Dear Colleagues,

The first edition of this newsletter is a significant milestone for RN37, representing a continuation of the process that began at the Berlin mid-term conference last October. The sociological community has recognized the importance of providing opportunities for both junior and senior members to exchange ideas and increase their visibility. As you can see from the diverse contents, this goal has been expressed in a variety of ways, including theoretical reflections, research reports, PhD projects, and updates on book publications. I would like to express my gratitude to colleagues from the Jagiellonian University of Krakow, the University of Wroclaw, and the Urban Sociology Network of the Polish Sociological Association, who contributed to the newsletter. I would also like to extend a special thanks to Katarzyna and Niccolò, whose tireless efforts made this newsletter possible.

Gabriele Manella (RN37 Board Coordinator)

We are delighted to present the first edition of this newsletter. It was no small task given our busy schedules filled with assignments, deadlines, research, and teaching. Nevertheless, we believe it is a necessary undertaking. While not essential, it is important. Why? In our current academic climate, the mantra "publish or perish" has become increasingly crucial. Consequently, new publications are released every minute, and despite the numerous opportunities to keep up on of these new articles, we are unable to remain as up-to-date as we desire. This creates a disadvantage, particularly for young researchers who have less visibility than established, well-known researchers.

This newsletter has two objectives: firstly, to disseminate new articles, books, PhD projects, and funded research programs that deal with contemporary urban challenges, especially those undertaken by young researchers; and secondly, to provide a platform that can activate the participation of our network. Every year, we aim to appoint new editors and select topics that give voice to the various perspectives that exist within our network. As previously stated, we believe this challenge is worth pursuing. We have initiated this venture, and we hope that in the future, others can take the newsletter to the next level.

This would be the best indication that this challenge is genuinely a collective one. Enjoy!

Niccolò Morelli and Katarzyna Kajdanek (Newsletter Editors, RN37 Board Members)
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Hello from Wrocław!

This issue of the ESA RN37 Newsletter is hosted by the Unit of Urban and Rural Sociology at the Institute of Sociology. My name is Mateusz Błaszczyk and I work as an Associate Professor, Chair of the Department and Dean for Scientific Affairs at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

In the Unit for Urban and Rural Sociology, we are a dynamic research group focused on broadening the knowledge of current transformations of urban and rural areas in Central Eastern Europe in a comparative perspective. Katarzyna Kajdanek, vice-coordinator of the network is one of member of our staff. We are experts in methods of social research (qualitative and quantitative), and we are up-to-date with current theoretical debates in the fields of urban and rural studies. Members of our research team are experts in the following areas:

- Economy of cities in late modernity and postmodernity
- Housing estates, urban renewal and gentrification process
- New urban social problems
- Concurring urbanization in a comparative perspective
- Agriculture and multifunctional development in rural areas

We have conducted many research projects in cooperation with local municipalities:
Evaluation of social impacts of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016 
https://www.repozytorium.uni.wroc.pl/dlibra/publication/94512/edition/89119,
and Social Diagnosis of Wrocław  
https://www.repozytorium.uni.wroc.pl/publication/94542, and we are open collaboration with academic institutions and business entities from EU and outside EU.

Currently, our research focus is on the project: "SOR-WAR. Resilience of social order during war in Ukraine. Experiences from Ukraine and Poland", a National Agency for Academic Exchange intervention grant. The proposed research focuses on the transformation of social order in Ukraine in the context of war. The study focuses on the phenomena of social self-organization as a fundamental aspect in the processes of developing local community resilience. The primary focus is on identifying the relationship between 1) social order established by spontaneous, spontaneous activities and self-organization and 2) the order of institutions governing the operation of local communities.

We welcome academic staff members to use Erasmus+ scheme and visit us for teaching exchange!

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Performing solidarity with refugees from Ukraine: caring practices as collective urban accomplishments (Marta Smagacz-Poziemska, Andrzej Bukowski, Jagiellonian University in Cracow)

After Russian invasion in Ukraine in February 2022, and still under pandemic restrictions and the lockdown in people’s mind, we could see an exceptional mobilization of local communities in Poland. New forms of humanitarian help – due to its scale called by US ambassador “humanitarian superpower” (Ptak 2022a) - have been emerging in the face of the massive flows of the war refugees from Ukraine. Urban public spaces, still remembered as emptied spaces during the lockdowns, got crowded. Local communities, organisations and pop-up groups provided various forms of aid: offering financial support, transport and accommodation, preparing meals, buying food and other utility goods and caring for frightened people. In that time everything we were observing in Krakow and in other Polish cities was unprecedented in many ways, but there were entanglements of humanitarian help, dynamics of urban everyday life and changes of urban materiality that we found particularly interesting.

Based on our ethnographic work and theoretical approach that we had applied in our previous research on caring practices in urban neighbourhoods (Bukowski, Smagacz-Poziemska 2022) we tried to grasp these processes using the lens of social practice theory [SPT] (Schatzki 2002) and the concept of collective knowledgeable accomplishments (Gherardi, Rodeschini 2016). We were following everyday life situations, observing media, collecting a variety of qualitative and quantitative data. We also asked the students from the Institute of Sociology who were engaged in voluntary work in various formal and informal groups to register their experiences and observations. Their reports and thoughts they shared with us immensely enriched our understanding of the process.

Ethnography and nethnography in Krakow evidence that materiality - objects, technologies, and infrastructures - is of great importance for redoing and reconnecting caring practices.

Things and knowledge on how to use or re-use materials were experimented and rearranged. Caring was performed collectively by hands-on improvements and rearrangements. It was supported by general understanding of “humanitarian crisis” and solidarity with refugees, and mediated by documentation in mass media and social media. Variety of practices' components (humans, things, infrastructures and technologies) were inscribed in a texture of everyday urban life.

Experimentation based on fossilised skills – for example knowing how to operate in limited space, get thousands of things together, or how to address help in just a way transformed into orchestration of mutual, shared help, pop-up initiatives and innovative solutions. Something that seemed impossible in urban space several days earlier, has became a fact: the train station, a shopping mall, the hospital out of service were rearranged into refugee’s centres or places to store up the things.
Research on caring practices in urban realms confirms that theory of social practise sensitises to entanglements of behavioural, material and discursive aspects of performing care in extraordinary and site-specific context. It also provides the set of methods and tools to search complex, fluid and dynamic phenomena.

The theoretical lessons from our research are the following: (1) posthumanist perspective doesn't limit agency to humans and includes non-humans (animals, things, infrastructures, technologies) as co-creators of social order; (2) "caring" emerges as a complex, relational, ambiguous and situated practice; (4) inclusion of non-human agents into analysis let us see unintended and unexpected consequences of everyday performances; (5) some ethical questions however remain still open: to be actively involved vs to be an observer (researcher); being inside the problem vs staying outside, reacting spontaneously vs following procedures.

We thank to the students for their work (ethnography, nethnography, photos): Aleksandra Górska, Aleksandra Reguła, Katarzyna Januś, Aleksandra Zątek, Wiktoria Ołdakowska, Gabriela Gregorczyk, Justyna Król, Martyna Lichoń, Gabriela Zając, Paulina Zdyb, Dominika Dziasek, Gabriela Kaduszkiewicz, Karolina Kozdrój, Elżbieta Sula. Photos 1 and 3: Bogusław Świerżowski / kraków.pl

Bibliography:
Ptak A. (2022a) US ambassador calls Poland "humanitarian superpower" for response to Ukraine crisis | Notes From Poland
Ptak A. (2022b), 77% of Poles involved in helping Ukraine refugees, spending €2 billion, finds study | Notes From Poland
Insights from Poland

Congress of Urban Movements: the right to the city in practice (Marta Jaskulska, Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz and Urban Sociology Network of Polish Sociological Association)

The Congress of Urban Movements (KRM) is a federation of 50 organisations representing over 20 cities in Poland. The objective of the KRM is to work for a liveable, green, democratically controlled, and equitable city. KRM focuses its public-sector operations on the common good and the implementation of the right to the city in Polish cities' everyday practises and policies. KRM brings progressive ideas and themes to the public debate, emphasising the need of equality and justice in cities. KRM has been successful in launching work on the National Urban Policy, actively reforming spatial planning, and developing the potential of urban movements in Poland.

KRM is political, yet it is not partisan or ideologically involved. It is independent of government, political parties, business, religion, and other institutions, organizations, or interest groups. It is solely reliant on its member organisations. The organisations that comprise KRM retain their independence, and their primary focus is on the local level. KRM is political in the sense that it acts in the public realm for the greater good, and we accept responsibility for Polish cities. It manifests itself in the election of delegates from KRM member and affiliated organisations as local committees in municipal elections. It's not about power; it's a tool for tackling urban problems. The core values, KRM's DNA is called "Urban Theses". It is a manifesto setting directions for action, and at the same time a moral compass for activists and organizations operating in the KRM. The Urban Theses are 15 ordinary theses and 5 extraordinary theses. These extraordinary are a response to current problems or challenges for cities.

KRM's mission is to formulate, lobby for, and execute legal rules, national, regional, and local policies, procedures, and practises that are advantageous to the long-term growth of cities. This goal entails the following: 1. the need for a strong, public RESPONSE to proposed legal acts, political initiatives, and other activities of central, regional, and local governments that are relevant to urban policies; 2. the need to prepare an independent DIAGNOSIS of what is happening in Polish cities; and 3. the need for KRM to independently CREATE proposals for legal solutions, sectoral policies, procedures, institutions, strategies, and so on.

KRM works on three levels:
1. local communities, residents, activists, informal groupings, and social organisations – organisational and substantive support, training, legal assistance, legislative initiative, and so on.
2. Participation in dialogues, legislative initiative, motivating new actions and policies, development of strategic studies and documents
3. National level - public consultations, petitions, involvement in expert teams and advisory bodies' activities.

If you want to know more, to support or join us, visit:
Recollections: ESA RN37 Midterm Conference in Berlin

unruly stories: the sensation of sustainability in a more-than-human world (Marvin Heine, University of Vienna)

Posthuman Landscapes
Shining like pale-green, mauve-colored coral-reefs, crisscrossing webworks of lichen curl over the tarnished tombstone in front of me. The sky is dark-blue. It is winter, it is cold and frost weaves filigreed arrangements over the mosses and weeds and shrubs of this graveyard’s thicket undergrowth. Standing motionless on the crunching, elastic ground, I imagine how it must feel to touch the almost-frozen earth, imagine those ungraspable fungal networks underneath, behind the reach of human sight, imagine how they entwine and connect and interlace the many layers of soil. In this stillness I hear a humming silence and I know that countless creatures - foxes, deers, squirrels, hedgehogs, woodpeckers, falcons, field-mice and a multitude of other feral animals - are also listening, are listening to me listening, are waiting for me to go on. I stay, though, and try to grasp the vastness of this place’s interconnectedness, the myriad layers of dead humans feeding the humus underneath, giving rise to new lives, to (hi)stories, to cycles and rhythms of entangled becomings. This cemetery is, per definition, a ‘post-human’ landscape, a landscape in which I am only a guest. Its strata are vertically layered bio-geographies, their soil composited from thick concentrations of organic material, bacteria, mycorrhiza and the residual components of human bodies such as formaldehyde or mercury. In places like these, abundant with life and possibilities for human and more-than-human inter-relations, situated in the midst of an all-too-human metropolis, I sense a fragile, complex and sticky assemblage of storied landscapes of which I am messily a part of: „These are stories of the becoming of bodies, matter, textures and light (…), stories of spaces, surfaces and sensations narrated through patterns of contact and non-contact“ (Hawkins 2020, 8).

Damaged Worlds
Yet, within city-scapes, this cemetery is one of those rare lacunas, a marginalized landscape for precarious entanglements, an unintentional protection zone for non-human life-forms. Where the strata beneath this cemetery’s frozen ground are complex medleys of diversity, everywhere else in this city the soil underneath is an essentially abiotic concoction made from construction-debris. Fungi have a hard time to do their thing in these environments and the carelessly caged trees do not flourish well here.

Picture 1. Dead albatross by Chris Jordan
Un-domesticated animals either adapt to the metabolism of human-made urban culture past all recognition, or they 'haunt' our cities, find themselves perilous niches and live fragile, risky ways of life. Feral animals in the city are, as Jennifer Wolch argues, "strange persons", similar to outsider human groups (2002, 728). And it is no secret that humans themselves (and, after all, more than half of the world's population now lives in cities) are exposed to environmentally and socially vulnerable conditions which pressure the affected individuals into unhealthy and problematic states of existence. The contemporary city, prometheus' flame, is the culmination of modernity's reckless attempt to separate 'culture' from 'nature', the 'human subject' from every other 'object', thereby transforming, eliminating, or replacing "its earth-bound aspects, covering the natural site with an artificial environment that enhances the dominance of man and encourages an illusion of complete independence from nature" (Mumford 1956, 386). Contemporary urban life and its conceptual hyperseparation from 'nature' is increasingly driving climate change to ever-more critical conditions: "We have written ourselves into the DNA of this planet, laced human history into the very earth" (Flynn 2021, 13). Global warming has risen by 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial times and sea levels by 20 cm. Ocean currents are slowing down, ice-caps are melting, extreme weather events are increasingly frequent and destructive, and the current rate of biological extinction is several hundred times greater than under 'normal' conditions. Earth's ecosystems, which are hazardously affected by urban life, are about to have hazardous effects on urban life.

**Unruly Stories**

Ecological informations like those mentioned above, and the way we communicate them, sediment, as stories, into histories, which in turn shape the way we sense the present and imagine the future. We construct our sensory capacities, our world-views, our (dis)respect for the more-than-human world, our hopes and our fears based on such narratives. And in regard to catastrophic environmental developments we have to anticipate, that, as Hannah Arendt emphasizes, "factual truths are never compellingly true. (...) Facts need testimony to be remembered and trustworthy witnesses to be established" (1972, 6). But, even though entire landscapes change so fast as to become wholly uninhabitable in only a few years for species that lived there for hundreds of centuries, the change happens too slow as to be detectable by the human senses. Humans, therefore, react to these stories mostly with a trained and cultivated 'blasé' attitude, particular brands of 'climate-fiction' in the popular industry, or, in the worst case, with resignation and self-indulgent narratives of apocalypse. A recent poll from North America, in this regard, found that "half (51%) of voters under 35 believe it is at least somewhat likely humanity will be wiped out in the next decade or so" (Harper 2019). These are stories of indifference, indifference towards the fate of our own descendants, even towards our own acute and immediate future on this planet. Often enough, these stories tell a tale of inevitable mass-extinction, which is, supposedly, okay, because life on this planet will, over millions of years, recover. These are stories which are told by humans, in utter disregard for the world-building, more-than-human narratives which are enacted by each and every single earthling around us: "It is not just human subjects who socially and collectively construct their world but (...) animal subjects may do so too. The animal constructs are likely to be markedly different from ours but may be no less real" (Noske 1989, 157). Among these palimpsestious multi-species polyphonies of voices, noises and silences which are the city, it "matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; (...) It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories." (Haraway 2016, 12).
Ripples of Care

The contemporary city, as a vibrating multispecies assemblage, is, thus, the processual effect of storied and fragile networks made from human and more-than-human entanglements which "are constantly in flux, interacting with each other, and exchanging their properties" (Farias & Blok 2017, 562). Urban culture, intentionally or not, creates divisions between the human and everything else, gives rise to disconnecting gestures which ripple forth across the countless interpenetrating layers that make up the city. If we want to be 'good ancestors', we must find new narratives and kinder stories which embrace reciprocity and the co-evolving of animals, trees, rhythms, places, atmospheres and the acknowledgement that "human is not a finished project, but a being that is constantly becoming (something else) through its relationships with the world and its inhabitants" (Lee et al. 2014, 111). Those webs that are woven, those always-already contaminated ontologies of more-than-human cityscapes arise "as storied landscapes, remembered, reinterpreted, and imbued with a changing value and significance" (Van Dooren 2014, 72) through the particular perceptive and interpretative capacities of the sensing creature in question. Attentively noticing our environment, listening closely and considering the voices and noises and stories of those whose lives are lived on the urban margins invisibly, yet deeply alive and interwoven with urbannity - makes caring a sensitive and consequential premise for a climate-adaptive and sustainable multispecies practice of urban planning: "Perhaps counterintuitively, slowing down to listen to the world - empirically and imaginatively at the same time - seems our only hope in a moment of crisis and urgency" (Tsing et al. 2017, 8).

Sensuous Scholarship

City-scapes, in this sense, are as much material environments as they are species-specific ways of perceiving these environments. Stories, places and bodies, therefore, emerge as deeply interwoven fabrics of encounter and becoming. As such, city-scapes "are co-fabricated between more-than-human bodies and a lively earth" (Whatmore 2006, 5). Urban Research, which has predominantly "retained the human-centric, human-exceptionalist view of the world" (Jon 2020, 394), has only recently begun to open up towards these hard-to-grasp interrelations between the material, the social and the sensual, thereby acknowledging the senses and everyday sensations "as the very tools and techniques allowing for the transaction between human and non-human agents, and the very condition of carnal experience of self-hood, society, and culture" (Vannini et al. 2012, 15). Hence, the more we pay attention, the more we listen and sniff and look and touch, the more we might notice...
how slippery this division between ‘first’ and ‘second’ nature is, and that neither ‘nature’ nor ‘culture’ is a tightly sealed entity, but “in fact, a socio-spatial continuum” (Kaika 2005, 4).

![Picture 2: Pollution in Beijing. Ed Jones, Getty Images.](image)

To tackle human health problems and the question of how to live well on a damaged planet (Tsing et al. 2017), therefore, necessitates far-reaching, in-depth investigations into the city’s various and changing sensory effects and into the enculturated values and interpretations thereof as they are experienced subjectively and intersubjectively by urban dwellers. But, on the other hand, the immanent quest in an increasingly urbanized and endangered all-too-human world is, also, to refrain from a purely human-centered, essentialist perspective, and, instead, to develop „relational understandings of planning as ‘co-becoming ’in and for diverse multispecies communities, where humans, plants, soils, microbes, birds, fungi, insects, native and non-native animals shape urban landscapes and interactions and where we are more attentive to the storied contexts of multispecies places within cities and regions“ (Houston 2018, 194). Either way, urban research and planning is more and more confronted with the inevitable challenge of addressing and analyzing these multi-layered and inter-twisted assemblages of more-than-human worlds - the micro-climatic and atmospheric, the sensual and corporeal fabrics of life in the city.

**Lenses, Tools, and Frames**

The acute imperative of developing sustainable modes of co-existence within the city-nature nexus, requires, first and foremost, thick, multi-faceted and highly reflexive ethnographic descriptions of numerous and contrasting urban landscapes, fusing a manifold diversity of quantitative and qualitative data, ranging from archive-material to expert-interviews to ethological and ecological inquiries. Multi-sited and multi-species case-studies focussing on sensual perceptions, lived experience and sustainability, in this regard, function as „passionate evocations of the world and an engagement in it“ (Thrift et al. 2003). In times of irrefutable habitat destruction, extreme weather events, and catastrophic biodiversity loss, the role of urban research, with its power and sensitivity to highlight and narrate, is greater than ever. These dynamic and animated stories of precarity and fragility which are slowly emerging within these fields of research fiercely emphasize one insight above all, that is, that „we, as assemblages of more-than-human actors, are truly in this together“ (Houston et al. 2018, 202). To this end, the questions that have to be faced in the future regard the potentialities of an urban planning approach which, by taking serious human and more-than-human narratives and sensations, embraces the urgent need to find an ethical, humble and climate-adaptive way of recuperating within,
and of becoming-together with the 'natural' flora and fauna which modern man (sic) so desperately and devastatingly tried to shut out. Such an approach, roughly labelled as 'environmental humanities' (Emmett & Nye 2017), consequently encompasses a wide variety of theories and methodologies as they have been developed within the fields of urban anthropology (Farias 2009), sensory studies (Classen & Howes 2014), human geography (Whatmore 2006), biology (Margulis 2020) and architecture (Augoyard 2020), as well as recent work done in science and technology studies (Haraway 2016), ethnology (Kohn 2007), ethology (Lestel et al. 2006) and sociology (Stuart 2021). One of the main assumptions which can be found in all of these disciplines is the recognition that „purity is not an option“ (Tsing 2015, 27) and that everyday-life for all kinds of beings emerges as part of more-than-human landscapes „which consist of sweeping planes of sensuality which mobilize both flesh and stone, or „universes‘ of becoming which coalesce in unpredictable ways and routinely bleed into each other“ (Thrift et al. 2003, 13).
Recollections: ESA RN37 Midterm Conference in Berlin

Re-thinking urban spaces through remote work (Francesca Bitetto, Carla Spinelli, Università degli Studi Aldo Moro di Bari)

According to Simmel, the spatial dimension plays a crucial role. The main categories for a spatial analysis of society are: border, distance and centre. In our perspective the distance from the centre and being peripheral is relevant. The place where we live and work inevitably affects our lives. Often the workers have moved to reach their place of work, they have moved home, they emigrated.

In Italy, in particular, many young people still abandon their peripheral lives in the less developed areas to reach better job opportunities. This determines an impoverishment of the countries of origin, especially in Southern Italy and causes the brain drain. During the lockdown the forced closure for preventive purposes for the Coronavirus emergency, was an opportunity to stop and observe our model of life and relationships and try to restructure it even if forced by necessity. The dystopian imaginary was realized by imposing a retaliation on us: our confinement in everyday life from which we seemed to want to escape to find our fulfilment elsewhere. The woman has found her fulfilment outside the home. Is working from home a threat or an opportunity? “The isolation of man on himself has made his dominion over nature great but has extinguished his ability to perceive the limit, that experience that is only made when one collides with the immense disproportion between us and the infinite”. (Franco Cassano, Modernizzare stanca 2001p.158)

The lock down took us away from the hectic daily rush and made us re-appreciate the slow pace, the silence usually suffocated by the noise of cars, the clean air that has given back space to life forms removed from modernization. Franco Cassano criticized the integralism of the race (Cassano, MS 2001) which represents a distinctive feature of our time: a race to succeed in work, to reach the holiday places, to keep fit, to manage the daily complexity. The job affirmation has taken on the characteristics of a race that has ended up permeating the whole setting of family and social life. In this race the most fragile have been marginalized; the elderly, children and the disabled have been entrusted to specialized care subsystems. The pandemic has changed the times and spaces of relationships, has led to blockages, unthinkable prohibitions. Stopping that race led us into another way of life, made us re-evaluate slowness, nature, ancient daily knowledge, neighbourhood and family relations.

The North-South relationship, in Italy but in general in the world has always been characterized by a disproportion. The developed north evaluated the south as a distance from the achievements of the north, a minus sign. Let us think of the definitions of lagging areas or developing countries. The South has often accepted these definitions, giving up the possibility of being able to represent an alternative
to pure modernization. The concepts of sustainable development or degrowth (Latouche) downsize our relationship with modernization.

Franco Cassano has overturned the evaluation criteria:

- from the North that values the south performances to the possibility for the south to be the subject of its own thought;
- from speed to slowness;
- from being willing to do anything for success to discovering the limit, the damage related to growth and success.

The industrially underdeveloped South can be an opportunity. The pandemic has pushed many workers to the south to care for their families or because remote working allowed them to choose where to work. Teleworking can give a new impetus to the human-centred agenda for the future of work, provided that certain conditions are satisfied. The widest adoption of teleworking in the private and public sector during the Covid-19 pandemic has shown the weaknesses of the existing legal framework, at national and EU level. In this respect, several pros and cons of remote work shall be taken into account from a labour (law, management, policy) perspective.

Teleworking wage schemes, working time schedules and health and safety protections need highly tailored legal and collective agreements regulations; adequate training programs shall be identified; HR policies shall be improved in a gender-oriented perspective. A more sensitive work-life balance culture shall be supported by adequate fiscal incentives and occupational welfare schemes. Consistent labour market and social policies are also needed, in an ever more digitalised scenario. Such an organizational and work-related innovation can also have a strong impact on the transformation of the socio-economic relationships in the territories. Where will knowledge workers live? They are those who are going to be more and more the main actors of digital capitalism. The development of remote work can enhance peripheral communities and promote the territory as a whole. Moreover, telework could also represent a measure to fight the so-called "Brain drain". At the same time, remote work can also "depopulate" big towns and cities, with relevant consequences on trade, real estate, etc.

**What’s going on in Italy?**

On the one hand, after centuries in which the demographic development of the places was grounded on their productive capacity, small towns and peripheral territories are again on stage. They have experienced a progressive decline due to mass emigration, determined by the lack of industrial development of many areas in our country. Right now, the attractiveness of places is no longer dictated by the availability of economic activities, but finds its pivot in the worker’s personal choices. The so-called ‘southworking’ is the opportunity to work in marginalized areas (or simply peripheral to large centres) for companies whose headquarters are in industrial centres or even abroad. Good intentions are not enough, however; not even is a good level of digitalization. The internal areas are characterized by a distance from some essential services (health, school, mobility) that makes everyday life difficult. They must equip themselves to live up to expectations and prevent the recent dynamism from turning out to be a passing fashion.

On the other hand, an interesting solution to both promoting “southworking” and prevent big towns desertification can be represented by the creation of co-working spaces, conceived as incubator for young start uppers or developing centre of circular economy projects at local level. Co-working spaces very often imply the activation of disused or under-used spaces and enhance network creation. They gather different competences making them available from remote and offer major opportunities to firms, workers and territories. In the present scenario of vibrant uncertainty, a top-down "one-size-fits-all" solution would be of little efficacy. A broad mobilization, that involves all relevant actors -
companies, trade unions, local authorities - is essential to make a new virtuous relationship between work and territory effectively feasible, in the awareness that the fracture of the unity of place between business and work performance, generated by the pandemic, is now a point of no return.

Local Governments should adopt strategic policies to promote social cohesion through a synergy among stakeholders, so as to enhance sustainable economic growth and overcome inequalities. In this perspective, the experience of the tripartite territorial pacts (social negotiations) could be intensified.

Recollections: ESA RN37 Midterm Conference in Berlin

Urban Fragments in the Politics of Infrastructure: Land Claims and Livelihood Spaces of Fishing Community in Chennai (Fathima Rayammarakkar Fasal, Indian Institute of Technology Madras; Swathi MP Manalodiparambi, Central European University)

I was an attendee of the ESA young scholars conference 2022 and a presenter at ESA Urban Sociology Conference in Berlin. I am a PhD candidate, and my first publication (co-authored with Swathi M P Manalodiparambi, also a PhD student) came out recently based on the presentation at the conference. We feel like the work warrants attention as we speak about negotiations of a fishing community in India for land and livelihood. Moreover, works from Global South require an audience beyond regional confines. Here’s the link to the publication.
New research projects
Resilient Communities. Local roots and social networks in the global city. The case of Madrid from a comparative approach (Margarita Barañano Cid, Researcher Responsible of COMURES, comures.es)
COMURES-CM project started on 01/01/2020, and carried out within the framework of the H2019/HUM-5738 program, financed by the Community of Madrid and the European Social Fund.

The website is accessible in Spanish, but many of the contents are also available in English, including the objectives and main hypotheses of the project, as well as some of its results and the sessions of its Permanent Seminar, which included Professor Sonia Arbaci as speaker.

At COMURES we are interested in analyzing the spatial dimension of well-being and care, especially in vulnerable neighborhoods in large cities in Southern Europe. For this, Madrid is used as a case study. More specifically, we study how the territory has continued to count in this regard, although it does so more and more in increasingly hybridized versions with distance relationships. We also examine the impact on this type of "spatial arrangements" of the intensification of mobility linked to the growing problems of access to housing.

We approach this topic taking into account the importance that the relative territorialization of social life has had in the provision of well-being. This includes both residential permanence and the fact that a good part of the residential mobility, especially in the vulnerable neighborhoods of the aforementioned cities, occurs within relatively close spaces (for example, within the same district or the same sub-zone of the area metropolitan area), or in spaces where the local care chains of relocating households are concentrated. We have also verified that in these spaces, many of the daily movements related to care or leisure take place in relatively close territories, resulting in the local dimension being very important.

All this is examined through both a statistical analysis of the main existing sources and thanks to the 97 interviews carried out with neighboring people and key informants.

For more information visit:
New books

*Megaprojects in the World Economy: Complexity, Disruption and Sustainable Development* By Gerardo del Cerro Santamaría, New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming 2023

After the urban impacts of the covid-19 pandemic, a “G7-G20 pact for sustainable urbanization” has been proposed, and several multilateral organizations have undertaken initiatives related to urban “resilience” to foster a green and fair economic recovery. The assumption is that the absence of integrated investment policies and public responses leads to widening disparities between high- and low-income countries, cities, and regions, as well as to lost opportunities for sustainable growth.

While the focus is on addressing global issues that require massive investments, such as social infrastructure and the net zero economy, the question about sustainability associated to megaprojects is customarily framed within the usual growth and development objectives and megaproject impacts are largely overlooked or treated as an unavoidable externality.

A key question then is whether the diverse and negative impacts of megaprojects can be compatible with any approach to urban sustainability that prioritizes socio-economic equity and environmental preservation. Megaprojects do not just “transform” cities; rather, their Hirschmanian “trait-making” character is disruptive, drastically altering urban structures by causing disturbances or problems, even in optimal planning, construction and management scenarios where the best combination of strategies to optimize rational decision-making has been deployed. This indicates that megaproject disruptive impacts - which take shape through the embeddedness of projects in the polity, economy and society - need to be part of any meaningful analysis intending to address the question of urban sustainability.

The book illustrates these ideas by discussing empirical evidence from megaprojects in eighteen different cities around the world (Istanbul, Sydney, Hong Kong, Bilbao, Denver, Helsinki, Abu Dhabi, Barcelona, Boston, London, Masdar City, Toronto, Tokyo, London, Paris, New York, Shanghai and Riyadh). These examples help document the transition towards the coexistence and entanglement, in urban political economies, of various development models where megaproject construction is often a fundamental element: property development, culture, iconic architecture, high tech and green.

In analyzing these models in the empirical chapters, the book conceptually links megaprojects to complexity, impacts and sustainability. A megaproject is tentatively defined as sustainable if it is planned and executed to account for the capacity, fitness, resilience, diversity and balance of its urban ecosystem. We take the view of sustainability as an organic process including environment, economy and community: form and efficiency (environmental factors in design, architecture, engineering and construction) as well as policy (urban plans and practices that explicitly aim at maintaining and improving the social and economic well-being of citizens).

Del Cerro Santamaría contends that megaproject embeddedness begets complexity - disruptive complexity -- as the central organizing and explanatory principle to describe the manifold, variegated impacts that megaprojects have on cities, regions and the wider world economy. In turn, a focus on disruptive complexity leads the author to (1) assess a possible response scenario to such disruptions caused by megaprojects (a scenario conceptualized as complex sustainability), and (2) using transdisciplinarity as the most robust and non-reductionist analytical strategy for understanding megaprojects in the world economy, their impacts, and the prospects for urban sustainability.

The notion of disruptive complexity aims at expressing the variegated and interdependent web of the impacts that megaproject have on urban areas: cost overruns, negative environmental impacts, gentrification risks, accentuation of socio-economic inequality, drawbacks of top-down cultural engineering, neglect of local cultural identities, an uncertain economic success, population
displacements, the spoiling of cities’ visual and structural uniqueness, rise of congestion and overpopulation, political gridlock, threats for ecosystems, environmental risks of many kinds, and others.

Under the idea of complex sustainability, the book develops a set of conjectures to flesh out a robust conception of sustainability as an assemblage with two main components: socio-economic sustainability and deep sustainability. Given that megaproject impacts often undermine any prospects for urban sustainability, these conjectures can be utilized to build viable policy alternatives to megaproject development.

Gerardo del Cerro Santamaría is a political economist and a megaprojects scholar in New York City. He has served as Visiting Professor at MIT, a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University and holds Visiting appointments at the London School of Economics and University College London. He is a Senior Research Fellow at Future Earth Urban Knowledge-Action Network and Earth System Governance Project, a member of the European Union Expert Group in Regional Policy (Regio Program), and a recipient of a United States Fulbright Award in Urban Planning. He served as a Program Director (Gateway Engineering) at the U.S. National Science Foundation. Professor del Cerro has been contributing to urban scholarship as Research Professor of Planning and Megaprojects at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in Manhattan.

New books

Post-socialist Cities and the Urban Common Good. Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe
By Maja Grabkowska
London: Routledge, Copyright Year 2023

This book explores the changing approaches to urban common good in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989. The question of common good is fundamental to urban living; however, understanding of the term varies depending on local contexts and conditions, particularly complex in countries with experience of communism. In cities east of the former Iron Curtain, the once ideologically imposed principle of common good became gradually devalued throughout the 20th century due to the lack of citizen agency, only to reappear as a response to the ills of neoliberal capitalism around the 2010s. The book reveals how the idea of urban common good has been reconstructed and practiced in European cities after socialism. It documents the paradigm shift from city as a communal infrastructure to city as a commodity, which lately has been challenged by the approach to city as a commons. These transformations have been traced and analysed within several urban themes: housing, public transport, green infrastructure, public space, urban regeneration, and spatial justice. A special focus is on the changes in the public discourse in Poland and the perspectives of key urban stakeholders in three case-study cities of Gdańsk, Kraków, and Łódź. The findings point to the need for drawing from best practices of the socialist legacy, with its celebration of the common. At the same time, they call for learning from the mistakes of the recent past, in which the opportunity for citizen empowerment has been unseized.

Excerpt from the Introduction: On the one hand, the city—a socially produced and politically charged phenomenon—is founded on the principle of the common good. On the other, as a collectively governed and used entity, it may be also considered a commons, just like its components—urban space and infrastructure—meet the conditions for being recognised as common goods. In either of the two instances, the urban common good is subject to constant renegotiations. Contemporary cities cope with multiple internal and external tensions and challenges affecting the urban common good—deepening social inequalities, intensifying global migratory movements and climate change, to name only a few. Although a growing collection of studies undertaken by human geographers and scholars representing related disciplines touch upon this relation, there has been little research which would spotlight post-socialist cities of Central and Eastern Europe. (…)

Regardless of being increasingly acknowledged in cities of Central and Eastern Europe, the urban common good tends to serve as an umbrella term, having different—often obscure—meanings and uses. Therefore, the research presented in this book reveals how the ideas of urban common good have been (re)constructed and put into practice in this part of the world. My research
seeks to show the impact of the systemic transformation and accompanying processes on the perception of the common good in relation to urban spaces, then establish patterns for the formation of the urban common good in 21st Century cities.

Maja Grabkowska is an urban geographer and a research fellow at the Department of Socio-Economic Geography, University of Gdansk. Her academic interests include urban regeneration in the post-socialist context, as well as urban grass-root initiatives and co-governance. She is an author of the book *Regeneration of the Post-socialist Inner City: Social Change and Bottom-up Transformations in Gdańsk* (2012) and co-founder of Sopocka Inicjatywa Rozwojowa, an informal citizen group advocating participatory democracy and sustainable development at the local level. Currently she is involved in a Horizon 2020 research project EUARENAS: *Cities as Arenas of Political Innovation in the Strengthening of Deliberative and Participatory Democracy*. 
**New books**

**Pandemic Urbanism: Infectious Diseases on a Planet of Cities** By Harris Ali, Creighton Connolly & Roger Keil Polity, 2022

Emerging infectious disease outbreaks in recent decades have transformed the very nature of urban life worldwide, even as the extent and experience of pandemics are shaped by the planetary urban condition. *Pandemic Urbanism* critically investigates these relationships in a world faced with an unprecedented global pandemic, the first on a majority urban planet. The authors reveal the historical context of recent infectious disease events and how they have variously transformed the urban social fabric. They highlight the important role played by socio-ecological processes associated with the global urban periphery – suburban or post-suburban zones and hinterland areas of “extended” urbanization – bringing to light the increased significance of social media, changing mobility patterns, and new forms of urban governance and pandemic response.

The book takes forward theoretical approaches to understanding pandemics grounded in urban political ecologies of disease and landscape political ecology, developing novel insights for post-pandemic urban governance and planning. In doing so, it reveals a paradox at the heart of pandemic urbanism: our urban way of life at close quarters enables contagion to spread easily, yet it also makes it easier to contain and respond to disease outbreaks.

Multidisciplinary in its approach and written by three proven experts in the field, this book is an invaluable, accessible primer on the origins, pathways, and management of infectious disease.

There is a discount code for the purchase of the book! We would like to thank the publishing house (Natalia Podpora and Adrienn Jelinek in particular) for this gift.

**Promo code: P2022**

The research project aims at investigating how street vendors organize themselves in markets to sell second-hand cloth in Lagos. It deals with actors in the “okrika” (i.e., the local term for used cloth) and textile material businesses and asks how such entrepreneurs valorize imported goods from the West considered as gifts, leftovers (unsold items, overstock) and sometimes even waste. The emphasis is made both on the value chain of such goods at the regional and Nigerian scales (macroscopic), and on the everyday interactions taking place within markets (microscopic). This research project falls into the debates of urban studies and economic sociology. The focus is made on the local scale, i.e., five urban markets of Lagos, to question how vendors navigate semi-public spaces. The master thesis will then zoom out to regional and global trade to analyze how they structure urban space and urban developments.

After having studied the scientific and grey literature on the regulation of marketplaces and the transnational trade of used cloth, original data was produced thanks to a three-months field research in Lagos (January to April 2023). The analysis of direct observations of five key markets of the metropolis and semiconductive interviews with their main actors (importers, wholesalers, resellers, landlords, managers, unions, ‘taught’, government agents, dwellers, and developers) will provide insights on the regulation of “informal” markets in Lagos and question the embeddedness of the second-hand cloth market into the social. This qualitative fieldwork is also a starting point to address the topics of entrepreneurship, women empowerment, and spatial mobility in cities of the Global South. The final aim of this research is to shed light on the thrift economy in Lagos and its underlying global dynamics, as well as how the two are part of the fabric of the city. The desk and fieldwork will serve the writing of a master thesis, for the obtention of a master's degree in urban governance from the Urban School of Sciences Po Paris, in June 2023. Another goal is to extend the research to a PhD project from September 2023 to address the following questions that arose from this qualitative work:

- How local-global arrangements shape the fabric of the city;
- How global commodity chains of discards structure Global North and Global South relationships and divide;
- How those commodity streams impact regional cross-border trade and communities, which are traditionally studied as peripheral.
Beyond the ghetto. Ethnic Residential Segregation dynamics in Bologna, (PhD Thesis under review), Maria Grazia Montesano, PhD candidate in Sociology and Social Research, Department of Sociology and Business Law, University of Bologna.

Abstract
This dissertation aims to contribute theoretically and empirically to the debate on ethnic residential segregation. Indeed, in recent years, studies and research have been developed with the aim of (re)defining the category of residential segregation and the forms it may assume at the urban level (micro-segregation, interstices, vertical segregation), focusing on the characteristics of the Mediterranean or Southern European context. Within this framework, the research design is articulated starting from the Bologna case study, analyzing the residential distribution of the foreign resident population in a diachronic perspective, using geo-referenced analysis tools and taking into account different variables (nationality, gender, socio-economic status). The quantitative analysis is complemented by a second part, consisting of 20 recall biographical interviews, which reconstructs the housing trajectories of migrants residing in the Metropolitan City of Bologna, in order to understand the ways in which the structural dynamics affecting the housing system take shape in the life stories of migrants. The analysis shows that the foreign resident population is subject to a process of peripheralisation, which manifests itself at the spatial-territorial level and in life paths. By adopting an extensive definition, the category of peripheralisation identifies a specific form of residential segregation that denotes not only a process of territorial mobility, but also a broader and more articulated "way of living" of those on the margins.
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