

*Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City*

# **URBAN ETHICS AS RESEARCH AGENDA**

**OUTLOOKS AND TENSIONS ON  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY DEBATES**

Edited by  
Raúl Acosta, Eveline Dürr, Moritz Ege,  
Ursula Prutsch, Clemens van Loyen and  
Gordon M. Winder



# Urban Ethics as Research Agenda

This book provides an outline for a multidisciplinary research agenda into urban ethics and offers insights into the various ways urban ethics can be configured. It explores practices and discourses through which individuals, collectives and institutions determine which developments and projects may be favourable for dwellers and visitors traversing cities.

*Urban Ethics as Research Agenda* widens the lens to include other actors apart from powerful individuals or institutions, paying special attention to activists or civil society organizations that express concerns about collective life. The chapters provide fresh perspectives addressing the various scales that converge in the urban. The uniqueness of each city is, thus, enriched with global patterns of the urban. Local sociocultural characteristics coexist with global flows of ideas, goods and people. The focus on urban ethics sheds light on emerging spaces of human development and the ways in which ethical narratives are used to mobilize and contest them in terms of the good life.

This timely book analyses urban ethical negotiations from social and cultural studies, particularly drawing on anthropology, geography and history. This volume will be of interest to scholars, researchers and practitioners interested in ethics and urban studies.

**Raúl Acosta** is a social anthropologist specialized in urban and environmental governance. He has conducted fieldwork in Mexico, Brazil, Spain, Venezuela and Peru. He is the author of *Civil Becomings* (2020) as well as numerous articles and chapters. He carried out research in Mexico City as part of the Urban Ethics Research Group.

**Eveline Dürr** is Professor of Social Anthropology at the LMU Munich. She has roles as PI in the Urban Ethics research group (2015–2021) and as co-chair of the Collaborative Research Centre “Culture of Vigilance.” She researches human-environment relations in Latin America, the USA and Oceania.

**Moritz Ege** is Professor at the Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies of the University of Zurich. He was PI at the Urban Ethics research group. His interests lie in everyday and popular culture both in contemporary and in historical perspectives.

**Ursula Prutsch** is Professor of American and Latin American History at the LMU Munich. Among her nine monographs are one on Eva Perón (2015), a cultural history of Brazil (co-authored in 2014), an analysis on Populism in the USA and Latin America (2019) and a biography on Austria's cartridge producer and Fascist Fritz Mandl (2022).

**Clemens van Loyen** studied Romance languages, sociology, political science and philosophy. His dissertation explores the concept of anthropophagy from a philosophical and historical perspective in relation to the Jewish cultural theorist Vilém Flusser. His areas of interest range from Brazilian history of ideas to translation studies and cultural-historical urban research.

**Gordon M. Winder** is Professor of Economic Geography and Sustainability Research at the LMU Munich. An economic and historical geographer, he researches sustainability issues related to resource-based economies and rebuilding after disaster. He publishes on resilience and transition-making, innovation, manufacturing and business networks and geographies of the news.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

## **Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City**

### **Political Economy of Housing in Chile**

*Francisco Vergara-Perucich, Carlos Aguirre-Nuñez, Felipe Encinas, Rodrigo Hidalgo-Dattwyler, Ricardo Truffello and Felipe Ladrón de Guevara*

### **Lahore in the 21st Century**

The Functioning and Development of a Megacity in the Global South  
*Mohammad A. Qadeer*

### **Writing the City Square**

On the History and the Histories of City Squares  
*Martin Zerlang*

### **The Anatomy of Inclusive Cities**

Insight into Migrants in Selected Capital Cities of Southern Africa  
*Hangwelani Hope Magidimisha-Chipungu and Lovemore Chipungu*

### **Reflecting on the City through Literature**

Urban Spaces, Differences and Embodiments  
*Daan Wesselman*

### **Splintering Towers of Babel**

Paradoxical Architectures and Urban Infrastructures  
*Liora Bigon and Edna Langenthal*

### **Urban Ethics as Research Agenda**

Outlooks and Tensions on Multidisciplinary Debates  
*Raúl Acosta, Eveline Dürr, Moritz Ege, Ursula Prutsch, Clemens van Loyen and Gordon M. Winder*

# **Urban Ethics as Research Agenda**

Outlooks and Tensions on  
Multidisciplinary Debates

**Edited by**

**Raúl Acosta, Eveline Dürr, Moritz Ege,  
Ursula Prutsch, Clemens van Loyen  
and Gordon M. Winder**

First published 2024  
by Routledge  
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2024 selection and editorial matter, Raúl Acosta, Eveline Dürr, Moritz Ege, Ursula Prutsch, Clemens van Loyen and Gordon M. Winder; individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Raúl Acosta, Eveline Dürr, Moritz Ege, Ursula Prutsch, Clemens van Loyen and Gordon M. Winder to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

The Open Access version of this book, available at [www.taylorfrancis.com](http://www.taylorfrancis.com), has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 license.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 9781032387871 (hbk)

ISBN: 9781032387895 (pbk)

ISBN: 9781003346777 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003346777

Typeset in Times New Roman  
by codeMantra

# Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
<b>Introduction: Researching urban ethics at the dawn of the urban century</b>	<b>1</b>
RAÚL ACOSTA, EVELINE DÜRR AND GORDON M. WINDER	
<b>1 Urban sovereignty in a time of crisis: Territorialities of governance and the ethics of care</b>	<b>16</b>
DIANE E. DAVIS	
<b>2 Urban mobility governance flows: Ethical bases of political becomings</b>	<b>39</b>
RAÚL ACOSTA	
<b>3 The political ecology of a diverse urban ethics of marine stewardship in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand</b>	<b>56</b>
MARIE ASCHENBRENNER	
<b>4 Conflictual planning in the Olympic City: Vila Autódromo's experience, Rio de Janeiro</b>	<b>79</b>
FERNANDA SÁNCHEZ, FABRÍCIO LEAL DE OLIVEIRA AND CARLOS VAINER	
<b>5 The transformation of the 'Valongo Complex': New perspectives on the historic port area of Rio de Janeiro</b>	<b>96</b>
CLEMENS VAN LOYEN	



<b>6 Restorative justice in Georgia: On the limited recognition of prostitution in Tbilisi 1991–2020</b>	116
LIANA KUPREISHVILI AND GUIDO HAUSMANN	
<b>7 Traversing troubled waters: Emergent ethics and pandemic politics</b>	133
JOHN CLARKE	
<b>8 On the impossibility of collaboration: Solidarity, power and loneliness in feminist, workerist and (urban) ethnographic methodology</b>	152
OLGA REZNIKOVA	
<b>9 Voluntary mentoring: Relationship-building as an urban-ethical practice in Munich</b>	167
LAURA GOZZER	
<b>10 Sacks and the city: Secondary burials in Naples and New York</b>	185
ULRICH VAN LOYEN	
<b>11 Producing community: An ‘ethopolitics’ of Berlin’s crisis-driven urban restructuring</b>	195
MAX OTT	
<b>Conclusion: Urban ethics as research agenda</b>	213
MORITZ EGE, CHRISTOPH K. NEUMANN AND URSULA PRUTSCH	
<i>Index</i>	223

# Contributors

**Marie Aschenbrenner** is a PhD candidate at the Research Unit for Economic Geography at LMU Munich. Since 2018, she works as research assistant in the project “Urban Environmental Ethics at the City Edge: The Creation of Ethical Citizens for Auckland’s ‘Blue Backyard’,” part of the DFG research group ‘Urban Ethics.’

**John Clarke** is Emeritus Professor at the UK’s Open University. His work has explored the transformations of welfare, state and nation since the late 20th century. His most recent book – *The Battle for Britain: Crises, Conflicts and the Conjunction* – was published by Bristol University Press in 2023.

**Diane E. Davis** is Professor of Regional Planning and Urbanism at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design. Her books include *Transforming Urban Transport* (2018), *Cities and Sovereignty* (2011), *Discipline and Development* (2004), *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation* (2003) and *Urban Leviathan* (1994).

**Laura Gozzer** (DPhil) is a post-doc researcher at the Department for European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich, Germany. Her research interests are: anthropology of ethics, urban anthropology, class theory, voluntary work, social welfare, care crisis and housing policies.

**Guido Hausmann** is professor of history of East and Southeast Europe, in particular the history of Russia/Soviet Union and Ukraine, at the University of Regensburg; head of the department of history at the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies in Regensburg. Related publications: *Kosmopolitisches Odessa? Eine historische Spurensuche*, in: Huber & Martin (eds.): *Metropolen des Ostens*. 2021; jointly with I. Sklokina (eds.): *The Political Cult of the Dead in Ukraine. Traditions and Dimensions from the First World War to Today*. 2021.

**Liana Kupreishvili** recently submitted her doctoral dissertation “Behind the shutters: Prostitution in Pre-revolutionary Tbilisi 1888–1917” at Ilia State University (Tbilisi, Georgia). She has combined historical research with ethnographic fieldwork in Germany and Georgia. Her research interests are public and social policy, gender and sexuality studies.

**Fabrcio Leal de Oliveira** is an architect and urban planner, Professor at IPPUR-UFRJ – Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Institute of Urban and Regional Planning and Research. He organized and co-authored, among others, the books: *Metropolitan Large Projects: Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte* (2012) and *Planning and Urban Conflicts* (2016).

**Christoph K. Neumann** is professor of Turkish Studies at LMU Munich since 2008. After receiving his DPhil in 1992 at LMU, he worked at the Orient Institute Istanbul, Boğaziçi University, the Czech National Library and Charles-University in Prague, Istanbul Technical University and Istanbul Bilgi University. Neumann has published on Ottoman historiography, Ottoman social and cultural history, the urban history of Istanbul, political culture and memory in the Republic of Turkey and Turkish fictional literature. He has also translated Turkish fictional literature into German.

**Max Ott** is an architect, urbanist and independent urban researcher. His writings are focused on the mutual relationship between collaborative planning, contemporary urban development politics and architectural space. Max is a guest lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences in Munich and works as a project developer for the cooperative *urban coop berlin*.

**Olga Reznikova** is a cultural anthropologist, studied at the Institute of Jewish Studies (St. Petersburg) and LMU (Munich). In 2021, she graduated with her PhD in Göttingen. She worked as a research assistant at LMU, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, the University of Zürich and the Max Planck Institute in Berlin. Her research projects included anti-Chechen racism, urban ethics, worker's protests in Moskau and urban living in NYC.

**Fernanda Sánchez** is Professora Titular at the Universidade Federal Fluminense, where she leads the Laboratory for Large Urban Projects, and an associate researcher at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Some of her books are: *The Reinvention of Cities for a Global Market* (2010) and *Spectacle City: Politics, Planning and City Marketing* (1997).

**Carlos Vainer** is an economist and urban planner, Full Professor at IPPUR-UFRJ – Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Institute of Urban and Regional Planning and Research. He organized and co-authored, among others, the books: *The City of Single Thought: Breaking Consensus* (2000) and *Mega-events and the City: Critical Perspectives* (2016).

**Ulrich van Loyen** works at the Media Theory Chair of the University of Siegen. His research interests mainly focus on the history of Anthropological Theory, Mediterranean Studies and the intertwining of old (personal) and new (technological) Media.

# Preface

This volume presents the results of a six year, two-phase research group on “Urban Ethics – Conflicts about the Good Life in the City during the 20th and 21st Century,” funded by the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) from 2015 to 2021 and hosted at the LMU Munich. Most of the contributions in this volume stem from the concluding conference entitled “Debating Urban Ethics as Research Agenda,” held in April in 2021 via zoom because of the COVID-19 constraints. In addition, we invited John Clarke, Diane E. Davis, Ulrich van Loyen, Fernanda Sánchez, Fabrício Leal de Oliveira and Carlos Vainer to contribute their expertise to the topics raised in this volume.

Our work in the research group spanned across the disciplines of American Cultural Studies, Architecture, European Ethnology and Empirical Cultural Study, History of Southeast and Eastern Europe, Human Geography, Japanese Studies, Social and Cultural Anthropology and Turkish Studies. We carried out research projects in 12 cities located in Europe, East Asia, Latin America, Southeast Asia and Oceania. In order to make the most of the opportunities of our collaboration, we held a series of academic events with guest scholars. We would like to thank all of those who participated, as their reflections, questions and contributions enriched our discussions and helped shape our results. We particularly thank participants in our two lecture series, of 2016 and 2019: Stephen J. Collier, Alexander Bogner, Engin Isin, Heike Delitz, Irmhild Saake, Melissa Checker, Christian Dimmer, Matthew Gandy, Melanie Lombard, Florian Riedler, Irene Götz, Monique Scheer, Vivian Luiz Fonseca, Christoph Brunner and Kelly Mulvaney. We also thank the scholars who kindly took part in our workshops, commenting on the advances of our individual projects: Carlos Haas, Young Rae Choi, Monique Scheer, Franziska Martinsen, Henry Kammler, Alexandra Schwell, Julia Affolderbach and Dietlind Huechtker. Their comments and feedback helped us to carve out the nuances of our preliminary work and to shape our arguments. We also thank Simon Zeitler, who acted as the research group’s coordinator and organized our many meetings.

Our research results, which are presented in this collection, as well as in a range of other publications, are based on the willingness of our interlocutors to share their views and experiences with us. We thank the numerous activists, civil servants and other individuals for their engagement and participation. Without their collaboration, this research would not have been possible. We also acknowledge

the support of various institutions. We enjoyed access to historical archives and sources, we worked across various Universities including in Goettingen, Regensburg and Munich, and also collaborated with our colleagues in the respective cities under study. We also acknowledge the Carl-Friedrich-von-Siemens-Foundation in Munich for hosting our concluding conference of the first project phase in January 2018 and the Deutsche Historische Institut in Rome for hosting a conference in April 2017. Finally, our thanks to the Center for Advanced Studies at the LMU for hosting our guest scholars from New Zealand, Nick Lewis.

The following essays represent some key reflections on urban ethics. It is our hope that they inform a new set of discussions, in academia and beyond, about the good life in cities.

# Introduction

## Researching urban ethics at the dawn of the urban century

*Raúl Acosta, Eveline Dürr and Gordon M. Winder*

An urban condition is currently the most common form of life for people around the world. Populations with contrasting cultural backgrounds and histories have been congregating in cities large and small on all continents over the last few centuries. The United Nations reported in 2009 that the urban population surpassed the rural for the first time in human history and has since kept on increasing. This tendency shows no signs of changing, although the shapes and configurations of cities vary widely. Planners argue that high concentrations of people in times of environmental catastrophe signify more efficient uses of services and resources (Beck et al. 2018). It seems, therefore, that our future is urban (Brenner and Schmid 2014). In this context, we are convinced that more systematic studies on urban ethics are not only desirable but urgent. Negotiations about the good life in cities have wider potential implications than simply addressing local situations as more people experience urban life and cities concentrate on ever more economic and political decision-making. The articulation of practices and decisions around urban ethics presents a trove of insights into emerging imaginaries and customs. In order to remedy the “historical neglect of the city’s ethical dimensions” (Chan 2019, 4), we set forth our proposal of a wide-ranging research agenda, seeking to shed light on ideas and enactments with which urban planners and dwellers (attempt to) resolve frictions, both large and small. We tap into reflective processes that, in turn, shape new moments of tension and conflict by paying attention to ethics-in-practice and -in-discourse. We put forth a research agenda for urban ethics in this volume, with valuable initial explorations that may help further investigations.

Life in cities is not only a confrontation with difference but, crucially, an intensification of sociality. Urban dwellers need to negotiate multiple issues that arise from living in close contact with others – human and otherwise – within a limited area. While governments and other organizations set out rules of interaction and access to spaces and goods, these need to gain legitimacy in the eyes of city inhabitants to ensure their compliance. However, there are also many aspects of life in cities where personal encounters require that individuals decide how to proceed in shaping ethical considerations better. A so-called ‘ethical turn’ in recent years has brought about an intensification of scholarly investigations into and debates about ethics (Rancière 2006; Fassin 2014). Ethicization

has increasingly been instrumental for legitimate public action in the realm of public interest, where governments and civil society groups (e.g. nongovernmental organizations and foundations) play crucial roles. It is common that ethical deliberations are designed into institutional architectures within technocratic neoliberal structures. Puig de la Bellacasa, thus, refers to ethical hegemony as the mechanism that power structures use to claim a search for improved practices without altering the status quo (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 133). In her view, these are “depoliticized engagements with ethics either by diluting them in vague moralizations or by turning them highly normative, though fairly empty, orders of compliance” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 133). Therefore, one needs to identify and differentiate between types of ethical negotiations taking place.

We offer insights into a variety of configurations of urban ethics in this volume. We do so with the conviction that a research agenda on the subject has the potential to shed light onto emerging processes of ethicization. Ethical deliberations – in practice and discourse – constitute “a form of reflection and practice concerned with the question of how a particular kind of ethical subject, society, should live” (Lakoff and Collier 2004, 421). These occur on contrasting scales, from micro encounters between two people or a person and a plant, to macro situations where urban planners decide the shape of sweeping changes to the biophysical make-up of whole areas of cities. Deliberations occurring on one scale may influence how those on another scale proceed, especially when discourses and debates in public spheres focus on airing situations and their resolutions. It is a case of trans-scalar feedback loops through which imaginings of possible alternatives are shared within a collective. Urban dwellers and traversers, in finding themselves living or visiting a city, constitute one such collective.

As researchers, the manner in which we approach ethics is not seeking philosophical clarity or normative principles but rather pursuing complementary but distinct social and cultural investigations. We are interested in critical reflections about how people in cities (dwellers or traversers, government authorities or not) negotiate between contrasting ideas and actions by deciding (either reflectively or intuitively) on what may be better, not merely for themselves but also for the collective of which they form part. In doing so, they shape a form best captured by the concept that several anthropologists have termed ‘ordinary ethics’ (Lambek 2010a; Das 2012). In this conception, ethics is ‘intrinsic to human action’ (Lambek 2010b, 61), especially if we consider it in relational terms, that is, as “simply part of our life with others” (Das 2012, 133). We are interested in the way in which individual people go through processes of subjectivation, identifying and putting in practice ideas of what it is to be a good member of a community. We do this thinking with Foucault through his idea of ‘technologies of the self,’ that

permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.

(Foucault 1997a, 225)

But rather than focusing on the production of the ideas of such goals, we prefer to scrutinize the process through which collectives set about finding a common ‘ethical imagination’ (Moore 2011).

This volume collects a selection from papers presented at the closing conference of the Research Group on Urban Ethics financed by the German Research Council (DFG, for its German initials). It was a six-year-long multidisciplinary collaboration consisting of two phases, in which cases of urban ethics were studied in 12 cities. Each investigation followed its own disciplinary traditions and conceptual frameworks – from anthropology, geography, history, cultural studies and architecture – but we sought to establish dialogues and debates about core preoccupations and notions regarding urban ethics. Seven of this volume’s chapters stem from projects within our research group: those written by Raúl Acosta, Marie Aschenbrenner, Laura Gozzer, Liana Kupreishvili and Guido Hausmann, Max Ott, Olga Reznikova and Clemens van Loyen. The other four are contributions from distinguished scholars whose investigations contribute to our discussions of urban ethics as a research agenda. All of the editors, who together wrote this introduction and the conclusions, are also part of the research group, that is, Raúl Acosta, Eveline Dürr, Moritz Ege, Ursula Prutsch, Clemens van Loyen and Gordon Winder. Christoph Neumann, a co-author of the conclusions, was also part of the Research Group.

### **Ethical deliberations and contestations**

Although we refer to urban ethical deliberations and contestations as the processes through which answers are sought for questions about the good life in cities, it is seldom the case that such questions are posed openly. “What is a ‘good’ life in the city?” for example, is more an abstraction about practical decisions that may be interpreted in a different register to the immediate situation to which they are related. People need to solve problems, face situations or make decisions about their own individual lives or responsibilities in everyday circumstances. Analytically, these matters may be addressing questions about the good urban life if they engage with wider consequences for the collective. The city is, therefore, not simply a site where individual lives take place but a structuring structure that shapes the possible paths for all its dwellers and traversers. It is an imagined community not merely as an allegiance or identity marker but mostly as a condition or cosmopolitanism that is shared. We consider four distinct registers of urban ethics: (a) in the city, (b) of urban life, (c) under urban conditions and (d) of the urban. Each register implies negotiations in which participants seek to differentiate between positive and negative, desirable and undesirable options, and to do so in relation to the city.

Cities are, therefore, laboratories of sociality. The ways in which urban dwellers and traversers manage their relations, interactions and personal decisions in cities have wider implications. The aggregation of individual acts forms patterns that, in turn, shape emerging possibilities for the whole city as a community. Recent publications that explore urban ethics refer mainly to city planning and government policymaking (Mostafavi 2017; Chan 2019; Moraitis and Rassia 2019). This is an



important sphere where decisions and considerations end up shaping the manner in which everyday encounters may take place in the city. Crucially, we believe that discursive manifestations of individual ethical choices or processes (e.g. at street level between two urban dwellers) have implications for other scales. Urban planning itself is informed by uses of public space and infrastructures, flows of matter and people and patterns of behavior of urban dwellers. Urbanists, thus, need to constantly assess priorities not only according to the needs and habits of dwellers and traversers, but also critically by keeping in mind the city as a whole system in its economic, social and political forms.

Three issues regarding the ethics of urbanism stand out for us: enabling potential, urban solidarity and vernacular efficiency. By enabling potential, we consider Sennett's distinction between open and closed cities: "Ethically, an open city would of course tolerate differences and promote equality, but would more specifically free people from the straitjacket of the fixed and the familiar, creating a terrain in which they could experiment and expand their experience" (Sennett 2018, 9). Based on Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (2010a [1945], 2010b [1945]), Sennett argues that closed systems restrict freedoms. Urban design can, thus, promote spaces and infrastructures that work in such a way as to reduce stark inequalities, in order to help people feel at ease with each other. This is linked to what we have termed urban solidarity. The opposite, to fragment social groups in various ways, leads to a closed system, which promotes distrust and rancor. Jane Jacobs argued in her renowned *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* that what is most important for urban dwellers is to feel at ease among so many strangers (2011 [1961], 38), but ironically, no amount of police can enforce such a sense of peace. In her view, trust among urban dwellers "is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts" (Jacobs 2011 [1961], 73). For this to happen, urban design must enable spaces for random encounters, avoiding dark corners or isolated areas. The third issue we mentioned, vernacular efficiency, means that urban design can reap benefits if it adapts to the aspirations and desires of local populations. Janette Sadik-Khan and Seth Solomonow authored *Streetfight* to share their experiences working to transform New York City's mobility infrastructures to open up public spaces for pedestrians and cyclists (2016). In their view, most urban planning nowadays lacks "a vision for how streets can support the life and vitality of both neighborhoods and the city as a whole" (Sadik-Kahn and Solomonow 2016, xv).

Several thinkers, including Sennett, thus, emphasize the need to facilitate conviviality in cities, but there is also the 'ethics of indifference' that Tonkiss puts forward (2005, 22), through which urban dwellers choose to preserve their anonymity. Instead, they retain a respectful distance so that things do not need to become personal. Chan distinguishes between the two extremes: "If Sennett's urban virtue of sociability is projected to catalyze the possibility for strangers to live together, then Tonkiss' ethics of indifference is a virtue that may enable strangers to live peacefully apart" (Chan 2019, 7). Such an attitude will surely resonate with most urban dwellers who value the possibilities that cities allow to not have neighbors knowing everything about oneself. In Tonkiss' view, indifference is an ethical relation between subjects, "one premised less on the 'face-to-face' relations of community

than on the ‘side-by-side’ relations of anonymity” (Tonkiss 2003, 298). But even when cities “bestow the gift of loneliness and the gift of privacy” (White 1999 [1949], 16), they do so as an affordance (Keane 2014, 7). The intricacies of cities, with their multiple living quarters, public spaces and roads, offer multiple ways of avoiding others and remaining unidentified, even while relatively close to them.

### **Scales of the ethical**

The ethical deliberations of urbanism occur on a macroscale, the planner’s bird’s-eye view of the city. Political decision-making about which projects to authorize and fund will have long-term consequences for the shape of a city and what it can enable among its population. On many occasions, such decision-making addresses not only the social world of the city, or its built landscape, but also the living ecosystem that surrounds it or of which it is part. It is common that by addressing such a variety of issues, policymakers need to put into practice a strategy that addresses state-wide concerns as well as local circumstances (MacLeod and Goodwin 1999). This process means that urban governance is crisscrossed by various spheres of territorial and relational interaction but also requires a top-down overview of potential risks or possibilities (Aina et al. 2019).

There is, nevertheless, a contrasting perspective that may be considered bottom-up, through which local actors (individual urban dwellers, perhaps) may choose to raise concerns with authorities about grievances or demands for improved services or policies. Depending on the openness of the political system, such demands may be faced with hostility or a willingness to engage in the coproduction of urban governance (Richardson, Durose and Perry 2018). Ethical deliberations among small- or medium-sized groups may, thus, end up influencing major policies regarding the city. As some of the contributors of this volume show, activist collectives, non-governmental organizations, private consultancies and academics have often challenged government authorities, demanding they address issues that had not been considered part of the political agenda or foreseen in accepted practice.

Drawing on Lefebvre’s work, Neil Brenner has recently argued for a stronger theorization of the urban through the concept of scale, especially considering it not as a physically delimited area but as a sociospatial multiscale site of “relational connections, articulations, and mediations” (2019, 36). In his view, the capitalist form of urbanization that is common throughout the world means that scalar hierarchies are constantly being shaped by power relations, state regulatory strategies and sociopolitical struggles which may, nevertheless, be mutable through sociopolitical contestation (Brenner 2019, 5). The implications for urban ethics lie in the possibilities that are opened for ‘alter-urbanizations’ (Brenner 2016) and a consideration of cities as commons (Stavrides 2016).

Urban ethics are, therefore, negotiated across various scales of sociospatial life in cities. Each scale may influence others, because of direct or indirect influence, or through other reverberations. One key issue we are interested in, for example, is the process of subjectivation, or how individuals go through a reflective self-discovery by which they become agentic subjects. There may be a trigger in

policymaking that has effects for individuals, as happens with political identities in changing contexts, such as that of Cyprus (Demetriou 2007). Or it may be a process through which protest techniques, such as mask-wearing, help frame not only the moment of public performance but also an attitude toward the political sphere (Riisgaard and Thomassen 2016). Ongoing ethical deliberations, thus, shape future ones, albeit in an informal and somewhat chaotic manner, which Lakoff and Collier refer to as a regime of living (2004, 427). These are “configurations of normative, technical, and political elements that are brought into alignment in problematic or uncertain situations” (Lakoff and Collier 2004, 427). By this, Lakoff and Collier mean that no person takes decisions without any precedents. We all have a series of references that we tap into either consciously or unconsciously. For this reason, in order to research urban ethics, one needs to pay attention not only to the decisions themselves but to the justifications or reasoning behind them. For Keane, “the ethical worlds made visible in the ethnographic stance draw on *affordances* they discover in cognition, affect, and interaction, are manifested tacitly and explicitly in everyday in everyday interactions, and have the potential to instigate ethical *reflexivity*” (2014, 7, emphasis in original).

Perhaps a good issue to think about regarding the concept of the trans-scalar is corruption (Muir and Gupta 2018). It is said that societies are corrupt when there is an established pattern of conduct and ethos that takes place from the level of high government to the street level. For Claudio Lomnitz, corruption is embedded in rituals that may have their roots deep in the history of a community, similar to what happens with the case of the Mexican polity (1995). The way in which certain ritual practices take place or are represented in public spheres may shape further understandings about acceptable conventions or habits, for example, regarding inequalities and social exclusion. Although corruption may elude easy definition and categorization, it implies in its various guises a lack of consideration for the common good and prioritization of private benefit. Urban ethical deliberations, on the contrary, imply negotiations about what is better for life in the city. Nevertheless, these exercises seeking improved conditions for urban living may just as easily disseminate in a population through practices and discourses.

For this reason, we have paid special attention to social creativity in our umbrella project on urban ethics (Dürr et al. 2019, 2). We believe that some individuals gathered in collectives (activist or otherwise) may be able to set examples through ‘ethical projects’ that, in turn, inspire others or provide opportunities for reflexivity (Ege and Moser 2020, 7). Of course, a permissive power structure should be in charge, such as a political system of government that is open to free civic participation, so that such independent groups are able to exist and put forward a view of their own. Would this mean that there is no room for urban ethics in totalitarian regimes? Not necessarily; but it would imply that the opportunities for a diversity of urban ethical initiatives would be limited. This means that the political sphere holds keys for ethical developments.

Zigon has put forth his idea of an ‘ethics of dwelling’ (2018, 23) to refer to an exercise of worldbuilding through active inhabiting, or “the subjective experience of doing a politics of worldbuilding” (2018, 23). Zigon constructs his argument

by explaining that for some people, the world they live in is a disappointment for various reasons. Those who decide to do something about it, therefore, are effectively seeking to do things differently: “the ethics of dwelling [...] opens possibilities for building new worlds because it is an ethics that begins not with a predefined political subject, but rather with a demand made by a broken-down world that demands change” (Zigon 2018, 103). Zigon is very critical of Lambek’s notion of ‘ordinary ethics.’ Just as Talal Asad claimed that Clifford Geertz’s definition of religion as a system of symbolic meanings “is a modern, privatized Christian one” (1993, 47), Zigon argues that Lambek’s notion of ordinary ethics is “quite similar to Kantian morality” (Zigon 2018, 110). For Zigon, ordinary ethics dissolves the ethical into the social and works with an *a priori* that assumes a transcendental condition of humanness. For these reasons, Zigon prefers to focus on dwelling as a practice “that allows for the very differences of ways of being-in-the-world” (2018, 122).

Zigon’s view resonates with our take on ethical projects, which we define as schemes “for improving not just the quality but the ethical character and the ethical valence of urban life” (Ege and Moser 2020, 7). When a group of people choose to carry out a joint effort to such effect, the improvements are to concrete aspects of urban living. While such projects may be in line with the policies of local governments or authorities, they may also be against them. What they entail is a commitment to the urban as a form of life. Our considerations are shaped by Foucault’s ideas of governmentality and ethics, with which he referred to technologies of the self (1997b). It is through reflexive processes that individuals choose to seek to address shortcomings they identify through concerted action. We present in this book a wide array of such ethical projects, as well as other arenas where urban ethics play a role.

### **The urban condition**

Cities have increased their share of legitimacy and representation among global populations both within states and at the international level. Cities were, for the most part, a minority type of human settlement throughout their development in history. And yet, they were extremely influential: “Despite the fact that they long contained only a small minority of the world’s population, they have had profound impacts on the societies in which they have arisen” (Lees 2015, 1). Power dynamics in the modern world have transformed cities into key centers of gravity, due to either historical symbolism, cultural hegemonic practices or innovative economic activities. Our postindustrial age has opened the door for a political economy of knowledge production, which is more easily accumulated in cities because of the density of interactions and cultural institutions. But we refuse to focus solely on alpha cities and choose to examine a variety of urban centers with contrasting political, cultural and economic clout. This volume, therefore, addresses issues both in the Global North and the Global South, examining situations for their urban qualities in a manner that provides fruitful conceptualization. Such a contrast, seldom included in similar analyses, renders visible the multifaceted path of urbanization that is taking place across our planet.

Ethical claims in cities, thus, serve urban dwellers to navigate quotidian collective life, with its allegiances, frictions and challenges. Interactions among strangers in public spaces, while commuting, or in entertainment or hospitality venues, are not only shaped by built environments and mediating technologies, but crucially by culturally, contextually and historically informed social behaviors. Additionally, discourses in mainstream and social media, as well as in works of literature, art or alternative public interventions, often engage in qualifying certain decisions as conducive or detrimental to a good collective life. These designations, in practice and discourse, configure novel social constellations, within and outside government institutions, that deal with broader situations that engulf urban communities, such as economic crises, the pandemic or waves of refugee influxes. It is not a case of applied moral principles, but a dynamic process of choices and practices through which good and bad behavior, language and attitudes are determined.

### **Mapping urban ethics**

Although all our contributions share some key concepts and discussions, we have chosen to divide our volume into four parts that correspond to key arenas we identify in cities: (I) the urban as a political arena; (II) disputes and resolutions; (III) solidarity in the city; and (IV) inhabiting urban space. Cities face numerous tensions within each of these arenas, where emerging ethical dynamics serve to facilitate arrangements or establish allegiances between different actors. The *urban as a political arena* is linked not only to a city's government but also to its legitimacy as a community where collective decisions shape the urban landscape. Claims of ethical behavior or decisions in such an arena are often justified with individuals' sense of recognition and belonging in their communities. This, in turn, is related to *disputes and resolutions*, which are characterized by the wide variety of actors who negotiate problems in order to seek solutions. In their efforts to dispute or resolve matters, actors use various forms of knowledge combined with diverse ideas of justice. The ethical claims being made are mediated not only by institutions of government but also by citizen-led organizations. *Solidarity in the city* refers to a combination of private and public collective efforts through which organizations and individuals seek to reduce material and symbolic inequalities. Here, the ethical is in constant tension with the just. Regarding the arena of *inhabiting urban spaces*, the cities' built environments serve as stages for urban dwellers, on which they reach agreements about what a good life looks like in practice. This is not only about planning and construction but also about uses of space and social inclusion or exclusion.

In each of the arenas mentioned, therefore, symbols and practices clash in registers that lie outside ideological camps of identities. Our focus on ethics seeks to examine actual ways in which individuals and institutions try to reach compromises over what is considered good and bad in their city. Some of our guest contributors, for example, explore matters of sovereignty and solidarity in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had not been envisioned as a context for our urban ethics research when the project began. It is one thing to discuss issues of

wealth versus health conceptually, for example, but another to witness inequality in accessing treatment or vaccinations. Cities offer vantage points from which to examine the senses of community as they are shaped by practices of cohabiting. Historical memories are constantly reevaluated according to changing value systems. Frictions, thus, reshape urban spaces beyond the well-known inequalities in built environments and urban sections. Air pollution, on the other hand, travels across postcodes, entering all living and working areas. In these and other issues, therefore, attempts to mediate interests, influences and unforeseen effects of various practices and processes complicate the distinction between common good and private interest.

Diane Davis uses an ethics of care framework in her chapter to examine health policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and their implications for governance. Highlighting the tensions between local and national authorities over how best to respond to the pandemic, she reveals an increasing disconnect between private interests and the public good playing out on different scales of health policy decision-making, which she describes as fueling a crisis of governance. In Davis's view, "one way to address both the governance and the health crisis [...] is to strengthen governance capacities on an urban scale." She uses the concept of urban sovereignty, defined as the ways in which city governments reciprocally engage with local populations and territories, to theorize this claim. Her larger point is that the pandemic sheds light on a longer-term process which was already underway. According to Davis, cities have increasingly amassed not only wealth and influence but also political clout. What may follow after the pandemic will depend on the ways in which such local power is wielded by other institutional actors.

The following two chapters of this section, by Raúl Acosta and Marie Aschenbrenner, deal with exercises of governance in Mexico City and Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. In both cases, local stakeholders challenge established institutional architectures to include points of view and grievances that had not been considered previously. Negotiations over urban ethics on various scales in these studies are, thus, part and parcel of wider political processes. Acosta analyzes the multilayered deliberations between activists, advocates, experts and government officials, regarding policies of urban mobility. In his view, the tension between public good and private interest has tilted toward the former in recent years, opening up new public spaces for cyclists, pedestrians and users of public transport. The new policies and projects have, thus, resulted in novel opportunities for urban dwellers to experience Mexico City anew. The result, he argues, is that such processes have opened up potential conceptions of belonging and ownership of the city, which he terms 'political becomings.' Aschenbrenner's chapter examines the collective effort to plan for improvements in the environmental state of the Hauraki Gulf. She explores how an urban ethics of marine stewardship emerged from community efforts and dealings with local government structures. As participants sought a common ground for collaboration and consensus building, they brought together 'diverse ethicalities.' Encompassing experts, advocates and activists, her case crucially involved Māori community members, who brought contrasting ethicalities, nature-culture relations and claims of self-determination. She shows how a focus on

urban ethics highlights the inadequacies of conventional framings of ‘participation’ and ‘good governance’ in the analysis of marine spatial planning. Both of these chapters explore the manner in which ethical negotiations form part of inherent proceedings over communal affairs in cities.

The second part, on disputes and resolutions, focuses on situations in cities where accumulated friction required settlements. In such circumstances, ethical deliberations provide a necessary framework for all actors involved to acknowledge each other’s claims and grievances. Fernanda Sánchez, Fabricio Leal de Oliveria and Carlos Vainer present the case of urban planning in Vila Autodromo, as residents responded to the planning for the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. In their analysis, what took place can be termed ‘conflictual planning,’ as authorities engaged in disputes remove residents to make way for new installations. Sanchez, de Oliveira and Vainer situate social theoretical approaches to conflict and conflict resolution in order to examine the manner in which urban populations reacted to the push by authorities for large projects for the ‘mega-event’ of the Olympics. Associations of residents, housing rights groups, academics, nongovernmental organizations dedicated to human rights, unions and other collective actors engaged in disputes over local territories and their uses.

Clemens van Loyen also focused on Rio de Janeiro, examining the ‘Valongo Complex’ in Rio’s port zone. In his analysis, the tensions at play were related to the efforts by some actors to use the large-scale *Porto Maravilha* (Wonder Port) urban renewal project to highlight the area’s history. The Valongo Complex is located in the city’s old port and is one of the best-documented sites of the history of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, according to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. It is a wharf built around 1811 that housed slave sales houses, markets, hospitals and even a slave cemetery. The history of this area has been intentionally neglected by state and local authorities, who were primarily committed to modernizing and Europeanizing the city. Some actors, particularly Afro-Brazilian civil rights groups and black activists, are working to incorporate remembrance as part of urban renewal in the area. Van Loyen analyzes the ethical negotiations that have ensued through the concept of ‘urbanophagy,’ an analytical category through which the reappraisal of slavery and its consequences is meant to become tangible in its material, mental, topographical and cultural dimensions.

The third chapter of this section is by Liana Kupreishvili and Guido Hausmann, who examine the case of restorative justice in Georgia, particularly regarding the recognition of prostitution in Tbilisi. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia has sought to strengthen its independent status in different aspects of collective life. Kupreishvili and Hausmann analyze prostitution in Tbilisi from an urban ethical perspective because of the tensions regarding urban spaces and practices it entails. They dissect the manner in which sex work has taken place since Soviet times through a cultural-historical perspective. Their analysis explores the changing perceptions of urban dwellers and authorities, as well as the attitudes adopted by police and other security personnel, by making use of the oral history of sex workers. Framed within a search for rights for sex workers, their study serves as a prism to scrutinize urban ethical explorations about private interests and the common good.

The third section of our book is about solidarity in the city. The first chapter of that section is by John Clarke, who examines some of the emerging and conflicted ethical orientations that have taken shape in cities during the COVID-19 pandemic. He examines the distinction between ethics and politics in relation to the solidarities and separations that derived from expert advice for public health. The conflicts that have taken place affecting lives, livelihoods and liberties constitute, in his view, the essence of communal living. The fact that numerous conflicts emerged over racialized inequalities also stresses underlying tensions that were there beforehand. His analysis centers on the situation in the United Kingdom, mostly London, where social relationships have been affected on various scales, especially an escalation of insecurity and tensions. At the same time, however, he addresses the multiplication of volunteer initiatives through which over 12 million people sought to support others in need. In his analysis, the ‘troubled waters’ where the ethical and the political meet require practices of translation and articulation, where there are possibilities for emergent ethics in relation to the field of politics.

Olga Reznikova’s chapter addresses solidarity from the point of view of researchers of activism, specifically exploring the feminist methodology. Stemming from her own work in Moscow and New York as part of our research group, Reznikova reflects on the role of ethics during investigations into urban mobilizations. The risks that individuals are confronted with may be used in the research process for one’s own analysis. This and other reflections lead to her asking what is the epistemological boundary between understanding and sympathy, as she seeks to scrutinize methodological challenges in ethnographic research. For observers of mobilizations, the subjectification processes that their research partners go through are not only an object (or subject) of study, but an intimate relation. Friendships and other forms of close connections evolve from quotidian interactions but are often strained by contrasting expectations and the actual temporary character of academic research. How does this affect scholarly analyses? Does ethnographic research turn out to be a transformational practice?

Laura Gozzer focuses in her chapter on several examples of voluntary mentoring that take place in Munich. She combines observations, interviews and documentary analyses to offer an ethnographic analysis of two types of mentoring: for children who live with parents with a mental illness and for refugees. In both cases, volunteers sign up for a program that is organized by an established group, through which they aim to support disadvantaged individuals in their life in the city. Gozzer considers these practices of mentoring as forms of care in an urban setting. The need for them is particularly attuned to city life, as the effects of disenfranchisement are felt particularly by people who may slip through the social fabric of communal life because of urban anonymity. Gozzer identifies tensions between ideals and structures, between class differences and conflicts, while addressing the ethics of relationship-building underpinning both programs, which are put to the test in everyday situations. The emotional and affective strains that result from the quotidian interactions between strangers reveal the difficulties that attempts at ethical reformulations of urban life face.



The final section is about inhabiting urban spaces. The first chapter in this section is by Ulrich van Loyen, who focuses on mortuary practices in Naples and New York. Van Loyen explores how anonymity can be used as a cultural resource in light of the idea of urban care by focusing on burial grounds with long histories as pandemic cemeteries in each of the two cities. The Fontanelle in Naples is associated with the plague dead, and Hart Island in New York represents the unknown AIDS dead. In both cases, the pandemic at hand had particular repercussions for the city and its inhabitants. The tensions between self-awareness and vulnerability, remembrance and care, are represented in the media through which urban dwellers share imaginative practices of the absent and of potential futures.

Max Ott's chapter deals with collaborative housing and participatory planning within urban transformation processes in contemporary Berlin and focuses on the power relationships structuring this field of observation. As a consequence of austerity politics and financial crisis, the access to housing has become a major problem in many cities around the world, and in Berlin, efforts to spur citizen participation are one way to address this issue. Ott's empirical starting point is the description of a community-oriented urban ethical subject in a guideline published by Berlin's Senate Department for Urban Development. He uses Nikolas Rose's concept of 'ethopolitics' (2000) in order to discuss the circumstances and impacts of such a model of proper urban self-conception. His use of ethopolitics carries with it Rose's combination of Foucault's work on governmentality and ethics. In doing so, Rose alludes to the style of subjectivation through which individuals – according to Foucault – negotiate between technologies of domination and the self (Foucault 1997b, 225). This is useful for Ott in examining how the challenge of deregulation and privatization policies, combined with intensifying property speculation and increasing sociospatial segregation, has been laid on Berlin's neighborhood communities and its present and future residents. What role do urban ethics play when structural forces affect grassroots initiatives? Who designs participatory processes, who meets the requirements to participate and who is excluded?

Each of our contributions addresses urban ethics from a particular vantage point, adding considerations to a complex topic. In our view, the instance of urban ethics does not automatically make a situation good or positive. It adds a layer of negotiation, where discussions or deliberations take place about what would be better for a collective, instead of only for an individual. Such parleying takes particular speed and intensity with the help of social media and new information technologies. In a similar manner to how Anderson explained the formation of imagined communities through thousands of people reading the same newspaper every morning (2006 [1983]), so, the imagination of what is best for a city requires a collective conception of its complexity and vastness. When considered through the prism of the city as an assemblage (McFarlane and Rutherford 2008; Brenner, Madden and Wachsmuth 2011; McFarlane 2011a, 2011b, 2011c), these reflections gain particular relevance for the various scales we present in each of our chapters.

The agenda we put forward, therefore, seeks to examine the manifold styles and enactments of urban ethics. Showcasing our recent efforts to conceptualize

and analyze the roles of urban ethics in (the resolution and contestation of) diverse issues leads us to think that this volume further elaborates and makes clear the usefulness of urban ethics thinking. This is a time of prominent emergencies, some of which are contexts for inquiries in this volume. Ethical claim-making serves to (re) assemble materialities, individuals and communities into novel societal constellations. That is a vital component of on-the-ground responses to current emergencies which deserves urgent attention.

## References

- Aina, Yusuf A., Alex Wafer, Fethi Ahmed, and Habib M. Alshuwaihat. 2019. Top-down sustainable urban development? Urban governance transformation in Saudi Arabia. *Cities*, 90, 272–281.
- Anderson, Benedict. 2006 [1983]. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Asad, Talal. 1993. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Beck, M. Bruce, Dillip K. Das, Michael Thompson, Innocent Chirisa, Stephen Eromobor, Serge Kubanza, Tejas Rewal, and Everardt Burger. 2018. Cities as forces for good in the environment: A systems approach. In: Priscilla Mensah, David Katerere, Sepo Hachigonta and Andreas Roodt, eds. *Systems Analysis Approach for Complex Global Challenges*. Cham: Springer, pp. 9–39.
- Brenner, Neil. 2016. *Critique of Urbanization: Selected Essays*. Vol. 156. Heidelberg: Birkhäuser.
- Brenner, Neil. 2019. *New Urban Spaces: Urban Theory and the Scale Question*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brenner, Neil, David J. Madden, and David Wachsmuth. 2011. Assemblage urbanism and the challenges of critical urban theory. *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action*, 15(2), 225–240.
- Brenner, Neil, and Christian Schmid. 2014. The ‘urban age’ in question. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38(3), 731–755. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12115>.
- Chan, Jeffrey K. H. 2019. *Urban Ethics in the Anthropocene: The Moral Dimensions of Six Emerging Conditions in Contemporary Urbanism*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Das, Veena. 2012. Ordinary ethics. In: Didier Fassin, ed. *A Companion to Moral Anthropology*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 133–149.
- Demetriou, Olga. 2007. To cross or not to cross? Subjectivization and the absent state in Cyprus. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13(4), 987–1006.
- Dürr, Eveline, Moritz Ege, Johannes Moser, Christoph K. Neumann, and Gordon M. Winder. 2019. Urban ethics: Towards a research agenda on cities, ethics and normativity. *City, Culture and Society*, 20(5–6), 100313.
- Ege, Moritz, and Johannes Moser. 2020. Introduction: Urban ethics—conflicts over the good and proper life in cities. In: Moritz Ege and Johannes Moser, eds. *Urban Ethics: Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. London: Routledge, pp. 3–27.
- Fassin, Didier. 2014. The ethical turn in anthropology: Promises and uncertainties. *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 4(1), 429–435. <https://doi.org/10.14318/hau4.1.025>.
- Foucault, Michel. 1997a. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Paul Rabinow, ed. New York: New Press.

- Foucault, Michel. 1997b. Technologies of the self. In: Paul Rabinow, ed. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth - The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954–1984. Volume I*. New York: The New Press, pp. 223–251.
- Jacobs, Jane. 2011 [1961]. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. 50th Anniversary Edition. New York: Modern Library.
- Keane, Webb. 2014. Affordances and reflexivity in ethical life: an ethnographic stance. *Anthropological Theory*, 14(1), 3–26.
- Lakoff, Andrew, and Stephen J. Collier. 2004. Ethics and the anthropology of modern reason. *Anthropological Theory*, 4(4), 419–434.
- Lambek, Michael. 2010a. *Ordinary Ethics: Anthropology, Language, and Action*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Lambek, Michael. 2010b. Toward an ethics of the act. In: Michael Lambek, ed. *Ordinary Ethics: Anthropology, Language, and Action*. New York: Fordham University Press, pp. 39–63.
- Lees, Andrew. 2015. *The City: A World History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lomnitz, Claudio. 1995. Ritual, rumor and corruption in the constitution of polity in modern Mexico. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 1(1), 20–47.
- MacLeod, Gordon, and Mark Goodwin. 1999. Space, scale and state strategy: Rethinking urban and regional governance. *Progress in Human Geography*, 23(4), 503–527.
- McFarlane, Colin. 2011a. Assemblage and critical urbanism. *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action*, 15(2), 204–224.
- McFarlane, Colin. 2011b. The city as assemblage: Dwelling and urban space. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29(4), 649–671.
- McFarlane, Colin. 2011c. *Learning the City: Knowledge and Translocal Assemblage*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- McFarlane, Colin, and Jonathan Rutherford. 2008. Political infrastructures: Governing and experiencing the fabric of the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32(2), 363–374. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2008.00792.x>.
- Moore, Henrietta. 2011. *Stil Life: Hopes, Desires and Satisfactions*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Moraitis, Konstantinos, and Stamatina Th. Rassia. 2019. *Urban Ethics under Conditions of Crisis: Politics, Architecture, Landscape Sustainability and Multidisciplinary Engineering*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing.
- Mostafavi, Mohsen. 2017. *Ethics of the Urban: The City and the Spaces of the Political*. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers.
- Muir, Sarah, and Akhil Gupta. 2018. Rethinking the anthropology of corruption: An introduction to supplement 18. *Current Anthropology*, 59, 4–15.
- Popper, Karl. 2010a [1945]. *The Open Society and Its Enemies. Volume One: The Spell of Plato*. London: Routledge.
- Popper, Karl. 2010b [1945]. *The Open Society and Its Enemies. Volume Two: Hegel and Marx*. London: Routledge.
- Puig de la Bellacasa, María. 2017. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rancière, Jacques. 2006. The ethical turn of aesthetics and politics. *Critical Horizons*, 7(1), 1–20.
- Richardson, Liz, Catherine Durose, and Beth Perry. 2018. Coproducing urban governance. *Politics and Governance*, 6(1), 145–149.

- Riisgaard, Lone, and Bjørn Thomassen. 2016. Powers of the mask: Political subjectivation and rites of participation in local-global protest. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33(6), 75–98.
- Rose, Nikolas. 2000. Community, citizenship and the third way. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43(9), 1395–1411.
- Sadik-Kahn, Janette, and Seth Solomonow. 2016. *Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution*. New York: Penguin.
- Sennett, Richard. 2018. *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*. London: Penguin.
- Stavrides, Stavros. 2016. *Common Space: The City as Commons*. New York: Zed Books.
- Tonkiss, Fran. 2003. The ethics of indifference: Community and solitude in the city. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6(3), 297–311.
- Tonkiss, Fran. 2005. *Space, the City and Social Theory*. Malden: Polity.
- White, Elwyn Brooks. 1999 [1949]. *Here Is New York*. New York: Little Bookroom.
- Zigon, Jarrett. 2018. *Disappointment: Toward a Critical Hermeneutics of Worldbuilding*. New York: Fordham University Press.

# 1 Urban sovereignty in a time of crisis

## Territorialities of governance and the ethics of care

*Diane E. Davis*

### **Introduction: empirical, theoretical and conceptual foundations**

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown much of the world into disarray, with cities and their residents suffering disproportionately. Urban dwellers have borne a lot of the brunt of the crisis, not just because of the negative health effects associated with density and close proximity, but also because the loss of jobs generated by quarantine, lockdowns and restrictions on gathering in restaurants and public spaces has dramatically reduced employment opportunities and sent urban economies into a tailspin. The economic slowdown has also affected tax revenues by reducing local and national state's fiscal capacities, while increasing the operating costs of providing health services and other public goods that urban residents have come to expect, including transportation and education. In order to deal with the current fallout, various social and spatial policies have been promoted to address and repair ruptures in the social, spatial and economic fabric wrought by COVID-19 in cities around the world (Bárcena 2020). As the policies roll out and the crisis continues, we have seen a series of conflicts and perhaps even programmatic missteps connected with tensions over how to regulate and manage either citizen or state actions, suggesting that the current pandemic appears to be producing a governance crisis and not merely a health crisis (Abers, Rossi and Von Bulow 2021).

Many of these tensions have revolved around the power of national authorities to impose restrictions on travel, masking and congregation in public and even private places. A large number of these mandates come from national authorities which are responsible for setting their country's public health agenda and dealing with health emergencies. Even so, policy decisions made with the nation in mind have, on occasion, had disastrous impacts on the scale of the city, and possibly on the scale of the neighborhood or the household as well, particularly regarding a return to normalcy. Numerous urban residents have experienced the pandemic quite differently than nonurban residents, owing to the ways that density drives contagion. This makes national efforts to recommend or establish policy for an entire nation potentially problematic, particularly when cities themselves vary in size, density and income or class heterogeneity. All this raises the possibility that governing institutions drawing their authority and action repertoires from a preoccupation with the health of nations may not be well-positioned to address health challenges

on the more local city scale, where the pandemic is wreaking extreme economic and social havoc for the urban economy, society and politics. To the extent that conflict rather than synergy often typifies governance relationships across territorial scales, constructive or coordinated action on the pandemic has been hard to achieve, and conflict rather than consensus has continued to be the norm.

However, despite the formidable barriers to coordination more generally, a great deal can be accomplished by focusing on the city itself and its potential to address the pandemic in ways that may elude national authorities. Indeed, seeing like a state is not the same as seeing like a city, to paraphrase the work of the great anthropologist James Scott (1999). In this chapter, I argue that the contemporary pandemic is producing tensions in the territorial distribution of decision-making power across local, state, national and even global governance institutions. These tensions hold the potential to exacerbate long-standing political disagreements about the balance of collective versus individual freedom and the most appropriate decision-making scale for resolving such tensions, thus, producing a governance crisis that may be as significant as the health crisis itself. In light of these developments, I suggest in this chapter that one way to address both the governance and the health crisis produced by the COVID-19 pandemic is to strengthen governance capacities on an urban scale.<sup>1</sup>

The urban of course is an analytically slippery concept (Brenner and Schmid 2015). Cities grow through extractive relationships with their surrounding hinterlands, often referred to in rural-urban terms or through the lens of metropolitan and regional governance, and which also involve local-global interactions that challenge nation-states. Manuel Castells once described cities as distinctive nodal densities in a global ‘space of flows’ (2001). These densities are of people, money, data and a global political economy that must flow in space even as it rests in densities. Similarly, this kind of flow inevitably transcends national borders, superseding them in both economic and political terms, weakening national state-centric politics, policies and borders. Yet, one might also say that the virus follows a similar logic: It flows through urban, national and global spaces without constraint, knowing no set territorial boundaries. It moves transnationally within and across spaces until it finds an amenable ‘host’ body, thus, defying conventional sovereignty logics built on national-state capacities to open or close borders. Given the inability of national authorities to stop flows, cities and their governing authorities must deal with their consequences by determining who benefits and who is exploited or made vulnerable by such flows, whether of money, people or viruses. In the context of the current pandemic, urban authorities are particularly well-situated to assess the needs of residents and recommend actions that balance the health of individuals with other priorities for the city as a whole.

To propose that the city may be better suited than the nation for equitably addressing the pandemic and its impact on other everyday servicing issues and livelihood concerns (Denyer-Willis and Davis 2021) will, thus, require a rethinking of the predominant territorialities of sovereignty, not only regarding health emergencies but also more generally. Although the definitions of ‘sovereignty’ have varied historically, it is thought to have a core meaning, which is supreme authority

within a territory – with the national state usually considered to be the principal political institution in which formal sovereignty is embodied. Scholars have begun to question the utility of the nation-state as the main source of sovereign power in recent years (Appadurai 2003; Sparke 2005; Agnew 2007), with some arguing that cities are already taking on such functions in a *de facto* if not *de jure* fashion (Barber 2013, 2017; Prak 2018).<sup>2</sup> This chapter builds on this literature but takes it in new directions by suggesting that greater sovereignty on the urban scale might help mitigate the most deleterious impacts of the current health crisis. To the extent that cities have meaning, purpose and extraordinary significance in citizens’ ‘everyday lifeworlds’ (Habermas 1987) because of their more direct knowledge and engagement with residents and are, thus, better suited to channel citizen claims for actions to protect everyday life (Stone 1993), they also offer possibilities for more reciprocal and potentially more legitimate government action. Another way to think about these reciprocities is through the concept of ‘imagined communities,’ a notion developed by Benedict Anderson (1983) to account for the bonds that tie citizens together in support of nationalism, but that could also be applied on the urban scale (Davis 2020).

In addition to a concern with urban sovereignty as primarily a governance matter, cities have an important role to play in addressing the disastrous consequences of the pandemic for individual health, the health of the local economy, existent hospital systems and the infrastructures and institutions of social welfare that have become increasingly necessary in the face of the contagion. The phrase ‘infrastructure of care’ has been developed to account for the operations of health delivery systems and collective investments in elements of the built environment that foster individual health outcomes, such as public parks, walkable streets and housing (Berlant 2016; Mellick Lopes et al. 2018; Power and Mee 2020).<sup>3</sup> In the context of the pandemic, the infrastructures of care have expanded beyond the material and now include citizens and governing authorities who are engaging in new forms of mobilization or action to mitigate the pandemic’s worst effects. In order to capture this expanded terrain of caregiving, I prefer to adopt an ethics of care framework, which analytically privileges benevolence as a virtue and, thus, establishes a normative underpinning for a larger governance agenda committed to care.

An ethics of care framework, as developed on the basis of work by Carol Gilligan (1982) and other feminists in the second half of the 20th century, not only requires attention to interpersonal relationships and situational detail – a directive that underscores the importance of identifying a scale closer to the everyday lived experience of citizens in the context of a pandemic-led health crisis. It also calls for a reckoning with the concepts of both justice and moral development, such that individuals who are directly affected by the consequences of others’ choices will deserve special attention in proportion to their own vulnerabilities (Gilligan 1987). I will return to this issue later when I address the ways in which governing authorities who oppose pandemic restrictions may put in jeopardy the lives of a nation’s most vulnerable populations, in a manner that Gilligan might have called morally

problematic, since it breeds moral blindness – or indifference of sorts – but which also suggests that the ethics of care involves both the public and private spheres.

Suffice it to say that several assumptions underlie what has come to be known as an ‘ethics of care’ framework. They include the fact that (a) individuals are understood to have varying degrees of dependence and interdependence on one another; (b) those individuals affected by the consequences of another’s choices deserve consideration in proportion to their vulnerability; and (c) situational or context-specific details determine how to safeguard and promote the interests of all. Although in prior years, those who focused on care often took individuals and their care-receiving needs as the starting point, scholars are now arguing that in the face of COVID-19, we must expand our framework to understand social, spatial and even governance relationships aggregated on the urban scale (Gabauer et al. 2022). In the words of these authors,

(a) amidst the pandemic, societies and public institutions have been compelled to adopt new forms of *taking care* – from mutual aid to physical distancing and social isolation [...] [while] in spatial relations, the pandemic has unraveled the urban as a place of particularly vulnerability.

(Gabauer et al. 2022, 3; author’s italics)

To the extent that the urban scale offers unique possibilities for forging health policies around an ethics of care, they, in turn, become elements in any blueprint for strengthening urban sovereignty.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I lay out evidence suggesting that the pandemic is helping to produce a crisis in long-standing governance practices. The focus is primarily on the ways in which national authorities have faced pushback from citizens or authorities on the urban scale in response to their actions, and *vice versa*. Although I draw heavily on examples from the USA, Brazil, India and Mexico, countries where both national and local politics have been destabilized by the pandemic, my aim is to identify general trends that might be applicable to other countries worldwide. The next section dives more deeply into several other issues at stake that intensify political conflicts over pandemic policy responses, thus, exacerbating the governance crisis. This includes a discussion of the relative balance of support for state versus market solutions to problem-solving and differences in opinion over collective versus individual rights in modern governance systems. A third section turns directly to the scale of the city. It shows how and why nationally imposed policy mandates often fail to accommodate the realities of urban life and livelihoods. In this section, I pay special attention to the specific ways in which cities are better suited than nations to advance an ethics of care agenda that is both more inclusive and better attuned to the specificities of pandemic daily life. The paper concludes by returning to the notion of urban sovereignty and the importance of ‘seeing like a city’ (Scott 1999) if advancing collective welfare and the public good in times of global contagion are understood to be the building blocks of good governance.



**National versus local governments in conflict:  
what the pandemic wrought**

Initial presidential responses to the pandemic in the USA, Brazil, Mexico and India produced protests, political realignment and considerable second-guessing of presidential leadership and integrity. In the initial months of the pandemic, Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro, Andrés Manuel López Obrador and Narendra Modi, the respective leaders of these countries, found themselves in the firestorms of controversy over delayed quarantine responses, unwillingness to respond to health guidance and the prioritization of economic growth over people's lives, albeit to different degrees. As the urgency of the health crisis persisted and even deepened with the rise of the Delta and Omicron variants, authorities in all four countries have relaxed their intransigence somewhat over time. The federal government in the USA, for example, is now a lot more proactive, partially because there is a new president who is seeking more active restrictions. Yet, President Joseph Biden has also faced protests despite taking the opposite approach from his predecessor, Trump, by promoting both stricter health measures and a state remediation of the social and physical infrastructure to deal with the economic and health crisis. This suggests that political conflicts over the pandemic response cannot be reduced to a single policy. Multiple other issues are at stake, and one of the most significant is the territorial vantage point from which supporters or opponents are reacting. Cities tend to prioritize policy actions tailored to their socio-spatial and class composition in ways that may not align with rural priorities, health related or otherwise, thus, explaining why a single national mandate is bound to make one of these two sets of constituencies unhappy.

Nowhere has this been clearer than in the USA, my home country, where major health policy responsibility has rested in federal-level agencies and institutions, such as the National Institute of Health, whose purview for action scales to the nation-state more than to cities or rural areas. In response to national mandates undertaken in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many governors and some mayors have rejected national policy directives, even as others have embraced them, depending on whether they represent rural, urban or a combination of these two populations. A degree of dissensus is also evident in other countries, including Brazil, India and Mexico, where national leaders have taken positions that do not always match the priorities and demands of citizens and local governing authorities.<sup>4</sup> It may be worth noting that the four countries with the worst record of managing the pandemic crisis over the first 18 months of the pandemic, at least as reflected in number of deaths, were the USA, Brazil, India and Mexico. These countries host stark distinctions between urban and rural settlements, rural poverty is a persistent problem and national wealth is skewed toward cities. Moreover, all four are large countries with federal systems where direct lines of accountability between national and local governing authorities have been under question, and where the flow of money to cities is mediated by provincial or subnational states, thus, setting up barriers to direct accountability between the local and the national, or the city and the federal government. These governance systems appear to be

prone to destabilization in the context of the current health crisis to the extent that they are federal systems with high rates of urbanization.

The fact that different political ideologies have mapped onto these federalist systems in ways that further intensified scalar conflicts is complicating the picture. Presidents Bolsonaro, Trump, Modi and Lopez Obrador have all been characterized as purveyors of either right- or left-wing populism, known for being socially illiberal but economically liberal, or *vice versa*, and using these somewhat contradictory commitments to enhance their decision-making power and authority. Both Trump and Bolsonaro, for example, showed a willingness to expand or even transcend their constitutionally given executive powers to challenge or undermine the actions of state and city governments who dare to propose alternative pathways to protect their citizens when the pandemic first hit (Hennigan 2021). That these leaders also embraced a form of populism motivated some observers to attribute their decisions as political leaders to be embedded in a masculinized cult of personality, with each using the health crisis for supplanting their political bases (Parmanand 2020). Yet, a lot more has been at stake than winning elections; the traditional balance of power between local, state and national authorities has also been destabilized through these actions.

Trump's claim to legitimacy and authority before his electoral defeat built in no small part on a grassroots media campaign, reinforced by Fox News and its national reporting, suggesting that COVID-19 was a hoax intended to undermine the popularity of the president. And although Trump is no longer in office, President Biden has had to deal with the ongoing fallout of Trump's efforts to paint the pandemic through the lens of conspiracy theories suggesting it was fabricated in order to undermine his authority and the Republican Party's electoral hold on power. But even more significantly, these narratives helped to expose a clash of rationalities that persist in the USA, yet are also evident in Brazil and less so Mexico and India. Three key elements fuel the crisis of governance in this class of rationalities: territorial fragmentation, conflicts between state and market logics and tensions between individual and collective responsibilities.

Let us start with the territorial fragmentation of political authority, which serves as the institutional basis for what we are calling the governance crisis. When the pandemic first hit in spring 2020, US President Donald Trump showed blatant obstinacy in the face of dire warnings from domestic and global health professionals, rejecting their advice and failing to respond in an effective or anticipatory fashion. Brazilian President Bolsonaro did much the same. Citizens in both countries began clamoring for national leadership on the contemporary health crisis, a state of affairs that some attribute to President Biden's success later that year in the 2020 US national elections. Even so, during Trump's time in office and continuing even today, a good number of citizens channeled their pleas more locally, to either mayors or governors, with the expectation that these authorities would be better able than the president or the federal executive to identify what is at stake in the pandemic, thus, guaranteeing more effective responses. Similarly, citizens and several local authorities in Brazil pushed back against presidential postures (Abers, Rossi and von Bulow 2021). In all these instances, opposition revolved

around each national leader's efforts to concentrate inordinate cultural authority in the person and office of the presidency.

To be sure, there was also considerable citizen support for Trump's and Bolsonaro's initial positions on the pandemic, which at times deviated in critical ways from national health advisors and also had a partisan flavor. Trump took a *laissez faire* approach to the health crisis in order to pump up his Republican base, highlighting the ideological aversion to government intervention that his party was known for. In Brazil, Bolsonaro took a similar posture, belittling the health threat to the nation. These intransigent positions motivated state governors to support or reject the federal advice on health measures depending on which political party they subscribed to. However, beyond the stalemate between the two dominant political parties in the USA, this was most clearly a conflict about scales of governance authority. Presidents in federal systems have historically defined their scope of action in the form of a more territorially integrative governance agenda intended to balance powers across regions that comprise the nation (Karmis and Norman 2005; Rodden 2008). When presidents make moves to expand their powers, the states often push back, making it more difficult to coordinate across scales and, at times, producing conflicts that land in the Supreme Court for settlement.

It is worth noting that the system of federalism that underlies American, Brazilian, Mexican and Indian democracy is built on a model that evolved centuries ago. In the USA case, which I know best, federalism was based not just on general principles of democracy; it was also informed by the particular settler and postcolonial history of the USA. In establishing a division of powers, principles of grassroots democracy informed efforts to avoid the kind of authoritarian centralization associated with monarchical rule in Great Britain, the colonizer. A basic principle was states' rights, and within this, opportunities for citizens to express localized preferences. A guiding assumption was that the 'closer' a governing authority was to the people, the more likely it would represent their individual interests rather than a heavy-handed and distant state. That is why the American democratic system is frequently considered to be highly decentralized, at least compared to many European democracies and even some Latin American nations. However, in the centuries since this system was established, urbanization has changed the demographic profile of the USA, shifting more populations to cities while also giving certain states greater social and class heterogeneity because of these urbanization patterns. Yet, because these 18th-century federalist arrangements remained permanent, even as demographics shifted throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, tensions over how democratic the current setup was began to emerge even before the pandemic arrived.<sup>5</sup> The arrival of the coronavirus only further exposed the potential weaknesses in this territorial distribution of power under federalism.

Federalism at its best, when working as prescribed, distributes power and coordinating capacities between states and national authorities. However, cities also need to be both included and empowered as active parties in any such governance arrangements to deal adequately with the locations hit hard by the pandemic, at least if progress on coordinating responses is to be possible. This would require involving participation and leadership from mayors, not merely governors or

presidents. But the federalist model designed and brought to fruition in an earlier era fails to empower cities in any purposeful way, despite the fact that the number of citizens living in cities began to outbalance those living in rural areas.<sup>6</sup>

As such, cities in the USA are frequently on the receiving end of policy decisions made with other territorial scales in mind, both state and federal, and they have been materially disadvantaged in the process. Data, for example, on the distribution of US federal monies for the pandemic published in late 2020 showed that the state of Nebraska has received \$379,000 per patient affected, while New York has received only \$12,000. This skewed distribution occurred because federal monies are allocated based on state-level jurisdictions rather than population counts. Stated differently, this egregiously unequal outcome is the product of a governance system created 300 years ago, before the intensive urbanization rates that made New York City a global metropolis with one of the largest population concentrations in North America. Such distortions lend further urgency to the need to question the scaling of decision-making authority to either the state or the nation and acknowledge the importance of cities within the US national political imaginary.

This is not, however, merely a US problem. Similar dynamics were evident in Brazil. Bolsonaro's far-right populist alliance increased decentralization without allocating sufficient revenues to cities. In this context, the lack of vertical coordination led to increasing gaps in service delivery, especially since states and municipalities have large fiscal debts and difficulty in providing day-to-day services (de Moura Palotti 2019). Even so, subnational state autonomy served as a defense against Bolsonaro's mishandling of the pandemic. The president publicly denied the pandemic and censored scientific data, all the while the country's infection rates and deaths placed it among the world's hardest hit. But his attempt to force the states to bend to his will to keep Brazil open for business was unsuccessful. Governors, congressional leaders and federal ministers formed an alliance across party lines, enabling continued lockdowns despite Bolsonaro's opposition. A Federal Supreme Court judge ruled in April 2020 that he did not have the power to centralize control over pandemic responses. However, even with a united opposition, cross-state policy coordination remained elusive. By April 2021, over 45,000 municipal and more than 2,000 state-level policies were implemented to address the pandemic (Bennouna et al. 2021).

In the context of such realities, which generated public outcry particularly from states with large cities, both Trump and Bolsonaro felt pressured to pull back on some of their initial unwillingness to take responsibility for the pandemic health crisis. President Trump, in fact, shifted back and forth on whether he saw his job, as the country's supreme leader, to be directed at solving local rather than national problems; and when he invoked the latter, his focus was on the state not the city. This is reflected well in his contradictory statements about whether it is the federal or the state government's job to provide ventilators, set quarantine rules, or monitor travel and movement across state lines, among other contentious issues. President Trump went from telling the states they have to be able to take care of their own problems (as seen during fights with former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo), to claiming that only he as president, or federal government agencies under his

discretion, should have the authority to set policy for dealing with the pandemic. In the face of increasingly mixed signals, some governors began to take matters into their own hands, as reflected in the emergence of a new alliance among state governors on both coasts, who began working together to solve coordination problems produced by pandemic policies. Just as in Brazil, the state governors' push-back spurred attacks from President Trump, who continued to insist that only the national government should have the power and right to make major policy decisions for addressing the crisis. Yet, more importantly, this response still reified the limitations of the federal system, creating more conflict and contributing to what we are calling a governance crisis set in motion by the pandemic.

### **Clashing ideologies of care: the balance of market vs. state solutions**

Scalar tensions in government help underscore why it is insufficient to point only to the hubris or personal style of any given president, whether Donald Trump or Jair Bolsonaro or others, to explain the pandemic policy and its destabilizing impacts. This is evidenced by the fact that, as the pandemic raged onward, protests and policy shifts in two other federal-provincial power-sharing systems, including Germany and Canada in early 2022, have continued. The fact that the latter two countries (and their elected leaders) cannot be considered populist further suggests that other factors are often at play in the push-back against territorial structures of decision-making authority.<sup>7</sup> One of those factors is the relative embrace of state versus market solutions for addressing pressing problems. To a great degree, Trump saw the national government as responsible for creating amenable conditions for growing the national economy, such as focusing on currency valuation, import-export regulations and forms of regulation to strengthen banks, the stock market, firm solvency and favorable trading agreements, among other things.<sup>8</sup> This originally meant that the health problems of urban residents were not high on his agenda, although as time went on and federal authorities got on board with vaccine development, some elements of the private sector soon became key advocates for proactive health action. While it is true that Trump came to office with business credentials, interpreted his job through this mindset and initially argued against forceful pandemic measures because they threatened the smooth functioning of the national economy, it is also true that some state governors took the same position. Even today, some governors argue against mask mandates and vaccine requirements because of the negative impacts on the business sector.

However, such postures raise questions regarding whose health is being 'cared' for in pandemic policy arguments: the public or the private sector? Differences of opinion over the relative power of these actors are also part and parcel of the tensions emerging over the pandemic. The issue for some protagonists was not merely the territorial division of powers within federalism that gives states and political parties the rights to govern cities based on their own agendas, but also the argument that market approaches to problem-solving may be preferable. Although the relative support for state versus market solutions to problems can be linked to partisan politics, it also reveals differences in opinion over whether local authorities are

more trustworthy than national authorities to create the conditions for economic prosperity, a difference of opinion that also creates tensions within federalism, further driving the governance crisis.

Although long-standing ideological disagreements about the relative power of market versus state solutions are known to find fertile ground in the USA owing to its history, we can see similar tensions emerging in Brazil, where divisions between citizens and national authorities over pandemic responses echoed those in the USA. As President Jair Bolsonaro continued to belittle those who sought a more active state response to the pandemic, his political antagonists openly accused him of prioritizing the health of the economy over that of the people, leading to mobilizations across a wide range of cities in opposition to his unwillingness to take the pandemic more seriously (Abers, Rossi and Von Bulow 2021). Complicating matters further, the concern about presidential inaction among citizens even involved those supporting a more robust role for the state, who argued that the economy cannot be fully revived until the pandemic is brought under control. Yet, doing so would require massive public expenditures. In a neoliberal context, where revenue streams to the public sector have been in steep decline, such demands are often seen as an invitation to argue that the market should be prioritized, albeit with the hope that additional revenues would become available to both the state and citizens to fight the pandemic. In the context of growing tensions between state versus market responses to the pandemic, the question of who should bear the financial cost and who should receive the benefits from state health policy responses accelerated.

This is not to say that all supporters of pandemic relief held strong ideological opinions about whether the public or private sector should be responsible for providing services to populations whose health was under threat.<sup>9</sup> In fact, a select few worried that private sector enrichment would be the result. Moreover, in the USA, advocates for firm-led solutions to the disruptions caused by the pandemic were active at the city, state and federal levels, where we are seeing a rush to use public monies to fund private-sector firm innovations in the production of protective equipment, food delivery, manufacturing of test kits and so on. In a significant political twist that further destabilized a long-standing ideological division of labor between Democrats and Republicans in the USA, some more extreme elements of the Republican Party associated with Donald Trump began to claim that the pandemic was a hoax inculcated by the pharmaceutical industry to beef up their profits. They also suggested that the private sector provision of pandemic ‘necessities’ would allow governing authorities more leeway to impose harsh quarantine or isolation policies on people, by arguing that their main concern is the protection of citizens. Such stances not only revealed growing concerns about propping up markets, but they also painted a scenario where both the market – or at least big corporations – and the state were seen as exploiting the health crisis.

Resolving these differences of opinion can be difficult in and of themselves, but they become even more contentious when they become embedded in partisan battles over who is best equipped to manage the crisis: the public or the private sector. Instances of corruption in vaccine supply and government failures in vaccine distribution across Latin America further led to a distrust of public sector

authorities, with health ministers in Argentina, Ecuador and Peru being forced to resign. In Paraguay, assertions that public sector officials were personally benefiting from pandemic policy mandates and/or responsible for the shortage of vaccines led to strikes among medical workers and widespread street demonstrations about corruption and elite entitlement. While not new issues, high infection rates and the failures of health measures to place the pandemic under control revitalized long-standing criticisms of government authority. In Brazil, the upswing in demonstrations clamoring for Bolsonaro's removal in the face of health policy failures led the President to deepen relationships with the military in a manner that echoed the country's authoritarian past, calling into question his commitment to democracy and, thus, further destabilizing governance arrangements. The efforts to charge Bolsonaro with crimes against humanity, an indictment that was later reframed as homicide, emerged in precisely this context. In response to ongoing citizen mobilization, Bolsonaro only doubled down on his claims that as a populist leader his priority was, in fact, the people and their need to work without quarantine or other pandemic-inspired restrictions.

Tensions between state and market advocates also produced concerns about democratic institutions in the USA; these focused primarily on the balance of power between citizens and lobbyists, who want to take advantage of pandemic funds dispersals, as well as between political parties. Republicans have historically placed greater faith in the private sector as a leading source of innovation, and this has produced calls to bailout private firms and not merely compensate individuals who have been sickened or lost their jobs. Many Democrats wanted to prioritize social spending, using the crisis as an opportunity to expand support for the government programs, whether expanding healthcare or undertaking government-led purchasing and distribution of equipment. The recent struggles to implement President Joe Biden's infrastructure and pandemic recovery bills shed light on these partisan tensions. In these debates, partisans walked a fine line between supporting red or blue state constituencies, while also reinforcing a market versus state logic, consistently trying to convince the voters that they are still interested in the public good. Complicating matters further, these partisan differences often embodied a spatial logic, with rural areas being more likely to support market-oriented approaches and cities more open to a public sector agenda. Thus, the state-market conflict additionally produces tensions across scales of governance, particularly for governors whose states host rural and urban constituencies equally.

While the USA eventually passed an infrastructure bill that prioritized private sector activities, it did so by separating the discussion of infrastructure from social programs, with only the latter focusing on the care of citizens (through the lens of health, family leave, education and childcare). Moreover, both bills came with a fiscally conservative pushback that reduced revenue outlays. Similarly, differences of opinion over whose health must be safeguarded required further compromises leading to national legislation that distributed funds to both public and private constituencies. Although the allocation of federal revenues buttressed firms and compensated workers in ways that bolstered consumer demand and strengthened the market, the question of who would pay for these programs remained contentious.

The federal government ultimately shouldered most of the burden because of opposition to increased taxation. More significantly, there was almost no discussion of how to generate new revenue sources for local government authorities equally tasked with the enormous job of propping up a faltering economy and serving citizens in cities themselves, where public and tax revenues have declined precipitously, even as the cost of keeping the city running during an ongoing health crisis is enormous.

The question of who bears the costs and who receives the benefits in a federal system is far from new. However, the pandemic has added a particular twist to this debate, because even when the federal governments agree to shoulder more of the burden, the way that funds are allocated in a federal system, nonetheless, skews benefits away from the city, at best advantaging the states. News reports have revealed the longer-term impacts of long-standing inequalities on the public health system as a whole, with most local public health systems considered to be in extreme crisis. A spokesperson for the National Association of County and City Health Officials, an organization representing the nearly 3000 local health departments across the USA, attributed these conditions to accelerating efforts by federal and state authorities to limit public health powers on the scale of the city (Baker and Ivory 2021). This is evidence that local infrastructures of care have long been low on the priority list of federal authorities. Yet, many cities are now facing a crisis of care within their own health delivery systems because the pandemic has made some of these inadequacies worse. The sorry state of local health infrastructure has generated recriminations about who is to blame, thus, reigniting conflicts over market versus state solutions and, as a result, preventing local authorities from further promoting public health measures, such as vaccine distribution and mask mandates, to keep individuals out of a health system already in crisis. However, they have also mobilized responses, many of which are built around an ethics of care. This was the case in late October 2021 when health authorities and hospital executives in Southern California sought to donate excess stocks of vaccines to neighboring communities in Mexico, given the oversupply that persisted in the wake of US vaccine obstinacy. Biden's White House Vaccine Task Force blocked these efforts because they ran up against federal mandates (Sieff and Diamond 2022).

### **The ethics of care and the urban scale: a productive synergy**

The federal government's efforts to block the Southern California initiative may be understandable owing to the transnational resource flows involved in the program, which tested the territorial limits of US governance. However constitutional or legal such a decision might have been, the federal government's reaction to these local efforts, nonetheless, underscores the ways in which traditional sovereignty arrangements can undercut pandemic responses built around an ethics of care. What made this initiative so interesting was not merely the philanthropic desire to share unused vaccines with citizens who, while technically residing in Mexico, lived in a transnational migratory world where many crossed the border for work daily. What was also significant was that cooperation between public



health authorities and private health providers made this happen. One might say that this initiative built upon a breaking down of traditional governance practices and ideologies in order to provide care for an ‘imagined community’ of residents whose lives were tied to each other in a given territorial jurisdiction that does not readily map onto the current system of federalism. This logic is also being followed elsewhere, primarily in cities, as questions continue to be raised about the efficacy of national efforts to establish the contours of pandemic policy. One could argue that what unites these efforts on the city scale is an ethics of care framework.

Recent writings on disaster and crisis, including COVID-19, coming from scholars who deploy the notion of care as both a normative and analytical entry point for addressing failures in social welfare and how to remedy them (Gabauer et al. 2022) have, in fact, highlighted the importance of actions of citizens organized on the very local scale. Caselli, Biullari and Mozzana (2021) examine the relationship between knowledge production and caregiving in times of emergency in their paper provocatively titled “Prepared to Care? Knowledge and welfare in a time of emergency,” highlighting examples of the spontaneous emergence of mutual aid groups organized at the neighborhood level during the pandemic. By collecting food and other basic necessities that were then distributed to poor households and other individuals hit hard by lockdowns, these urban ‘political collectives’ were able to respond and coordinate welfare to the neediest in ways that remained beyond the scope of national authorities (Caselli, Biullari and Mozzana 2021, 108). Such bottom-up activities, which emerged in the course of deep engagement with the everyday experiences of their neighbors, were then used to develop locally accurate data for the town’s social service agencies, thus, linking grassroots urban mobilization to urban governance priorities in ways that provided targeted support and more effective care of the vulnerable.

These recent developments suggest that the city may be among the most propitious sites for strengthening an ethics of care, at least during emergencies and health crises. If this is indeed the case, one finds further credence and legitimacy for the importance of strengthening urban sovereignty. If we think about sovereignty as the fortification of an imagined community of allegiance built around shared commitments between the rulers and the ruled, as well as between public and private sector actors who are locally committed, it is not difficult to see why the city may provide the best way forward for addressing the pandemic through an ethics of care.

There are also economic arguments for privileging the city, having a great deal to do with the fact that cities in the current postindustrial era are the sites where a lot of the growth that sustains the national economy now occurs. The recent adoption of SDG11 (Cities and Communities) has also reinforced a growing interest in the city as a key site for problem-solving, even among multilateral agencies that used only the nation as the starting point in the past (Parnell 2016). Moreover, despite the constructive use of federal government monies to salvage the national economy, ranging from bailing out the airlines through beefing up monetary compensation for unemployed workers to rescuing the nation’s aged infrastructure, these strategies have had a limited impact on people’s daily lives if city leaders

and residents are not also factored into the equation. Although some of the funds associated with the highly contentious infrastructure bill in the USA could have been spent on local needs, such as transport and highway upgrading, the dialogue about spending remained focused on the gains or losses to the national economy and how upgrading infrastructure could both help American competitiveness and foster employment. Similarly, the bill's opponents highlighted inflationary impacts and other national economic concerns, saying little about urban impacts deriving from such investments.

Some of the failure to insert the city into the discussion occurred because, as noted at the outset, the notion of the urban is a very general concept. Not all cities are alike. In large, bustling cities where citizens relied on public transit, people were exposed to the virus as they sought to negotiate the urban conditions that separate home from work.<sup>10</sup> Other factors impacted transmission in small cities or those without good public transit infrastructure. Although cities have hosted high degrees of diversity for a long time, whether related, for example, to income, ethnicity, race, work opportunities or land use, residents still suffer differentially, depending on where they live in the city itself. Residents of wealthy neighborhoods have had a very different experience with the pandemic than poor residents, who are more likely to live in crowded areas susceptible to contagion. But despite the differences within and among cities, the reality is that all citizens have experienced the pandemic on the everyday scale of experience, not abstractly as citizens of a nation-state or federal system. That is exactly why city authorities need to be on the frontline of decision-making when it comes to the ethics of care around pandemic responses.

Doing so is far from easy. The demographic and ecological complexity of the city makes it difficult for governing authorities to address a wide range of resident concerns with a single policy position. Not everyone is equally affected, depending on how health advantages and vulnerabilities are spread. Such factors as the presence of immigrants or citizens of color and concentrations of lower-income residents employed in service industries will also impact debates on the most appropriate pandemic policy measures. Although socially and economically disadvantaged populations may be more exposed and least protected by the healthcare system, they are also the most prone to having their livelihoods challenged by mandates for closure, vaccination or social distancing. The complexity of the urban terrain pushes some citizens to clamor for purposeful government action targeted toward populations that are most hurt by the pandemic, even as it mobilizes others to insist that individual citizens should oversee their own health, with those who argue that neighborhoods rather than the city as a whole must be the starting point for action, constituting yet a third framing of the question. The fights between pro- and anti-maskers, the conflicts over vaccine mandates and the battle over whether a city should have a single policy for all its residents are merely three examples that underscore the difficulties of governing the pandemic on the scale of the city. However, these tensions may still be more manageable when compared to the national scale.

Evidence suggests that one way to find legitimacy for action on the scale of the city is to frame pandemic responses in the context of group rather than individual

responsibility. Citizens tread a fine line between advocating for the protection of individual rights versus insuring collective well-being in many political systems, albeit especially in the USA. A lot of citizens argue for their rights and recognition as individuals, not necessarily as members of groups. Such distinctions are frequently reinforced in national debates, often in ways that divide the body politic and map into divisions between supporters of market and state-based solutions. To the extent that the celebration of individual autonomy has found new life in the context of state mandates to protect vulnerable or at-risk groups or impose general mandates on behavior to do so, it has further driven tensions over federal mandates to protect the nation as a 'group,' if you will. In this sense, the pandemic has fueled a resurgence of ideological conflict directly over the value of individual versus collective rights.<sup>11</sup> One of the advantages of policy action on the scale of the city, however, is the possibility of transcending these distinctions, if only because group diversity and accommodation have long stood at the heart of urban governance, even though democratic franchises electorally empower citizens as individuals.

A common way in which these distinctions have been overcome is through local government's prioritization of public goods. Whether public parks, public transit or other infrastructural investments that are intended for collective consumption, the job of local authorities is to make the city work for its residents and to do so by providing infrastructures that cannot be individually guaranteed. This is not to say that individuals do not consume collective goods, and it is not to deny that local authorities may rely on federal funds for local infrastructure provision. The point here is that these are public goods provided for all. Such aims underlie the social contract between urban authorities and a city's residents, built around a proximity of experience that makes accountability more likely. Indeed, the 'closeness' of the relationship between citizens and the state can be argued as sustaining both democratic principles and a shared engagement with social and political problem-solving (Davis 1999). That providing collective goods in response to citizen claim-making is central to urban governance has already been established theoretically by the renowned urban scholar Manuel Castells (1978), who argued decades ago that 'the urban,' as a conceptual notion, is defined as a form of collective consumption.

On a more operational level, the collective good is precisely what sustains the profession of city planning, which has concerned itself historically with the provision of infrastructure and the regulation of land market dynamics through zoning and other mechanisms intended to limit individual gain in the service of the greater good.<sup>12</sup> In that sense, urban planners are already grounding actions with close attention to the lived experience of citizens and, by so doing, city planners and the local governing officials they work for are usually committed to an infrastructure agenda that could be seen as contributing to an ethics of care (Wise 2019; Davis 2022; Gabauer et al. 2022). Granted, urban planning decisions are not without criticism or controversy, and not all residents approve of urban policies undertaken by local authorities, even when they are framed through the lens of advancing what is increasingly referred to as the health of the city (Barton and Tsourou 2000). Even so, the pandemic and the problems it has produced for the routine functioning of the city, such as the rise in evictions accompanying pandemic-related job losses,

have strengthened the need for local urban planning responses capable of dealing with pandemic impacts neighborhood by neighborhood as well as for the city.

Yet, perhaps even more important than the provision of public goods is the social contract that such endeavors are intended to reinforce. After two years of struggling through the pandemic, with protests over mask and vaccine mandates continuing, many citizens are fed up. Tensions between local and national authorities have not disappeared and, even on the scale of the city, we see divisions over the imposition of mandates. Trust in national government officials is at an all-time low in several of the countries discussed in this chapter, including the USA and Brazil, and the pandemic has merely reinforced this situation. This has motivated some observers to suggest that the biggest problem produced by the pandemic has not been the health crisis *per se* but the erosion of trust in public officials (Klein 2022). This is why I suggest we must move beyond the preoccupation with national sovereignty and turn our attention to the city as a privileged site for creating stronger relationships of trust between rulers and the ruled (Davis and Libertun de Duren 2011). Doing so will not only help us identify health measures and policy priorities that might strengthen the ties that bind an imagined community of individuals together as a collective on a scale that is both visible and meaningful to everyday life. It will also give us a new entry point for reinforcing an ethics of care framework in the process. One observer links the notion of trust to collective social action in a recent discussion of the importance of prioritizing responsibility over rights and does so by invoking a healthcare-related metaphor of societal immunity. According to Dov Seidman,

(s)ocietal immunity is the capacity for people to come together, do hard things and look out for one another in the face of existential threats, like a pandemic, or serious challenges to the cornerstones of their political and economic systems, like the legitimacy of elections or peaceful transfer of power. (Seidman 2022)<sup>13</sup>

### **Concluding remarks: urban sovereignty as a way forward?**

Whether through enhanced collective responsibility, strengthened ties of reciprocity between rulers and ruled or new forms of trust, the challenge ahead is to restore the health of the people, the economy and the city equally. This will require a deep understanding of the everyday experience of people whose lives have been disrupted by the pandemic. Doing so will also help to enhance the ethics of care for residents within these urban settings. Both can be accomplished by enhancing urban governance capacities to respond adequately to COVID-19 – or any future such health crisis – at the scale of the city, with full attention being paid to everyday spaces and practices of contagion that are not legible by national authorities. Individuals cannot survive in a pandemic if they cannot work or move around. Thus, it is on this granular scale of livability where we are most likely to enable an ethics of care that understands the interconnectivity between the fate of one individual and another, the ways that actions intended to privilege one resident must be weighed

against their impacts on the most vulnerable, and the ways that policies established with a free-floating national constituency in mind might be inadequate to the task. As a guiding principle, a city's residents should be at the forefront of any action intended to simultaneously alleviate the pandemic and the governance crisis that it has produced.

Prioritizing the city – no matter its size – as the primordial scale for formulating pandemic policies based on an ethics of care is not going to be easy, particularly in contexts where legal tools, financial resources and legitimate authority rest in the hands of national authorities. However, moving beyond the nation as the main solver of all social problems, health related or otherwise, appears ever more urgent because we are entering a historical moment when the rise of new political challenges – ranging from anarchism to populist nationalism – seems to be strengthening in the context of the pandemic (Katz and Nowick 2018). This is so because some national leaders have found it expedient to argue that they are best placed, in the space created in the conflict between advocates of globalization and decentralization, in terms of fiscal resources and governance tools, to handle a pandemic that knows no borders. Using some of the examples mentioned earlier, these claims are precisely what empowered the nationalist agendas of Bolsonaro, Modi and Trump. In each scenario, questions of individual rights versus collective obligations and market versus state solutions hovered below the surface of the larger pandemic agenda, thus, provoking long-simmering tensions between state and market-driven logics, while also challenging the basic principles of democracy, leaving an opening for nondemocratic strongmen to claim authority at the national level.

This is precisely why I argue that we take the notion of urban sovereignty seriously: not just as a toolkit for better addressing the inequalities and disasters produced by the pandemic, but as a means for sustaining both democracy and more robust ethics of care. A focus on the city is not intended to diminish the attention being paid to rural areas or the countryside. Instead, it serves as a starting point for descaling governance attention away from the nation to a territorial location, where citizen experiences are more tangible and dialogue can be more inclusive. Though the answers to questions about how to protect citizens on the scale of the city equally are not always obvious and consensus will not emerge easily, urban governing institutions and authorities can generate the local knowledge and legitimacy to guide this conversation in a way that is accountable to residents. This does not mean that authorities whose governing power derives from the local scale will always do the right thing, or that disagreements over the trade-offs between protecting local and national or even international well-being will not themselves provoke a local governance crisis. Yet, for precisely this reason, strengthening urban sovereignty should also be seen as the first step toward building institutional and policy relationships locally in ways that can eventually connect across various territorial scales of authority, placing the city at the center of more agile multilevel governance frameworks that can be adapted to face the health crisis. If this occurs, both the governance crisis produced by the pandemic and the health challenges associated with it are more likely to be mitigated.

While this involves highlighting the value of “seeing like a city” as much as “seeing like a state” (Scott 1999), it is equally prudent to reflect on citizenship and where this fits into any rescaled conceptualization of sovereignty. As the days and months of quarantine, distancing and isolation drag on, and as local, national and global economies continue their downward trundle, popular stirrings among individuals and collectivities continue under the banner of aspirations such as freedom and autonomy. However, for every right-wing group angry that the government is overstepping its bounds, there are collectivities of the historically disenfranchised, the oppressed and the marginalized who are clamoring for more government protection of their health and their livelihoods, and on the scale where they live. Although the reality is that citizens in the latter category are also more likely to be the subject of punitive policing actions disguised as health measures, these citizens may be more readily mobilized to question both the governance arrangements and the historical policy failures that have helped to institutionalize their extreme vulnerabilities in the first place. One can only hope that a more strengthened local democracy will eventually be the victor even if COVID-19 continues to produce victims.

Just as in the postmedieval era that raised questions about cities, nations and empires, and in which the nation-state emerged as sovereign, one can only hope that in a post-pandemic world it will be cities, their citizens and local authorities that will continue to be central to any such deliberations. Despite the planetary scale on which the climate crisis is unfolding, environmental threats will continue to be experienced locally, making it even more important to marshal urban sensibilities and cross-territorial institutions to continue addressing the governance of risk, pandemic related and otherwise (Banai 2020; Sharifi and Kharavian-Garmsir 2020). Indeed, we should not forget that crisis moments historically, in the USA and elsewhere, oftentimes lead to fundamental institutional changes in governance (Sassen 2007). Those moments when citizens and authorities have had to rely on each other to survive in extraordinary circumstances are often those moments collectively understood to be life-threatening, such as times of war or direct attack. The COVID-19 pandemic has produced a similar mindset, a life-threatening moment, when many feel they are vulnerable to being attacked by an enemy, in this case a virus. Let us make the most of this crisis and not waste this opportunity without coming out more prepared for the future and what it might hold. Responses to major emergencies, such as the current pandemic, have historically produced responses akin to those facing countries at war. And often, these moments of extreme crisis – whether related to war or fundamental economic ruptures, as occurred in the USA after the great depression – have frequently led to new governance paradigms and arrangements.

For precisely these reasons, the crisis of governance generated by the pandemic must be linked to larger historical questions about relationships between sovereignty and the basic enlightenment ideals of modern governance, including a recognition that public goods are as important as private goods and that virtuous governance is defined by the capacities of these authorities to care effectively for all the citizens falling within its territorial jurisdiction. In addition to reconsidering the utility of the Westphalian nation-state model that triumphed over city-states and

empires in the struggle to monopolize capital and coercion (Tilly 1990; Prak 2018), the tensions laid bare by the pandemic lead to questions about the willingness of citizens to cede their daily life to the control of the state (Hobbes 1651; Mann 1988) as well the state's ethical responses to such conditions. If there is anything to celebrate in the political and ideological divisions produced by the pandemic and in the ongoing struggle toward recovery and post-pandemic normalcy, it may be the opportunity to rethink the conceptual and territorial principles of the social contract in ways that establish an ethics of care between rulers and the ruled (Beck and Levy 2013). If so, the pandemic will not have been for naught, and we all will be prepared to address the next healthcare crisis with a savvier understanding of how the territorially and ideologically complex governance terrain can be transformed through a shared commitment to the importance of strengthening an infrastructure of care capable of responding to citizens' basic needs on the scale at which they are experienced.

## Notes

- 1 This possibility calls for further reflection on the concept of *subsidiarity*, currently enshrined in European Union Law, which suggests that social and political issues should be dealt with at the level that is most consistent with their resolution.
- 2 In considering what urban sovereignty might actually look like, it is useful to draw from the governance literature that focuses on just, inclusive and democratic cities, in which the concept of an 'urban regime' is used to denote a set of long-term rules, institutions, identities, power relationships, practices and discourses that shape citizenship and governance (Mossberger and Stoker 2001).
- 3 Equity advocates in the USA have posited that "care infrastructure includes the policies, resources, and services necessary to help U.S. families meet their care-giving needs," a phrase that has been repurposed in the context of the post-pandemic infrastructure bill discussed in the US Congress throughout much of 2021 (Gibson 2021; Washington Center for Equitable Growth 2021). The concept is not specific to the USA, however, having inspired actions and even the founding of a new global center on infrastructure at the Bartlett School, University College London.
- 4 In Brazil, not unlike the USA, the issue at stake has not been national overreach but federal government's *unwillingness* to act forcefully with health mandates in the face of COVID-19, a posture that generated a heated debate in late 2021 over whether President Jair Bolsonaro should be charged with crimes against humanity. The logic among his myriad accusers is that the national government's failure to act contributed to the death of Brazilian citizens, the majority of whom reside in cities. Although such charges may be both unconventional and legally questionable, the extreme formulation of the charges underscores the seriousness of the issues at stake. For more on this, see *The Economist* (2021).
- 5 In the USA, for example, political conflicts over civil rights and the electoral influence of African Americans posed a serious challenge to the federal system immediately after the Civil War, and continued throughout the 20th century, as states' rights advocates pushed back against federal policies to foster reconstruction. Even today, the debate over voting rights and efforts to reduce African American electoral successes through gerrymandering reflect continuous efforts to tinker with different elements of a federal system that many conservative (and primarily white) activists see as needing to be fixed. The arrival of the coronavirus only further exposed the potential weaknesses in this territorial distribution of power under federalism.

- 6 In fact, Brazil, India and Mexico (and slightly less so for the USA) are among the most urbanized nations in the world, with numbers of populations living in cities that far outbalance the number of citizens living in some of their country's smallest states. Residents in cities are suffering disproportionately from the pandemic. Yet, these countries also have federalist systems that systematically limit the power of cities to participate equally in power-sharing arrangements and, thus, coordinate pandemic responses across government scales.
- 7 Brazil and the USA were not the only countries whose unwillingness to take the pandemic seriously was framed in the context of people-centered rhetoric. The same occurred in Mexico, where President Lopez Obrador also questioned the threat of the pandemic and was slow to issue national mandates. Populist discourses in both Mexico and Brazil had become more evident as a political strategy deployed for the purposes of uniting different local and regional constituencies behind a common national project. The fact that these discourses were framed in left- versus right-wing political priorities was less important than the fact that they were used strategically to empower the president vis-à-vis more urban constituencies which argued for their democratic rights to foster policies that responded to local conditions.
- 8 The global scale of governance and its role in pandemic management complicated this picture further. Crisis management directives emanating from global governing institutions, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), may undermine or call into question the preferred strategies of national authorities, as occurred in the US during the first months of the pandemic. As the WHO ramped up its warnings about the ease of contagion and recommended travel and other restrictions, US President Donald Trump threatened to withdraw from the WHO. Much of the logic was the negative impact of WHO directives on the travel industry and the US economy. Although the arrival of President Biden signaled a concerted effort to restore such relationships, the tensions between national and global health priorities remain, particularly over the issue of vaccine supply to poorer countries around the globe.
- 9 Nor is it to say that only supporters of market solutions opposed the imposition of national mandates. In more left-wing populist settings, such as Mexico, we may see greater efforts to buttress the public sector's own willingness to respond to citizens, bypassing the private sector to enhance the legitimacy of national authorities. In Mexico, these decisions alienated and produced pushback from supporters of market-led economic growth, further problematizing the nation's fiscal capacities to fund expensive social programs to address the pandemic.
- 10 The cities in the US that were initially hit hardest by the pandemic included New York, Boston and Los Angeles, three locales that serve as hubs for global business travel, but where the virus multiplied rapidly because of extreme densities. Because of these specificities, many residents of these cities wanted *both* the local and the federal government to be thinking about travel restrictions and how to better their lives in real time in everyday spaces.
- 11 Immigration in the US has brought new racial, ethnic or religious populations into cities in steady numbers, with such groups often residing in the same neighborhoods. Such patterns bring demands for local authorities to respond to group rather than individual circumstances in ways that differ from suburbia or in small towns where racial, ethnic and class homogeneity is more likely to fuel a concern with individual rights.
- 12 One should also acknowledge that urban planners and the authorities they work for have been extremely limited in their proactive capacity to provides services equitably or build inclusive cities, at least in the USA. This has been because the scope of urban governance and planning action has been limited by US citizens' ideological embrace of markets over state, individual freedom over collective solidarity and the institutional infrastructure of federalism. Local authorities have also been limited in their political capacity to question the real estate development rules of the game. The inability to do so



helps to explain why, historically, the poor lived in dense, crowded neighborhoods. The latter patterns, however, are precisely what have made the city a breeding ground for the current pandemic crisis.

- 13 According to Friedmann (2022), Seidman also considers societal immunity a ‘function of trust,’ such that “(w)hen trust in institutions, leaders and each other is high, people – in a crisis – are more willing to sublimate their cherished rights and demonstrate their sense of shared responsibilities toward others, even others they disagree with on important issues and even if it means making sacrifices.”

## References

- Abers, Rebecca Neera, Federico M. Rossi, and Marisa von Bulow. 2021. State-society relations in uncertain times: Social movement strategies, ideational contestation and the pandemic in Brazil and Argentina. *International Political Science Review*, 42, 333–349.
- Agnew, John. 2007. Sovereignty regimes: Territoriality and state authority in contemporary world politics. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 95(2), 437–461.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 2003. Sovereignty without territoriality: Notes for a post-national geography. In: Setha Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga, eds. *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*. Boston, MA: Blackwell, Part V, Ch. 15. , pp. 337–349
- Baker, Mike, and Danelle Ivory. 2021. Public health crisis grows with distrust and threats. *New York Times*, [online] October 18. <https://static01.nyt.com/images/2021/10/18/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf> [Accessed February 25, 2022].
- Barber, Benjamin. 2013. *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Barber, Benjamin. 2017. *Cool Cities: Urban Sovereignty and the Fix for Global Warming*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Banai, Reza. 2020. Pandemic and the planning of resilient cities and regions. *Cities*, 106, 102929. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102929>.
- Bárcena, Alicia. 2020. *The Social Challenge in Times of COVID-19*. Santiago: ECLAC.
- Barton, Hugh, and Catherine Tsourou. 2000. *Healthy Urban Planning*. London: Routledge.
- Beck, Ulrich, and Daniel Levy. 2013. Cosmopolitanized nations: Reimagining collectivity in world risk society. *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 30(2), 3–31.
- Bennouna, Cyril, Agustina Giraudy, Eduardo Moncada, Eva Rios, Richard Snyder, and Paul Testa. 2021. Pandemic policymaking in presidential federations: Explaining subnational responses to COVID-19 in Brazil, Mexico, and the United States. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 51(11). <https://doi.org/10.1093/PUBLIUS/PJAB025>.
- Berlant, Lauren. 2016. The commons: Infrastructure for troubling times. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 34(3), 393–419. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758166645989>.
- Brenner, Neil, and Christian Schmid. 2015. Towards a new epistemology of the urban? *City*, 19(2–3), 151–182.
- Caselli, Davide, Barbara Giullari, and Carlotta Mozzana. 2021. Prepared to care? Knowledge and welfare in a time of emergency. *Sociologica*, 15(3), 107–124. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1971-8853/13600>.
- Castells, Manuel. 1978. *City, Class, and Power*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.
- Castells, Manuel. 2001. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Vol. 1. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Davis, Diane E. 1999. The power of distance: Rethinking social movements in Latin America. *Theory and Society*, 24(4), 589–643.

- Davis, Diane E. 2020. Sovereignty and the urban question: Exploring the material foundations for imagined communities of allegiance in conflict cities. In: Simon Goldhill, ed. *Being Urban: Community, Conflict, and Belonging in the Middle East*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 172–200.
- Davis, Diane E., and Nora Libertun de Duren, eds. 2011. *Cities and Sovereignty: Identity Politics in Urban Spaces*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Davis, Juliet. 2022. *The Caring City: The Ethics of Urban Design*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- De Moura Palotti, Pedro Lucas. 2019. Federalism, Brazil. In: *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*. Cham: Springer. [https://doi.org/10.100/978-3-319-31816-5\\_3753-1](https://doi.org/10.100/978-3-319-31816-5_3753-1).
- Denyer-Willis, Graham, and Diane E. Davis. 2021. Urban sovereignty in the age of pandemics: Illicit actors and the crisis of governance. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology*, [online] January 2021. <https://polarjournal.org/2021/02/10/urban-sovereignty-in-the-age-of-pandemics-illicit-actors-and-the-crisis-of-governance/> [Accessed February 25, 2022].
- Friedman, Thomas L. 2022. America 2022: Where everyone has rights and no one has responsibilities. *New York Times*, [online] February 8. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/08/opinion/spotify-joe-rogan-covid-free-speech.html?referringSource=articleShare> [Accessed February 25, 2022].
- Gabauer, Angelika, Sabine Knierbein, Nir Cohen, Henrik Lebuhn, Kim Trogal, and Tihomir Videman, eds. 2022. *Care and the City: Encounters with Urban Studies*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Gibson, David K., and Marjorie Sims. 2021. Building and infrastructure of care. Aspen Institute, Colorado, [online] June 25. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/building-an-infrastructure-of-care/> [Accessed February 25, 2022].
- Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gilligan, Carol. 1987. Moral orientation and moral development. In: Virginia Held, ed. *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*. New York: Routledge, pp. 31–46.
- Gilligan, Carol. 2008. Moral orientation and moral development. In: Alison Bailey and Chris J. Cuomo, eds. *The Feminist Philosophy Reader*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, pp. 467–478.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1987. *Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Hennigan, Tom. 2021. Bolsonaro ramps up preparations to hold on to power in defiance of electorate’s will. *The Irish Times*, [online] July 9. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/bolsonaro-ramps-up-preparations-to-hold-on-to-power-in-defiance-of-electorate-s-will-1.4616052> [Accessed February 25, 2022].
- Hobbes, Thomas. 1651. *Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*. London: Andrew Crooke.
- Karmis, Dimitrius, and Wayne Norman. 2005. *Theories of Federalism: A Reader*. London: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Katz, Bruce, and Jeremy Nowak. 2018. *The New Localism: How Cities Can Thrive in the Age of Populism*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press.
- Klein, Ezra. 2022. The Covid policy that really mattered wasn’t a policy. *New York Times*, [online] February 7. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/06/opinion/covid-pandemic-policy-trust.html?referringSource=articleShare> [Accessed February 25, 2022].
- Mann, Michael. 1988. *States, War, and Capitalism: Studies in Political Sociology*. Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Mellick Lopes, Abby, Stephen Healy, Emma Power, Louise Crabtree, and Katherine Gibson. 2018. Infrastructures of care: Opening up “home” as commons in a hot city. *Human Ecology Review*, 24(2), 41–45.

- Mossberger, Karen, and Gerry Stoker. 2001. The evolution of urban regime theory: The challenge of conceptualization. *Urban Affairs Review*, 36(6), 810–835.
- Parmanand, Sharmila. 2020. The dangers of masculinity contests in a time of pandemic. *Oxford Political Review*, [online] April 18. <http://oxfordpoliticalreview.com/2020/04/18/the-dangers-of-masculinity-contests-in-a-time-of-pandemic/> [Accessed February 25, 2022].
- Parnell, Susan. 2016. Defining a global urban development agenda. *World Development*, 78, 529–540. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.10.028>.
- Power, Emma R., and Kathleen J. Mee. 2020. Housing: An infrastructure of care. *Housing Studies*, 35(3), 484–505.
- Prak, Maarten. 2018. *Citizens without Nations: Urban Citizenship in Europe and the World, c. 1000–1789*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rodden, Jonathan A. 2008. Federalism. In: Donald A. Wittman and Barry R. Weingast, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Part V., pp. 357–370.
- Sassen, Saskia. 2007. *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Scott, James C. 1999. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Sharifi, Ayoob, and Amir Reza Kharavian-Garmsir. 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic: Impacts on cities and major lessons for urban planning, design, and management. *Science of the Total Environment*, 749, 142391. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.142391>.
- Sieff, Kevin, and Dan Diamond. 2022. US communities want to share unused vaccines with Mexico, but the White House won't let them. *Washington Post*, [online] October 22. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/10/22/mexico-border-vaccine/> [Accessed February 24, 2021].
- Sparke, Matthew. 2005. *In the Space of Theory: Post-foundational Geographies of the Nation-state*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Stone, Clarence. 1993. Urban regimes and the capacity to govern. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 15(1), 1–28.
- The Economist. 2021. Jair Bolsonaro is accused of crimes against humanity in Brazil. *The Economist*, [online] October 29. <https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2021/10/23/jair-bolsonaro-is-accused-of-crimes-against-humanity-in-brazil> [Accessed February 24, 2021].
- Tilly, Charles. 1990. *Coercion, Capital, and European States: AD 990–1990*. Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Washington Center for Equitable Growth. 2021. Factsheet: What does the research say about care infrastructure. *Equitable Growth*, [online] April 15. <https://equitablegrowth.org/factsheet-what-does-the-research-say-about-care-infrastructure/> [Accessed February 25, 2021].
- Wise, Alexis. 2019. Exploring the future of care in urban communities. *Sidewalk Talk*, January 17. <https://medium.com/sidewalk-talk/exploring-the-future-of-care-in-urban-communities-fc3bc7beed34> [Accessed February 25, 2021].

## 2 Urban mobility governance flows

### Ethical bases of political becomings

*Raúl Acosta*

Mobility governance in Mexico City is being shaped by recent fluctuations in countrywide political configurations. Once dominated by a single party, soft dictatorial regime, the national political arena is now a stage open to competition among various parties and with an increasing presence of non-state actors. Decisions about mobility are now less centrally controlled, involve diverse stakeholders and take into account the needs of more actors than previously. My analysis of the situation is that mobility activists have spurred a series of debates and practices as they pioneer novel ethical habits in the city. By this, I mean that some urban dwellers have learned to navigate through the streets and infrastructures of Mexico City by using new visions of what is possible or desirable. The aggregation of such behaviors, combined with outright political action by activists and others involved, has shaped new horizons of what urban dwellers aspire to regarding the governance of their city. Whereas there seems to be a single-party nostalgia among politicians, civil society organizations and market-driven actors are assertively increasing their demands for improved forms of inclusive decision-making for urban-wide policies and projects. The result is that changing expectations and practices, which I term ‘governance flows,’ have opened up novel conceptions of belonging and ownership of the city, which I call ‘political becomings.’ The emerging networks that increasingly take decisions entail not only an active participation of civil society organizations (Acosta 2020) but also and crucially an ethics of dwelling (Zigon 2018).

This chapter presents some of the findings of an anthropological analysis of the mobility milieu in Mexico City. I conducted eight months of ethnographic fieldwork in Mexico City from 2018 to 2020. I carried out informal and in-depth interviews with activists, government officials, workers of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), mobility experts, academics, entrepreneurs, cycling aficionados and other urban dwellers. I also undertook several exercises of participant observation, especially in activist interventions and cycling events, as well as observations of meetings and gatherings, examination of documents and publications, and analyses of reporting of activities and policies in mainstream and social media. I undertook this investigation as part of the Urban Ethics Research Group (Dürr et al. 2019; Ege and Moser 2020b), which provided a space for debates about central concepts and approaches across disciplinary fields. Each researcher focused on a different city and issue area of interest and determined frameworks and definitions. As an

anthropological study, my approach is informed by what I witnessed and analyzed from events and encounters on the ground and by debates on anthropological theorizations. The identities of those I interviewed are pseudonymized in what follows, except those of public figures.

Urban mobility comprises transportation (public and private), infrastructure, space, vehicles, practices and discourses. It is not only relevant for the movement of people and goods but also because the infrastructures it requires are fundamental for cities. The majority of public space in cities, for example, consists of streets and avenues. The conveyance of individuals and materials, nevertheless, is of utmost importance for urban economic and social life. Urban dwellers and traversers have a permanent need to move from one place to another, either to go to work or to buy foodstuffs, seek entertainment, visit friends and/or family or take part in collective ceremonies (religious or otherwise). City governments, thus, focus a great part of their attention on managing the needs of mobility in altering urban landscapes, i.e. building expressways, bridges and tunnels, or public services, such as bus lines and trams. Governments also determine norms and regulations that oversee the streams of people and vehicles. In each of these issues, government officials engage in discussions with those involved (e.g. users and neighbors) that delve into the urban ethics. This development is partly due to neoliberal policies through which the Mexico City authorities seek to thin the state apparatus by privatizing public services and decision-making (Kamat 2004). Instead of the depoliticization that some analysts interpret from this style of rule (Wilson and Swyngedouw 2014), my analysis in this chapter points to new forms of urban dweller politicization. Mobility activists have spurred an effervescence of street life that is not limited to cycling or pedestrian infrastructures or regulations but goes to the heart of a sense of community. It is in renewed forms of discourse and behavior among urban dwellers I qualify as ethical that I notice how some individuals point to alternative forms of managing public affairs. In my view, the resulting altered expectations have enabled fresh reflections about what are considered adequate or inadequate conducts and opinions.

One of these quotidian scenes I experienced on several occasions in Mexico City is the weekly event called ‘Move on a bike’ (*Muévete en bici*). Since May 2007, every Sunday from 8 am to 2 pm, several avenues and streets have been closed off to motorized traffic in order to free up the space for cyclists, skaters, runners and others. The first city to institute this policy – now widespread worldwide – was Bogotá in 1976 (Montero 2017, 118). When it was first instituted in Mexico City, the ride’s length was 10 kilometers, but it spanned 55 kilometers at the time of my fieldwork. I often attended while I was in the city, sometimes riding the whole distance as fast as I could, and other times a bit more slowly to take photos and videos of the scenes around me. I also stopped to talk to people, enjoy the atmosphere and take notes. A government official in her early thirties, who I call Francisca, explained the weekly event’s purpose to me as the “promotion of cycling culture.” On the Sundays I joined the ride, I noticed the pedagogical element in the voice of an army of university students who worked on the corners to ensure cyclists respected the traffic signals (as motorized traffic on other roads

continued) and gave out advice while the red light lasted. I also noticed how some cyclists on the weekly ride would actually make suggestions to each other, or seek to reduce risks by pointing out better ways of riding (e.g. “slower cyclists, please remain in the right lane”).

When I first met Francisca, she worked in the office in charge of both the Sunday Ride and the bicycle-sharing scheme Ecobici within Mexico City’s Ministry of Environmental Affairs. Ecobici is one of the world’s largest public bicycle-sharing schemes. A new city government took office in December 2018, and she was promoted to director of “road safety and sustainable urban mobility” in the brand new Ministry of Mobility, within which everything related to cycling was incorporated. During an interview in her office, she told me how she had started out as a mobility activist during her university studies in public administration in a renowned local university. She wrote her thesis on policymaking for cycling promotion and once she graduated, she was invited to work in the government office dedicated precisely to it. Her early work among activists has ensured that she maintains a constant dialogue with civil society groups and is often invited to events discussing the benefits of sustainable mobility. Her path is not unique, as along the way, I met several activists who had moved into government or other roles (NGOs, private consultancy firms and academia). These activists-turned-others maintain a conviction of their roles as fundamental to secure an improvement in the quality of life in urban mobility.

The weekly Sunday Ride epitomizes the changes in the mobility milieu. It is a highly visible event that invites urban dwellers to get involved and to dare and try a new way of moving. Spurred by activists and aided by NGO workers, it is supported by government officials. As a common space for everyone in the city, it has become a meeting area for people of all socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as tourists, visitors and others. Most of all, the weekly event is a learning opportunity: for novice cyclists, for families wishing to teach their children, for more experienced cyclists to learn to navigate city streets and for everyone to appreciate bicycles and public space. The crisscrossing routes of runners, cyclists, skaters and others also provide ongoing opportunities for emerging ethical choices. How can one organize the flow of cyclists better? When should we stop to let pedestrians cross? All of these opportunities add up, I argue below and shape fresh ways for people to feel about the city in which they live. By participating on a weekly basis, they increasingly feel that the city and the urban social life respond to what they do, to their choices and actions. This may, in turn, produce senses of ownership and nascent political awareness. This is what I term political becomings. It is a concept, as I will expand below, related to Zigon’s ethics of dwelling, with which he refers to “a reflective process of working on both oneself *and* the world in which one finds oneself for the purpose of changing both so as to once again dwell” (2018, 95, emphasis in original).

My main argument in this chapter is that changes in the mobility milieu, spurred by activists but accomplished by multiple institutions and individuals, have allowed for novel forms of sociability in Mexico City’s streets through which urban dwellers make decisions not only about their own transportation needs but also about

the city's makeup. My research shows that the spaces which have opened up – for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users – have multiplied ethical negotiations on the street level. People's decisions about how to navigate the city influence the way in which planners make decisions about infrastructures and regulations. The political becomings I refer to are these: Urban dwellers who may have wished to avoid becoming involved in politics but whose realization of the shared spaces and infrastructures may make them more aware of their sense of political community, with all its rights and obligations. I argue that those individuals who got involved in activism became politicized in wishing to engage directly with government authorities and planners. The multiple styles of urban ethics involved, thus, provide for interesting conceptualizations. In order to develop my arguments, the rest of this chapter is divided into three parts. In the first section, I clarify my use of the term 'governance flows,' especially regarding the trends toward collaborative decision-making concerning mobility issues that are continuously changing. In the second part, I include two ethnographic vignettes of events I witnessed in Mexico City, where many of the issues I analyze play a role. In the third and last section, I bring issues together in my conceptualization of political becomings.

I refer to 'urban ethics' in the plural to emphasize the multiple processes through which city dwellers make decisions about good and proper behaviors or judgments. It is perhaps a case of ordinary ethics (Lambek 2010b), which "implies an ethics that is relatively tacit, grounded in agreement rather than rule, in practice rather than knowledge or belief, and happening without calling undue attention to itself" (Lambek 2010a, 2). Cities, as sites where humans live in close contact with each other, are built environments where differences are often the cause of friction. Urban ethics, therefore, represent a "means with which people and institutions negotiate urban life" (Dürr et al. 2019, 1). In the project that informs this chapter, urban ethics are constructed both in discourses and practices, constituting a basis for life in common. It is, thus, a process of subjectivation, inasmuch as it involves the incorporation by individuals of ideas and habitus shared by a collective. This means that the individual stated becomes a member of the collective by enacting its common practices and replicating its shared views. Although the city government maintains a particular sense of authority and legitimacy in the eyes of city dwellers, recent changes in circumstances have allowed them more freedom of decision-making than they were accustomed to. The urban ethics I refer to, thus, operate on two levels: on the street level (of quotidian life for all urban dwellers) and in the planning circles (among policymakers and others who join the political arena). Both are crucial for my analysis, which is better explained by my conceptualization of governance flows.

### **Governance flows**

I refer to 'urban governance flows' in order to capture the dynamic character of decision-making mechanisms in the city. Grounded in an anthropological approach to collective decision-making (Boholm, Henning and Krzyworzeka 2013), I seek to conceptualize the manner in which stakeholders shape mechanisms

of policymaking and urban design regarding mobility issues within the new, diversified public arena that sets the context for decision-making in the city. In this context, I consider stakeholders to include organizations of various sizes and bureaucratization levels as well as some individuals who seek to engage with policies regarding public transport or infrastructures. Governance is useful as a concept that refers to how issues that are common to a group of people are decided upon. Although it is usually directly related to the act of governing – which implies issues of legitimacy, power and authority (Shore and Wright 1997) – recent debates about policymaking have related it to a desire for the inclusion of stakeholders involved directly with the issue at the center of debates (Da Cruz, Rode and McQuarrie 2019; Pradel-Miquel, Cano-Hila and Marisol 2020). ‘Good governance’ has, therefore, come to mean a process whereby solutions to certain problems are sought in dialogue with those most affected by such problems, taking into account their interests and concerns. The Mexico City mobility governance nexus encompasses public transport, motorized vehicles, pedestrian and road infrastructures, parking spaces, streetscapes and policies about these issues. Historically, the actors involved in decision-making would be planners, construction companies and transport entrepreneurs but not users. This is precisely where demands for change focus: a broadening of the mobility milieu. Demands usually follow the new urban agenda (Caprotti et al. 2017) which is inspired by Jane Jacobs, whose activism helped reform urban design in the second half of the 20th century. Jacobs insisted sixty years ago that streets and avenues are the “main public spaces of a city” (Jacobs 2011 [1961], 37). The social interactions that occur in such spaces, therefore, end up shaping the city. By demanding more voice for urban dwellers and users of public transport, activists and NGO advocates make a stand for a bottom-up approach. This has not been easy because there are so many aspects to consider, from infrastructure, to economic interests of transport companies, to regulations and traffic planning. The resulting negotiations have tended to sway sometimes in favor of activists and NGOs, sometimes in favor of business owners and other power holders. The government itself houses tensions within, as contrasting interests dominate different ministries or even contend within a single ministry. For this reason, I refer to governance flows as tidal cycles where changing winds and political opportunities sometimes help one cause more than another. In mobility issues, the case for sustainable mobility has gained significant advances due to environmental aspects (such as reducing emissions and procuring a growth in green areas) and social demands for better conviviality (by reducing car-centric infrastructures and promoting more areas for pedestrians and cyclists). The car and construction lobbies, nevertheless, continue to determine large-scale construction projects (e.g. of bridges, tunnels) and favorable policies (e.g. the much-criticized condoning of the annual tax on cars).

My emphasis on flows is also related to the comings and goings of individuals between the different groups involved in mobility in Mexico City. I have explained how Francisca started out as an activist and moved into government. Many others have followed similar changes in various directions. Some have started out as activists and become so enamored with everything related to mobility that they



decided to pursue studies in areas relating to it, for example, in urban design or transport engineering. A few have joined influential international NGOs that are deeply involved with these issues in the city, such as the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) and the World Resources Institute. These two NGOs have offices in Mexico City and are strongly involved with policymakers. They carry out technical studies and evaluations which they combine with campaigns for sustainable transportation. A few people also have no problems having several affiliations at the same time. One case was Sara, who combined her work at an NGO with organizing events for ‘bikepackers’ or cycle travelers, i.e. cyclists who make long journeys. Another was Adrián, who worked as an independent journalist dedicated to mobility issues, while also doing activism and maintaining a strong social media presence promoting cycling. The fact that many of those involved in mobility activism have become so engaged with technical knowledge and public debates that this has helped to raise the profile of such topics in Mexico City’s public spheres.

As one of the largest cities in the world, Mexico City has suffered considerable problems deriving from motorized traffic in its streets and avenues. The high number of cars and aging road infrastructures constantly lead to long traffic jams. Other problems include air and noise pollution, as well as road insecurity. One of the key issues that mobilized international policymaking agendas to help improve urban mobility around the world was a concern over greenhouse gas emissions from cities. Once international financial institutions and development agencies agreed that helping to reduce traffic jams would contribute a reduction in such gases, they offered special funds to city governments to get them to adjust local policies. This is where NGOs got involved, as they became mediators between international institutions and local governments. Mexico City authorities launched a series of plans in the 1990s to reduce emissions. One was the circulation restriction policy for private vehicles and another was the phased relocation of major industries out of the urban area. The first, called “Hoy no circula” (today [your car] does not circulate), started in 1989 and consisted of a one-day-per-week car ban determined by the ending number of the license plate. Contrary to what had been expected, pollution levels did not go down in any significant manner (Davis 2008). This may have been due to the fact that many middle-class families simply resorted to buying or using a second vehicle (Guerra and Millard-Ball 2017). Other policies followed, focused especially on improving public transport and the organization of motorized traffic. As has happened elsewhere around the world, these areas were eventually bundled into governmental bureaucracy under the new concept of urban mobility in order to stress the correlations between road infrastructures, transportation and city dwellers (Jones 2014).

I mark 1997 as the start of the current wave of mobility activism, which is the year when Bicitekas was founded (Hidalgo Vivas 2021). Bicitekas is an organization dedicated to promoting the bicycle as a form of transportation in Mexico City. Their work has brought public attention to mobility issues beyond the bicycle. Adriana Lobo, the executive director of the Mexican chapter of the World Resources Institute, told me that although there were incentives through

international organizations to help the Mexico City government transition toward a more sustainable mobility model, cycloactivists were of crucial importance to garner public attention and political support for the necessary changes. In her view, “the cycling movement is extremely powerful in all this,” as she told me in an interview we held in her office in Coyoacán. Nevertheless, she added that the design and launch of the Metrobus, Mexico City’s Bus Rapid Transit system, was also fundamental for the shaping of the mobility agenda in the city and the country. She was deeply involved with the Metrobus, helping design and implement the first few lines. But she insisted that by itself, it could have remained caught between power negotiations of the sort that had plagued the city. Activists made a difference by raising the profile of mobility as a cause for concern for all city dwellers.

In this sense, I argue that the work that activists and NGO advocates have carried out is part and parcel of the wider democratization process of the country. Up until the early 1990s, the vast majority of elections had been won by one political party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional. Some scholars have labeled it a ‘soft dictatorship’ (dictablanda) (Gillingham and Smith 2014; Vaughan 2018). Democracy was enacted as a pretense for most of the 20th century. State violence against dissenters was swift and brutal; control of the media was almost total; and government policies and projects were done more to gain political support than address needs or with a view to the future. The political system was overtly centralized and demanded allegiance, regardless of ideologies or beliefs. The resulting multiplication of favors and kickbacks represented a complex corporatist and clientelist web. This is what Davis refers to when she describes Mexico City as an *Urban Leviathan* (Davis 1994). After explaining the way in which large-scale works, such as the Metro (underground), were done without considering population projections or actual needs, Davis noticed cracks in the system. These started showing in the 1980s, especially after the large earthquake that destroyed numerous buildings and showed that civil society was more ready to help than government authorities. By the 1990s, the system started collapsing, and this is when opposition parties started winning elections. In this context, citizen initiatives started gaining unprecedented levels of attention and support.

Nevertheless, I prefer to avoid a linear understanding of ‘democratization’ as a learning curve toward a steady improvement of mechanisms and practices. The wider process of the liberalization of political competition was not straightforward. Several new political parties have tended to adopt practices of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, seeking corporatist and clientelist networks as bases for their power. Therefore, in effect, it is a flow between tensions that liberate and others that bring things back into a semi-authoritarian model. It is somewhat similar for civil society initiatives, as there are fluctuations between acting as part of wider networks of political interest, actually enacting cynic simulations of citizen voices and others, where urban dwellers seek to change even small things in their surroundings. In this context, whenever government officials call for consultations, exercises of citizen participation or other techniques to include voices of urban dwellers, the actual undertakings vary greatly in both form and significance. But it is not only practices of government or organized civil society that fluctuate; urban

dwellers' own expectations, demands and opinions also vary. While there are more frequent calls for changes in how decisions are taken, there is no consensus as to what form new procedures should take. There is no clear compass that points toward good governance, nor an agenda that helps stakeholders navigate the difficult terrain to reach it. This is where urban ethics play a crucial role, as the ongoing frictions and agreements that come with everyday negotiations may start shaping collective views on what the city is and should become.

In these circumstances, I argue that mobility activists have shaped a series of ethical bases of what may constitute new political practices. The empathic connection spurs an ethical imagination by insisting on the need to think of others while moving oneself through the city. I believe such exercises foster 'political becomings' because they allow people to reflect on their place and role in the city. Activists have helped shape common spaces through performative actions that help urban dwellers' navigation of life in the city as the two ethnographic vignettes that follow the show. The ethical bases I refer to are concrete principles of conviviality that are experienced every day in the city, and which help everyone involved decide good versus bad practices. While these exercises may not yield immediate results – such as working methodologies for good governance – their value lies in a potential alteration of the manner in which urban dwellers engage with their city. They promote mobility as an experiential activity through which people not only passively use their city's infrastructures and services but also actively shape them. This, in effect, becomes a subjectivation process of political engagement. People realize they are not solely users of the city, but are its owners, and this may alter the way in which they state their demands to authorities and others around them.

### **Ethnographic vignettes of urban mobility**

I investigated mobility activism in Mexico City in light of environmental concerns from an anthropological perspective within the umbrella project of our research group on urban ethics. It was an investigation into how the work of those involved in mobility issues has changed some of the infrastructures and spaces of Mexico City, as well as the practices of its inhabitants. Equally, it illustrates how their work has altered the visions of the desired future for the city. This, in turn, affects upcoming plans, projects and policymaking.

It is important to note that my definition of activism is broader than most others I know, especially those focused on social movements (Melucci 1989; Tilly 1994; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996). While scholarship on activism has usually emphasized the value of collective contentious action (Tarrow 1998 [1993]), I include, for example, NGO advocacy as part of the activism milieu, even though their activities are often closer to a privatized bureaucracy than to protest movements. I define activism as the manner in which a group of individuals act to achieve a change in their social surroundings or in government plans that would not have occurred without inducement. I consider that some activists who move on to work in government continue doing activism despite their new job title. This is because they continue to be guided by their aspiration to achieve a desired change. In any

case, in my view, activism plays a crucial role in policymaking by insisting on specific aspects of issues that would otherwise not have been considered. Anthropologists have often reflected on the transposing priorities in research on activism as a sign of changing geopolitical times (Chari and Donner 2010). Some scholars have addressed similar approaches to mine by using the term ‘advocacy’ (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; Reid 2000; Reid and Molina 2001, 2003; Andrews and Edwards 2004), although these studies tend to focus solely on the diplomatic efforts of NGOs and similar groupings. Regarding those attentive to revolts and revolutions, there seems to be a search for purity, for isolating violent acts as vents for accumulated grievances. I prefer a middle ground, as I consider that, in a similar vein to a social movement perspective, there is an advantage to including a wider range of interventions, from grassroots protests to high-level civil diplomacy. For some, such as Swyngedouw, the fact that the state has shrunk and actively seeks to privatize the public interest (Day and Goddard 2010) means that all action that emerges is marked by a neoliberal tinge (Swyngedouw 2017, 54). But could there be an unforeseen political emergence from neoliberal policies? I think so.

The following two ethnographic vignettes or scenes I witnessed illustrate the phenomenon I put forth here. One is part of an annual campaign to promote safer routes for students to reach their schools by cycling or on foot, which, although it is called the “Day of walking and cycling to school,” lasts for a whole week with different activities located in various schools around the city. The other is part of ‘Mission: Zero,’ a separate campaign to promote improved infrastructures in order to reduce lethal accidents involving cyclists or pedestrians. Activists were the key actors, within wider networks of organizations and institutions, in both cases. They provided a wealth of ideas and opportunities for the public performance of dissent and ethical negotiations.

### *Safe cycling to school*

I reached the square in front of the Cuauhtemoc municipal government buildings on my bicycle around 8 am on Thursday, October 11, 2018. I rode for over half an hour from the Roma neighborhood to get there. Most of the ride was on the cycleway along the Reforma. Because I rode early in the morning, several men in suits overtook me. Some were using Ecobici shared bicycles, but many others were using the bicycle lane, including women in dresses, young men in informal clothes and middle-aged-looking men in work clothes (apparently builders). Up to a dozen of us would have to wait for the green light at traffic signals. On a few occasions, faster cyclists would go out of the protected lane and invade the car lane to overtake us, and only rejoin ahead later. Overall, this part of my ride was quite easy. The green lane was protected from motorized traffic by concrete blocks that impeded cars from invading it. However, when I had to leave this avenue to travel toward my destination, I needed to navigate more difficult terrain.

This was a reminder of the purpose of the activity I was there to visit, as part of the “Safe cycling and walking to school day.” The NGO personnel involved teachers, students and authorities from a school, local government officials, activists, as

well as cycling trainers and invited reporters from various media outlets in each event organized by the ITDP. The purpose was to highlight the benefit that walking or cycling to school would have for all involved.

For students, it is a way of promoting active mobility [...] they can concentrate a lot better after riding a bit instead of being bored in their parents' car or in public transport, stuck in traffic; for the neighborhood, it would mean fewer cars in the area, which would reduce congestion, pollution, and noise.

Sofía told me one day over lunch. But as things are now, cycling or walking to school is not feasible for many children, partly because of problems in the way streets are made. Sofía works in the ITDP and is in charge of urban design with integrated mobility plans: "The idea is to think about how we could redesign the area so that it would be safer for children." Furthermore, the ITDP seeks to strengthen its case to improve street design and convince decision-makers to incorporate their views of how things could be better by involving students, their teachers, school authorities and government officials.

As I was taking off my helmet, Sofía came to greet me but soon had to go and welcome some authorities from the Ministry for Mobility. Several cyclists were already there, as well as NGO workers, a few government officials and reporters. The square is at a corner of two avenues, so the sound of motorized vehicles was a constant hum in the background. Not too long afterward, a group of teenagers arrived in their white school uniforms with green cardigans. They were led by one of their teachers. A few cycling instructors greeted them and gave each a T-shirt with the logo of the campaign. Once everyone had put on their T-shirts, the instructors led a series of warming-up exercises for the students. After a few minutes, the instructors gave each a helmet, an instructor explained some basic issues and then we all set off toward the school. We rode two kilometers, first, along Juan Aldama street, and then we took the Mexico-Tenochtitlan Avenue. Although there was a painted line that marked a space dedicated to bicycles, the proximity of cars, buses, trucks and minibuses to our left was loud and menacing. The avenue has six lanes; three in each direction. At one point, we needed to cross Insurgentes Avenue, and I went ahead with the first part of the group, but a large number of students and others were stuck at the red light. We waited on the other side until the light was green and the whole group could continue together.

When we reached a corner with a small park, we were instructed to dismount and walk along the sidewalk to the school entrance. It was about one hundred meters. The reason for this was that we could not ride because it was a one-way street in the opposite direction. As we arrived to the school, a few teachers and school staff were waiting for us, and they let us in. After a photo shoot, we all walked together into the school theater for a series of talks that followed. The speakers were from the ITDP, the local government and the school. Sofía led the educational meeting, introducing each speaker and including a few comments about how good cycling was for children.

As Sofia had explained, the main purpose of the campaign was to convince the authorities about the need for an improved mobility infrastructure around schools in order to make it safer for children to travel by bicycle or walking. But the fact that the activity involved so many people provided it with more than simply that message. Sofia later told me that the preparations had lasted several months. “The teachers had to select students with cycling experience who would not be afraid to do that ride,” she said. Most of the event held just after the talk – attended by school staff and students – was devoted to imagining how good it would be for everyone if the youngsters could cycle to school. I believe that this combination of messages and practice triggers a series of reflections that redefine aspirations and habits in the city. It is an ethical process through which those involved prioritize consensus-oriented resolutions to urban conflicts (Dürr et al. 2019, 9). This partially helps to extend the pressure on the government to actually change their policies and planning to meet those emerging expectations better. But it also means that children talk to their parents about it and may start considering cycling, or at least thinking about it in a different way to what they had been used to.

### ***Mission: Zero***

A truck of a well-known Mexican cement company ran over a cyclist in a central Mexico City avenue in June 2017. After protests by activist groups, the company decided to set up a strategy to reduce the possibility of accidents by engaging with activists and other organizations. They, thus, decided to fund a campaign in three cities (Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey) implemented by activists to demand improved infrastructures and promote better behaviors among all road users in order to reduce lethal accidents. The result was Mission: Zero.

On the morning of Saturday, October 27, 2018, I visited a busy crossing in Mexico City close to where the aforementioned accident had happened. The first thing I noticed as I was coming out of the underground station was that a lot of people with bright yellow vests were busy at several points of the crossing. It became evident to me that they were the ones carrying out the Mission: Zero intervention I had read about in social media. Some were painting colorful pedestrian crossings on a side street, others were distributing a booklet about pedestrian rights to motorists and passersby, and a small group was carrying large signs asking drivers to respect people crossing the streets. I was surprised to find out that most of those distributing the booklets and talking to drivers were actually drivers of the cement company. One explained to me with a smile that their participation was part of a training course to sensitize them about street life and safe driving. “It helps to make streets safer,” he added.

Most of those wearing vests, however, were activists from several groups. One of such groups was the *Liga Peatonal* (Pedestrian League), a dynamic activist group that frequently held interventions and other events in the city. I spoke to several of its leaders during the intervention and interviewed them separately a few days later. Reporters from news outlets were busy interviewing activists, passersby and drivers. The whole intervention appeared to be designed to provide a lot of

photo opportunities. The colorful crossings they painted caught the attention, as did the large signs that at one point some started carrying from one corner to the other when the red light was on at the crossing. Each sign, which must have been around 1.20 by 1.60 meters, had the image of a person. There were a mother with her son, an older person with a walking stick, a woman jogging, a man with his dog and a cyclist.

At one point, a group of cyclists took smaller signs that were laying around, wrote something on them and hung them on their backs. The signs stated: “I am \_\_\_\_\_ and I am one less car,” followed by the campaign name and logo. Each cyclist filled out the blank: ‘an engineer,’ ‘a teacher’ and ‘a mother.’ After they all had their signs, they posed together for photos, got on their bicycles and started pedaling along the Revolución Avenue. They purposely did not use the segregated cycleway on the right of this six-lane one-way avenue but went straight into the traffic. Although busy, the Saturday traffic was less than it is during the week. They apparently sought to be as visible as possible not only to drivers but also to bus passengers and pedestrians.

This campaign had also taken a long time to prepare. One of Biciteka’s leaders told me she had been part of the committee that the cement company formed to brainstorm about the possible designs for activities. But not everyone was positive about the campaign. A former member of Bicitekas, who had worked in the ITDP and in the government and at the time of my fieldwork ran his own consulting company, told me that instead of putting money into a few interventions, the company should invest in their trucks. He showed me a photo of the trucks the same company uses in the United Kingdom, whose characteristics help reduce risks of accidents of several types. “They simply follow the regulations of where they operate [...] if the government here does not demand they do more, they don’t,” he said. “The problem is when activists play along to their tune and miss a chance for true change,” he added with a twisted smile.

The actions of all those involved in the intervention I witnessed served a purpose. They helped to make a series of demands visible. At one point, an activist in a wheelchair started giving out booklets to passing cars. I saw the gestures of the drivers as they took the booklets and heard what he had to say, and they seemed attentive and polite. Although part of the purpose of the campaign is to convince governmental authorities of the necessity of improving road infrastructures to reduce risks, the clearest effort of the activists was trying to persuade drivers to change their way of driving so as to be less threatening toward pedestrians and cyclists.

The mobility milieu is much more diverse than the interventions described here are able to convey. Nevertheless, both are good examples of a general characteristic of the field, inasmuch as they are networked efforts between activists, NGO advocates, government officials, specialists and others. In both cases, furthermore, the activists’ aim was not limited to a specific project but sought to convey a multilayered message promoting both improvements in urban infrastructures on the part of the government and a rethink of daily mobility practices among urban dwellers. As performative events on streets, their purpose was meant to both be seen and communicate the experience of those taking part in the activities. These interventions

served as experiential activities for those taking part and in situ examples of what is being demanded. In showing by doing, those involved sought to establish a level of empathy among urban dwellers that would help them understand what the cyclist or pedestrian goes through on the streets. They exercised a type of embodied persuasion (Acosta García 2018).

Both interventions, thus, emphasize a subjectivation process through which a few individuals spur onlookers to think about others. In doing so, they constitute ‘patterns of ethicization’ (Dürr et al. 2019, 9) that showcase what a better life in the city would look like. The choice of highlighting everyday paths, to school or otherwise, stresses the ethical dimension of “microlevel interactions in the everyday and mundane” (Ege and Moser 2020a, 14). Activists in both settings did not only use the interventions for photos, videos and documents, but crucially as scenarios where urban dwellers could see their lives in their quotidian movements as in a mirror. By promoting a reflexive process of what the good life in the city looks like, they laid the basis for urban dwellers to notice their own sense of community anew.

### **Political becomings and its ethical foundations**

A classic anthropological method to find out underlying social norms that are not usually talked about is to take the role of the clown. Clowns “speak strangely with a flawed grammar; they ask surprising and sometimes tactless questions, and tend to break many rules regarding how things ought to be done” (Eriksen 2001, 24). In doing so, we learn hints about accepted behaviors or discourses. It is similar to activists: By performing exaggerated and unusual characters, they make people turn to see. But while anthropologists do this to find out cultural cues, activists use it to highlight ethical conundrums. Is it acceptable for children to risk their lives on their way to school? Should not a mother feel safe cycling? For Jarrett Zigon, activists’ political action “often takes the form of experimentation,” in the configuration of an ethics of dwelling that “opens possibilities for building new worlds because it is an ethics that begins not with a predefined political subject, but rather with a demand made by a broken-world that demands change” (Zigon 2018, 94–95, 103). Activists open up urban dwellers’ imagination to new possibilities by inciting reflections among onlookers about the repercussions for others of their behavior in public ways.

The recent ethical turn in anthropology and other disciplines has come to refer explicitly to the manner in which humans apply decisions about what they consider good or bad in practice (Faubion 2011; Fassin 2014). However, when trying to examine freedom and virtue as ethical ideals (Laidlaw 2014), the result has been what Puig de la Bellacasa described as a hegemonic ethics which embodies “the aspiration to a higher morality or is depoliticized” (2017, 130). Puig de la Bellacasa argues that such perspectives overlook a “possible politics of ethical engagement” (2017, 135), which is the manner in which dynamics within collectives establish a foundation of potential political relationships. Mexico City’s mobility milieu provides a case in point. Mobility activists promote novel ways of understanding and practicing urban life in movement. They do so by combining outright political



action (consistent with diplomatic negotiations with policymakers) with public performances (such as the interventions portrayed above). The resulting spaces that are opened up for urban dwellers to experience mobility anew for themselves, therefore, also enable fresh opportunities for ethical negotiations between urban dwellers. It is here where I notice the most important legacy of mobility activism: By laying an ethical foundation, it may (or may not) lead to more widespread political becomings, but the possibility of thinking and living the city anew are there.

Reports in mainstream and social media about activists' interventions served to send out the message to both urban dwellers and government authorities. Thus, the images of activists in the street carrying their signs and making demands were reproduced alongside their eloquent demands that they had related to reporters. Activists and others involved sought to shape debates about urban ethics by enacting and explaining what could be better in the city. Thousands of chance encounters among urban dwellers every day bring about spontaneous decisions where they need to solve a situation quickly and come to an enacted decision of how to do it. This may be a gridlock in traffic, an encounter on a pedestrian crossing or something else. Decisions about who to let through, what to privilege or how to behave constitute the result of a quick evaluation that shapes broader ideas about what is a good life in cities. There are also thousands of spoken conversations, debates in print or reflections in mainstream and social media about what is a good practice and what is not. The frequent presence of activists and others in Mexico City's streets and public sphere, thus, reinforces the configuration of ethical appraisements. These are not limited to planners and policymakers but entail urban dwellers, those who either live in the city or traverse it.

As I left both interventions, one on a bicycle and another using the underground, I paid attention to my surroundings. As I cycled, I saw some cars honking violently at cyclists but most of the time I saw peaceful coexistence between both. Cyclists sometimes even smiled and thanked taxi drivers who had stopped to let them through. As I walked into the underground station, I noticed how people kept to their right on the escalators to allow those in a hurry to walk on the left side, something that had been unthinkable a few years back. It may be the case that small changes in individual behavior are aided by the type of activity I have described above. The role of such interventions, however, is not to dictate a solution and expect everyone to follow it, but rather to help everyone think of other people using the same space as them (be it on the streets, in the underground or on the sidewalks). Many activists say that cars are the ultimate individualizing machine, as one travels in a bubble, so, there is little connection to the outside world. On a bicycle, they claim, one sees the city on a more human scale. Eye contact comes more easily with everyone around.

Both interventions were part of wider efforts to modify legislation, infrastructures and government projects. They were attempts to try a more inclusive governance for urban mobility policies. But these activities in themselves were not about political haggling, technical arguments or specific points of legislation. These interventions in the public sphere – on the streets in plain sight of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians – were about showing how the street can be shared with less risk

to the vulnerable. Their main message was about recognizing ethical behaviors, distinguishing ways of acting that are good or safe from those that are bad or dangerous. In doing so, activists pointed out that the city is made up in a great part of the aggregated interactions that take place in its public spaces. This is in itself an emergent form of civic awareness and engagement; a realization through micro-ethical negotiations about a potential sense of political entitlement among urban dwellers; a multilayered process that makes up what I term political becomings.

## References

- Acosta, Raúl. 2020. *Civil Becomings: Performative Politics in the Amazon and the Mediterranean*. NGOographies. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Acosta García, Raúl. 2018. ‘Toma-la Ciudad’: Intersubjective activism in Guadalajara’s streets and City Museum. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 24(1), 221–242.
- Andrews, Kenneth T., and Bob Edwards. 2004. Advocacy organizations in the US political process. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30, 479–506.
- Boholm, Åsa, Annette Henning, and Amanda Krzyworzeka. 2013. Anthropology and decision making: An introduction. *Focaal*, 2013(65), 97–113. <https://doi.org/10.3167/fcl.2013.650109>.
- Caprotti, Federico, Robert Cowley, Ayona Datta, Vanesa Castán Broto, Eleanor Gao, Lucien Georgeson, Clare Herrick, Nancy Odendaal, and Simon Joss. 2017. The new urban agenda: Key opportunities and challenges for policy and practice. *Urban Research & Practice*, 10(3), 367–378.
- Chari, Sharad, and Henrike Donner. 2010. Ethnographies of activism: A critical introduction. *Cultural Dynamics*, 22(2), 75–85.
- da Cruz, Nuno F., Philipp Rode, and Michael McQuarrie. 2019. New urban governance: A review of current themes and future priorities. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 41(1), 1–19.
- Davis, Diane E. 1994. *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Davis, Lucas W. 2008. The effect of driving restrictions on air quality in Mexico City. *Journal of Political Economy*, 116(1), 38–81.
- Day, Sophie, and Victoria Goddard. 2010. New beginnings between public and private: Arendt and ethnographies of activism. *Cultural Dynamics*, 22(2), 137–154.
- Dürr, Eveline, Moritz Ege, Johannes Moser, Christoph K. Neumann, and Gordon M. Winder. 2019. Urban ethics: Towards a research agenda on cities, ethics and normativity. *City, Culture and Society*, 20(2020), 100313. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.CCS.2019.100313>.
- Ege, Moritz, and Johannes Moser. 2020a. Introduction: Urban ethics—conflicts over the good and proper life in cities. In: Moritz Ege and Johannes Moser, eds. *Urban Ethics: Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. London: Routledge, pp. 3–27.
- Ege, Moritz, and Johannes Moser. 2020b. *Urban Ethics: Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. London: Routledge.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2001. *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*. London: Pluto Press.
- Fassin, Didier. 2014. The ethical turn in anthropology: Promises and uncertainties. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 4(1), 429–435.
- Faubion, James. 2011. *An Anthropology of Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gillingham, Paul, and Benjamin T. Smith. 2014. *Dictablanda: Politics, Work, and Culture in Mexico, 1938–1968*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Guerra, Erick, and Adam Millard-Ball. 2017. Getting around a license-plate ban: Behavioral responses to Mexico City's driving restriction. *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment*, 55, 113–126.
- Hidalgo Vivas, Georgina. 2021. *Crónica Biciteka: la verdadera conquista de las calles de la gran Ciudad de México*. Mexico City: El Salario del Miedo.
- Jacobs, Jane. 2011 [1961]. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. 50th Anniversary Edition. New York: Modern Library.
- Jones, Peter. 2014. The evolution of urban mobility: The interplay of academic and policy perspectives. *IATSS Research*, 38(1), 7–13.
- Kamat, Sangeeta. 2004. The privatization of public interest: Theorizing NGO discourse in a neoliberal era. *Review of International Political Economy*, 11(1), 155–176.
- Laidlaw, James. 2014. *The Subject of Virtue: An Anthropology of Ethics and Freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lambek, Michael. 2010a. Introduction. In: Michael Lambek, ed. *Ordinary Ethics: Anthropology, Language, and Action*. New York: Fordham University Press, pp. 1–36.
- Lambek, Michael. 2010b. *Ordinary Ethics: Anthropology, Language, and Action*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald. 1996. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Melucci, Alberto. 1989. *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*. London: Hutchinson Radius.
- Montero, Sergio. 2017. Worlding Bogotá's Ciclovía: From urban experiment to international "best practice". *Latin American Perspectives*, 44(2), 111–131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582x16668310>.
- Pradel-Miquel, Marc, Ana Belén Cano-Hila, and García Cabeza Marisol. 2020. *Social Innovation and Urban Governance*. Cheltenham: Elgar Publishing.
- Puig de la Bellacasa, María. 2017. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Reid, Elizabeth J. 2000. *Structuring the Inquiry into Advocacy*. Vol. 1, *Seminar Series Nonprofit Advocacy and the Policy Process*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Reid, Elizabeth J., and Maria D. Molina. 2001. *Exploring Organizations and Advocacy*. Vol. 2, *Seminar Series Nonprofit Advocacy and the Policy Process*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Reid, Elizabeth J., and Maria D. Molina. 2003. *In the States, across the Nation, and Beyond*. Vol. 3, *Seminar Series Nonprofit Advocacy and the Policy Process*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Sabatier, Paul A., and Hank C. Jenkins-Smith. 1993. *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Shore, Chris, and Susan Wright. 1997. *Anthropology of Policy: Critical Perspectives on Governance and Power*. London: Routledge.
- Swyngedouw, Erik. 2017. Insurgent urbanity and the political city. In: Mohsen Mostafavi, ed. *Ethics of the Urban: The City and the Spaces of the Political*. Cambridge: Harvard University Graduate School of Design, pp. 46–73.
- Tarrow, Sidney. 1998 [1993]. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tilly, Charles. 1994. Social movements as historically specific clusters of political performances. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 38, 1–30.

- Vaughan, Mary Kay. 2018. Mexico, 1940–1968 and beyond: Perfect dictatorship? dictablanda? or PRI state hegemony? *Latin American Research Review*, 53(1), 167–176. <https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.294>.
- Wilson, Japhy, and Erik Swyngedouw. 2014. *The Post-political and Its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Zigon, Jarrett. 2018. *Disappointment: Toward a Critical Hermeneutics of Worldbuilding*. New York: Fordham University Press.

### 3 The political ecology of a diverse urban ethics of marine stewardship in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand

*Marie Aschenbrenner*

#### **Introduction**

Coastal zones can be urban. Historically, they have been places of settlement and arrival, of food sources, transport and networking. Multiple and complex nature-culture relations have evolved as cities have formed in and with coastal environments. Urban coasts can be regarded as interwoven networks of nonhuman and human actors, matter and discourses – from the land to the sea (and *vice versa*). Modern coastal urban life(style) is shaped by and shapes coastal/marine relationships and interactions, be it in terms of climate change-induced rises in sea level, built infrastructure for flood protection, pollution, leisure activities or sea-related business (McGranahan, Balk and Anderson 2007; Wong et al. 2014; UN Atlas of the Oceans 2016; Wyles et al. 2017; Gesing 2019). Thus, urbanity and urban lifestyles are also made, experienced and negotiated in coastal cities. Their local context and land-sea interconnectedness needs to be considered when thinking about the question of “How should one live in the city?” This chapter localizes urban ethics in a coastal city with a special focus on its nature-culture entanglements. It is concerned with the ethics imagined and claimed in a coastal urban ethical field and places a particular emphasis on nature-culture relations and the kind of coastal city and coastal urban environmental ethics imagined. The chapter focuses on a governance process for coastal transformation, framing it as a meeting point of diverse urban ethical discourses, imaginaries and claims. Analytically, it takes a governance perspective as well as one of social and environmental (in)justice (Barnett 2017; Dürr et al. 2019; Acosta García et al. 2020).

The analysis deals with a specific project of marine spatial planning (MSP) in the city of Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa NZ). The process took place between 2013 and late 2016. A central part of the planning was the extensive participation of governmental agencies, Indigenous partners, business stakeholders and civil society (all to a varying degree). The chapter is concerned with the negotiation and emergence of a new urban environmental ethics and associated nature-culture imaginaries in this participatory planning space. Some questions are: What kind of urban coastal ethics were claimed, imagined and assembled in this process? What role does the assembling of a new environmental ethics play?

And what potential effects in terms of imagining and claiming specific lifestyles and nature-culture relations does it have?

Auckland and its urban dwellers share a long, interconnected history with the sea. The city has grown between three harbors of which the Waitematā, with its access to the Hauraki Gulf Tīkapa Moana (in the following: the Gulf), a designated coastal and marine part of the Pacific Ocean, can be considered the more central harbor – in terms of modern (Western) city dynamics and functions. The relationships between the Waitematā and the Gulf, Auckland’s urban dwellers and the nonhuman parts of the land/sea are manifold. They are part of collective and individual identities, economic-environmental projects and imaginaries. Those interrelations, perceived as environmental risks such as runoffs, pollution or overfishing, have been increasingly problematized in the last decade. A report by government authorities on the environmental state of the Gulf in 2011 brought to the fore the historical changes and environmental degradation which have occurred there and emphasized “the need to take urgent action” (Hauraki Gulf Forum 2011b; Peart 2019, 4). Former reports concentrated on urbanization as “one of the great drivers of change in the state of the Hauraki Gulf’s environment” (Hauraki Gulf Forum 2008). The 2011 report was consciously aimed at “creating a [different] narrative that was ultimately disruptive,” as one of the lead writers framed it in 2019 (personal communication, March 7, 2019). Peart (2017, 2019) sees the 2011 report as providing an important impetus to efforts to initiate the subsequent MSP process, which was called Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari (SCTTTP).

The process differed considerably from other – technocratic – processes of MSP worldwide (Aschenbrenner and Winder 2019; Flannery and McAteer 2020). Process participants raised not only questions of spatial behavior and (non-)use or management within the ongoing process but ethical claims, and narratives of *care*, *responsibility* and *stewardship* that aimed at a transformation in behavior and lifestyles, in imagining and relating to the Gulf. It seems that a new governmental rationality emerged in the participatory spaces of SCTTTP that aimed to disrupt current behavior considered as unethical and environmentally harmful and to improve the environmental state of the Gulf by making urban dwellers collectively into ‘good’ coastal citizens. The quest of reassembling nature-culture relations converged with particular forms of governing that greatly involved nongovernmental actors and motivated ethical reflection and self-governance – such as spaces of participation, round tables and a repeated logic of consensus and collaboration in planning and decision-making (Campbell-Reid 2013; Dürr et al. 2019). In conclusion, SCTTTP could be read – and analyzed – as a process of neoliberal, depoliticizing governmentality (Rose 2000b; Mouffe 2005; Swyngedouw 2009; Wilson and Swyngedouw 2014; Tafon 2018; Flannery and McAteer 2020). At the same time, this way of interpreting the urban ethical field of SCTTTP falls short in the particular context of Aotearoa NZ. Ethical claims and narratives in the settler state of Aotearoa NZ are not only connected to neoliberal forms of governing but – as the chapter aims to show – entangled with claims of (in)justice, diverse ontologies and discourses, and (post-)colonial relationships. It is necessary to acknowledge the place-specific context of this watery urban ethical field to understand what role

ethical claims, narratives and discourses play, and to learn more about dynamics of ethicization in (coastal) urban contexts (Choi 2020). With this in mind, the chapter asks for the ways in which an *ethics of marine stewardship* was assembled in SCTTTP. It is interested in the *diverse* origins, discourses and narratives of ‘good’ environmental stewardship and the nature-culture imaginaries and relations linked to it. It explores how exactly commonly accepted planning and decision-making norms and techniques, such as collaboration and consensus, were linked with an emergence of an ethics of stewardship. The aim is to understand the implications and effects of this emergent ethics of marine stewardship within both the political ecology of the Gulf and the nature-culture relations that are being (re-)imagined and (re-)assembled in the SCTTTP process.

The empirical analysis of the process of SCTTTP is based on data collected between April 2018 and July 2021 within a German Research Foundation research project. The mapping of the process, its actors and important elements (e.g. actors’ interests and objectives, claims, narratives, events, legislations and documents) were identified from several primary and secondary sources, such as official and semiofficial plans, reports and other publications, newsletter articles and further media resources (videos and radio broadcasts). Authors and distributors of these sources were government and municipal institutions, science and academia, environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community organizations, private companies and public media. In order to retrace the process of SCTTTP, selected elements were assembled and mapped using a visual mapping software application (Mattissek and Wiertz 2014). Semi-structured and narrative interviews and participant observations were incorporated to complement the data collection and analysis. These were conducted in three field stays in Aotearoa NZ from the end of 2018 to the beginning of 2020 (a total of eight months). Concerning this chapter, 27 semi-structured interviews with experts regarding their role in and knowledge of SCTTTP were analyzed in an inductive way and interpreted. Integrated in the following chapters, these relate the diverse narratives of marine stewardship emerging in and from the process and their further implications.

The overall chapter is structured along the following lines: I first outline the theoretical concepts influencing my understanding and viewpoint following the idea that “land-water spaces are place-specific entities, where geographic materialities and local contexts are deeply intertwined” (Choi 2020, 6). These concepts are themselves inspired and shaped by the research field and its entities. This means I take up *ethicalities* as an analytical lens to make an understanding of ethical ontologies in their diversity possible. The subsequent section accordingly analyzes the Gulf as an ontologically diverse urban ethical assemblage where different moralities and ethical practices meet. The results section then traces the assembling of a diverse urban ethics of marine stewardship in the MSP process SCTTTP. Finally, the results are discussed from a political ecology viewpoint. Accordingly, I look at what ethical claims and imaginaries prevailed or were excluded. Did the assembling of an urban ethics of marine stewardship allow for claiming non-hegemonic nature-culture imaginaries, relations and practices? Did it give justice to claims of Indigenous sovereignty and rights or can it rather be seen as a post-political form of

neoliberal governance – reinforcing hegemonic perspectives, interests and coastal practices. More generally, the question of inclusion and the potential marginalization of people and social groups is raised.

### **Urban ethics, *ethicalities* and ‘ethical’ nature-culture relations**

The chapter engages with *urban ethics* as a research approach (Dürr et al. 2019; Ege and Moser 2020a). It starts from an understanding of urban ethics as a field of interaction where actors problematize moral and social ideals, principles and norms of living in a city. They all reassemble around the question of “how should one live in the city?” Instead of looking to identify a particular definition of ethics, the interest is in the claims and discourses that can be read as answers to the central question of how to live in a city. The process of SCTTTP is framed as a space where different ways of urban living with, in and around the Gulf were problematized and new ‘ethical’ nature-culture relations were assembled and imagined. The approach has benefited from the work of and exchange in a wider multidisciplinary German Research Foundation research group on urban ethics, where contrasting traditions and approaches to ethics have been used and discussed (DFG Research Unit Urban Ethics 2021).

Commonly ethical claims, discourses and practices are understood to be centered around human subjects and subject formation (Foucault 1993; Collier and Lakoff 2005; Dürr et al. 2019; Ege and Moser 2020a). Dürr et al. see ‘the ethical’ as defined by processes of subject formation. In their foundational contribution on a research agenda of urban ethics, they see the ethical as a question not just of individuals but of collectives, milieus and groups, but which ultimately passes “through individuals’ work on their selves” (2019, 2). Ege and Moser link ethics to choices of individual subjects in their introduction to the anthology *Urban Ethics – Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities* (2020b). They suggest *ethics* as choices that individuals “should make freely, on their own accord, because they are motivated by a desire to do what is ‘good’ and ‘right’ or ‘proper’” (Ege and Moser 2020a, 4). A lot of other publications on (urban) ethics, especially those written in the context of urban policy and governance (Rose 2006; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017), support such an understanding. The contributions to the anthology edited by Ege and Moser (2020b) also show that most (urban) ethical projects work with and through personal action and conduct, refer to moral orders and link to human individual intentionality.

The empirical exploration of *urban ethics* in and around the Gulf in Auckland, Aotearoa NZ, challenges the focus on human agency, reflexivity and individual intentionality identified and made by a lot of authors working on (urban) ethics (Foucault 1993; Butler 2005; Zigon 2008; Muehlebach 2012; Dürr et al. 2019). In the case of the Gulf, it is not necessarily the reflective engagement of individuals (or a group of individuals) with moral codes and their ‘good’ or ‘proper’ conduct of life that are fundamental and lead, or can lead, to an urban ethical situation (Ege and Moser 2020a). D. B. Rose (2000a, 185) and others (Whyte and Cuomo 2017; Makey 2021; Wheaton et al. 2021) make us aware how Indigenous ethics



must be understood more in a humanly decentered and relational way. D. B. Rose refers to Indigenous ethics as a “dialogical approach [located] in a system of mutually embedded relationships of care [in which] one can neither unfold nor enfold one’s self” (2000a, 186). Possibilities for mutual care emerge in connections and reciprocities, which “include humans, non-living things, and environments” (Rose 2000a, 175). This short ‘definition’ does not display the complexity, multiplicity and local embeddedness of Indigenous ethics. However, it suggests that a human-centered understanding of urban ethics in Auckland’s settler-colonial society probably falls short of the diversity of *ethicalities* present and in formation (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). Limiting one’s view on discourses of and claims made on individuals’ (or groups’) agency means to potentially (re-)inscribe a Western *regime of truth* (Smith 2012). It overlooks the political-ecological aspects and implications of exactly such individual and human-centered claims and ethics being assembled in and around the SCTTTP process. Thus, this chapter understands urban ethics as a field of interaction where fundamentally different – *diverse* – ontological conceptualizations of ethics are problematized and assembled. The claims made in SCTTTP concern the question of how one should live in the city, but answers rely on different knowledge and ontological understandings of subjectivity, agency and the emergence of ethical living.

Indigenous, feminist, ecofeminist, deep-ecology and relational materialist analyses have questioned anthropocentric conceptualizations of *ethics* (Rose 2000a; Barad 2007; Whyte and Cuomo 2017; Olson 2018). Indigenous and feminist practices and movements place an emphasis on ontologies, ethics of care and caretaking and the interconnectedness of all human and more-than-human elements. However, Indigenous ethical systems and other more-than-human approaches should not be conflated (Rose 2000a; Whyte and Cuomo 2017; Makey 2021). They differ in ideas, such as kinship, and Indigenous ontologies have long been “‘more-than-human’ and ecologically grounded [while] Euro-Western thinking is recently beginning to follow suit” (Yates 2021, 109). Western academics often reinforce colonial injustices by remaining silent on Indigenous ontologies when speaking of care ethics and more-than-human agency (Todd 2016).

María Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) works in a feminist materialist tradition. The author’s conceptualization of *ethicalities* stands in this tradition but can offer a useful lens and understanding of the overall diversity of ethical ontologies, including Indigenous ethical systems. She understands ethics from a relational, nature-culture point of view, as complex and emergent (also see Barad 2007). In referring to diverse *ethicalities*, the author differentiates between such an understanding and an anthropocentric understanding of ethics – attached to “rational, individual, [and] obviously human subjects” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 129). In the second case, Puig de la Bellacasa speaks of an *Ethics hegemonic*. Other ontological understandings – such as feminist approaches or Indigenous ethical systems – are framed as “anormative or not yet normative ethicalities” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 132). In the author’s view, an *Ethics hegemonic* (with ‘Ethics’ capitalized) refers to modes of ethical normalization. We live, according to the author, in an ‘age of ethics,’ in which the diversity of ethicalities remains unacknowledged. When authors

criticize an ethicization and “*depolicization* of social life in neoliberalism” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 135; emphasis in original), they refer to an increasing resort to Ethics – thus, more claims made to the individual, rational subject (Dürr et al. 2019; Ege and Moser 2020a). At the same time, anormative or not yet normative ethicalities are being further disregarded. There is a diversity of ethical ontological systems in Auckland’s MSP which creates the background for the emergence of a new diverse urban ethics for the Gulf. An awareness of ethicalities in their diversity and the “possibilities emerging in terrains where the meanings of ethics are being reconfigured” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 135) is necessary to understand the dynamics in this complex field. It differs from a “blanket rejection of the spreading of ethics as depoliticization” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 135) and is interested in the “colonizing uses of Ethics and the particular forms of biosocialities that are produced in these processes” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 133).

Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) aims at opening speculative paths and possibilities for proposing new ethical visions in more than human worlds. This chapter takes a more analytical, poststructuralist perspective while trying not to do what the author criticizes as ‘distant critique.’ The chapter takes up a relational way of thinking about ethics in its view (Gesing 2019; Fischer 2020), based on Zigon (2010). The latter uses an analytical framing of a “moral and ethical assemblage [being a] unique aspectual combination of various institutional, public, and personal moral discourses and ethical practices” (Zigon 2010, 5). Broadening its view to anormative or not yet normative ethicalities and forms of ethical agency, the chapter explores the assembling of human and nonhuman entities, relations and moral and ethical narratives, and claims and discourses in the process of SCTTTP. It is interested in how, in a field with a various assortment of knowledge, actors and potentially conflicting agendas, certain nature-culture relations, imaginaries and discourses are being assembled as ‘good’ (desirable, sustainable and caring) interactions. Taking a political ecology point of view, both nature and ‘ethical’ human interaction with it are approached as being results of political processes, with certain knowledge and its understanding of nature-culture relations and imaginaries becoming strategically naturalized ahead of others (Gesing 2016, 2019). The research explores the stabilization of a potentially hegemonic urban ethical assemblage and its nature-culture relations in SCTTTP, as well as its effects and implications. It is concerned with the production of new territorial organizations and the remapping of space as new urban ethical claims and imaginaries emerge (Affolderbach, Clapp and Hayter 2012; Müller 2015).

### **The Gulf as a diverse urban ethical field**

Rather than comprehensively mapping the ethical and moral discourses at work in Auckland’s coastal context (a task beyond the scope of this work), this section begins by using Zigon’s (2010) approach to conceptualizing a local moral and ethical assemblage and then moves to sketch in the additional elements – namely, Māori (Indigenous) concepts and ethics – required for an understanding of the Auckland assemblage.

Regarding the connected and fluid materiality and the historic and legislative context of the ocean, there is a multiplicity of institutions – and institutional moralities – coming together and overlapping in the context of the Gulf. Most originate from or are dominated by Euro-Western perspectives and share similar conceptions of nature-culture relations, such as those following binary logics (e.g. nature/culture and human/nonhuman), and their basic understandings of environmental morality and ethics (Yates 2021). At the same time, agendas, priorities and ideas of how to arrange ‘good’ human-environment relations differ and partly conflict with each other.

The United Nations Law of the Sea of 1982 is the foundational document that sets out rights, standards and principles in terms of coastal and marine government and management. It follows and consolidates a particular Euro-Western norm of stewardship that allows “individual social actors – or communities of actors – [to] act [...] temporarily appropriate, manage, and even transform the stewarded space in order to ensure that it continues to serve specified social ends” (Steinberg 1999, 258). The state of Aotearoa NZ is granted rights to its coastal waters under the law of the sea, and the Crown allocates responsibilities to ministers, ministries, agencies and other actors to ‘steward’ the living and nonliving resources of its waters. The Department of Conservation (DOC) with its competence for environmental conservation as well as the Ministry for Primary Industries responsible for the management of fisheries and aquaculture are just two examples along a wide spectrum of Crown officials, ministries and public service departments with competences in the coastal area. The main interests and moralities of Crown institutions often differ and are partly incompatible. The DOC is interested in establishing a network of marine protected areas in the Gulf (Department of Conservation 2018). Its overall aim is one of environmental conservation connected primarily to moralities of nonuse and protection, while the Ministry for Primary Industries wants to achieve sustainable *use* of Aotearoa NZ’s fisheries through neoliberal market mechanisms (Winder 2018; Ministry for Primary Industries 2019). National agendas and norms are influenced by international regulations, consultancy and expert networks and draw on international discourses of marine protection, sustainable development or a blue economy, which often prioritize disparate aspects and principles while referring to mutual terms such as sustainability.

Multiple regional and local authorities complicate the moral and ethical assemblage around the Gulf. They hold responsibilities for managing the effects of using coastal waters, harbor navigation, safety and marine pollution, as well as local infrastructure that may affect coastal waters, such as sewerage (Local Councils NZ 2020). Auckland Council and Waikato Regional Council have competencies in the Gulf as its two neighboring regions. Auckland is Aotearoa NZ’s most populous city and major financial center (Stats NZ 2019). The Gulf area of Waikato Region is considered rural. This results in different imaginaries of the Gulf and how to exercise one’s responsibilities and to what ends. Waikato Regional Council emphasizes, among other things, the Gulf’s value as a resource for aquaculture and primary production activities in the catchment area, such as forestry and farming (personal communication, March 23, 2019). Auckland Council frames the Gulf as a crucial economic, cultural and social asset of the city, which distinguishes its identity and

is essential in terms of its urban, recreational livability (Auckland Council 2012, 2018). Auckland Council is again fragmented in itself. Its 21 local boards, although part of Auckland Council, identify in a variety of ways. Waiheke Local Board, for example, distances itself as the ‘Gulf island community,’ with its ideals, principles and moralities, from the ‘big city’ and employs imaginaries of rural activities and relationships (Fischer 2020; personal communication, April 5, 2019). One can also identify controversial claims – and moralities – along lines of a good urbanity and urban living. Auckland City’s different institutions, such as the council-controlled organization Panuku Development or the council-owned company Ports of Auckland, follow disparate imaginaries, such as urban residential living, livability and access to the Gulf at a renewed waterfront, on the one hand, and trade development, industrial economic performance and efficiency, on the other hand (POAL 2010; personal communications, April 5, 2019, and January 23, 2020).

The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act of 2000 established a marine park in the Gulf with a new statutory authority, the Hauraki Gulf Forum (HGF), to oversee its management (Peart 2017). The HGF consists of representatives of multiple institutions and local Māori representatives. The idea of the forum was to integrate the management of the Gulf for better environmental outcomes – the HGF’s key concern since its establishment. Since then, the park act and HGF have not resulted in a unified morality among its members (Peart 2019).

In addition to the multiple formal institutional moralities, there are a number of nonformal NGOs with their own interests, views and ideals of the ‘good.’ Many international (e.g. Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Fund) and national environmental organizations (e.g. Forest & Bird, the Environmental Defence Society) are active in the region. They connect largely to international moral discourses of nature conservation and raise environmentalist concerns and interests, such as nonuse areas (WWF New Zealand 2019), and others address governance and management practices (Environmental Defence Society 2019). Environmental NGOs also address societal attitudes and individual behavior – they aim to initiate ‘environment-friendly’ practices – through education and environmental volunteer work (Keep NZ Beautiful 2019). Volunteer cleanup groups, such as the nonprofit organization *Sea Cleaners* organize rubbish removal activities in the Gulf, proclaim (and presuppose) individual responsibilities and an anthropocentric ethics in terms of addressing rational and knowledgeable (or yet to become knowledgeable) urban human subjects who are asked to reduce their harmful impacts on and restore the marine environment (own observation, February 17, 2019; Munro 2021). Private foundations and companies also support environmental conservation activities, networks and developments. Toyota, for instance, initiated, in cooperation with the DOC, the *Kiwi Guardians* program for children’s conservation education, which works all over Aotearoa NZ, including the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park (Department of Conservation 2022). Private companies, of course, follow additional interests and moralities oriented to economic and profit interests. What stands out is how NGOs, companies and the public are enlisted especially as stewards of the Gulf’s living resources, extending ocean governance “beyond the realm of [the] state [...]” (Steinberg 1999, 261) and its agencies.

Public discourses of moralities often offer “an alternative moral voice to that of institutional morality” (Zigon 2010, 8). Moral beliefs, conceptions and hopes are articulated in several different public spheres, including media, protest, the arts and literature or academia (Zigon 2010). People engage with, reflect and problematize moral beliefs in ordinary urban practices of environmental care, as Jeannine-Madeleine Fischer (2020) shows in the case of ‘land-based’ Auckland, leading to them becoming *ethical*. This might be closely intertwined with the self-formation of individuals as ethical subjects and their work on themselves (Dürr et al. 2019; Gesing 2019; Fischer 2020). At the same time, this does not exclude the possibility of other public ethicalities which can be better understood as relational or post-human (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; also see Gesing 2019; Fischer 2020; Wheaton et al. 2021).

Crossing the conceptual categorizations made by Zigon (2010) and extending them, the overall moral and ethical assemblage in and around the Gulf ‘involves’ Māori world views and ethical ontological constructs. “In the case of [Aotearoa] NZ, marine spaces have been stewarded over the centuries by Māori. [In] the contemporary [Aotearoa] NZ marine scene [...] Māori and European worldviews, knowledge and modes of governing” (Le Heron et al. 2018, 111) coexist. However, Māori moral/ethical ontologies cannot be understood as one morality amongst others, with ethics emerging out of a reflective and practical human engagement with the overall moral assemblage (Zigon 2010). Māori world views traverse (Indigenous) institutions and forms of organizations, sea- and water-related companies and communities. They differ from the Euro-Western hegemonic ethicality of many institutions and need to be understood in their own terms (Wheaton et al. 2021). Acknowledging the problematic nature of thematizing Māori concepts as a Western European (German), non-Māori author, which “can easily become instances of cultural appropriation” (Smith 2012; Scott and Morton 2021, 3), the limitations of my understanding of *kaitiakitanga* (to be explained hereafter) and Māori world views needs to be mentioned at this point. However, regarding the theoretical discussion of urban ethics in Auckland, I engage with authors and the work of human and nonhuman collaborators (Makey 2021) who bring these concepts to the fore in multifaceted ways. The aim is to bring these aspects to the discussion of urban ethics as a concept, and not to claim ‘objective correctness’ – while working to the best of my knowledge and beliefs.

“For Māori [...] connections to moana (sea) have particular significance having provided physical and spiritual sustenance since the arrival of the seminal voyaging canoes between 800–1350AD” (Wheaton et al. 2021, 6). Leane Makey (2021) describes Māori ontology as a complex system of connection and mutually embedded relationships bridging, or dissolving, European binary distinctions between humans and nonhumans. “[N]ature is indistinguishable from culture” (Makey 2021, 1) within Māori ontology, and “it is the relation, or connection, not the thing itself, that is ontologically privileged” (Hoskins and Jones 2017, 26). Geological, atmospheric, hydrological and biological entities are “connected to people through kin-based relationships and treated as (or are) ancestors and family members” (Makey 2021, 7), which is why authors prefer the term *more-than-human* (and

not, e.g. nonhuman) (Makey 2021; Yates 2021). “*Mauri*, a life-force or spirituality [flows] from, through and between matter(s). Such embodiment connects the body with the metaphysical/spiritual to have relations with the mauri of M[ā]ori ancestral beings and Deities” (Makey 2021, 7; emphasis added). It enmeshes life “as a field or more-than-human collective” (Yates 2021, 102). A change in “mauri [...] of any part of the environment [...] would cause [changes] in the mauri of immediately related components” (Harmsworth and Awatere 2013). According to Amanda Monehu Yates, “a care-full and ethical attention to living-well-with the more-than-human [is vital] in order to maintain mauri ora or life-field vitality” (2021, 102).

“For M[ā]ori people involved with the caring of ecosystems, the value and practice of *kaitiakitanga* maintains this relationship” (Makey 2021, 8). *Kaitiakitanga* as a socio-environmental ethic is not human centric but interwoven with and emergent from *whakapapa* (genealogy), reciprocal relationships and *mauri*, *inter alia* (Makey 2021). *Kaitiakitanga* is a ‘practical philosophy’ (Walker et al. 2019, 2) which “recognises that along with the privileges (food, shelter) associated with the environment, there is also a responsibility to offer care and maintain and sustain it for future generations” (Wheaton et al. 2021, 7; also see Kawharu 2010).

Place and practice are inextricably linked in tribal relationships with the land and the sea, and the maintenance of connections is of central importance and essential to well-being (Forster 2016; Wheaton et al. 2021). “British colonization of Aotearoa New Zealand diminished the influence of the tribal territory on Indigenous autonomy, identity and belonging” (Forster 2016, 316). It established British forms of governance and English norms as “valid and appropriate structures for governing the environment” (Forster 2016, 321). This included an extractive economy agenda for ocean resources and Euro-Western norms, such as property and stewardship. At the same time, it displaced Māori environmental beliefs and practices and deliberately excluded Māori from participation in systems and institutions (Forster 2016). Colonial repression and disregard of Māori environmental interests and perspectives were exercised despite the presence of the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840. The agreement between representatives of the Crown and Māori tribes “granted British governance in New Zealand as well as the continued recognition of Māori authority over tribal matters” (Forster 2016, 321). Successive developments, such as the urbanization of Māori communities, further diminished and challenged traditional relationships and have “changed societal structures and narratives, as well as connections with nature” (Walker et al. 2019, 1).

But “Māori have a long history of challenging the authority of the Crown where [...] Māori environmental perspectives and interests” (Forster 2016, 326) are disregarded. Forster sees *kaitiakitanga* as a key vehicle in the Māori resistance and achievements to renegotiate norms and inequitable relationships. *Kaitiakitanga* has, as contemporary socio-environmental ethics based on a Māori world view, worked to achieve involvement in systems and institutions for the governance and management of natural resources (Forster 2016). Along with the term *stewardship* and commonly translated as *guardianship*, *kaitiakitanga* has become increasingly embedded in environmental politics and is also prevalent in legislation for resource management, fisheries and conservation (Scott and Morton 2021). Walker et al.

(2019) view the increasing inscription of *kaitiakitanga* into legislation critically. The embedded definitions of *kaitiakitanga* align only weakly with current practices in Māori communities. They are also lacking in their philosophical understanding as they de-emphasize spirituality, place-based narratives, kinship and intergenerational knowledge.

When framing Auckland and the Gulf as an urban ethical field, where different ethics become negotiated and assembled, it is utterly important to acknowledge precolonial rights and ethical systems, and the consequences of colonization. In doing so, concepts of stewardship and *kaitiakitanga* need to be understood in their diversity and as being potentially in conflict with each other. The term ‘stewardship’ stems from Euro-Western contexts, while it has been reshaped when assembled with *kaitiakitanga* and guardianship in resource management and legislation. This changed and broadened context-specific understandings and connotations of stewardship and *kaitiakitanga*. Focusing on stewardship as a norm guiding ocean governance, connected to elements of the commons and common property and linked to a ‘pragmatic,’ human-centered ethics (Steinberg 1999; Davis 2015) further marginalizes the anormative and not yet hegemonic ethicality of Māori ontological systems. This understanding creates the background for the further exploration of the context-specific assembling of different ethicalities and ethical narratives in the process of SCTTTP.

### **Assembling a diverse urban ethics of marine stewardship in SCTTTP**

The emergence of a context-specific ethics of marine stewardship and *kaitiakitanga* can be traced through several spaces and moments in the assemblage of SCTTTP. Three main projects and their elements came together in the early stage of assembling the SCTTTP MSP process. First, the need for change in coastal human-environment relationships was argued by an NGO and the HGF identifying and problematizing the extent of polluted waterways, eroded landscapes, sediments, nutrient flows and other ecosystem elements (Davison 2011; Hauraki Gulf Forum 2011b; Peart 2019). At the same time, they assembled discourses of (insufficient) marine conservation, marine protected areas and institutional stewardship. The report of the HGF in 2011 composed new ecological narratives, measures and baselines. It detected a concerning state of the environment, adopting a baseline prior to human settlement instead of a pressure-state-response framework similar to previous reports, and, thus, reframed and reimagined nature-culture relations. Second, through people, relationships and an HGF report in 2011 which reviewed the worldwide use of MSP, setting it up as an option for the Gulf, the growing international discourse on MSP “as a tool or method through which to achieve ‘better’ or more comprehensive ocean management” (Boucquey et al. 2016, 5) ‘settled’ locally. Aspects of conflict resolution in MSP – between diverse agencies, uses/users and viewpoints, ecosystems and humans – became emphasized, and a vision of reconciliation, consensus and agreement emerged (Mouffe 2005; Hauraki Gulf Forum 2010, 2011a; Campbell-Reid 2013). Finally, Māori have fought

postcolonial and still colonizing (in)justices, receiving increasing awareness. Insufficient involvement in the governance and management of the Gulf, disregard of *mātauranga* (Māori world views and knowledge) and the ongoing weakening of the Gulf’s *mauri* have diminished the ability to exercise *kaitiakitanga*. These violations of the Treaty have continuously been challenged and have not yet been solved (Hauraki Gulf Forum et al. 2016).

At the beginning of SCTTTP, several elements of these disparate ‘projects’ assembled together: Charles Ehler, leading MSP consultant to UNESCO, was present at the launch of SCTTTP in Auckland in 2013. This built a link to the global discourse of MSP, invoking certain Euro-Western norms, such as marine stewardship, spatial planning and ecosystem-based management (Ehler 2013; Flannery and McAteer 2020). Ludo Campbell-Reid, who codesigned SCTTTP for Auckland Council, presented the project emphasizing and integrating a collaborative and stewardship vision that spoke to the common responsibility of (urban) communities and institutions to engage as ‘champions’ and ‘expert ecosystem builders’ in the management of the Gulf to improve its environmental state (Campbell-Reid 2013). Furthermore, elements to make ocean governance more just were introduced. The structure of SCTTTP involved a co-governance approach at a governance level, meaning that the Project Steering Group consisted of the same number of government institution representatives as Māori representatives with territorial authority (see Figure 3.1). A guiding vision for the project was established that took up elements of *kaitiakitanga* and values plausible for Euro-Western ethics of environmental conservation (Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari 2015).

The selection process for the Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) members, who would take over the main plan development, followed a bicultural agenda

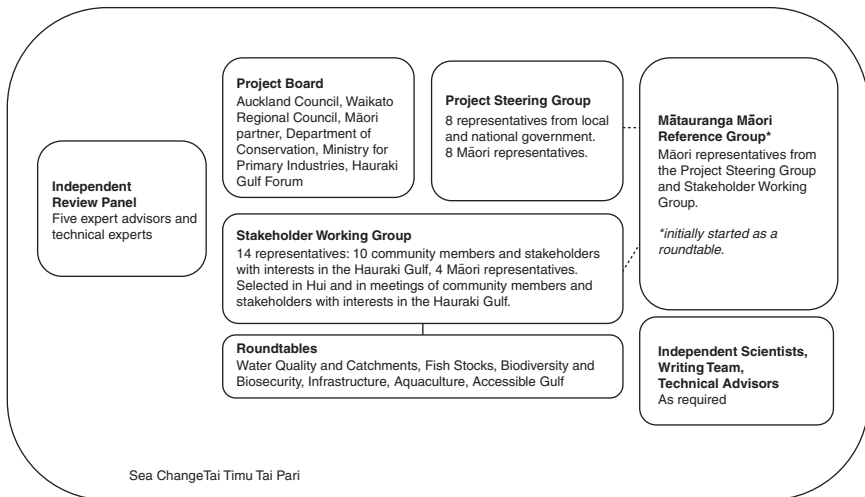


Figure 3.1 Structure of the Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari process (author’s own figure after the Office of the Auditor General 2017; Peart 2019).



and norms. Māori members were selected in *hui* (meetings) corresponding with customary Māori practices. The selection of non-Māori members was asserted differently and followed logics that deviated a lot from official Euro-Western participation conventions. It involved a diverse group of people, invited as representatives of interest groups and the public. This group selected SWG members in a stepwise process. Those interested in becoming members needed to relate to a discursive set of moralities by presenting themselves as ‘good’ potential representatives in front of the group at some point of the process. As post-process narratives show, a strong ideal of legitimate participation by embodying an ‘ethical’ individual formed. As interviewees recounted, people *should* represent an individual subject. They *should* “take off [their] mandated spokesperson hat for this group” (personal communication, March 19, 2019). They had to reflect on their morality by getting “up in front of that group of people and say, I’m this kind of person [...] I can work with people to try and reach solutions [...] and become a voice for the Gulf” (personal communication, March 19, 2019). Participants were also asked to be collaborative rather than ‘disruptive.’ They should be ‘open-minded,’ in the sense of being open to a personal transformation from primarily supporting vested interests to putting their individual endeavors for the recovery and conservation of the Gulf’s ecosystems first (Peart 2018; personal communication, November 16, 2018). One’s own version of being a legitimate SWG member and steward for the Gulf was formed here.

A specific ethic of stewardship assembling particular narratives and claims of guardianship and *kaitiakitanga* was also constituted and repeatedly invoked in the subsequent planning and bargaining process. It functioned as a boundary concept in the SWG process – allowing the group to work collaboratively despite their different knowledge and interests (Affolderbach, Clapp and Hayter 2012; personal communication, February 18, 2019). A member of the SWG described ‘guardianship’ and its role in the SWG as follows:

It is a sort of an ethics or a principle that underpins things generally, everyone could agree at this macro level that guardianship was very important [...] But actually, when you start talking about what does it mean [...] everyone had their own different way of thinking about what guardianship means for them. But you found that they had very strong agreement that it was incredibly important.

(Personal communication, February 18, 2019)

Claims of “being a voice for the Gulf” were invoked and assembled in moments in the process when conflicts arose, in order to reach agreement and collaborative behavior, as another member recalled:

At the end of the day, when we were discussing quite a contentious point, trying to get agreement [...] one of the members [of the SWG] said: ‘Well, at the end of the day, we have to do what is best for the Gulf [...],’ and that was the touch stone in our process [...]. At the end of the day, we were all there because we wanted the Gulf to improve [...] we were there for a purpose,

everyone in there wasn't there just to protect their own interest; they were there because they believed that something had to be done. They were concerned about the state of the Gulf [...] certainly that was a very important touchstone; it was the state of the Gulf that was important.

(Personal communication, October 23, 2018)

While becoming the common ground on which compromise could be reached, an ethic of stewardship for the Gulf was simultaneously assembled involving diversity and comprising collaborative behavior – framed by interview partners as ‘gifting and gaining’ (personal communications, March 23, 2019, and March 3, 2020).

The final SCTTTP documents, their maps and narratives, and the narratives of people interviewed, with some distance in time from the process, show how a diverse urban ethics of marine stewardship was temporarily stabilized in its interpretation, aspects and ascribed role. Interviewees stressed the bicultural dimension of the emergent ethic. While a Māori interview partner described guardianship and *kaitiakitanga* as an ‘easy fit’ code of conduct, the same person made a clear distinction between *kaitiakitanga* as a practice which is open to everyone, and those who can legally and culturally be *kaitiaki*, which are only those who are linked genealogically to a tribe with territorial authority (personal communication, March 19, 2019). An essential aspect of this ethics is meant to be its ‘strong political narrative’ and the acknowledgment of biculturalism, in terms that it acknowledges *mana whenua* (local tribes and their authority), realizes a Treaty-Crown partnership and takes into account Māori cultural values (personal communication, November 16, 2018). Thus, it is meant to be a *diverse* ethical concept and not bound to a Western (ethical) ontology. The ethics became further shaped in the SCTTTP final document, of which it is the underlying narrative and theme (Hauraki Gulf Forum et al. 2016). The restoration of the *mauri* of the Gulf, some non-Māori interviewees for their part used the wording ‘health of the Gulf,’ is at the center of the report. One of the leading authors said: “It [guardianship/*kaitiakitanga*] became embedded throughout [and] each chapter would have had different ways in which you might express those principles” (personal communication, February 18, 2019).

Part of this diverse ethics of stewardship is the practice of *guardianship* and *kaitiakitanga* – used somewhat synonymously – as ‘code of conduct’ and ‘environmental ethics,’ in the sense of ‘ethical’ living. A Māori interviewee suggested an evolution and change of *kaitiakitanga* (as a concept) toward human agency and into modern needs and demands: “If people are undertaking actions that lead to revitalizing the *mauri* of the Hauraki Gulf [...] they are practicing *kaitiakitanga*” (personal communication, March 19, 2019). Guardianship/*kaitiakitanga* is understood as “taking responsibility of things you can influence and recognizing the importance of long-term restoration and future generations” (personal communication, February 18, 2019). In addition to being narrated as a theoretical ethic, interviewees approached guardianship/*kaitiakitanga* from an empirical perspective. They observed it as a powerful, disrupting element that has evolved in the SWG’s process, a transformation and change in “terms of peoples’ world views” (personal communication, March 26, 2019). People *became* voices of the Gulf, paying

‘care-full’ (Yates 2021, 102) attention to maintaining its health or *mauri* (personal communications, March 7, 19, 26, 2019). This also implies a narrative and growing acknowledgment with non-Māori members of the authority and vitality of the Gulf, and the role of people to speak on its behalf as it is embedded in Māori ontological systems and an ethics of *kaitiakitanga* – and as it is recognized in legislations, such as the Waikato River Authority and Te Urewera Board, where, respectively, the river or national park are recognized as legal entities/persons (Forster 2016).

The diverse ethics of marine stewardship became increasingly territorialized in the form of spatially defined areas. Māori representatives proposed *ahu moana* (*ahu* = nurture, build up; *moana* = the ocean) areas late in the planning process, and they were inscribed into maps and the final document. They were defined as “localised near-shore co-management areas along the length of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands, that will extend from mean high water springs (the high tide mark) generally 1 km out” (Hauraki Gulf Forum et al. 2016, 52). They are meant to be co-managed by local tribes and communities. *Ahu moana*, in their view, reflects the linkage of tribal relationships with place. They should enable Māori self-determination, *kaitiaki* responsibilities and practice. At the same time, they assembled non-Māori communities with elements and logics of care, environmental behavior and localness. Eventually, interviewees narrated an ethics of marine stewardship as localness and local self-determination. One interviewee suggested that the “*ahu moana* concept [in] many ways reflects the guardianship [theme]. It’s about providing [...] local communities with the opportunity to have their own say” (personal communications, February 18, 19, 28, 2019). With the constitution of *ahu moana* and a spatial remapping, a further *urban* dimension is added to marine stewardship beyond being constituted in an urban context. Part of the logic of *ahu moana* is the possibility of self-determination in a tribal complex and urbanized environment. A specific form of local urban guardianship/*kaitiakitanga* is formed that imagines a nationwide unique urban marine park and specific ‘good’ and valuable nature-culture relations, as the illustrations of *ahu moana* in the SCTTTP follow-up report ‘Revitalizing the Gulf’ by the national government also show (Hauraki Gulf Forum et al. 2016; Department of Conservation, Fisheries New Zealand and Ministry for Primary Industries 2021).

### **Interpretation and implications of an emergent ethics of stewardship for the Gulf**

The complex and diverse assemblage of an urban ethics of marine stewardship that emerged in the process of MSP in Auckland, Aotearoa NZ, shows that it is essential not to confine an understanding of *ethics* to human agency, individual responsibility and behavior. The background here is a complex urban ethical field where diverse *ethicalities* meet. While nonhuman-centric Māori ethical ontological systems have been intertwined with the land/sea and its people since the landing of the different voyaging canoes, a Euro-Western, anthropocentric understanding of ethics has become hegemonic and has been enforced in many institutions and public areas since colonization. *Stewardship* is a contested idea here, which

is interlinked with a colonizing use of Ethics (hegemonic), establishing particular forms of ocean governance and nature-culture imaginaries and relations. At the same time, the term *stewardship* has taken different forms and been linked to and sometimes used interchangeably with *kaitiakitanga*. This has led to the assembling of diverse forms of ‘ethical’ stewardship/*kaitiakitanga* in Aotearoa NZ legislation, but often only weakly aligned with Māori philosophy and practices (Walker et al. 2019; Scott and Morton 2021).

The process of SCTTTP shows how MSP can constitute an ethical field where diverse ethicalities are assembled, claimed and contested, especially in terms of a still hegemonic Ethics of marine stewardship (Steinberg 1999; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). It was used to challenge post-colonial and still colonizing injustices against both humans and more-than-humans. In the process, a diverse urban ethics of marine stewardship emerged that assembled environmental concerns and conservation interests, self-determination, co-governance/management and biculturalism with governmental techniques and rationalities of collaboration, agreement and consensual decision-making. It reimagines hegemonic nature-culture relations in terms of an urban Gulf community becoming the *Voice of the Gulf*, and following a code of conduct or environmental ethic of guardianship/*kaitiakitanga* for revitalizing the *mauri* and health of the Gulf. It also takes a spatial dimension by assembling localness and establishing *ahu moana* – near shore, community and Māori co-managed ‘ocean care’ – areas. This shows the importance of looking at the many possibilities emerging in such a terrain where the actual meanings of ethics are being reconfigured (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 135).

At the same time, there *is* a potential danger of ethical imperatives of guardianship/*kaitiakitanga* being singled out, in the sense of governmental techniques. The 20th anniversary of the Marine Park held in February 2019 in Auckland showed how demands of ‘good’ environmental behavior were easily singled out and used by the state to request individual responsibilities and action of individuals in the form of voluntary ‘care’ work (own observation, February 27, 2020). This holds the fundamental danger of further cultural appropriation and the continuation of colonizing practices, discourses and imaginaries.

From a political ecology point of view, it is worth looking closer at the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion and power connected to the emergence of this ethics. *Kaitiakitanga* and local self-determination is a “critical mechanism for realizing Māori autonomy in relation to resource management” (Forster 2016, 324). When linking rationalities of care, localness and self-determination to not exclusively Indigenous communities and participants in SCTTTP as ‘voices of the Gulf,’ the question arises: *Who* speaks for the Gulf? And who is, and can be, part of a ‘Gulf community’? In the SWG selection process, people were answerable for themselves as ‘ethical’ subjects in relation to a certain discursive framework (Butler 2005), but other elements, such as living close to the Gulf or being active in some way, as well as having expert knowledge also played a role in terms of inclusion/exclusion. This determines participation in the future, which became spatially inscribed through *ahu moana*. While potentially excluding specific individuals not complying with the hegemonic ethical narratives, it also means limited access and participation

of urban dwellers living in distant suburbs (while not necessarily determined by physical distance). This is critical when thinking about unequal urban conditions, such as property prices, access to the ocean and (ocean) literacy. There is a risk of the Gulf becoming an ‘urban park’ closely related to and reflecting urban conditions, processes and injustices. Potential injustices have also emerged for other marine areas, such as the Manukau Harbour located to the southwest of Auckland and its connected people (personal communication, February 19, 2019). There are less focus and financial means for these areas due to Western city structures, dynamics and measurements. The case study demonstrates the interconnection of ‘the urban’ with place-specific ethics in the case of Auckland.

It is still generally hard to anticipate the effective consequences of an emergent diverse urban ethics of marine stewardship. Various efforts by local and national government institutions to implement SCTTTP are ongoing. A national government action report was released in July 2021 but the non-statutory nature of SCTTTP combined with the elusive character of ‘ethics’ complicates implementation. Some agency representatives and experts in power have questioned the legitimacy of the process and the rightfulness to implement the components in the plan. They have challenged SCTTTP primarily for its form and rationalities of participation. A clash is shown between their understandings and the logics of participation and decision-making along the lines of marine stewardship as made in the SWG. According to some experts and agency staff, those holding a particular expertise, such as planners, scientists or interest holders, should be in charge of MSP decision-making. They also criticized SCTTTP for its ‘undemocratic’ approach because SWG members did not hold a proper democratic mandate and did not sufficiently engage with the broader public. More research will be needed in terms of a potentially changing ethical ontology, Indigenous rights and changing nature-culture relations, which this chapter can only provide in a very limited way regarding my own position and perspective as a European, non-Māori researcher. A transformation also depends a lot on the ability – and willingness – of those in power to take relevant decisions and measures, especially as claims of ‘democracy’ are continuously invoked in spaces around the Gulf’s management and governance and attempt to challenge partnership approaches and principles (own observation at SCTTTP public meeting, March 6, 2019).

Finally, this chapter objects to “a blanket rejection of the spreading of ethics as depoliticization” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 135). As has been shown, *urban ethics* can be an important dimension in urban struggles of rights, self-determination and decolonization. There can be a transformative dimension coming along with urban ethics. In order to acknowledge this ‘political edge,’ it is of utter importance to perceive ethics in their diversity, and to pay attention to anormative and not yet normative ethicalities. The problem and danger of a depoliticization of social life in neoliberalism as political problems are reduced to ethics and tend to become individualized, is also linked to the narrowing definitions of and viewpoints on ethics in the field of an Ethics hegemonic. When looking at the struggles and negotiations around SCTTTP from a viewpoint of not yet normative ethicalities, it appears that “radical dissent, critique and fundamental conflict” (Swyngedouw 2009, 608) were not evacuated from the political arena by ‘the ethical,’ as theories of post-politics

and depoliticization suggest (Mouffe 2005). Māori ethics constitute a collective way of living which is persistently claimed and fought for. Existing beyond and within the neoliberal paradigm, they contain non- and alternative neoliberal aspects and (co-)constitute a diverse economy (Gibson-Graham 2005, 2008). From this perspective, they can offer hope and possibilities for coastal nature-culture futures (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Bargh 2018; O’Sullivan 2018; Lewis 2019). At the same time, ethical dynamics are complex. As possibilities emerge, their assembling in the governance of coastal urban spaces can potentially lead to depoliticized discourses of an Ethics hegemonic, cultural appropriation and attempts of neoliberal governmentality as has been shown. One needs to be aware of these somewhat paradoxical dynamics of urban ethics in order not to lose sight of the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, (in)justices or colonizing tendencies when considering transformative possibilities of ethics in (coastal) cities.

## **Conclusion**

As the public awareness of marine- and coast-related risks and problems grows, approaches and claims of how to reach ‘better’ (‘moral,’ ‘ethical’ and ‘sustainable’) coastal futures increase, and these often involve claims of “how should one live” (Fletcher and Potts 2007; Bennett 2018). Urban coastal areas are particularly affected by growing risks, of which they are also the cause to a large extent. In these complex land/sea contexts, traveling ideas, moralities and ethics, such as those imbricated in MSP or marine stewardship, settle and are assembled, taking effect on nature-culture relations. At the same time, ethics are, as shown in this chapter, essentially local, raised in and from networks of humans and nonhumans and are bound to them and the specific place in their practice. They are important parts of the urban ethical field of coastal cities. In terms of ‘better’ coastal urban futures, it is important to acknowledge both ethics as constitutive of the political ecologies of urban, coastal spaces and coastal nature-cultures as constitutive of urban ethics.

## **Acknowledgments**

The theoretical development of and empirical research for this chapter took place within the Germany-based research group ‘Urban Ethics.’ The interdisciplinary research group was funded by German Research Foundation grants from 2015 to 2021, with the project being part of the second funding period (2018–2021). I am indebted to the many people who directly and indirectly participated in the research of the project and made valuable contributions. My thanks also go to the reviewers of the draft chapter who helped improve the text with their valuable comments.

## **References**

- Acosta García, Raúl, Marie Aschenbrenner, Eveline Dürr, and Gordon M. Winder. 2020. Re-imagining cities as ecosystems: Environmental subject formation in Auckland and Mexico City. *Urban Research & Practice*, 15(3), 350–365.

- Affolderbach, Julia, Roger Alex Clapp, and Roger Hayter. 2012. Environmental bargaining and boundary organizations: Remapping British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 102(6), 1391–1408.
- Aschenbrenner, Marie, and Gordon M. Winder. 2019. Planning for a sustainable marine future? Marine spatial planning in the German exclusive economic zone of the North Sea. *Applied Geography*, 110, 102050.
- Auckland Council. 2012. The Auckland Plan: The world's most liveable city. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20211209222909/https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/Documents/auckland-plan-2012-full-document.pdf> [Accessed July 3, 2020].
- Auckland Council. 2018. *Auckland Plan 2050*. Auckland: Auckland Council. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220217052647/https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/docsprintdocuments/auckland-plan-2050-print-document.pdf> [Accessed March 2, 2022].
- Barad, Karen. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Bargh, Maria. 2018. Māori political and economic recognition in a diverse economy. In: Deirdre Howard-Wagner, Maria Bargh, and Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez, eds. *The Neoliberal State, Recognition and Indigenous Rights: New Paternalism to New Imaginings*. Canberra: ANU Press, pp. 293–308.
- Barnett, Clive. 2017. Geography and the priority of injustice. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 108(2), 317–326.
- Bennett, Nathan J. 2018. Navigating a just and inclusive path towards sustainable oceans. *Marine Policy*, 97, 139–146.
- Boucq, Noëlle, Luke Fairbanks, Kevin St. Martin, Lisa M. Campbell, and Bonnie McCay. 2016. The ontological politics of marine spatial planning: Assembling the ocean and shaping the capacities of 'community' and 'environment'. *Geoforum*, 75, 1–11.
- Butler, Judith. 2005. *Giving an Account on Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Campbell-Reid, Ludo. 2013. Sea change: Hauraki Gulf marine spatial plan. In: Auckland Council, ed. *Auckland Conversations*. Auckland: Auckland Council, pp. 1–19.
- Choi, Young Rae. 2020. Slippery ontologies of tidal flats. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 5(1), 340–361.
- Collier, Stephen J., and Andrew Lakoff, 2005. On regimes of living. In: Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier, eds. *Global Assemblages*. London: Blackwell, pp. 22–39.
- Davis, John. 2015. *Coastal and Marine Stewardship in Western Australia: The Case for a Virtue Ethic*. Doctor of Philosophy, Murdoch University.
- Davison, Isaac. 2011. Hauraki Gulf: Toxic paradise? *New Zealand Herald*, [online] 11 August. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220303122420/https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/hauraki-gulf-toxic-paradise/REZEUEO6MURH6PLCWI4GL76QOU/> [Accessed March 2, 2022].
- Department of Conservation. 2018. NZCA's advice on the Department of Conservation's Marine Protected Areas Policy and Implementation Plan 2005. [online] May 25. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210303060432/https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/nz-conservation-authority/advice-to-the-minister-and-or-director-general/docs-marine-protected-areas-policy-and-implementation-plan-2005/> [Accessed July 3, 2019].
- Department of Conservation. 2022. Become a kiwi guardian. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220214125143/https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/toyota-kiwi-guardians/> [Accessed March 2, 2022].
- Department of Conservation, Fisheries New Zealand and Ministry for Primary Industries. 2021. Revitalising the gulf: Government action of the sea change plan. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220211023228/https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/sea-change-hauraki-gulf-marine-spatial-plan/> [Accessed March 2, 2022].

- DFG Research Unit Urban Ethics. 2021. Urban ethics – LMU Munich. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220119101637/https://www.en.urbane-ethiken.uni-muenchen.de/index.html> [Accessed March 25, 2021].
- Dürr, Eveline, Moritz Ege, Johannes Moser, Christoph K. Neumann, and Gordon M. Winder. 2019. Urban ethics: Towards a research agenda on cities, ethics and normativity. *City, Culture and Society*, 20(5–6), 100313.
- Ege, Moritz, and Johannes Moser. 2020a. Introduction: Urban ethics – conflicts over the good and proper life in cities. In: Moritz Ege and Johannes Moser, eds. *Urban Ethics: Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 3–27.
- Ege, Moritz, and Johannes Moser. 2020b. *Urban Ethics: Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Ehler, Charles. 2013. Marine spatial planning: An international perspective. In: *Auckland Conversations*. Presentation September 10. [https://web.archive.org/web/20220201024414/https://conversations.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/sites/conversations.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/files/pdf/charles\\_ehler\\_marine\\_spatial\\_planning.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20220201024414/https://conversations.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/sites/conversations.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/files/pdf/charles_ehler_marine_spatial_planning.pdf) [Accessed March 2, 2022].
- Environmental Defence Society. 2019. EDS welcomes government’s resource management system review. [online] July 24. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220303123024/https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/media-releases/2019/eds-welcomes-governments-resource-management-system-review/> [Accessed March 2, 2022].
- Fischer, Jeannine-Madeleine. 2020. *Urbane Ethiken und Umweltschutz: Ideale, Praktiken und Aushandlungen um die gute Stadt in Auckland, Aotearoa Neuseeland*. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Flannery, Wesley, and Ben McAteer. 2020. Assessing marine spatial planning governmentality. *Maritime Studies*, 19(3), 269–284.
- Fletcher, Stephen, and Jonathan Potts. 2007. Ocean citizenship: An emergent geographical concept. *Coastal Management*, 35(4), 511–524.
- Forster, Margaret. 2016. Indigenous environmental autonomy in Aotearoa New Zealand. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 12(3), 316–330.
- Foucault, Michel. 1993. *Sexualität und Wahrheit*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Gesing, Friederike. 2016. *Working with Nature in Aotearoa New Zealand: An Ethnography of Coastal Protection*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.
- Gesing, Friederike. 2019. Towards a more-than-human political ecology of coastal protection: Coast care practices in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 4(2), 208–229.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson). 2005. Surplus possibilities: Postdevelopment and community economies. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 26(1), 4–26.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson). 2008. Diverse economies: Performative practices for ‘other worlds’. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(5), 613–632.
- Harmsworth, Garth R., and Shaun Awatere. 2013. Indigenous Māori knowledge and perspectives of ecosystems. In: John Dymond, ed. *Ecosystem Services in New Zealand – Conditions and Trends*. Lincoln, New Zealand: Manaaki Whenua Press, pp. 274–286.
- Hauraki Gulf Forum. 2008. Tikapa moana – Hauraki Gulf: State of the environment report. [online] June 2008. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220208023548/https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/1511/state-of-our-gulf-2008.pdf> [Accessed September 23, 2021].
- Hauraki Gulf Forum. 2010. Co-operation, capacity, charisma: Enhancing the Hauraki Gulf environment through non-regulatory approaches. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220228121413/https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/harbour-forums/docshaurakigulfguidanceseries/cooperation-capacity-charisma-enhancing.pdf> [Accessed March 2, 2022].



- Hauraki Gulf Forum. 2011a. Spatial planning for the gulf: An international review of marine spatial planning initiatives and application to the Hauraki Gulf. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210304200020/https://ref.coastalrestorationtrust.org.nz/site/assets/files/8540/spatial-planning-gulf.pdf> [Accessed March 2, 2022].
- Hauraki Gulf Forum. 2011b. State of our gulf: Tikapa moana – Hauraki Gulf: State of the environment report 2011. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220128093130/https://gulffjournal.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/state-of-our-gulf-2011.pdf> [Accessed March 2, 2022].
- Hauraki Gulf Forum, Ministry for Primary Industries, Department of Conservation, Waikato Regional Council, Auckland Council and Mana Whenua. 2016. Launch copy: Tai timu tai pari sea change – Hauraki Gulf marine spatial plan. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210429095203/http://www.seachange.org.nz/> [Accessed May 27, 2019].
- Hoskins, Te Kawehau, and Alison Jones. 2017. Non-human others and *kaupapa māori* research. In: Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones, eds. *Critical Conversations in Kaupapa Māori*. Wellington: Huia Publishers, pp. 56–71.
- Kawharu, Merata. 2010. Environment as a *marae* locale. In: Rachel Selby, Pataka J. G. Moore and Malcolm Mulholland, eds. *Maori and the Environment: Kaitiaki*. Wellington: Huia Publishers, pp. 221–237.
- Keep NZ Beautiful. 2019. About us. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220128083823/https://www.knzb.org.nz/about-us/> [Accessed July 3, 2019].
- Le Heron, Richard, Paula Blackett, June Logie, Dan Hikuroa, Erena Le Heron, Alison Greenaway, Bruce Glavovic, Kate Davies, Kate Allen, and Carolyn Lundquist. 2018. Participatory processes for implementation in Aotearoa New Zealand’s multi-user/user marine spaces? In: C. Patrick Heidkamp and John Morrissey, eds. *Towards Coastal Resilience and Sustainability*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 20.
- Lewis, Nicolas. 2019. Cultivating diverse values by rethinking blue economy in New Zealand. In: C. Patrick Heidkamp and John Morrissey, eds. *Towards Coastal Resilience and Sustainability*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 94–108.
- Local Councils NZ. 2020. Councils’ roles and functions. Te Tari Taiwhenua, Internal Affairs, [online]. [https://web.archive.org/web/20220222205939/https://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lqip.nsf/wpg\\_url/About-Local-Government-Local-Government-In-New-Zealand-Councils-roles-and-functions](https://web.archive.org/web/20220222205939/https://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lqip.nsf/wpg_url/About-Local-Government-Local-Government-In-New-Zealand-Councils-roles-and-functions) [Accessed March 2, 2022].
- Makey, Leane. 2021. ‘Thinking with *kaipara*’: A decolonising methodological strategy to illuminate social heterogeneous nature–culture relations in place. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 5(3), 1466–1494.
- Mattisek, Annika, and Thilo Wiertz. 2014. Materialität und Macht im Spiegel der Assemblage-theorie: Erkundungen am Beispiel der Waldpolitik in Thailand. *Geographica Helvetica*, 69, 157–169.
- McGranahan, Gordon, Deborah Balk, and Bridget Anderson. 2007. The rising tide: Assessing the risks of climate change and human settlements in low elevation coastal zones. *Environment and Urbanization*, 19(1), 17–37.
- Ministry for Primary Industries. 2019. Fish quota management system. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220119152401/https://www.mpi.govt.nz/legal/legislation-standards-and-reviews/fisheries-legislation/quota-management-system/> [Accessed July 3, 2019].
- Mouffe, Chantal. 2005. *On the Political*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Muehlebach, Andrea. 2012. *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Müller, Martin. 2015. Assemblages and actor-networks: Rethinking socio-material power, politics and space. *Geography Compass*, 9(1), 27–41.

- Munro, Steven. 2021. Sea cleaners: We remove rubbish from the sea, harbours and oceans. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220217154958/https://seacleaners.com/> [Accessed October 9, 2021].
- O'Sullivan, Dominic. 2018. Māori, the state and self-determination in the neoliberal age. In: Deirdre Howard-Wagner, Maria Bargh and Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez, eds. *The Neoliberal State, Recognition and Indigenous Rights: New Paternalism to New Imaginings*. Canberra: ANU Press, pp. 241–256.
- Office of the Auditor General. 2017. *Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari: Creating a Marine Spatial Plan for the Hauraki Gulf*. Wellington: Controller and Auditor-General.
- Olson, Elizabeth. 2018. Geography and ethics iii: Whither the next moral turn? *Progress in Human Geography*, 42(6), 937–948.
- Peart, Raewyn. 2017. A 'sea change' in marine planning: The development of New Zealand's first marine spatial plan. *Policy Quarterly*, 13(2), 3–9.
- Peart, Raewyn. 2018. *Turning the Tide: Integrated Marine Planning in New Zealand*. Auckland: Environmental Defence Society.
- Peart, Raewyn. 2019. Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari: Addressing catchment and marine issues in an integrated marine spatial planning process. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*, 29(9), 1561–1573.
- POAL: Ports of Auckland. 2010. Annual review of the Ports of Auckland. City / Port. Moving forward together. POAL, [online]. [https://web.archive.org/web/20200209032129/http://www.poal.co.nz/media-publications/resultsandreviews/2011\\_Annual%20Review.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20200209032129/http://www.poal.co.nz/media-publications/resultsandreviews/2011_Annual%20Review.pdf) [Accessed March 2, 2022].
- Puig de la Bellacasa, Maria. 2017. *Matters of Care*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rose, Deborah Bird. 2000a. Indigenous ecologies and an ethic of connection. In: Nicolas Low, ed. *Global Ethics and Environment*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 175–187.
- Rose, Nikolas. 2000b. Community, citizenship, and the third way. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43(9), 1395–1411.
- Rose, Nikolas. 2006. *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-first Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Scott, Rodney, and Eleanor Morton. 2021. Stewardship streams in New Zealand public administration. *2021 International Public Policy Conference*, July 5–9, Barcelona.
- Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari. 2015. Sea change – Tai Timu Tai Pari Project: Mana Whenua Survey. [online]. [https://web.archive.org/web/20210207144831/http://www.ngaatiwhanaunga.maori.nz/wp-content/uploads/Tai-Timu-Tai-Pari\\_Survey-.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20210207144831/http://www.ngaatiwhanaunga.maori.nz/wp-content/uploads/Tai-Timu-Tai-Pari_Survey-.pdf) [Accessed October 10, 2021].
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies*. London: Zed Books.
- Stats NZ. 2019. Auckland economy hits \$100 billion. [online] March 20. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210723074401/https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/auckland-economy-hits-100-billion> [Accessed July 3, 2019].
- Steinberg, Philip E. 1999. Lines of division, lines of connection: Stewardship in the world ocean. *Geographical Review*, 89(2), 254–264.
- Swyngedouw, Erik. 2009. The antinomies of the postpolitical city: In search of a democratic politics of environmental production. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(3), 601–620.
- Tafon, Ralph Voma. 2018. Taking power to sea: Towards a post-structuralist discourse theoretical critique of marine spatial planning. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 36(2), 258–273.
- Todd, Zoe. 2016. An indigenous feminist's take on the ontological turn: 'Ontology' is just another word for colonialism. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 29(1), 4–22.

- UN Atlas of the Oceans. 2016. Human settlements on the coast. [online]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220303134201/http://www.oceansatlas.org/subtopic/en/c/311/> [Accessed September 15, 2021].
- Walker, Erana T., Priscilla M. Wehi, Nicola J. Nelson, Jacqueline R. Beggs, and Hēmi Whaanga. 2019. Kaitiakitanga, place and the urban restoration agenda. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology*, 43(3), 1–8.
- Wheaton, Belinda, Jordan Te Aramoana Waiti, Rebecca Olive, and Robin Kearns. 2021. Coastal communities, leisure and wellbeing: Advancing a trans-disciplinary agenda for understanding ocean-human relationships in Aotearoa New Zealand. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(2), 450.
- Whyte, Kyle Powys, and Chris Cuomo. 2017. Ethics of caring in environmental ethics: Indigenous and feminist philosophies. In: Stephen M. Gardiner and Allen Thompson, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 234–247.
- Wilson, Japhy, and Erik Swyngedouw. 2014. *The Post-political and Its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Winder, Gordon M. 2018. Introduction: Fisheries, quota management, quota transfer and bio-economic rationalization. In: Gordon M. Winder, ed. *Fisheries, Quota Management and Quota Transfer: Rationalization through Bio-economics*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 3–30.
- Wong, P. P., I. J. Losada, J.-P. Gattuso, J. Hinkel, A. Khattabi, K. L. McInnes, Y. Saito, and A. Sallenger. 2014. Coastal systems and low-lying areas. In: C. B. Field, V. R. Barros, D. J. Dokken, K. J. Mach, M. D. Mastrandrea, T. E. Bilir, M. Chatterjee, K. L. Ebi, Y. O. Estrada, R. C. Genova, B. Girma, E. S. Kissel, A. N. Levy, S. MacCracken, P. R. Mastrandrea and L. L. White, eds. *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge, UK and New York, NJ: Cambridge University Press, pp. 361–409.
- WWF New Zealand. 2019. Missions and goals. World Wildlife Fund New Zealand, [online]. [https://web.archive.org/web/20220220120513/https://www.wwf.org.nz/about\\_us/missions\\_and\\_goals/](https://web.archive.org/web/20220220120513/https://www.wwf.org.nz/about_us/missions_and_goals/) [Accessed July 3, 2019].
- Wyles, Kayleigh J., Sabine Pahl, Matthew Holland, and Richard C. Thompson. 2017. Can beach cleans do more than clean-up litter? Comparing beach cleans to other coastal activities. *Environment and Behavior*, 49(5), 509–535.
- Yates, Amanda Monehu. 2021. Transforming geographies: Performing Indigenous-Māori ontologies and ethics of more-than-human care in an era of ecological emergency. *New Zealand Geographer*, 77(2), 101–113.
- Zigon, Jarrett. 2008. *Morality: An Anthropological Perspective*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Zigon, Jarrett. 2010. Moral and ethical assemblages. *Anthropological Theory*, 10(1–2), 3–15.

## 4 Conflictual planning in the Olympic City

Vila Autódromo's experience,  
Rio de Janeiro

*Fernanda Sánchez, Fabrício Leal de Oliveira and  
Carlos Vainer*

### Introductory notes

Nous pourrions [...] nomer 'utopie expérimentale' l'exploration du possible humain, avec l'aide de l'image et de l'imaginaire, accompagnée d'une incessante critique et d'une incessante référence à la problématique donnée dans le 'réel'.

(Lefebvre 1961)

Car ce droit à la ville signifie bien sûr également une participation effective – conquise et non octroyée – des habitants et citoyens aux décisions et aux projets d'urbanisme. L'autogestion urbaine, concept novateur à l'époque, qu'il [Henri Lefebvre] est l'un des premiers à formuler et à défendre, et qui sera repris comme mot d'ordre dans les luttes urbaines des années 1970, constitue la base de ce droit à la ville, censé réaliser la 'société urbaine' en devenir.

(Busquet 2012)<sup>1</sup>

This chapter seeks to present and discuss a concept referred to as 'conflictual planning,' based on a reflection on the elaboration process of the Vila Autódromo People's Plan, a low-income neighborhood and its contribution to the battle against the removal of residents threatened by the construction of the Olympic Park in Rio de Janeiro, the main concentration of sports teams for the 2016 Olympics. The analysis that this chapter proposes about the planning experience conducted by the Vila Autódromo Fishermen and Residents Association is the search to understand how the planner and the autonomous, counter-hegemonic agents were constituted.

The issue is social conflict and its place and role in the dynamics of social life. More specifically, the focus is on urban conflict and its role and place in urban life, and on the possibilities and limits of planning practices in the context of conflict. We will see how certain initiatives in popular neighborhoods, in times of mega-events, went beyond resistance to destruction. They planned the space and designed alternative futures, based on the 'experimental utopia' (Lefebvre 1961), the 'ideal of justice' (Miraftab 2009) and the exercise of the right to the city. The Vila Autódromo experience is emblematic in this sense.

The text is structured in the following sections: “Conflictual planning in the Olympic City,” the first section, discusses Rio’s recent urban history and presents brief notes that relate to the large urban projects and social upheavals associated with the so-called mega-events context. The second section, “Conflict and conflictual planning,” discusses the role of conflict in social theory and the clash between two perspectives: one that emphasizes the place of conflict prevention and mediation practices as a new social technology and, the other, the critical interpretations that present conflict as something virtuous and potentially the builder of new collective agents, social forces and historical possibilities. In the third section, the “Vila Autódromo, the Plan and the conflict” are examined regarding the specific process and content of the Vila Autódromo People’s Plan, such as its role in the strategies of confrontation, by those residents who were threatened with removal and their challenges. Finally, the concept of conflictual planning is built from this discussion and aims to contribute to the analysis of certain planning practices experienced outside the state. We particularly consider the specificity of a process where the context and nature of the conflict and “the emergency of the situation conditions the method, the elaboration time and other aspects of the planning process” (Vainer et al. 2013, 60).

### **Conflictual planning in the Olympic City: Vila Autódromo’s experience, Rio de Janeiro**

Between August 2002, when the municipality of Rio de Janeiro was formally chosen to host the 2007 Pan American Games (Pan 2007), and August 2016, when the 2016 Summer Olympic Games came to an end in a ceremony at the Maracanã Stadium, the city experienced what has been commonly called “the era of mega-events.” Between 2002 and 2016, in addition to the events mentioned already, Rio hosted the 5th World Urban Forum of 2010, organized by UN-HABITAT, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20), the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup, the XXVIII World Youth Day 2013, in the presence of Pope Francis, and seven games of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, including the final match.

Political articulations, institutional changes and, especially, investments in infrastructure and other urban projects, usually involving some big events and, not uncommonly, large real estate projects, popped up all over the city, generating important social conflicts.

The strategy of promoting the city through the organization of major sporting events was certainly not exactly new. Since 1995, with the approval of the city’s first Strategic Plan, with consultancy from the Catalan company Technologies Urbanes S.A., a political articulation involving the Rio de Janeiro City Hall and entrepreneurs from Rio de Janeiro (Vainer 2000b, 106) that Vainer would later call “direct democracy of the bourgeoisie” (Vainer 2016, 281) had the realization of the 2004 Olympics in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro as a fundamental strategy. Thus, the Catalan strategy that culminated in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona and a set of major infrastructure works that sought to affirm the city in the European scenario was copied, supported by aggressive urban marketing, of which some

of its promoters, such as Manuel de Fom and Jordi Borja, the main names of the consultancy for the City Hall of Rio de Janeiro were immensely proud.

The attempt of the 1990s failed (Athens was the city chosen to host the 2004 Olympics), therefore, the City Hall dedicated itself to preparing its candidacy for the 2007 Pan American Games and the 2012 Olympics, the latter eliminated by the International Olympic Committee in 2004. In 2007, with the officialization of Brazil as the host country for the 2014 FIFA World Cup, and, in 2009, with the indication of Rio de Janeiro as the host of the Olympics, the dream cherished in the 1990s finally came true.<sup>2</sup>

The realization of these events implied the concentration of federal and state public investments in Rio de Janeiro and a series of municipal public investments directly or indirectly linked to the events, especially when justified as fundamental for the city's promotion in a period of so much international exposure. This is the case, for example, regarding the Porto Maravilha Project, a real estate development conducted through a public-private partnership, involving the urban renewal of the city's old port area and a small part of the city center.

Today, the financial and socio-environmental impacts of the World Cup in Brazil and the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro are known better. The implementation of major urban projects included in the candidacy packages for sporting and city promotion events – such as stadium construction works, the implementation of major road corridors and new transportation systems and extensive real estate developments that are linked to these initiatives – implied debts still unpaid today, the removal of tens of thousands of people and, according to numerous authors, the increase in social inequalities (Sánchez et al. 2016; Sánchez, Oliveira and Bienenstein 2016; Oliveira et al. 2019b). Social conflicts multiplied, opposing associations of affected residents, social articulations, movements fighting for housing, academic groups, nongovernmental human rights organizations, the Public Defender's Office of the State of Rio de Janeiro, some unions and other multiple actors critical to the promoters of the mega-events: the Government (especially the City Hall) and its private partners – large public contractors, real estate developers and large land-owners, important corporate media – fueled by the international business interests that constitute what could be called the global mega-event industry.<sup>3</sup>

Although, in the vast majority of cases, the results of these clashes have been unfavorable to the low-income residents affected, a lot of conflicts have triggered new dynamics, led to the emergence of new collective individuals and alliances, and, occasionally, new strategies for fighting in a troubled national political and economic context. After the reelection of Dilma Rousseff of the Workers' Party for a second mandate, a period of intense offensive by the most conservative forces began, which took advantage of the serious economic crisis and the weakness of the governmental alliance to carry out the process that would lead, in 2016, to the parliamentary coup that ousted the elected president.

As recent research shows (Sánchez et al. 2014; Sánchez, Oliveira and Bienenstein 2016; Sánchez, Oliveira and Monteiro 2016; Tanaka 2017; Vainer et al. 2016; Tanaka et al. 2018; Oliveira et al. 2017; 2019a), some popular settlements threatened with removal (either by mega-events or by other government enterprises

and initiatives in cooperation with private companies) developed strategies that involved not only resistance but also actions and initiatives that projected future alternatives to the programmed destruction, almost always presented and accepted as inevitable. Rather than limiting resistance to the necessary claim for mitigation or fair compensation actions, movements fighting for housing, social articulations, associations of residents and researchers produced dossiers with the collection and systematization of information, technical reports that confronted studies by city halls, parties and other community events aimed at expanding the recognition of values shared by threatened residents (especially in relation to the enhancement of the place of residence and common living) and also planning actions: urban plans and projects that challenged government projects and its partners.

The processes that involved the elaboration of the Urban Plan of Dandara (2008–2014), the Alternative People’s Plan of the Favela da Paz (2012–2013), the Horto’s land and urban regularization project (2006–2011), the Vila Autódromo People’s Plan (2011–2016) and the Vargens People’s Plan (2016–2018), the last three, in Rio de Janeiro, were among recent examples in Brazil (Oliveira et al. 2016b; Tanaka et al. 2019).<sup>4</sup>

These initiatives certainly have a history quite different from the one that culminated in the production of community plans in the USA and the resistance to Robert Moses’ authoritarian urbanism in New York, ubiquitous in the critical literature on radical and insurgent planning (Jacobs 1961; Davidoff 1965; Angotti 2007). Nor can they be interpreted only through the lens of the international criticism that has focused on the insurgency of residents in the so-called Global South, since James Holston (1998), with his observations on a possible ‘insurgent urbanism’ in Brazilian favelas,<sup>5</sup> and Faranak Miraftab (2009, 2016), with her research in South Africa and Indonesia. The diverse roots of Brazilian community/insurgent planning can be seen especially in favelas’ urbanization projects and collective self-construction of low-income housing in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the 1960s and 1980s (Bonduki 2013; Tanaka 2017) or in the settlement planning of the Landless Workers’ Movement, especially from the 1990s (Faria and Pontes 2016) and of the Movement of People Affected by Dams in the early 2000s (Vainer 2003), among other initiatives.

Based on research conducted between 2011 and 2019, Giselle Tanaka et al. (2019) identified a series of social conflicts in Rio de Janeiro in this period. Referenced on the Rio de Janeiro Observatory of Urban Conflict,<sup>6</sup> it was possible to survey and monitor events organized by social movements fighting for housing in Rio de Janeiro and particularly experiences of direct involvement of researchers and volunteer professionals in assisting residents threatened with removal for the implementation of projects directly or indirectly linked to the Olympics.

### **Conflict and conflictual planning**

Concepts, models and technologies that affirm and seek to implement practices to promote what is called “conflict prevention and mediation” have spread in Latin America in recent years. Training courses for conflict mediators, often called

'facilitators,' began to appear, with repeated reference to the work by Fischer and Ury (1981), from Harvard University.<sup>7</sup> Important segments in the area of urban law are in favor of mechanisms for the prevention, mediation and arbitration of conflict outside the institutional-state judicial system. Mediation, negotiation and arbitration appear as the alternative to the proceedings of a state judicial system accused of being slow, inefficient and costly, in analogy to the accusations made against public state companies as a pretext for the privatization processes that have been written down in the booklets of the World Bank and IMF since the 1980s.<sup>8</sup>

Prevent means "to act in anticipation of (an event or a fixed time); to anticipate (a need, objection, etc.); to precede; to stop or keep (from doing something); to keep from happening; make impossible by prior action; hinder – *vi.* to interpose an obstacle" (Webster's Dictionary, 1988). Preventing conflicts implies, therefore, the assumption that they are the bearers of damages or losses, hindrances and inconveniences that must be foresighted and avoided. Why should conflicts be the cause of harm and, for this reason, be avoided? If we transcend the judicial disputes sphere and think about the conflict in the sphere of social life and social relationships, without intending an exhaustive review of the rich existing literature, it would be possible to find at least two major currents about the place and the role of conflict in social life in the tradition of sociological thinking.

On the one hand, there is a perspective that could be called normative, which understands conflict as a manifestation of social dysfunction. In a nutshell, this concept is based on the assumption that 'conflict' means a dysfunctional system or a systemic imbalance. A balanced, functional and properly regulated social system would be one in which conflicts do not appear, or, at least, in which conflicts are few in number and trigger arenas and objects that do not concern the very foundations of social organization, or, if preferred, focus on dynamics or segments, aspects or secondary dimensions, which are not very significant in the structuring and reproduction of the system. The Parsonian functionalist school that ruled the Anglo-Saxon academy in the second half of the last century, and still exerts great influence, sees the conflict as a symptom of a systemic dysfunction and, therefore, something problematic and, potentially, threatening (cf., e.g., Parsons 1949).

Another, antipode, perspective would say that a system is more powerful and dynamic when it is capable of generating conflicts. Instead of signaling dysfunctions and imbalances, conflicts would constitute dynamics, processes and social subjects that enable and operate the permanent improvement of the system or, in some perspectives, its overcoming – through reforms or revolutions. The famous passage with which Marx and Engels, in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, claim that "the history of all hitherto existing Society is the history of class struggles" continues:

Oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

(Marx and Engels 1848)



Here, conflict, understood as class struggle, latent or not, is not only constitutive of social life but also seen as positive, as it bears the possibility of radical transformations (also see Misse 1981).

As in almost all polarities, there are intermediate positions. Thus, for example, Georg Simmel (1904) saw conflict as an essential element of socialization. Seymour Martin Lipset (1985), an important American liberal thinker, claims that there is no radical opposition between Marx and Parsons. But both Simmel and Lipset consider that conflict is virtuous and dynamic, whenever and as long as it takes place within certain limits.

Concepts that the city in the globalized world is the mirror image of capitalist companies in competition in a – world, continental, national or regional, as the case may be – market of cities have been progressively spread and imposed since the 1990s (Vainer 2000a, 2000b). Faced with the globalization process and what was seen as an inexorable (for some, desirable) weakening of national states, cities would be condemned to a dispute to conquer a space of competitive global insertion. In this ideological context, strategic planning, as a model and planning method, presents itself as an alternative precisely because it has been created and tested in the corporate world, in private companies. Conceived at Harvard Business School, it was transposed to the public sector and to cities.<sup>9</sup>

The competitive city must necessarily be able to be cohesive, in other words, it must be able to contain its conflict by generating a consensus of the entire population. Consensus is essential for the city to be united for any dispute with other cities, so that it can attract capital and tourists. Thus, one of the conditions for success is “the joint will and the public consensus for the city to take a leap forward [...]” (Castells and Borja 1996, 156). It would therefore be necessary to “overcome the confrontations between actors related to day-to-day conflicts” (Castells and Borja 1996, 166) and build and “find an operative public-private consensus” (Forn 1993).

The banning of politics and conflict is, therefore, an element of urban strategic planning, conceived as “a consensual project that slightly transcends the field of political party affiliations and that can guarantee investors the permanence of certain choices” (Ascher 1994, 91).

It is not difficult to understand how friendly and convergent the proposals, models, rhetoric and technologies of “conflict prevention and mediation” met with the new city models, rhetoric and technologies of urban strategic planning. In the case of Brazil, under the coalition government led by the Workers’ Party, a Group for the Prevention and Negotiation of Land Conflicts was created within the scope of the National Council of Cities and, in several cities, especially in the low-income neighborhoods and *favelas*, quasi-judicial bodies, police organizations and non-governmental organizations began to promote processes of “negotiated conflict resolution,” which could have domestic fights and disputes between neighbors to processes of removal of residents in areas of interest to real estate or targets of large projects as their purpose.

But despite all efforts, conflicts have not disappeared from this negotiating city, that is, simultaneously at the service of businesses and aimed at eliminating conflict through negotiated conflict resolution. In Rio de Janeiro, the first Latin American

city to proudly display its Strategic Plan, prepared with the consultancy of those who brought the ‘victorious’ experience of Barcelona to the tropics, conflicts tended to multiply and intensify in the face of urban projects that should prepare the city to host major events: the Pan American Games (2007), Military World Games (2011), Soccer World Cup (2014) and Olympic and Paralympic Games (2016).<sup>10</sup>

In this context of accelerated subordination of the city to major projects, to the transnational mega-event industry and to large landowners and large contractors, an original experience of autonomous planning emerged, along the lines of what some authors have been calling ‘radical’ or ‘insurgent’ planning (Holston 1998; Sandercock 1998, 1999; Angotti 2008; Miraftab 2009; Yiftachel 2012; Yiftachel et al. 2013; Meir 2015), and which here we prefer to call ‘conflictual planning.’ These are processes, methodologies and practices that associate and subordinate the rhythms and ways of planning urban spaces to the process of struggles (Vainer et al., 2013; Tanaka, 2017).

As a theory and perspective, as an innovative concept, methodology and practice of urban planning, conflictual planning conceives and triggers urban conflict as a foundation, information and dynamics on which, and from which, policies, plans and projects are built. And, perhaps above all, on which and from which, a new planning subject is constructed – a social collective, capable of a political agency in the city. The negotiating proposals assume that the actors of the game are on the field and that they are equipotent; the conflictual planning supposes and proposes that subordinate, counter-hegemonic subjects are only built in the very process of conflict, of struggle. In the sense that Edward Palmer Thompson gave his monumental work *The Making of English Working Class* (1991), the conflictual planning states that in the social conflict, and only in it, it is possible to unfold the ‘making’ process of collective actors capable and able to promote a right to the city that is much more than the right to integrate and enjoy the benefits of the city that is there, a right to the city that is configured as self-management and that prefigures urban society in its future.

In this perspective, the analysis that this chapter proposes about the conflictual planning experience conducted by the Vila Autódromo Fishermen and Residents Association in Rio de Janeiro is also, and perhaps above all, the search to understand how the planner, and the autonomous, counter-hegemonic collective subject was constituted, who dared to challenge and contest apparently indisputable forces, and who made the Vila Autódromo People’s Plan such a striking example of the richness and potentialities of conflictual processes in the construction of a new city and a new way of planning.

### **Vila Autódromo, the plan and the conflict: emergence and affirmation of new collective agents**

The present section is driven by a thesis: Vila Autódromo, a low-income neighborhood in the city of Rio de Janeiro, a contiguous and preexisting place close to the Olympic Park of the Rio 2016 Games, a territory targeted by the great interests that moved and still move the current restructuring of the space, can be taken

as a reference of conflictual space. Its residents, as subjects of the production of space, used several instruments, resources and strategies to resist the city project of the so-called ‘Olympic urbanism’ to reinvent the space and reinsert it in the public sphere at the local, metropolitan, regional, national and, in a sense, international level.

It is estimated that a large part of the political strength of this experience, made an emblem of the popular resistance to the 2016 Games, is positioned in the imaginative capacity to disfigure, in different dimensions, the codes of power and reconfigure the urban territory as a struggling land, built in the political process.

To develop the reflection, this section presents a brief characterization of Vila Autódromo as a disputed territory and shows the media as an active instrument in the production of space, the institutional violence in the territory as strategies of power, the choice of places and spaces for the communication of the resistance, as well as the ‘territorial insurgency grammars’ as messages in dispute.

We are not a threat to the environment, the landscape or the safety of anyone. We threaten only those who want to violate our constitutional right to housing. We are a threat only to those who want to speculate with urban land and to the politicians who serve their interests. They have their plan, which wants to wipe us off the map. We have our plan, which affirms our right to continue to exist. Our history of resistance now continues in our People’s Plan.

(Altair Guimarães, President of the Vila Autódromo Residents Association in the video testimony “Vila Autódromo: a neighborhood marked for living”)

Vila Autódromo is located in an area owned by the Government of the State of Rio de Janeiro on the banks of the Jacarepaguá Lagoon, in Barra da Tijuca, the main area of real estate production expansion for medium and high income in Rio de Janeiro. The Olympic Park, the area for the main cluster of sports teams for the 2016 Olympics, was also built on the public land next to the settlement.

Vila Autódromo was a small low-income settlement with about 1,300 residents in 2009 when Rio de Janeiro was announced as the host of the 2016 Olympic Games. Since 1993, the population had resisted the initiatives of the City Hall, which, with very varied justifications,<sup>11</sup> intended to remove the settlement completely. As of 2009, the threats became progressively more intense.

The consortium that won the bid for the Olympic Park real estate project was formed by two of the largest public construction works contractors in Brazil – Odebrecht and Andrade Gutierrez – and by the company Carvalho Hosken S.A., a large landowner in Barra da Tijuca, especially in the neighborhoods of the Olympic Park. It is on the land of Carvalho Hosken S.A. that, in May 2016, the construction of Vila dos Atletas (Athletes’ Village) was being completed, a residential development launched with the suggestive name of ‘Pure Island.’ How can the City Hall deny such powerful partners? And, for their part, what did the residents of Vila Autódromo try to deny when the removal tractors became increasingly threatening every day? And how was that experience lived?

In fact, Vila Autódromo's resistance strategies triggered various resources that aggregated from internal mobilization to the cooperation of allies and supporters that covered social movements and articulations,<sup>12</sup> alternative media, representatives of municipal legislative mandates, technical advisors, individual activists and public institutions, such as the Public Defender's Office of the State, which has been legally defending the community since the 1990s (Vainer et al. 2013; Oliveira, Bienenstein and Tanaka 2016a).

Among the strategies developed by the residents, the development of the Vila Autódromo People's Plan stands out. The plan was prepared with the assistance of two federal universities and sought to demonstrate the compatibility between the permanence of the community and the implantation of venues for the Olympic Games. As the official justifications were based on supposedly 'technical' arguments, especially those related to environmental protection or the impossibility of an urbanization project, the university – an authority with social recognition in the scientific and technical field – was seen by residents as a necessary support to certify the possibility and the viability of the conditions of permanence of the whole community.

The Vila Autódromo People's Plan rejected the involuntary removal of any resident and its elaboration involved conducting field research, applying questionnaires, analyzing documents, aerial photos and cartographic bases and a discussion process that culminated in the production of proposals in areas such as housing, sanitation, infrastructure, environment, public services and cultural and community development, as well as in the definition of people's organization and communication strategies (AMPVA 2012).

In the Vila Autódromo planning, it was the context and nature of the conflict that guided the planning process, the content of the proposals and even the design of the projects (Vainer et al. 2013). For this reason, it can be read as a 'conflictual planning' process, in contrast not only to the participatory planning processes produced in the 'invited' spaces of public agencies (Miraftab 2009), but also with certain autonomous developments, qualified as 'insurgent' or 'radical,' which rely on documents, strategies or specific guidelines that remain minimally changed throughout the process.

In Vila Autódromo's case, the dynamics of the conflict led insurgent subjects to define new political spaces in different places and on multiple and simultaneous scales. Public acts were held in highly visible urban spaces, such as the central area of the city of Rio de Janeiro. Religious celebrations and rituals of the neighborhood's social life began to be deliberately inscribed in new spaces, such as that of the iconic Copacabana Beach, more than 30 km away, crossing scales in search of recognition of the struggle of the low-income neighborhood. In turn, local leaders sought, several times, spaces for enunciation and legitimation of their struggle and participated in national sessions, such as the Senate Human Rights Commission, in September 2015, and international sessions, such as the Assembly of the United Nations in Geneva in June 2016.

Successive meeting attempts, formalized in protocols at the municipal and state governments' departments, or meetings held at the City Hall and the Institute

of Land of Rio de Janeiro, reveal that there has been a permanent movement of the subjects of conflict over the years and on several scales among the ‘invented spaces’ of resistance, occupations and insurgencies and the ‘invited spaces’ of public institutions in which they sought to broaden the chances of negotiating the plan. In this process, the analytical pair of ‘invited spaces’ and ‘invented spaces,’ by Faranak Miraftab (2004), characterized this intense and necessary transit between the first – formal spaces of participation – and the second – those created and forged in the resistance. In this movement, the subjects of the conflict sought to redefine possibilities, activate instruments and occupy spaces in different situations of confrontation.

The first document with the main principles and proposals of the People’s Plan was concluded just two months after the beginning of the planning process and the permanent clash with the City Hall required adjustments to the uncertain temporality in the imprecise and unforeseen stages of the struggle and resistance process of the residents.

According to the dynamics of the conflict, the struggle emphasized the legal field – with the support of the Public Defender’s Office – or the promotion of political articulations with other movements affected by mega-events, or through broader social articulations as the realization of cultural events and parties, public demonstrations, among other actions.

It is highlighted in an analysis that began with the announcement of Rio de Janeiro’s successful candidacy for the Olympic Games in 2009 and ended in 2016 that the relative cohesion of the 20 families that resisted in Vila Autódromo until the end is an unprecedented fact in processes of the removal the low-income settlements in Rio de Janeiro. Albeit with varied, alternating and volatile internal divisions – this cohesion is emphasized in view of the dispersion of residents violently removed or indemnified with values close to or equal to those of the market.

Instead of the desolation of the almost total destruction of the community (only 20 houses remained in May 2016), it was preferred in this chapter to emphasize the possibilities of learning and emancipation that transformed all those who participated in the process – residents and supporters. The material achievement and symbolism of the victory of those 20 families are also noteworthy; their resistance led to the commitment signed in a contract by the City Hall with the Public Defender’s Office which guaranteed the realization of an urbanization and construction project in the Vila Autódromo’s territory, with new houses on individual lots for all resistant families, residences with dimensions and characteristics much more favorable than those offered in the housing complex constructed by the City Hall in another area.

The apparatus of symbolic production triggered, driven by the coalition of forces that commanded this city project – businesspeople, politicians from different spheres of government, the International Olympic Committee and the business media – and promoted the transformation of the city into a theme park, with images of spaces that would be consumed on a global scale, a kind of ‘urbanalization’ (Muñoz 2008) of ‘Marvelous’ and, since then, ‘Olympic’ city of Rio de Janeiro. ‘Pacified’ scenarios, diluted differences, erased inequalities and homogenized values have long-term consequences, as pointed out by Sánchez and Broudehoux

(2013) and Broudehoux (2014), from studies of the Beijing (2008) and Rio de Janeiro Olympics (2016). The spectacularization of the space and the branding of the place have their counterfaces, with effects on the appropriation of public spaces, the construction of citizenship and the conquests of urban rights was noticed the intense performance of the national hegemonic media groups, which sought to sell the renewed and pacified city, was noticed regarding the operation of this 'spectacle machine' (Oliveira 2015).

### **Final remarks**

The global, the local and the national are connected in Vila Autódromo's struggle strategies and reflect and represent the realities of the various places made invisible by power. The Vila Autódromo People's Plan, which has been transformed and updated overtime to illustrate the changes imposed by demolitions, was the first political action that showed the community as a place that exists, resists and has rights that were being systematically disrespected by the public authority. The residents of Vila Autódromo restructured their territory daily for more than seven years, based on visible and invisible actions that actively responded to the materiality of violence and coercion evidenced by the gradual and intentional degradation of social space.

It becomes useful here to resort to the category of 'territorial grammar' suggested by Guterman, Sánchez and Laiber (2015, 110), which seeks to motivate relational analyzes in space by mapping territorial actions of the subjects of the dominant coalition and the urban resistance field. Such a category is defined as a set of combined and recognizable actions in the territories, in their spatial inscriptions and displacements, the trans-scalar relationships that the subjects establish, their locational choices according to different conjunctures, the use of communicational instruments in public spaces, triggering counterpoints to the official images of places, the subversion of traditional meanings attributed to urban places and emblematic buildings, the search for centrality even under the spotlight of the main corporate media, for the careful territorial registration of conflicts. The inventive grammar of the residents of Vila Autódromo as a collective subject, through the plan and its related spatial actions, challenges the so-called 'power geometries' (Massey 2008), whether in corpographies<sup>13</sup> and micro-resistances or in large manifestations in public spaces. Thus, they interfere in the subjects' relational forms in the search for the widening of democracy in the space of the metropolis.

Six years after the Olympic Games, the residents who remained in the 20 houses built in the first phase continue to give new meaning to the space. Only in 2022 did they conquer the second phase of the urbanization work agreed with the City Hall based on the Popular Plan reference: the building to house the cultural center, the playground and the sports court. From a historical perspective, residents see their struggle as successful, however, unfinished. It continues to inspire urban activism in other popular communities in the metropolis and is not only considered in the collective memory as a struggle against the Olympic City. In Vila Autódromo's fight for housing and the right to the city, political action continues to be materialized, exposed and updated in the territory.

The Vila Autódromo People's Plan sought to disfigure the codes of power and reconfigure the territory in the resistance. If the space is built from the multiplicity of social relationships on all scales, from the global to those of the city, the neighborhoods and the house, the plan constituted the historic opportunity not only to rebuild the place – formerly scorched earth – but also to (re)inscribe it in a set of relationships and scales that place Vila Autódromo as a struggle known and debated throughout Brazil, but also in Latin America and other peripheral countries, in addition to being raised to an emblematic case in certain international spheres, in the defense of human rights and the right to housing.<sup>14</sup>

It is not intended that the conflictual planning – as carried on by the Vila Autódromo Fishermen and Residents Association, and also in some other locations in Rio de Janeiro – constitutes a new model, in addition to other models that have been proposed as an alternative to technocratic and authoritarian planning, because, after all, the authors are not looking for an alternative model but for alternatives to the models.

Miraftab (2009) upholds the 'ideal of justice' in insurgent planning. More than a model, a general principle. Planning can operate in certain conflict contexts as a process through which collective agents are built and experience the possibility and potential of an urban utopia: the self-managed city, the city that projects life, desires and collective resistance of those who do not submit. Experimental utopia, an oxymoron through which Lefebvre drew attention to the understanding that the urban revolution is, can be experienced and is not just a dream of the future.

## Notes

- 1 "We could [...] call 'experimental utopia' the exploration of the human possible, with the help of the image and the imagination, accompanied by an incessant criticism and an incessant reference to the given problematic in the 'real'" (Lefebvre 1961).

Because this right to the city, of course, also means an effective participation – conquered and not granted – of inhabitants and city dwellers in decisions and urban planning projects. Urban self-management, an innovative concept at the time, which he [Henri Lefebvre] was one of the first to formulate and defend, and which would be taken up as a watchword in the urban struggles of the 1970s, constituted the basis of this right to the city, supposed to realize the 'urban society' in the making.

(Busquet 2012)

- 2 This epopee is apologetically narrated in the official documents of the federal and municipal governments on the legacies of Pan 2007 and the 2016 Olympics and, critically, by several authors, such as Eduardo Nobre, Gilmar Mascarenhas, Giselle Tanaka, Glauco Bienenstein and Nelma Gusmão de Oliveira.
- 3 The same company often presented itself as a contractor, developer and landowner in articulations involving some of the largest companies in the country, as is the case of the Odebrecht group.
- 4 Dandara was the name given to the planned occupation of an area of 31 hectares in the city of Belo Horizonte, conducted by an articulation of social movements; the elaboration of an alternative people's plan was one of the resistance strategies of the Favela Vila da Paz, threatened with removal by the construction works of a 2014 World Cup stadium in São Paulo (Oliveira et al. 2016b); the Horto Florestal Regularization Project was designed to support the permanence of a low-income locality threatened by

- real estate interests supported by environmental justifications; the Vargens People's Plan was prepared by a social articulation in opposition to the bill of the City of Rio de Janeiro that stimulates the real estate promotion in an area of great environmental fragility.
- 5 A criticism of the term's adoption with reference to the favelas of Rio de Janeiro can be found in Tanaka et al. (2018).
  - 6 According to the website (<http://www.observaconflitosrio.ippur.uftj.br/observa2019/fox/index.php>), the Observatory of Urban Conflicts in the City of Rio de Janeiro "registers and disseminates public collective demonstrations that have the city as a space and object of their claims."
  - 7 The role played by Harvard University as a true think tank in the formulation and dissemination of models that will be incorporated into the neoliberal *vade mecum* is noteworthy, from all points of view. As will be seen later, the formulation and dissemination of strategic planning methodologies by Harvard Business School at about the same time as Fischer and Ury's work (Novais Lima Junior 2010) is a prime example.
  - 8 Originating in the (private) resolution of commercial conflicts between large corporations (Dezalay and Garth 1996) and driven by the approval of the Ley Modelo of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (1985), there was a wave of adhesions to the Convention of New York on the execution of foreign arbitral awards (1958) and reforms for the adoption of negotiation and arbitration processes outside the formal state judicial systems from 1990 onward.
  - 9 The performance of the Catalan consultants and the company TUBSA – Tecnologias Urbanas Barcelona SA – was decisive, hired by a business consortium to prepare the Strategic Plan of Rio de Janeiro (Vainer 2000b).
  - 10 The first Strategic Plan, advised by TUBSA, reads: "The sporting tradition in Rio and its natural and human resources allow you to launch your candidacy to host the 2004 Olympic Games, with excellent possibilities. And, following the example of other cities, to enjoy the games for your transformation" (Prefeitura da Cidade 1996, 52). Rio de Janeiro submitted its candidacy to host the 2004 Olympic Games in 1996, also with consultancy from the Catalan company and with the participation of the same Jordi Borja and Manuel de Forn who had advised the Strategic Plan (Vainer 2016).
  - 11 About this point, see Vainer et al. (2013).
  - 12 It is worth mentioning the performance of the Rio de Janeiro's People's Committee on the World Cup and Olympics, which, since the beginning of the pressure for removal, has been following and supporting the resistance of the residents of Vila Autódromo. The Committee is formed by a group of "social movements, NGOs, academic institutions, communities' leaders and those affected by the arbitrary actions of the city" (CPCO-RJ 2014).
  - 13 Corpographia is a Brazilian term, understood as a processual concept of the urban body in the urban space. See Britto and Jacques (2014, 4).
  - 14 In December 2013, the Vila Autódromo People's Plan was the big winner of the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award, promoted by the British University London School of Economics and Social Sciences. Among the more than 160 plans and projects oriented to various poor areas of the metropolis, the Vila Autódromo People's Plan explained the collective agents that mobilized planning as an effective instrument of resistance.

## References

- AMPVA: Associação de Moradores e Pescadores da Vila Autódromo. 2012. *Plano Popular da Vila Autódromo* [People's Plan of Vila Autódromo]. Rio de Janeiro: AMPVA.
- Angotti, T. 2007. Advocacy and community planning: Past, present and future. *Planners Network*, [online] April. <http://www.plannersnetwork.org/2007/04/advocacy-and-community-planning-past-present-and-future/> [Accessed October 8, 2007].



- Angotti, T. 2008. *New York for Sale: Community Planning Confronts Global Real Estate*. 1st ed. Cambridge and London: MIT Press.
- Ascher, F. 1994. Projeto público e realizações privadas: o planejamento das cidades refloresce [Public project and private achievements: city planning flourishes]. *Cadernos IPPUR*, VIII(1), 83–96.
- Bonduki, N. 2013. *Entre a academia e a política: uma trajetória entrelaçada* [Between Academy and Politics: An Intertwined Trajectory]. Free Teaching Thesis, Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo.
- Britto F. D., and P. B. Jacques. 2014. Corpography: A processual concept of the urban body. In: G. Schiller and S. Rubidge, eds. *Coreographic Dwellings. New World Choreographies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385673\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385673_4).
- Broudehoux, A. M. 2014. A construção da imagem urbana orientada por grandes eventos: potemkinismo, a mídia e a periferia [The construction of urban image oriented by big events: Potemkinism, media and periphery]. In: F. Sánchez, G. Bienenstein, F. Oliveira and P. Novais, eds. *A Copa do Mundo e as Cidades* [The World Cup and the Cities]. Niterói: EDUFF, pp. 22–33.
- Busquet, G. 2012. L'espace politique chez Henri Lefebvre: l'idéologie et l'utopie [The political space at Henri Lefebvre: Ideology and utopia]. *Justice Spatiale/Spatial Justice*, 5. <https://www.jssj.org/article/lespace-politique-chez-henri-lefebvre-lideologie-et-lutopie/> [Accessed May 10, 2020].
- Castells, M., and J. Borja. 1996. As cidades como atores políticos [Cities as political actors]. *Novos Estudos CEBRAP*, 45, 152–166.
- CPCO-RJ: Comitê Popular da Copa e Olimpíadas do Rio de Janeiro. 2014. *Dossiê Megaeventos e Violações dos Direitos Humanos no Rio de Janeiro* [Dossier Mega Events and Human Rights Violations in Rio de Janeiro]. Rio de Janeiro: CPCO-RJ.
- Davidoff, P. 1965. Advocacy and pluralism in planning. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 31(4), 331–338.
- Dezalay, Y., and B. G. Garth. 1996. *Dealing in Virtue: International Commercial Arbitration and the Construction of a Transnational Legal Order*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Faria, J. R. V., and D. R. Pontes. 2016. Planejamento militante: trajetória e instantâneos da experiência da Ambiens Sociedade Cooperativa [Militant planning: Trajectory and snapshots of Ambiens Cooperative Society's experience]. In: F. L. Oliveira, F. Sánchez, G. Tanaka and P. Monteiro, eds. *Planejamento e conflitos urbanos: experiências de luta* [Planning and Urban Conflicts: Struggle Experiences]. Rio de Janeiro: Letra Capital, pp. 231–269.
- Fischer, R., and W. Ury. 1981. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving in*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Forn, M. 1993. *Barcelona: estrategias de transformación urbana y económica* [Barcelona: Urban and Economic Transformation Strategies]. Barcelona: Mimeo.
- Guterman, B., F. Sánchez, and P. Laiber. 2015. Rio Olímpico 2016: Ciudad Maravillosa es la que lucha [Olympic Rio 2016: Wonderful city is the one that fights]. In: G. Arico, J. A. Mansilla and M. L. Stanchieri, eds. *Mierda de ciudad. Una rearticulación crítica del urbanismo neoliberal desde las ciencias sociales* [Shit City. A Critical Rearticulation of Neoliberal Urbanism from the Social Sciences]. Barcelona: Pollen Edicions, pp. 109–121.
- Holston, J. 1998. Spaces of insurgent citizenship. In: L. Sandercock, ed. *Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 155–173.
- Jacobs, J. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House.

- Lefebvre, H. 1961. Utopie expérimentale: pour un Nouvel Urbanisme [Experimental utopia: For a new urbanism]. *Revue Française de Sociologie*, 2(2–3), 191–198.
- Lipset, S. M. 1985. *Conflict and Consensus: Essays in Political Sociology*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Marx, K., and F. Engels. 1848. *Manifesto del Partido Comunista* [Communist Party Manifesto]. <https://www.marxists.org/espanol/m-e/1840s/48-manif.htm> [Accessed May 10, 2020].
- Massey, D. 2008 [2005]. *Pelo espaço* [For Space]. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil.
- Meir, A. 2015. Bedouin, the Israeli state and insurgent planning: Globalization, localization or glocalization? *Cities*, 22(3), 201–215.
- Miraftab, F. 2004. Invited and invented spaces of participation: Neoliberal citizenship and feminists’ expanded notion of politics. *Wagadu*, 1, 1–7.
- Miraftab, F. 2009. Insurgent planning: Situating radical planning in the global South. *Planning Theory*, 8, 32–50.
- Miraftab, F. 2016. Insurgência, planejamento e a perspectiva de um urbanismo humano. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Urbanos e Regionais*, 18(3), 363. <http://rbeur.anpur.org.br/rbeur/article/view/5499> [Accessed February 2, 2017].
- Misse, M. 1981. Sobre o conceito de Conflito Social. In: F. A. Miranda Rosa, ed. *Direito e Conflito Social* [Law and Social Conflict]. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, pp. 34–60.
- Muñoz, F. 2008. *Urbanización. Paisajes comunes, lugares globales* [Urbanization. Common Landscapes, Global Places]. Barcelona: Gustavo Gilli.
- Novais Lima Junior, P. 2010. *Uma estratégia chamada “Planejamento Estratégico”*: *Deslocamentos espaciais e atribuições de sentido na teoria do planejamento urbano* [A Strategy Called “Strategic Planning”: Spatial Displacements and Meaning Attributions in Urban Planning Theory]. Rio de Janeiro: 7 Letras.
- Oliveira, N. G. 2015. *O poder dos jogos e os jogos do poder: interesses em campo na produção da cidade para o espetáculo esportivo* [The Power of Games and Power Games: Field Interests in the City’s Production for Sports Spectacle]. Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFRJ and ANPUR.
- Oliveira, F. L., R. Bienenstein, and G. Tanaka. 2016a. A batalha da Vila Autódromo: “negociação” e resistência à remoção [Battle of Vila Autódromo: “Negotiation” and resistance to removal]. In: C. Vainer, A. M. Broudehoux, F. Sánchez and F. Oliveira, eds. *Os megaeventos e a cidade: perspectivas críticas* [Mega Events and the City: Critical Perspectives]. Rio de Janeiro: Letra Capital, pp. 483–512.
- Oliveira, F. L., F. Sánchez, G. M. Tanaka, and P. Monteiro. 2016b. *Planejamento e conflitos urbanos: experiências de luta* [Planning and Urban Conflicts: Struggle Experiences]. Rio de Janeiro: Letra Capital.
- Oliveira, F. L., F. Sánchez, G. Bienenstein, and G. Tanaka. 2017. Rio de Janeiro: Social and urban impacts of the Maracanã stadium renovation. In: E. C. Nobre, ed. *Sports Mega-events and Urban Legacies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 117–136.
- Oliveira, F. L., C. Santana, F. S. Santos, G. M. Tanaka, M. Medeiros, P. Monteiro, P. C. Moreira, and R. Cosentino. 2019a. Planejando contra a corrente: o caso do Plano Popular das Vargens, Rio de Janeiro, RJ [Planning against the current: The case of Vargens People’s Plan, Rio de Janeiro, RJ]. In: *Annals of XVIII Encontro Nacional da Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa e Planejamento Urbano e Regional*. Natal, RN: ANPUR.
- Oliveira, F. L., C. B. Vainer, G. Mascarenhas, G. Bienenstein, and E. Braathen. 2019b. Mega-events, legacies and impacts: Notes on 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 1, 1–14.

- Parsons, T. 1949. Social classes and class conflicts in the light of recent sociological theory. *The American Economic Review*, 39(3, Papers and Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Meeting of American Economic Association), 16–26.
- Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro [Rio de Janeiro City Hall]. 1996. *Plano Estratégico da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro: Rio Sempre Rio* [Rio de Janeiro City Strategic Plan: Rio Always Rio]. Rio de Janeiro: CRJ/ACRJ/FIRJAN.
- Sánchez, F., G. Bienenstein, F. L. Oliveira, and P. Novais Lima Jr, eds. 2014. *A Copa do Mundo e as cidades: políticas, projetos e resistências* [The World Cup and the Cities: Policies, Projects and Resistance]. Niterói: EDUFF.
- Sánchez, F., and A. M. Broudeux. 2013. Mega-events and urban regeneration in Rio de Janeiro: Planning in a state of emergency. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 5(2), 132–153.
- Sánchez, F., F. L. Oliveira, and G. Bienenstein. 2016. Olimpíadas 2016: um balanço de véspera [2016 Olympics Eve: A balance]. *Advir (ASDUERJ)*, 35, 94–104.
- Sánchez, F., F. L. Oliveira, and P. G. Monteiro. 2016. Vila Autódromo in dispute: Subjects, instruments and strategies to reinvent the space. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Urbanos e Regionais (ANPUR)*, 18, 408–427.
- Sandercock, L. 1998. Framing insurgent historiographies for planning. In: L. Sandercock, ed. *Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1–33.
- Sandercock, L. 1999. Planning’s radical project. What’s the pedagogy? *Planners Network*, [online] 12 January. <https://www.plannersnetwork.org/1999/01/plannings-radical-project-whats-the-pedagogy/> [Accessed May 10, 2020].
- Simmel, G. 1904. The sociology of conflict. *American Journal of Sociology*, 9(4), 490–525. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/2762175?refreqid=excelsior%3A385fa9d73b26c18cee3399774f341b27&seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2762175?refreqid=excelsior%3A385fa9d73b26c18cee3399774f341b27&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents) [Accessed May 10, 2020].
- Tanaka, G. 2017. “Planejar para Lutar e Lutar para Planejar”: Possibilidades e limites dos planejamentos alternativos [“Plan to Fight and Fight to Plan”: Possibilities and Limits of Alternative Planning]. PhD dissertation, Instituto de Pesquisa e Planejamento Urbano e Regional, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro.
- Tanaka, G. M., F. L. Oliveira, F. Sánchez, R. Bienenstein, G. Bienenstein, C. Vainer, R. Cosentino, M. Medeiros, and P. Monteiro, eds. 2018. *Viva a Vila Autódromo. O Plano Popular e a luta contra a remoção*. Rio de Janeiro: Letra Capital.
- Tanaka, G. M., F. L. Oliveira, F. S. Santos, and L. R. C. Silva Junior. 2019. Da Vila Autódromo às Vargens: Planos Populares na luta contra hegemônica na cidade [From Vila Autódromo to Vargens: Popular plans in counter-hegemonic struggle in the city]. In: N. Rena, D. Freitas, A. I. Sá and M. Brandão, eds. *2º Seminário Internacional Urbanismo Biopolítico* [2nd International Biopolitical Urbanism Seminar]. Belo Horizonte: Associação Imagem Comunitária.
- Thompson, E. P. 1991. *The Making of the English Working Class*. Toronto: Penguin Books.
- Vainer, C. 2000a. Pátria, Empresa e Mercadoria: Notas sobre a Estratégica Discursiva do Planejamento Estratégico Urbano [Homeland, company and commodity: Notes on strategic discourse of urban strategic planning]. In: O. Arantes, C. Vainer and E. Maricato, eds. *A Cidade do Pensamento Único: Desmanchando Consensos* [City of Single Thought: Dismantling Consensus]. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, pp. 75–104.
- Vainer, C. 2000b. Os Liberais Também Fazem Planejamento Urbano? Glosas ao “Plano Estratégico do Rio de Janeiro” [Do liberals also do urban planning? Glossings to the “Rio de Janeiro Strategic Plan”]. In: O. Arantes, C. Vainer and E. Maricato, eds. *A Cidade do Pensamento Único: Desmanchando Consensos* [City of Single Thought: Dismantling Consensus]. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, pp. 105–120.

- Vainer, C. 2003. O Plano de Recuperação e Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social das Comunidades Atingidas pelas Barragens de Itá e Machadinho. Uma experiência inovadora de extensão universitária e de planejamento [Recovery and economic and social development plan for communities affected by Itá and Machadinho dams. An innovative university extension and planning experience]. *Cadernos IPPUR*, XVII(1), 135–154.
- Vainer, C. 2016. Rio de Janeiro's strategic plan: The Olympic construction of the corporate town. In: L. Albrechts, A. Balducci and J. Hillier, eds. *Situated Practices of Strategic Planning: An International Perspective*. 1st ed. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 275–290.
- Vainer, C., A. M. Broudehoux, F. Sánchez, and F. L. Oliveira. 2016. *Os megaeventos e a cidade: perspectivas críticas* [Mega Events and the City: Critical Perspectives]. Rio de Janeiro: Letra Capital.
- Vainer, C., G. Tanaka, F. L. Oliveira, C. Lobino, R. Bienenstein, G. Bienenstein, and F. Sánchez. 2013. O Plano Popular da Vila Autódromo: uma experiência de planejamento conflitual [Vila Autódromo People's Plan: A conflictual planning experience]. In: *Annals of XV Encontro Nacional da Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa e Planejamento Urbano e Regional*. Recife: ANPUR.
- Webster's New World College Dictionary. 1988. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan.
- Yiftachel, O. 2012. Critical theory and “gray space.” Mobilization of the colonized. In: N. Brenner, P. Marcuse and M. Mayer, eds. *Cities for People, Not for Profit. Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City*. Oxford, UK and New York: Routledge.
- Yiftachel, O., N. Baruch, S. A. Sammur, N. Sheer, and R. B. Arie. 2013. A Master Plan for the unrecognized Bedouin Villages in the Negev. Selected Parts 2013. Planners for Planning Rights BIMKOM, Beersheba, Israel, [online]. [https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4578955/mod\\_resource/content/1/COMP\\_YIFTACHELet%20a%20-%202013%20-%20A%20Master%20Plan%20for%20the%20Unrecognized%20Bedouin%20Villages%20in%20Negev](https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4578955/mod_resource/content/1/COMP_YIFTACHELet%20a%20-%202013%20-%20A%20Master%20Plan%20for%20the%20Unrecognized%20Bedouin%20Villages%20in%20Negev) [Accessed October 8, 2020].

# 5 The transformation of the 'Valongo Complex'

New perspectives on the historic port  
area of Rio de Janeiro

*Clemens van Loyen*

## Introduction

The 'Valongo Complex' (*Complexo do Valongo*) in the old port area of Rio de Janeiro is the "most impressive place of remembrance of the African diaspora outside the continent" (IPHAN 2016, 13). According to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, it will become one of the best-documented sites of the transatlantic slave trade in the history of slavery (IPHAN 2016, 13). Its importance had remained hidden in Rio's public memory over the last two hundred years because of attempts to 'beautify' the city through 'modernization' and 'civilization' along European lines (Meade 1997, 84).

In addition to the violent and repressive policies of the state of Rio and the private sector (Faulhaber and Azevedo 2015), the Afro-descendent population of the waterfront had long been ignored and become accustomed to social and cultural neglect by state and local authorities (Cardoso et al. 1987). Under the guise of neglect, however, numerous cultural and neighborhood initiatives were able to develop (Guimarães 2014). That is why the state's decades-long discourse about the emptiness, remoteness, abandonment and depravity of the waterfront has actually come to naught. When the current urban renewal project called *Porto Maravilha* (Wonder Port) began in 2009, it had little interest in honoring the archaeological and cultural heritage of Afro-Brazilians. This changed abruptly with the media's valorization of the Valongo Wharf excavation as a so-called 'rediscovery' in 2011 (Lima 2013, 184).

Slavery, sometimes romanticized as 'humane' in official Brazilian historiography (Nascimento 2019, 36), had taken a back seat to racial inequality in Brazil, although it was, of course, the main cause of the latter (Schwarcz 2019). The thesis of the supposedly 'softer' slavery originates from the travel impressions of European naturalists at the beginning of the 19th century, especially the French naturalist Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, who came to Brazil in 1816 and drew a highly distorted picture of slavery in his writings (Versiani 2007). The historical fact of slavery was often concealed even by its descendants because they still suffered from the pain it had caused them (Sheriff 2001, 65). Given recent findings on the logistics of slavery in Rio (Tavares, Rodrigues-Carvalho and Lessa 2020) and current debates on antiracism and empowerment related to the claim of

*amefricanidade* – an identity-building anti-colonial construct that emphasizes the importance of Africa in shaping the culture of the Americas (Gonzalez 1988, 71) – the material and symbolic transformation of the Valongo Complex needs to be examined both historically and socially.

This paper, as part of the interdisciplinary Urban Ethics Research Group (Ege and Moser 2020), examines the agents of this transformation and searches for the discourses and strategies used to create a narrative around the Valongo Complex as an approach to understanding Brazilian history, which has been marked by oppression and resistance over nearly three centuries. To this end, a concept of Brazilian cultural history was specifically developed and adapted to urban research. It is intended to show a way in which urban and social processes can be interpreted together and, thus, make a reading of Brazilian history possible that does not level out but is able to endure contrasts. Finally, the paper shows how the practices of heritage and memory construction are intertwined with various claims to recognition and visibility in Rio's waterfront.

The chapter is based on several months of field research in Rio de Janeiro from 2018 to 2020, during which open and participant observations were made, semi-structured interviews were conducted, official documents related to the *Porto Maravilha* project were analyzed and specialized literature was studied. The theoretical and methodological input comes from the fields of cultural studies, history, anthropology, literature and urban studies.

The paper is structured as follows: In addition to a general introduction to the topic in its temporal and spatial dimensions, the first part is concerned with approaching the transformation processes at the Valongo from the perspective of urban ethics. Furthermore, the concept of 'urbanophagy' is introduced as an analytical category under which these processes will be examined. In this way, the chapter aims to make a theoretical contribution to the understanding of urban transformation processes that, although often grounded in European-Western models, can find their explanation in cultural-historical approaches that have their origins in non-European thought and seek to invite a change of perspective. The second part is dedicated to the transformations in the historical course, unfolding the different facets of urbanophagy. It shows that urbanophagic processes in the reappraisal of slavery and its consequences become tangible in very different dimensions, especially materially, mentally, topographically and culturally. The concluding remarks summarize the analysis and its underlying theory, proving, once again, that the transformation at the Valongo Complex is far from complete and the attempts to reconcile Brazilian society with itself cannot be left behind ritually emptied practices of recognition.

### **Urban ethics and the concept of 'urbanophagy' as an analytical framework**

To begin, I will show why the Valongo must be studied from the perspective of urban ethics by attempting to connect the urban, concretely visible material of the Valongo Complex with the underlying question of the psychological, which

resonates above all in the word ‘complex.’ The complex, in its specific materiality, is associated with a particular space in the port area of Rio, which bears the name ‘Valongo,’ composed of the words ‘valley’ (*vale*) and ‘long’ (*longo*). According to historical documents and oral testimonies, the compound means ‘long valley’ and refers to the large extension of the space during the 18th and 19th centuries, which, apart from the Wharf built around 1811, was characterized mainly by slave sales houses, slave markets, hospitals and a slave cemetery (Honorato 2019, 38). The name ‘Valongo’ symbolizes the long path of suffering that the enslaved had to take on their way from Africa to the New World, a path which they often did not survive. To this day, many stories are entwined around the former places of slavery. The street where the Valongo Wharf is located is now called *Rua Camerino*, presumably in reference to the Spanish word *camerino*, which means dressing room and cynically alludes to the context in which Africans were forced to give up their names and biographical histories when they became enslaved. Other sources refer to an accountant named Francisco Camerino, who became a war hero in the Brazilian war against Paraguay (1864–1870). In summary, the topographical designation of the Valongo has often been the subject of historical controversy, as it has undergone new meanings and reinterpretations over time due to political and social circumstances (Gerson 2000, 157).

The Valongo Wharf relates in its material dimension to what is called the ‘ethics of the urban’ (Dürr et al. 2020, 3), in the sense that there were politically, aesthetically and morally guided reasons to silence and transform the historical narrative of slavery commonly associated with inhuman and unethical practices. In the analytically double-grounded case of the ‘Valongo Complex,’ this happened in terms of its material aspects and its spatial representation of social order of the time, primarily by simply building over the past, adding two different layers of history to the Wharf, each of which silenced the previous one. The space was reordered and regulated as the rulers of the time deemed appropriate to maintain public decency and, regarding the first remodeling of the Wharf beginning in the 1830s, to comply with the insistence of the English Crown, which wanted to prohibit the transatlantic slave trade less out of philanthropy than out of economic interest. The British woman Maria Graham may have been a philanthropic exception here. Among the many other travelers and explorers who visited Rio in the early 19th century, she stood out for her humanity and empathy, although she also had a Eurocentric and evolutionist perspective. Her travel diary, in which she reported on life at the royal court of Dom Pedro and Dona Leopoldina at that time, recorded her impressions of the Valongo Wharf. In it, she described the slaves as ‘poor creatures’ and points out the ‘evils’ of this form of human trafficking (Graham [1824] 2021). She possessed a keen sense of the social dislocations that would follow slavery. However, she was also intellectually a ‘child’ of her time and, moreover, powerless in her position to change anything.

The term ‘complex’ in psychology (Wirtz 2017) applies to emotions, wishes, memories and imaginaries about a particular topic. In the case at hand, it refers to the memories of slavery and other issues related to it, such as racism, the myth of a ‘racial democracy,’ and the repression of the exercise of Afro-Brazilian beliefs

and practices. As for the psychological aspects of the 'complex,' the transformation around the Valongo has been driven by the desire for national identity, a state order built on notions of historical, cultural and racial mixture, portraying Brazil inside and outside the country as a 'racial democracy' (Miki 2018, 5). The term dates back to the Brazilian Empire (1822–1889), with its idea of 'whitening,' and was then positively incorporated into the dictatorial system of rule under Getúlio Vargas in the 1930s (Van Loyen 2018, 106). It reflects the idea that 'national unity' and 'nation-building' could succeed via the construction of a national culture accompanied by a cultural heritage policy focused on material goods – "made of stone and lime" (Fonseca 2019a, 81) – as advocated by Brazilian modernists since the 1930s (Clarke et al. 2014, 113). The idea should then be shared as widely as possible by the different sectors of society, that is, by both the state and civil society and its relevant actors. In a sense, the resolution of the 'complex' would be achieved if all disputing groups could come to a consensus. This would make claims for reparations, recognition and visibility superfluous. Ethnic diversity and the associated conflicts would then fit into the harmonious idea of Brazil as a country where slavery would have been less brutal, where racism would have been virtually non-existent, and where socio-spatial segregation would have been far less pronounced than in the black ghettos of the USA or the townships of South Africa. Mind games like these led to representations embedded in oversized graffiti, such as Eduardo Kobra's 2016 mural 'Ethnicities' (*Etnias*) on Rio's waterfront, which is a clear allusion to harmonious coexistence in an imaginary world society. The Valongo Complex remains stuck in its desire for visibility and claims for reparation through these discursive strategies and the suggestive images they evoke.

The entire urban environment, the old warehouses, the Valongo Garden, the listed sites in the port area within the Valongo Complex and the newly built infrastructure – such as the giant wheel, the aquarium, the commercial buildings, the promenade with its small stalls and the cruise piers – continue to be the subject of ethical negotiations. These clashes, alliances and conflicts take place in a variety of social and governmental spheres, including media agencies, antiracist institutions, public power, the market, academia and other discursive spheres (Sánchez et al. 2020). It should be said that these negotiations are not so much along political lines, but along racial, social, legal, religious and territorial differences. Their resolution can be bundled in the term of recognition, that is, in the advocacy of a just form of remembrance of the transatlantic slave trade. The latter characterized the city for centuries, and it was only through it that Rio was able to become the capital of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves (1815–1821), the Empire of Brazil (1822–1889), and later of the various republican regimes of Brazil (from 1889). In 1960, Rio finally lost its status as capital to Brasília and, from then on, sought new ways of national and international recognition through urban redevelopment projects such as the *Porto Maravilha*, which brought the Valongo Complex and the transatlantic slave trade back into the public consciousness.

To achieve a just way of remembering, according to Afro-Brazilian movements, it is necessary to recognize the different ethnic groups that were forcibly brought to Brazil from Africa in their diversity as the largest 'African diaspora' outside of



Africa. This is all the truer when considering that more than half of the inhabitants in Brazil, and especially in Rio, are of African descent. Although the term ‘Little Africa’ (*Pequena África*) is used in territorial allocation to the Valongo Complex and represents at least a symbolic-spatial recognition of people of African descent, this diminutive form is, nonetheless, inappropriate because it undermines not only the full territorial recognition but also the contribution of the African-descended population to the Brazilian nation. However, the term has a utopian, mythical character for many Afro-Brazilians, and has become inscribed in notions of a better and juster life in which the traumatic experiences of slavery and the social ostracism of being ‘lazy,’ ‘dirty’ and ‘dangerous’ would finally belong to the past. Above all, it is an expression of resistance to state paternalism, which allows the descendants of formerly enslaved people to make claims for territorial, religious and ethnic recognition (Guimarães 2014, 25). Understood in this way, the designation proves to be an urban-ethical resonance space in which the desires, hopes and demands of the Afro-Brazilian community are articulated. The term ‘Little Africa’ and its socio-geographical boundaries originally go back to Heitor dos Prazeres, a famous samba composer of the 1920s, as the area around the port and the Valongo was historically inhabited mainly by descendants of Africans or Brazilian inland migrants of African origin (Mora 1997, 92). However, the designation falsely suggests to some residents that it is a kind of enclave of Africanness in which they live. This, in turn, creates an artificial separation between ‘white’ and ‘black’ territories. After all, the boundaries between black and white are not so precise in Rio. There are numerous shades of gray and other ethnic groups in Little Africa (Guimarães 2014), just as there are poor white residents in the port area of Little Africa and rich black residents. But according to cultural scholar Rafael Cardoso, a physical and mental separation could be an obstacle to the recognition that the Brazilian nation should never be thought of without the contribution of Afro-Brazilian culture and heritage (Cardoso 2021, 28). In this respect, the urban and social transformation processes at the port and the Valongo Complex are the subject of urban-ethical debates and, therefore, constitute an ‘ethical project’ (Ege and Moser 2020, 7), since they are not primarily guided by the primacy of politics, even though they naturally take place under highly political conditions.

After this brief historical outline, it should have become clear that the urban history of Rio de Janeiro and that of the Valongo Complex cannot be understood without examining certain historical traces. By this, I mean layers of time that are observable in their materiality, for example, in the form of the stones used to build the two wharves. The traces of a past can be seen, on the one hand, in not only urban forms but also everyday practices, such as ritual dances, purifications, consecrations and commemorations performed on these stones (Hiernaux 2013, 379; Souty 2018). On the other hand, certain events have become inscribed in people’s memories and triggered complexes and traumas. Following cultural studies and the metaphor of cultural anthropophagy from the artistic movement of Brazilian modernism under its ‘undisputed leader’ Oswald de Andrade (Cardoso 2019, 279), I speak of ‘urbanophagy’ in not only the materially observable but also the cognitively occurring transformation processes. Since Brazilian culture has its

own unique way of dealing with cultural goods by 'devouring' external influences in order to recreate them, urbanophagy and anthropophagy mean a 'cultural technique' (Strasser 2021, 16). Regarding this urban-ethical case, urbanophagy, which derives from anthropophagy, represents a kind of toolbox to understand Rio's urban history, with its rapid succession of ruptures with the past, typical of the era of industrial metropolises that destroy and recycle lifeworlds and environments.

In the concept presented here, 'urbanity' as part of urbanophagy encompasses, on the one hand, the materiality of the city, such as squares, gardens, streets and buildings; on the other hand, the way in which a place is filled with life. According to urban researcher Paulo Rheingantz (2012, 136), the experience of urbanity depends on the particular lifeworld of its inhabitants, on their experiences, moods, desires, hopes and ideas about space, as well as on the relationship and interaction between the 'human' and the 'nonhuman,' including the physical materiality of the city. Urbanity, thus, takes on a very dynamic character that oscillates between flowing and pausing, between building up and breaking down, between remembering and forgetting. There have been repeated entanglements and appropriations of urban space in the course of Rio's urban history, as in many other cities, and, beyond that, of people and their cultural practices. Such 'urbanophagic' processes are visible today in the struggles for the appropriation of Afro-Brazilian heritage, for the struggle of memory and interpretive sovereignty of a never-ending history of exploitation, and in the urban structural changes in the course of *Porto Maravilha*. Adding to this subterranean seething past is the fact that the new wharf and, later, the new square were built on the ruins of the old Valongo site.

The concept of urbanophagy ties in with the notion of Latin American urbanism, which conceives of the city as being in motion and reminds us of the transitory, the buried and the ephemeral. It builds on the writings of Afro-Brazilian geographer Milton Santos in 'The Nature of Space' (*A Natureza do Espaço*), in which he emphasizes the fluidity of space and, thus, the urban, as distinct from the static, contributing to the compression of space and its multilayered meaning (Santos 2006, 143). Such a 'vitalist understanding' of the city, which illuminates the unlit interstices of urban history (Lindón 2013, 76), aligns well with the metaphor of anthropophagy, which itself suggests movement and change through its call for constant engulfment. Furthermore, urbanophagy broadens the gaze from local events to global history. It captures the complexity between particular places and the events that produced them, such as the Valongo Wharf through slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. It argues for an intersection of places and times, for a multiscalar territoriality with different temporal inscriptions. This is a circumstance that the anthropologist Néstor Canclini condenses in the concept of the 'multitemporal city' (Huffschmid and Wildner 2013, 33) and which, in his opinion, is a special characteristic of Latin American urbanity. In this way, the urbanophagy advocated here aims to contribute to decolonial urban research, decenter a one-sided historical urban research that only acknowledges the official history of the 'victors' immortalized in schoolbooks and disregards the contributions of nameless enslaved Africans to Brazilian nation-building. Urbanophagy should, therefore, not only be an analytical tool to describe the past. Instead, it is a plea to read

Brazilian history and related transformation processes not only from above, from the perspective of the former colonizers and their descendants, but also from below, from the perspective of the countless killed, nameless and unfortunate.

Urbanophagy is more than a culturalist metaphor, as it does not disregard the political, the economic and the various constellations of power that are at the origin of every act of engulfment. That makes it possible to write an urban history of Rio that takes into account the brutal erasure processes of whitening, both symbolic and physical. On the subject or actor level, and in the sense of the cannibalistic rite of anthropophagy, as described, for example, by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro in connection with the cosmological ideas of the Tupinambá Indians (2013, 224), this form of incorporation is not about the physical destruction of the other, but about transformation, that is, about the termination of a formerly antagonistic relationship of enemy and devourer. The ritual culminates in the assimilation of a new way of seeing the world that first makes the devouring subject a unity and reconciles it with itself. Understood in this way, anthropophagy means ‘semiophagy’ (Viveiros de Castro 2015, 161), as it calls for a radical change of perspective that produces new meanings and, consequently, a ‘new reality’ (Flusser 1963). This is how urbanophagy is to be understood: it argues, at the social level, not for a ritual that entails further separations but for a mutual give-and-take that will have to show itself in concrete practices, that is, in political actions with the ‘possibility of a transformation’ (Trouillot 2000, 185). In doing so, healing processes can be initiated, for example, in relation to slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, so that even national acts of collective apology do not degenerate into ‘abortive rituals’ (Trouillot 2000, 174).

Moreover, the reflections on urbanophagy initiated here are to be linked to the various modernist movements of the 1920s and 1930s, when the discourse around the preservation of nationally relevant heritage assets gained momentum in Brazil (Guimarães 2012, 300). Oswald de Andrade has not written specifically about the profound urban changes in Rio, although he hints at them in some of his text and drawings. That the Brazilian modernists were committed to transformation and new beginnings is reflected, for example, in the progressive expression ‘routes’ (*roteiros*), which is repeated seven times in the Anthropophagic Manifesto (Andrade 2011, 70). The modernists who worked in important cultural heritage institutions during the Brazilian *Estado Novo* (1937–1945) were extremely concerned with the creation of a national identity through the establishment of a cultural heritage, even if this still required a long process of becoming. This notion of cultural heritage changed with the beginning of Brazilian ‘re-democratization’ in the 1980s, when the state responded to a public desire to decentralize patrimonial practices and foreground the local and the particular, such as the protection of certain chants, foods and socio-territorial practices of Afro-Brazilian interactions that originated in slavery. The particular in Rio’s old port zone was then articulated not only as a material heritage ‘carved in stone’ but, above all, as an intangible heritage of religious, trade unions and ethnic groups. The proclamation and preservation of cultural heritage sites such as Valongo Wharf are, of course, linked to ethical and political actions and interests, except that these are no longer solely in the hands of the nation-state

and its cultural policy institutions, as was the case until the proclamation of the so-called 'citizen's constitution' of 1988, but are shaped by discourses of ethnic recognition, reparations and the demand for affirmative policies from a variety of actors and social movements (Garmany and Pereira 2019, 131). At this point, heritage sites no longer served only as symbols of a national or local culture, but became one of the most important arenas for political and moral recognition of historically grown differences that could only be resolved at the level of society as a whole.

In summary, by urbanophagy, I mean the specific ways in which Rio's urban spaces have been produced over centuries, including the constant reshaping of narratives, memories and imaginaries as a type of cultural technique. Following Walter Mignolo's (2005, 38) understanding of modern coloniality, Rio's urban history can be seen as a set of European-influenced power relationships renewed through ritual acts of construction, destruction and reconstruction. In the terminology of modern planning terms, as used by Nelson Diniz (2014), these are 'requalification,' 'reurbanization' and 'revitalization.' There has always existed a remarkable tension between the desire for a 'tabula rasa' and the desire for preservation in Rio's urban history (Moreira 2004), even if the two are not necessarily contradictory. According to the urban planner Clarissa da Costa Moreira (2004, 48): "In the face of the destruction of everything, something should be safeguarded. Therefore, the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage is part of the modern city project." The protection of cultural heritage concerns both materiality and the urban lifestyles associated with it, as well as social claims. They were sometimes suppressed and sometimes encouraged by government action over time, depending on whether it suited the authorities or not. Urbanophagy, the cyclical devouring of urbanities and the urban and its subsequent transformation, thus, runs as a thread through Rio's history, helping to establish relationships between one era and another.

An idea that is somewhat related to the concept of urbanophagy is that of the American literary scholar Benjamin Moser. He argued in his essay *Autoimperialismo* (Moser 2016), so far published only in Portuguese, that Brazil is a country that is constantly reclaiming itself, relying on its own destruction and transformation. Moser's concept of 'auto-imperialism' borrows from the oldest and most famous image in Brazilian historiography: anthropophagy. Moser is particularly astonished to discover that where the globally staged Museum of Tomorrow (*Museu do Amanhã*) now stands in Rio's old port district, there also lie the human remains of tens of thousands of formerly enslaved people who receive no official recognition through this museum. It seems as if the new reality, with its supposed architecture of the future in the shape of an oversized cockroach and with its striking claims of sustainability and coexistence, has swallowed the old reality of the slave trade in the port of Rio with its permanent human wear and tear and struggle for survival. In fact, all of this would lend a particularly 'macabre' flavor to the neoliberal claim of 'revitalization,' as it is to be carried out over the bones of those who made Rio's urban future possible in the first place (Moser 2016, 83).

Urbanophagy alludes to the process of consuming and digesting the urban space. It renders phenomena of transformation visible in various forms. This can be observed in architecture, design, landfill, as well as in cultural images, memory, narratives,

monuments and heritage. Furthermore, urbanophagy is about the appropriation and transformation of narratives, symbols and memories, including the cooptation and adaptation of Afro-Brazilian cultural popular practices by ‘white’ people. Following the original concept of anthropophagy, urbanophagy is a constantly evolving dynamic concept that makes both temporalities tangible (such as slavery, the foundation of the Brazilian Republic and its proposals for ‘civilization’ and ‘beautification,’ and the contemporary ‘society of spectacle’) and spatialities that are constructed (conflictively and cooperatively) by the various actors of the urban space. Urbanophagy, in its negative manifestation, can be compared to a kind of amnesia or memory loss, a forgetting that usually stems from traumatic experiences, from eras that are better left blank because of their accusatory potential. Such oblivion has long existed around the remains of the Valongo Wharf, the largest wharf in the Americas for enslaved people from Africa, which was only reexposed in 2011, leaving it to persist for more than 150 years under new layers of historical and geological sediment that may have been less compromising to those in power.

Brazilian authors with a cultural history orientation often draw on Walter Benjamin’s understanding of ‘porosity’ (Carvalho 2013; Carvalho, Cavalcanti and Venu-turupalli 2016, 10) to make the multiple social and urban transformations in urban space analytically comprehensible. Some others, mainly European scholars, follow literary critic Andreas Huyssen’s metaphor of reading ‘the city as text’ (1997, 58) and rely on the concept of the ‘palimpsest’ (Huffschmid 2015, 40) to describe the various layers of memory landscapes in urban space that accompany urban transformation and overbuilding processes. Both metaphors have their justification. While porosity foregrounds the interpenetration of the old by the new, the constant exchange and fluidity of the city, the metaphor of the palimpsest emphasizes the city as a constantly updating archive that is, nevertheless, not immune to a certain immobility. Neither concept addresses the conflictual aspects of urban transformation processes adequately. Both tend to be neutral and descriptive, ignoring the fact that the major urban transformations were almost always accompanied by the oppression of social and ethnic groups. The metaphor of urbanophagy proves far more appropriate to bring resistance to exclusionary urban practices and the inherent porosity of a city into a dynamic relationship. It vividly illustrates the tension between actor-centered creativity from below and historically identifiable urban change efforts from above. In the Brazilian context, it refers particularly to the playful double character of resistance in and appropriation of urban spaces under conditions of oppression and marginalization of specific ethnic groups, as manifested, for example, in cultural practices, such as samba or capoeira, but also in forms of Afro-Brazilian solidarity in clandestine gatherings, food rituals, or religious and spiritual assemblies, all associated with particular places, streets and buildings. Such forms of resistance and community, which found and still find their territorial expression in the Valongo Complex, have very often become a part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity (Fonseca 2019b, 150).

The concept of urbanophagy works analytically in conjunction with the notion of ‘territoriality,’ as it captures the asymmetrical distribution of power in the appropriation of public spaces, such as the Valongo Complex, by the numerous actors

and movements involved in the heritage process. This is significant insofar as the territory on which the Valongo Complex is located is charged with different meanings by these actors. Indeed, the relationship between social and ethnic identities and the contested territory, in this case, the territory culturally and historically negotiated as 'Little Africa,' is currently valorized in two ways: on the part of Afro-Brazilians living there on an affective level as a return to their African ancestral roots, and on the part of the city government and the business community interested in the old port area on a commercial level as a world of sales and experiences for tourists and wealthy residents of the city. Both types of valorization might even be reconciled. Thus, affective relationships to the territory of 'Little Africa' are not always free of commercial interests, for example, in the sale of city tours, samba or capoeira performances, or the countless African 'authentic' food specialties in the port area. It becomes problematic, however, when the violent histories of the transatlantic slave trade, which gave rise to these relationships in the first place, are hidden by the city administration in order to be able to promote them to the mostly 'white' urban customers as conflict-free and harmonious.

### **Transforming the Valongo**

As for the Valongo Complex, the first urbanophagic ingestion took place in 1843 to receive the Neapolitan Princess Teresa Cristina of the Two Sicilies, who had just married the Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro II. For this purpose, an obelisk was erected on the old Wharf. The aim was to beautify the Valongo and transform it into the Empress's Wharf, as the inscription still visible today informs: "In this place, there was the Pier of the Empress. In 1843 the old Valongo Wharf was enlarged and embellished to receive the future Empress Teresa Cristina." Not a word about the slave trafficking and the suffering of the hundreds of thousands of enslaved people is mentioned. The square is simply presented as unattractive and, therefore, in need of beautification and enlargement. The 'multitemporality' evident in the Valongo Wharf is presented here only one-sidedly by the ruling class; the perspective of the many nameless people who not only built an entire city around the Valongo but also served the imperial economic circuit is left out. At this point, it is worth recalling Benjamin Moser's thesis of auto-imperialism:

Brazil has always been consuming itself. Extending the metaphor [of anthropophagy] to the swallowing of its own people and territory, it would be possible to find a way to see the country as something that, despite the patriotic rhetoric, would not deserve protection or preservation. Its sole purpose would be to enrich those who had come to despoil it.

(Moser 2016, 84)

In fact, the transatlantic slave trade did not benefit Brazil so much as it enriched the English Crown and the Iberian Peninsula through the export of goods such as gold, ores, minerals, wood and sugar (Florentino 1997). The main function of the old port, along with the Valongo Complex, was to integrate Brazil into the

world economy and incorporate it into the “regime of global accumulation” (Costa and Gonçalves 2020, 32). This ultimately meant selling out the country, which it afforded itself through the importation of enslaved people, hundreds of thousands of whom died and whose descendants live mostly in poverty today. In this respect, we can speak here not only of urbanophagy, the devouring and forgetting of people, but also of a form of destructive imperialism, which Moser reports on in his essay.

The transformation of the Valongo for aesthetic and symbolic reasons in 1843 represents the first spatial erasure and silencing of black discourse in Rio’s urban space. It changed space, both its usage and the narrative on the transatlantic slave trade. The Valongo Wharf should no longer be known as the place where enslaved people arrived but as a place where a Neapolitan princess was celebrated and where the Old World, with its supposedly humanistic values, met the New World, which still clung to the old idea of ‘masters and slaves’ (Freyre 2003). However, this did not mean that the slave trade suddenly came to a halt in 1843. Enslaved Africans continued to arrive in many other locations along the Brazilian coast. For nearly three centuries, the transatlantic slave trade relied on a necropolitical system of domination that envisioned the normalization of violence and the production of death as modalities for the exercise of sovereignty (Mbembe 2019) – a system that Brazilian society has not fully overcome to this day (Soares 2019). Of course, a one-sided description of black life in Rio is not intended here. Not all blacks saw themselves in a victim role, even if they rejected the inhumane system of human trafficking. Resistance also arose from the ranks of blacks with the social abolitionist movements around Luís Gama (1830–1882), José Carlos do Patrocínio (1854–1905) and André Rebouças (1838–1898). The latter, as an engineer, even had an entire warehouse, the Docas Dom Pedro II, built in the port in the immediate vicinity of the Valongo Wharf without the aid of black slave labor.

Rio’s urban splendor as the representative capital of the Empire, though, was not to be further overshadowed by ‘immoral’ activities that included not only illegal confinement but also inhumane practices, such as food deprivation, flogging or mutilation. This moral transformation can be understood, on the one hand, as territorial urbanophagy in the sense of a radical transformation of space and, on the other, as discursive urbanophagy. It is then an expression of the ruling class’s desires and ideas of a more ‘civilized’ Brazil, which is supposed to counteract the ‘complex’ of a slaveholding society. However, such ambitions hardly stood up to reality. The architectural remodeling of the Valongo impressively proves what urbanophagy causes in the minds of the powerful: forgetting and repression to the point of amnesia. This amnesia also survived the second major transformation of the square, when the Valongo Wharf was once again built over at the beginning of the 20th century, which seemed to make the monarchical system forgotten. The area was filled with land and transformed into a spacious square in 1906, as part of the urban planning “improvement and beautification measures” of Mayor Pereira Passos, who wanted to finally expel the colonial legacy from the city (Abreu 2013, 61). This meant that the old port area finally lost its fragmentary character and was geometrically straightened for use by ships. The square was once again given a new name, this time that of one of Brazil’s most famous dailies, the *Jornal do*

*Comércio*, which is said not to have been allied with the slave trafficking in the past (Dimas Filho 1987).

Another urbanophagic process within the Valongo Complex resulted from the political transformations of 1889, when Brazil became a republic, and the social consequences of the formal abolition of slavery in 1888 became increasingly visible. Urban customs such as walking barefoot, playing the guitar in the street or public gambling were banned and made illegal in a veritable campaign against old colonial habits and 'backwardness' and in search of a supposedly European morality (Sevcenko 1999, 33). Brazil's first republican governments started to criminalize the various manifestations of popular culture in Rio. Many practices and rituals associated with the formerly enslaved were prohibited and persecuted: capoeira gangs, samba percussions, carnival blocks and religious rites of the Afro-Brazilian communities. These practices were part of a social vitality that took place in the secret interstices of the city's originally 'black spaces,' in communal shelters, in the narrow winding streets of the emerging favelas and in small religious associations. One of these spaces is in the immediate vicinity of the Valongo Wharf, the so-called 'Salt Rock' (*Pedra do Sal*), in which a staircase was carved at the beginning of the 19th century. Enslaved people had built these stairs with their own hands in order to carry the salt up to the hills. The space today, along with the surrounding bars and kiosks, serves as a venue for cultural performances. Samba percussions are held on Fridays and Mondays. Friday evening is reserved for tourists, who are expected to flock from neighboring cruise ships; Monday evening is reserved for locals with what is called "authentic and traditional samba." At these performances, however, there are hardly any port residents or Afro-Brazilians to be seen. If anything, they are only participating in the events by selling food and drink. This reappropriation and rebranding of cultural and religious practices of Afro-Brazilian origin by the commercial sector and Rio's city government is further evidence of the persistence of a cultural urbanophagy that is more in line with the interests of Rio's wealthy, European- and North American-oriented citizens than with those of the Afro-Brazilian population in the port zone. After more than two hundred years in which the waterfront was labeled 'dirty' and 'dangerous' by those in power, a moral reassessment of the territory as a place of festivals, samba and carnival, and African heritage has been taking place since the 'rediscovery' of Valongo in 2011. Given this urban-ethical shift, the dominant discourse of the city government and the media largely ignores social conflict and focuses territorially on control and pacification and on the commercial exploitation of Afro-Brazilian cultural assets. The *Time Out London* magazine is an example of this cultural reevaluation, for the reaccentuation of narratives about slavery and the creation of new global imaginaries. Rio's waterfront, which includes the Valongo Complex, was ranked the 25th "coolest neighborhood in the world" in October 2021. There is almost no word about slavery or the territorial recognition clashes of the various actors then and now; instead an idyllic picture was softly painted of the port area where there were "charming bars, beautiful Portuguese architecture and fascinating sites" to discover (Altino 2021, 26). The publication of *Time Out* resonated widely in Rio's media landscape and fueled the mayor's urban patriotism, which he attributed to



the success of 'his' *Porto Maravilha* revitalization efforts. What can be observed, then, is not only a moral shift in the course of this urbanophagic process but an entirely new allocation of and attitude toward physical space, shaped by power and commercial agendas.

The result of this investment in the reorganization of a 'moral geography' (DeRogatis 2003, 181), driven by the discourse of the city government, is a normative classification of the Valongo Complex according to Brazilian exclusionary elites and Eurocentric standards. Although some inhabitants of the area perceive the spaces as physically degraded, unhealthy, empty and invaded or socially marginalized and criminal, many residents and members of black social movements regard the same spaces as positive experiences of ancestry, of bonds of solidarity (especially during the pandemic) and of historical belonging to a sacred place (with the spiritual energy of the formerly enslaved). In this sense, the urbanophagic processes at the Valongo evoke territorial negotiations, including, on the one hand, techniques of government and neoliberal tourist interests and, on the other hand, a lot of 'insurgent' and 'transformative action' from below (Cruz, Van Loyen and Sánchez 2021, 492). These negotiations center around the question of how to live together in a socially, economically and culturally fragmented environment where different claims of recognition, visibility and authenticity are being made (Guimarães 2014). The claims have a strong racial and ethnical component as well as a religious or spiritual one and have the urban renewal project of *Porto Maravilha* as their common ground. They were not new but culminated in 2011 and the following years with the unearthing of the Valongo Wharf. The actors involved in these claims are quite heterogeneous. Urban occupation movements, slum dwellers' associations affected by the urban renewal project, university groups, black social movements and nongovernmental organizations have all emerged or been present for some time. They have subsequently organized themselves into local collective initiatives, such as the Porto Community Forum and the Popular Committee for the World Cup 2014 and for the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro 2016. Today, many of their actors can be found in community initiatives such as SOS Providência, which continues its history of resistance to displacement and gentrification while combating the social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Providência is the closest favela to the Valongo Complex and only about 50 meters from the Wharf. It owes its settlement history to the slave trafficking, and many of its residents are direct descendants of formerly enslaved people, which explains why ties to African roots are strong there.

A particular form of urbanophagy that encompasses the territorial, cultural and discursive dimensions of engulfment lies in the attempt to 'whiten' the history of the Valongo. This strategy is not new from a historical perspective and used to refer mainly to the demographic aspect of population formation in Brazil. Moreover, it is part of what Moser understands as 'auto-imperialism,' since it has an 'invasionist' component that seems to come directly from within Brazilian society (2016, 78). In the case of the Valongo Complex, it refers to the accusation of whitening the discursive and topographical space that is leveled by social black movements against organizations that should primarily represent Afro-Brazilian interests.

Some of these movements, for example, question whether their concerns are being adequately addressed by 'white-led' institutions, such as the Institute of the New Blacks (*Instituto dos Pretos Novos*), which have made the former slave cemetery of the Complex a place of encounter and remembrance. A statement by Brenda, a member of one of the black social movements in Rio, is very telling in this context. Brenda stated on February 10, 2020, that she believes the problem is that the director of the institute, who is of Spanish ancestry, portrays herself as the 'guardian' of the heritage in 'Little Africa,' thereby invading and appropriating that territory, even if her biography does not have much to do with it. Instead, she declares herself a 'black' woman who must fulfill her 'mission' as a 'savior,' as if the memory of the multitude of enslaved people depended entirely on her work. Still, black social movements demand a more collective management of this institute, led not only by one person, her family and some black people as supporting actors. According to these movements, changing these circumstances would give more legitimacy to the decisions and remove the cloak of nepotism from the institution. In addition to this, some of the black movements felt patronized by white academics, for it was the former who introduced the Valongo Wharf to the public and urged that it be preserved for Brazilian history and heritage (Carneiro and Pinheiro 2015, 386). The academics involved, in turn, accused the black social movements of insufficient participation in the process of reviewing historical facts. According to some scholars, however, with a few exceptions, the history of slavery has never been central to debates in black movements (Cicalo 2013, 175; Nascimento 2019, 198).

The way in which discourses of heritage and memory are intertwined with a sense of dignity and recognition is illustrated by a speech given by Paulo Roberto dos Santos, the former president of the Committee for Black Rights in the state of Rio de Janeiro. He was one of the signatories of the so-called 'Valongo Charter' in March 2011 (Honorato 2019), a document that aimed to create a memorial center to the African diaspora in Brazil immediately after the unearthing of the Valongo Wharf. It represents a desideratum that has not been fulfilled to date. Paulo Roberto stated in June 2011:

Here at the Wharf, approximately one million slaves arrived. And the intention is to transform the former Valongo Wharf, because the history of the Wharf is much more significant than the Empress's Wharf.

Rio's history begins here, and the idea is to transform it into a memorial to the African diaspora, a museum that tells a story that most people don't know, the story of the black population that lived here and is still here. I think that now we are going to reclaim that memory and guarantee that passport to the dignity of the population, the population that founded this state.

(Xavier 2016, 195)

Memory is reflected here in the psychological complex of personal and collective longings associated with the pursuit of identity and dignity. Roberto believes that both are based on the need for acceptance and recognition and redress the historical injustice evident in the municipality's preference for the Empress's Wharf

until the excavation of the Valongo. He is expressing what is being called for by many black activists, namely, the acknowledgment that the Brazilian nation would not have become what it is today without the contribution of the enslaved Africans. His speech has ethical and political significance. Roberto wants the history of African-American slavery to stop being silenced and to be told from a ‘non-white’ perspective (Trouillot 2015). Based on the claim of *amefricanidade* mentioned in the introduction, he wants the black population to be recognized as a citizenry that has made the cultural and economic development of the Brazilian state possible. To this end, he calls for the creation of a moral space, a museum, where the reassessment of concepts such as trauma and suffering becomes a ticket, a ‘passport’ to justice and a better life. In this context, urbanophagy serves to make a negative circumstance visible, that is, slavery and exploitation, which is to be turned into something positive and transformative. Consider, for example, various forms of affirmation through cultural and religious practices, opposition to displacement and resettlement, and sociability and solidarity in times of crisis and oppression. Or, as a Brazilian researcher of African history, referring to Hannah Arendt’s *On Violence* (1970), puts it: “Being a victim does not mean losing the ability to act and transform” (Lima 2018, 106). The fact that transformations meet with resistance and cause conflicts is part of urbanophagic processes, as has already been explained in the first part of the chapter.

### **Concluding remarks**

This chapter proposed to analyze the transformations at the Valongo Complex through the notion of urbanophagy. It was discussed in detail in the first part and applied to the transformations of the Complex in the second. The analysis was embedded in the theoretical framework of urban ethics, which showed that the different discourses on heritage, memory and history are, above all, imbued with an ethical vocabulary.

The reason for appropriating Oswald de Andrade’s Anthropophagic Manifesto from 1928 lies in its topicality, which is evident, not least, internationally in the ongoing celebrations of the centenary of the ‘Modernist Week of 1922’ (*Semana de 22*). This shows the significance of the Manifesto itself for the cultural-historical discussion of Brazil from a Brazilian perspective. One might object that Andrade is not a representative of black intellectuality and belonged to the elite of São Paulo. But that is not the point here in the use and interpretation of anthropophagy. The focus is solely on his ideas, which continue to shape Brazilian cultural studies to this day, and not on the person of Oswald de Andrade. It will also become visible that the Manifesto puts its finger exactly into the wound that has arisen through the neglected treatment of the urban heritage in Brazil. In Andrade’s understanding, it should not degenerate into fossilization and ‘urban sclerosis,’ but is always integrated in the process of becoming and movement, and, thus, must be open to new interpretations and social demands. Andrade’s claim contains a clear anti-capitalist subtext, as he argues that ‘speculative boredom’ in relation to urban goods should finally come to an end (Andrade 2011, 72). Besides, this is still a valid argument

today against the numerous patrimonialization processes in Brazil, which are subjected to tourism and a neoliberal market logic (Gonçalves 2012).

In the case of the Valongo Complex, the municipality's sudden interest in heritage resulted from greater control of urban spaces by state public-private management, authoritarian urban restructuring and market interests. Thus, both the transformation of the Valongo Complex and its goals show parallels to the interventions which took place when the slave market was transferred from Rio's city center to the Valongo region at the end of the 18th century (Honorato 2019, 165). Market interests were also at stake back then, with the church as the largest private owner of real estate – in addition to the governmental control management of the enslaved through spatial planning and a panoptic architecture (Araújo 2019, 144).

The argument the authorities named as reasons for their interventions in both the 18th and 21st centuries was the rhetorical appeal to the moral 'degradation' and 'dirtiness' of the region. The difference lies more in the measures adopted and less in the consequences and ends. Today, the local government wants to make use of the Valongo Complex for tourism purposes which have to be embedded in a supposedly 'white,' 'civilized' and 'safe' urban context. More than two hundred years ago, it was the transatlantic slave trade that supplied the port area and its surroundings economically (Costa and Gonçalves 2020). Both the state authorities and the slave traders benefitted from the slave trafficking and the Valongo Complex was considered 'black,' 'uncivilized' and 'dangerous.'

As has been shown, black social movements oppose the construction of a memory landscape that focuses only on white history and history made by white people, especially when the latter claim to be 'guardians' or advocates of blacks, as Brenda explained. By doing so, they oppose the restoration of 'racial democracy' as an ideology that levels social, ethnic and economic differences. According to black activists, today's culture of remembrance should not be limited to the collective regret of the transatlantic slave trade but should focus on the historical structures of privilege and their reproduction in the present.

The frequently invoked buzzwords of recognition and visibility and the associated narrative of the Valongo territory as the birthplace of samba and 'authentic' Afro-Brazilian culture have primarily a commercial background. They are devoid of meaning and can be considered 'abortive rituals' in the sense given by the Haitian-American anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, namely, "rituals that package history for public consumption" (2015, 116). As such, they represent a rhetorical strategy that is more evident on the part of the city administration than of the social movements, which mostly argue politically and fight for an improvement of living conditions.

A graffiti just a few steps from the Valongo Wharf symbolizes these failed rituals of reconciliation in a striking and depressing way. Here, the Valongo is presented as a site of Afro-Brazilian memory in the overarching 'Wonder Port' transformation process. The graffiti refers to it in large letters as a misguided ritual. In a 'semiophagic' double sense, it calls the *Porto Maravilha* an *Aborto Maravilha* ('miraculous abortion'). This is done in the image, on the one hand, by depicting an Afro-Brazilian boy lying in his own blood, and, on the other hand, by referring to the *Porto Maravilha*

project itself as an exclusionary project of destruction. This, in turn, can be read in Moser's terms of 'auto-imperialism' as a hopeful but always disappointed belief that the Brazilian nation 'could escape from itself' (Moser 2016, 21).

In conclusion, within the dynamics of urbanophagic processes in Rio, the Valongo Complex represents an unfinished transformation "that has gone off the rails in the middle of the street," as some port residents say. This happened partly because there is a lack of money for historical signalization, interpretation and maintenance of the space, but mostly because the Valongo is still being negotiated, while networks of institutional knowledge and power constellations are forming with new actors.

## References

- Abreu, Maurício de A. 2013. *Evolução Urbana do Rio de Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Pereira Passos.
- Altino, Lucas. 2021. Muito prazer Saúde. Revista 'Time Out' inclui bairro carioca em lista dos 49 lugares mais legais do planeta. *O Globo*, September 9, p. 26.
- Andrade, Carlos Drummond de. 2011. Manifesto Antropófago. In: Carlos Drummond de Andrade, ed. *A utopia antropofágica*. São Paulo: Editora O Globo, pp. 67–74.
- Araújo, Luis Gustavo Costa. 2019. *A morte feita de pedra: O Mercado de escravizados do Valongo e a necroarquitetura*. Master thesis, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro.
- Arendt, Hannah. 1970. *On Violence*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Cardoso, Elizabeth Dezouart, L. F. Vaz, M. P. Albernaz, M. Aizen, and R. M. Pechman. 1987. *História dos bairros Saúde, Gamboa, Santo Cristo*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Index.
- Cardoso, Rafael. 2019. Forging the myth of Brazilian modernism. In: Larry Silver and Kevin Terraciano, eds. *Canons and Values: Ancient to Modern*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, pp. 269–287.
- Cardoso, Rafael. 2021. *Modernity in Black and White: Art and Image, Race and Identity in Brazil, 1890–1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carneiro, Sandra de Sá, and Márcia Leitão Pinheiro. 2015. Cais do Valongo: Patrimonialização de Locais, Objetos e Herança Africana. *Religão e Sociedade*, 35(2), 384–401.
- Carvalho, Bruno. 2013. *Porous City. A Cultural History of Rio de Janeiro*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Carvalho, Bruno, Mariana Cavalcanti, and Vyjayanthi Rao Venuturupalli. 2016. *Occupy All Streets. Olympic Urbanism and Contested Futures in Rio de Janeiro*. New York: UR Books.
- Cicalo, André. 2013. A voice for the past: making 'public' slavery heritage in Rio de Janeiro. *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, 3(2), 170–183.
- Clarke, John, Kathleen Coll, Evelina Dagnino, and Catherine Neveu. 2014. *Disputing Citizenship*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Costa, Sergio, and Guilherme Leite Gonçalves. 2020. *A Port in Global Capitalism. Unveiling Entangled Accumulation in Rio de Janeiro*. New York: Routledge.
- Cruz, Giovana, Clemens Van Loyen, and Fernanda Sánchez. 2021. Culture, territory and action: The Providência favela's response to Covid-19. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 13(3), 481–495.
- DeRogatis, Amy. 2003. *Moral Geography: Maps, Missionaries, and the American Frontier*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Dimas Filho, Néelson. 1987. *A notícia dia a dia: Jornal do Comércio, 1827–1987*. Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Assis Chateaubriand.
- Diniz, Nelson. 2014. *Porto Maravilha: antecedentes e perspectivas da revitalização da região portuária do Rio de Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Letra Capital.
- Dürr, Eveline, Moritz Ege, Christoph K. Neumann, Johannes Moser, and Gordon Winder. 2020. Towards a research agenda on cities, ethics and normativity. *City, Culture and Society*, 20(5–6), 100313.
- Ege, Moritz, and Johannes Moser, eds. 2020. *Urban Ethics. Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. New York: Routledge.
- Faulhaber, Lucas, and Lena Azevedo. 2015. *Remoções no Rio de Janeiro Olímpico*. Rio de Janeiro: Morula.
- Florentino, Manolo. 1997. *Em costas negras. Uma história do tráfico de escravos entre a África e o Rio de Janeiro*. São Paulo: Unesp.
- Flusser, Vilém. 1963. *Língua e Realidade*. São Paulo: Herder.
- Fonseca, Vivian. 2019a. Escritos sobre políticas patrimoniais e a área de história: um balanço preliminar sobre produções intelectuais. In: Lia Calabre and Alexandre Domingues, eds. *Estudos sobre políticas culturais e gestão de cultura*. Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa, pp. 75–107.
- Fonseca, Vivian. 2019b. O ensino de história, a diversidade cultural e o antirracismo: reflexões a partir da história oral e da história da capoeira. In: Everardo Paiva de Andrade and Juniele Rabêlo de Almeida, eds. *História oral e educação*. São Paulo: Letra e Voz, pp. 149–178.
- Freyre, Gilberto. 2003. *Casa-grande & Senzala. Formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal*. São Paulo: Global Editora.
- Garmany, Jeff, and Anthony W. Pereira. 2019. *Understanding Contemporary Brazil*. New York: Routledge.
- Gerson, Brasil. 2000. *História das Ruas do Rio*. Rio de Janeiro: Lacerda Editores.
- Gonçalves, José Reginaldo Santos. 2012. As transformações do patrimônio: da retórica da perda à reconstrução permanente. In: Izabela Tamaso and M. F. L. Filho, eds. *Antropologia e Patrimônio Cultural: trajetórias e conceitos*. Brasília: ABA, pp. 59–73.
- Gonzalez, Lélia. 1988. A categoria político-cultural de amefricanidade. *Tempo Brasileiro*, 92/93, 69–82.
- Guimarães, Roberta. 2012. De monumento negro a território étnico: os usos do patrimônio cultural na produção de espaços urbanos diferenciados. In: Izabela Tamaso and M. F. L. Filho, eds. *Antropologia e Patrimônio Cultural: trajetórias e conceitos*. Brasília: ABA, pp. 299–318.
- Guimarães, Roberta. 2014. *A Utopia da Pequena África*. Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora.
- Graham, Maria. [1824] 2021. *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil and Residence There During Part of the Years 1821, 1822, 1823*. Salt Lake City: Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/21201/21201-h/21201-h.htm#slave>.
- Hiernaux, Daniel. 2013. Die historischen Stadtzentren Lateinamerikas. Auf dem Weg zu einer kreolischen Gentrifizierung?. In: Anne Huffschnid and Kathrin Wildner, eds. *Stadt-forschung aus Lateinamerika*. Bielefeld: transcript, pp. 377–395.
- Honorato, Cláudio de Paula. 2019. *Valongo. O mercado de almas da praça carioca*. Curitiba: Appris Editora.
- Huffschnid, Anne. 2015. *Risse im Raum. Erinnerung, Gewalt und städtisches Leben in Lateinamerika*. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Huffschnid, Anne, and Kathrin Wildner, eds. 2013. *Stadt-forschung aus Lateinamerika*. Bielefeld: transcript.

- Huyssen, Andreas. 1997. The voids of Berlin. *Critical Inquiry*, 24(1), 57–81.
- IPHAN. 2016. *Sítio Arqueológico Cais do Valongo. Proposta de inscrição na lista do patrimônio mundial*. Rio de Janeiro: IPHAN.
- Lima, Monica. 2018. História, patrimônio e memória sensível: o Cais do Valongo no Rio de Janeiro. *Outros Tempos*, 15(26), 98–111.
- Lima, Tania Andrade. 2013. Arqueologia como ação sociopolítica: o caso do Cais do Valongo, Rio de Janeiro, Século XIX. *Vestígios*, 7(1), 179–207.
- Lindón, Alicia. 2013. Urbane Geographien des alltäglichen Lebens. In: Anne Huffschmid and Kathrin Wildner, eds. *Stadtforschung aus Lateinamerika*. Bielefeld: transcript, pp. 59–79.
- Mbembe, Achille, 2019. *Necropolitics*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Meade, Teresa. 1997. *Civilizing Rio. Reform and Resistance in a Brazilian City, 1889–1930*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press.
- Mignolo, Walter D. 2005. A colonialidade de cabo a rabo: o hemisfério ocidental no horizonte conceitual da modernidade. In: Edgar Lander, ed. *A colonialidade do saber: eurocentrismo e ciências sociais. Perspectivas latinoamericanas*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, pp. 33–49.
- Miki, Yuko. 2018. *Frontiers of Citizenship. A Black and Indigenous History of Postcolonial Brazil*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mora, Roberto. 1997. *Tia Ciata e a Pequena África no Rio de Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Secretária Municipal de Cultura.
- Moreira, Clarissa da Costa. 2004. *A cidade contemporânea entre a tabula rasa e a preservação. Cenários para o porto do Rio de Janeiro*. São Paulo: Editora Unesp.
- Moser, Benjamin. 2016. *Autoimperialismo. Três ensaios sobre o Brasil*. São Paulo: Planeta.
- Nascimento, Abdias. 2019. *O Quilombismo. Documentos de uma Militância Pan-Africanista*. São Paulo: Perspectiva.
- Rheingantz, Paulo. 2012. Narrativas ou traduções de urbanidade. In: Douglas Aguiar and Vinicius M. Netto, eds. *Urbanidades*. Rio de Janeiro: Folio Digital, pp. 135–161.
- Sánchez, Fernanda, Paula Moreira, A. C. Machado, and A. P. Junior. 2020. Portos e cidades: cartografias críticas da Operação Urbana Porto Maravilha. In: Cezar Honorato and Alcidesio de Oliveira Júnior, eds. *Portos e cidades portuárias em questão*. Niterói: Polis, pp. 194–224.
- Santos, Milton. 2006. *A Natureza do Espaço*. São Paulo: Edusp
- Schwarz, Lilia Moritz. 2019. *Sobre o autoritarismo brasileiro*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
- Sheriff, Robin E. 2001. *Dreaming Equality. Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Sevcenko, Nicolau. 1999. *Literatura como missão. Tensões sociais e criação cultural na Primeira República*. São Paulo: Brasiliense.
- Soares, Luiz Eduardo. 2019. *O Brasil e seu duplo*. São Paulo: Todavia.
- Souty, Jérôme. 2018. Les lavages du quai des esclaves du Valongo. *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 1(229), 25–68.
- Strasser, Melanie. 2021. *Kannibalogie. Zu einer Philosophie der Einverleibung*. Wien: Turia + Kant.
- Tavares, R. B., Claudia Rodrigues-Carvalho, and Andrea Lessa. 2020. Da alfândega ao Valongo: A entrada dos cativos africanos no Rio de Janeiro do século dezenove sob uma nova perspectiva historiográfica. *Latin American Antiquity*, 31(2), 342–359.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2000. Abortive rituals. Historical apologies in the global era. *Interventions*, 2(2), 171–186.

- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2015. *Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Van Loyen, Clemens. 2018. *Vilém Flusser in Brasilien. Eine Anthropophagie des Geistes*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.
- Versiani, Flávio Rabelo. 2007. Escravidão “suave” no Brasil: Gilberto Freyre tinha razão? *Revista de Economia Política*, 27(2), 163–183.
- Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 2013. *A inconstância da alma selvagem*. São Paulo: Cosaic Naify.
- Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 2015. *Metafísicas Canibais*. São Paulo: Cosaic Naify.
- Wirtz, Markus Antonius, ed. 2017. *Dorsch. Lexikon der Psychologie*. Bern: Hogrefe.
- Xavier, Priscila Oliveira. 2016. *Do Porto ao Porto Maravilha. Discursos que (re)criam a cidade*. Curitiba: Appris.



## 6 Restorative justice in Georgia

### On the limited recognition of prostitution in Tbilisi 1991–2020

*Liana Kupreishvili and Guido Hausmann*

#### **“They treated us like animals”: the legal situation of sex workers and the criminalization of sex work in Tbilisi**

Sex work remains a highly contested field of study given its intersection with social taboos about sexuality and desire. Positioning sex work as sex trafficking in the understanding of most of the citizens in Georgia contributes to the continued debates to criminalize it. One of the most demanding aspects of these studies was the actual fieldwork, particularly the ethical and safety issues involved in gaining access (which, in this case, was through NGOs and social workers), and establishing contact and rapport with the participants.

The stigmatized nature of the sex work environment raises several methodological issues and ethical challenges for researchers and has a direct bearing on the validity of the data collected (Shaver 2005). The objectives were to examine the differences in the way sex work and urban space were organized and experienced by women and transgender workers. This involved observing behaviors and analyzing attitudes through in-depth interviews with 18 women and transgender workers (genetic males who present themselves as women) on a field site of the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, from 2018 to 2020.

The population of rural settlements in Georgia is decreasing yearly, which generally also affects the structure of the city/village. The proportion of the city's population has increased over the past four years from 57.7% to 58.7% of the total population. Unlike other regions of Georgia, the population of Tbilisi and Adjara AR is growing (Government Commission on Migration Issues 2019). A total of 90% or more of female sex workers (FSWs) are Georgian. The FSWs in Tbilisi increasingly come from other cities, towns, or villages throughout Georgia. In 2001, 56% of FSWs came from someplace other than Tbilisi, increasing to 63% in 2004 and 73% in 2006. Fewer than 10% have done commercial sex work in locations other than Tbilisi (USAID 2007). Tbilisi is not the only place of prostitution but, as one of the interviewed street sex workers said: “It is the best place to be invisible” (Meri, personal communication, July 17, 2019). Tbilisi is also the epicenter of emerging activism around sexuality and queerness in the city. It is associated with distinct locations, specific groups of people and particular types of activities; here, the urban environment is a site of constant processes of social inclusion and exclusion.

Extensive apparatus of social control is in action to regulate human interaction and social activity because of its status as the capital city.

Sex work is not a criminal offense under Georgian legislation. However, sex work is also not recognized as a form of labor, and the Labor Code of Georgia does not apply to this activity. Sex work is an administrative offense<sup>1</sup> – it is subject to administrative sanction and belongs to the group of administrative offenses that violates public order. At the same time, several acts related to sex work are criminal offenses. This legal situation has not changed considerably since 1991 when the Georgian state emerged out of the ruins of the dying Soviet Union (Austin and Jones 2015).<sup>2</sup> Natia, 47 years old, remembers the early 1990s quite well:

I remember that in the Shevardnadze period, special force squads were operating in the city in search of the sex workers. They were throwing women into the car by force, bringing us to the ‘Kanveni’ [the National Centre of Dermatology and Venerology] for compulsory examinations, or they would drop us on the Gardabani highway in the middle of the night so we could not get back to the city. It was hard for 15 to 20 of us because there was no traffic on that highway. They treated us like animals.<sup>3</sup>

(Personal communication, August 28, 2018)

Urban public spaces are highly contested areas where different interests and desires meet. They present an ideal testbed of the level of societal ability for democratic and consensual decision-making and its tolerance toward diversity (Allmendiger and Haughton 2012; Madanipour 2016). Natia, however, remembers a very different understanding of public spaces, although Georgia has considered itself a democratic polity since 1991.

The phenomenon of sex work reappeared in Tbilisi in the late 1980s with the beginning of *perestroika* and the subsequent economic decline in the last years of the Soviet Union. At the time, sex workers began to act more openly in the public space of Georgia’s capital. The following decade is marked by the downfall of the pleasure industry in Georgia; the post-Soviet economic downfall dragged on and the Georgian civil war comprising interethnic and international conflicts in the regions of South Ossetia (1988–1992) and Abkhazia (1992–1993) led to the loss of some of the provinces of Georgia. A civil confrontation took place in Georgia’s capital, destroying parts of the Tbilisi center. The end of the 1990s then marked the emergence of the sexually marginalized group in Georgia: street, train station and road sex workers. If low ‘price tags’ in the Soviet Union were coming with a risk of getting disease or running into ‘klofelinshitsa,’<sup>4</sup> street sex workers in post-Soviet Georgia were most vulnerable to rape, violence and racketeering. The majority (71.9%) of FSWs in Tbilisi were from other cities of Georgia, different from their current place of work (Gabiani and Melikishvili 1993, 12).

The emergence of sex work in Tbilisi since the 1980s and in the 1990s was linked to societal and state attitudes toward it which showed both commonalities with and differences to sex work in other cultures and societies. Renzikowski (2007) has generally distinguished four societal attitudes to sex work, both

negative and positive: first, sex work is a violation of human dignity; the stigma and discrimination include prejudice, negative attitudes, violence, verbal abuse and poor treatment directed at people living with HIV; second, sex work is (merely) a violation of moral principles or an offense against common decency; third, sex work is an autonomous decision to work in a risky profession; and fourth, it is an occupation like any other (The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2007).

Sex work and prostitution are terms that are often used interchangeably to refer to the exchange of sexual labor for money (Orchard 2019, 2) when engaged adult participants consent and have not been coerced or trafficked. Advocates argue that sex work is a matter of individual choice and accepting the term sex work/worker itself can be a step to decriminalizing all aspects of adult prostitution, making it safer and reducing gender- and occupation-based exploitation. The term galvanized sex worker rights movements and helped unify people in the sex trade with other marginalized communities, such as migrant and immigrant groups, human rights coalitions, workplace safety advocates and different agencies that promote the well-being of women, girls and others (Jeffreys 2015).

There were several categories of FSWs in Tbilisi from 1991 until recently: (a) street-, (b) sauna- (or bathhouse-), (c) hotel- and (d) cell phone-based. Additionally, there are escort agencies and private homes. Each category of FSW is generally found in different locations and serves different types of clients. Thus, each category represents a type of ‘status’ among FSWs. The Informational Medical Psychological Centre Tanadgoma<sup>5</sup> is working with street-, sauna- (bathhouse-) and hotel-based FSWs (Curatio International Foundation and Tanadgoma C. f. I. a. C. o. R. H. 2012).

The Bio-behavioral Surveillance Survey (Chikovani et al. 2012) in Tbilisi in 2012 selected street-based FSWs since they were easier to locate, less educated and less likely to be aware of the dangers associated with high-risk behaviors: easier to access because there are no pimps, likely to be at a higher risk of sexually transmitted infections and/or HIV due to having a more significant number of clients, and least likely to be able to afford testing and treatment. According to the survey, economic problems can cause people, primarily women, to enter sex work to satisfy their basic needs (e.g. food, clothing and education). Sex work is widespread in bars, hotels and massage parlors, seemingly incorporating underage people into their practices (Coalition for Equality 2021). Commercial sex represents the only source of income (83.7% in Tbilisi in 2012) for the vast majority of FSWs at both survey locations.<sup>6</sup> Those who reported having another source of income worked mainly as street vendors. In addition, the vast majority of FSWs (90% in Tbilisi) have financial dependents.

Georgian legislation after 1991 does not envisage the terms ‘sex work’ or ‘sex worker’: The Administrative Offences Code of Georgia and the Criminal Code of Georgia use the term ‘prostitution,’ which means sex work.<sup>7</sup> The code does not provide any definition or explanation of what constitutes prostitution.

National laws frame the broad policy approach to sex work that a country chooses. However, Georgia is not a country that chooses well-known ‘policy regimes,’ such

as the prohibition of sex work (Belgium), the criminalization of clients (Finland)<sup>8</sup> or the legalization of sex work and sex facilities (Germany) (Scoular 2010). Under Article N1723 of the Administrative Offences Code of Georgia, “sex work shall carry a warning or a fine of up to one-half of the minimum wage.”<sup>9</sup>

“We do not have a definition of prostitution in law, that makes it hard to prove that a person is involved in sex work,” said Tamar Dekanoidze, a lawyer who does strategic human rights litigations and focuses on women’s rights, nondiscrimination and health rights in the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA), in an interview (personal communication, November 22, 2019).<sup>10</sup>

When a police officer monitors the streets and sees women standing in a well-known sex work area, he/she is sure that they are sex workers, but by legislation, he cannot prove it, so he will request the women to leave the territory. Sex workers report that they are often charged with noncompliance with a lawful order or the demand of a law enforcement officer (Art. 173 of the code) rather than for sex work. Such cases happen because there is no definition of sex work in the Administrative Offences Code and determining guilt for sex work requires a set definition for the act.

(Tamar Dekanoidze, personal communication, November 22, 2019)

As the article on sex work envisages a warning or fine up to one-half of the minimum wage,<sup>11</sup> the fine shall be defined as a maximum of 20 GEL. Under the above article (Art. N1723), if sex work is committed repeatedly – within one year after the imposition of an administrative penalty – it shall carry a fine from one-half to one minimum wage. Victims of human trafficking and a person declared to be a victim of the crime provided in Articles 1431 and 1432 of the Criminal Code of Georgia should be released from administrative liability if they committed the act due to being trafficked before obtaining the status of a victim of human trafficking (GYLA 2018, 16).

If a person engages in sex work based on her/his free will, this act does not constitute a crime. Engagement in sex work and making available an area or dwelling place for sex work are crimes for which a person who engaged another person in sex work or has made the dwelling available is criminally responsible (the sex worker is not criminally responsible).<sup>12</sup> Such sentencing options are framed by the policy (i.e. administrative law), which, in this case, it can be argued, is responsible for an overwhelming amount of the harm experienced by workers.

According to information provided by the Georgian Ministry of Interior Affairs, sex work among women sex workers<sup>13</sup> is defined by year. No incidents (of fining for sex work) were recorded from 2005 to 2015. According to these statistics, the highest recorded level of sex work was 41 incidents in Tbilisi in 2015. The Tbilisi City Court heard 38 cases under Art. 1722 (sex work), where the administrative offender was a woman. In 2016, the court heard three similar cases. There were no cases filed under this article in 2010–2014 or the first five months of 2017.<sup>14</sup>

According to lawyers, the Georgian Ministry does not have records because sex workers are charged not for sex work but for resistance to a lawful order. Noncompliance with a lawful order or demand of a law enforcement officer, verbal abuse of

or any other abusive act against such a person while in the line of duty shall carry a fine from GEL 250 to 2000 or an administrative penalty of up to 15 days, states the law. Therefore, the responsibility under Art. 173 is more serious (envisages a higher fine and administrative detention) than sex work (Art. N1723). Sex workers stated that they were often imposed fines for disobeying police orders rather than for sex work. The fine for this offense is several hundred GEL (much more than for sex work), which the sex workers most often could not pay.<sup>15</sup> According to respondents of qualitative research in 2017, police officers are driving FSWs from their working places and arresting them for blocking traffic or resisting police. Eventually, FSWs end up with fines and/or in pretrial detention isolation. In multiple cases, FSWs were mistreated, their families were informed and their right to counsel was violated (Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadgoma and Alternative Georgia 2018). This charge is easier and more profitable for the government and police, in addition, sex work does not appear anywhere. If there are no records, cases do not appear in statistics.

The number of cases connected to sex workers is also limited since the Administrative Offences Code does not identify a person/body authorized to issue the administrative offenses protocol for sex work. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, according to the code, does not have the authority to issue the protocol on sex work. Chapter N3 of the code identifies the authorized bodies for hearing administrative offenses. None of these bodies envisage hearing sex work under Art. 1723. A police officer is authorized to detain a sex worker to prevent an administrative offense (when other measures are exhausted) or to issue an administrative offenses protocol if it is not possible to issue the protocol on the spot. Respectively, if it is possible to issue the protocol on the spot and it is not necessary to detain a sex worker to prevent an administrative offense, there is no legal provision to authorize a law enforcement officer to issue an administrative offenses protocol.

In conclusion, it should be said that sex workers living or working in Tbilisi are regularly subjected to physical, psychological and sexual violence, or coercion by the police (Coalition for Equality 2021).<sup>16</sup> Imposing administrative responsibility on sex workers for sex work and the lack of compliance with the police officer's order when the facts of sex work could not be confirmed proved to be a concerning issue. Government policies introduced in the 1990s that were more repressive than the national law not only promoted the environment of fear, degrading treatment, physical and/or sexual abuse but also created the spaces of unresolved relationships between state and sex work: spaces of constant alert.

Thus, the analysis of the legal framework and political handling of sex work reveals a two-sided picture: on the one hand, sex work in Georgia from the state perspective does not exist, on the other hand, regarding the perspectives of sex workers, they experience police violence and a life without any kind of protection. In both respects, however, the legal framework and the political handling of sex work play an important role in shaping societal attitudes. It is clear that power shapes the distribution of stigma on sex workers and, therefore, brings up the question whether enforcement implementers are powerful actors in this distribution (Kleinman and Hall-Clifford 2009).

### Stigmatization of sex workers as social practice

Stigma, deliberately and surreptitiously, shapes laws, regulations, practices, institutions and policies. It undermines the effectiveness and fairness of the regulation of sex work and generally results in the social marginalization of sex workers. A study on the role of stigma in sex workers' experience of the implementation of the prostitution policy in the Hague provides a new theoretical insight that suggests that rule enforcers, in many cases, seem to contribute to this stigmatization (Buitenhuis 2017).

As for Georgia, Anzor Gabiani,<sup>17</sup> head of the Georgian Research Laboratory for the Sociology of Crime, stated in his book chapter "On special measures combating prostitution":

Proceeding to the presentation of our considerations about special measures to combat prostitution, we want to immediately declare that we are against the legal prohibition of practicing this *craft*. We are for the reasonable regulation within the framework of a more humane and even merciful attitude towards prostitutes, who, for their good, will have to be subjected to some restrictions. This incorporates all aspects, including morals. It is fully justified, at least in the face of the deadly danger of the impending 'plague of the twentieth century – AIDS.'

(Gabiani and Melikishvili 1993)

If we take a closer look into some memories of former sex workers and social workers, it becomes clear why the authors of the book *The Social Face of Women Delinquents and Prostitutes* (Gabiani and Melikishvili 1993) were favoring 'reasonable regulations.' George Gotsadze, CEO of the Curatio International Foundation, a nongovernmental research organization in Tbilisi focusing on health policy and systems research, remembered late Soviet practices as follows:

In Soviet times, raids were a common practice. Police brigades would attack the women (sex workers), seize them, and take them to the dispensary under the guise of the fight against syphilis. They would stuff the car with prostitutes, deliver them to the institution, and then suddenly, every one of them was infected with syphilis and was going through aggressive treatment. Locked up in semi-barrack rooms, until they had undergone a course of treatment.

(Personal communication, December 2, 2019)

According to him, the treatment of sex workers had not changed much until the late 1990s and was shaped by various forms of violence:

However, in the late 1990s, during the presidency of Shevardnadze, prostitution was not on display, but the situation was pretty much the same. Again, they were (sex workers) picked up by particular operation unit by cargo trucks, beaten with truncheons [...] They would drive women to Gori

and drop them there or somewhere else [the directions varied, it could have been on the highways of Rustavi or Kakheti]. Those women had hard times coming back. There was terrible police violence: taking their money, rape, psychological violence.

(Personal communication, December 2, 2019)

The Soviet practices described by sex workers and social workers of a later period show the tendencies of the government toward strict and forceful measures regarding women working in the streets. These measures were oriented to punishment, sex workers were victims of the industry, their clients or passersby, and of the state, who became their biggest enemy and offender.

Social workers underline the fact that from the end of the 2000s, during the presidency of Michel Saakashvili (2004–2013), which had reformed the Soviet period *milicja*<sup>18</sup> by transforming them into *patruli*,<sup>19</sup> the situation began to change. Since then, raids against sex workers have only been carried out occasionally. However, the struggle with amorality and criminal behavior with the sex workers as targets became a usual pretext and crucial component of the election campaigns of the governments under Saakashvili. As the sex industry was a visible phenomenon of public concern, raids on Tbilisi brothels transmitted through the TV show ‘Patruli’<sup>20</sup> became the signature of the Saakashvili rulership. Based on administrative law, state organs aimed at protecting the interests of public order (e.g. the prevention of noise, quarrels and other offenses) by regulating street prostitution. Another aim was to prevent HIV (AIDS) or other sexually transmitted diseases. Several respondents pointed out these facts of discrimination of the sex worker and mentioned such cases which took place several times a week.

Reports from 2012 to 2019 and interviews carried out within the ‘Urban Ethics’ research project 2018–2021 with sex workers show a regression in attitude.

Nana (29 years old), a street sex worker, said:

Police officers often approach us at our usual site, they are rude, yelling from a car to get out, cursing at us, and they can quickly push you. If you respond, ‘Where can I go?’, they respond with cursing. After provoking us, they will turn their cameras on; it looks like we were the ones who started the fight while they are protecting the order. F\*\*\*ing heroes. They call us ‘citizens’ only when the camera is on. In the end, we are detained, fined, and abused.

**Moderator:** How often do you experience violence at your workplace by clients, passersby and pimps?

**Respondent 2:** When they walk past us, they throw half-eaten apples and banana skins at us, they have even thrown eggs at us, and sometimes they spit at us and curse at us.

**Respondent 6:** Last year, two boys came to us while we were on the riverside, they were under the influence of drugs and they beat me severely, kicked me, and hit me with a rod in my stomach. I was beaten for half an hour. Other girls were standing there, looking very scared, and when they came to their senses, they called the police. I was pregnant, and I started

bleeding. Had they not called an ambulance, I would have probably died (FGD no. 1, Tbilisi).

(Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadgoma and Alternative Georgia 2018, 35)

Sophio Rusetski, representative of the Gender Department of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia, said in an interview:

Violence against sex workers has not been reported to the Public Defender's Office, although there have been many reports of transgender women engaged in sex work, and there have been cases where the Public Defender's hotline received reports almost daily as this subgroup is the most vulnerable. [...] Regarding the number of women involved in sex work, we have one statement regarding discrimination,<sup>21</sup> the discriminatory nature of the administrative law. In general, not violence, although the statement details the facts of violence against sex workers.

Since sex workers do not contact us, we have no cases of sex work (we mean female sex workers) even in terms of violence. Regarding cases of discrimination, we currently have a statement on which the fact of occurrence has not yet been established. The fact is that the state punishes the person who engages in sex work and does not punish the client, not because we want the client to be punished, but the problem is in the very approach, which is discriminatory. Sex work is practiced by a person, mostly by women.

(Personal communication, January 13, 2020)

This interview was held in the Public Defender's Office in autumn 2019. A lawsuit on this case was only registered in 2020 under the name *Opinion of a friend of the court*: Author – Public Defender of Georgia. On June 22, 2018, a FSW applied to the Public Defender's Office to investigate the facts of human rights violations against her. According to the statement, she became involved in sex work ten years previously due to her difficult social conditions. This document addresses violations of the rights of sex workers and uses information provided by the applicant and information obtained by the Public Defender. According to the FSW, she has often been the victim of economic and psychological violence by clients and third parties (passersby) during her activities. She said that the number of psychological and economic violence cases against her by clients is so frequent that it is difficult to name even the approximate number. Psychological violence against the applicant is often manifested in verbal abuse. By contrast, economic violence is manifested in outsiders' systematic demand for a certain amount of money in exchange for a 'permit' to stand in a particular place.<sup>22</sup>

### **Restorative justice: concept and compatibility to Georgia after 1991**

The concept of restorative justice subsumes various approaches to wrongdoing, including minor- and middle-seriousness offenses. The approaches share that violation of law and conduct codes cause negative impacts beyond those to the direct



victim (Koss 2000, 1624). As we use the concept, consideration is given to the victim, the perpetrator of the transgression, and the community and social network to which each actor belongs (Koss and Bletzer 2013). This will be our starting point, as (1) prostitution in Georgia is a violation of administrative offenses that violates public order. The number of acts related to prostitution are criminal offenses. (2) Vigilant actions of law enforcement agencies, the misuse of law and the abuse of power by the police authority can be considered a cause of the negative impact for victims (e.g. prostitutes) and their families. (3) The ‘practice’ of pillory from different state agencies in Georgia gives local community members, including clients, a green light to abuse representatives of marginalized groups physically and verbally without fear of punishment.

Restorative justice in North America (Canada, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, USA) was introduced for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual assault cases. Though it is viewed as an alternative to criminal justice, notions of civic responsibility differ within and across societies, and practices criminalized in one country can be legal or undefined in another ((CICS), November 15, 2018 – November 16, 2018). While exploring possibilities and problems of applying restorative justice for adult sex work in Georgia, we came out with two essential questions: Why is restorative justice needed and is it possible to apply it to sex work?

The application of restorative justice aims at the reconceptualization of the victim, assumptions about the source of harm, definitions of the offending party and an understanding of what is needed to repair the harm (Lewis 2010). Without defining sex work or what constitutes sex work, the definition of crime and the notion of victim and offender is quite blurry; that is what creates space for abuse and denigrating attitudes. Restorative justice diversion programs and the laws they are based on for people working in the sex industry (PWSI) and for their clients are the conceptualizations of harm and the harmed that are the basis of the programs (Lewis 2010). Recent studies (Pavlich 2005; Lewis 2010; Bletzer and Koss 2013) argue that harm representation and conceptualization of harm (imposed by the prostitution laws) are necessary to examine how the concept of restorative justice has been or can be, in our case, applied to sex work.

The application of restorative justice to sex work in Canada typically takes the form of diversion programs aimed at street-based workers and their clients (Anon 2018). Such programs aim to demonstrate the harmful nature of the industry and its adverse effects on the sex worker and community, thereby discouraging involvement in it or reducing recidivism among customers arrested for the first time (Lewis 2010, 290).

We will try to prove the need for restorative justice, despite the Georgian situation of sex work in some grey areas, the undefined character of victim and offender and other flowing issues. Within the research project, informants on this topic were PWSI, nongovernmental organizations, LGBTQ and sex workers advocacy groups, lawyers’ associations oriented on women and economic social and cultural rights areas of work (e.g. GYLA). In addition to interviews,

we included court and policy documents that show the use of the authority of the courts to reduce prostitution crimes by providing punishment of sex workers on unclear legal grounds.

Sex workers often become victims of physical and psychological violence precisely when they commit an act prohibited by the disputed norm. The ban and the sanction imposed by the disputed norm force the sex workers to hide the violence against them: not to report the cases of beatings, torture, inhuman, degrading treatment and forms of verbal abuse to the law enforcement agencies. In order to approach the investigative bodies about violence against them, they would have to name activities that are prohibited by the disputed norm. This circumstance will lead to the punishment of socially particularly vulnerable sex workers and the punishment of the perpetrator of the violence.

From the perspective of restorative justice, there are multiple victims, including direct victims, family and friends of victims and perpetrators, and community members who experience less safety and social connection when they perceive high levels of crime and low deterrence (Koss 2014). When it comes to sex work, an important obstacle for implementing restorative justice approaches can be seen in Georgian law, as the conceptualizations of victim and offender are not as clear-cut as the framing of current programs/policies in North America and Australia would suggest. Within this framing, the victims are the community and the sex worker, with community concerns given priority (Lewis 2010, 291). The broader structural and cultural situation in Georgia must be studied to understand that particular context.

According to the disputed norm, sex work causes administrative-legal responsibility. Punishing a person for sex work is against the Constitution of Georgia. Sex workers experience physical and psychological violence to which victims cannot respond legally as their activities are punishable.<sup>23</sup> Although most sex workers in the streets of the big cities of Georgia want to leave the industry, respective assistance available in other countries (e.g. Canada) does not exist in Georgia. However, they wanted to be free to do their work without the daily fear of violating the law and being detected and harassed by police (Lewis 2010, 293).

As a result of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in May 2017, amendments were made in the Georgian legislation (entered into force on June 1, 2017), which expanded the mechanisms and services against violence. Under the amendments, these mechanisms are available not only for victims of domestic violence but also for all victims of gender-based violence. They can be applied to sex workers who experience violence from a family member, a client, a former client or another person (GYLA 2018, 18).

A constitutional suit “S.M. vs. Parliament of Georgia” was registered on October 3, 2018, to declare the disputed norm unconstitutional. Therefore, this type of legal framework results in a substantial deprivation of access to justice and the violation of the right to equality before the law. Plaintiff S.M. was a FSW. No disputed norm had been applied to her. Nevertheless, due to the plaintiff’s activities, there was a risk of future use of the disputed norm.

The study of violence against FSWs and their access to justice in Georgia revealed that all laws and practices related to sex work must be analyzed regarding gender-based violence and intersectional discrimination. This is one of the main conclusions and recommendations from the GYLA:

Structural inequality, which sex workers (women, transgender, and men sex workers) experience because of their marginalization and social status, affects the decision of sex workers to enter and remain in prostitution, and the repressive legislation hinders their access to legal remedies to protect themselves from violence.

(GYLA 2018, 28)

Other concerns of sex workers raised by organizations such as GYLA include, first, physical violence because of their sexual orientation or gender identity (beating, rape)<sup>24</sup>; second, abuse of human rights against FSWs, involving different structures (law enforcement structures, religious groups, legal institutions); and third, abuse of human rights against FSWs in receiving healthcare and medical services after medical personnel identified them as sex workers. The FSWs are treated with indifference; they also fail to perform their duties, fail to report violence to law enforcement, the confidentiality of their personal information is not protected and they experience degrading treatment.<sup>25</sup>

The limited visibility of women, particularly those belonging to marginalized groups (e.g. FSWs), is apparent in Georgian legislation and society. In 2018, GYLA issued a recommendation to the Parliament of Georgia, the Ministry of Interior, the Chief Prosecutor's Office, the Common Courts and the Government of Georgia to minimize cases of inhuman treatment and power abuse. To move engagement in sex work (including of a minor) to the relevant chapter of the criminal code, which will classify the crime as a crime against human rights or sexual freedom,<sup>26</sup> is one of the first recommendations, as well as the demand for effective investigation and punishment of the abuse of power, gender-based violence and other crimes committed by law enforcement officials against sex workers. This is in cooperation with the community of sex workers. The protection of the human rights of sex workers shall be the focal point for all decisions and policies (GYLA 2018, 29).

The proposal of 2018 mentioned above makes the application of restorative justice to sex work in Georgia via the legislation and socio-cultural structure of society used currently problematic because the attitudes translated through the state reinforce discriminatory laws and their associated harms. State laws and policies put PWSI in harm's way and reinforce stereotyping and marginalization. "Community is broken and there is a pain for its members [...] There is a sense of separation, of being disconnected from the rest of the community" (cited in Sharpe 1998, 10). Lewis (2010) states that the goal of restorative justice programs is to help people get back together, "its goal is to reintegrate 'us' with 'them' into a larger society" (Sharpe 1998).

## **Conclusion**

Regarding urban ethics, it is crucial to understand what urban dwellers articulate as a ‘good life’ and “living in the right way, what has been taken for granted or seen as normal and morally sound. Urban ethics can be understood as a field of interaction in which a range of actors in cities negotiate moral and social ideals, principles and norms (Dürr et al. 2020, 2)”. As restorative justice focuses on values such as respect for human dignity, responsibility and justice between people in the relationship with nonhumans and the environment (European Forum for Restorative Justice 2020), both restorative justice and urban ethics aim to strengthen relationships to create safe, peace oriented, inclusive living conditions. The broader aim is the well-being of people and communities. Therefore, it is assumed that ethical debates negotiate and pay attention to mechanisms of judgment and legal framework.

Sex work and decriminalization remain one of the picky issues in mainstream urban discourse. This is not only because of different positionalities of gender and sexualities but also the emerging modes of organizing around queering urban space approaches to understanding the shifting sexual and gendered landscapes in the capital city of Georgia. Some of the biggest problems facing marginalized groups in cities, including sex workers and queer people, are economic precarity, violence and unjust and brutal policing. Lawyers outside mainstream institutions of criminal justice, including GYLA, are foregrounding debates involving questions of safe spaces, claims on space and working rights in cities by particularly marginalized urban residents and the necessity of changes in discriminatory policies and unjust political-economic systems.

Restorative justice has demonstrated its effectiveness in addressing the underlying causes and generating solutions to many contemporary social problems, including acts and behaviors within a relational context, and which usually strengthens socially constructed gendered discourses and dynamics (European Forum for Restorative Justice 2019).

One way to judge the justness of a state and its policies is by looking at how the most marginalized members of the society are treated (Lewis 2010, 294). Relevant questions in this regard are: Why marginalized members or groups of society are reluctant to apply to the police when subjected to violence by clients? How can we change the existing societal stigmata, which vary concerning women and men? Who benefits from the exploitation of women? How can justice for Georgian sex workers be restored?

In Georgia, the state acts as an agent of morality because the legal situation of sex workers is blurred. However, the state is allowed to restrict the right to free personal development only when the latter causes tangible harm to third parties. It is unclear what tangible harm can be done to third parties by relationships that start with a person’s means of communication (telephone or internet) and end with a person’s bedroom. People have complete freedom of action, isolation from the rest of the world. The state does not have the right to propagate a particular understanding of morality against the right to personal development only because it considers

it wrong, unreasonable, and wrong for a person to decide about her/his sex life based on existing traditions and customs.<sup>27</sup>

The necessity of implementing restorative justice becomes clear by looking at what the state does for the most marginalized community members. For this to occur, the Georgian Administrative Procedure Code regarding limited recognition of sex work has been changed and, subsequently, frames of restorative justice need to be modified and incorporated into policy. The first step will be the rethinking of the conceptualization of victims and offenders, broadening the concept of harm and implementing policies reintegrating PWSI into the community. The GYLA is the most important agent for change and restorative justice in Georgia.

Sex work belongs to a group of activities with an exceptionally high stigma, prejudices and discrimination in society and government agencies. Sex workers are often subjected to various sanctions, and they are shunned by society because they do not conform to social, sexual and gender norms. Criminalization and penalization of sex work contribute to the stigmatization of sex workers throughout their entire life. Society perceives them as immoral and irresponsible offenders who deserve punishment, judgment and even violence because of their conduct.<sup>28</sup>

Prostitution is not an isolated phenomenon in the urban landscape but instead a symptom of larger trends in the changing global political economy and the ensuing struggles for identity, recognition, human rights and citizenship that flow from it. It is an undeniable element of urban life that is best accepted and treated so that the safety of sex workers and the quality of life of inner-city neighborhoods are protected (Wagenaar, Amesberger and Altink 2017, 155).

Further systemic changes to protect sex workers in Georgia from gender-based violence and ensure their access to justice are needed in legislation, policy and practice to eradicate human rights abuses resulting from sex work, target the root causes of these abuses and ensure substantive equality for women.

## Notes

- 1 If you are charged with an administrative offense, you have been charged with a violation of the law, but your offense is not serious enough to be considered criminal. An administrative offense differs from a criminal offense in that the violation is considered less serious.
- 2 For general information on the history of Georgia after 1991, see Austin, Ian, and Glen A. Jones, eds. 2015. *Governance of Higher Education: Global Perspectives, Theories, and Practices*. New York: Routledge.
- 3 'The Shevardnadze years' refers to the years 1992–2003 when Eduard Shevardnadze, the former First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party and Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev, was first Chairman of the Georgian Parliament (1882–1995) and the President of Georgia (1995–2003). The 'Gardabani highway' is located 40 km from Tbilisi.
- 4 *Klein* (Russian *Klofelin*; Clonidine was patented in 1961 and came into medical use in 1966) became famous because of its usage as a drug for criminal purposes: When it is added to alcohol, it puts the victim into an unconscious state; this often resulted in the death of the victim. There are many cases of such use of clonidine by prostitutes on their clients. That is how the term '*Klofelinshitsa*' appeared.

- 5 The services of Tanadgoma, which works throughout the country, are accessible for the general population of reproductive age. The organization focuses particularly on and elaborates proactive programs for women and vulnerable, high-risk behavior groups (key populations): men who have sex with men, injecting drug users, commercial sex workers, young people, prison inmates, the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community, victims of trafficking, people living with HIV and internally displaced people.
- 6 In other cities, such as Batumi, it is higher (87%), as the Bio-behavioural Surveillance Survey in Tbilisi and Batumi states (Chikovani et al. 2012).
- 7 The human rights literature, apart from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (which uses the term ‘prostitution’), uses primarily the term ‘sex worker.’
- 8 Clients are punished with fines or prison sentences of up to six months if they accept sexual services from victims of human trafficking.
- 9 Under the Order of the President of Georgia of June 4, 1999, the amount of a minimum wage is 20 GEL (12 EUR). The minimum wage for fines and other duties was determined as 40 GEL: 2013 – 20 GEL (11 EUR), 2016 – 20 GEL (8 EUR) and 2019 – 20 GEL (7 EUR).
- 10 The GYLA provides legal consultation free of charge. Every year, it addresses the Constitutional Court of Georgia and the European Court of Human Rights in strategically essential cases to protect human rights. The organization actively cooperates with all three branches of government and supports creating legislative guarantees to protect human rights.
- 11 According to today’s data, the minimum wage in the private sector is set at 20 GEL, and in the public sector at 135 GEL, National Statistics Office of Georgia (GeoStat).
- 12 According to information provided by the Georgian Ministry of Interior Affairs, instances of prostitution among women sex workers are defined by year. According to these statistics, the highest recorded level of prostitution was 41 incidents in Tbilisi in 2015. This is followed by Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti (regions of Georgia) in 2013 when 19 incidents were recorded (GYLA 2018). First instance court decisions under Art. 173 of the code, where the offender was a woman, were analyzed to examine the above facts and the adequacy of the proceedings: in 2010–2017 (May), the Tbilisi City Court heard 421 cases.
- 13 It does not include transgender sex workers or man sex workers.
- 14 Letter of Tbilisi City Court, N3-0486/1977239, June 22, 2017.
- 15 Gender-Based Violence against Sex Workers and Barriers to Accessing Justice: International Standards and Experience in Georgia (GYLA 2018, 24).
- 16 A study conducted in 2014 showed that the majority of respondents were subject to physical abuse, beatings by a client, coercion by police for cooperation, verbal abuse by the police, requesting sexual contact by the police without compensation, and refusal of service by medical staff, among other things. Discrimination against sex workers is provoked by their gender and sex work-related stigma. ISSA, HERA XXI, “Research on the factors that identify the needs of sex workers and the causes of discrimination,” 2014.
- 17 Founder of the Scientific Research Center for Problems of Fighting Criminals of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia in 1993.
- 18 In the Soviet Union and many Eastern Bloc states, as well as in some post-Soviet successor states (until 2011 in Russia), the police were known as militia (milicija).
- 19 Analogue of US police patrolling. The goals and objectives of which include crime prevention, criminal apprehension, and law enforcement in different districts of the city.
- 20 Popular nonfiction series that provided viewers an unfiltered look at law enforcement officers in action on the channel Rustavi 2 through 2007 to 2010. Usually aired in the late evening.

- 21 International human rights norms (including the practice of the European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court) recognize violence against women as a form of discrimination. General Recommendation N19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women defines that “gender-based violence is a form of discrimination, which seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men.”
- 22 Amicus Curiae. Public Defender’s Office, Georgia. (Sup. Ct. of Georgia 2020). <https://www.constcourt.ge/ka/judicial-acts?legal=1426>.
- 23 Within the framework of the study, decisions based on Art. 172 of the Administrative Offences Code from 2007 to 2017 were obtained from courts in Tbilisi, Batumi, Gori, Zugdidi, Telavi, and Kutaisi City/Regional. Based on the information provided, only Tbilisi City Court had ruled on administrative offenses cases on prostitution.
- 24 The majority of the respondents in the “Discrimination survey conducted among 120 LGBT in Georgia” by the Inclusive Foundation in cooperation with ILGA-Europe/COC Netherlands in February 2006, reported having experienced different types of discriminative or violent acts because someone knew or presumed them to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersex and transgender. Only six cases have been reported, and none of the victims of discrimination felt satisfied with the outcomes.
- 25 Every third respondent (33%) believes that the antidiscrimination law approved by the Parliament of Georgia in 2014 will not change anything in terms of protecting the rights of sex workers and eliminating facts of discrimination; 44% of the respondents find it difficult to answer this question. Only 15.2% expect a positive result by introducing an antidiscrimination law (9% of sex workers have never heard of this law). The legalization of prostitution in Georgia is supported by most respondents (71%). A majority (67%) believe that legalizing prostitution will reduce sex worker discrimination, while 85% believe that sexually transmitted infections (HIV/AIDS) will decrease.
- 26 The subject of the dispute is the inconsistency of the prohibition of prostitution with the first and second paragraphs of Article 17 of the Constitution. In its judgment of May 11, 2018, in the case of Tamar Tandashvili v. Parliament of Georgia, the Constitutional Court of Georgia declared in paragraph 53 of the second chapter: “In the present case, the state, to achieve a legitimate aim, uses human [...] vulnerability as a means to achieve a specific public goal and a priori turns the disputed norm into a violation of human dignity.”
- 27 S.M. vs. Parliament of Georgia. Constitutional Claim N1354, October 3, 2018. <https://www.constcourt.ge/ka/judicial-acts?legal=1426>.
- 28 Amnesty International Policy, p. 9.

## References

- Allmendiger, P., and Haughton, G., 2012. Post-political spatial planning in England: A crisis of consensus? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 37(1), 89–103.
- Anon. 2018. *Principles and Guidelines for Restorative Justice Practice in Criminal Matters*. [online]. Available at: <https://scics.ca/en/product-produit/principles-and-guidelines-for-restorative-justice-practice-in-criminal-matters-2018/>.
- Buitenhuis, E. 2017. *The Stigmatizing and Destigmatizing Power of Prostitution Policy Enforcers*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.
- Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadgoma and Alternative Georgia. 2018. *Stigma, Discrimination, and Forms of Violence among Women Who Use Drugs and Female Sex Workers*. Tbilisi: Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadgoma and Alternative Georgia.

- Coalition for Equality. 2021. *Report of the Coalition for Equality and Other NGOs the Pre-Sessional Working Group of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 81st Session*. Tbilisi: Coalition for Equality.
- Dürr, E., Moritz, E., Moser, J., Neumann, C. K., and Winder, G. M. 2020. Urban ethics: Towards a research agenda on cities, ethics, and normativity. *City, Culture and Society*, 20(100313), 1–11.
- European Forum for Restorative Justice. 2019. *Restorative Justice and Sexual Violence*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.euforumrj.org/en/restorative-justice-and-sexual-violence> [Accessed February 12, 2022].
- Gabiani, A., and Melikishvili, L. 1993. *Social Face of Women Delinquents and Prostitutes*. Tbilisi. N.-i. center for prob. fight against the crime of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Rep. Georgia.
- Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA). 2018. *Gender-Based Violence and Barriers to Accessing Justice: International Standards and Experience in Georgia*. Tbilisi: Georgian Young Lawyers' Association.
- Government Commission on Migration Issues. 2019. *Migration Profile of Georgia, 2019*. Tbilisi: Government Commission on Migration Issues. Available at: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/12978-georgia-endorses-anti-discrimination-law.html> [Accessed October 07, 2021].
- Jeffreys, E. 2015. Sex worker politics and the term 'sex work'. *Research for Sex Work*, 14, 4–6.
- Kleinman, A., and Hall-Clifford, R. 2009. Stigma: A social, cultural, and moral process. *Epidemiol Community Health*, 63(6), 418–419.
- Koss, M. 2000. Blame, shame, and community: Justice responses to violence against women. *American Psychologist*, 55, 1332–1343.
- Koss, M. P. 2014. The restore program of restorative justice for sex crimes: Vision, process, and outcomes. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 29(9), 1623–1660.
- Koss, M. P., and Bletzer, K. V. 2013. Restorative justice and sexual assault: Outcome appraisal through textual analysis. *The Open Area Studies Journal*, 5, 1–11.
- Lewis, J. 2010. Shifting the focus: Restorative justice and sex work. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 52, 285–301.
- Madanipour, A. 2016. Space and pluralism: Can contemporary cities be places of tolerance? In: Stefano Moroni and David Weberman, eds. *Culture and Tolerance in Public Space*. Budapest: Central European University Press, pp. 36–54.
- Orchard, T. 2019. Sex work and prostitution. In: *Encyclopedia of Sexuality and Gender*. Cham: Springer, pp.1–3.
- Pavlich, G. 2005. *Governing Paradoxes of Restorative Justice*. Sydney: Glasshouse Press.
- Renzikowski, J. 2007. *Reglementierung von Prostitution: Ziele und Probleme-eine kritische Betrachtung des Prostitutionsgesetzes*, Zeitschrift für Rechtspolitik, pp.75–79.
- Restorative Justice Cities. 2020. *European Forum for Restorative Justice*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.euforumrj.org/en/restorative-cities> [Accessed February 12, 2022].
- Scoular, J. 2010. What's law got to do with it? How and why law matters in the regulation of sex work. *Journal of Law and Society*, 37(1), 12–39.
- Sharpe, S. 1998. *Restorative Justice: A Version for Healing and Change*. Edmonton: Mediation and Restorative Justice Centre.
- Shaver, F. M. 2005. Sex work research: Methodological and ethical challenges. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20(3), 296–319.
- Tanadgoma, C. f. I. a. C. o. R. H. 2012. *HIV Risk and Prevention Behavior among Female Sex Workers in Two Cities of Georgia*. Tbilisi: Curatio International Foundation.



The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. 2007. *Report by the Federal Government on the Impact of the Act Regulating the Legal Situation of Prostitutes (Prostitution Act)*. Berlin: The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the SHIP Project. 2007. *Characteristics, High-Risk Behaviors, and Knowledge of STI/HIV/AIDS and STI/HIV Prevalence of Street-based Female Sex Workers in Tbilisi in Tbilisi, Georgia: 2002–2006*. Tbilisi: Tanadgoma – Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health.

Wagenaar, H., Amesberger, H., and Altink, S. 2017. *Designing Prostitution Policy: Intention and Reality in Regulating the Sex Trade*. Bristol: Policy Press.

## 7 Traversing troubled waters

### Emergent ethics and pandemic politics

*John Clarke*

I reflect in this chapter on some of the emerging – and conflicted – ethical orientations that have taken shape on the terrain created by the pandemic. The issues that I explore occurred in the unsettled space between ethics and politics as people, parties and projects sought to make sense of, respond to and direct collective responses to the impacts of COVID-19. The chapter begins and ends with some thoughts about this distinction between ethics and politics which form the framework for exploring four issues that illuminate the complications of the distinction in practice:

- The emergent ethics of separations and solidarities as people struggled to respond to new challenges of living together and apart;
- The politics of lives, livelihoods and liberties as conflicts broke out about when economies could be reopened;
- The trouble with ‘normal’ as a focus of popular and political desires; and
- The political and ethical conflicts that emerged over racialized inequalities in pandemic times.

Two orienting points are worth making regarding the idea of emergent ethics that frames the discussion. First, I borrow the idea of *emergent* from Raymond Williams (1977). When thinking about concrete ‘historical analysis’ (as opposed to ‘epochal’ framings), he wrote about the importance of triangulating dominant, residual and emergent formations of culture and cultural practices. He used ‘emergent’ to point to the rise of new questions and new demands that cannot be framed or contained within the currently dominant formation (although noting that dominant formations will always try to subdue or incorporate the emergent). I use this sense of ‘emergent’ in what follows to locate public responses to the pandemic that sought to craft new relationships and practices.

Second, I am treating ‘ethics’ as a form of *everyday* practical reasoning, justification and claims-making by situated social actors. It has some similarities to what Lambek (2010) and others have called ‘ordinary ethics.’ Lambek suggests that ethics has become a focus of attention (in anthropology and elsewhere) because the idea of ethics “serves as a cover term for acknowledging and exploring the richness and complexity of living, of human being in an imperfect world,

and the challenges raised or encountered, acknowledged or renounced. In a word, ethics concerns existence” (2015, 18). His approach has been taken up by others to explore everyday ethical reasoning (e.g. Barnett 2011; Barnett and Bridge 2017). I have two reservations about Lambek’s conception, despite its suggestive and productive qualities. The all-encompassing character of Lambek’s view of ‘the ethical’ makes me nervous: It apparently knows no bounds and the whole of human life is there. I will suggest here that ethics might be better understood as one *register* through which human reasoning and argument about “existence” and its troubles take place. Like Didier Fassin (2015), I am interested in the boundaries that separate ‘ethics’ from ‘politics’ and in how those boundaries are defined, blurred, traversed and policed. Fassin challenged Lambek’s separation of politics and ethics by arguing for the importance of holding together

the sense of the human good and the leverage of the social forces, the recognition of others and the forms of domination, moral judgment and power relations, values and interests – and ultimately to restore an intellectual space of tensions, contradictions, and sometimes aporia: the troubled waters where ethics and politics meet.

(2015, 207)

‘Troubled waters’ invokes an intellectual space for such explorations – and the pandemic has certainly been the site of such troubles.

There is a more particular point concerning our understanding of the situated reasoning that produces ‘everyday ethics.’ Some time ago, the late Clive Barnett and I were working on related projects (about cultures of consumption) and had a productive (for me) argument about how to think about these social actors making sense of their own practices. Clive suggested that they resembled ‘little Habermasians’ reasoning in public debates, while I thought that they might be better understood as ‘little Bakhtinians,’ negotiating heteroglossic or polyvocal contexts. Such subjects engage in what Pennycook calls “borrowing, bending and blending” (2007, 47), using existing resources to create new connections between things, practices and people. This view borrows from Holland and Lave’s Bakhtinian argument that social conflicts and struggles “produce occasions on which participants are ‘addressed’ with great intensity and ‘answer’ intensely in their turn” (2001, 10). In the process, such participants draw upon “the languages, dialects, genres, and words of others” that are in circulation (Holland and Lave 2001, 11).

By *ethics* in this sense, I want to highlight the more or less reasoned ways in which people either account for acting or demand action, treating ‘ethics’ as one of the registers in which such accounts may be offered. In accounting for themselves – or demanding accounts from others – people act as situated social subjects, drawing on different repertoires of cultural resources to make cases and demands or to incite others to act. In this, I agree with Fassin’s argument that “the ethical signification of political stances is contingent on the historical setting, cultural background, and social context” (2015, 206). Ethical puzzles, conflicts and stances proliferated during the first two years of COVID-19’s complex trajectory – for

example, in arguments over how to organize support for those ‘at risk,’ around vaccination (forms of obligation, compulsion and global inequalities of distribution), over what freedoms might be at risk or over obligations to protect others as well as oneself. Such issues involved claims on how we wish social relationships to be conducted and about the selves that we wish to be in those relationships. Many different ethical issues emerged during the pandemic, although in the context of my argument here, it might be more accurate to say that many issues *were framed and addressed in ethical registers*. They intersected – often uncomfortably – with other framings and other registers, notably those of politics and ‘economic realism.’

In what follows, I begin from the most banal of observations: COVID-19 has acted as a disruptor in many ways, creating severe dislocations of our established ways of living together, while proceeding along all too familiar pathways of inequality. I will focus on the disruptive dynamics of the pandemic, in particular their capacity to create the conditions of possibility for new *everyday* ethical reactions and responses to living together in hard times. More precisely, I intend to speculate about some of the emergent orientations, dispositions and practices that have come to my attention. This is not a systematic analysis nor is it a research study. Instead, it represents ‘first thoughts’ about these issues and is mostly United Kingdom (UK)-centered (given that my current work is focused on the profoundly unsettled UK in conjunctural terms).

### **The emergent ethics of separation and solidarity**

Negotiating social distance and isolation has been a widespread – albeit unevenly distributed – preoccupation during the pandemic. This was exemplified in the UK’s ‘two-meter rule’ for interpersonal spacing, itself just beyond a conversational distance (people tended to shuffle closer together during conversations that began at approximately two meters). There has also been the fraught negotiation of what were intimate moments of illness, death and loss – especially for those in care homes. Distance came to signify many things: loss, safety, government regulation (or interference) and an absence of the tactile. People struggled to find ways of managing distances, while promoting social connection, intimacy and solidarity. At the same time, distance evoked dilemmas about what to do about those who failed to observe appropriate distances, including a propensity to become angry about those not doing distance ‘properly.’ Ethical registers also involve views about the other selves that are involved in social relationships and how they should conduct themselves, a concern manifested in a similarly acrimonious issue during lockdown: the problem of proximity to ‘difficult’ neighbors. There was a 67% rise in complaints to police during 2020 about antisocial behavior by neighbors (Savage and Tapper 2021). More generally, the emergence of new regulations and codes of conduct created what Clarke and Barnett (2022) have called a site of ‘uncertainty’:

Many people were confused about government rules and guidance. This opened up space for reflection on what might count as binding for particular individuals in particular situations. We also found that prescriptions and

guidance generated a series of *dilemmas* for many people. The right thing to do was therefore rendered subject to forms of judgement regarding the balancing of multiple demands and values.

Pandemic response, we conclude, was not simply a question of compliance or non-compliance. It was experienced ethically. Abstract regulations had to be interpreted, given content, and made meaningful in practical terms and in terms of what matters. These conclusions help to advance understandings of how people responded to public health measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also, more generally, how ordinary people engage with public issues.

(Clarke and Barnett 2022; emphasis in original)

Alongside issues of separation, there was the emergence of new *solidarities*. People created ways to come together in the face of pandemic disruptions and dislocations: around food, keeping or making contact (especially with the isolated), many forms of care and the creation of networks of delivery/support, such as food banks, school meals and their substitutes. Bowlby and Jupp (2020; Jupp 2022) have examined the entanglements of inequalities, home and care during the pandemic, with a particular interest in emergent practices of caring and gifting. Meanwhile, a campaign led by the footballer Marcus Rashford demanded that free school meals for children living in poverty be maintained during ‘holiday times’ when the government was refusing to fund them. In the process, he became a public embodiment of everyday ethics – and was, at times, told to ‘stay out’ of politics. Other emergent sites of solidarity included experiments in opening hotels up to the homeless – an unimaginable practice in ‘normal times,’ if not without its problems and contradictions (e.g. Andrews 2020; Gentleman 2020). And in the small town where I live, existing forms of support (such as the local food bank) were supplemented by collaborations between local small businesses, charities, churches and new volunteers to organize deliveries, visit the isolated, manage vaccination schemes and provide those missing school meals.

During the first year of the pandemic, it is estimated that over 12 million people in the UK volunteered in a variety of roles including home visiting, mutual aid groups and managing vaccination processes (Sherwood 2021). These practices were mainly new activities, as existing voluntary organizations (charities and non-governmental organizations) reported a decline in volunteering during this period (NCVO 2021). Some of these new initiatives were scaled up and institutionalized, for example, making use of a variety of moribund public institutions – from taking over buildings for vaccinations (e.g. unused arts centers, churches) to the creation of what have been called “flatpack democracies” in the most local tiers of government in the UK, such as parish or town councils, in order to develop new community-centered and participatory initiatives (Harris 2020). These developments sometimes drew on existing social and political commitments and networks, for example, in challenging the conditions in which the UK government was ‘housing’ (or ‘warehousing’) asylum seekers. But many of them involved newly mobilized people trying to find new ways of doing things with and for others.

This emergence of activism – especially in the form of volunteering – poses a wider analytical issue. As Williams (1977) observed, emergent forms and practices are always at risk of being incorporated by the dominant and their possibilities for making a difference neutralized. This dynamic has been productively rethought by Andrea Muehlebach (2012) in her work on ‘moral neoliberals’ in Northern Italy. For Muehlebach, the emergence of ‘ethical citizens,’ committed to providing social support and care for the vulnerable and needy though unwaged labor, driven by a variety of moral, ethical and political commitments, could not be read as outside of or as an alternative to the neoliberalization of the social (Clarke 2021a). Instead, she argues, these responses were recurrently folded into the dominant formation – neoliberalism – becoming incorporated despite their diverse political, ethical and moral inspirations, including ones that understood themselves to be in opposition to the economizing and individualizing dynamics of neoliberalization. She sketches out this site of tension as follows:

solidarity very much remains a concern of the state, which attempts to mobilise all members of Italian society, including those of Italy’s ex-Communist Left, in ways that allow them to engage with neoliberal reform in critical-complicit ways [...] people are not easily subjected to or infiltrated by neoliberal values but instead engage with them in fraught, uncertain and provisional ways.

(Muehlebach 2012, 52)

Her analysis is a compelling and important one and points to the complexities of ideology, culture and affect that ought to be central to discussions of ‘incorporation.’ Here, ‘incorporation’ is neither a simple nor singular moment (once incorporated, you are incorporated forever). Instead, her view of ‘fraught, uncertain and provisional’ engagements (and the unsettling dynamic of ‘critical-complicit’) suggests it would be better to think of incorporation as one phase in a dynamic of articulation and rearticulation: a (potentially) continuous process of contestation. I think it is productive – analytically and politically – to keep this dynamic open, rather than assuming a singular moment of closure (or enclosure). Thus, volunteering during the pandemic should be read neither as a ‘prop to the system’ nor as proof that ‘another world is possible.’ It might be better understood as always potentially both, subject to pressures toward incorporation and toward becoming a countermovement. This implies treating the process of political domination (incorporation) *as work* – as the recurring expenditure of energy and capacity on keeping dominance in place. Here, though, we can also see one of the uncertain and porous boundaries between ‘ethics’ and ‘politics.’

### **The politics of lives, livelihoods and liberties**

Formal political debates about the pandemic recurrently juxtaposed health against the economy, urged the importance of returning to ‘business as usual,’ and connected uneasily to libertarian anti-mask, anti-vax movements (not surprisingly given

the constituencies in which they circulate in the UK – and England especially – around Brexit, nationalism, populism, etc.). The issues and arguments at stake in conflicts over ‘reopening the economy’ look like the recognizable stuff of *politics* and certainly took recognizably political forms (arguments in parliament, demonstrations and the very loud voices of mediated ‘outrage’). Even if they were not necessarily the dominant politics, they were certainly enacted through the dominant political forms and sites.

These focal points of conflict and contestation have persisted through the pandemic with precautionary public principles being repeatedly challenged in the name of business and the economy. In one striking example, The Adam Smith Institute announced the need to fight against what it denounced as ‘disaster corporatism’ (in both pandemic and environmentalist forms) – a movement that sought to create a new settlement between the state and capitalism. Instead of the emerging trends of ‘stakeholder capitalism’ or, worse, businesses that pursue a ‘social justice agenda,’ the Institute argued that the state needed to be rolled back (again) in order to liberate ‘shareholder capitalism’ to do its work (Lesh 2022, 5–7). Such responses (fetishizing the split between the state and the market) played into shifting conceptions of the relationships between governments and the public, or between states and societies (Sobo and Drązkiewicz 2021). States are not always experienced as supportive, generous or reliable allies, particularly for some groups in specific places. From colonial formations to states in socialist regimes, their experiences of being governed do not predispose people to trust in the benevolent state (see also Powers 2021). Anti-statist, anti-governmental and libertarian politics have mobilized suspicions of and skepticism about governing powers in complex and shifting alignments across different locations (see Monbiot’s discussion of elisions between left, right and counter-cultural anti-statism, 2021). In the UK, it has been interesting that predominantly libertarian demands have had a rather limited everyday purchase, suggesting a gap between dominant (or at least loud) political tendencies and a more cautious public. The journalist John Harris has argued that there are important questions:

about what the government thinks about the public, and how those perceptions have shaped its responses to the crisis. A lot of official thinking seems to be derived from the pages of the rightwing papers, and a picture of Britain – or, more specifically, England – as a country that always verges on the ungovernable, and tends to view orders from on high with the utmost scepticism [...].

(Harris 2021)

He contrasts this view with

[...] A recent study by University College London [UCL, 2021] which collected responses from more than 70,000 participants – found 96% were following most or almost all of the rules for the week ending 10 January, the highest figure since April of last year. According to YouGov [2021], 85% of

people endorse the new lockdown, and 77% think it should have happened sooner. All over the country, there is a sense of dutiful and resigned acquiescence, however difficult some of the rules may be for millions of us.

(Harris 2021)

This is a useful reminder that politics cannot simply be treated as a ‘reflection’ of public moods, even though that is a recurring political claim (and one often repeated in political science). It may be more productive to treat politics as involving attempts to construct, summon and project these moods: typically expressed in the claim that ‘we all feel ...’. The UK government certainly worked hard to construct a series of public moods during the pandemic: Evoking a variety of dispositions from free-spirited freedom-seeking to autonomously cautionary; and from a tone of regretful necessity to the enunciation of a grieving nation. Sara Ahmed has explored the potential disjunctures between such projected moods and lived experiences in her essay “Not in the Mood” (2014a), while recognizing how the imagined and projected consensus tries to make disaffection invisible (or where recognized, marks it as unpatriotic and illegitimate). Writing specifically about the UK’s Royal Wedding of 2011 and the Royal Jubilee of 2012, Ahmed teased out the construction of the mood of national celebration and concluded that the celebratory national mood summoned people to partake in the feeling of national pride. She concluded that: “Not to cheer is to withdraw from the situation. Not being in the mood for happiness becomes a political action. And you know what: I am not in the mood” (Ahmed 2014a, 28).

The issue of mood also points to a relationship between institutionalized politics and emergent ethics, centered on processes of borrowing or attempted incorporation. Members of the UK government, for example, after belatedly discovering how many people were dying in care homes, took to wearing little plastic lapel badges with the word ‘CARE’ on them. The government also endorsed the popular initiative of ‘clapping for carers,’ initially for National Health Service workers and then for all those working in vital occupations (Manthorpe et al., 2021). ‘Clapping for carers’ was enacted as a publicly shared moment on Thursday evenings (a practice borrowed from Italy and elsewhere) and was subsequently taken up by the government (ostentatiously so by the Prime Minister). This borrowing led to difficult political arguments about co-option and hypocrisy, centered on government failures to adequately fund and provide for health and social care services. Annemarie Plas, the event’s original organizer, then called for it to stop, because this was ‘not why I started it,’ arguing that

Without getting too political, I share some of the opinions that some people have about it becoming politicised.

I think the narrative is starting to change and I don’t want the clap to be negative.

(BBC 2020)

These comments center on a couple of formulations that give me pause for thought: she is anxious about the event becoming ‘politicised,’ or that her comments might



sound ‘too political.’ Is it possible that ‘being political’ may not be a good thing? What is at stake at these intersections of ethics and politics?

### **The trouble with normal**

Uncomfortable intersections of the ethical and the political were also visible in the multiple and contradictory desires that converged on the word *normal*, invoking both ideas of getting back to normal and the efforts to *not* get back to normal or to make a ‘new normal’ instead. This new normal covered a huge range of possibilities – from ways of living together, environmental changes, the organization of work and care and the renewal of democracy. This tension between returning to normal and creating a new normal ran across institutional politics and everyday ethics. In April 2020, Arundhati Roy wrote a much-quoted comment about the possibilities that the pandemic might create: “Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next” (2020). Similarly, Martin Parker’s collection of essays was prefaced by the observation that “What you have here is a document of a particular time, of a moment when the world seemed to becoming undone, and many people started to imagine that it might be stitched together differently” (2020, 9). Lorenzo Marsili, writing in the following year, offered a more sobering view when commenting on the creation of a new Italian government led by Mario Draghi and its promise to return to normal:

At the beginning of this global pandemic it was common to hear commentators warn about the folly of returning to normal after Covid. Normal was the problem. So what is the normal that Italy aspires to now? The spectacle in most of Europe is one of slow-motion decline, where business-as-usual presides over growing inequality, democratic and environmental degradation and a dramatic loss of any grip over the challenges of the 21st century.

[...] The Italian twist has the benefit of making explicit what is merely implicit in most European countries: the absence of alternative, the infamous Tina (‘there is no alternative’), that haunts contemporary politics like a tragic death drive.

(Marsili 2021)

In between political statements about the need for change or the need for restoration, I was struck – in televised vox pops and everyday conversations – by a proliferation of vernacular images and ideas centered on the desire to get ‘back to normal.’ People talked about ‘feeling stuck’ – either being literally in lockdown or more generally in terms of lives being put on hold or possibilities being frozen, such that ‘normal time’ had been somehow suspended for many people. This sense of waiting in the pandemic world has combined with a strange sense of desire – a longing or a yearning – for recovering ‘normal’ things. Such things are typically registered in a minor key – they are small claims being made by modest people (Clarke 2015a; Jansen 2015). Typical examples included going for a drink with

friends, attending a live entertainment, having a haircut, shopping aimlessly, seeing parents or simply not measuring distances.

Clearly, one of the conditions for these desires lies in the sense of normal time being disrupted, dislocated or suspended. Lives ‘in waiting’ have become a focus of recent sociological and anthropological inquiry. Anne-Marie Fortier’s recent book *Uncertain Citizens* (2021), for example, explores “life in the waiting room” and draws on the work of Elizabeth Povinelli (2011), who has written of the ‘bracketing’ of lives spent suspended within government processes. In a similar vein, Sarah Hall has written of how people have experienced Brexit as a form of ‘waiting’ in which “furious moments of political changes were discussed as enhancing feelings of stuckness, exclusion – of being left in waiting” (2021, 7). This conjunction of vernacular distress and desire and academic reflection directs my attention to questions of *temporality*. In particular, I want to ask whether pandemic time (or, more accurately, the dominant pandemic time) has been experienced as a form of bracketing or being held in waiting? This strange mix of desires to recover the ‘normal’ and the problematic sense of dislocated time echoed some of the arguments made by Stef Jansen in his ethnography of ‘yearning’ in Sarajevo. He points to the disruptions of time, brought about by the wars and the Dayton settlement in Bosnia Herzegovina, that left people dislocated from ideas of normal life and progress, suggesting that

‘Yearning’ denotes a persistent longing. It is continuous and prolonged and its object is known to be out of reach: it can be both lost in the past and deferred in the future [...] As such, it can capture disappointment, frustration, impatience and even fury. Yet the term yearning also evokes a wistfulness, a bittersweetness, a melancholy. This prickly combination – a ferociousness verging on tenderness, a sense of entitlement verging on disbelief – along with the tension between familiarity and normativity, and the simultaneous backward- and forward-orientation make yearnings for ‘normal’ lives, I believe, a promising object for analysis.

(Jansen 2015, 55)

I do not want to equate these different contexts and experiences, yet, Jansen’s ‘yearning’ captures something of the fragile yet intense desire for a return to ‘normal’ in the time of the pandemic – even if it was a differentiated and elusive sense of normality that was being evoked. Nor do I assume that everyone shares this experience of time (and the desires that emerge from it). There are always multiple temporalities in play in any situation (Sharma 2014). Even in the small semi-urban space where I currently live, people experienced very different temporal disorders: overworked delivery drivers asked, “What pandemic?,” while health workers wanted to know, “When do we stop?” Some people enjoyed the suspension of ‘normal’ working patterns (and places), while others deeply resented the compressed combination of home working, childcare and homeschooling.

Now, though, I want to focus more on the word *normal* itself as the site of a potent and productive elision between vernacular and governmental conceptions and

desires. When members of the public expressed a desire to get back to normal, they exemplified this in an array of everyday habits and intimacies. When politicians (and governments) expounded the need to get back to normal, they had in mind ‘business as usual’ – with an emphasis on the business. Economic sectors queued up to announce their need to ‘get back to normal.’ Rapidly disappearing beneath the weight of this institutionalized ‘normal’ was the other desire, articulated from the beginning of the pandemic, to *not* go back to normal but to take the opportunity to do things differently. Can we still imagine a normal that is not the normal that we had before? Clearly, there are emergent possibilities – from new intimacies to a green revolution; from an adequately funded and functional health system to forms of employment and employment support that are not dangerous and might even be protective of individuals and social life, or the chance to seize back the meaning of ‘security’ from its obsessive focus on terrorism and turn it to questions of social and environmental security and care. Such things are at risk in the slipperiness of the ‘normal,’ which marks the site of what Evelina Dagnino (2005) has called a ‘perverse confluence’ that enables the colonization of popular sentiment by dominant political framings. This dynamic of elision and colonization of meanings evokes what the Canadian singer-songwriter Bruce Cockburn brilliantly named as the *Trouble with Normal*. In one verse of the song of the same name, he wrote:

Politician on the screen says,  
 We’ll all get back to normal if we put our nation first.  
 The trouble with normal is that it always gets worse.

(Cockburn 1981)

These shifting drives and desires feel like the contradictory and contested mixture of cultural forms that Raymond Williams (1977) sought to uncover in ‘authentic historical analysis’ (as opposed to epochal analysis). On the one hand, we have dominant projects, aiming to secure and restore the ‘normal’ conditions of power and profit. By contrast, it is possible to see both residual desires (for older habits of everyday life) and emergent ethical *and* political strivings that seek to build a new normal from solidarities and sustainable ways of living together. Dominant projects seek to restore dominance, not least by a constant political-cultural struggle against the alternative possibilities: marginalizing, co-opting, subordinating and – not least, in the form of ‘greenwashing’ – reclothing the forms of domination. Indeed, some of the strategies of domination involve ‘re-normalizing’ the forms of business as usual that brought us to our pandemic troubles, from vaccine nationalism (and colonialism) to injurious patterns of work; from impoverished and run-down public facilities to the rent-seeking behavior of crony capitalism.

### **Black lives and deaths: ethics and politics in the pandemic**

Didier Fassin’s (2015) important questions about the relationships and distinctions between ethics and politics also invite attention to the question of how things *become* political. More particularly in this context, how do they move *between* being ethical and being political? Issues that are active in the public domain (and,

of course, not all achieve such a public presence) may be framed through a range of different registers: for example, ethical, moral, public, technical, economic, legal and political. At this point, it may be important to note that things do not have an *essentially political* character, even though one of the temptations of critical intellectual work is to argue that this thing is *really* political (or, indeed, that *everything* is really political). But what processes and practices are in play in making something political – or stopping it from becoming so and identifying it as belonging to some other register?

The time of the pandemic has been entangled in many political issues – or perhaps it would be more accurate to describe them as a multiplicity of attempted *politicizations*, as different groups have struggled to make things political. My UK-centric pandemic shortlist includes:

- The Black Lives Matter mobilizations after the murder of George Floyd last year (in the USA but in the UK too).
- The kidnapping and murder of a woman called Sarah Everard by a serving Metropolitan Police officer, leading to groups attempting to organize ‘reclaim the night’ vigils in a number of cities. These were typically refused police permission (on pandemic public order grounds).
- Environmental activism – including Extinction Rebellion, school strikes and the Insulate Britain movement – generated new problems about ‘public order policing’ and attracted political condemnation for their ‘disruption’ of everyday life and “people going about their daily business.”
- Emerging protests against the Government’s *Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts* Bill (2021), which seeks to control protest and extend police powers, especially enabling them to prevent demonstrations that may cause ‘disruption.’ Demonstrations – organized under the ambiguous title ‘Kill the Bill’ (‘the Bill’ being a popular nickname for the police) – were often acrimonious and even turned violent in some places (for more on the Bill, see Liberty, 2021)

This sequence of events highlighted a deepening crisis of what in the UK is celebrated as ‘policing by consent.’ These conflicts had been preceded by Extinction Rebellion mobilizations causing problems for public order policing and a long-running but deepening dynamic of antiracist responses to the policing of Black and Asian communities. In what follows, though, I am going to focus on the potent and unsettling intersections of ‘race’ and COVID-19 (drawing on Clarke, 2021b).

There has been a complicated ethical-political intersection around ‘race’ and COVID-19 in the UK and elsewhere. The impact of COVID-19 has been unequally distributed – with increased risks of infection and death for Black and other racialized and minoritized groups. The accumulating evidence and arguments about vulnerability and inequality were becoming public issues when the killing of George Floyd took place on May 25, 2020, inspiring a wave of Black Lives Matter protests that went far beyond the USA. As Ben Okri wrote

Never in my lifetime has the case of such visible injustice moved white and black people, moved them as human beings [...] Why has the killing of

George Floyd struck such a profound chord in us? Maybe it was that phrase: ‘I can’t breathe.’

The consonance of the phrase with the very root of our pandemic fears is uncanny. The phrase linked the coronavirus with the ubiquitous and implacable nature of institutional racism.

(2020; see also Hansen 2021)

This conjunction was indeed a potent one – and generated intense pressures on the UK government to address ‘ethnic disparities.’ This took place amid renewed challenges to UK police forces about racial profiling, their use of stop and search powers and weapons, such as Tasers, and deaths in police custody). These issues became publicly dramatized as fundamental matters of life and death in a ‘shared’ emergency – and about who was being asked to pay the price. The racializing dynamic of vulnerability and mortality in the pandemic was particularly visible in the deaths of health and social care workers from COVID-19. As Gamlin, Gibbons and Calestani put it,

Populations and biopolitics also collide in the colonial patterning of care provision by Britain’s National Health Service (NHS), the centrepiece of the UK’s epidemic response, an institution sustained in large part by the combined labour of EU and colonial diaspora communities.

(2021, 109)

These challenges to racialized inequalities of vulnerability and death aimed to create a public mood that was different from the recurrent governmental use of the word ‘sadly’ as an attempted political affect: “today 250 people sadly died [...].” The challenges deployed a rich repertoire of statistical, scientific, legal, ethical and political registers and connected with other collective mobilizations, not least, those directed against imperial memorializations, such as statues of colonial figures (Beebeejaun 2021). The *politicization* of racialized lives – and deaths – posed the question of when and how black lives might matter. The UK government’s responses to the challenges set in play a series of classic *depoliticizing* responses which I summarize as the three D’s: deferral, denial and deflection.

*Deferral* involved postponing discussion of the issues at stake by setting up inquiries and investigations. As the Prime Minister wrote:

It is no use just saying that we have made huge progress in tackling racism. There is much more that we need to do; and we will. It is time for a cross-governmental commission to look at all aspects of inequality – in employment, in health outcomes, in academic and all other walks of life.

(Johnson 2020)

The announcement of a new review of ‘racial disparities’ provoked outrage for several reasons. One was its inevitable postponement of any immediate or effective action in the current pandemic crisis. A second was the catalog of

previous investigations, studies and reports in which racialized inequalities had been reviewed but had produced few consequences (Lammy 2020).

*Denial* meant insisting that there is no problem here. Kemi Badenoch (the Minister for Equality) insisted in a parliamentary debate that:

[L]et us not in this House use statements like ‘being black is a death sentence’, which young people out there hear, don’t understand the context and then continue to believe that they live in a society that is against them. When actually this is one of the best countries in the world to be a black person.

(Cited in Brewis 2020)

Badenoch played a leading role in establishing the commission on ‘racial and ethnic disparities’ requested by the Prime Minister.

*Displacement* involved attempts to shift the issue to a ‘culture wars’ framing by invoking the need to defend ‘our history’ (with a very particular – and particularly racialized – view of who the ‘we’ were who owned this history). Ministers argued that attacks on statues celebrating colonialism were attacks on ‘our history’ and, thus, needed to be both condemned and made a distinct criminal offence: there were more mentions of statues in the new *Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Bill* than about violence against women (Thomas-Symonds 2021).

This triple strategy culminated in the publication of the *Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities* Report in April 2021 (CRED 2021). It claimed that there was little or no evidence of structural, systemic or institutional racism in the UK; and that young people from ‘ethnic minority’ backgrounds fail to progress because of ‘family and culture’ issues. Meanwhile, the misplaced ‘idealism’ of ‘well intentioned’ young people was leading them to protest inappropriately. This report was shaped by an understanding of *cultural* politics: the political advantages of agenda setting, the careful cultivation of outrage and the opportunity to reassure its target audience that Britain is not a racist society:

Put simply we no longer see a Britain where the system is deliberately rigged against ethnic minorities. The impediments and disparities do exist, they are varied, and ironically very few of them are directly to do with racism. Too often ‘racism’ is the catch-all explanation, and can be simply implicitly accepted rather than explicitly examined.

The evidence shows that geography, family influence, socio-economic background, culture and religion have more significant impact on life chances than the existence of racism.

(CRED 2021, 8)

This cluster of issues around ‘race’ and inequality operates along and across the indeterminate and always shifting boundary between ethical, moral and political domains. Challenges to dominant formations are sometimes made in ethical registers, sometimes in political ones. Ethical challenges always run the risk of being denounced as ‘political’ (bringing politics into a domain that should be above – or

below – politics). They also run the risk of being denounced as being ‘apolitical’ – failing to engage with the politics of a particular situation. In these complex intersections, ‘race’ in the UK always risks being bracketed as a ‘moral’ issue, marked as somehow *beyond* politics, a framing that perhaps emerges from the British role in the abolition of slavery (the nation is more comfortable remembering ourselves as abolitionists than as slavers).

More generally, the commission provided one more reminder about the political *effort* – the sheer extent of politics as labor – that goes into depoliticization. There are many ways of making things *not* political, enclosing them instead in other registers: moral, governmental-technical, evidential and so on. The distinction between the political and that which is not political is always a contested boundary and, as Jacques Rancière neatly puts it: “politics is a way of re-partitioning the political from the non-political” (2011, 4). While Rancière has a distinct preference for the political over the nonpolitical, I think that popular understandings of the political are more ambivalent, often being suspicious of politics and political actors. I have also tried to indicate some of the ways in which the ‘non-political’ is inhabited – particularly as the site of practical ethics that may become political.

### **The contingencies of everyday ethics**

I think it is important to distinguish this register of everyday ethics from Ethics and Morals (in their formalized sense). These have always been contentious figures, loaded and coded in dominant, if not hegemonic, ways. Their upper-case initial letters indicate the ways in which they are intimately woven into the fabrics of rule: they evoke people shouting at us, telling us how to behave – the experiences of attempted domination that underpin Sara Ahmed’s explorations of the troublesome conditions of being willful, or just ‘not in the mood’ (2014a, 2014b). By contrast, ethics as everyday practice, understood as practical reasoning, complaining and claims-making, makes visible efforts to make living together imaginable, desirable and survivable. Viewed in this way, everyday ethics forms part of a wider repertoire of cultural practices: ways of justifying, accounting, reason-giving and *connection-making* in the everyday. That points to a wider range of conceptions that might illuminate similarities between ‘the ethical’ and other practices: from Boltanski and Thévenot’s work (2006) *On Justification*, to Scott and Lyman’s (1968) analysis of ‘Accounts,’ as well as Holland and Lave’s Bakhtinian view of *History in Person* (2001). All of these connect – for me – with Antonio Gramsci’s understanding that *everyone* is a philosopher and attempts to make sense from the fragments that compose common sense (Crehan 2016).

Second, this view of ethics as an everyday practice is necessarily complicated. I have tried to indicate in the examples above how such reasoning is always *contingent*: It is socially situated and draws on available repertoires as resources from which to make sense. Such reasoning is always both constrained (by the resources available) and creative (as people craft new combinations out of existing resources). This underlines Fassin’s argument that both everyday ethics and their turbulent relationship to politics are always socially located. I have tried to show

how the boundaries between the ethical and the political (and indeed other registers of sense-making) are continually in motion: they are worked on by social forces – from Black Lives Matter to the ruling political formations – as attempts are made to politicize and to depoliticize specific issues, controversies, crises and conflicts.

Third, it is in the ‘troubled waters’ where the ethical and political meet that we should look for practices of *translation* (between ideas and between people) and of *articulation* (Kipfer and Hart 2015). Such practices attempt to construct framings that are mobilizing – that bring people together in shared understandings and responses to events. There are attempts to create connections – solidarities, identifications and potential lines of collective action – in each of the issues I have touched on. Yet, practices of translation and articulation may also seek to demobilize, settle populations and accommodate them to ‘business as usual.’ The practice of articulation is what Stuart Hall (borrowing from Gramsci) saw as the vital connection between common sense, politics and hegemony (see Grossberg 1986; and Clarke 2015b). It brings with it a view of political practice that rests on an understanding of the plural and, indeed, contradictory subject. Articulation reveals political subjectivity as formed in the unstable equilibria between identification, ambivalence and refusal (and their shifting intensities). It invites us to think of situated subjects, engaged in efforts to make sense of their world and how to act in it. To be sure, such practices of sense-making – the formation of ethical and political selves – work with and against constraints of many kinds. The pandemic certainly loosened some of those constraints, even as it tightened others, and has produced possibilities for emergent ethics and their continuing complex, shifting and contested relationship with the field of politics.

\*\*\*\*\*

\* My thanks to the organizers for the invitation to think about these questions and to Janet Newman, Paul Stubbs and the editors for comments on earlier drafts; to the members of the Temporalities Reading Group for thoughts on the normal; and to Malin Rönnblom for the invitation to present a seminar at Karlstadt University in April 2021, which allowed me to explore some of these arguments in conversation.

## References

- Ahmed, Sara. 2014a. Not in the mood. *New Formations*, 82, 13–28. <https://doi.org/10.3898/NeWF.82.01.2014>.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2014b. *Willful Subjects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Andrews, Mark. 2020. Hotel offering five-star service for homeless once again during lockdown. *Shropshire Star*, [online] 9 November. <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/shrewsbury/2020/11/09/shrewsbury-hotel-once-more-offering-shelter-to-the-homeless-during-lockdown/> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Barnett, Clive. 2011. Geography and ethics: Placing life in the space of reasons. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(3), 379–388.
- Barnett, Clive, and Gary Bridge. 2017. The situations of urban inquiry: Thinking problematically about the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40(6), 1186–1204. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12452>.



- BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation. 2020. Coronavirus: Clap for carers should end, says founder. *BBC News*, [online] May 22. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52773032> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Beebeejaun, Yasminah. 2021. Race, ethnicity and the politics of memorialisation. *Debating Urban Ethics as Research Agenda* conference, April 26–28.
- Boltanski, Luc, and Laurent Thévenot. 2006. *On Justification: Economies of Worth*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bowlby, Sophie, and Eleanor Jupp. 2020. Home, inequalities and care: Perspectives from within a pandemic. *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 21(3), 423–432. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2020.1840901>.
- Brewis, Harriet. 2020. UK is ‘one of the best countries in the world to be a black person,’ says Tory MP. *Evening Standard*, [online] June 4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/uk-best-countries-black-person-kemi-badenoch-a4459751.html> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Clarke, John. 2015a. Afterword: Going public: The act of complaining. In: Jonathan Reinarz and Rebecca Wynter, eds. *Complaints, Controversies and Grievances in Medicine: Historical and Social Science Perspectives*. London: Routledge, pp. 259–269.
- Clarke, John. 2015b. Stuart Hall and the theory and practice of articulation *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 36(2), 275–286. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.1013247>.
- Clarke, John. 2021a. ‘No such thing as society’? Neoliberalism and the social. In: Chistopher Deeming, ed. *The Struggle for Social Sustainability: Moral Conflicts in Global Social Policy*. Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 37–54.
- Clarke, John. 2021b. Following the science? Covid-19, ‘race’ and the politics of knowing. *Cultural Studies*, 35(2–3), 248–256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2021.1898019>.
- Clarke, Nigel and Clive Barnett. 2022. How do people respond to public health measures? Ordinary ethics during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Popular Responses to Covid-19* blog, [online] January 6. <https://covidresponsibility.org/2022/01/06/how-do-people-respond-to-public-health-measures-ordinary-ethics-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Cockburn, Bruce. 1981. *The Trouble with Normal*. Lyrics at <http://cockburnproject.net/songs&music/twn.html> [Accessed March 6, 2022]. It appears on the LP of the same name, released by True North Records in 1983.
- CRED – Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities. 2021. *The Report*. London: Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities/HM Government.
- Crehan, Kate. 2016. *Gramsci’s Common Sense: Inequality and Its Narratives*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Dagnino, Evalina. 2005. “We all have rights but ...”: Contesting conceptions of citizenship in Brazil. In: Naila Kabeer, ed. *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions of Citizenship*. London: Zed Books, pp. 147–163.
- Fassin, Didier. 2015. Troubled waters: At the confluence of ethics and politics. In: Michael Lambek, Veena Das, Didier Fassin and Webb Keane, eds. *Four Lectures on Ethics: Anthropological Perspectives*. Chicago, IL: Hau Books, pp. 175–210.
- Fortier, Anne-Marie. 2021. *Uncertain Citizens: Life in the Waiting Room*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Gamlin, Jennie, Sahra Gibbon, and Melania Calestani. 2021. The biopolitics of COVID-19 in the UK: Racism, nationalism and the afterlife of colonialism. In: Lenore Manderson, Nancy J. Burke and Ayo Wahlberg, eds. *Viral Loads; Anthropologies of Urgency in the Time of COVID-19*. London: UCL Press, pp. 108–127.

- Gentleman, Amelia. 2020. Hotels used to house rough sleepers during pandemic return to business. *The Guardian*, [online] June 18. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/18/hotels-used-to-house-rough-sleepers-during-pandemic-return-to-business> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Grossberg, Larry. 1986. On postmodernism and articulation: An interview with Stuart Hall. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10(2), 45–60. Reprinted in Chen, Kuan-Hsing and David Morley, eds. 1996. *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, pp. 131–150.
- Hall, Sarah Marie. 2021. Waiting for Brexit: Crisis, conjuncture, method. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 47(1), 200–213. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12505>.
- Hansen, Bue Rübner. 2021. The interest of breathing: Towards a theory of ecological interest formation. *Crisis & Critique*, 7(3), 109–137.
- Harris, John. 2020. Local people have had to improvise during the pandemic. Could their solutions stick? *The Guardian*, [online] November 22. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/22/local-people-improvise-pandemic-solutions-stick-community-politics-flatpack-democracy> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Harris, John. 2021. The British public are careful and calm – The problem is that the government isn't. *The Guardian*, [online] January 17. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jan/17/british-public-careful-calm-government-isnt-covid-measures> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Holland, Dorothy, and Jean Lave. 2001. Introduction. In: Dorothy Holland and Jean Lave, eds. *History in Person: Enduring Struggles, Contentious Practices, Intimate Identities*. Santa Fe: School of American Research. Oxford: James Currey Ltd, pp. 3–33.
- Jansen, Stef. 2015. *Yearnings in the Meantime: 'Normal Lives' and the State in a Sarajevo Apartment Complex*. New York: Berghahn.
- Johnson, Boris. 2020. Rather than tear some people down we should build others up. *Daily Telegraph*, [online] June 14. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/06/14/rather-tear-people-should-build-others/> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Jupp, Eleanor. 2022. *Care, Crisis and Activism: The Politics of Everyday Life*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Kipfer, Stefan, and Gillian Hart. 2015. Conclusion: Translating Gramsci in the current conjuncture. In: Michael Ekers, Gillian Hart, Stefan Kipfer and Alex Loftus, eds. *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics*. New Malden, MA: Antipode Book Series, Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 321–343.
- Lambek, Michael, ed. 2010. *Ordinary Ethics: Anthropology, Language, and Action*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Lambek, Michael. 2015. Living as if it mattered. In: Michael Lambek, Veena Das, Didier Fassin and Webb Keane, eds. *Four Lectures on Ethics: Anthropological Perspectives*. Chicago, IL: Hau Books, pp. 5–52.
- Lammy, David. 2020. Britain needs leadership on race inequality. Not just another review. *The Guardian*, [online] June 16. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/16/race-inequality-review-boris-johnson-black-lives-matter-david-lammy> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Lesh, Matthew. 2022. *Capitalism after Covid: The Case against Disaster Corporatism*. London: The Adam Smith Institute.
- Liberty. 2021. Liberty's briefing on the police, crime, sentencing and courts bill for report stage in the House of Commons. July. <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Libertys-briefing-on-the-Police-Crime-Sentencing-and-Courts-Bill-Report-Stage-HoC-July-2021.pdf>.

- Manthorpe, Jill, Steve Iliffe, Patricia Gillen, John Moriarty, John Mallett, Heike Schroder, Denise Currie, Jermaine Ravalier, and Paula McFadden. 2021. Clapping for carers in the Covid-19 crisis: Carers' reflections in a UK survey. *Health and Social Care in the Community*. June 14. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13474>.
- Marsili, Lorenzo. 2021. Italians want Mario Draghi to deliver normality and therein lies the danger. *The Guardian*, [online] February 17. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2021/feb/17/italians-want-mario-draghi-to-deliver-normality-and-therein-lies-the-danger> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Monbiot, George. 2021. It's shocking to see so many leftwingers lured to the far right by conspiracy theories. *The Guardian*, [online] September 21. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/sep/22/leftwingers-far-right-conspiracy-theories-anti-vaxxers-power> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Muehlebach, Andrea. 2012. *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- NCVO – National Council for Voluntary Organisations. 2021. *Latest Findings Suggest Shift from Formal Volunteering during Pandemic*. London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations, [online] February 15. <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/2789-latest-findings-suggest-shift-from-formal-volunteering-during-pandemic> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Okri, Ben. 2020. 'I can't breathe': Why George Floyd's words reverberate around the world. *The Guardian*, [online] June 8. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/08/i-cant-breathe-george-floyds-words-reverberate-oppression> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Parker, Martin. 2020. Beginning, again. In: Martin Parker, ed. *Life after COVID-19: The Other Side of Crisis*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp. 1–10.
- Pennycook, Alistair. 2007. *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. 2011. *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Powers, Theodore. 2021. Authoritarian violence, public health, and the necropolitical state: Engaging the South African response to COVID-19. *Open Anthropological Research*, 1, 60–72.
- Rancière, Jacques. 2011. The thinking of dissensus: Politics and aesthetics. In: Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp, eds. *Reading Rancière: Critical Dissensus*. London and New York: Continuum, pp. 1–17.
- Roy, Arundhati. 2020. The pandemic is a portal. *Financial Times*, [online] April 3. <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Savage, Michael, and James Tapper. 2021. Noisy neighbours spark 67% rise in police complaints. *The Guardian*, [online] September 19. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/sep/19/noisy-neighbours-spark-67-rise-in-police-complaints> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Scott, Marvin B., and Stanford M. Lyman. 1968. Accounts. *American Sociological Review*, 33(1), 46–62.
- Sharma, Sarah. 2014. *In the Meantime: Temporality and Cultural Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sherwood, Harriet. 2021. Volunteer lockdown army helps to make Britain brighter. *The Guardian*, [online] February 28. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/feb/28/volunteer-lockdown-army-helps-to-make-britain-brighter> [Accessed March 6, 2022].

- Sobo, Elisa J., and Elżbieta Drażkiewicz. 2021. Rights, responsibilities and revelations: COVID-19 conspiracy theories and the state. In: Lenore Manderson, Nancy J. Burke and Ayo Wahlberg, eds. *Viral Loads; Anthropologies of Urgency in the Time of COVID-19*. London: UCL Press, pp. 67–90.
- Thomas-Symonds, Nick. 2021. Putting statues before women, the Tories could end up on the wrong side of history. *The Guardian*, [online] March 15. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/mar/15/tories-statues-safety-women-police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-government> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- UCL – University College London. 2021. Lockdown compliance improving but low take up of Covid tests ‘worrying’. *UCL News*, [online] January 13. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2021/jan/lockdown-compliance-improving-low-take-covid-tests-worrying> [Accessed March 6, 2022].
- Williams, Raymond. 1977. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- YouGov. 2021. Do you support or oppose the national lockdown measures introduced this week? *YouGov*, [online] January 5. [https://yougov.co.uk/topics/health/survey-results/daily/2021/01/05/dee1c1?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=daily\\_questions&utm\\_campaign=question\\_1](https://yougov.co.uk/topics/health/survey-results/daily/2021/01/05/dee1c1?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=daily_questions&utm_campaign=question_1) [Accessed March 6, 2022].

## 8 On the impossibility of collaboration

Solidarity, power and loneliness  
in feminist, workerist and (urban)  
ethnographic methodology

*Olga Reznikova*

### **Introduction: ethical interpellations in/of field research**

The question of methodology is central to all cultural studies, yet, it is also always linked to the field. Therefore, before I address the methodological question of the chapter, I would like to describe the context in which they emerged: my research fields. The political turn toward authoritarian populism<sup>1</sup> in Russia and the USA, which happened especially in the second half of the 2010s, also affected how proper ethics were thought and talked about in protest movements, i.e. not least, how ethical *interpellations* were made. Engagement with the figure of ‘ordinary people’ gained *conjunctural* significance notably in 2012–2018 in Moscow and 2017–2020 in New York.<sup>2</sup> The historical and political power relationships, as well as their cultural processing in both cities and countries, could hardly be more different. For this reason, it is not easy to make a comparative claim. However, the interpretation and processing of this cultural formation can be examined in line with the extended case method (Burawoy 1998) since the transformations in the rhetoric or the ethical appeals of the protest movements show similarities and because the close international networking of the protests plays a significant role for both locations. Initial analyses of the cultural formations can already be formulated based on the research which has been conducted in Moscow and New York protests.

The urban protesters use an ethical vocabulary in their search for a good (or just) life in the respective metropolises. Consequently, they use a unifying or delimiting rhetoric vis-à-vis the ‘common people.’ Thus, activists protesting against the development of green spaces in their neighborhoods (e.g. in Torfjanka Park in Moscow [Reznikova 2020] or Battery Park City in New York) may use their affiliation with the ‘ordinary people’ (Russian: *prostoj narod*) as a legitimation for their protest. In other contexts, however, the same groups may also distinguish themselves from the ‘ordinary people,’ for example, when liberal oppositionists distinguish themselves from ‘ordinary’ Americans or Russians who support a corrupt/right-wing government. Protests with a ‘not in my back yard’ (NIMBY) agenda and exclusionary to racist rhetoric against oppressed minorities, such as the prevention of laundry for the homeless in Northern Moscow or those in Brighton Beach against the Black Lives Matter movement, also base their anger on their own belonging

to the ‘ordinary people’ and simultaneously tend to distance themselves from the ‘ordinary’ (now in a different sense) liberal metropolitan residents.

I have explored shifts in the ethical invocations and cultural figurations of ‘ordinary people,’ as well as the rhetoric of solidarity and, not least, the daily practice of alliance building in urban protests through the ethnographic accompaniment of various protests in both New York City and Moscow since 2014. My research partners in the study were either activists and protesters who figure as ‘ordinary people’ within the movement or members of groups and networks who wanted to form alliances with ‘ordinary people’ and give voice to their (supposed) agenda. Most of the interviewees, however, were workers or unemployed. In addition, I also interviewed middle-class intellectuals in both cities, primarily to investigate mutual attributions. I hoped that this research would not only help me to understand the new heterogeneous protest landscape in the respective cities better, but also, through an analysis of the politicization and ethicization dynamics in the movements, make sense of the participants’ understanding of what a better life (in their cities) could be (Reznikova 2020, 2023a, 2023b).

However, the perspective can also be productively reversed, because the question of the ethicization process in one’s own research or disciplines is also essential for research into urban ethics or the significance of ethical invocations in protests. In the context of social movements, researchers’ methodological considerations can be considered even less isolated from the object of research than in many other fields. In daily exchanges with actors about actions and alliance building, in participant observations of their discussions of good life, in reading leaflets and social media discussions, etc., the ethnographer soon faces questions of ‘collaboration’ with the protests, of one’s political engagement as part of ethnography, and of solidarity or militant writing. Of course, the urgency of the actors’ concerns makes the compulsion to act and collaborate even more substantial (yet, in my field where labor rights are at stake, certainly not as strong as in the case of the European Union’s external borders, at war or in women’s shelters where the actors sometimes fight to preserve their lives).

I, therefore, deal in this paper with the programmatic and methodological implications of cooperation and solidarity in ethnography. The starting point of this paper is a rather trivial observation about the methodological discussion in the field: the same categories also play a crucial role in the reflection of the relationship between the researchers and the researched in research fields where solidarity and alliance building have particular significance for the actors. My long-term study, for example, of research participants’ collective and individual concerns about right and wrong, or ethical and unethical alliances and strategies in protests and strikes has also influenced my role in the field. Thus, the actors’ search for alliances among themselves is, not least, why I (like most researchers of protests) also raise the question of alliances and solidarity between the researchers and the researched. Hence, while I have asked the actors in the field about their ideas of a good life in the city, I now want to address a similar question about ‘good’ research (in the city, in and with urban protests) to the academic community. Does research need to advocate for social change and what role do we ascribe to researchers in

doing so? Does ethnography have any transformative power at all? If so, does the very collaboration in the field actually contribute to changing the situation of the researched, as is often claimed? What does ethnographic research accomplish in such protests, and why are we as researchers so concerned with doing good, ethical, solidarity-based research? What function do such invocations have – not only across disciplines, but also specifically in ethnography – for reflection?

In this chapter, I shall first refer to some of the classical positions on solidarity and collaboration in (critical) cultural studies. My basic assumption is that the primary task of scientific understanding is to analyze social relationships. This is more important than a general partiality toward the actors. An understanding of research that aims primarily at giving voice to the subaltern can – this is a central thesis of my contribution – be in contradiction to true solidarity through research. Emphasizing collaboration and sympathy tends to obscure the real goals of inquiry or sacrifices the strength of the scientific argument. Finally, using a situation in my field of urban protest, I discuss the role of relationships in the research situation in the quest for an ethically correct methodology in cultural studies.

### **Solidarity, critique of power and collaboration in methodology**

The actors' search for blueprints for a better life, their ethical considerations in alliance building and their protest practice affect research practice and researchers' understanding of 'ethical' or 'politically correct' ethnography. The challenges involved are shared by not only almost all protest and movement researchers but also scholars who seek to adopt a feminist methodology when conducting research with underprivileged women and marginalized people (e.g. DeVault 1999; Letherby 2003; Harding 2004; Solovey 2022) or avoid reproducing power structures in their research with refugees and migrants (e.g. Hess and Schwertl 2013; Fassin 2017; Riedner 2018).

French anthropologist Didier Fassin summarizes two current academic trends when he claims that a major achievement of the postcolonial turn and feminist critique consists, above all, of a new *consensus on the basic stance* of researchers: "One should no longer speak in the name of the subaltern, but make their voice heard" (2017, 27). German cultural anthropologist Sabine Hess also argues for collaborative and engaged research, even though she and gender researcher Beate Binder see in this collaboration a danger of exploiting activists (Hess and Binder 2013). These examples represent a broader debate about different forms of engaged, activist, collaborative and even militant research. It has three main historical foundations, which often overlap in current research paradigms: (1) First, specifically in anthropology, it ties in with the so-called 'writing culture' debate, which, after the publication of the Malinowski diaries and in a (post)colonial situation, problematizes external determination and objectification of the researched during fieldwork and (fixed) writing.<sup>3</sup> (2) On the other hand, poststructuralists, given their critique of understandings of social totality, manifested most radically in thinkers such as Bruno Latour, propose that a research free of hierarchy might be realized through activist and collaborative approaches (Latour and Hermant 1998; Latour 2005; Knecht 2012).<sup>4</sup> (3) Finally, and I would like to elaborate on this a

little further, the programmatic of collaborative research builds on experiences and insights from the second wave of feminist thought. The resulting feminist epistemological critique of established knowledge production has aimed, *inter alia*, to reflect on social structures of power and domination and overcome them in writing.

The first proposals for feminist methodology in social science and anthropological research were articulated in the context of the debate on feminist epistemology and feminist ethics in the 1980s (e.g. Harding 1987; Haraway 1988). Donna Haraway reasoned that supposedly objective and universal science presupposes an androcentric speaker position and obscures relationships of domination. She, therefore, argues for a situated understanding of knowledge in a poststructuralist tradition (Haraway 1988). Similarly, the feminist critique of universal ethics argues that it does not consider women's ethics focused on care (e.g. Gilligan 1982).<sup>5</sup> In terms of methodology, Shulamit Reinharz (1993) argues accordingly that the basis of feminist research lies in an *ethic of care*, i.e. in cooperation between researchers and researched aimed at improving the situation of the researched. Later researchers in gender studies also argue that the specificity of the feminist methodology lies in the caring relationship between researchers and researched and in researchers' commitment (e.g. Letherby 2003; Harding 2004).

Even though this critique of science and universal ethics has generated many inner-feminist discussions, its influence on methodology and shared research ethics with rules of research reflection is still significant today. Gender researchers Elena Zdravomyslova and Anna Temkina (Здравомыслова and Тёмкина 2014), for example, summarize the following key principles of feminist methodology: (1) The research situation impacts the process and outcome of knowledge significantly. (2) All research is ideologically and politically engaged. (3) Oppressed people have an epistemological advantage in understanding the mechanisms of oppression and structural inequalities inscribed in their everyday experience. (4) Feminist research should have an emancipatory function and contribute to more agency for the less privileged. (5) Politicizing the oppressed and claiming to give them a voice are important strategies of feminist research (Здравомыслова and Тёмкина 2014, 85). This is a good overview of the orientation toward the feminist methodology that can also be found similarly in Harding, Reinharz, DeVault and others.

Feminist methodology and the poststructuralist anthropological critique of ethnographic representation share a remarkable commonality in their ways of reasoning about an engaged (or militant) anthropology. From the critique of the universal subject follows an appeal to reflect the researcher's position. This then gives rise to a defensive stance toward science, with anthropology understood as a discipline that can and should give 'voice' to the subaltern through collaborative research.<sup>6</sup> As Lisa Riedner writes in an activist urban ethnography on migration,

A producer of knowledge who assumes she can (and should) stay out of the negotiations being researched can only look at her object of research from a perspective of distance (and reaction), and not with emancipatory and resistant movements from the perspective of shared struggle.

(2018, 60)



This is a pointed formulation, but also a very typical one. In this view, then, we as researchers have two choices: we either share the struggles of the actors or switch – by distancing ourselves – to the ‘dark side,’ that of power and, thus, also deprive ourselves of a possible (standpoint) epistemological advantage.<sup>7</sup> An activist and collaborative attitude, thus, becomes an obligatory part of good and reflexive research, in a sense, evidence of the ethical rulebook. However, this implies the risk that the equally emphasized task of reflecting on the research situation can be carried to an absurdity, for example, when the question of social reality is thereby pushed into the background, or can even devolve into its opposite, for instance, when it serves the function of defense.

So, when I criticize ethical invocations that urge researchers to reflect and collaborate, my point is not to question or reject feminist approaches, a politically engaged stance or reflection during fieldwork in general. Quite to the contrary, I argue for a *more* critical, politically conscientious feminist methodology and reflexive ethnography. Yet, I doubt that an understanding that sees the task of anthropologists as making the voices of the researched heard will help us do so, even though today many ethnographic or cultural researchers who claim to be political and do critical research have internalized this consensus. The corresponding ethical and political imperatives, I argue, are based, on the one hand, on a massive overestimation of the importance of academic ethnographic work for actors and political struggles.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the notion of cooperation and collaboration in practice is often at odds with what actors expect from participating in research and how intensely they want to work for research (for free). I know this from my own research. These imperatives are simultaneously grounded, on the other hand, in a questionable underestimation of the social mandate for professional intellectuals to engage in social critique. Seen in this light, the requirement to side with the *view of the oppressed* can also be understood as a problematic form of depoliticization in which a reflection on ‘the role of the researcher’ (often routinized rhetorically, habitually and even institutionally) degenerates into a form of ‘narcissistic reflexivity,’<sup>9</sup> an end in itself.

A researcher’s collaborative attitude does not resolve the inequalities or the question of power, and it does not follow from the common struggles with the subaltern that research is or should be in solidarity with them. For on what grounds would one assume that people are able to derive their true interests out of their being affected better than others can and that a more progressive approach to their situation actually results from this? That would be an assumption based on nothing but optimism, especially when presented as a consensus.

### **Dialectics and solidarity with workers**

This assumption is not only seemingly widespread in the poststructuralist tradition, for which the critique of universalist models of knowledge (science) is constitutive. The optimism underlying the collaborative approach is also reminiscent of the debate on workers’ consciousness among Western Marxists, which took place around the same time as the beginning of the anthropological and methodological-feminist

debate mentioned above, i.e. in the 1970s to 1980s. This methodological debate about the study of workers (or peasants) and revolution, similar to the feminist approach, was not solely about methodology. Thus, methodology, on the one hand, and the concept of class, on the other hand, play a decisive role for the reflections of E. P. Thompson (1978a). He methodically relies on the perspective of understanding and on 'patient listening' in his analysis of the bread riots of the 18th century. In doing so, he distances himself decisively from 'economic reductionism' and sees people's experiences and their interactions, norms and morals as fundamental to the formation of classes or structures. It is not economic structures that form classes, which then fight for hegemony in revolutions and uprisings; instead, class struggles precede class formation, and it is only through the (often spontaneously and morally expressed) sense of injustice that the poor form something like class consciousness. Thompson, thus, centers actors and their agency. In contrast to the ideology-critical reading of Marx, Thompson (1978b) argues that there is no 'false consciousness' and that the conservative aspects of the uprisings can also turn into future-oriented, progressive visions.

While this hope is obviously historically unsustainable, as the 1970s have clearly shown, it continues to influence Marxist optimism to this day.<sup>10</sup> The rediscovery of Antonio Gramsci and his distinction between 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals (1977) also play a role in the discussion. Just as poststructuralist feminist researchers sought to avoid androcentric scientific practices, Marxist intellectuals did not want to serve the bourgeoisie. This is understandable and appealing, but the question remains whether it is in the interests of the workers if the researcher, for example, misrepresents reactionary attitudes in the workers' protests because they are in unconditional solidarity with them and subscribe to a methodology that makes such positioning virtually necessary.

Another interesting, albeit much less known, impulse for the discussion of the Marxist methodological debate was provided by Andrei Alexeev in the 1980s. Alexeev was a Soviet sociologist who quit his researcher job at the Academy of Science in order to work as a machine setup operator in a factory. In his 'epistemological prank,' he relied on the transformative power of participant observation. His primary goal, however, was not to use his experience as a worker for sociological analysis. Instead, he used the methods of observation learned in the academy to improve planning and organization in a specific factory and, above all, the functioning of the machine 'entrusted to him.' His notes (Алексеев 2003–2005) are free of any romanticization of his colleagues or the factory administration. His methodological focus is on the 'emergency initiative,' i.e. on entering bureaucratic and communicative paths only within a necessary, unavoidable framework. He acted in his role as sociologist setup operator in the same way as some other workers in the factory who tried to eliminate a technical problem: committed, but without zeal; calm, but without giving up on the goal – to get 'his' machine going. Only then could he understand the limits, the 'indifference' and the 'cynicism' of some workers and, above all, the administration. By reversing the aspirations (compared to the other collaborative studies I know) of the experiment, Alexeev confronts his academic readers of today with their own methodology, which follows 'intrusive,'

‘starry-eyed idealizing’ (according to Alexeev) ethical standards – a most familiar example for myself being, of course, my own methodology in researching workers’ protests.<sup>11</sup>

What we can take away from these Marxist discussions for today’s cultural and social anthropology, and for a more general postcolonial and feminist-inspired debate is perhaps the consideration that the ‘science of praxis’ (Gramsci) cannot be reduced to praxis. In other words, sharing the hardships of the subaltern and participating in their struggles cannot be the researcher’s primary task, even when they are in solidarity with the researched. In many cases, this will negatively impact the scientific critique of existing social conditions.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, I argue for a dialectical view of solidarity, as it was shaped by the critical theories of the Frankfurt School,<sup>13</sup> in order not to lose sight of the regressive and authoritarian tendencies among workers and, thus, not to misjudge the danger of a revolution from the right (or, depending on the context, a counterrevolution).<sup>14</sup>

### **Loneliness in the field**

The question of solidarity with the actors and misrepresenting the grievances observed by the researcher is here on a rather general, theoretical level, but it also has an everyday and emotional dimension during fieldwork. Research on people is based on relationships and connections, as feminist sociologists convincingly show. This has once again particular resonance in ethnographic epistemological practice, where understanding and proximity to actors is considered the master path (e.g. Faubion 2009; Bonz 2016; Mohr and Lindner 2017). Without relating to the actors and feeling empathy for them, we cannot develop the understanding of their values, actions and conscious and unconscious desires that is necessary for analysis. To conduct ethnography without understanding would ultimately also mean that what is observed and obtained in interviews cannot be related to social structures and processes.

However, this relationship built in the field is different from other forms of understanding and empathetic interpersonal relationships. The relationships that people enter into as ethnographers can be experienced by both sides as affinity, affection and even desire. As with all other forms of relationships, projections, self-doubt and the search for recognition occur during prolonged fieldwork. Empathetic relationships are most often characterized by shared experiences, often involving mutual caring (for example, when the researcher shares with the researched the hardships of daily life or even the experience of detainment). However, they remain a kind of strategic relationship that actually serves the generation of knowledge. The ethnographer enters the relationships in the field in order to learn something from the actors, to understand worlds of experience and ways of reflecting on their conditions and actions and to derive statements about present or past realities from them. In other life contexts, we would perceive people who maintain such relationships as manipulative, narcissistic, violent and exploitative.

Both the compassionate ethnographer and the researched can experience this difference to their other understanding of ‘good’ interpersonal relationships as a painful contradiction.<sup>15</sup> In order to find a way to deal with this, many ethnographers seek relief. The ethical and moral uncertainty resulting from this contradiction sometimes leads to the temptation to deny and conceal this structural contradiction, especially in protest and movement research. In this sense, I see in the imperatives for collaborative research, above all, a practical way of conceptualizing this longing for relief while concealing the essential element of this form of relationship.

The latter that emerges in ethnographic research also differs from the relationship between patients and therapists. Erich Fromm held a seminar on the psychoanalytic method in 1974 and, shortly before his death in 1980, wrote a text entitled “Psychoanalytic ‘Technique’ or the Art of Listening” based on the notes from the seminar. He argues that the key to treating neuroses is not a particular technique but a matter of listening and relating. His understanding of patients is characterized by a ‘deep solidarity’ and a humanistic attitude (Funk 2015). This kind of listening presupposes that the analyst has learned to deal with themselves (e.g. through self-analysis practiced by Fromm) and that the primary goal of their partiality toward the patient is to help them:

While technique refers to the application of the rules of an art to its object, its meaning has undergone a subtle but important change. The technical has been applied to the rules referring to the mechanical, to that which is not alive, while the proper word for dealing with that which is alive is “art.” For this reason the concept psychoanalytic “technique” suffers from a defect because it seems to refer to a non-alive object and hence not applicable to man.

We are on safe ground to say that psychoanalysis is a process of understanding man’s mind, particularly that part which is not conscious. It is an art like the understanding of poetry. [...] The basic rule for practicing this art is the complete concentration of the listener. Nothing of importance must be on his mind, he must be optimally free from anxiety as well as from greed. He must possess a freely-working imagination which is sufficiently concrete to be expressed in words. He must be endowed with a capacity for empathy with another person and strong enough to feel the experience of the other as if it were his own. The condition for such empathy is a crucial facet of the capacity for love. To understand another means to love him – not in the erotic sense but in the sense of reaching out to him and of overcoming the fear of losing oneself. Understanding and loving are inseparable. If they are separate, it is a cerebral process and the door to essential understanding remains closed. The goal of the therapeutic process is to understand the unconscious (repressed) affects and thoughts and to make aware and to understand their roots and functions.

(Fromm 2009, 176–177)

The structural similarities and, above all, the serious differences to ethnographic practice cannot be overlooked. To illustrate this, I would like to cite a conversation in Moscow that has prompted me to write this article.

Tatyana once invited me to her house after our night shift together at a protest in her neighborhood. She let me sleep on her couch after the shift so we could go to the picket line together the following afternoon. During that night shift, I had informal conversations with her and with the other protesters as usual, did what the group let me do, and later recorded the events, conversations and thoughts in my research journal. During the research, I got closer to Tatyana than the others: I was fascinated by her warm, raw manner, as well as her biography and language. She is about 20 years older than me and has a working-class biography typical of Moscow: she is an internal migrant (*limitchitsa*) and came to Moscow from a small Soviet collective farm. For most of her life she did hard physical labor, first at a factory, and in a *banya* (a Russian bathhouse) after the Perestroika. She stood out in the protest group due to her short and precise language, a dry and crude sense of humor, and her plans of action for the protest strategy that were usually more radical.

That morning, we had a long and intimate conversation in her kitchen. She shared moving stories from her life with me; I shared sad memories from my youth. The conversation could have been understood as a comforting conversation between an older and a slightly younger woman, until Tatyana interrupted herself and asked, "Are you studying me right now or are we just talking? I don't want to be dissected down to the molecules." I found this remark painful.

Tatyana's emotional reaction to the conversation with the researcher does not primarily reveal anything about the social relationships in the field, nor is the reciprocity of the observation the main theme. This situation was about a thwarted expectation of an interpersonal relationship. More than in any other situation (and there were very different challenges during the two fieldwork periods in New York and Moscow), I felt very lonely, ashamed and sad after Tatyana's question and after my answer that even now in her kitchen as we talked about violence and sexuality, I was trying to remember everything so I could write it down later in my journal. Then I mumbled something about not wanting to break her down to the molecules but rather wanting to learn from her and understand her point of view, and that I also valued her as a person. Whether out of greed (for an academic title), scientific curiosity or fear of losing myself, the fact is that the well-being of the interlocutors was not in the foreground in my conversations in the field, which were sometimes long and very touching. By listening a lot, I often felt empathy (and, thus, anger, joy, excitement, sadness and shame) or even love (according to Fromm's understanding). But in my role as a researcher, it was (also) a means to gain knowledge about social conditions.

## **Conclusion**

The emotional challenge of ethnographic research is not only the fear of not being able to access the field and form relationships, nor only structural power imbalances between differently privileged people, but also of disappointing the emerging relationships, including in terms of ethical expectations, because one has to analyze and objectify them. There is no single way to deal with this dilemma. However, after my research on various protests of ‘ordinary people,’ I think I know that ethnography does not only involve empathy, solidarity and understanding, but often also the need to disagree with the actors, to disappoint their relational expectations and even to accept that the final text about them can be perceived as betrayal. This reflects the discomfort in the interpersonal situation, and I think rightly so. We get to know people who are different yet similar to us, who live in a world that is at times beautiful and at times ugly, which they (and we) produce and of which they (and we, too) are, at the same time, the product. The similarity of our lives could lead to a bond with these people. But ethnography, even if it gets very close to people and their realities of life, remains a form of knowledge production. For this reason, we as researchers are ultimately always lonely in the field, even when we enter familiar relationships and pursue them scientifically. Even when we collaborate with the researched or take on a role as activists in the struggles that the researched are waging; even when as women, as former factory workers, as queers, or simply as humans we suffer or have suffered from the same inequalities.

This is true whether we are doing our research with refugees, workers or in the police station, and it is not just a feature of obviously ‘problematic’ fields, such as research among overt right-wing radicals. In my observation, performative invitations in the contemporary academy to “think about power relations” or to engage in collaborative research are characterized by the recurring motif of overcoming the loneliness of the researcher in the field while doing nothing wrong (i.e. nothing unethical). My ethnographic work has led me to the insight that this is ultimately a self-deception and that it is necessary to acknowledge the structural separation of researchers and other actors for knowledge production.<sup>16</sup> This also means that, in addition to understanding, sympathy and solidarity, loneliness is also an essential prerequisite for the insights gained from ethnography.

Ethnographers certainly can and should reflect on the production of understanding and analysis. The relationships that researchers enter into during research, the projections and counter-projections associated with them, as well as the institutional structures in which academic knowledge is produced, are always a part of the field that we do not see through from the beginning. Ethnographic reflection, however, should not become an end in itself within research that aims to understand the actors and, with the help of this understanding, to analyze the social relationships in which we all live. In researching the protests of ‘ordinary people,’ I, therefore, suggest to professional intellectuals that research should be understood less as an opportunity to “give voice to the subaltern” – we will never be as loud and as angry as they are (and if we were to be, we would possibly take over the movement we study) – and not as an opportunity to collude with them or create collaborative

academic products (movements benefit much less from this than scholars often assume); not even in representing “the actors’ point of view” in a militant way. Rather, research offers the researcher a chance to honestly encounter the actors, argue with them if necessary, learn to understand them seriously and use the understanding gained to analyze the social conditions in which the actors currently live (if necessary, also with a critical distance to their position). This is not much: not a revolutionary collaborative promise or a defensive positioning that is generally critical of academia (which can also be comfortable). For me, taking this task politically and seriously means making the analysis accessible for and open to critique from the movements, other relevant actors and later researchers, which might result in a (collaborative) search for (perhaps even emancipatory) alternatives for a better life. That, in turn, is no small thing.

### Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Vanya Solovey and Laura Gozzer for their discussions with me on the topic of the article and for their important comments.

### Notes

- 1 On the concept of authoritarian populism, there are classic works by Hall (1980, 1985); Jessop et al. (1984).
- 2 On the change of figuration and instrumentalization in authoritarian populism for Britain, Clarke (2010, 2013); Reznikova (2023a, 2023b).
- 3 Ethnographic writing (‘storytelling’) is harshly criticized in cultural studies and European ethnology in Germany, for example, by Hess and Schwertl (2013), Schwertl (2015) or Riedner (2018), but this criticism can also be found in other schools (e.g. Kaschuba 1999). Concerning international debate: Clifford and Marcus (1986), Marcus (1986, 2008), and Rabinow and Bennett (2012), who accordingly also reject Marxist diagnostic analyses, hermeneutic understanding and psychoanalysis (for a critique, Bourdieu and Wacquant 2006; Timm 2013).
- 4 The rejection of the anthropological method of ‘dense description’ is, *inter alia*, related to the epistemological critique of the totalizing view, in the tradition of the actor–network theory (ANT). Instead of the hermeneutic search for interpretation and contextualization to uncover deep-seated social connections, ANT suggests a focus on networks for which ‘thin description’ is considered an appropriate tool (in contrast to Geertz’ proposal to deal with the problem of ethnographic representation) (Marcus 2008; Law 2009; Hess and Schwertl 2013). The field is only created through dialogue, thus, it does not exist independently of research (which, for example, cannot be a field by definition for Bourdieu 2006). The collaboration between researchers and researched, or between different disciplines, such as art and science, becomes itself part of structures/assemblages.
- 5 Although Carol Gilligan and Donna Haraway take different positions on the definition of ‘woman,’ they share a critique of universal knowledge production and, in my opinion, overlap to a large extent in the resulting methodological programmatic.
- 6 Regarding the discipline in which I work in Germany (“ethnology/European ethnology/empirical cultural studies”), the central theme in the 1970s and 1980s was the confrontation with the entanglement of knowledge production in nationalist thinking (*völkisches Denken*). It was, therefore, counterproductive for left-wing scholarly reflection in this discipline to renounce universalism. Unfortunately, this methodological and epistemological debate (e.g. the stimulating discussion on the limits of understanding

in post-Nazi Germany in the *Tübinger Korrespondenzblatt* in 1989: Bausinger 1989; Jeggle 1989) has been almost forgotten in today's Germany. What might it mean, for example, to engage in committed and militant research against conspiracy myths? What would it mean to conduct partisan research against anti-Semitism or Holocaust denial? In these cases, partisanship is, one might provocatively suggest, for universalism and enlightenment. Utz Jeggle (1989, 16), for example, defended this kind of 'partisanship' in the discussion mentioned above as follows: "As cultural scholars, we are – to put it broadly – committed to ascertaining the truth and not to defending points of view." Even though I see weaknesses and limitations in this methodological standpoint (for it is ultimately also 'true' and empirically provable that knowledge production since the Enlightenment has contributed to legitimizing violence against women and indigenous peoples, to justifying slavery, to the instrumental understanding of reason, etc.), I advocate for having this discussion again, for emancipating science from partisanship and, in doing so, by no means to lose sight of the dialectical in Enlightenment and universalism.

- 7 I do not in any way mean to question the important findings of a colleague's very sound research here. Instead, I am merely pointing out that the argument on ethical and political methodology that is so prominent in this work also has its flip side. However, it should also be acknowledged that the actors in Riedner's research are Bulgarian day laborers, who are multiplicatively discriminated, and the pressure to seek ethical and political justifications in writing is correspondingly higher.
- 8 The gender and movement researcher Vanya Solovey reports impressively on this: "Drawing upon feminist research methodology and constructivist grounded theory, I have tried in this research to adopt and create a set of tools that would help me produce a nuanced analysis and conduct feminist research ethically on the grounds of solidarity with the feminist movement and my participants [...]. I have realized in retrospect that one of the reasons why I came up with this complicated procedure was because I was not quite prepared to assume the power and full authority of a researcher. Yet in fact, I have been the single author all along. Even if I voluntarily ceded my power, I remained the one making decisions and being in control of the research in institutional terms. Going back to participants for every quote was partly meant shifting the burden of responsibility for making decisions from myself onto them, which rather damaged the spirit of solidarity and collaboration I sought to establish between us. Reflecting on this ambiguous experience, I realize now that to act ethically and in solidarity with participants should not mean expecting them to make the researcher's decisions for the researcher, but rather accepting one's power and using it responsibly. When I designed my research method, I imagined a rather utopian collaborative process. By offering my participants various opportunities for control and feedback, I aspired to enable an ongoing collective, dialogical reflection on what the feminist movement in Russia was, what it should be, and how this could be achieved. In reality, various participants had largely varying priorities and most had little interest in engaging in the sustained reflective discussion I had imagined" (2022, 72–73).
- 9 On this term, see Bourdieu (2006).
- 10 See, for example, Sayer (2017) or Clément (2015), who attribute to today's underprivileged, 'ordinary people,' a progressive will for social transformation, while consciously excluding the reactionary elements or even glorifying them. Didier Eribon (2009), for example, argues differently in his book on the French right-wing turn among workers.
- 11 Interestingly, Alexeev's former fellow dissident and colleague Dmitry Shalin (who works as a sociologist in the USA) criticized Alexeev for his methodology in a "discussion across the ocean" that took place after the publication of Alexeev's notes in the 2000s, insofar as it contradicted an ethics of collaboration paradigm common in the West (Алексеев and Шалин 2013). The main issue was that Alexeev had 'exposed' the actors, and had not been partial with them or obtained written consent from them. It is also interesting that Shalin does not address the most obvious flaw of Alexeev's text, the structural, linguistic and methodological sexism of the research, which in the original is entitled "Letters to the Beloved Women."



- 12 An alternative would be to pick out from the fields only what fits into the analysis; hopefully there is consensus among researchers that this is not a good idea. However, it is missing in the numerous discussions with doctoral students, students and colleagues, as well as in the self-observation, that for us, the question of ethical behavior in the field often takes on a very large weight in the writing. Thus, for example, the interconnectedness of the actors (whom we perceive as sympathetic) with the structures we criticize can remain underlit, or overall ambivalences and the observed but contradictory or irritating facts.
- 13 See, for example, Worell (2008), who analyzes the unpublished study “Antisemitism among American Labor, 1944–45” by the Institute of Social Research and develops a dialectical understanding of solidarity and class consciousness along the lines of the critical theories of the Frankfurt School. Also see the study “Arbeiter und Angestellte am Vorabend des Dritten Reiches” by Erich Fromm (1984), first published in 1980.
- 14 The discussion about workers’ consciousness is still relevant today. Didier Eribon, for example, says in an interview (2016) that the partisan attitude toward the working class is so difficult because most workers do not know what their situation is and their actions often contradict their own interests (as he shows with the example of the elections of the right-wing parties in France).
- 15 In this context, the reflexive and empathic approaches to the situation are not to be limited to the researcher – as is often suggested in the ‘reflection chapters’ of anthropological and cultural studies – but are, in most cases, also performed by the researched. Both ways of dealing with things are, in turn, influenced by the social conditions in which they take place. A scientific reflection means (according to Bourdieu) to uncover these respective relationships and the limits of their validity rather than searching for a ‘correct,’ ‘ethical’ methodology (Bourdieu 2006).
- 16 Only then do we truly recognize the equality between us and the actors.

## References

- Bausinger, Hermann. 1989. Verstehen  $\neq$  verstehen. *Tübinger Korrespondenzblatt*, 34, 19–20.
- Bonz, Jochen. 2016. Subjektivität als intersubjektives Datum im ethnografischen Feldforschungsprozess. *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, 112(1), 19–36.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Lois J. D. Wacquant. 2006. *Reflexive Anthropologie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2006. Die Praxis der reflexiven Anthropologie. Einleitung zum Seminar an der *École des études en sciences*, Paris, Oktober 1987. In: Pierre Bourdieu and Lois J. D. Wacquant, ed. *Reflexive Anthropologie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, pp. 251–294.
- Burawoy, Michael. 1998. The extended case method. *Sociological Theory*, 16(1), 4–33.
- Clarke, John. 2010. Enrolling ordinary people: Governmental strategies and the avoidance of politics? *Citizenship Studies*, 14(6), 637–650.
- Clarke, John. 2013. In search of ordinary people: The problematic politics of popular participation. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 6, 208–226.
- Clément, Karin. 2015. Unlikely mobilisations: How ordinary Russian people become involved in collective action. *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*, 2(3–4), 211–240.
- Clifford, James, and George E. Marcus. 1986. *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- DeVault, Marjorie L. 1999. *Liberating Method. Feminism and Social Research*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Eribon, Didier. 2009. *Retour à Reims*. Paris: Fayard.

- Eribon, Didier. 2016. Ihr könnt nicht glauben, ihr wärt das Volk: Interview von Felix Stephan. *Zeit Online*, July 4, 2016. [https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2016-07/didier-eribon-linke-angela-merkel-brexit-frankreich-front-national-afd-interview?utm\\_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F](https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2016-07/didier-eribon-linke-angela-merkel-brexit-frankreich-front-national-afd-interview?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F) [Accessed October 6, 2022].
- Fassin, Didier. 2017. *Das Leben. Eine kritische Gebrauchsanweisung*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Faubion, James. 2009. The ethics of fieldwork as an ethics of connectivity, or the good anthropologist (isn't what she used to be). In: James Faubion and George Marcus, eds. *Fieldwork Is Not What It Used to Be: Learning Anthropology's Method in a Time of Transition*. New York: Cornell University Press, pp. 145–64.
- Fromm, Erich. 1984. *The Working Class in Weimar Germany, a Psychological and Sociological Study*. Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers.
- Fromm, Erich. 2009 [1994]. *The Art of Listening*. New York: Open Road Integrated Media.
- Funk, Rainer. 2015. *Towards a Human Science. The Relevance of Erich Fromm for Today*. Giessen: Psychosozial-Verl.
- Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice. Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1977 [1929]. *Gefängnishefte. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, eds. Klaus Bochmann and Wolfgang Fritz Haug. Hamburg and Berlin: Argument.
- Hall, Stuart. 1980. Popular-democratic versus authoritarian populism. In: Alan Hunt, ed. *Marxism and Democracy*. London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, pp. 157–185.
- Hall, Stuart. 1985. Authoritarian populism: A reply. *New Left Review*, 1, 151.
- Haraway, Donna. 1988. Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575–599.
- Harding, Sandra. 1987. *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Harding, Sandra. 2004. Introduction standpoint theory as a site of political, philosophical, and scientific debate. In: Sandra Harding, ed. *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader. Intellectual and Political Controversies*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 1–16.
- Hess, Sabine, and Beate Binder. 2013. Eingreifen, kritisieren, verändern: Genealogien engagierter Forschung in Kulturanthropologie und Geschlechterforschung. In: Beate Binder, Friedrich von Bose, Katrin Ebell, Sabine Hess and Anika Keinz, eds. *Eingreifen, Kritisieren, Verändern!/? Interventionen ethnographisch und gendertheoretisch*. Münster: Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot, pp. 9–21.
- Hess, Sabine, and Maria Schwertl. 2013. Vom „Feld“ zur „Assemblage“? Perspektiven europäisch-ethnologischer Methodenentwicklungen – eine Hinleitung. In: Sabine Hess, Maria Schwertl and Johannes Moser, eds. *Europäisch-Ethnologisches Forschen. Neue Methoden und Konzepte*. Berlin: Reimer, pp. 13–39.
- Jeggle, Utz. 1989. Verstehen und Kritisieren. *Tübinger Korrespondenzblatt*, 34, 15–18.
- Jessop, Bob, Kevin Bonnett, Simon Bromley, and Tom Ling. 1984. Authoritarian populism, two nations, and Thatcherism. *New Left Review*, 1, 150.
- Kaschuba, Wolfgang. 1999. *Einführung in die Europäische Ethnologie*. München: Beck.
- Knecht, Michi. 2012. Ethnographische Praxis im Feld der Wissenschaft-, Medizin- und Technikantropologie. In: Stefan Beck, Jörg Niewöhner and Estrid Sorensen, eds. *Science and Technology Studies. Eine sozialanthropologische Einführung*. Bielefeld: transcript, pp. 245–274.
- Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Latour, Bruno, and Emilie Hermant. 1998. *Paris ville invisible*. Le Plessis-Robinson: Inst. Synthélabo.

- Law, John. 2009. Assembling the world by survey: Performativity and politics. *Cultural Sociology*, 3(2), 239–256.
- Letherby, Gayle. 2003. *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Marcus, George E. 2008. The end(s) of ethnography: Social/cultural anthropology's signature form of producing knowledge in transition. *Cultural Anthropology*, 23(1), 1–14.
- Mohr, Sebastian, and Rolf Lindner. 2017. Lernen, sich auf Menschen einzulassen. Ein Gespräch mit Rolf Lindner über die Angst des Forschers vor dem Feld. *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, 1, 64–76.
- Rabinow, Paul, and Gaymon Bennett. 2012. *Designing Human Practices. An Experiment with Synthetic Biology*. Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Reinharz, Shulamit. 1993. Neglected voices and excessive demand in feminist research. *Qualitative Sociology*, 16(1), 69–76.
- Reznikova, Olga. 2020. Guardians of Torfjanka Park: The fight for “our Moscow” and the understanding of “ordinary people” in the current conjuncture. In: Moritz Ege and Johannes Moser, eds. *Urban Ethics: Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 261–276.
- Reznikova, Olga. 2023a. “Social rage” against the oligarchs: Justice, Jews and dreams of civilization in current Russia. In: Moritz Ege and Johannes Springer, eds. *The Cultural Politics of Anti-Elitism*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 135–154.
- Reznikova, Olga. 2023b. *Wut der Fernfahrer: Ethnografie eines sozialen Protests*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag (accepted for publication 2023).
- Riedner, Lisa. 2018. *Arbeit! Wohnen! Urbane Auseinandersetzungen um EU-Migration – Eine Untersuchung zwischen Wissenschaft und Aktivismus*. Münster: edition assemblage.
- Sayer, Andrew. 2017. *Why We Can't Afford the Rich*. Munich: Policy Press.
- Schwertl, Maria. 2015. *Faktor Migration. Projekte, Diskurse und Subjektivierungen des Hypes um Migration & Entwicklung*. Münster: Waxmann.
- Solovey, Vanya. 2022. The contemporary feminist movement in Russia. Action, community, and difference. *Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*, [online] 8 June. <https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/handle/18452/25414> [Accessed September 1, 2022].
- Thompson, Edward P. 1978a. *The Poverty of the Theory and Other Essays*. New York: The Merlin Press Ltd.
- Thompson, Edward P. 1978b. Eighteenth-century English society: Class struggle without class? *Social History*, 3(2), 133–165.
- Timm, Elisabeth. 2013. Bodenloses Spurenlesen. Probleme der kulturanthropologischen Empirie unter den Bedingungen der Emergenztheorie. *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, 116(1–2), 49–75.
- Worell, Mark P. 2008. *Dialectic of Solidarity: Labor, Antisemitism, and the Frankfurt School*. Boston, MA: BRILL.
- Алексеев Андрей. 2003–2005. Драматическая социология и социологическая ауторефлексия. Тт. 1–4. СПб,
- Алексеев, Андрей, and Дмитрий Шалин. 2013. Дискуссия через океан. О нарративной идентичности, о жизненном выборе, о натуральном эксперименте. *Заметки по еврейской истории*, 170(11–12). [https://berkovich-zametki.com/2013/Zametki/Nomer11\\_12/Alekseev1.php](https://berkovich-zametki.com/2013/Zametki/Nomer11_12/Alekseev1.php) [Accessed September 1, 2022].
- Здравомылова, Елена, and Анна Тёмкина. 2014. Феминистские рефлексии о полевоом исследовании. *Laboratory*, 6(1), 84–112.

# 9 Voluntary mentoring

## Relationship-building as an urban-ethical practice in Munich

*Laura Gozzer*

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on practices and narratives of voluntary mentors (*Pat:innen*) in the German city of Munich. Voluntary mentoring is a specific mode of civic involvement often established by publicly funded programs.<sup>1</sup> In the scope of these programs, social workers recruit volunteers to become mentors for people from diverse vulnerable groups. Nowadays, different mentoring programs in Germany support seniors living alone, homeless people, children in precarious living conditions or refugees and asylum seekers. My ethnographic study focuses on the volunteers' narratives and experiences in two mentoring programs in Munich (Gozzer 2022b).<sup>2</sup> One program offers mentorships for refugees and asylum seekers. The other matches volunteers with children whose parents have been diagnosed with a mental illness. In both case studies, professionals advise mentors and mentees to meet once a week. How they spend their time together is up to them. Common rituals in mentorships between volunteers and refugees are visiting the city or sharing dinner at the refugee's home. Volunteers and children of parents with mental illness often go to the playground or visit the cinema. A key characteristic of this type of mentoring is that support is less instrumental and not dedicated to a specific task, such as helping with homework or finding a job. Instead, volunteers should become reliable everyday contacts for the refugee or the child to whom they are assigned. I argue that mentoring programs are ethical projects that aim at improving the urban social fabric and counteracting exclusion and stigmatization through one key instrument: creating personal relationships between strangers.

Voluntary mentoring is an intimate mode of active citizenship on two levels: first, volunteers engage in their immediate surrounding, their hometown, and second, the actual practice of mentoring is a complex process of relationship-building that is individualized and builds on emotional practices (Scheer 2012). Looking at these practices of relationship-building from the perspective of an anthropology of ethics (Laidlaw 2014; Lambek et al. 2015; Das 2020) opens questions about the ethical ambitions and self-understandings of volunteers and the ambivalences they face. Furthermore, voluntary mentoring as an ethnographic research field offers insights into negotiations of urban life because mentoring is intrinsically shaped by the conditions of city life and the discourses surrounding it. Volunteers in both

case studies are city dwellers aiming to change the social togetherness in their hometown. Which ideals and dystopias of urbanity are connected to mentoring as relationship-building between strangers?

This chapter focuses on the intersection between mentors' ethical ambitions and the problematizations and constellations of urban life. Using the concept of relational ethical subjectivation (Foucault 1997), I show that mentoring is a form of ethical reformulation of the city. It reformulates ways and possibilities of togetherness, recombining traditions of charity and pedagogics with current claims of power-sensitive solidaric approaches. It aims at changing sociality by not using political practices in a narrow sense but also focusing on the personal, intimate level of one-on-one relationships.

After a short description of the research setting, the case studies and the key analytical concept of ethical subjectivation, I unfold my argument in two steps. First, I show how the ideal of relationship-building against isolation lies at the core of mentors' roles and self-understandings. Second, I focus on one aspect of mentoring that is perceived as a key potential: the establishment of relationships that transgress socioeconomic and cultural categories. I conclude with remarks on how – even though the involvement takes place in the private sphere of personal relationships – volunteers relate to wider processes of social and political change.<sup>3</sup>

### **Mentoring and processes of (urban-)ethical subjectivations**

My research focuses on the experiences of mentors by applying ethnographic methods of qualitative interviews and participant observations in two mentoring programs in Munich<sup>4</sup>: First, a program for children of parents with mental illness, which is part of the church-based *Social Service of the Catholic Women in Munich* and, second, a mentoring program for refugees from the initiative *Save Me Munich*, which is part of the left-leaning and antiracist *Munich Refugee Council*. The two mentoring programs were established in 2008 and 2009, respectively. This was the early phase of utilizing institutionalized mentoring programs as a tool for social work in Germany, even though the history of these programs internationally dates far back to the beginning of the 20th century. The first mentoring programs came into being in the USA in the context of professionalizing social welfare (Netzwerk Berliner Kinderpatenschaften e.V. 2018, 39). The idea has become increasingly popular in Europe during the last one hundred years. Most mentoring programs in Germany were established in the years around 2010. The so-called 'refugee crisis' in 2015 led to a further boom of mentoring programs. A sign of their growing popularity is the federal program 'People Support People,' which has been funding mentoring projects in diverse German cities since 2016.

On the one hand, the two case studies of this research are similar in their organizational structure. In both, social workers recruit and train volunteers, coordinate the matching process and consult volunteers during mentorships. The professionals work in small teams of three to five women. On the other hand, the programs target very different social groups and have contrasting political and ideological backgrounds. The mentoring program of the *Social Service of the Catholic Women*

in Munich connects ideas of Catholic charity with professionalized social work and women's solidarity. It has existed since 1906 and is a branch of the nationwide institution of the *Social Service of Catholic Women*. The mentoring program is only one project amongst many, such as housing for women experiencing homelessness or pregnancy counseling. The program *Save Me Munich* for resettlement refugees derived from a political campaign of the *Munich Refugee Council* (Gozzer 2022a).<sup>5</sup> The program advocates human rights and the increase of the resettlement quota in Germany and operates in a conflictual political context. These contrasts make the two programs ideal case studies for a cultural analysis of mentoring as a sociocultural practice because they open up a perspective on a broad range of motivations and political and religious aspects of volunteering. Regarding the social fabric of Munich, the programs also represent catholic as well as liberal influences in the urban middle class of the city. The two programs shed light on a variety of different ethical ambitions and conflicts among voluntary mentors, however, common topics and general characteristics of mentoring emerge during grounded theory analysis (Breuer, Muckel and Dieris 2019).

Foregrounding mentors' ethico-political self-understandings and practices is a new angle in research on voluntary mentoring. Most research is conducted by psychologists and presents quantitative data about the effects of mentoring on the respective target groups (Raithelhuber 2018, 1–9). These studies are often evaluations of existing programs (Schreier, Wagenblass and Wüst 2009; Heitmann, Reinisch and Bauer 2010). How mentoring shapes subjectivities on a sociocultural level and which ideals and ambitions are connected to the practices of relationship-building are both questions that remained unanswered. Therefore, my perspective leads away from the question whether and how mentoring can help the respective target group. The interest is more about what mentoring means as a sociocultural phenomenon and what it can tell us about current negotiations of social cohesion, inequality and solidarity.

Until now, sociologists and anthropologists have contributed many analyses to understand volunteering in its sociopolitical contexts. I want to highlight two main aspects: first, critical research states that volunteering (Muehlebach 2012), and mentoring in particular (Colley 2003), is a part of a political regime in the neoliberal welfare state. Indeed, mentoring initiatives – often funded by public money – are cheap. Citizens take over care responsibilities to fill holes in the social welfare system (Pinl 2015). Volunteers offer unpaid labor that becomes necessary primarily because of the socioeconomic (and, to some extent, legal) circumstances that structure the lives of stigmatized and poor people: a lack of money for everyday needs, overcrowded housing situations and less access to education. At the same time, more and more areas of social welfare are identified as fields for civic involvement and volunteering. New target groups are identified, as I will show in the case of children of parents with mental illness. Therefore, mentoring occurs in the context of an accelerating care crisis (Winker 2013) and changing social welfare politics that increasingly put active citizenship at the core of society's support system.

Second, research on refugee and humanitarian aid has pointed out that many forms of refugee support rely on paternalistic or pedagogical understandings of the

‘other’ and are rooted in traditions of top-down charity (Dünwald 2006; Fassin 2007; Braun 2017). These analyses show that offering care and, in this case, mentoring is not a politically innocent practice. Instead, it risks reproducing racism and socioeconomic inequality. Nevertheless, most research states that it can also establish new forms of solidarity and empower the target group. Mentoring as a research case leads to a deep understanding of the ethical claims and political stances used to differentiate between top-down charity and empowering solidarity in actual practice.

Academic discourses about the care crisis, humanitarianism and critical social work literature have made their way into the actual practices of many volunteering associations. Both ambivalences – working unpaid in the light of structural shortages and the power imbalance in charity relationships – have already become part of the self-reflections of volunteers and professionals in the two case studies of this research. My analysis shows that the question whether support is politically empowering (and hence ‘good’) or ‘bad,’ in the sense of patronizing, is an integral part of the volunteers’ self-reflection. The ethical and political questions that many mentors ask themselves are at the center of the analysis. How do mentors understand themselves, their voluntary work and the mentoring relationships they become part of? Which moments and constellations render their ethical self-making difficult? How do they deal with critics and ambivalences in filling their roles as mentors?

Using the concept of ethical subjectivation, I focus on practices and techniques mentors use to constitute an ethical subject. Michel Foucault describes ethics as “the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself, *rapport à soi*, [...] which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions” (1997, 263). Judith Butler (2008) and Simon Critchley (2013) have argued for a more relational understanding of ethics that does not take the autonomous individual as a starting point. Instead, a relational understanding of ethics shows that people are dependent and inextricably connected to others. In a similar sense, social anthropologist Henrietta Moore describes ethics as

a labor that seeks to address the query: ‘how should I live’ with myself and with others? Any life, whatever it consists of, is necessarily a shared one, and the self in its relations to others is the ‘very stuff’ of ethics.

(Foucault 1997, 300; Moore 2021, 30)

Therefore, I understand ethical subjectivation as an everyday practice and reflection that is strongly influenced by all others we live with and not as a self-focused, intellectual process based on (distanced and rational) reasoning and reflection. Additionally, ethical subjectivation is closely connected to public discourses and shared values about the ‘good’ and ‘proper’ way of living together. Using this relational concept of ethical subjectivation offers a closer look onto the practices and narratives that volunteers use to make sense of themselves as mentors – considering current political and socioeconomic circumstances and the constant interaction with others, especially the mentees.

### Relationship-building against isolation

The central care idea in mentoring is that support works through contact. The initiators of the program for children of parents with mental illness define mentoring (*Patenschaft*) as a “low-threshold, preventive, practical and everyday support that is based on the trustful, long-term relationship between two people” (Perzmaier and Sonnenberg 2013, 22).<sup>6</sup> The focus on relationship-building manifests in the distinction between *Patenschaften* and *Mentoring* in the German language. While the German use of *Mentoring* refers to rather instrumental support, for example, helping children to finish school or supporting refugees to find a job, *Patenschaften* focuses on a more emotionalized, relationship-based goal. People associate *Patenschaften* with godparenthood in Judeo-Christian tradition. Therefore, *Patenschaft* invokes the ideal of a tight, family like, life-long relationship between someone who can give advice and the other who needs guidance.

Both case studies – the *Social Service of Catholic Women in Munich* and *Save Me Munich* – explain how and why relationships help refugees, on the one hand, and children of parents with mental illness, on the other. They do this in their mission statements and the actual training and counseling for mentors. The professionals’ explanations are crucial for the self-understanding of mentors: Volunteers, who often do not know what mentoring in actual practice means, get to know their roles and responsibilities and boundaries during training and in conversations with the social workers.

Academic and political discourses inform the professionals’ knowledge. Academic literature on children of parents with mental illness has increased in the last few years parallel to initiatives dedicated to that target group. The programs refer to research about children of parents with mental illness in psychology, educational studies and social work. This is visible in the case of the *Social Service of the Catholic Women* in the internal mission statement (Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen München e.V. 2019) and in a book published by the initiators (Perzmaier and Sonnenberg 2013), which remains an important reference for the practical work in the program to the present day.

The growing research literature presents children of parents with mental illness as a group that has, so far, been widely neglected by mental health professionals. Experts warn that children affected by their parents’ illness run a higher risk of developing mental health problems themselves (Wiegand-Grefe, Matzejat and Lenz 2011; Schone and Wagenblaus 2012). Most parents participating in the program of the *Social Service of the Catholic Women in Munich* are single mothers, whose diagnoses vary from depression and borderline or anxiety disorders to schizophrenia (Interview January 7, 2019).<sup>7</sup> The program points to the precarious emotional situation of many children as they take on responsibilities at home: “They care for the ill parent, take over the parental role and, therefore, a high level of responsibility inadequate for a child” (Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen München e.V. 2019, 3). A lot of children do not understand their mother’s disease, do not have access to the necessary explanations and blame themselves for their mother’s problems (Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen München e.V. 2019, 3).



Resilience theory is currently most referred to in the academic knowledge production about children of parents with mental illness. It focuses on the children's resources and strengths (Wustmann 2009, 71). Following this approach, the mentorship program of the *Social Service of the Catholic Women* presents neither the mothers as unfit or unreliable nor their children as helpless or lacking skills and opportunities (Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen München e.V. 2019, 3). Instead, the social workers emphasize the families' resources during training and in conversations with mentors. So-called 'resilience factors' or 'protective factors' that can be strengthened by therapeutic or social work are central in resilience theory (Wustmann 2009, 72). Protective factors illuminated in research on children of parents with mental illness include the children's understanding of the mental health condition of their parents (Wiegand-Grefe, Mattejat and Lenz 2011, 18). It is important that children know that they are not responsible for the problems in the family and that they feel loved by their parents (Wiegand-Grefe, Mattejat and Lenz 2011, 18). Other resilience factors are friends and hobbies and a "strong relationship to a healthy grown-up" (Wiegand-Grefe, Mattejat and Lenz 2011, 18). This is where mentoring as a support model comes into play.

The program claims that it is not necessarily the parent's mental health illness that renders the family life difficult but, instead, sociocultural norms surrounding mental health and economic precarization. The initiative takes a critical stance toward how society deals with mental illness as opposed to only framing the situation of the children as a psychological, individual problem resulting from their parents' health. In this perspective, the children's loneliness and abandonment result from the way in which society economically and socially stigmatizes parents and especially mothers with mental health conditions.

The initiators of the program at the *Social Service of the Catholic Women* explain that single mothers cannot communicate their mental health problems openly because they are afraid of social stigmatization or repression from youth authorities. Their children become allies in hiding the illness, which leads to further isolation and social withdrawal of both mothers and children (Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen München e.V. 2019, 3). Correspondingly, contact with others, the wider family or friends, becomes difficult to uphold (Perzlsmaier and Sonnenberg 2013, 45). Problematising missing ties to others is the basis for ascribing an important role in the support of the children to volunteers.

Regarding the academic knowledge and social work premises, the most important task in the role of a mentor is to guarantee continuous and reliable contact with the child. The hope is that mentors can strengthen the child's personality and resources and indirectly support the mother by 'just being there.' The program emphasizes the limits of the mentors' role. They can offer relieving time-out but cannot change the general situation of the children. Respecting these boundaries is one of the biggest challenges in the actual mentoring practice for many of my interview partners.

In the case of mentoring for refugees, the program *Save Me* refers less directly to academic knowledge. Being part of the *Munich Refugee Council*, the initiative builds on years of expertise in advocacy work for refugees in the city and

uses mostly activist knowledge. The professionals take a critical stance, especially toward the Christian Social Union-led<sup>8</sup> politics in Bavaria, but also toward political decisions of the German government and the European Union. At the time of the research, the *Council* and *Save Me* problematized the refugees' living conditions in overcrowded refugee homes and their lack of private space in press statements and on social media.

The *Council* criticizes the fact that the state actively isolates especially asylum seekers through restrictive asylum and labor market policies. Work permits are hard to get and, therefore, the possibilities of getting to know other inhabitants of Munich are limited – also in private life. As the coordinator of the program emphasizes, many refugees do not have any opportunities to get in contact with other people living in Munich:

I mean, where do you get to know people? [...] It's even more difficult if you don't drink alcohol. You're not a student, you're not an apprentice, you don't have any contact with any Germans. In language class, there are only other[s] [refugees, L.G.] and then you can't even go to a bar because you don't support the concept.

(Interview June 13, 2018)

The mentoring program tries to counteract this partly state-led isolation and exclusion. The program builds implicitly on a concept of integration that not only includes language, housing and (possibly) work, but also emotional factors and social contacts (Han-Broich 2012). The quest for *Teilhabe* – participation or having a share – is key to these debates and contact to 'Germans' is a central aspect of *Teilhabe*. Ties are not only perceived as important on a psychological, emotional level but also as helpful in concrete situations such as applying for a work permit at the local authorities or searching for a job.<sup>9</sup> 'Opening doors' or 'building bridges' are key metaphors to explain the roles of mentors.

Comparing both programs, the central problem identified in the refugees' lives, on the one hand, and the lives of children of parents with mental illness, on the other, is surprisingly similar. Mentoring in both cases tries to heal exclusion and stigmatization by creating personal relationships. As the coordinator of the program for children of parents with mental illness puts it: "Because these relationships make it easier and that is the common denominator. Relationships can provide a lot of relief" (Interview January 7, 2019). I interpret mentoring as characterized by ideas of support developing against the background of a 'collective relational crisis' (Muehlebach 2011, 67), as anthropologist Andrea Muehlebach describes the growing problem of loneliness in many current societies. Voluntary engagement is perceived as an important instrument in fighting this crisis. In this scope, I understand mentoring as 'affective labor' that "remedies not material poverty but collective relational crisis. It restores not economic wealth but the foundations of public morality" (Muehlebach 2011, 67).

That both programs identify isolation, loneliness and exclusion as key problems gives the basis to highlight the roles of volunteers and potentials of

mentoring.<sup>10</sup> Mentoring becomes a promising instrument because isolation is seen as society's fault and fighting it becomes the duty of active citizens. Both programs emphasize that volunteers have a different role in the lives of mentees compared to professionals. In mentoring, refugees or children do not represent 'cases.' Instead, the relationships to volunteers can and should be more individual and emotional. Mentors offer contact that goes beyond the state-led bureaucratic welfare structure surrounding refugees or families dealing with mental illness. That line is drawn, even though volunteering in both programs is dependent on public funding by the city.

The increasing popularity of mentoring programs in Germany is part of a general trend of initiatives that aim at bettering the social fabric of societies by promoting close personal ties. Most of these projects, including mentoring programs, are placed in cities. A coordinator in the *Social Service for the Catholic Women* contextualizes the mentorships with other urban initiatives that strive to create relationships in the city, such as intergenerational housing or cooperative projects (Interview January 7, 2019). Mentoring programs represent urban-ethical projects that Moritz Ege and Johannes Moser describe as future-oriented endeavors which promise a better or fairer city and a better urban life (2021, 7). They promise the arrangement of new forms of togetherness and, therefore, problematize the current social fabric of Munich. The urban-ethical projects of mentoring offer a basis for identification for volunteers. "Ethical projects also tend to exude and encourage positive ('warm') affects or sentiments of doing something good and being aware of it on the side of initiators and participants" (Ege and Moser 2021, 8). Looking through the theoretical lens of ethical subjectivation, the projects promote an ideal subject of the 'good mentor' and, thus, prefigure processes of ethical subjectivation for volunteers.

Mentors in the two Munich cases take up metaphors and ideals of the initiatives to describe their roles, such as 'opening doors' or 'building bridges.' Interview partners made clear that they see their responsibility in "keeping on showing up no matter what." Being reliable, trustworthy and 'just there' are the key ambitions mentors set for themselves. Relationship-building becomes an ability on which mentors constantly need to work. They link their own biographical experiences and personal attributes to their capabilities as mentors. One mentor sees her growing-up with a father having an addictive disorder as helpful in filling the role as mentor. She perceives herself as empathetic and sensitive to the needs of others (Interview January 23, 2019). Many interview partners describe themselves as open and strong enough to offer relationships to strangers – additionally in difficult contexts and circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

Thereby, many mentors implicitly refer to images of urban anonymity, alienation and social deprivation as crucial problems in today's Munich. The coordinator of the mentoring program for refugees sees the need for institutionalized forms of relationship-building especially in cities, "because anonymity is a bigger topic and, therefore, encounters are much more difficult than in the village" (Interview June 13, 2018). While people, she suspects, meet 'sooner or later' (Interview June 13, 2018)

in the village, many refugees do not get in contact with Munich residents at all. Ege describes how

many initiatives that propagate a ‘better’ urban life [conjure up] exactly what, according to the classic theoreticians of urbanity, is not genuinely urban, or rather in the sense of an urbanity of the ‘urban villagers’: So more community, less anonymity, less superficiality and fluidity, smaller scales and so on [...].

(Ege 2018, 183)

However, this interpretation is only one side of the story. The city and the urban also present positive references in the institutions and mentors’ narratives. Many interview partners describe Munich as liberal and open in contrast to the surrounding rural region. Coordinators, especially, not only perceive mentoring programs as necessary because of urban anonymity but also see urban conditions as the necessary basis for the thriving of such programs. The coordinator of the mentoring program for children of parents with mental illness states that initiatives in rural areas face more difficulties in implementing programs (Interview January 2019). Her interpretation is that the shame and fear of status loss are more threatening in small towns and villages than in cities. Moreover, as the interviews show, many people who decide to become mentors are influenced by discourses, examples and networks placed in the city. The city as a sociopolitical space is not only part of the problem that mentoring programs address but also the basis for their existence.

### **‘Building bridges’ beyond sociocultural differences**

New personal ties are built between strangers from different sociocultural worlds. Unlike forms of self-help, mentoring programs match people who do not have much in common in the first place. “In mentorships, people from totally different lifeworlds, with different educational backgrounds and with completely different economic situations come together, but they meet in an appreciative and respectful way” (Interview January 7, 2019). With these words, the coordinator of the mentoring program for children of parents with mental illness highlights the socio-economic and cultural differences between the lives of middle-class volunteers and those of children who grow up in precarious conditions.

Even though the program emphasizes that mental illness occurs throughout all social classes, mostly single mothers in precarious economic conditions ask for mentorships at the *Social Service for Catholic Women*. This is linked to the service’s offers that target this group but, above all, shows the correlation between mental illness, economic deprivation and the mothers’ acceptance of support by volunteers. Similarly, the mentees at *Save Me* are mostly people who fight to make a life in Germany and struggle to find jobs and adequate housing. Besides stressing ‘cultural’ differences, the economic resources and educational backgrounds of the mentees differ tremendously from those of the mentors. The program works

differently than, for example, mentoring between university students and refugees who start to study at university.

Mentors in both initiatives belong to the urban, academic middle class. I spoke to IT engineers, lawyers and sales managers. Many find themselves in a situation of biographic consolidation: some want to settle in Munich, and others are at the beginning of a new life phase with children moving out of the house. Mentors in both programs are in solid and comfortable personal and financial positions. They refer to values and political claims of equal rights, antiracism and socioeconomic equality. Only a few mentors have biographical connections to migration or mental illness, but most of them do not have any previous experiences.<sup>12</sup>

The ideal of creating relationships beyond class and culture boundaries is part of the mentors' ethical subjectivations in diverse ways. The volunteers speak about the beginnings of their mentorships as confrontations with the unknown. In some cases, interview partners admit that initially, confrontations with 'other' lifeworlds were not easy. Bettina, a 28-year-old mentor at *Save Me*, remembers how she wanted to meet her mentee Safiye for the first time in a coffee house, but Safiye insisted on meeting in the room of the refugee home where she is living with her family. Bettina tells me how irritated she was and how insecure she felt, going to Safiye's home. Her narrative ends in emphasizing what a warm and welcoming atmosphere she found in the room (Interview July 11, 2018). Similar to Bettina's case, mentors reflect on their own prejudices and present mentoring as a learning process. Some interview partners describe themselves as courageous compared to others. When Andrea, a 49-year-old osteopath, speaks about her motives to become a mentor for a refugee family, she remembers that many people in her surrounding were 'afraid' when refugees arrived in Germany in 2015. As a reaction, she decided to 'delve into' the field of refugee aid and "show those people around me who are so scared that there is no need to be that afraid" (Interview January 21, 2019). Andrea states that becoming a mentor requires 'going out' and 'coming out of one's shell' (Interview January 21, 2019). She emphasizes the necessary courage to get in contact with 'others' and to leave one's own comfort zone.

For many mentors, their engagement brings with it a 'first time': the first time entering a refugee home, the first time getting in touch with Muslim traditions or the first time getting in contact with restrictions that people dependent on social benefits face.<sup>13</sup> Felicitas, a 33-year-old controller, serves as a mentor for a girl whose mother was diagnosed with depression. Felicitas remembers when she first entered the mother's flat, nine years ago: "It was definitely shocking for me. Before that, I had never been to a family's home where they had such a lack of money" (Interview April 24, 2019). Having grown up in a middle-class family that she describes as supportive and harmonious, mentoring confronts the mentor with unseen poverty and public neglect. She continues: "This is extreme, of course, if you think about it, we are all living in the same city. But no one ever really looks behind the curtains" (Interview April 24, 2019). Here, Felicitas refers to the image of an urban society devoid of solidarity, in which encounters beyond class lines rarely occur.

Many mentors self-reflexively see the tendency of retreating into homogeneous bubbles in their own lives and want to counteract this by mentoring. Maria,

a 32-year-old sales manager and mentor to a refugee family, describes her social surrounding as homogenous: She self-critically reflects that she is living in a ‘bubble’ of academics, whose lives are ‘far away’ from people in precarious circumstances (Interview August 29, 2018). Maria herself grew up in a refugee home, attended university and is now working in a well-paid job in luxury retail. Climbing up the class ladder is an experience several interview partners share. In contrast to Felicitas, who acknowledges her limited knowledge about the lives of ‘the other half,’<sup>14</sup> Maria sees some relationship between her biographical experience and the situation of the mentees.

What both women have in common – even though they are mentors in totally different contexts – is that they embody a similar ideal subject: a city dweller who cares for the lives of others and looks behind the façade of wealthy Munich. In doing so, they refer to images of other middle-class people who do not see and/or acknowledge the precarious lives of others. This ethical boundary work entails political critique: Felicitas criticizes people who claim that living with ‘Hartz IV’<sup>15</sup> is easy. Annoyed by these comments, she points out that the commentators have never seen living circumstances like the ones in which her mentee is living, and that they have no idea what they are talking about (Interview April 24, 2019).

Mentoring confronts volunteers with ‘other’ lifeworlds within the city. This confrontation can become an integral part of ethical self-understandings. The ideal of mentoring as ‘building bridges’ develops in the context of current debates in Germany (and other Western countries) about rising gaps between winners and losers of late capitalism (Wietschorke 2020). Another key trope in these debates is that people from different lifeworlds rarely meet but retreat into their own ‘bubbles.’ In this diagnosis of a ‘society drifting apart,’ cities seem socially fragmented into homogenous neighborhoods and groups. Working against the isolation of the excluded and precarious becomes part of the mentors’ ethical subjectivations.

In practice, ‘building bridges’ is not always easy and manifold dynamics lead to the reproduction of inequality and distance between mentors and mentees. The professionals address the difficulties of creating egalitarian relationships of support in a hierarchical society in the programs’ training sessions. The social workers of the *Social Service of the Catholic Women* ask the volunteers to not enter a competitive relationship with the mother of their mentee. Mentors can offer to discuss matters at hand, such as decisions regarding school, with the mother but should not give unsolicited advice. The coordinator emphasizes:

That is very important for us when we recruit new volunteers, that they approach the families with a high amount of appreciation, that they do not say: I am the one who knows how things work and I come to those who don’t get it anyway.

(Interview January 7, 2019)

Instead of reproducing sociocultural hierarchies in the personal relationship through pedagogical approaches, mentors should respect the mother’s opinion and education style as equally worthy as their own. The coordinator describes the ideal

mentoring relationship as an ‘encounter on an eyelevel’ (*auf Augenhöhe*, Interview January 7, 2019), an encounter between equals.<sup>16</sup>

A power-sensitive approach and critique on paternalism are important for the professionals at *Save Me*. They remind mentors in training sessions that they should not expect refugees to assimilate into German culture. The term integration is discussed critically by the social workers. They ask mentors to respect the traditions, habits and perspectives of the other and not to expect too much gratitude. Training sessions are influenced by critiques of traditional charity approaches toward refugees. The ideal of establishing an informal friendship instead of a helper-receiver relationship influences the mentors’ ambitions in their voluntary practice. Instead of becoming German teachers, they search for similarities on a personal level, such as being a woman, to create friendship-like a-hierarchical ties.<sup>17</sup>

To sum up, both programs expect mentors to be open and appreciative toward the children and refugees and respect their independence. This is advice directed against the pitfalls of charitable practices. The shift from power-insensitive top-down charity to more egalitarian relationships is present in both programs, despite the differences in their religious, political and social positionings. Mentors must work on the self to fulfill this claim for more egalitarian relationships. Key challenges are to avoid being too pedagogical toward the mentee or interfering too much in the education of the children. The mentors for children of parents with mental illness especially actively need to restrain themselves when they witness parents taking decisions they perceive as bad for the child. In these situations, mentors often reach out to the professionals in the program and ask for help.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to irritations regarding the decisions or habits of the other, mentors find it difficult to create personal ties because of structural differences. This is most evident when mentors compare their own housing situation with that of the mentees. One mentor is searching for an apartment for a family who lives in one room in a refugee home. She talks about her insecurities regarding inviting them over to her and her boyfriend’s place. She’s afraid about “what they will think” of her when they see her three-room apartment (Interview December 10, 2018). Another mentor to a refugee family decided from the beginning on that she wants to keep the mentoring and private life separate. She reflects on how she cannot imagine a party where both her academic friends and the refugee family with no educational background come together. She fears that the mentees could feel judged and observed by her friends (Interview August 9, 2018). The ability to confront oneself with the other reaches its limits in these constellations and decisions.<sup>19</sup>

Middle-class mentors are confronted with their own privileges in the process of mentoring. They see their lives in a different light when they compare them to the situations and prospects of mentees. ‘I simply feel bad’ (Interview September 3, 2019), one interview partner sums up when looking at his comfortable life and the struggle his counterpart is facing trying to get a residence permit. To reflect one’s own privileges is part of the current mode of self-reflexivity employed mostly by the academic urban middle class. One’s own wealth is no longer seen as earned through hard work but as pure luck or the result of exploiting others. In some cases, this privilege check leads to politicization when mentors criticize the Hartz IV

reform or asylum policies of the European Union. In other cases, the confrontation leads to a guilty conscience and to further exclusionary practices when mentors decide not to invite refugee mentees to their home or meet their friends.

The search for more contact and more personal relationships that transcend lifeworlds and economic and sociocultural barriers is connected to positive and negative images of the urban simultaneously. In the context of recent diagnoses of a society drifting apart, relationships between people with positions far away in the social space of the city are perceived to be an absolute rarity. The coordinator of the program for children of parents with mental illness sets the present situation in contrast to unspecified ‘old days’ (*früher*), in which encounters between strangers and unequals were more common in everyday urban life, for example, between neighbors (Interview January 7, 2019). Many interview partners share this view. As personal relationships between unknown strangers who do not ascribe to the same social class, nationality or religion and do not share political views or interests seem unlikely to emerge in the urban everyday of Munich, institutions such as mentoring programs aim at filling this gap. However, mentoring programs are by no means just about anti-urban or -modern attitudes and images. They also refer – in an emphatically urban sense – to the ideal of the city as a space of lived heterogeneity and confrontations between strangers (Ege and Moser 2021). The mentorship model is accompanied by an urban-ethical call to confront oneself with others instead of retreating into a group of similar people (Sennett 2019).

### **Concluding remarks: problematizing the urban social fabric and becoming an ethical subject**

Mentoring as a mode of active citizenship locates support in the private sphere and promotes social solidarity on an individual level: in ideally egalitarian relationships. Volunteers fill their roles as mentors in diverse ways, sometimes dealing with projects such as finding an apartment, sometimes trying to create a friendship (Gozzer and Moser 2022).

Locating support for stigmatized and excluded groups in the private sphere and as the responsibility of unpaid volunteers has been criticized in the research literature as potentially depoliticizing. At first glance, building personal ties as an instrument for change seems to be an example of the “non-repressive ethico-political strategies and tactics” that urban-ethical projects use instead of “more confrontational political contestation” (Ege and Moser 2021, 8) to initiate change. It seems obvious that structural circumstances – legal regulation and economic deprivation – determine the lives of children affected by parental mental illness and refugees in a much more urgent, even life-threatening way than the lack of personal contact to the urban middle class. Mentors identify this contradiction themselves and put their support in question. In extreme cases – when mentees get deported to their home countries or children are separated from their families and need to live in youth centers – mentors become directly aware of the limited impact they have. This can destabilize and irritate their practices of ethical subjectivation and lead to frustration, hopelessness and sometimes mean the end of mentoring.



But even though relationships are transferred in the private, emotional sphere and their impact on structural injustice can be criticized as limited, relationship-building is a way for many mentors to inscribe themselves as active citizens in bigger sociopolitical transformations. In interviews, mentors describe a perceived distance between their private lives and important sociopolitical developments. Some see their engagement as a way to ‘become part of the city’ or ‘participate’ in society. Here, it seems, it is not about the inclusion or participation of the vulnerable other but also about the inclusion of the self.

Where does this need for self-inclusion come from? My interview partners are generally in good social and economic situations, have families and friends and relatively well-paid jobs. But they name a variety of developments in society about which they feel concerned, such as the rise of right-wing extremists, the public fear of migrants and their own fear of social disruption due to economic inequality. Volunteers in refugee mentoring often spoke about their worries in the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis in 2015, as I conducted the interviews three years after that time. Mark, a 46-year-old IT engineer explains his motive to become mentor as follows: “Yeah indeed, to give something back to our society in the sense of: Hey, you guys raised me and now [...] I can also do something in order to make ourselves feel more comfortable with the situation” (Interview July 18, 2018). As Mark perceives society in crisis – by interestingly switching between ‘you guys’ (*ihr*) and ‘ourselves’ (*uns*) – he sees his mentorship as payback to an insecure collective. The connection he wants to create seems to be less between him and a person confronted with racialized exclusion, but between him and society. The bridge that should be built in mentoring does not only connect the middle class to the precarious but also connects the private lives of volunteers to sociopolitical developments on a macrolevel.

The research took place at a time that the sociologist Andreas Reckwitz calls the phase of ‘disillusionment’ regarding unfulfilled promises connected to liberalism, secular democracy and capitalism (2020). Interviews often turned into discussions about Trump’s politics, terror attacks in Europe, Brexit or the rise of the radical right in German regional parliaments. The mentors are concerned and worried about these developments and, at the same time, describe political decision-making as far away from their own daily life and influence. Their comfortable and secure private lives contrast with bigger political shifts.

Many interview partners describe their wish to contribute to a society in crisis and, simultaneously, their difficulties in finding an access to this arena that fits them. Mentoring, I suggest, can be one way for the urban middle class to participate politically in an individualized form. In becoming mentors, they try to hold onto the promises made by democracy and liberalism on a local level, in their direct surroundings. The ideal is an ‘open city’ (Sennett 2019) that offers equal opportunities to everyone, and which is open to ‘strangers.’ Mentors do not follow these ambitions by challenging the current socioeconomic order or the regime of citizenship and borders, but do so by building personal, individual relationships. Their attempt to do something for the collective connects to the wish of involving oneself personally and individually.

Apart from the argument regarding the self-perceptions of mentors and from an analytical, feminist perspective, degrading mentoring as privatized, emotion-ridden work on a small-scale cannot hold. Feminist scholars have criticized the clear distinction between care as depoliticizing and conflict or fights as politicizing since the 1980s (Gozzer and Reznikova 2020). Care and keeping personal ties are not less than fighting for justice with petitions or in demonstrations, it is a different way of participating in political matters of inclusion, participation and equality. Similar to every ethico-political practice, it has its challenges. The latter are addressed and worked upon by professionals and mentors alike in the mentoring programs of my research. Therefore, mentoring is not only a field to analyze ethical subjectivations of a specific group of citizens in an age of increasing insecurities but also a practice where ethics and politics, charity and solidarity, the reproduction of injustice and the quest for egalitarianism are intertwined.

## Notes

- 1 Mentoring is a term for various forms of learning and support. Mentoring occurs not only in work life, where younger employees are paired with more experienced colleagues, but also in semi-therapeutic contexts, as a paid service by professionals. This chapter refers exclusively to mentoring as a voluntary practice that takes place in the context of specific social work programs.
- 2 The PhD project (2018–2021) was located at the Institute for European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and is part of the DFG-funded research group ‘Urban Ethics’ (FOR 2101).
- 3 I develop these aspects in the third and fifth chapter of my dissertation (Gozzer 2022b).
- 4 I talked to 19 mentors, met them at mentor-meetings, conducted participant observations in the initiatives and was present at so-called first meetings between autumn 2018 and the beginning of 2020.
- 5 *Save Me* was an initiative promoting the German participation at the UNHCR resettlement program, which was realized in 2009. In the resettlement program, refugees who had already left their home and are living in an endangered situation in another country are chosen by UNHCR and legally relocated to a country that offers to admit them. The mentoring program of *Save Me* is focused on this group of resettled refugees in Munich. As their number is relatively small, *Save Me* decided to open the program to asylum seekers in 2015. Until 2020, mentors were ascribed both to asylum seekers and to refugees, two groups that differ tremendously regarding their residence and work permits and the security of their status in Germany (Hess and Lebuhn 2014).
- 6 German quotes from interviews or literature are translated by the author.
- 7 Most women have already used other services of the *Social Service of the Catholic Women*, such as ‘mother-child houses,’ where mothers and children can live for a specific time and receive support from social workers and therapists.
- 8 The Christian Social Union in Bavaria is the regional partner of the Christian Democratic Union.
- 9 The arguments here are reminiscent of social capital theories, in which social networks and contacts are deemed as important assets to succeed economically and socially, such as in Bourdieu’s notion of social capital (1986).
- 10 Problematising social isolation is linked to two wider debates in the respective programs. While mentoring for children of parents with mental illness is connected to the goal of increasing public health by preventing children from developing mental health problems in the future, the mentoring for refugees presents a tool to stabilize ‘social

- peace' in the context of heated debates about migration and asylum policies in Germany. In this sense, mentoring programs also serve as governmental techniques.
- 11 My conversations with volunteers were characterized by a high level of self-reflection. The interview situation itself certainly motivates the volunteers to describe and reflect on themselves and their roles as mentors, but as I witnessed in training and counseling sessions in the initiatives, mentoring itself confronts the volunteers strongly with their own personalities and character traits.
  - 12 Professionals at *Save Me* promote the importance of a self-help approach and hope that more refugees and former asylum seekers apply as mentors in the program. The *Social Service of Catholic Women* points out that it can be difficult if people who themselves have a history in dealing with mental illness become mentors as they might face problems of keeping their distance.
  - 13 Hamann and Karakayali (2016) have pointed out the processes of learning about the 'dark' side of German bureaucracy as a key pedagogic moment for new volunteers during the refugee support movement of 2015.
  - 14 This is an indirect reference to the book of the photojournalist Jacob A. Riis (1997 [1890]) about the tenements in New York in the late 19th century. Riis described and showed the housing and living conditions in the "urban slums." He starts the book, originally published in 1890, with the following words: "Long ago it was said that 'one half of the world does not know how the other half lives.' That was true then. It did not know because it did not care. The half that was on top cared little for the struggles, and less for the fate of those who were underneath, so long as it was able to hold them there and keep its own seat."
  - 15 Hartz IV is the informal term for ALG II (Arbeitslosengeld II, currently 446 Euros per month for one person) introduced in 2003 in the German unemployment and social security system. In the following years, the term "Hartz IV" became part of stigmatizing discourses about poor people. One argumentative stance in the debate about social security is that the unemployment money is too high, therefore, people see no need to go to work. Felicitas is referring to the latter criticism.
  - 16 This ideal refers to the relationship between mentors and mothers. That mentors who often care for children younger than ten years make decisions for the child when spending time together is perceived as an absolute necessity because mentors are responsible for the well-being of the child during that time.
  - 17 That this ideal of egalitarian relationships puts high expectations on the mentees is an aspect I develop further in Gozzer (2022b).
  - 18 Professionals urge the mentors to consult them in case they have a bad feeling regarding the situation at the parent's/parents' home. The program coordinator emphasizes that at that point, a professional perspective is crucial to differentiate between constellations that middle-class representatives would wish to handle differently and endangering situations for the children that need interventions by professionals. The program has a clear policy to double-check in cases where mentors see the well-being of the child endangered.
  - 19 Some mentors, however, follow the ambition of social inclusion without compromises, even if they face uncomfortable situations or opposition within their circle of friends or family.

## References

- Bourdieu, P. 1986. Forms of capital. In: J. G. Richardson, ed. *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood, pp. 241–258.
- Braun, K. 2017. Decolonial perspectives on charitable spaces of "welcome culture" in Germany. *Social Inclusion*, 5(3), 38–48.

- Breuer, F., P. Muckel, and B. Dieris. 2019. *Reflexive Grounded Theory: Eine Einführung für die Forschungspraxis*. 4th ed. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Butler, J. 2008. *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Colley, H. 2003. Engagement mentoring for ‘disaffected’ youth: A new model of mentoring for social inclusion. *British Educational Research Journal*, 29(4), 521–542.
- Critchley, S. 2013. *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance*. London: Verso.
- Das, V. 2020. *Textures of the Ordinary: Doing Anthropology after Wittgenstein*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Dünnwald, S. 2006. *Der pädagogische Griff nach dem Fremden: Zur Haltung lokaler Initiativen gegenüber Flüchtlingen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Frankfurt am Main: IKO –Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation.
- Ege, M. 2018. Urbane Ethiken und das Normative der Urbanität – ein Diskussionsbeitrag. In: B. Schmidt-Lauber, ed. *Andere Urbanitäten: Zur Pluralität des Städtischen*. Wien: Böhlau Verlag, pp. 169–192.
- Ege, M., and J. Moser. 2021. Introduction: Urban ethics – conflicts over the good and proper life in cities. In: M. Ege and J. Moser, eds. *Urban Ethics: Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, pp. 3–27.
- Fassin, D. 2007. Humanitarianism as a politics of life. *Public Culture*, 19(3), 499–520.
- Foucault, M. 1997. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*. New York: New Press.
- Gozzer, L. 2022a. Eine Stadt sagt ja!: Oder: Wie der deutsche Resettlement-Beitritt mit begann. In: J. Lange, ed. *Stadt – Moral – Migration: Analysen zur lokalen Moralisierung der Migration*. Tübingen: TVV, pp. 159–179.
- Gozzer, L. 2022b. *Sich und anderen gerecht werden. Ethische Selbstentwürfe ehrenamtlicher Patinnen und Paten*. Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus Verlag.
- Gozzer, L., and J. Moser. 2022. Nähe, Leistung und Kontinuität: Beziehungsideale und Hilfepraxen am Beispiel ehrenamtlicher Pat\_innen. In: D. Böhringer, S. Hitzler and M. Richter, eds. *Helfen. Situative und organisationale Ausprägungen einer unterbestimmten Praxis*. Bielefeld: transcript, pp. 233–244.
- Gozzer, L., and O. Reznikova. 2020. *Abhängigkeit und Zuständigkeit: Dimensionierungen von Fürsorge und Ethik in ethnografischer Praxis und Deutung*. Manuscript in preparation.
- Hamann, U., and A. Karakayali. 2016. Practicing Willkommenskultur: Migration and solidarity in Germany. *Intersections*, 2(4), 69–86.
- Han-Broich, M. 2012. *Ehrenamt und Integration: Die Bedeutung sozialen Engagements in der (Flüchtlings-)Sozialarbeit*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Heitmann, D., A. Reinisch, and U. Bauer. 2010. Unterstützungsmöglichkeiten am Beispiel des Forschungs- und Entwicklungsprojektes “KANU – Gemeinsam weiterkommen”. *Zeitschrift für psychiatrische Pflege heute*, 16(3), 129–134.
- Hess, S., and H. Lebuhn. 2014. Politiken der Bürgerschaft: Zur Forschungsdebatte um Migration, Stadt und citizenship. *sub|urban. Zeitschrift für kritische Stadtforschung*, 2(3), 11–34.
- Laidlaw, J. 2014. *The Subject of Virtue: An Anthropology of Ethics and Freedom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lambek, M., V. Das, D. Fassin, and W. Keane. 2015. *Four Lectures on Ethics: Anthropological Perspectives*. Chicago, IL: HAU.
- Moore, H. 2021. The habitat of the subject: Exploring new forms of the ethical imagination. In: M. Ege and J. Moser, eds. *Urban Ethics: Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, pp. 28–46.

- Muehlebach, A. 2011. On affective labor in post-Fordist Italy. *Cultural Anthropology*, 26(1), 59–82.
- Muehlebach, A. 2012. *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Netzwerk Berliner Kinderpatenschaften e.V. 2018. *Starke Beziehungen für starke Zivilgesellschaften: Dokumentation 3. European Mentoring Summit Berlin 2018*. [https://www.mentoringsummit.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/EMS-Doku\\_180801\\_final\\_web-1.pdf](https://www.mentoringsummit.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/EMS-Doku_180801_final_web-1.pdf) [Accessed May 5, 2023].
- Perzлмаier, C., and B. Sonnenberg. 2013. *Patenschaften praxisnah*. Weinheim: Beltz Verlagsgruppe.
- Pinl, C. 2015. Ehrenamt statt Sozialstaat?: Kritik der Engagementpolitik. *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* [online], 65(14), 49–54. <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/203553/ehrenamt-statt-sozialstaat-kritik-der-engagementpolitik> [Accessed June 10, 2022].
- Raithelhuber, E. 2018. How “godparents” are made for “unaccompanied refugee minors”: An ethnographic view into the training of future youth mentors. *Child & Youth Services*, 39(4), 250–283.
- Reckwitz, A. 2020. *Das Ende der Illusionen: Politik, Ökonomie und Kultur in der Spätmoderne*. 4th ed. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Riis, J. A. 1997 [1890]. *How the Other Half Lives*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Scheer, M. 2012. Are emotions a kind of practice: And is that what makes them have a history? *History and Theory*, 51(2), 193–220.
- Schone, R., and S. Wagenblass. 2012. *Wenn Eltern psychisch krank sind: Kindliche Lebenswelten und institutionelle Handlungsmuster*. 3rd ed. Weinheim: Juventa.
- Schreier, M., S. Wagenblass, and T. Wüst. 2009. *Patenschaften für Kinder psychisch kranker Eltern: Bericht zur Evaluierung des Modells*. Bremen: Hochschule Bremen.
- Sennett, R. 2019. *Die offene Stadt: Eine Ethik des Bauens und Bewohnens*. 2nd ed. München: Hanser Berlin.
- Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen München e.V. 2019. *Konzept Patenschaften für Kinder psychisch erkrankter Eltern*. SkF München e.V, Internal document .
- Wiegand-Grefe, S., F. Matthejat, and A. Lenz, eds. 2011. *Kinder mit psychisch kranken Eltern: Klinik und Forschung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Wietschorke, J. 2020. Kulturelle Spaltung als Narrativ. *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde*, 1, 21–35.
- Winker, G. 2013. Zur Krise sozialer Reproduktion. In: H. Baumann, ed. *Care statt Crash: Sorgeökonomie und die Überwindung des Kapitalismus*. Zürich: Denknnetz/Réseau de réflexion, pp. 119–133.
- Wustmann, C. 2009. Die Erkenntnisse der Resilienzforschung – Beziehungserfahrungen und Ressourcenaufbau. *Psychotherapie Forum*, 17(2), 71–78.

# 10 Sacks and the city

## Secondary burials in Naples and New York

*Ulrich van Loyen*

### 1

When a pandemic rushes through a society, it is often perceived as a force of equality.<sup>1</sup> It hits urban structures at their very core: what made them desirable by many, now becomes their weakest point. That was already noted by the Tuscan poet F. Boccaccio, who presents in his *Decamerone* (1353) the account of some young people who flee the city to live in splendid isolation and tell each other stories until the threat had passed.

Of course, what happened in early modern ages can hardly be compared to the pandemics today, let alone the spread of the COVID-19 disease. The plague, for example, was far more lethal, but it hit a far less populated continent where dangerous spots emerging in the countryside could be isolated more efficiently (although this efficiency brought unimaginable despair to the suffering). Nevertheless, what it has in common with recent events is the need to provide not only medical assistance but burial sites for many people within a short time. Even Goethe in his *Italian Journey* (1816) recalls the testimonies which spoke about the countless corpses one was forced to step over in the streets of Naples every day. Where should they all be buried, especially in a city where the dead were usually interred in ossuaries under the churches, narrow sites, however, where one had to wait patiently until the flesh was consumed by bacteria and air? During the big pandemic wave of 1663, some chronicles reveal that one-third of the city's population had died within less than two weeks (Croce, *Storia del Regno di Napoli*, 1958, 73) – and Naples back then was the most densely inhabited and, together with Paris, the largest European city. One could imagine that impact, the loss of established family structures, the breakdown of neighborly solidarity and administrative capacity. Pandemics brought death, but also anarchy and the social disruption which followed from it. However, it also fostered the awareness of the liminal, or perhaps better: of a world without limits, for any reasonable limitation proved to be provisional. The experience of abrupt annihilation was also an experience of extreme freedom for some of the survivors, and, thus, of the possibility to give shape to a different understanding of the city.

The plague was placed at the beginning of one of the most intriguing religious devotions of the Mediterranean, which is located in the historical center of Naples.

It is commonly called “Il culto delle anime pezzentelle” or “anime sante del purgatorio,” “the cult of the holy souls of the Purgatory” (see De Matteis and Niola 1993; Vovelle 1996). On many street corners in the historical center, the tourist can still find tiny niches and altars protected by glass windows behind which one can see small figures, often made of terracotta, which from the bust downwards are consumed by an artificial fire. Close to these figures, one often finds photographs of other people, usually the loved ones of those who take care of the altar or simply live in the neighborhood. People passing by are asked to pray for their souls, sometimes even explicitly (by inscriptions in the niches). This makes evident how the original cult proliferated. However, a more detailed account of a custom that was quite widespread until the 1960s can be gained by photographs and some documentaries, for example, the film *Grazia e numeri* by Luigi di Gianni (1961). People used to pray in front of anonymous skulls in the crypts of the churches and a provisory burial place where the bones of the victims of the city’s three big plague pandemics had been gathered. The skulls were occasionally put on cushions and into miniature houses, sometimes decorated with rosaries and other devotional objects. People who dedicated their pious activities to them and, thus, ‘adopted’ their skull usually initiated a lifelong relationship, hoping that the person represented by the skull would ease the way for the devotee and their loved ones in the hereafter. Every relationship had its own myth, a special history that often started with a marvelous encounter (van Loyen 2018, 186–190). The skull without a name revealed its identity to the devotee in dreams or visions, thus, turning into someone, and from time to time revealed information about the devotee’s remote descendants as well (de Matteis and Niola 1993, 170–175). Moreover, the person represented by the skull intervened to resolve everyday issues: practitioners say that places where lost items or documents could be found were indicated at night, or the dreamer was reminded not to forget an important appointment (van Loyen, 283f.). The relationship became reciprocal, forming a complex structure of mutual care that was not confined to mere ‘spiritual’ ends – the, metaphorically speaking, chain migration to paradise.

While the sites of this devotion were spread all over the city center, the most famous today are at its contemporary margins. One is situated in the crypt of the church where, according to a legend, Saint Peter had celebrated his first liturgy in Italy (a completely apocryphal tradition, for the first Pope’s travel to Naples, has never been mentioned anywhere), a church which later became known as a kind of safe space for heretics and reformists. This sanctuary stands today on the corner of the vivid Piazza Garibaldi and the Central Station and, thus, forms the frontier of the old town. One can still attend prayer sessions today under the guidance of a seer (‘veggente’) and her ‘impresario,’ a ‘pizzaiola’ (pizzabread baker), in close proximity to the glass coffins where the once venerated human remains have been put.<sup>2</sup> After these sessions, people go to the various corners of the crypt where the skulls were positioned previously. Practitioners dedicate small items, such as artificial flowers, images of their deceased relatives, and travel tickets, to those areas, alluding the absence of a presence, thus, contributing to an aesthetics of the otherwise forgotten and overlooked. Materiality, as such, comes into sight as the *conditio sine*

*qua non* of any sacramental transmission – in both aspects: enabling the symbolic to appear and preventing it from becoming real.<sup>3</sup>

Another important site is in the ancient quarter of the Sanità, located in the north east of the city. The so-called cemetery of the Fontanelle (Italian for fountains, but also for the central upper rupture of the skull) looks from its entrance like a cathedral with three naves made of tuff. In each nave, there are skulls placed along the walls, many with visible signs of devotional practice. Papers with prayers, coins, validated travel tickets, rosaries and images all usually dating back before 1969, when the devotion was officially banned by the Catholic church but went on secretly.<sup>4</sup> The highlights here are the ‘teschio che suda’ (‘sweating skull’) which indicates that its owner is still in purgatorial pain, and the skull with the dark orbit, connected to an enamored Spanish colonel who, as a ghost, came to wedding of his beloved lady and literally frightened her to death to take her with him.<sup>5</sup> The sheer abundance of skulls is striking. The inscriptions and local research indicate that the Fontanelle came into existence when a mass of skulls from ancient times were found in its cavern after a heavy rain in the early 19th century. Here, as in other places, local culture and religious entrepreneurship have turned the massive presence of ‘senseless’ objects – many dating back to pandemics, such as the bubonic plague and, later, cholera – into something ‘meaningful.’ Visitors from all over the world, as well as Neapolitans themselves, are still fascinated by this cult and try to keep it alive as a ‘cultural resource’ (Thomas Hauschild).

## 2

The skulls we find in the Neapolitan crypts and cemeteries are liberated from any flesh. Bronislaw Malinowski once described society as an organism, stating that it was made of ‘bones’ symbolizing group organization, charts and kinship, ‘flesh and blood’ representing the ‘imponderabilia’ of daily life, and ‘spirit’ as the ‘corpus inscriptionum,’ the native’s view of what it all means (Malinowski, *Argonauts*, 1922, 19). Using that metaphor, the question could arise regarding what to do if group organization remains visible as a pure fact but without being animated by daily routines. What call derives from its existence, what kind of archeological or translation work is required? Seemingly, the more ‘bones’ one finds, the less one can abstain from the task. The bones remind the locals to keep on looking for their possible animation and ‘message.’ And the ultimate passage of a human organism, that is, to become a skeleton consisting of extremities and the skull, thus, becomes readable as the moment one’s individual existence starts to coincide with the order itself.

Ritual efficiency, it seems, has to do with that state of purity which is the contrary of what people have to deal with during their lifetime. Probably this is also at stake when it comes to a custom which has been widely interpreted as ‘secondary burial.’ For a long time, it was attributed as something exotic, although one of the first writers who concentrated on it, the Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894), came from a cultural background where one was quite well acquainted with the cult of the dead. His hometown Edinburgh is rich in monumental graveyards where the passing of time is represented in a kind of artificial



landscape of ruins – ruins on the tops of the hills of the city, indicating the future of the city in the valley. He noted during his travels in the Polynesian Archipelago (*In the South Seas*, 1896) the idea according to which the process of decomposition is one of vulnerability for the human community as a whole and corresponds to the period of grief (grief not as a choice, but as an obligation enforced by society) as was common to the inhabitants of the Paumotu islands. Over a decade later, Stevenson's diaries inspired Durkheim's nephew Robert Hertz to formulate the first explicit theory of 'secondary burial' (*A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death*, 1907/1960), based on missionaries' ethnographies in Borneo. Physical death, Hertz explains, is only the beginning of a process of separation between the dead and their survivors, ending with complete decomposition, when the pure bones are put into the grave and the dead turn into benevolent ancestors. The time in-between, made of the physicality of flesh and liquids, of material which decomposes within time, full of bad odor, possible herds of illnesses, corresponds to the time the dead can haunt, attack their (former) people, still showing the desire of returning among them. They can be envious and revengeful, mostly in ways as they were imagined during their lifetime. Grieving, therefore, is imagined as an act of pleasing, a kind of consolation. Hertz proclaimed a correspondence between the decaying state of the corpse and the 'social death' of the griever, set apart by meticulously observed taboos until their ceremonial lifting. The end of grieving, however, reestablishes formalized, diplomatic relations between the society of the dead and the society of the living over a well-mended wall. Six years after Robert Hertz – and nine years before Malinowskis *Argonauts*, which shows various attempts at arriving at a sound theory of secondary burial customs as well – another founding father of a new discipline published what one may call psychological evidence of the practice in question: Sigmund Freud in *Totem and Taboo* (1913) gives a theory of the grieving period as one of 'transmission': the transmission of ambivalent feelings the survivors have toward their deceased onto the latter themselves. Thus, mourning acquires an emancipatory quality, to the same extent as the mourners 'purify' themselves while the dead enter a stage where they represent the ancient drama of how to escape from the realm of shadow and return to the light. However, Freud also elaborated a concept that made the 'secondary burial' a plausible practice of human beings. This additionally turned the 'fear' of the dead into a necessary sequence within a therapeutic process – 'haunting' then appears as the price the individual has to pay for transferring their own ambivalence to a substitute object, and, at the same time, opens the space for cultural interventions and sublimations of an otherwise destructive state (Freud 1913, 67).

'Secondary burials,' meaning the dilation of time between a physical departure and the personal and social valuable integration of that departure, may, thus, seem as quite a necessity for human interaction with the past. Being able – favored by certain climatic or geophysical conditions – to refer to bones and flesh as effective symbols during that process gives rise to an explicitly and collectively formulated passage that otherwise is kept interiorized individually.<sup>6</sup> Now, let us have a closer look at how the relationship with the deceased shapes modern Naples.

First, the city nowadays disposes over one extended cemetery, on top of one of the city's most panoramic sites. It was built in the 1830s, and it obviously opposed the common attitude of 'parochial' adherence. Many of the monumental graves, the well-ornated chapels, recall Egyptian, masonic or otherwise 'pagan' references and do not follow the evangelical call to humility. But, at least, since burials within the churches and the crypts were no longer possible, the central cemetery turned into a rather standardized town of the dead, even with its own police section (the so-called 'polizia cimenteriale'). Effects of densification are palpable, especially at the edges: three- or four-storey buildings contain corridors on every floor with niches, so-called 'loculi,' which can be rented for 99 years. However, these 'loculi' do not offer space enough for a coffin or a corpse. Instead people place the pure bones and skulls of their family members inside, after the corpse has spent up to two years undergoing the procedure of 'esseccatura' – meaning that the deceased has been put in a semi-upright position in a special area of the cemetery so that all liquids can flow out – and undergone an ultimate purification. Some declare they personally 'wash' the remains of their beloved ones before putting them in a sack ("And how happy I was that I could finally touch my mother's bones, free of everything, this made me feel really close to her after such a long time," a lawyer admitted). In any case, what happens between the end of the 'esseccatura' and the final deposition in the 'loculo' becomes a personal ritual, although the number of participants is significantly reduced in comparison to the funeral. Therefore, it seems appropriate to interpret the 'secondary burial' as an explicit ritual step in a 'rite of passage' (A. van Gennep) which comprises separation, liminal exposure and reintegration, and which, with regard to Naples, can be formulated on grounds of inherited rituals and Catholic customs, while it, nevertheless, is fostered by geographic and social conditions (e.g. the lack of cemeterial space). The social psychological condition can be, for instance, that in a context of permanently overlapping relationships (kinship, neighborly), being motivated to a high extent by the density of the population, the pressure of coming to terms with the 'ambivalent' past is quite strong – not least because there are so many 'ambivalent' relationships that the one with the deceased has to be put 'in order.' On the other hand, as pointed out by ethnographic work about the 'meridione' – for example, by Annabelle Rossi's dialogical ethnography *Lettere di una tarantata* (1970) – the purity of the deceased who becomes a benevolent ancestor and is involved in reciprocal actions (praying/protection), honored and, thus, closed away from the ambivalent feelings which accompanied them during their lifetime, can also raise the expectancy of gifts to come or treasures which are still to be revealed. The survivors often know that their deceased family members did not really behave as one might have expected – the father who fathered extramaritally, the mother who ran away for a few years – but to make these wounds heal and not making other's mistakes one's own, the choice to turn the relative in a benevolent ancestor – the ancestor who is benevolent in so far as they represent the ideal social order: bone, not flesh – is helpful, and besides that, socially well accepted and imitated.

The question remains, what is going to happen to the liquids, with blood and flesh, as Malinowski intended. They belong to the soil, where they enter the process

of regeneration. This idea of the ‘imponderabilia’ of daily life is best expressed in the miracle of S. Gennaro, the patron saint of Naples, a martyr of Early Christian period, whose blood liquefies in its ‘ampulla’ twice a year. His liquidity is a metaphor of the sheer abundance of life, a sphere where good and evil are entrenched, and, therefore, the sphere where the sacred and profane mingle. It is the sphere of earthly life, but this life itself stems from the separation of ‘bones’ and ‘flesh and blood.’ That life can flourish, although social structure remains untouched, is the compromise of the Mediterranean segmentary society of Naples.

### 3

The question is now whether a comparable kind of attitude regarding kinless dead (more specifically, their physical remains) can be met in societies that are structured in a different manner. By this, I mean a society that is far less characterized by anti-statal, sometimes anarchic tendencies, where kinship groups and phratries of almost equal power, internally organized according to rules of ‘anciennité,’ combat for power and prestige. The second question: if that might be the case, what does that say about this specific society?

When the Corona pandemic started in Europe in the spring of 2020, iconic images were quite rare. Or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say: the iconic images were anti-images insofar as they revealed a sudden emptiness, a world not inhabited by human beings, a world surrendered and ‘waiting for the barbarians,’ as the South African writer Coetzee puts it. Pope Francis, for example, is a lonely man celebrating Easter in an empty Saint Peter’s square. But then we saw Italian photographs of military transport vehicles which brought coffins to the cemeteries, presenting the pandemic as a kind of war, and the city under siege. On the other hand, iconic images from the Americas confronted us with the subjugated urban poor or with crowded cemeteries (especially regarding the situation in Brazil, but also in the USA).

One of the latter is Hart Island, 11 miles from Manhattan, and, as the *Washington Post* first introduced it, “the final resting place for New York’s unclaimed and poor for over a century” (April 16, 2020). Among the unclaimed have been crime victims and many people struck by HIV in the 1990s, homeless drug addicts or young nonconformists who had escaped from their families in more traditional and repressive surroundings. In April 2020, the city of New York announced the cemetery would be used to inter the unclaimed dead of the ongoing pandemic. This made sense in various ways: first, although space was quite limited, Hart Island already had a symbolic meaning which converted the ‘unclaimed’ and ‘abandoned’ into ‘somebodies’; second, because Hart Island was inserted into both administrative and cultural routines (e.g. with associations, events and registers) which did not have to be established from zero. Despite the criticism which arose from that decision, cultural historians and officials defended it. As Thomas Laquer writes, the history of the unclaimed corona victims becomes part of guarantees that they are “a remaining part of the community, of the honored rather than the humiliated”

(Website Hart Island Project). While Melinda Hunt, cofounder of the *Hart Island Project* and its website dedicated to the memory of the buried, declares “Hart Island [is] New York City’s family tomb.” “Honoring every life makes us feel safe,” she says.

From that perspective, Hart Island seems to move quite close to the Fontanelle in Naples, the cemetery of the anonymous human remains and a continuous reservoir for the cult of the ‘anime pezzentelle,’ a place of the ritual enlargement of kinship ties (and strengthening those ties undoubtedly makes one ‘feel safe’). It is a place of ‘unclaimed’ dead – which is certainly not the same as anonymous, for ‘unclaimed’ is the wider term by inferring that nobody is willing to pay for a private funeral service – sometimes ‘anonymous’ dead and, simultaneously, the place which calls for a transformation not only of the status of the dead but also of the city itself (not the city which never sleeps, but the caring and devout city). The more so as new technological media have transferred it from its edge to its heart. The unclaimed, people who seemingly do not belong to any family, pass under the ‘patronship’ of the city and become the resource of heritage caretakers.

Despite these similarities, one may note a certain inversion: While the dead in the context of the cult of the ‘anime’ for their ‘secondary burial’ have to be stripped of their particular characteristics to be associated with the imaginary or even mythical foundations of a city and its culture, associations such as the ‘Hart Island Project’ try to individualize the remnants by publicly searching for their history, a description of their life, their character and so on. Or, to make it more poignant, while ‘invisibility’ is a quality in the case of the ‘anime,’ as of any other in the ‘secondary burial’ practices, the contrary seems true for Hart Island.<sup>7</sup> But is this really the case?

One may remember the famous header of the *New York Times* about ‘Those we have lost,’ portrait pictures and short obituaries which, since then, have been actualized and are available in the online version. It is a way to fight both the lethal violence of a pandemic and a policy and economy driven by oblivion. People are presented in their complex surroundings as belonging to families, friends and neighborhoods. Their redemption, in a lay context, may not be imagined as a meta-physical one, as is the case in the Catholic South, but as a task other people take over. They will live on in the gestures other people make at their place. So what appears in the end is the image of society itself, the idea of a society made of lacerations and asking for healing. Thus, the individual story is embedded and transcended at the same time. In a similar manner, the ‘anime pezzentelle’ in Naples opens the reference to the city as a never-ending reservoir that institutionalizes the connection of care and redemption, where singular particularities emerge (in dreams and visions) merely to promote the transition of the ambivalent into the benevolent. This is seen as a premise for living in a ‘good city.’

One may argue that the ‘secondary burial’ of the ‘unclaimed’ of Hart Island happens when these people are remembered as parts of the history of New York – and appear with their complete names, data, personal histories and photos on the website, purified from any material which might decay. Perhaps this is an eternity

similar to the heaven of Southern Italian Catholics, who knows? At the end, however, these deceased become the source of a similar social optimism as the one deriving from the skulls in the natural cathedral of the Neapolitan ‘Fontanelle.’

## 4

With respect to what follows for a concept of Urban Ethics, I would just like to emphasize the following points.

First, it is still an open question whether ‘urban ethics’ follow from urbanity as a set of topologically concentrated practices or if a distinctive kind of ethical behavior creates shared spaces which, in the following, can be described as ‘urban.’ Regarding the Neapolitan practices, we can talk without doubt of an ancient urban society which, nevertheless, had to constantly define itself against both a fertile and, thus, very self-confident agrarian backland, and colonial powers which ruled the city (e.g. the Aragonese, the Anjou, Bonaparte and the Habsburgs). And, finally, its natural environment with recurring dangers of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions enhanced the vulnerability of the city. However, urbanologists, such as Paul Virilio, understood that the urban condition itself is a perpetuation and, thus, a fruition of fragility and crisis. Not least, because the connections between the individual life cycle, annual cycle and cosmological whole need to be reinvented.

One operation which repairs the connections in question can be seen at work in the cult of the ‘anime pezzentelle’: the city itself is hereby created by its fragments, and it is created as a cosmological whole (the afterworld is made of the people represented by the skulls). Exchange of goods between living people can also be operated by reference to the skull cult (people belonging to neighborhoods with shared cult sites cooperate because the dead in their dreams tell them what to do and to whom). People become irrevocably bound to their particular localities (parishes, quarters, etc.; the more so because the central cemetery has a rather abstract location) by recommending their beloved ones to the ‘anime.’ The cult, thus, transforms belonging from a question of inheritance and having into a question of caring. Moreover, caring becomes an argument for belonging, the places of cult practitioners have to be defended, and people claim their right to worship or simply go where ‘their’ skulls and the pictures of their deceased are. They justify their ‘informal’ rights as those which are, by their nature, ‘informal’ and, thus, contest the discourse of official social control and ecclesiastical or state bureaucracy (especially concerning questions whether crypts have to be closed, adjacent structures sold, and similar). Informality itself can be understood as part of both the strategy of resistance and participating in the economic, political and cultural procedures, especially from the side of hitherto marginalized groups (Moraitis 2019). It is often this contact zone between the centralized and controlled and the informal by which the specifically ‘urban’ aspect of collective attitudes and actions is shaped.

Regarding the case of Hart Island, however, this argument does not fit. The associations caring for the unclaimed dead do not ask for cultural participation, nor do they represent marginal social straits of the city. Melinda Hunt, the president, is a journalist, others include New York citizens active in the field of community

gardening, but also lawyers, and both Catholics and Protestants. However, they emphasize the necessity of their engagement with the city itself – as if the city would get lost if it does not acknowledge its lost ones. Outside of any parental network, the unclaimed dead become exclusive members of the city, offering the opportunity that the city can be idealized as a family (but rather than through an enlargement of kinship ties, a thickening of existing kinship structures, these practices tend to institutionalize the idea of the whole community as a moral person). By this, the city finally acknowledges the price it has to pay for its existence and success – almost in the manner of an inverted gesture of the installation of the ‘unknown soldier’ erected in many graveyards during the first half of the 20th century – as if the conditions of the need to which it answered lie in the city itself (in its ‘anonymity,’ the promise of freedom from non-chosen obligations). The fact that the place where these contradictions become manifest is also topographically located at its edges (on an island, in this case) emphasizes the ongoing fragility of the ‘urban’ for ‘urban ethics.’

## Notes

- 1 It goes without saying that pandemics or disasters of all kind emphasize existing distinctions between the rich and the poor, between those who can afford to escape and those who cannot. However, the degree of self-protection depends on the imminency of the danger and the force and predictability of associated events.
- 2 San Pietro ad Aram belongs to the Franciscan order and not to the diocese of Naples. For this reason, cult restrictions imposed by the archbishop had no effect, although the monks themselves expected the devotion to assume a character more in concordance with traditional expressions of piety toward the dead. The latter comprised the necessity to properly bury the human remains which hitherto had been venerated in different parts of the crypt. A local pizza baker took over the responsibility of finding appropriate coffins, which, because of their glass windows, could be used as vehicles where the cult could flourish despite meeting the official requirements.
- 3 To reflect upon the role of materiality in comparison between popular religion and official or elitist religion is still an unaccomplished task. It seems that in a ‘higher’ religion, material often dissolves in its symbolic value (gold or silver, for instance), while in ‘popular’ religion, the material dimension of any intermediation (the paper on which one writes a prayer, the image one leaves close to the statue of a saint) is also considered as an obstacle to fulfillment, although this obstacle itself can turn into a blessing. This becomes evident in folk legends about material carriers of spiritual meanings which become alive (wood, images and textures which speak).
- 4 In the aftermath of the second Vatican Council, the rather progressive bishops tried to eradicate cults and forms of devotion which seemed to strengthen traditional clientelistic worldviews. The matrilocal cult of the ‘anime pezentelle’ in Naples was, therefore, described as an obstacle on the way to implementing a more modern, more democratic notion of society.
- 5 Among the skulls with their very particular identities, as evoked by the devotees, there are traditionally also those merely characterized by their social function. The doctor (mainly ‘Dottore Alfonso’), the judges and the ‘sposi’ all incorporate a social theatre of the city, analogous to the *commedia dell’arte*.
- 6 This, in fact, also seems to be the intuition of Robert Hertz, who intended to contribute to the category project of Emile Durkheim and his collaborators, to establish the social origins of thought (Parkin 2006; van Loyen 2022).

- 7 One could, furthermore, juxtapose oneiric (i.e. revealed) and empirical (i.e. conquered) truth and, thus, confront different ontological concepts. Besides that, the real difference is the collocation of the public sphere: in a concept of ‘staged publics,’ the revelation of truth in the Neapolitan context occurs in a semi-public sphere (people share their practices, but they do not share their individual convictions), while the place of truth in the American case is decisively ‘public’ (i.e. collectively accessible and contestable). This again hints at the greater picture of segmentary vs. centralized society (Marshall Sahlins, *On the Ontological Scheme of Beyond Nature and Culture*, 2014).

## References

- Croce, Benedetto. 1958. *Storia del Regno di Napoli*. Bari: Laterza.
- de Matteis, Stefano, and Marino Niola. 1993. *Antropologia delle anime in pena. Il resto della storia: un culto del purgatorio*. Lecce: Argo.
- Freud, Siegmund. 1913. *Totem und Tabu. Einige Übereinstimmungen im Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker*. Leipzig and Wien: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. 1816 [1996]. *Italienische Reise (Reise-Tagebuch 1786. Tagebuch der Italienischen Reise für Frau von Stein)*. Frankfurt a.M.: Insel.
- Hertz, Robert. 1960. *A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death*. Translated by Rodney Needham with an Introduction by E. E. Evans-Pritchard. Glencoe: Free Press.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific. An Account of Native Adventure and Enterprise in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. London and New York: Routledge & Kegan.
- Moraitis, Konstantinos. 2019. Informal ethics, ethics of transformation: Political and landscape urbanity. In: K. Moraitis and St. Th. Rassia, eds. *Urban Ethics under Conditions of Crisis*. New York: WSPC, pp. 3–29.
- Parkin, Robert. 2006. *The Dark Side of Humanity. The Work of Robert Hertz and Its Legacy*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn.
- Rossi, Annabella. 1970. *Lettere di una tarantata*. Bari: Squilibri.
- Sahlins, Marshall. 2014. On the ontological scheme of beyond nature and culture. *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 4(1), pp. 281–290.
- van Loyen, Ulrich. 2018. *Neapels Unterwelt. Über die Möglichkeit einer Stadt. Eine Ethnographie*. Berlin: Matthes & Seitz Berlin.
- van Loyen, Ulrich. 2022. Drawing a line. On Hertz’ hands. In: J. Schick, M. Schmidt and M. Zillinger, eds. *The Social Origin of Thought*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn.
- Vovelle, Michel. 1996. *Les Âmes du purgatoire ou le travail du deuil*. Paris: Gallimard.

# 11 Producing community

## An ‘ethopolitics’ of Berlin’s crisis-driven urban restructuring

*Max Ott*

### **Ethical conjunctures**

The thoughts presented on the following pages are grounded in empirical fieldwork for a research project on the significance of collaborative architecture and participatory planning within urban transformation processes in contemporary Berlin. However, this project also took shape while participating in the efforts of an interdisciplinary research group, and the present chapter is, thus, just as much influenced by debates among its members concerning the methodological foundation and theoretical meaning of their empirical findings.<sup>1</sup>

Time and again, we argued over whether our rich body of observations on how parties to various conflicts in diverse cities negotiated and used particular terms and means, proved the existence of what we – on a preliminary basis – had decided to call an ‘ethical conjuncture.’ In our discussions on this matter, we mostly used the German word ‘Konjunktur,’ a common term in the field of political economy and economics, where it indicates a perceptible increase of quantity. Any attempt to claim this kind of conjuncture met with reservations within the research group because it evoked notions of a rather superficial and homogenizing macro diagnosis and, thus, a certain unease: to highlight our findings as indicators of an ubiquitous boom of debates and practices concerned with ideas of a good (or at least a better) life in cities, could also risk downplaying historical continuities, structural differences, cultural specifics or local disparities, some of us argued. I sympathize with this cautious attitude and consider it fundamental for an empirical and theoretical approach to what has been aptly termed “the inevitable specificity of cities” (ETH Studio Basel 2015).

Nonetheless, I must admit that as far as my own field of research is concerned, it seems appropriate to speak of an ethical conjuncture in the aforementioned quantitative sense. That is because, since I started fieldwork in 2015, there has been an almost confusing increase in publications, conferences and exhibitions in the German-speaking regions all stressing the value of participatory modes of planning and collaborative housing activities for a more sustainable, inclusive or just way of living in cities. Between 2015 and 2017, three major museums for architecture and design in Germany hosted large exhibitions about contemporary forms of ‘Building and Living in Communities’ (Becker et al. 2015).<sup>2</sup> They were



accompanied by catalogs, which promoted the very subject they were dealing with (Becker et al. 2015; Lepik and Strobl 2016; Kries, Ruby and Ruby 2017), and, therefore, resonated with a broad range of other current publications, including several issues of well-known architecture journals (Bauwelt 2016; Arch+ 2018; *Bauwelt Einblick* 2019), two case study collections published by a leading research foundation in the field of architecture and urbanism (Wüstenrot Stiftung 2017, 2020), but also writings, newspaper articles and media reports addressing a more general public (Nothegger 2017; Rosenkranz and Rehage 2019; Weissmüller 2019). Albeit some of these publications also introduce several buildings located in rural areas, a strong focus lies on claiming the particular urbanity of collaborative building typologies and participatory planning procedures. They are, for example, depicted as a sustainable form of ‘commoning’ against the backdrop of spatial scarcity in a densified built environment under the pressure of growth (Arch+ 2018) or as an optimistic prefiguration of ‘how life could be’ if more planning projects celebrated spatial proximity and sociocultural heterogeneity (Weissmüller 2019).

It is tempting to understand this intensified discourse as a perfect background for theorizing the ‘ethical function of architecture’ (Harries 1997, 2017) further whenever a “prefigurative desire to ‘live-in-common’” (Hodkinson 2012, 425) is translated into, and eventually enabled by three-dimensional structures. First of all, such an attempt may reflect a primarily analytical interest in ethics ‘at work.’ It may aim, for instance, at describing the relationship between the production of architectural space, ideas of a good life and corresponding practices, and, thereby, build upon participatory observation and explanations given by the authors and users of the buildings examined (Ott 2019, 2020a, 2020b). However, it is not a big step from theorizing the ethical function of architecture to a normative approach to ethics, as a number of writings situated at the intersection of philosophy, architectural theory and urban studies demonstrate. Their authors have drawn on phenomenological thinking, moral philosophy or critical urban theory to either pass a moral judgment on urban life and its physical dimension, define the essential spatial qualities of a ‘good city’ or specify major criteria for a professional ethics for architects, designers and planners (Amin 2006; Düchs 2011; Cojocar 2012; Loo 2012; Düchs and Illies 2017; Sennett 2018; Wolfrum et al. 2018; Chan 2019).

Similar to the urban ethical framing of cohousing and participatory planning, such a normative turn to ethics within academia appears to have recently gained momentum. But as much as all these current publications that bring forward ethical considerations, carry out ethical evaluations or suggest ethical standards constitute both a valuable basis for my research and a condition for this essay, I do not point to them with the intention of outlining a normative concept of collaborative urban architecture and participatory planning. The discursive ‘boom of ethics’ that I have just depicted instead inspires a different approach. This approach is based on an understanding of the term conjuncture that differs from the connotation of its German equivalent and points to other urgencies.

In our research group, it was emphasized primarily by two members, who were analyzing the empirically fragile lines between morality, ethics and politics and the interpretation, confluence, strategic merger and differentiation of those entities within urban protest movements (Reznikova and Ege 2019; Reznikova 2020). In doing so, they drew on theories originating from neo-Marxist thinkers, such as Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser and Stuart Hall. Hall had particularly used the term ‘conjuncture’ not to address quantitative increase but a “coming together and merger of elements” (Ege 2019, 104)<sup>3</sup> – he referred to its Latin origin *conjungere*, whose meaning is best reflected in the English verb ‘conjoin.’ In Hall’s words, a conjuncture is a historical “period when different social, political, economic and ideological contradictions that are at work in society and have given it a specific and distinctive shape come together, producing a crisis of some kind” (Hall and Massey 2010, 55). Accordingly, any conjunctural analysis considers social orders and their power relationships to be structurally grounded but, nonetheless, particular, conflictual, contested and potentially shifting compositions of different – political, economic and cultural – domains of social life. ‘Thinking conjuncturally’ (Clarke 2010, 352) is, therefore, always guided by the question how a given object of investigation contributes to the emergence, maintenance, transformation or dissolution of such a composition, and how this object relates to the other composites. It is its embeddedness in broader social circumstances that are of central epistemological concern. Cultural anthropologist Jeremy Gilbert, thus, describes the starting point of this approach in the most general terms: anyone using it asserts the “crucial importance of the question ‘what does this have to do with everything else?’ when examining any phenomenon, however minute” (Gilbert 2019, 5).

So what does the increased tendency to refer to collaborative architecture and participatory planning in ethical terms and the framing of such a field as an urban ethical practice “have to do with everything else?” This contribution seeks to address that matter by discussing empirical material from my Berlin research project. My key reference throughout this chapter will be the normative invocation of a community-oriented urban ethical subject in a guideline on participatory planning published by Berlin’s city administration roughly ten years ago (SenStadt 2011). My essay aims at illustrating the strategic function of this ethical discourse and wants to dwell on the question what it may tell us about the power relationships structuring the field of observation. By drawing on theories of governmentality (Foucault 1997a; Rose 2000), I will first discuss it as an example of ethopolitical reasoning, and then use that perspective to address some concerns of thinking about conjunctures in order to pave the way through the following section. I will focus here on Berlin’s spatial transformation and urban restructuring in the recent past and present, and, thus, on a crisis-ridden time period with a formative meaning for the particularities of defining a ‘good Berliner’ in an official policy paper on participation. In the last section of this essay, I will ask what this paper’s line of argumentation itself owes to existing spatial practices of collaboration, and how it is applied in order to reproduce such spatial practices, thereby, also legitimizing an exclusionary mode of action.

### **How to be a good Berliner**

In 2011, more than 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of a divided city, the Berlin Senate Department of Urban Development published a 350-page document titled ‘Manual for Participation’ (SenStadt 2011). On the one hand, this publication was addressed to the employees of the city and district administrations, who were invited to assure themselves of the importance of citizen participation as a worthwhile complement to hermetic in-house procedures (SenStadt 2011, 5). On the other hand, the manual was supposed to win broader public attention. It was prominently placed on the Senate Department’s website, where it is available for free download to this day. The manual opens with a foreword that bears the signature of Michael Müller, member of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and, at that time, Senator for Urban Development. It starts as follows:

Active citizenship and political participation are among the creative and supportive forces that make life in the city inspiring and attractive. People who stand up for the concerns of their neighborhood [...], who discuss the minor and major questions and projects of urban development with great passion and firmly assert their own point of view, people who bring forward new ideas and encourage others to participate – such people shape the face and the future of our city. Hence, they contribute to the constant renewal of the city’s various districts [...]. At the very same time, they also pay attention to the preservation of the urban cultural heritage and the strengthening of neighborhood communities.

(SenStadt 2011, 5)<sup>4</sup>

These opening words in a publication with guidelines for citizen participation in spatial planning procedures, made by a top city official about people who apparently care for Berlin, are a pretty good illustration of an attempt to create what philosopher Michel Foucault, in order to define the meaning of the term ‘governmentality,’ once called the “encounter between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self” (Foucault 1997a, 225). However, the manual’s foreword does not just provide a general example of Foucault’s influential concept, but, in addition, represents a specific form of ‘governmentality-as-encounter.’ It is a form that sociologist Nikolas Rose – one of the first scholars to combine Foucault’s ideas of governing “as a mode of action upon the actions of others” (Foucault 1982, 790) with the philosopher’s notion of ethics as a process of governing oneself in relation to others (Foucault 1997b) – refers to as ‘ethopolitics’ (Rose 2000, 1399). According to Rose, who used this neologism to distinguish the neoliberal ‘Third Way’ politics of Tony Blair’s New Labour in Great Britain from both its conservative and social democratic predecessors, the specific character of ethopolitics lies in a “new conception of those who are to be governed and the proper relations between the governors and the governed” (Rose 2000, 1399). While the ‘governors’ shall increase the distance to any principle of a comprehensive welfare system and “be relieved of (their) obligations to know, plan, calculate, and steer from

the center” (Rose 2000, 1400), the latter are now referred to as self-responsible, diverse and devoted individuals who ‘desire personal autonomy’ but, nevertheless, do not “live their lives as atomized isolates, (but) as citizens [...] of neighborhoods, associations, regions, networks, subcultures, age groups, ethnicities, and lifestyle sector – in short, communities” (Rose 2000, 1398). The idea that human beings are ‘at root, ethical creatures’ (Rose 2000, 1398) is as much central to this rationality as community is the privileged scope and scale for any corresponding strategy, Rose argues: ethopolitical power tries “to intensify [...] the forces that bind individuals into such groupings and relations” and seeks to “work through (their) values, beliefs, and sentiments thought to underpin the techniques of responsible self-government and the management of one’s obligations to others” (Rose 2000, 1399). Therefore, governing means, predominantly, a well-defined “enactment of individual freedom” (Rose 2000, 1399) by creating possibilities and occasions for – as Rose puts it with reference to Foucault – individuals’ ‘self-crafting’ (Rose 2000, 1399) as active members of supportive communities.

In the light of Rose’s explanations, the Manual for Participation almost appears like a source he could have used to underline his arguments if the Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development had published it a good decade earlier and Rose had then come across the document in the vastness of the internet. The very beginning of the manual outlines people who neither belong to a social class with specific material needs, nor represent an accumulation of rational beings pursuing a calculated self-interest, nor a group of people who rather passively obey written law or a set of fixed moral principles. In fact, the manual’s foreword introduces people who are, to use Rose’s expression, ‘at root’ ethical subjects: they are depicted as self-confident, creative and dedicated individuals, eager to communicate what they think is right and having both the will and the capacities to mobilize other people as well. These abilities and virtues do not exist unbound, but blend, as is suggested, with a particular sense of belonging: they never take effect only in isolated circles because the protagonists of the Manual for Participation are committed to the physical and social dimension of their city’s districts and neighborhoods, and thus, in a nutshell, to a greater common good: ‘the future of our city’ (SenStadt 2011, 5).

From a perspective that asks how such an ethical framing is part of a conjuncture, the concept of ethopolitics constitutes a valuable line of thought as it points to central concerns of any conjunctural analysis. As has already been mentioned, one of these is to show where different domains of social existence intersect or become objectives of strategies of alignment. The foreword of the Manual for Participation gives an example of such an operation; it represents what Rose calls an attempt “to create some novel links between the personal and the political” (Rose 2000, 1398). It is a policy paper that is far from conceiving “projects of urban development” (SenStadt 2011, 5) as only a domain of institutionalized politics, controlled by experts from the top down and detached from urban dweller’s personal responsibilities. On the contrary, it explicitly addresses its addressees as individuals who are motivated to contribute to their city’s future, and in its style of reasoning, Berlin’s ‘renewal’ (SenStadt 2011, 5) appears to be an ethical issue of individual behavior. As much as such a process affects

the spatial configuration of the city, it equally depends on its residents' willingness to participate in developing it, the manual argues.

This line of argument is reinforced by references to Berlin's 'neighborhood communities' (SenStadt 2011, 5) and, thus, to a socio-spatial entity that ethopolitics both identifies and promotes as "an affective and ethical field (of) durable relations" (Rose 2000, 1401). This 'zoom-in' touches upon another concern of a conjunctural analysis, namely, to illustrate the significance of discourses, practices, and, as should be added, imagined and concrete spaces "within which [...] members of a society form their conceptions both of themselves and of the wider social world" (Gilbert 2019, 10). It is an objective that is never an end in itself. It always serves the purpose to reflect on the potential anchor points of governance in the everyday physical and cultural fabric that participates in shaping people's common sense.

Returning from here to the macro level, Rose's reflections are similarly noteworthy because they highlight ethopolitics as a strategy to react to the ideological crisis of a given 'regime of living' (Collier and Lakoff 2005). Following Rose, ethopolitical reasoning was part of an effort to rearticulate a neoliberal sociopolitical agenda by moving beyond its homogenizing national conservative ('Thatcherist') version, which had started to lose its cohesiveness by the beginning of the 1990s. The rearticulation was characterized by combining established narratives of growing individual freedom through deregulation and entrepreneurial self-responsibility with an emphasis on the actual 'existence and legitimacy' of a culturally "localized, fragmented (and) hybrid" society, and attempts to integrate "diverse forms of identity and allegiance that are no longer deferential to [...] a territorialized image of national and civic culture" (Rose 2000, 1401). It seems to me that this focus on a governmental shift resonates well with conjunctural analysis as a "methodological way of marking significant transitions between different political moments" (Hall and Massey 2010, 56). However, it is important to note that the latter's interest in "transformation, break, and the possibility of new 'settlements'" (Clarke 2014, 115) neither intends to draw hermetic lines between 'specific historical moments' nor identifies such moments with only one 'abstracted epochal dominant' (Clarke 2010, 340). Conjunctural analysis pays attention to "convergent and divergent tendencies" (Gilbert 2019, 6) and the significance of other 'residual and emergent' (Clarke 2010, 340) phenomena as well. In doing so, it hopes to gain detailed understanding of how existing power relationships may be crisis-prone, and by which means its proponents seek to (re-)produce consent. As the following sections will argue, the ethical discourse in the Manual for Participation represents such a means to "stabilize existing antagonisms and contradictions" (Clarke 2014, 115) within the context of Berlin's urban restructuring.

### **When to be a good Berliner**

I now want to take a look behind the opening scenes of the Manual for Participation. It is a look behind the emphatic lines about the abilities and virtues defining a 'good Berliner,' and it seeks to shed light on its political and economic context by addressing some urban development policies that had already shaped the

preconditions for participatory spatial planning when the Senate Department for Urban Development published its guidelines in 2011. Although these policies affected “the fundamental, the real, the material, (and) the economic” (Clarke 2010, 338), upon which participation was supposed to flourish, they are not mentioned in the manual’s foreword. Nonetheless, they are indispensable to get a basic idea of how the ethopolitical form of reasoning in the Manual for Participation presented its own truth about Berlin’s recent past and present and sought to produce a particular narrative – both optimistic and inciting – to rationalize the conflictual way the city was governed.

This recent past and present have been shaped by radical urban spatial reconfigurations after the reunification of East and West Berlin and the decision to designate the city as the new capital of Germany in 1991. From its very beginning, such a physical transformation was hard to overlook, as countless construction sites changed the appearance of many former peripheral areas, which had regained their central position within an urban layout once dominated by border territories and a massive wall, rigorously cutting through the existing urban tissue. The projects for the capital Berlin, and the so-called ‘critical reconstruction’ (Hohensee 2010) of spaces of high significance for Berlin’s historical reputation as one of the most vibrant European cities in the late 19th and early 20th century, were considered to recreate links to an imagined glorious past (Hertweck 2010; Hohensee 2010; Hain 2013). Simultaneously, a grand coalition of the Christian Democratic Party and SPD, governing Berlin throughout the whole 1990s, also decided to stage these transformations as announcements for a similarly glorious future of a booming city “in transition to a united [...], a capital [...], a capitalist (and) a post-industrial or post-Fordist metropolis” (Colomb 2012, 7).

A less visible form of transformative urban policies had been implemented to enable such comprehensive reshaping of Berlin’s post-Wall geographical center. It covered a lot more parts of the city than the construction works mentioned above and stretched far beyond the years of a gold rush mentality in the early and mid-1990s, but its sweeping consequences became perceptible only gradually. From 1989, the city-state of Berlin drastically transformed the ownership structures on its property and real estate market. Within roughly 28 years, Berlin’s city administration under the leadership of different coalition governments involving the Christian Democratic Party, the SPD and the Party of Democratic Socialism (today: *Die Linke*) sold more than 21 square kilometers of state-owned land.

This number included not only approximately 50% of the total share suitable for further development (Schüsckke 2020, 78f.) but also a large number of properties with housing stock managed by Berlin’s public housing companies. By selling these properties off after 1990 and privatizing two state-owned housing companies (Eichstädt-Bohlig 2020, 118), the city-state of Berlin gave up long-term control over 220,000 apartments for lower-income households within only 19 years (Holm 2016, 17). Due to a long-standing stagnating population trend that coincided with “public investments and subsidy programs, (the) high level of construction activities, a (still) sizable segment of public and social housing and strong rent regulations in the 1990s” (Holm 2013, 172), Berlin’s average rent level, nonetheless,

remained relatively low for a good one and a half decades, and gentrification processes were, at first, limited to particular inner-city areas, thereby beginning in the former East Berlin district of Mitte in 1992, and reaching northern parts of Neukölln around 2007 (Holm 2013, 173f.). But, in fact, the policy of making more than 6,750 properties in Berlin accessible for speculative market activities between 1989 and 2017 (Schüsckke 2020, 79) “rolled out the red carpet for the valorization of private capital,” as a former member of the Berlin parliament put it (Eichstädt-Bohlig 2020, 115), and created the basic conditions for an extensive commodification of land and real estate in Berlin. This process became increasingly obvious when the city’s population started to grow again from the mid-2000s and accelerated after the world financial crisis in 2008 and during the following euro crisis, when institutional and private investors worldwide redirected huge quantities of capital into the property and real estate market of prospering regions, with the expectation of safe and promising investment opportunities (Heeg 2013; Rink et al. 2015; Kockelorn 2017; Hesse 2020; Trautvetter 2020).

According to urban geographer Henrik Lebuhn, the privatization policies were a decisive element of a toolkit for Berlin’s ‘Neoliberalization through Crisis’ (Lebuhn 2015, 103) in two distinctive phases. Lebuhn dates the first phase from 1989 to 2001 and argues that massive privatization in the “Aftermath of the Fall of the Wall” and the breakdown of the socialist German Democratic Republic aimed at incorporating the latter’s formerly state-owned “goods, resources and properties” into a capitalist market economy. At the same time, it was meant to attract ‘international investment’ in order to rapidly fulfill a ‘local elite’s global city dream’ (Lebuhn 2015, 104), regardless of the lack of signs of the economic recovery of a city which had lost its high federal subsidies after the German reunification and then about two-thirds of its industrial workforce within only nine years after the end of Berlin’s division (Lebuhn 2015, 105). This concurrence of drastic economic decline, a stagnating population trend and excessive growth expectations, continuously fueled by representatives of the city and the federal government (Lenhart 2001), had created a speculative bubble. Following Lebuhn, its burst signaled the start of a second phase of Berlin’s neoliberal governance.<sup>5</sup> This phase began with the ‘Berlin Banking Scandal’ in 2001, when “the participation of public corporations in speculative real estate bonds” (Lebuhn 2015, 108), interdependencies between the state-owned ‘Berliner Bankgesellschaft’ and leading politicians, and Berlin’s high debt burden of roughly 40 billion euro (Colomb 2012, 223) became public knowledge. After the forced resignation of Berlin’s Mayor Eberhart Diepgen (Christian Democratic Party), a coalition of the SPD and the Party of Democratic Socialism under the social democrat Klaus Wowereit continued the neoliberal politics, “but now mediated through austerity policies and fiscal crisis,” as Lebuhn puts it (2015, 108). One of the first acts in this context was the foundation of the *Berliner Liegenschaftsfonds* (Berlin Property Fund). Its task was to manage and intensify a citywide sell-off of public property in order to contribute to Berlin’s fiscal consolidation (Schüsckke 2020, 82).

Lebuhn’s two-phase model might appear, at first glance, somewhat unsubtle but it is very convincing in exactly how it presents policies of privatization as a

thread running through the recent past of a city that had suddenly become open to substantial geopolitical and economic reconfiguration. In Lebuhn's depictions, these policies prove to be both instruments to react on situations of crisis and break, and formative elements for the next crisis to come. But Lebuhn's analysis also has conjunctural qualities that provide a link back to the considerations presented in the previous section. First, because he lays great emphasis on particular "moments of transformation, break, and the possibility of new 'settlements'" (Clarke 2014, 115), which he considers to be the significant "entry points for an in depth understanding" (Lebuhn 2015, 110) of restructuring processes. Second, because as much as 'breaks' are central to his view, he also pays attention to ideological continuities, shifts, transformations and rearrangements, similar to Rose and his description of changing modes of neoliberal rationality and governance in Great Britain. Third, this seems to me to be the most important point, Lebuhn regards Berlin's "crisis-driven restructuring as a process in which sociopolitical, economic and cultural dimensions are inseparably entangled with each other" (2015, 110). His perspective, thus, corresponds perfectly with a conjunctural understanding of crisis as an 'over-determined' constellation, where "(d)ifferent levels of society [...] come together or 'fuse'" (Hall and Massey 2010, 57). Accordingly, Lebuhn never treats politics in a reductionist fashion as an unattached technical field, organized only by apparent objective interests, inherent logics and rather prosaic decision-making processes. Instead, he illustrates that the neoliberal transformation of post-Wall Berlin has continuously been structured and carried by efforts to demonstrate how it might serve a greater purpose or open up new opportunities for the city's inhabitants, and permeated and regenerated by attempts to legitimize, rationalize or downplay the material consequences of these politics.

Among different examples listed by Lebuhn, such efforts included a long-lasting media discourse in the 1990s – fueled by politicians, city officials, historians, cultural critics and architects – about Berlin's 'ethos' as a city shaped by 18th- and 19th-century bourgeois culture and business sense, whose revitalization would designate it as a capital for a confident new Germany (Hertweck 2010).<sup>6</sup> In the 2000s, these efforts consisted of an administrative adoption and adaption of selected rationales of subcultural or alternative spatial practices. Regarding Berlin's rather hermetic urban development discourse of the 1990s, and in the words, Rose used to describe New Labour's strategy of rearticulating Neoliberalism, this move 'from *culture* to *cultures*' (Rose 2000, 1402) aimed at substantiating the guiding principle of a diverse, multifaceted, open-minded and creative city (Lebuhn 2015, 108f.). In addition, and over the entire period covered by Lebuhn, Berlin's administration brought forth ideas and ideals of proper urban self-conception – whether it was the historically conscious urban citizen (*Stadtbürger*), who was meant to enable Berlin's 'critical reconstruction' by purchasing a building site and recreating the city's pre-war urban layout (Hain 2013, 59–64), or the creative 'culturepreneur' (Lanz 2013, 1313; Lebuhn 2015, 108), who was supposed to contribute to Berlin's tolerant atmosphere and its economic rebirth as a cultural industries hub after years of recession and stagnation (Lebuhn 2015, 111).



This is the point to return to the foreword of the Manual for Participation. Against the backdrop of what I have just described and regarding how the manual itself invokes a self-reliant, creative and responsible urban citizen, it probably comes as no surprise to consider it a characteristic “strategy of how to deal with [...] crisis” (Lebuhn 2015, 103) in the context of Berlin’s long-standing restructuring process. However, the foreword’s strong emphasis on ‘community’ as an inspiring and supportive nucleus of urban life also set a new tone in the governmental discourse about Berlin’s further development – or, at least, its reasoning was much more focused on “the subject and its relationship to others” (Foucault 1997a, 225) than had been the case when city officials introduced an entrepreneurial bourgeois or a creative culturepreneur as urban role models in the 1990s and 2000s. To conclude this section, I therefore want to dwell for a few lines on one question: what might the foreword tell us about a particular moment within a neoliberal conjuncture?

In 2011, when Berlin’s Senator for Urban Development, Michael Müller, signed the introduction to the Manual for Participation, he was confronted with a delicate situation: In the previous years, the prices for housing had started to rise notably in many central districts where – due to the history of the once divided Berlin, with its inner city peripheries – the number of households with very low income and dependent on welfare transition was above average compared to other cities (Holm and Kuhn 2011; Holm 2014; Rink et al. 2015). Only three years before, a large protest network consisting of political activists, artists, club owners, creative professionals and local residents had enforced a public referendum in the central district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg against the sell-off of public property on the inner city Spree riverbanks and the resulting gentrification processes (Novy and Colomb 2013; Ott 2020a). Nonetheless, the government Senator Müller represented in 2011 was not planning to put an end to either privatization or spending cuts ‘until it squeaks,’ as Mayor Wowereit had infamously put it after his inauguration ten years previously in the light of Berlin’s enormous public debt (Bayer; Berg and Stark 2001).

Müller could have used the opening words of the Manual for Participation to simply repeat his mayor’s still effective TINA (There Is No Alternative) argument. Instead, he chose to present the dynamics of Berlin’s crisis-driven urban restructuring in a different way. It illustrates quite well what Rose calls the ethopolitical “double movement of autonomization and responsabilization” (Rose 2000, 1400), two seemingly divergent matters, which are mediated through the concept of community. In order to fully understand Müller’s style of reasoning, one has to add what the manual’s foreword left out when it conveyed the invitation to embrace an ever-changing Berlin, take part in changing it, bring forward personal ideas, motivate others to act accordingly and to take care of ‘neighborhood communities’ (SenStadt 2011, 5). This particular way of promoting active urban citizenship was tightly interwoven with a coming together of austerity measures and privatization policies, an intensifying property speculation, and increasing threats of socio-spatial segregation. Within that conflictual constellation, the governmental offer to participate inevitably entailed the expectation that the participants are prepared to mobilize a great part of their social, cultural and economic resources and, in doing

so, assume broad responsibilities. First, by considering participation in Berlin's urban development as an opportunity to invest in the process of shaping and securing the spatial conditions for their own social reproduction, against the backdrop of a constrained public budget and a sellout of public goods. Secondly, by combining this investment in their immediate living environment with "civic (and) community engagement" (Rose 2000, 1403) in order to strengthen social cohesion against the backdrop of the exclusionary processes of market driven and competitive urban restructuring.

### **Where to be a good Berliner**

There is a hardly disputable contradiction between a more or less 'open call' to participate in Berlin's spatial renewal and cultural preservation, and a widespread absence of public construction activities, a persistent decrease in state-owned land, and a tough competition on a growing privatized property, real estate and housing market, especially in inner-city areas. Against the backdrop of this situation in 2011, one might well have wondered how many people could have been able to meet the expectation of Berlin's government and city officials when the opportunities to actually influence the planning, designing and appropriation of Berlin's built urban environment were constantly diminished by a policy that extended exclusive property rights by giving up democratic control over public land.

Nonetheless, the foreword of the Manual for Participation – with its inciting style of communication and, yet, eloquent silence – should neither be underestimated as a nice story about people who constantly help each other when it comes to shaping "the face and the future of (their) city" (SenStadt 2011, 5), a neoliberal myth about freedom and win-win situations for everyone, nor a fairytale to mask a political agenda with unpleasant consequences. If the narrative of vibrant and supportive urban communities aims at presenting a credible form of subjectification and seeks to enter common sense, if it is supposed to "become 'just how things are'" (Hall and Massey 2010, 61), 'community' cannot be just a 'weasel word' (Hall and Massey 2010, 62) but has to trigger associations. As Foucault points out, the potential of a discourse to normalize power relationships, represent a social norm or gain normativity depends on the quality of its conjunction to the material world: "the dimension of what is to be done can only appear within a field of real forces" (2007, 18).

Regarding the discourse central to this essay and the aspiration to think about it in terms of conjunctural analysis, Foucault's statement means two things: First, certain spatial practices must already exist to constitute the plausibility of speaking about 'good' community-oriented Berliners – practices that can be presented as creative, collaborative, responsible and self-reliant contributions to the city's urban transformation. Second, to sustain this plausibility, there is a governmental necessity not only to draw on what John Clarke calls 'residual' (2010, 340) phenomena but also to make room for the emergence of new examples by, at least, an occasional provision of spaces to facilitate what the Manual for Participation asks for. In other words, without a productive basis, without possibilities to create

graspable connections to the physical dimension of urban space, its ideology would run the risk of running dry. A couple of years after the publication of the Manual for Participation, I had the opportunity to follow some steps of a planning and building process, where these aspects of an ethopolitics of community could be observed, as well as its particular mode of marking differences.

This process took place in Südliche Friedrichstadt, a part of the inner-city district of Kreuzberg with origins going back to the 18th century. Today, it is shaped, for a great part, by postwar social housing and some very modest commercial infrastructure and has a high poverty rate, both being reminders of the neighborhood's massive destruction by allied airstrikes in 1945 and its peripheral location close to the German Democratic Republic's border during the subsequent decades. In 2012, after some initial discrepancies, the authorities of the district and the city-state of Berlin had agreed to follow a commissioned study (Schmidt 2011) on the potential future of a former flower market area located in the center of the neighborhood. The most remarkable decision resulting from the preliminary study concerned the allocation of the state-owned properties on the former market area, which slightly modified Berlin's usual procedure of property privatization. Instead of declaring the highest bid its sole criterion, only projects that handed in a convincing combination of a reasonable financial offer and a detailed concept for a mixed-use building with different housing typologies, affordable spaces for artists and creative professionals, as well as commercial and social infrastructure were given the chance to purchase one of three plots of building land.

'Concept outbids cash' soon became the slogan of this urban development and property marketing strategy.<sup>7</sup> But this is somewhat misleading, given the fact that the proceeds from the sale of public land had to refinance the expensive relocation of the flower market and its new facilities, and taking into account that the overall costs for each of the three mixed-used buildings resulting from the so-called concept procedure eventually lay in a lower two-digit million euro range. Such a figure may illustrate the degree to which the restructuring of the former market area centered around people who were not only expected to develop ambitious spatial and programmatic concepts and, as the Manual for Participation states, 'bring forward new ideas' (SenStadt 2011, 5), but also to carry a considerable financial burden and take an entrepreneurial risk. It is, therefore, not surprising that the winning projects were all submitted and developed by architects who had already gained experience in self-initiated planning without public subsidies but with a focus on participation. Some of their projects dated back to the beginning and middle of the 2000s, when the concurrence of a high number of empty lots in former inner-city peripheries, still relatively low property prices and little to no real estate development in the aftermath of Berlin's fiscal crisis in 2001 had created a short-term but favorable condition for members of the urban middle class to collectively gain property ownership by participating in cohousing groups. Without a doubt, this situation also enabled a particular form of social creativity and, by the end of the 2000s, an urban development discourse was emerging in Berlin that attributed a broader urban potential to cohousing projects. One appraisal that was frequently brought forward considered the often dialogic planning processes not only as a

guarantor for differentiated spatial solutions that met the user's actual needs, but also as a good basis for building relationships with the broader neighborhood of the project. Cohousing architecture, the argument went, would be inhabited by people who – due to their involvement in the lengthy learning processes of participation – had already developed a particular sensibility for the context of their home before they actually moved in (Ring and SenStadt 2013, 10–13; Ott 2019, 72–75).

The future residents of the cohousing projects on the former flower market area encountered similar expectations. While the idea behind the concept procedure for the marketing of its building sites certainly was to reduce the likelihood of speculative real estate development based on the logic of extracting the highest financial profits, it was also meant to allow for the participation of local stakeholders, who were supposed to be interested in a careful long-term development of a heterogeneous neighborhood that would soon become their personal home.<sup>8</sup> In a certain sense, such a framing mirrors the descriptions in the *Manual for Participation*, of people who participate in the “strengthening of neighborhood communities” (SenStadt 2011, 5). During my fieldwork, I met, talked to and spent time with members of the building projects for the former flower market area, whose ideas and actions corresponded in some ways with such descriptions. They participated, for instance, in the construction of a small temporary building which was conceived as a meeting room for the neighborhood. They organized summer parties, flea markets and a so-called talk café and invited people living in the area to get to know each other better. They also made efforts, investing time and money, to implement a large noncommercial space on the ground floor level of one of the new buildings as an offer to people with little or no income, a “modest attempt to bring people together, in order to live together as true neighbors,” as one of its architects put it.<sup>9</sup> The novelty of the concept procedure after more than 20 years of privatizing public land in Berlin at a maximum price, the intense participatory planning of three mixed-used buildings and the qualities of an architecture that certainly stands out from the profit-driven mainstream of contemporary urban housing, combined with the many possibilities to create a public platform for collective ethical self-representation throughout the whole development phase may all have contributed to the overwhelmingly positive media reception of this urban restructuring process.

Nevertheless, the transformation of the former flower market area illustrated how the whole procedure rested upon the contradictory logic of an urban governance based on competitive policies of privatization and an invocation of the ‘creative and supportive forces’ (SenStadt 2011, 5) of participatory community building. It was obvious from the outset of this project that the opportunities to participate would be limited to those Berliners who would have enough symbolic capital to be acknowledged as driving forces for both creative and responsible urban change, enough cultural and social capital to clear their way through the complex and time-consuming procedures of collaborative decision-making, and enough economic capital to finance the overall costs of the planning process and all the construction works. Now, this might provide just another example of one of the long-term effects of what Lebuhn called Berlin's crisis-driven neoliberal restructuring: even when ‘concept’ was alleged to ‘outbid cash,’ those who were threatened most

by increasing property speculation but lacking the aforementioned resources to participate as entrepreneurial subjects in the housing market were excluded first.

In fact, the case study of the former flower market is even more telling, because it allows a better understanding of the ethical discourse that has been the empirical focus of this chapter and its mode of action within the current neoliberal conjuncture. Articulating the transformation of a privatized inner city property in a rather poor neighborhood as an ethical question of active citizenship, responsible action and community building provided its drivers with a means to distance themselves from other potentially relevant stakeholders or social groups in this context. Such a mode of making distinctions worked in two ways and, thereby, marked the counterparts of what Senator Michael Müller, in his foreword of the *Manual for Participation*, had described as a ‘good Berliner’: First, and already mentioned, it drew a line between the collaborative housing projects of new but ‘local’ middle-class neighbors on the flower market and a profit-driven real estate economy, which was described as self-serving and greedy, almost placeless, and thoughtless in terms of a socially sustainable development of the neighborhood. In the public eye, this kind of differentiation, which was repeatedly taken up in media coverage of the concept procedure and the construction process, gave the formers’ claim to the area more legitimacy. Second, and this is at least as important, the self-representation as being ‘proactive’ urban citizens who “really want to change something,” as one of the initiators of the concept procedure put it, sometimes went hand in hand with incapacitating those residents of the neighborhood who often lived in the social housing areas just around the corner and did not really have a say in the transformation of the former flower market. They were described as ‘passive’ or ‘indifferent,’ remembered as making pushy comments in public dialogue events, and, most of all, perceived as resisting what the *Manual for Participation* depicts as one of the central qualities of Berlin: change.<sup>10</sup>

### **Thinking conjuncturally about a good Berliner**

In the first section of this essay, I addressed one question that I considered to be of central interest for ‘thinking conjuncturally’ (Clarke 2010, 352) about the urban ethical framing of my field of research: What do the increased tendency to refer to collaborative architecture and participatory planning in ethical terms and the framing of such a field as an urban ethical practice ‘have to do with everything else?’ After having discussed the means and targets of ethopolitical governmentality, traced Berlin’s crisis-driven urban restructuring process post-1989 and depicted an urban transformation project in which ethics of community were both suggested, claimed and demanded, I want to return to this question and try to give at least one concluding answer. Against the backdrop of the thoughts and observations brought forward throughout this chapter, it emphasizes the importance of reflecting on the strategic potential of urban ethics in order to understand how conflicts about urban transformation are always conflicts about existing power relationships, shaped by attempts to obtain consent and the quest for adequate means to meet this objective.

While Stuart Hall and Doreen Massey were reflecting on neoliberalism and the ideological function of its parlance, Hall argued that to privilege the word ‘community’ tends to ‘g(i)ve up on society’ (Hall and Massey 2010, 62). With this consideration in mind, I want to argue that to frame the transformation of the built urban environment, above all, as a question of virtues, values, and personal behavior and responsibility, helps to blur questions of social inequality, structural advantage and disadvantage, or material needs and interests, and, thus, the very contradictions of a market-based political economy. In my case study, such an ethical framing has, therefore, been applied in two respects: It became a discursive means to support a broad neoliberal political agenda of comprehensive urban restructuring, and provided an opportunity to legitimize the small-scale appropriation of a privatized property by people who sought to reproduce their social position within this competitive process, and, therefore, made use of any means at hand.

## Notes

- 1 The author was an associated member of the DFG research group Urban Ethics during its first funding phase from 2015 to 2018.
- 2 These museums are the Deutsches Architekturmuseum DAM in Frankfurt am Main, the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein and the Architekturmuseum der TUM in Munich.
- 3 Translated from German by the author.
- 4 Translated from German by the author.
- 5 Lebuhn considered this second phase had not yet been concluded when he drafted his article in 2015.
- 6 Lebuhn argues that the approach of promoting a “global city with a very German touch” (2015, 107) in the 1990s is only comprehensible against the backdrop of the material and ideological collapse of the socialist Eastern Block. It was a condition for a strong “hegemony of the conservative party” in Germany (Lebuhn 2015, 111) and favored the combination of public property privatization with culturally revisionist identity politics.
- 7 Participant observation during the ‘Make City Festival’ (June 12, 2015).
- 8 Interview with Florian Schmidt (September 29, 2015; translated from German by the author).
- 9 Participant observation at the roofing ceremony of the ‘Metropolienhaus’ (April 28, 2016; translated from German by the author).
- 10 Interview with Florian Schmidt (September 29, 2015; translated from German by the author).

## References

- Amin, Ash. 2006. The good city. *Urban Studies*, 43(5–6), 1009–1023.
- Arch+. *Zeitschrift für Architektur und Urbanismus*, 51, (232), (July 2018).
- Bauwelt*, 107(24), (June 2016).
- Bauwelt Einblick*, (6), (June 2019).
- Bayer, Wolfgang, Stefan Berg, and Holger Stark. 2001. Bis es quietscht. *Der Spiegel*, 48, 36–37.
- Becker, Annette von, Laura Kienbaum, Kristien Ring, and Peter Cachola Schmal, eds. 2015. *Building and Living in Communities. Ideas, Processes, Architecture*. Basel: Birkhäuser.
- Chan, Jeffrey. 2019. *Urban Ethics in the Anthropocene. The Moral Dimensions of Six Emerging Conditions in Contemporary Urbanism*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Clarke, John. 2010. Of crisis and conjunctures: The problem of the present. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 34(4), 337–354.
- Clarke, John. 2014. Conjunctures, crises, and cultures: Valuing Stuart Hall. *Focaal – Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*, 70, 113–122.
- Cojocar, Maria-Daria. 2012. *Die Geschichte von der guten Stadt. Politische Philosophie zwischen urbaner Selbstverständigung und Utopie*. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Collier, Stephen J., and Andrew Lakoff. 2005. On regimes of living. In: Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier, eds. *Global Assemblages. Technology, Politics and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. London: Blackwell, pp. 22–39.
- Colomb, Claire. 2012. *Staging the New Berlin. Place Marketing and the Politics of Urban Reinvention Post–1989*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Düchs, Martin. 2011. *Architektur für ein gutes Leben. Über Verantwortung, Ethik und Moral des Architekten*. Münster: Waxmann.
- Düchs, Martin, and Christian Illies. 2017. Wer wohnt hier eigentlich? Eine unzeitgemäße anthropologische Fußnote zu ‘The ethical function of architecture’. *Cloud-Cuckoo-Land: International Journal of Architectural Theory*, 22(36), 87–112.
- Ege, Moritz. 2019. Cultural Studies als Konjunktur- und Konstellationsanalyse. Zur Einleitung. *ZfK – Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*, 2, 101–104.
- Eichstädt-Bohlig, Franziska. 2020. Gemeinnütziges Wohnen als Finanzmarkttroulette. In: Florian Hertweck, ed. *Architektur auf gemeinsamem Boden. Positionen und Modelle zur Bodenfrage*. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, pp. 114–128.
- ETH Studio Basel, ed. 2015. *The Inevitable Specificity of Cities*. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers.
- Foucault, Michel. 1982. Subject and power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 777–795.
- Foucault, Michel. 1997a. Technologies of the self. In: Paul Rabinow, ed. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth – The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954–1984, Volume I*. New York: The New Press, pp. 223–251.
- Foucault, Michel. 1997b. The ethics of the concern of the self as a practice of freedom. In: Paul Rabinow, ed. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth – The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954–1984, Volume I*. New York: The New Press, pp. 281–301.
- Foucault, Michel. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gilbert, Jeremy. 2019. This conjuncture: For Stuart Hall. *New Formations*, 96–97, 5–37.
- Hain, Simone. 2013. Berlin’s urban development discourse: Symbolic action and the articulation of hegemonic interests. In: Matthias Berndt, Britta Grell and Andrej Holm, eds. *The Berlin Reader: A Compendium on Urban Change and Activism*. Bielefeld: transcript, pp. 53–65.
- Hall, Stuart, and Doreen Massey. 2010. Interpreting the crisis: Doreen Massey and Stuart Hall discuss ways of understanding the current crisis. *Soundings*, 44, 55–69.
- Harries, Karsten. 1997. *The Ethical Function of Architecture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Harries, Karsten. 2017. Some thoughts and questions on revisiting the ethical function of architecture. *Cloud-Cuckoo-Land: International Journal of Architectural Theory*, 22(36), 13–35.
- Heeg, Susanne. 2013. Wohnungen als Finanzanlage. Auswirkungen von Responsibilisierung und Finanzialisierung im Bereich des Wohnens. *Sub\Urban. Zeitschrift für kritische Stadtforschung*, 1(1), 75–99.
- Hertweck, Florian. 2010. *Der Berliner Architekturstreit. Architektur, Stadtbau, Geschichte und Identität in der Berliner Republik 1989–1999*. Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag.
- Hesse, Markus. 2020. ‘Property states’ und Finanzialisierung der Stadtentwicklung. In: Florian Hertweck, ed. *Architektur auf gemeinsamem Boden. Positionen und Modelle zur Bodenfrage*. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, pp. 130–143.

- Hodkinson, Stuart. 2012. The return of the housing question. *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization*, 12(4), 423–444.
- Hohensee, Naraelle. 2010. Reinventing traditionalism: The influence of critical reconstruction on the shape of Berlin's Friedrichstadt. *Intersections Online*, 11(1), 55–99.
- Holm, Andrej. 2013. Berlin's gentrification mainstream. In: Matthias Bernt, Britta Grell and Andrej Holm, eds. *The Berlin Reader. A Compendium on Urban Change and Activism*. Bielefeld: transcript, pp. 171–187.
- Holm, Andrej. 2014. Zeitschleife Kreuzberg – Gentrification im langen Schatten der Behutsamen Stadterneuerung. *Zeithistorische Forschungen / Studies in Contemporary History*, 11(2), 300–311.
- Holm, Andrej. 2016. (Un)sozialer Wohnungsbau. Schwerpunkt der Berliner Verdrängungsdynamik. In: Andrej Holm, Ulrike Hamann and Sandy Kaltenborn, eds. *Berliner Hefte zur Geschichte und Gegenwart der Stadt #2: Die Legende vom Sozialen Wohnungsbau*. Berlin: trigger.medien.gmbh, pp. 13–99.
- Holm, Andrej, and Armin Kuhn. 2011. Squatting and urban renewal: The interaction of squatter movements and strategies of urban restructuring in Berlin. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35(3), 644–658.
- Kockelkorn, Anne. 2017. Wohnungsfrage Deutschland: Zurück in die Gegenwart. In: Jesko Fezer, Nikolaus Hirsch, Wilfried Kuehn and Hila Peleg, eds. *Wohnungsfrage*. Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, pp. 106–142.
- Kries, Mateo, Andreas Ruby, and Ilka Ruby, eds. 2017. *Together! The New Architecture of the Collective*. Berlin: Ruby Press.
- Lanz, Stephan. 2013. Be Berlin! Governing the city through freedom. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(4), 1305–1324.
- Lebuhn, Hendrik. 2015. Understanding the city through crisis. Neoliberalization in post-Wall Berlin. *Critical Planning*, 22(1), 99–119.
- Lenhart, Karin. 2001. *Berliner Metropoly: Stadtentwicklungspolitik im Berliner Bezirk Mitte nach der Wende*. Opladen: Leske und Budrich.
- Lepik, Andres, and Hilde Strobl, eds. 2016. *Keine Angst vor Partizipation! Wohnen heute*. München: Architekturmuseum der TU München.
- Loo, Stephen. 2012. Design-ing ethics. The good, the bad and the performative. In: Emma Felton, Oksana Zelenko and Suzi Vaughan, eds. *Design and Ethics: Reflections on Practice*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 10–19.
- Nothegger, Barbara. 2017. *Sieben Stock Dorf. Wohnexperimente für eine bessere Zukunft*. Salzburg and Wien: Residenz Verlag.
- Novy, Johannes, and Claire Colomb. 2013. Struggling for the right to the (creative) city in Berlin and Hamburg: New urban social movements, new 'spaces of hope'? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(5), 1816–1838.
- Ott, Max. 2019. Help yourself, but build the right thing. A collaborative housing project in growing Berlin. In: Johannes Moser and Simone Egger, eds. *The Vulnerable Middle Class? Strategies of Housing in Prospering Cities*. München: utz Verlag GmbH, pp. 69–88.
- Ott, Max. 2020a. Shaping urban ethics: The 'making-of' a collective housing project at Berlin's River Spree. In: Moritz Ege and Johannes Moser, eds. *Urban Ethics – Conflicts over the 'Good' and Proper Life in Cities*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 147–163.
- Ott, Max. 2020b. A threshold space: Connecting a home in the city with the city. In: Johannes Lenhard and Farhan Samanani, eds. *Home: Ethnographic Encounters*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, pp. 133–144.



- Reznikova, Olga. 2020. Guardians of Torfjanka Park: The fight for ‘our Moscow’ and the understanding of ‘ordinary people’ in the current conjuncture. In: Moritz Ege and Johannes Moser, eds. *Urban Ethics: Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 261–276.
- Reznikova, Olga, and Moritz Ege. 2019. Moralische Ökonomien vs. ethische Politik? Arbeiter- und Mittelschichtsproteste in Moskau 2015/2016. In: Karl Braun, Claus-Marco Dieterich, Johannes Moser and Christian Schönholz, eds. *Wirtschaften: Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven*. Marburg: MakuFEE, pp. 343–354.
- Rink, Dieter, Barbara Schöning, Daniel Gardemin, and Andrej Holm. 2015. Städte unter Druck. Die Rückkehr der Wohnungsfrage. *Blätter für deutsche und international Politik*, 16(6), 69–79.
- Ring, Kristien, and SenStadt – Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt Berlin, eds. 2013. *Selvmade City Berlin: Self-initiated Urban Living and Architectural Interventions*. Berlin: jovis.
- Rose, Nikolas. 2000. Community, citizenship and the third way. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43(9), 1395–1411.
- Rosenkranz, Jan, and Ruben Rehage. 2019. Hier darf ich sein. *Stern*, 21, 28–38.
- Schmidt, Florian. 2011. KUKQuartier – Kunst- und Kreativ-Quartier am Blumengroßmarkt. Konzeptstudie für das innerstädtische Areal rund um den Blumengroßmarkt. <http://www.kreativ-quartier-berlin.de/kukq.pdf> [Accessed October 26, 2021].
- Schüsckle, Florine. 2020. Ausverkauft. Die Privatisierung von landeseigenem Grundbesitz in Berlin. *Arch+ Zeitschrift für Architektur und Urbanismus*, 53(241), 76–85.
- Sennett, Richard. 2018. *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*. London: Allen Lane.
- SenStadt – Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, ed. 2011. Handbuch zur Partizipation. [https://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/soziale\\_stadt/partizipation/download/Handbuch\\_Partizipation.pdf](https://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/soziale_stadt/partizipation/download/Handbuch_Partizipation.pdf) [Accessed October 26, 2021].
- Trautvetter, Christoph. 2020. Wem gehört die Stadt? Analyse der Eigentümergruppen und ihrer Geschäftspraktiken auf dem Berliner Wohnungsmarkt. *STUDIEN*, [online] 13, edited by Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Berlin. [https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls\\_uploads/pdfs/Studien/Studien\\_13-20\\_Wem\\_gehoert\\_die\\_Stadt.pdf](https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/Studien/Studien_13-20_Wem_gehoert_die_Stadt.pdf) [Accessed October 26, 2021].
- Weissmüller, Laura. 2019. Wie Leben sein könnte. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 21, 11.
- Wolfrum, Sophie, Heiner Stengel, Florian Kurbasik, Norbert Kling, Sofia Dona, Imke Mumm, and Christian Zöhler, eds. 2018. *Porous City: From Metaphor to Urban Agenda*. Basel: Birkhäuser.
- Wüstenrot Stiftung, ed. 2017. *Wohnvielfalt: Gemeinschaftlich wohnen – im Quartier vernetzt und sozial orientiert*. Stuttgart: Offizin Scheufele.
- Wüstenrot Stiftung, ed. 2020. *Wohnen jenseits des Standards: Auf den Spuren neuer Wohnlösungen für ein differenziertes und bedürfnisgerechtes Wohnungsangebot*. Stuttgart: Offizin Scheufele.

# Conclusion

## Urban ethics as research agenda

*Moritz Ege, Christoph K. Neumann and Ursula Prutsch*

The chapters of this book have proven urban ethics to be a timely concern on different levels. We situate the publication within a wave of recent publications that document an interest in the intersections between ethical normativity and urban life – that is, in the terminology we suggest, in urban ethics (Mostafavi 2017; Sennett 2018; Kaltsa 2019; Koutsoumpos 2019; Moraitis and Rassia 2019; Nieswand 2021; Lange and Dieterich 2022). The contributions in this volume build on this interest and also continue the work documented in previous publications from this research group (including Ege 2018; Moser 2018; Schulz 2018; Habit 2019; Moser and Egger 2019; Ott 2019; Reznikova and Ege 2019; Strutz 2019; Dürr et al. 2020; Fischer 2020; Fischer and Dürr 2020; Ege and Moser 2021; Reznikova 2022). They reflect lively discussions on different aspects of urban ethics in changing city structures: urban politics and moral economies, the ethics of space and urban planning, subjectivation processes, social creativity and forms of disputes and conflicts. The contributions analyze ethics and social creativity in urban social movements, conceptions of justice and intersectional differences, as well as the meanings and implications of a suspected ‘ethical turn.’ In addition to this multitude of approaches, urgent existential menaces, such as environmental catastrophes and the COVID-19 pandemic, were taken into consideration.

We will not attempt to summarize the individual results of the chapters or this broader body of work in this conclusion, we instead want to point out some shared concerns, conceptual reference frames and diagnoses as well as different approaches to cities as laboratories of sociality.

### **Social creativity and moral economies in urban spaces**

The concept of social creativity provides a useful starting point for thinking through the ethical projects and initiatives in cities discussed in the chapters: through such projects, individuals gathered in collectives within cities are able to create new social relationships and institutions (Graeber 2005; Dürr et al. 2020). By doing so, they potentially set examples that inspire others – through their inventiveness, resistance, endurance and reflexivity. Social creativity on a larger scale can challenge the status quo of urban governance and lead to broader demands for more ethical *valence* and change in structures of urban life. Such discourses and acts

tend to have much more room in democratic settings than in highly hierarchical, authoritarian or even totalitarian ones. But even under such regimes, negotiations on the urban scale – especially those centered on notions of a *good* or *better* life in the city or the *good* city – are not always resolved entirely in a top-down manner and their outcomes are far from fully predictable. This may be the case because it often remains unclear how *political* such projects are and to what extent they can or will question the overall distribution of power. Thus, there may well be more room for experimentation in this field of urban ethics than expected, and it can become a particularly important arena for societal negotiations. As Diane Davis showed in her chapter of this volume, the urban scale now carries the hopes of many avowed political progressives in many formally fully democratic contexts – including the USA. If cities – seen in contrast to nation states that are more likely to have conservative political majorities – can be made ‘more ethical,’ then urban ethics are much more likely to also be seen as pertinent and realistic strategies for political change in those contexts.

Such change must necessarily be a negotiated one. From the outset, the discursive character of ethics has led our research group to concentrate on processes of implicit or explicit negotiations about the *good life* in the city. The term ‘moral economy’ has been proven to be useful and inspiring but also challenging in analyzing such debates. While it is difficult to assign a definite meaning to the concept after its long career in various fields of studies (Dürr et al. 2020), its very ambiguity is apt to adequately reflect the plurality of situational definitions and understandings inherent in many complex urban conflicts. On the one hand, moral economies are deeply conservative. They take recourse to traditional rules, practices or principles, often enshrined in what is understood as a long past. On the other hand, moral economies refer to rights and customs that challenge the implementation of juridical stipulations supporting the interests of those in power. Moral economies are extralegal in a basic sense. They, consequently, allow one to identify instances where law is little more than an instrument for exercising power. Taken from this angle, they have a radical and, at times, even revolutionary potential. They may even invert neoliberal forms of ethicization when a *crowd* (however it constitutes itself) tries to enforce a strict moral stance on members of the elite, their ‘adversaries.’ However, when the material (economic, technological, legal, social) basis of such demands has eroded, they can appear merely moralistic and compensatory.

Throughout the chapters, perhaps most explicitly in John Clarke’s, it has become clear that the reflexivity inherent in the usage of these concepts and labels is crucial for understanding dynamics of urban ethics today: terms such as morality, moralization and ethics are not merely descriptive or analytical, they are used, commented upon and redefined by all sorts of actors and have explicitly or implicitly become intertwined with classification struggles. Relatively privileged urban groups tending toward social and economic liberalism often present themselves and their preferred discursive/social form as more progressive and contemporary – and *ethical* – than those of others whom they depict as old-fashioned, vestigial and stuck in an unenlightened past and a *moralistic* worldview. At the same time, in many constellations, authoritarian politicians and conservative culture warriors

present themselves as defenders of *true* popular morality against anti-traditionalist ‘moralizers’ from the political left and their universalistic, cosmopolitan ethics (Brown 2020; Ege 2022). While the terminology of ‘moralizing’ is messy, the contentions around urban ethics provide a key to understanding several contemporary sociocultural conflicts better, including the much-debated cultural and political cleavage between ‘progressive cities’ and ‘conservative peripheries.’

### **Tensions: ethical normativity, theoretical divergences and analytical pragmatism**

The view of cities and urban ethics taken by the authors in this book has not been that of a bird’s eye on a macroscale of urban planners. The chapters examine decision-making within living ecosystems by actors who seek to be included in negotiation processes of urban life and governance. As the introduction outlined, we believe this is an important intervention in a discursive field that is often characterized by top-down perspectives.

While this approach unites the chapters and provides common ground, the contributions also contain some divergences. They concern the ambiguities of ethical normativity in research and its transfer to urban life, and the relationship that pertains between (meta-)theoretical reflections on the place of ethics and pragmatic approaches toward studying it. Explaining such tensions offers room for reflections on questions of theory and methodology and can also – hopefully – prepare the ground for future discussions. Two divergent theoretical approaches to the field of urban ethics can be distinguished, at least as ideal types, to situate the first tension: an openly normative one and a primarily ethically detached approach in either a descriptive or analytical mode. While the proponents of normative debates, who are prominent in parts of urban planning, geography, political science and, of course, philosophical ethics, tend to want to give reliable answers to definitions and necessities of the *good* life in the city, or *good* and successful urbanity (Sennett 2018), the self-avowed descriptive and analytical approach, which is more prominent in the field of sociocultural anthropology, history and sociology, takes ethical and moral statements and negotiations primarily as indicators for processes that should ultimately be investigated in nonnormative terms, such as struggles over power or social distinction (e.g. Nieswand, 2021). The word ‘ethical’ tends to be used both as designator of a specific – and highly valued – field of debates and an evaluative term in studies in the straightforwardly normative vein. Statements such as ‘this is ethical’ tend to mean ‘this is good/right’ or ‘this should be solved through (ethical) debate.’ In studies in the descriptive and analytical vein, ‘this is ethical’ means primarily “this is part of ethics, a specific sociocultural form of discourse/knowledge/ideology.”

The work on urban ethics in this book primarily takes up analytical tools from the latter side of this divergence: ethics and ethicization are analyzed in their pragmatic contexts, rather than being situated in an imagined sphere of non-interested, rational discourse. At the same time, most of the authors here also refrain from being fully distanced from the ethical normativity of the actors ‘on the ground,’

from treating them as mere objects of study and from presenting research on urban ethics as completely disconnected from normative evaluations. Such a choice is programmatic and reflects ambiguities inherent in the role and responsibility of academic intellectual work. There is also a practical side to it, especially in politically fraught fields of (urban) research: scholars often seek out ‘ethical projects’ for their studies of which they are broadly supportive. They often hope that these projects will initiate political change. Such change can be seen as positive, be it in relation to ecological sustainability, questions of social justice or other matters. Such approaches can open up new insights and perspectives – even if they imply obvious risks of partiality and bias. In order to deal with the latter, the authors of this volume focused not only on the ethical ambitions of such projects but also on changes, unintended consequences and implications.

Tensions between metatheoretical positions also play into different conceptualizations of urban ethics and their potential scope. Authors who adhere to Actor-Network Theory (ANT), Post-ANT and Deleuzian ‘assemblage thinking,’ for example, often see ethics as *immanent* in socio-semiotic-material worlds (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). Regarding cities and other objects of research, they tend to reject notions of fixed social structures, distinctions between depth and surface phenomena and between scalar levels. Instead, they describe the urban world through a networked heterogeneity of assemblages where there is a constant emergence of the new. From the vantage point of more structuralist-oriented perspectives, this can come close to (problematic) ethical voluntarism, i.e. the belief that ethical impulses can trigger urban change irrespective of ‘structural’ conditions. In the latter vein, Bourdieu’s theory of practice and neo-Marxist critical realism tend to assume that ethical discourses and initiatives are limited and, at least, partly determined by such conditions (Bourdieu 2011 [1972]). Researchers working in this tradition are, therefore, more likely to stress the limitations of (urban) ethical impulses and their ideological aspects. While this is obviously no exhaustive list of possible (meta-) theoretical approaches, the point here is that such positions often have a strong influence on how researchers evaluate the potential and implications of projects to improve urban life through ethics, and on their views of strategies for urban social transformation. This is an important background in order to understand the evaluations of urban-ethical projects in recent literature. This book has tried to avoid presenting these divergences in the form of theoretical polemics. Instead, authors have shown different ways for navigating through these force fields.

In doing so, despite and perhaps through these divergences, the authors, nevertheless, suggest a specific approach to the field of urban ethics. It is characterized by a double strategy: ethics was presented in all chapters both as an ‘ordinary,’ immanent practice, an experience, an aspect of world-building *and* type of discourse, apparatus/*dispositif* and regime – or, rather, a series of types. Thus, a range of relevant theories was brought into a pragmatic frame of research. They were treated as potential tools in geographically, socially and politically divergent urban contexts. The advantage of a near-global perspective was that all contributions shared common ground through this double take, however, the respective micro studies sought to move in new directions and (collaboratively) modify the

conceptual and analytical tools within their respective local contexts. They did not adapt a scientifically normative approach in a strong sense of that term. The resulting variety of analyses, therefore, reflects not only (meta-)theoretical divergences but also different (local) discourses on ethics and a *good* life in concrete cities, depending on numerous needs and opportunities. Therefore, historical contexts, political transitions, architectural and infrastructural layers, as well as historically shaped ethnic and cultural inequalities had to be taken into consideration. Doing so required careful empirical research with sources such as policy documents and public representations *and* within the lifeworlds and intersubjective dynamics of and among all sorts of actors, individuals and collective ones – be it through ethnography, policy research or historical analysis.

This kind of research on urban ethics renders visible the effects and implications of practices and discourses that social actors consider ethical. It highlights the power relationships that ‘ethical’ actors activate or challenge. It takes their grievances seriously and, if that is the case, their resistance to power and domination, as well as potential limitations, unintended consequences and complicities of interventions by urban actors through ethical arguments and framings. To return to the earlier point about normativity: in this process, researchers and their research partners ‘in the field’ usually also engaged in discussions about the desirability of the effects and implications of urban-ethical projects for the individuals, groups and larger parts of society involved. This is an almost inevitable aspect of research encounters framed by the methodological ideal of an equal footing between the investigator and the actors in the field. At the same time, the approach of a critical-analytical pragmatism was intended to avoid overly authoritative (e)valuations of urban ethical projects: researchers are themselves enmeshed in power relationships and many stem from ‘white,’ European, (urban) middle-class backgrounds.

This research also has a strong interdisciplinary character. The results presented here, to some extent, reflect theories and approaches from the fields of historiography, political science, social and cultural anthropology, European ethnology/cultural studies, geography, sociology, architecture and urban studies. At the same time, they are also influenced by individual methodical approaches and by self-reflections as scholars in the respective fields working in an interdisciplinary field and group.<sup>1</sup> This constant questioning of being aware of who one is in disciplinary terms, how to approach the research, what responsibilities are entailed by entering vulnerable fields or conflictive settings, helped researchers to move away from the preset meta-perspectives that often shape studies on urban life and governance.

### **Systemic ethicization in contemporary governance**

Urban ethics are negotiated across various scales of socio-spatial life in cities. The chapters of this book have shown that the interest in urban ethics is connected to relational articulations and mediatizations that, despite their differences, exhibit some similar patterns. Building on the earlier work of this research group, we return to sociologist Alexander Bogner’s term (2011) ‘ethicization’: there have been increasing discursive thematizations of urban life in ethical terms and specific

ethical vocabularies, especially in governance contexts, in recent decades. The latter includes not only generic evaluations, such as ‘good’ and ‘ethical,’ but also more specific terms, such as ‘responsible,’ ‘sustainable’ or ‘participatory,’ which interpellate urban citizen-subjects that are (supposed to be) committed to and engaged in bringing about a better city in a nonantagonistic manner. Ethicization and its shifting vocabularies are intertwined with transposing techniques of governance (as they have been analyzed, most prominently, by the followers of Michel Foucault in ‘governmentality studies;’ see Burchell, Gordon and Miller 1991). This ethical governance paradigm in urban policies answers, to some extent, demands for participation by urban social movements, but it also gained attractivity through the work of global or transnational nongovernmental organizations (Moore 2021) and the global circulation of concepts and policies, actualized by heterogeneous configurations of ‘civil society’ – which do not follow a bottom-up paradigm. While a general periodization is difficult and contentious, this ethicization process has become increasingly prominent in many cities at least since the mid-2000s. Some of the chapters in this volume examine discursive and practical processes of ethicization on a ‘systemic’ level. These systemic forms of ethicization, however, must be seen as connected to what Bogner (2011) terms ‘lifeworld’ ethicizations and the realm of ‘ordinary ethics’ (see the introduction): i.e. the ‘subjective’ meanings (and practices) of *good* cities and *good* ways of being an (urban) subject, dweller, visitor or citizen. These tend to be much more varied and contradictory than standardized vocabularies and policy measures.

Studies of urban ethics as ethicization, including some of the chapters of this book, have shown how the ethical register can conceal forms of power. Current vocabularies of ethical governance have been shaped – among other forces – by decades of neoliberalism.<sup>2</sup> ‘Ethical’ urban governance beyond the state, as Swyngedouw (2005) has pointed out early on, fosters new arrangements of participation by private economic actors (capital), representatives of grassroots movements and other parts of civil society that are politically not legitimized through votes. Such networks and models of ethical urban subjecthood gain legitimacy against the backdrop of the perceived or real failures of previous or alternative forms of governance, for example, in the case of widespread corruption or authoritarian bureaucracy. Nevertheless, it remains important to point out that ethical rhetoric can also mask material interests, and ‘ethical’ forms of governance can have a fairly limited purview on the systemic level – most prominently often leaving out questions of economic justice. Powerful actors tend to position and limit ethics to the conduct of individuals’ lives in a self-responsible, self-optimizing often individualistic manner, and encourage members of societies to build consensual arrangements among themselves. Such strategies foster the ‘responsibilization’ of certain kinds of – often privileged – subjects and the abjections of ‘immoral’ others. They tend to hide the limits of supposedly ‘self-evident’ freedoms, and they can work against building collective or communitarian challenges from below.

At the same time, as the chapters have shown, these forms of governance can also trigger new conflicts and provoke specific types of resistance.

They do so partly because ethicization introduces and legitimates specific values and virtues, such as accessibility, self-organization or transparency. Furthermore, the authors of the chapters have shown that, despite some similarities, systemic ‘ethicization’ can have remarkably different effects and implications, depending, among other factors, on the concrete political situation and background or conjuncture. Neoliberalism does not exist in ‘pure’ forms, it blends with other ideologies, with old-fashioned liberalism, with more straightforwardly authoritarian and revanchist-reactionary ideas, and, in other cases, with social-democratic or Christian-socialist traditions. These dynamics of ethicization should be observed without taking recourse to simple ideal types of ethical interpellations in the context of the neoliberal ‘as such.’ Counter-developments to the self-optimizing, self-responsible, individualistic understanding of ethics are present in many cases. Seemingly subaltern actors can, as some of the chapters show, put moral and political pressure on ‘ethicized,’ consensus-oriented forms of governance. The two-pronged analytical approach taken here makes it possible to understand the characteristic ambiguities of ethicization processes better. Ethical concerns are matters of public rhetoric and discourse, and they are also experienced in highly personal ways as inner dilemmas – as matters of ‘ordinary ethics’ (see introduction). They are often presented as beneficial for all city dwellers in public rhetoric, be it from the side of governments or specific interest groups, but they also diverge among (and within) social milieux and according to different backgrounds, positionalities, subjectivities and agendas.

Given this heterogeneity, ethicizations through ‘ethical’ rhetoric and governance in many cases depoliticize urban conflicts. However, they may also lead to radical challenges. In that regard, the perspectives and research results presented here diverge from some of the governmentality studies literature on ethics and ethical subjectivation. Where the latter tend to highlight the functionality of individualizing ethics in neoliberal contexts, the analyses in this volume highlight the connections, resonances (consonant or dissonant) and tensions between different aspects of urban ethics, between different strands of ethicizations. In contrast to overly unitary diagnoses, this research has also shown that the meanings and implications of ethicization can differ quite radically – be it because ethical reflections in real-life situations of contention and social differences can become much messier and more heterogeneous than expected, or in the context of broader shifting balances of power.

The chapters, thus, offered insights on a macro- and microlevel into a variety of configurations of urban ethics. They followed transformations and changes on the individual, societal and government levels regarding key arenas in cities: inhabiting urban space, the urban as a political arena, disputes and resolutions and solidarity in the city. By paying attention to ethics in practice and discourse, we put forth a new research agenda. We hope that these analyses help to inspire further research and actions. Ultimately, questions of urban ethics concern how individuals, groups and societies live – if they live in decent, respectful and supporting environments, in dignity, and protected against poverty, marginalization and exploitation.



## Notes

- 1 While the urban ethics research group itself was interdisciplinary, it did not – for better or worse – comprise researchers with positivist and strictly normative approaches, such as most versions of economics, and philosophy and theology. In that sense, interdisciplinarity was moderate.
- 2 This vocabulary is also a mainstay of the “The New Leipzig Charter,” a declaration of the EU ministers responsible for urban matters in 2020. The charter sets aims such as the transformation of power for the common good, ‘the just city’ and ‘good urban governance’ ([https://www.nationale-stadtentwicklungspolitik.de/NSPWeb/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/the\\_new\\_leipzig\\_charter.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=4](https://www.nationale-stadtentwicklungspolitik.de/NSPWeb/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/the_new_leipzig_charter.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4), accessed January 23, 2023).

## References

- Bogner, A. 2011. *Die Ethisierung von Technikkonflikten: Studien zum Geltungswandel des Dissenses*. 1st ed. Weilerswist: Velbrück Wiss.
- Bourdieu, P. 2011 [1972]. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, W. 2020. Neoliberalism’s scorpion tail. In: W. Callison and Z. Manfredi, eds. *Mutant Neoliberalism: Market Rule and Political Rupture*. New York: Fordham University Press, pp. 39–60.
- Burchell, G., C. Gordon, and P. Miller, eds. 1991. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Dürr, E., Moritz Ege, Johannes Moser, Christoph K. Neumann, and Gordon M. Winder. 2020. Urban ethics: Towards a research agenda on cities, ethics and normativity. *City, Culture and Society*, 20, 100313. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2019.100313>.
- Ege, M. 2018. Urbane Ethiken und das Normative der Urbanität. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag. In: B. Schmidt-Lauber, ed. *Andere Urbanitäten. Zur Pluralität des Städtischen*. Köln, Weimar and Wien: Böhlau (Ethnographie des Alltags, 3), pp. 169–192.
- Ege, M. 2022. Ethisierung als Diagnose und Vorwurf: einige Dilemmata der stadthethnografischen Forschung heute. In: J. Lange and M. Dieterich, eds. *Stadt – Migration – Moral. Analysen zur lokalen Moralisierung der Migration*. Tübingen: TVV (Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde), pp. 167–204.
- Ege, M., and J. Moser. 2021. Introduction: Urban ethics – conflicts over the good and proper life in cities. In: M. Ege and J. Moser, eds. *Urban Ethics. Conflicts about the ‘Good’ and ‘Proper’ Life in Cities*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 3–26.
- Fischer, J.-M. 2020. *Urbane Ethiken und Umweltschutz: Ideale, Praktiken und Aushandlungen um die gute Stadt in Auckland, Aotearoa Neuseeland*. Bielefeld: Transcript (UmweltEthnologie, Band 4).
- Fischer, J.-M., and E. Dürr. 2020. Caring for the “good” city in ethical terms: Graffiti removal in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand. *New Zealand Sociology*, 35(1), 49–69.
- Graeber, D. 2005. Fetishism as social creativity or, fetishes are gods in the process of construction. *Anthropological Theory*, 5(4), 407–438.
- Habit, D. 2019. Gated Bukarest. Wohnraumentwicklungen und die Krise des Urbanen. In: K. Braun, C.-M. Dieterich, J. Moser and C. Schönholz, eds. *Wirtschaften: Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven*. Marburg: Philipps University Marburg, pp. 514–520. Available at: <http://archiv.ub.uni-marburg.de/es/2019/0032> [Accessed April 8, 2021].
- Kaltsa, M. 2019. Urban ethics and dystopia: Is architecture as we know it under strain? In: K. Moraitis and S. T. Rassia, eds. *Urban Ethics under Conditions of Crisis: Politics,*

- Architecture, Landscape Sustainability and Multidisciplinary Engineering*. Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific, pp. 61–79.
- Koutsoumpos, L. 2019. Morality versus ethics in the urban development of Exarcheia. In: K. Moraitis and S. T. Rassia, eds. *Urban Ethics under Conditions of Crisis: Politics, Architecture, Landscape Sustainability and Multidisciplinary Engineering*. Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific, pp. 199–225.
- Lange, J., and M. Dieterich, eds. 2022. *Stadt-Migration-Moral: Analysen zur lokalen Moralisierung der Migration*. Tübingen: TVV, Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde e.V (Untersuchungen des Ludwig-Uhland-Instituts der Universität Tübingen, Band 127).
- Moore, H. 2021. The habitat of the subject: Exploring new forms of the ethical imagination. In: M. Ege and J. Moser, eds. *Urban Ethics: Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities*. London: Routledge, pp. 28–46.
- Moraitis, K., and S. T. Rassia, eds. 2019. *Urban Ethics under Conditions of Crisis: Politics, Architecture, Landscape Sustainability and Multidisciplinary Engineering*. Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific.
- Moser, J. 2018. Protest and social creativity: An art and activist network furthers debate on problems of urban living space. *Narodna umjetnost*, 55(2), 165–177. <https://doi.org/10.15176/vol55no208>.
- Moser, J., and S. Egger, eds. 2019. *The Vulnerable Middle Class?: Strategies of Housing in Prospering Cities*. München: Utz (Münchner ethnographische Schriften). <https://doi.org/10.5282/UBM/EPUB.61625>.
- Mostafavi, M., ed. 2017. *Ethics of the Urban: The City and the Spaces of the Political*. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers.
- Nieswand, B. 2021. Konturen einer Moralsoziologie der Migrationsgesellschaft. *Zeitschrift für Migrationsforschung*, 1(1), 75–95. <https://doi.org/10.48439/ZMF.V1I1.98>.
- Ott, M. 2019. Being and making Berlin: Researching urban ethics in Berlin's spatial transformation processes. In: K. Moraitis and S. T. Rassia, eds. *Urban Ethics under Conditions of Crisis*. World Scientific, pp. 155–178. [https://doi.org/10.1142/9789813141940\\_0007](https://doi.org/10.1142/9789813141940_0007).
- Puig de la Bellacasa, M. 2017. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (Posthumanities, 41).
- Reznikova, O. 2023 *Wut der Fernfahrer: Ethnografie eines sozialen Protests*. Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus Verlag.
- Reznikova, O., and M. Ege. 2019. Moralische Ökonomien vs. ethische Politik? Arbeiter- und Mittelschichtproteste in Moskau. In: K. Braun, C.-M. Dieterich, J. Moser and C. Schönholz, eds. *Wirtschaften: Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven*. Marburg: Philipps University Marburg, pp. 343–354. Available at: <http://archiv.ub.uni-marburg.de/es/2019/0032> [Accessed April 8, 2021].
- Schulz, E. 2018. Begegnungsräume in Tokio. Städtische Vielfalt zwischen Wachstumsprozessen und Entschleunigungsstrategien. In: B. Schmidt-Lauber, ed. *Andere Urbanitäten. Zur Pluralität des Städtischen*. Köln, Weimar and Wien: Böhlau, pp. 33–60.
- Sennett, R. 2018. *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*. London: Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books.
- Strutz, J. 2019. Spiriting away the bad urbanite. From the Topkapı Bus Terminal to the Panorama Museum 1453. In: M. do M. Castro Varela and B. Ülker, eds. *Doing Tolerance: Democracy, Citizenship and Social Protests*. Leverkusen: Barbara Budrich, pp. 136–152.
- Swyngedouw, E. 2005. Governance innovation and the citizen: The Janus-face of governance-beyond-the-state. *Urban Studies*, 42(11), 1–16.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

# Index

Note: Page numbers followed by “n” denote endnotes.

- active citizenship 167, 169, 179, 198, 208
- activism: defined 46; environmental 143; mobility 44–45, 52; and policymaking 47; urban 89
- actor–network theory (ANT) 162n4, 216
- advocacy 47; groups 124; NGO 46; work for refugees 172
- affective labor 173
- African-American slavery 110
- Africanness 100
- Afro-Brazilian: beliefs and practices 98–99; communities 100, 107; cultural assets 107; culture 100, 111; heritage 100, 101; movements 99; solidarity 104
- Ahmed, Sara 139, 146
- air pollution 9
- Alexeev, Andrei 157, 163n11
- Althusser, Louis 197
- ambivalences 167, 170
- analytical pragmatism 215–217
- Anderson, Benedict 18
- Andrade, Oswald de 100, 102, 110
- Andrade Gutierrez 86
- anime pezzentelle 191, 192
- “anime sante del purgatorio” 186
- anthropology 3, 51, 97, 154–155, 167, 215, 217
- Anthropophagic Manifesto 102, 110
- architecture: cohousing 207; collaborative 196–197; ethical function of 196; institutional 2, 9; panoptic 111; Portuguese 107; urban 196
- Arendt, Hannah 110; *On Violence* 110
- Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand: marine spatial planning (MSP) 56–73; political ecology of urban ethics 56–73; urban dwellers 57; urban ethics 59–60
- Auckland Council 62–63, 67
- authoritarian populism 152, 162n1, 162n2
- auto-imperialism 103, 105, 108, 112
- Autoimperialismo* (Moser) 103
- autonomy: desire personal 199; individual 30; state 23
- Badenoch, Kemi 145
- Barbara Giullari 28
- Barnett, Clive 134–135
- Bennett, Gaymon 162n3
- Berlin/Berlin Wall 198; average rent level 201–202; Banking Scandal 202; city administration 201; division 202; fiscal consolidation 202; long-standing restructuring process 204; neighborhood communities 200; neoliberal governance 202; neoliberalization through crisis 202; public housing companies 201; renewal 199; spatial renewal and cultural preservation 205
- Berliner Liegenschaftsfonds* (Berlin Property Fund) 202
- Bicitekas 44, 50
- Biden, Joseph 20–21
- Bio-behavioral Surveillance Survey 118
- Black Lives Matter 142–147, 152
- Blair, Tony 198
- Boccaccio, F. 185
- Bogner, Alexander 217–218
- Bolsonaro, Jair 21–26, 34n4; on COVID-19 pandemic 22; demonstrations against 26; far-right populist

- alliance 23; on state response to pandemic 25
- Boltanski, Luc 146; *On Justification* 146
- Borja, Jordi 81, 91n10
- Bowlby, Sophie 136
- Brazil: *Estado Novo* 102; federalist systems 35n6; national vs. local governments, COVID-19 20–23
- Brazilian Empire 99
- Brenner, Neil 5
- Broudeoux, A. M. 88–89
- ‘Building and Living in Communities’ (Becker) 195
- Butler, Judith 170
- Camerino, Francisco 98
- Canclini, Néstor 101
- capitalism 138, 142, 177, 180
- Cardoso, Rafael 100
- care: ethics of 9, 18–19; ideologies of 24–27; infrastructure of 18
- Carvalho Hosken S.A. 86
- Caselli, Davide 28
- Castells, Manuel 17, 30
- cemetery of Fontanelle 187
- Christian Social Union in Bavaria 173, 181n8
- civic/community engagement 205
- Clarke, John 205
- Clarke, N. 135
- class and culture boundaries 176
- Clifford, James 162n3
- Cockburn, Bruce 142
- collaboration: ethical interpellations 152–154; impossibility of 152–162; and loneliness 158–160; in methodology 154–156; solidarity and 154–156
- collaborative housing 12, 195, 208
- collaborative research 154–155
- Collier, Stephen J. 6
- commercial sex work 116, 118
- Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities* Report 145
- Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels) 83
- community-oriented: Berliners 205; urban ethical subject 197
- community production 195–209; ethical conjunctures 195–197; good Berliner 198–209
- concept: outbidding cash 206; procedure 206
- conflict: and conflictual planning 82–85; emergence/affirmation of new collective agents 85–89; plan and 85–89
- conflictual planning 10; in the Olympic City 79–90; in Rio de Janeiro 79–90
- conjunctural analysis 197, 199–200, 205
- conjunctural qualities 203
- conjunctural significance 152
- conjuncture, defined 197
- contingencies of everyday ethics 146–147
- corruption 6; in vaccine supply 25–26
- COVID-19 pandemic 8–9, 11, 33, 108, 133, 134–135, 143–144, 185; crisis of governance 33; ethics and politics in 142–146; in Europe 190; governance and health crisis 17; infrastructure of care 18; national vs. local governments in conflict 20–24
- Criminal Code of Georgia 118
- crisis management directives 35n8
- crisis of governance 33
- Critchley, Simon 170
- critique of science and universal ethics 155
- cultural resource 12, 134, 187
- cultural studies 3, 97, 100, 110, 152, 154, 217
- Curatio International Foundation 121
- Dagnino, Evelina 142
- The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jacobs) 4
- Decamerone* (Boccaccio) 185
- Dekanoidze, Tamar 119
- democracy: racial 98–99, 111; secular 180
- democratization 45
- destructive imperialism 106
- DeVault, Marjorie L. 155
- dialectics 156–158
- Diepgen, Eberhart 202
- di Gianni, Luigi 186
- Diniz, Nelson 103
- displacement 89, 108, 110, 145
- diverse ethicalities 9, 60, 70–71
- Docas Dom Pedro II 106
- Dom Pedro II, Brazilian Emperor 105
- do Patrocínio, José Carlos 106
- dos Prazeres, Heitor 100
- dos Santos, Paulo Roberto 109

- Draghi, Mario 140
- economic reductionism 157
- Ege, Moritz 59, 174–175
- emergency initiatives 157
- emergent ethics: and pandemic politics 133–147; of separation 135–137; of solidarity 135–137; of stewardship 70–73
- empathetic relationships 158
- Engels, F. 83; *Communist Manifesto* 83
- environmental activism 143
- epistemological advantage 156
- Eribon, Didier 164n14
- esseccatura 189
- ethical bases, and mobility activists 45
- ethical conjunctures 195–197
- ethical deliberations 3–5; political decision-making 5
- ethical hegemony 2
- ethical interpellations: in/of field research 152–154
- ethicalities 58, 59–61, 70; diverse 9, 60, 70–71
- ethical methodology 163n7, 164n15
- ethical nature-culture relations 59–61
- ethical normativity 215–217
- ethical projects 7
- ethical subject, becoming 179–181
- ethical subjectivation 168–170
- ethical vocabulary 152
- ethicization 1–2, 217
- ethics: described 170; of dwelling 6–7; everyday 146–147; hegemonic 51; importance of 2; of indifference 4; ordinary 2, 7, 42; in the pandemic 142–146; urban 97–105; of urbanism 4
- ethics of care 9, 18–19; and urban scale 27–31
- ethnographic writing 162n3
- ethnography 153; ethical 154; politically correct 154; reflexive 156; solidarity in 153; urban 155
- ethopolitical reasoning 197
- ethopolitics 12
- European Union 173; asylum policies of 179; external borders 153
- Everard, Sarah 143
- everyday ethics 146–147
- ‘experimental utopia’ 79
- Extinction Rebellion 143
- Fassin, Didier 134, 142, 146, 154
- federal governments 20; financial burden of pandemic 27; and Southern California initiative 27–28
- federalism 22, 24, 25, 28
- federalism 22, 24, 25, 28
- female sex workers (FSWs) 116–118, 120, 125–126
- feminist: critique of universal ethics 155; epistemological critique 155; epistemology 155; ethics 155; methodology 154–156
- FIFA Confederations Cup (2013) 80
- 5th World Urban Forum of 2010 80
- Fischer, Jeannine-Madeleine 64
- Fischer, R. 83, 91n7
- Floyd, George 143–144
- force of equality 185
- Forn, Manuel de 81, 91n10
- Fortier, Anne-Marie 141; *Uncertain Citizens* 141
- Foucault, Michel 2, 7, 12, 170, 205
- Freud, Sigmund 188
- Fromm, Erich 159
- Gabiani, Anzor 121; *The Social Face of Women Delinquents and Prostitutes* 121
- Gama, Luís 106
- Gennaro, S. 190
- geography 3, 215, 217; moral 108
- Georgia: Administrative Offences Code of 118–120; concept and compatibility to 123–126; population of rural settlements in 116–117; restorative justice in 116–128
- Georgian Administrative Procedure Code 128
- Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA) 119, 126, 127
- German Research Council (DFG) 3
- Gilbert, Jeremy 197
- Gilligan, Carol 18, 162n5
- Global North 7
- Global South 7, 82
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang 185
- good governance 10, 43, 46
- Gorbachev, Mikhail 129n5
- Gotsadze, George 121
- governance: crisis of 33; defined 43; good 43; and health crisis 17
- governance flows 42–46; defined 39; urban 42–43; urban mobility 39–53

- Graham, Maria 98  
 Gramsci, Antonio 146–147, 157, 197  
*Grazia e numeri* (di Gianni) 186  
 guardianship *see kaitiakitanga*  
 Guterman, B. 89
- Hall, Sarah 141  
 Hall, Stuart 147, 197, 209  
 Hamann, U. 182n13  
 Haraway, Donna 155, 162n5  
 Harding, Sandra 155  
 Harris, John 138  
 Hart Island Project 191–192  
 Hauraki Gulf Forum (HGF) 63  
 Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act of 2000 63  
 Hauraki Gulf Tīkapa Moana: Auckland Council 62–63; as diverse urban ethical field 61–66; emergent ethics of stewardship for 70–73; environmental state of 57; restoration of *mauri* 69; and SCTTTP 59  
 hegemonic ethics 51  
 Hertz, Robert 188, 193n6  
 Hess, Sabine 154, 162n3  
*History in Person* (Holland and Lave) 146  
 Holland, Dorothy 134, 146; *History in Person* 146  
 Holston, James 82  
 Hunt, Melinda 191  
 Huyssen, Andreas 104
- ‘ideal of justice’ 79  
 “Il culto delle aneme pezzentelle” 186  
 imagined communities 18  
 imperialism: auto-imperialism 103, 105, 108, 112; destructive 106  
 imponderabilia of daily life 190  
 India: federalist systems 35n6; national vs. local governments, COVID-19 20  
 individual freedom, enactment of 199  
 Informational Medical Psychological Centre Tanadgoma 118  
 infrastructure of care 18  
 Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) 44, 48  
 Insulate Britain movement 143  
 insurgent urbanism 82  
 International Olympic Committee 81, 88  
 interpersonal relationships 158, 159, 160  
 Istanbul Convention 125  
*Italian Journey* (Goethe) 185
- Jacobs, Jane 4, 43; *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* 4  
 Jeggle, Utz 163n6  
 Jupp, Eleanor 136
- kaitiakitanga* 71; defined 65; and Māori 65–66, 69  
 Karakayali, A. 182n13  
 Keane, Webb 6  
*Kiwi Guardians* program 63  
*Klein* 129n6  
 Kobra, Eduardo 99  
 ‘Konjunktur’ 195
- Labor Code of Georgia 117  
 Laiber, P. 89  
 Lakoff, Andrew 6  
 Lambek, Michael 133–134  
 Laquer, Thomas 190  
 Latin America: corruption in vaccine supply 25–26; urbanism 101  
 Latour, B. 154  
 Lave, Jean 134, 146; *History in Person* 146  
 Lebuhn, Henrik 202–203, 207, 209n5, 209n6  
 legal situation of sex workers in Tbilisi 116–120  
*Lettere di una tarantata* (Rossi) 189  
 Lewis, J. 126  
 LGBTQ 124  
 liberalism 180, 214, 219  
 liberties 11, 137–140  
*Liga Peatonal* (Pedestrian League) 49  
 Lipset, Seymour Martin 84  
 live-in-common 196  
 livelihoods 11, 19, 29, 33, 137–140  
 Lobo, Adriana 44–45  
 loculi, defined 189  
 Lomnitz, Claudio 6  
 loneliness 158–160, 173  
 López Obrador, Andrés Manuel 20–21  
 Lyman, Stanford M. 146
- Makey, Leane 64  
*The Making of English Working Class* (Thompson) 85  
 Malinowski, Bronislaw 187  
*mana whenua* (local tribes and authority) 69  
 Manual for Participation 199, 200, 204, 205–206

- Māori 9, 61, 63–73; *ahu moana* 70; and *kaitiakitanga* 65–66, 69; ontology 64
- Marcus, George E. 162n3
- marine spatial planning (MSP): Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand 56–73; technocratic processes of 57
- marine stewardship: political ecology of urban ethics 56–73; and SCTTTP 58, 66–70; urban ethics of 58
- Marsili, Lorenzo 140
- Marx, K. 83, 84; *Communist Manifesto* 83
- Marxist methodological debate 157
- Massey, Doreen 209
- Melikishvili, L.: *The Social Face of Women Delinquents and Prostitutes* 121
- mentoring 181n1; processes of (urban-) ethical subjectivations and 168–170; voluntary 167–181; *see also* voluntary mentoring
- mentorships 167–168, 174–176
- methodology 157, 163n11; collaboration in 154–156; in cultural studies 154; debate 156–157; ethical 163n7, 164n15; feminist 154–156; political 163n7
- Mexico: federalist systems 35n6; national vs. local governments, COVID-19 20
- Mexico City: Bus Rapid Transit system 45; “Hoy no circula” 44; Mission: Zero 49–51; mobility activism 44–45; mobility governance 39, 43; motorized traffic 44; ‘Move on a bike’ 40–41; safe cycling to school 47–49
- middle-class mentors 178
- Mignolo, Walter 103
- Military World Games (2011) 85
- Miraftab, Faranak 82, 88, 90
- mobility activism 44–45
- Modi, Narendra 20–21, 32
- Moore, Henrietta 170
- moral economies 213–215
- moral geography 108
- Moreira, Clarissa da Costa 103
- Moser, Benjamin 103, 105; *Autoimperialismo* 103
- Moser, Johannes 59, 174
- Mozzana, Carlotta 28
- Muehlebach, Andrea 137, 173
- Müller, Michael 204, 208
- Munich Refugee Council 168, 169, 173
- Naples: anime pezzentelle 191; Mediterranean segmentary society of 190; plague 185–186
- narcissistic reflexivity 156
- National Council of Cities 84
- National Institute of Health 20
- neighborhood communities 200
- new collective agents: affirmation of 85–89; emergence of 85–89
- New World 106
- New York Times* 191
- non-governmental organizations (NGOs) 39, 41, 43–45, 47, 58, 63, 116
- non-repressive ethico-political strategies/tactics 179
- ‘not in my back yard’ (NIMBY) agenda 152
- “Not in the Mood” (Ahmed) 139
- Odebrecht 86, 90n3
- Okri, Ben 143
- Old World 106
- Olympic and Paralympic Games (2016) 85
- Olympic urbanism 86
- On Justification* (Boltanski and Thévenot) 146
- On Violence* (Arendt) 110
- The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Popper) 4
- ordinary ethics 2, 7, 42
- ordinary people 152–153
- Pan American Games (2007) 80, 85
- Panuku Development 63
- Parker, Martin 140
- parochial adherence 189
- Parsons, T. 84
- participatory planning 12
- Partido Revolucionario Institucional 45
- Passos, Pereira 106
- Patenschaften* 171
- paternalism 100, 178
- people working in the sex industry (PWSI) 124, 126, 128
- physical death 188
- plague 12, 185–187
- plan/planning: and the conflict 85–89; emergence and affirmation of new collective agents 85–89



- Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Bill 145
- Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 143
- political becomings 9, 39; foundations of 51–53
- political ecology of urban ethics 56–73
- political methodology 163n7
- politics: of liberties 137–140; of livelihoods 137–140; of lives 137–140; in the pandemic 142–146
- Pope Francis 80
- Popper, Karl 4; *The Open Society and Its Enemies* 4
- Porto Maravilha* project 81, 96, 97, 99, 101
- Povinelli, Elizabeth 141
- power imbalance in charity relationships 170
- power-sensitive approach 178
- “Prepared to Care? Knowledge and welfare in a time of emergency” 28
- prostitution 118; and sex work 118–119; in Tbilisi 10, 116–128
- protective factors 172
- Puig de la Bellacasa, María 2, 51, 60–61
- Rabinow, Paul 162n3
- racial democracy 98–99, 111
- Rancière, Jacques 146
- Rashford, Marcus 136
- Rebouças, André 106
- Reckwitz, Andreas 180
- reflexive ethnography 156
- refugees: crisis 168, 180; research on 169–170; volunteers and 167
- regime of living 6, 200
- Reinharz, Shulamit 155
- relationships 158–159, 161; -building against isolation 171–175; empathetic 158; interpersonal 158, 159, 160; social 160; strategic 158
- Renzikowski, J. 117
- resilience theory 172
- restorative justice 10; concept and compatibility to Georgia after 1991 123–126; in Georgia 116–128; and sex work 123–126
- Rheingantz, Paulo 101
- Riedner, Lisa 155, 162n3, 163n7
- Riis, Jacob A. 182n14
- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 10; conflict and conflictual planning 82–85; conflictual planning in 79–90; emergence and affirmation of new collective agents 85–89; plan and the conflict 85–89; ‘Valongo Complex’ 10
- Rio de Janeiro Observatory of Urban Conflict 82
- ritual efficiency 187
- ritual practices 6
- rituals in mentorships 167
- Rose, D. B. 59–60
- Rose, Nikolas 198–200
- Rossi, Annabelle 189
- Rousseff, Dilma 81
- Roy, Arundhati 140
- Rusetski, Sophio 123
- Saakashvili, Michel 122
- Sadik-Khan, Janette 4; *Streetfight* 4
- Saint-Hilaire, Auguste de 96
- ‘Salt Rock’ (*Pedra do Sal*) 107
- Sánchez, F. 88, 89
- San Pietro ad Aram 193n2
- Santos, Milton 101
- Save Me Munich* 169, 171, 173, 175, 181n5
- Schwertl, Maria 162n3
- Scott, James 17
- Scott, Marvin B. 146
- Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari (SCTTTP) 57–61, 66–70
- secular democracy 180
- Seidman, Dov 31
- Senate Human Rights Commission 87
- Sennett, Richard 4
- separation, emergent ethics of 135–137
- sex work: as administrative offense 117; commercial 116–117; criminalization, in Tbilisi 116–120; emergence, in Tbilisi 117–118; and prostitution 118–119; and restorative justice 123–126; societal attitudes to 117–118; stigmatized nature of 116
- sex workers: legal situation of 116–120; stigmatization of, as social practice 121–123
- Shevardnadze, Eduard 129n5
- ‘The Shevardnadze years’ 129n5
- Simmel, Georg 84
- slavery 96–102; abolition of 107, 146; African-American 110; softer 96; and transatlantic slave trade 101–102; traumatic experiences of 100
- S.M. vs. Parliament of Georgia* 125

- Soccer World Cup (2014) 85  
 social creativity 6, 206, 213–215  
 social death 188  
 Social Democratic Party (SPD) 198  
*The Social Face of Women Delinquents and Prostitutes* (Gabiani and Melikishvili) 121  
 social isolation 181–182n10  
 social practice: stigmatization of sex workers as 121–123  
 social relationships 160  
*Social Service of Catholic Women in Munich* 168–169, 171, 172, 174, 175, 177  
 societal immunity 36n13  
 society, described 187  
 sociocultural differences 175–179  
 socio-spatial entity 200  
 solidarity: in the city 8; collaboration and 154–156; dialectics and 156–158; emergent ethics of 135–137  
 Solomonow, Seth 4; *Streetfight* 4  
 Solovey, Vanya 163n8  
 Southern California initiative 27–28  
 Soviet Union 117, 130n20  
 space of flows 17  
 Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) 67–68  
 starry-eyed idealizing 158  
 Stevenson, Robert Louis 187  
 stewardship 57, 70–71; emergent ethics of 70–73; environmental 58; ethics of 58; Euro-Western norm of 62, 66; institutional 66  
 stigmatization of sex workers as social practice 121–123  
 strategic relationship 158  
*Streetfight* (Sadik-Khan and Solomonow) 4  
 subsidiarity concept 34n1  
 Swyngedouw, E. 218  
 systemic ethicization 217–219
- Tanaka, Giselle 82, 90n2, 91n5  
 Tbilisi, Georgia: criminalization of sex work in 116–120; legal situation of sex workers 116–120; prostitution in 116–128; restorative justice 123–126; stigmatization of sex workers as social practice 121–123  
 technologies of the self 2  
 Technologies Urbanes S.A. 80  
*Teilhabe* 173  
 Temkina, A. 155  
 temporality 88, 141
- theoretical divergences 215–217  
 Thévenot, Laurent 146; *On Justification* 146  
 thinking conjuncturally 197, 208–209  
 Thompson, Edward Palmer 85, 157; *The Making of English Working Class* 85  
*Time Out London* magazine 107  
 TINA (There Is No Alternative) argument 204  
 Tonkiss, Fran 4  
*Totem and Taboo* (Freud) 188  
 transatlantic slave trade 101–102  
 trans-scalar relationships 6  
 Treaty of Waitangi of 1840 65  
 Trouillot, Michel-Rolph 111  
 Trump, Donald 20–24; claim on pandemic being a hoax 25; *laissez faire* approach to pandemic 22  
 Tupinambá Indians 102
- Uncertain Citizens* (Fortier) 141  
 UNESCO World Heritage Committee 96  
 UN-HABITAT 80  
 United Nations (UN) 1, 62, 80, 87  
 United Nations Commission on International Trade Law 91n8  
 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) 80  
 United Nations Law of the Sea of 1982 62  
 United States: federalism 22; infrastructure bill 26; market vs. state solutions, relative power of 25; national vs. local governments, COVID-19 20–24  
 urban coasts 56, 73  
 urban condition 1, 7–8  
 urban design 4, 43–44, 48  
 urban ethics 5, 42, 59–61, 97–105, 192; contestations 3–5; ethical deliberations 3–5; mapping 8–13; moral economies in 213–215; political ecology of 56–73; as research agenda 213–219; researching 1–13; social creativity 213–215; subjectivations 168–170; systemic ethicization 217–219; urban condition 7–8  
*Urban Ethics – Conflicts over the Good and Proper Life in Cities* (Ege and Moser) 59  
 Urban Ethics Research Group 39, 97  
 urban governance flows 42–43

- urbanism: insurgent 82; Olympic 86
- urban mobility: ethnographic vignettes of 46–51; governance flows 39–53; overview 40
- urban mobilizations 11
- urbanophagy 10, 101–102; as analytical framework 97–105
- urban planning decisions 30
- urban regime 34n2
- urban scale, and ethics of care 27–31
- urban social fabric 179–181
- urban sovereignty: conceptual foundations 16–19; empirical foundations 16–19; ethics of care 27–31; ideologies of care 24–27; importance of 32; national vs. local governments, COVID-19 20–24; overview 16–19; theoretical foundations 16–19
- urban spaces 10; inhabiting 8, 12
- Ury, W. 83, 91n7
- ‘Valongo Complex’ (*Complexo do Valongo*): overview 96–97; transforming 105–110; urban ethics 97–105; urbanophagy as analytical framework 97–105
- Valongo Wharf excavation 96, 98
- Vargas, Getúlio 99
- Vila Autódromo 79–90; Fishermen and Residents Association 79, 85, 90; People’s Plan 80, 85
- Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo 102
- voluntary engagement 173
- voluntary mentoring 11, 167–181; becoming an ethical subject 179–181; overview 167–168; processes of (urban-)ethical subjectivations 168–170; relationship-building against isolation 171–175; sociocultural differences 175–179; urban social fabric 179–181
- volunteers: children of parents with mental illness and 167; refugees and 167; unpaid labor and 169
- Waikato Regional Council 62
- Washington Post* 190
- Williams, Raymond 133, 137, 142
- Workers’ Party 84
- World Bank 83
- World Resources Institute 44
- writing culture debate 154
- XXVIII World Youth Day 2013 80
- Zdravomyslova, E. 155
- Zigon, Jarrett 6–7, 51, 61, 64