2006: 36).

There are also some cultural concerns in relation to Algherese speakers. They do not feel themselves to be fully integrated into the greater Catalan community; rather, they feel they are

an isolated minority in Italy (Argenter, 2008: 210; Chessa, 2008: 190). Nevertheless, this is a recent feeling. Historically, the Catalan-speaking community considered any Catalan-speaker to be Catalan, independently of their place of origin (Catalonia, Valencia, Balearic Islands, Roussillon). This is proved by documents as ancient as the reign of Alfonso IV of Aragon (fourteenth century). In fact, even today most Catalan speakers consider people from Alghero to be members of the transnational Catalan community (Adell & Balata, 2012), but this is not a mutual perception. In truth, the Algherese recognize that there is no real desire from their side to reproduce the language.

Another reason behind this feeling is that the Algherese dialect is not fully intelligible by the rest of the Catalan speakers, as opposed to the total intelligibility of other dialects (Eastern, Western, Valencian). This fact arises from some specific phonetic phenomena such as rhotacism, metathesis, and assimilation (Perea, 2010: 144), as well as a substantial corpus of vocabulary incorporated into the dialect from other languages, mainly from Italian but also from Sardinian. These aspects make it insufficiently comprehensible to other Catalan speakers. In addition, the situation of Algherese as a non-unified language becomes a fundamental obstacle to setting up any kind of action to improve it (Bover, 2002: 113). Indeed, some scholars and observers point out that Algherese can no longer be called a Catalan dialect mixed with Italian; rather, it is an Italian dialect with a Catalan substratum (Boix, 2008).

If the language is to have any chance for revival, the first task that needs to be achieved is to attain agreement between scholars regarding what kind of language they would like to promote. For now, there are two opposing positions:

- One argues that Algherese has to settle on a phonetically based orthography, which unequivocally represents the sounds of colloquial Algherese using Italian graphemes, the ones that Algherese people are used to dealing with (Chessa, 2008: 190).

- The other proposes that Algherese needs to be written in a non-autochthonous standard variety, because it has to follow the same criteria as the rest of the Catalan-speaking regions (Bosch, 2012: 53).

The first approach is likely to be the more straightforward way to extend a written variety of Algherese among native speakers who are used to speak it, but not to write it, as well as to the passive bilinguals who are also used to hear it. However, this would develop Algherese into a non-formal dialect that is impossible to use when conducting any kind of formal activities. This would also segregate the Algherese people from the larger Catalan community, expanding the feeling of being isolated and speaking a dialect with no practical use outside of the tiny local community.

The second position would imply an extra effort to train speakers in a strange orthography that is different from Italian, which they use on a daily base, and which does not have a proper correspondence with local pronunciation (and sometimes lexicon). However, it could be argued that this is not a major stumbling block because it also occurs with other dialects, such as Valencian, Balearic, and others. Indeed, a lack of correspondence between written and oral forms is common with any kind of dialectal variation, and it is not a problem *per se*, but an attitude of language loyalty to a standard variety (Gumperz, 2009: 66). In fact, "In Europe today, non-standardised varieties are rarely written (and if so, only in personal genres, such as in e-mail, a conceptually half-oral, half-written text type)" (Auer, 2005: 10). This option would approximate Algherese to the rest of the Catalan-speaking community, and it would develop into a formal language that is not restricted to local employment, but extended to any kind of political, professional, or cultural sphere. The isolation of Algherese would come to an end, and they would enter once again into a greater linguistic domain.

This process of orthographic unification has also been developed in other Catalan varieties, such as Valencian or Balearic, with reliable

success: “la codificació ortogràfica (i també podríem dir-ho de la gramatical) unificà la manera d’escriure la llengua. I la unificació és un concepte positiu: la manera d’escriure la llengua ha contribuït a definir la comunitat parlant, ha facilitat l’ensenyament de l’instrument que la vertebra i ha canalitzat de forma unitària les manifestacions expressives d’aquest instrument» [the orthographic codification (and we could say the same about the grammar) unified the way of writing the language. And unification is a positive concept: the way of writing the language has helped to define the speech community, has aided to the teaching of the instrument which supports it, and has oriented the expressive manifestations of this instrument in a unified form] (Badia i Margarit, 1994: 12). This position has already been adopted by some Algherese scholars who are aware of its benefits. In a project to edit an Algherese version of one of the most popular comics in the world, *The adventures of Tintin*, a team of Algherese speakers decided to use an orthography which respected standard Catalan, although including some particularities of proper Algherese morphology, syntax and lexicon (Bosch i Rodoreda, 2012: 52).

Nevertheless, in twenty-first century Alghero, as in many other minority languages, the best way to keep the language alive remains undecided: “For non-standardized varieties, there is a fundamental -perhaps unresolvable- tension between an emphasis on difference vs. an emphasis on sameness” (Jaffe, 2000: 506).

### Conclusions

All evidence suggests that Catalan in Alghero is undervalued by its own speakers. The radical and wide-sweeping changes that came to pass during the sixties and the seventies in terms of the urban economy and society disrupted how the language was practiced in daily life. The upper class witnessed the fall of their group and the rise of a new one, and their language went with them. Catalan lost its prestige and its social value as it could not find a place in the new market. It was replaced by Italian, which was quickly becoming

associated with wealth coming from the continent. Likewise, it was the only language that could open a new world of opportunities beyond the city. Subsequently, parents tried to provide their children with the best tools to attain a place in the new market, and so they stopped transmitting Algherese to them. This provoked an inter-generational rupture that is not easy to repair.

The twenty-first century began with the same situation, and there is little indication that the problem can be easily solved. Attitudes towards this minority language have changed thoroughly since its was challenged by Italian, the official state language. Previously, Catalan enjoyed great prestige among its speakers, and even among migrants who came to settle in the city. Today, it has come to be considered merely a symbol of old times, a relic that is almost useless in the twentieth century, excluding its consideration as an historical relic. Younger generations have lost the native competence in Catalan of which their elders were so proud, and they barely have a passive competence in the language. Correspondingly, Catalan has lost its place as a communicative tool. New generations do not seem to be interested in altering this position.

If people from Alghero do not value their linguistic and cultural heritage, there is no action that official institutions can take to preserve it. The only way to revive the language is if the Algherese people make an effort to see themselves as part of the larger Catalan-speaking community. It is very likely that local official institutions would need to intervene to make this process occur. Their main efforts must be directed towards changing the mentality of its speakers and their descendants. As long as languages continue being merely tools in the market and not valued for their intrinsic richness, there will be no opportunity for Algherese or any other minority language to flourish. We know that it is difficult to resist such changes in a world where “even the most inaccurate and improvised forms of language became prestigious when promoted by the most popular of the mass media: the television” (Tosi, 2008: 266). Yet languages are also



vehicles of culture, a culture that would be lost if the language it comes with disappears.

The future of Algherese is unknown. The loss of the old economic structures broke the traditional social balance and helped Italian to become the preferred language for communication, leaving Catalan without a place in the labour market (Leprêtre, 1995: 60). This can be interpreted as the abandonment of traditional linguistic attitudes in favour of an extremely practical language behaviour, leaving Algherese as an icon of nostalgia.

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**Note on the Author**

JOSÉ MARÍA SANTOS ROVIRA holds a BA in Spanish Philology (University of Granada, Spain), and a PhD in Linguistics (University of Alicante, Spain). He is currently working at the Department of General and Romance Linguistics, University of Lisbon (Portugal), where he teaches Spanish Linguistics. He is interested in applied linguistics, language contact and sociolinguistics.