

Local Cultures Global Spaces

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Local Cultures – Global Spaces
Communities, People and Place

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INTRODUCTION

Local Cultures – Global Spaces Communities, People and Place

The United Nations Human Rights and Habitat programmes connect how we live, to where we live. The association is premised on an understanding of cultures, communities and society through the lens of place. It sees them as inherently interlinked, and mutually reinforcing. Examining this liminal state, the Local Cultures – Global Spaces conference questions this idea as it appears at the intersection of cultural studies, sociology, human geography, architecture and urban planning.

It responds to debates around community networks and cultural traditions as independent of location. It addresses readings of the built environment as an isolated phenomena – as a series of constructed objects in, of, and for, themselves. Conversely, it acknowledges that how we live can be seen as inseparable from our built environments – our buildings, villages, towns and cities. In such readings, place may be defined as deterministic – as a central player influencing actions, and even identity. Positioning itself somewhere between these positions, Local Cultures – Global Spaces explores readings of societies and place as hybrid – as byproducts of the conflicting social, cultural and economic forces shaping our lives in multiple spheres.

In addressing questions of social and built environment theory and practice, then, these proceedings bring together a diversity of ideas. From the social sciences, themes of debate include cultural geographies, late Capitalism spatially manifest, and critiques of community and social justice, à la Lefevre and Harvey. In terms of architectural and urban design, it collects together texts that reflect concerns about participatory approaches in housing, examinations of queer space, Critical Regionalism, placemaking, and questions of race and planning, to name but a few.

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THE MAGIC BEANS: ADDRESSING HOUSING INSECURITY THROUGH MICRO ENVIRONMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The burgeoning housing insecurity crisis in major American cities has extended its reach to university campuses, particularly impacting commuter students. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates a rising trend in commuters enduring long travel times or distances within the United States. A recent publication by UCLA cityLAB emphasized that "extreme" commuting, defined as journeys lasting 90 minutes or more,¹ is not exclusive to urban professionals but has permeated university settings as well. Escalating housing costs alongside a dearth of affordable options near campuses have forced numerous students to seek housing alternatives far from their academic institutions. Within this diverse student population, a significant proportion comprises "super-commuters," individuals residing off-campus who endure arduous commutes often exceeding the 90-minute mark. Recent research underscores the disturbing prevalence of housing insecurity (43%)² and homelessness (15%)³ among super-commuter students, who frequently resort to organizing their lives around lengthy commutes,⁴ sometimes resulting in overnight stays in vehicles or campus facilities to navigate the logistical and financial obstacles associated with living and studying simultaneously.

This paper examines the problem of housing insecurity among extreme commuter students at UCLA and discusses the use of specially designed and fabricated mobile pods called "Beans" as a provisional solution. The paper describes the research, design, and successes of UCLA Bruin Hub as a case study for addressing the problem of extreme commuting and student housing insecurity through a physical and architectural intervention. The project was led by cityLAB, an architecture and urban research think tank situated within UCLA's Department of Architecture and Urban Design, and involved a close collaboration between various student groups, researchers, designers, and university administration agencies. The result of this initiative was the launch of 15 prototypical mobile pods "Beans"-as illustrated in Figure 1- inside a new space on campus, called the Bruin Hub. The Beans and the hub provide space to rest, sleep and study for the underserved extreme commuter students at UCLA.

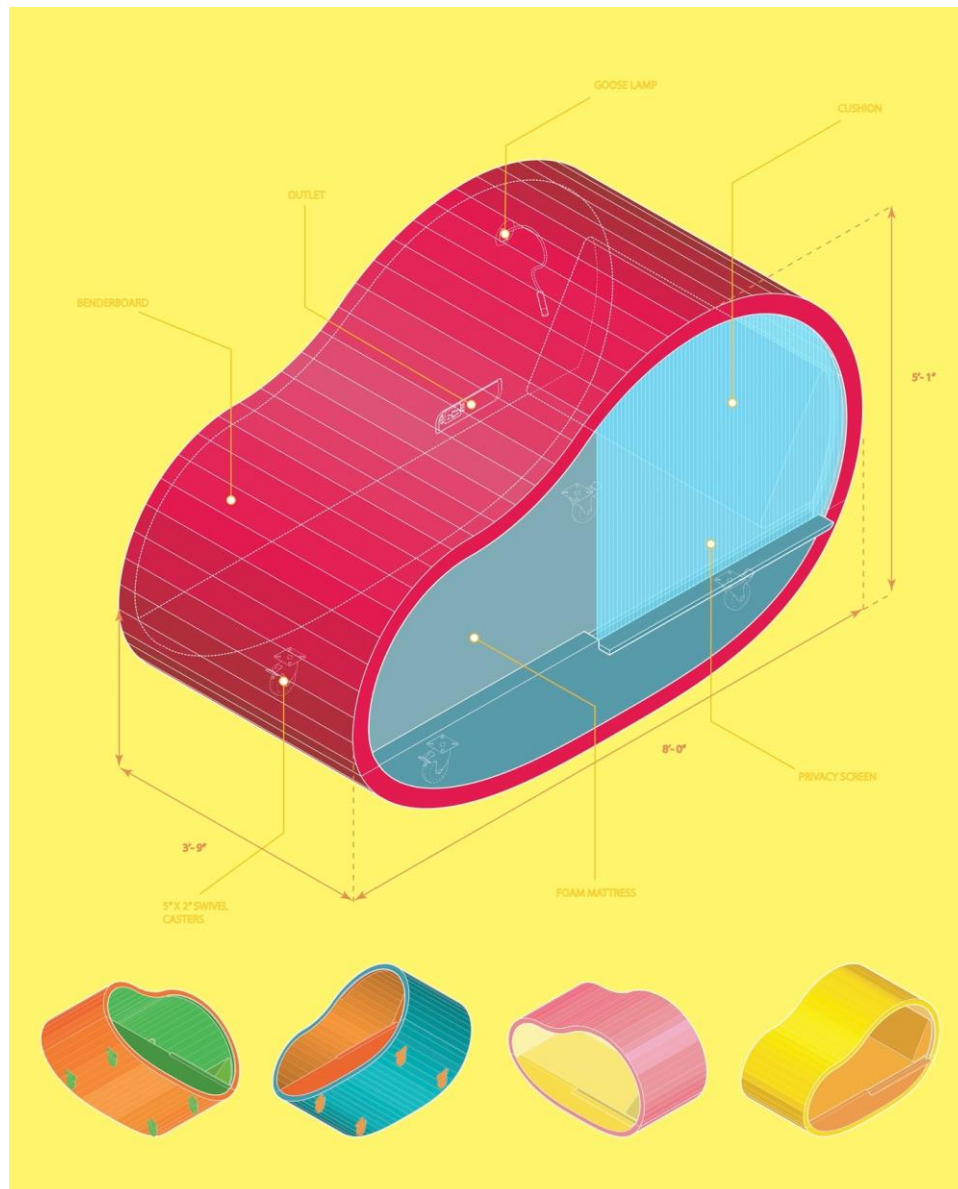


Figure 1. The Bean with all features. Image by AN.ONYMOUS

Context

The idea of the capsules or pods, that create microenvironments for human beings, may not be anything new. We have seen the Mercury Capsule, the first human spacecraft that allowed astronauts into orbit, on television during the 1958-1963 Space Race. While Mercury designers have been preoccupied with solving engineering challenges such as reentry heating, human tolerance for high acceleration and zero gravity, one would assume that they paid little attention to the other human functions and conveniences. However, that's precisely what was new in the capsule design as it included modularized systems, with compact packages that can be removed without affecting other systems. Testing the limits of human endurance in unfamiliar settings was similarly applied to the balloon capsule by Auguste Piccard building a sealed aluminum gondola suspended from the largest balloon ever constructed.⁵ The gondola had an internalized system for pressurization, temperature control and air composition. Around the same time, the Metabolist movement in post-war Japan led to the evolution of biomimetic architecture that fused ideas of megastructures with those of organic

biology. The Nakagin Capsule Tower Building was a mixed-use residential and office tower in Tokyo, Japan designed by Kisho Kurokawa and combined 140 modular capsules and the space targeted the demographic of young bachelor Tokyo salarymen. The capsules included utilities and fit outs such as compact appliances and cabinets built into one wall (including a television set, kitchen stove and a refrigerator) and a bathroom unit the size of an aircraft lavatory. While metabolism strategies were tested in Japan, the Ant Farm at the University of California Berkeley staged a performance “Breathing- That’s your Bag.” Just like the Mercury Capsule or the Stratosphere Gondola that engineered a sealed microenvironment, here the inflatable bag offered the public an impermeable environment that aimed to protect humans from the toxic air, smog, and fear of asphyxiation in urban environments. The bubble would screen out noxious contaminants and shield people through the membrane creating a conserved ecological milieu blocked from the effluence of the outside world. Today, the work of Lidia Kallipoliti inspired by the closed systems in architectural and engineering projects of the 70’s takes the pods to a whole new level- reflecting and addressing the most pressing contemporary issues concerning global warming, recycling, and sustainability. Climate House examines “smart ventilation, grow rooms, microbial house kitchen, vertical green walls, hyper-oxygenated and synced sleeping chambers, Roombas, spirulina taps and wastewater treatment systems, in order to critique, and dismantle domestic machines as tools of surveillance and environmental control.”⁶ Furthermore, a contemporary architectural precedent, Capsule Hotel built in Japan, becomes a new type of temporary accommodation facility to provide cheap and basic overnight accommodation for those who can’t afford conventional hotels. The pod hotel is also a space-saving model of commercial accommodation for dense and overpopulated cities. Testing humans’ most intimate and immediate environment bounded by the pod system may seem like a utopian dream. While the solutions contemplate the relationship of humans to and impact on natural world or dense urban environments, they offer architectural features that could prove to be practical and valuable: small and intimate space that supports human comfort, tight enclosure that allows for the feeling of security and protection from the outside world and minimum infrastructure like light, power, storage, or food that enable satisfying basic human needs. Beyond the design, the economics and cost of human scale intervention can prove to be cost effective.

While all these precedents offer ways of addressing human scale design or provide design strategies for microenvironments, this type of learning doesn’t translate into strategies that Universities around the country deploy for their students. For example, The James Madison University puts up a Nap Nook in a leftover space which relies on placing a few bean bags on the ground. Wake Forest University also uses a loft over space equipped with supposed to be comfortable armchairs. Unfortunately, this strategy doesn’t allow for sleeping and just sitting in. Finally, a Napping Station at Michigan University goes a step further and puts up a few cots in one location on campus. As universities recognize the problems for super commuters, their solutions rely only on simply providing furniture and not thinking about the students’ needs nor the infrastructure that is required for a successful project. The larger student needs, besides sleeping and studying, include: 1) infrastructure and access, 2) psychological needs including safety and security, 3) health and wellness needs that include maintenance and cleanliness of the spaces used.

METHODOLOGY

The development of the Beans and the Bruin Hub was characterized by close collaboration with student commuter groups, involving a series of iterative and feedback-based workshops. These workshops aimed to understand various facets of the problem: 1) students’ behavior and activities, 2) programming and infrastructure, 3) health and wellness and 4) psychological needs. The inclusive design process relied on multiple sessions with user groups focused on developing a better

understanding of students' specific needs, followed by the design and fabrication of various one-to-one scale prototypes tested by different student groups. The design and development process entailed extensive interviews with students, ongoing feedback from focus groups, and rigorous physical body testing to accommodate various body types. This inclusivity ranged from accommodating a petite five-percentile female student to a burly football player. Over the course of four years, this initiative led to the launch of 15 Beans and BruinHub as well as new commuter spaces in different parts of the campus.

The first workshop with the supercomputers focused on understanding the problem and outlining the students' needs. Each workshop lasted 3 hours and consisted of about 25 students. In the first session each student was asked to write out their student journey across the entire day. What we learned from this session is that students typically arrive on campus around 4-5am to beat Los Angeles traffic and their first class starts not sooner than 8am. They then stay on campus until their last class around 3-4pm and wait up until 9pm to drive home. Just like in the morning they maneuver their daily commute according to traffic. In the time between their arrival and their first class, they were already exhausted- they had to get up early and spend at least 60 min in the car. Now that they arrived on campus, they need to decide what to do with their time before the first class. There are not many spaces on campus that the students can go to that would be open at 5 am (besides one 24h library), there are also no spaces where they can nap and catch up on their sleep. A lot of the students ended up sleeping in their cars in the garages while some others went to the main library- the only one open 24h. The library does not have spaces to rest or lay down. We then asked the students to map their schedule to the campus locations to learn where they typically have classes or which garages, they arrive at. It turns out that there is no pattern of activities here- the students take classes all over UCLA ground. But what we also learned here is that they do walk a lot from garages to the classes and to save time they end up carrying all their stuff they bought for the day. Unlike students who live on or near campus who can hop on or off their dormitory or apartment during the day, the typical commuter brings up a large backpack with all their books, computers, gym clothes, food and change of clothes.

The second workshop helped us uncover the programming and infrastructural needs. Here we asked the students to list what they need during the day that they currently don't have on campus, or they don't have in one location on campus. This activity was both an open question as well as a voting system on ideas we as organized prepared from them. The student rated all ideas put forward. What became clear is that the need for sleeping spaces is the most critical. The space to study and connect their laptop was right up high in the students' needs. Storage and locker facilities were also in high demand. Refrigerators, hot water, massage chairs, and coffee bars were considered "nice to have." We asked the students then to also vote on the space itself and what qualities it needed to have to success: loud or quiet, flexible, or fixed, bright or dark, security with easy access or tight security, private or public, hours and days of operations, type of use, if we need a staff member to be there. The students seem to be very aligned in what they need. They wanted the space to be quiet or semi quiet, semi dark, flexible, private, for individual needs with some level of community. It was very clear they wanted the space to be open 24h daily and that tight security was incredibly important.

Based on the results of the workshop we created success metrics and project objectives. We realized that for the project to be successful, the project will need to address the following four goals:

a) Student Behavior, ergonomics, and inclusivity:

The project will need to provide the range of activities with the focus on sleeping and studying. The project needed to be comfortable for those activities for all student bodies. And it needed to be inclusive and allow for students with disabilities to be able to easily use it.

b) Programming and infrastructural needs: the project needs to include power outlets, personal storage space, adequate lighting, and other amenities such as kitchenettes.

- d) Psychological Needs: Ensuring the project to provide a sense of safety, security, especially during vulnerable moments like sleep but also be accessible to students commuters.
- c) Health and Wellness Needs: Addressing cleanliness, maintenance, and COVID-19 prevention measures to ensure the safety and well-being of users. This last goal was a necessary addition since the project was developed during the 2 years of COVID-19 pandemic.

RESULTS

Bean Design and Features

Conceived as micro-environments tailored for studying and rest, each Bean's form is designed based on an analysis of various human activities occurring within them, as depicted in Figure2.

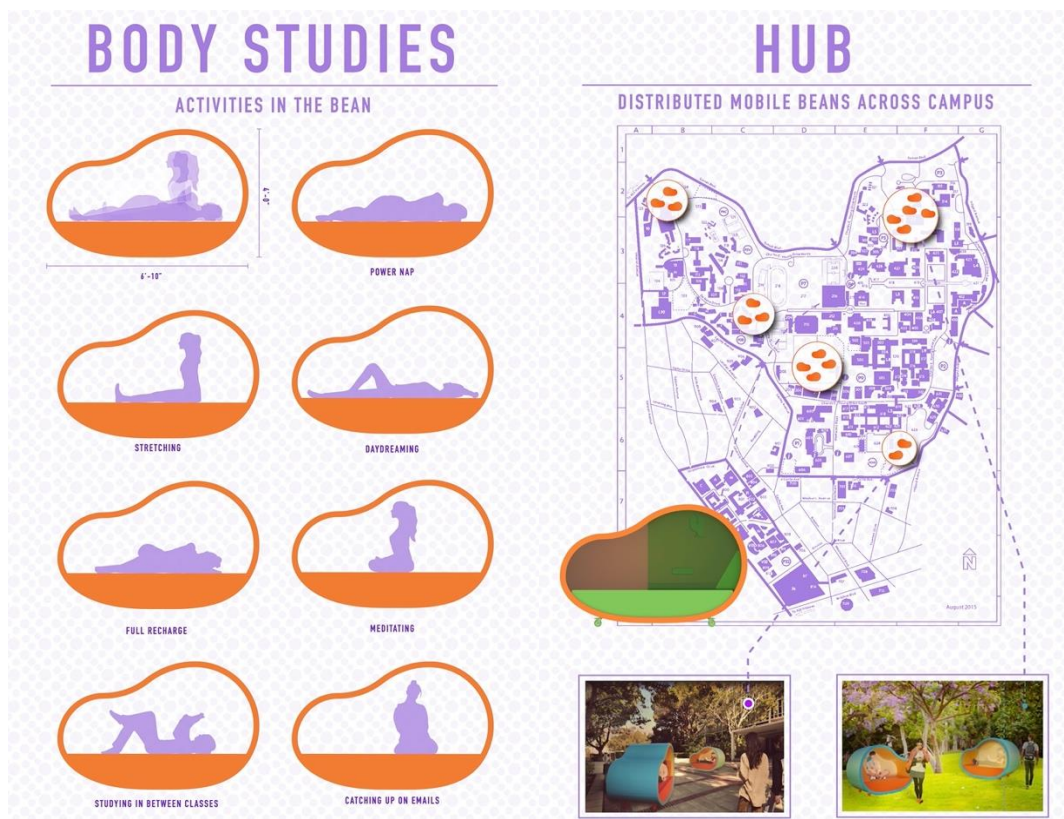


Figure 2. Studies of the activities inside the Beans and map of Beans distribution across the campus. Image by AN.ONYMOUS

These spaces are outfitted with adjustable lighting systems, power outlets for personal devices, and individual storage compartments, all geared towards meeting the multifaceted needs of student commuters. The detachable screen serves the dual purpose of providing a sense of security during sleep while facilitating easy egress in emergencies. Furthermore, the particle screen is designed with active surveillance strategies, allowing parts of the body to remain visible from the outside, enabling users of the Bruin Hub to ascertain if the Beans are in use. Many students have praised the vibrant and uplifting colors of the Beans, describing them as "delightful," which fosters a sense of dignity and hope. The materials utilized are chosen for their ease of cleaning, promotion of COVID-19 prevention, enhancement of ventilation through the mesh privacy screen, as demonstrated in Figures 3,4. While the initial cost of each prototype amounted to \$15,000, it's important to note that it is not indicative of potential production costs should the project progress into mass production.

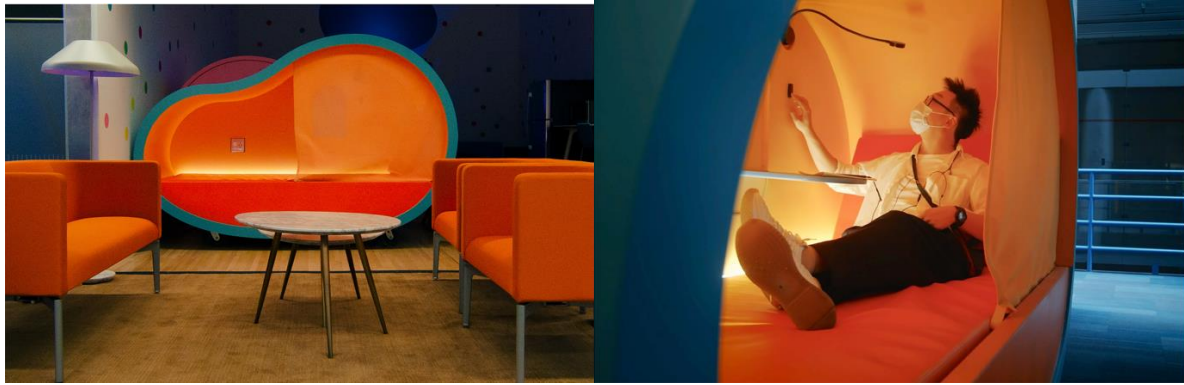


Figure 3 and 4. Studies of the activities inside the Beans and map of Beans distribution across the campus. Image by Nathan Su.

BruinHub and Features

As noted by Cuff, the Bean Hub stands out from conventional napping capsules, commuter lounges, or overnight shelters on other campuses.⁷ It is organized by playful, individual study-napping pods, collected into a lounge (see Figure 5) where the full range of students' daily needs is dignified by design and accommodated without stigma.⁸ The Bean Hub serves as a secure gathering place accessible 24 hours a day, providing additional spaces for both focused and collaborative work. Additionally, it offers continuous access to basic amenities such as bathrooms, showers, storage, and a kitchenette. The Bruin Hub is located at Wooden Center- the main UCLA gym that requires ID access and therefore strict security for use by the UCLA community. The gym is in the heart of the campus allowing the commuter students to find a central space between the garages and their classes. The collaboration between UCLA administration and CityLab allowed them to convert one of the unused racquetball halls into the commuter hub. The conversion included revisions of power, access and entrance, painting and refreshment, furniture, kitchenette, and the Beans. The use of Beans operates based on a reservation system and students can reserve each space online- see Figure 6. We completed 15 prototypes and today there are two more locations on campus that host the Beans.

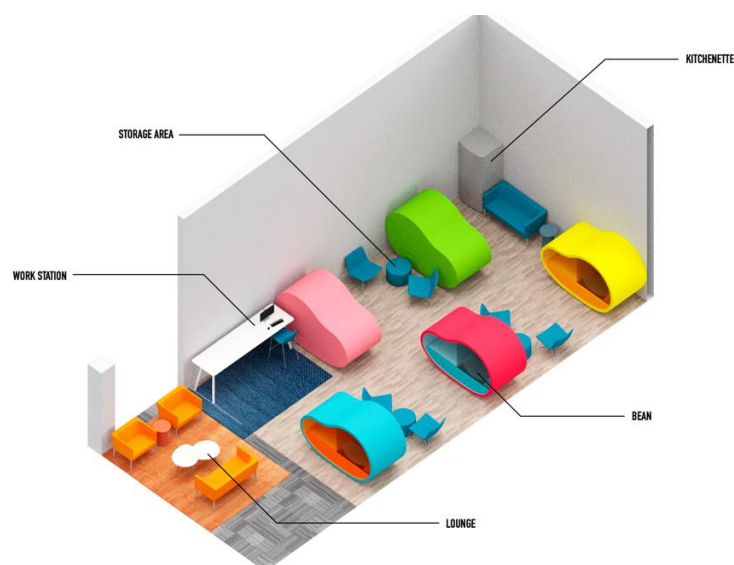


Figure 5. The BruinHub at John Wooden Center at UCLA. Image by AN.ONYMOUS.

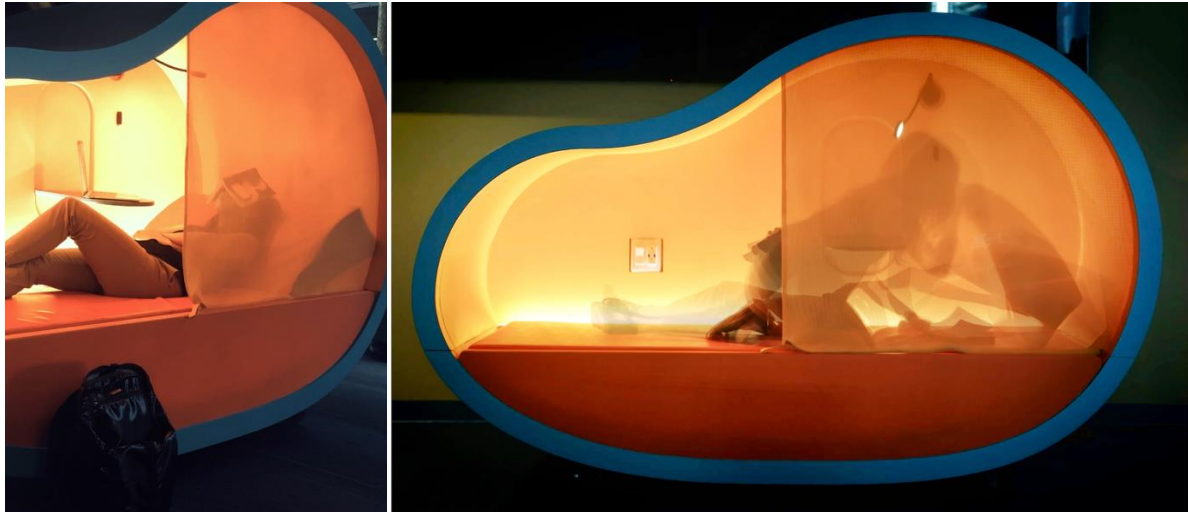


Figure 6. The usage of the Bean over time. Image by Nathan Su

Evidence of Success

As described by Cuff, the implementation of the Beans at the BruinHub in September 2021 marked a significant milestone, coinciding with the return of students to campus after a year and a half of remote learning. The BruinHub was launched with great enthusiasm. Since its inception, this space has been consistently occupied by commuters who can easily register for a free BruinHub pass online—see Figure 6. Cuff states that “...for the first time, not only can the university identify students who may be on the brink of homelessness, but UCLA’s commuter students have a home away from home at UCLA”.⁹ Moreover, a comprehensive report, drawn from a year and a half of commuter usage, unequivocally underscores the effectiveness of the Bean Hub initiative. The report states that the Bean Hub is a resounding success, as confirmed by interviews with students and staff, as well as site observations: “Bruin Hub is the first step in the right direction in addressing the needs of long-distance commuters”.¹⁰



Figure 6. Students using the Hub. Image by Dana Cuff

The impact of the BruinHub is also evident in its substantial registration numbers. During its opening phase, it registered an impressive 800 students, and this number surged to 500 more by the end of the first academic year which captures more than 75% of the super commuter population (estimated total 1,700). In the following year since its inauguration, an additional 600 students registered and used the Beans and the hub. The sentiment among students who have experienced the BruinHub is overwhelmingly positive, as one student aptly noted, "Bruin Hub is unique because it's designed to meet the specific needs of commuters in a way that does not stigmatize. What I mean by that is it was cool to go in there. It was fun to go there. It makes you feel comfortable to go in there."

There is still room to improve the functionality of the Bruinhub with a better reservation system and allowing overnight access any time. But most of the feedback would go toward supporting the operations and infrastructure beyond what the Beans can offer.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this project represents one of several low-cost, temporary solutions that can effectively address student housing insecurity and improve access to education for commuter students. The "Beans" mobile micro-environments, shaped by the needs and feedback of the student community, offer a glimpse into new strategies that universities and communities can employ to support these vulnerable populations.

While these Pods may not be the definitive solution to the issue of housing insecurity among student commuters, they serve as a beacon of hope, providing a secure and accessible refuge.¹¹ These temporary measures become essential lifelines while more stable and permanent affordable housing solutions are sought. The future lies in the hands of institutions willing to embrace such integrated approaches to foster a more equitable access to higher education for all students, regardless of their housing challenges.

NOTES

- ¹ Melanie A. Rapino and Alison K. Fields, "Mega Commuting in the U.S," 2013, Accessed Jan 6th, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2013/demo/SEHSD-WP2013-03.html>
- ² Hannah Muniz, "Student Homelessness and Basic Needs Insecurity," BestColleges.com, March 31, 2022, Accessed Jan 6th, 2024, <https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/homeless-student-guide/>
- ³ Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, "RealCollege 2020: Five Years of Evidence on Campus Basic Needs Insecurity," *New America*, February 2020, Accessed Jan 6th, 2024 <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/highered-public-opinion-hub/realcollege-2020-five-years-of-evidence-on-campus-basic-needs-insecurity/>
- ⁴ Mikayla Bouchard. "Transportation emerges as crucial to escaping poverty." *The New York Times* 7 (2015); Dana Cuff and Gus Wendel, Rep. "My Commute Is Hell", *UCLA Students, Extreme Commutes, Impacts, Solutions* (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA CityLab, 2019), 6.
- ⁵ Lydia Kallipoliti, *The Architecture of Closed Worlds: Or, What Is the Power of Shit?* (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2018), 43
- ⁶ "Lydia Kallipoliti" Cooper Union, Accessed Jan 6th,2024 <https://cooper.edu/architecture/people/lydia-kallipoliti-1#/gallery/6>
- ⁷ Dana Cuff, *Architectures of Spatial Justice* (The MIT Press, 2023), 230.
- ⁸ Dana Cuff, *Architectures of Spatial Justice* (The MIT Press, 2023), 239.
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- ¹¹ Carolina A. Miranda, "Newsletter: I tried a sleeping pod at UCLA's new commuter student hub," *Los Angeles Times*, October 9, 2021, Accessed Jan 6th,2024, <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/newsletter/2021-10-09/ucla-sleeping-pod-design-for-commuter-students-essential-arts>.

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THE NEW CULTURAL ECONOMY OF SPACE REVISITED: LANDSCAPES OF TOURISM

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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This study is placed in the crisis-laden post pandemic world, broadly described in terms of increasing globalization, rampant consumerism/ commodification, time-space compression, proliferation of new ICTs, changing patterns of mobility, etc.¹ In this context, the objective of this study is to revisit previous conceptual tools in spatial/ geographical analysis, namely to re-examine, re-contextualize and reformulate the basic tenets of ‘the new cultural economy of space’ in a more updated, critical and comprehensive framework of analysis, with an application in landscape, drawing examples from the area of tourism.

Initially coined in 2002² and developed in the collective volume published by Springer, *Landscapes of a New Cultural Economy of Space*,³ the processes of this ‘new cultural economy of space’ have a serious and multifold bearing on the role and significance of landscape for tourism and on landscapes of tourism—in terms of their conceptualization, designation, planning, use, management, etc. This re-examination of the initial framework of the new cultural economy of space is deemed necessary and timely, in light of a fast transforming world, highlighting prospects and pitfalls of upcoming macro-socio-spatial change. Specifically, it aims to contribute to the discourse towards a theoretical and analytical re-examination of contemporary socio-spatial and landscape transformation, with specific applications to the landscape (of/ and tourism) and a bearing to all of its aspects and elements: form, function and meaning/ symbolism.

The paper begins with a reconsideration of the processes of this ‘new cultural economy of space’; these processes have been already termed ‘en-worldment’, ‘un-worldment’, ‘de-worldment’, ‘trans-worldment’ and ‘re-worldment, as will be described and developed below. It proposes and explores this macro-analytical framework for contemporary change, through a conceptual and critical investigation of forces and features of change, as applied on the landscape. Specifically, the paper proceeds to explore and discuss the repercussions of this socio-spatial transformation over the forms, functions, uses and meanings of landscape, broadly defined, in and for tourism. Although all aspects of life come into play in shaping change as accounted for above, culture—in its broader sense—is central to the articulation of present-day socio-spatial transformation.

ON LANDSCAPES OF TOURISM

Conscious or unconscious application and expression of such transformation in human contexts of life becomes most direct and discernible in the landscape. Based on a) its nature (a ready and direct way of human-space interrelating); b) its synthetic and holistic character; and c) its flexible scale,⁴

landscape becomes an appropriate means and medium to decipher, analyze and discuss contemporary socio-spatial change, in newly developing contexts of shifting values, tourism patterns/ practices, and spatial/ tourism stewardship/ decision-making.

Furthermore, as one of the major and all-encompassing forces of global transformation, tourism becomes a highly effective and influential factor and means of change in space and in the landscape. Landscape is central and quintessential to tourism.⁵ It becomes key to the production, development, marketing, promotion and consumption of tourism destinations, to triggering and sustaining tourism markets, and to enticing tourist dreams, fantasies, and behaviors.⁶

More analytically, for tourism purposes, landscape may serve a) as a tourist attraction in itself; b) as a scenery and visual image of the destination; c) as a container and source of tourism resources and attractions; d) as a means of promoting, marketing and managing tourism; e) as a spatial/ research tool for studying tourism; and f) as a medium for developing an understanding of and appreciation of the destination.⁷

ON THE NEW CULTURAL ECONOMY OF SPACE

Contemporary spatial change, occurring at a much more rapid pace than in the past, is developing structures and functions of spatial organization that transcend previous sectoral and scalar interconnections. Principally a First World phenomenon, such change has been spreading around the world and refers back to all types of human-related processes, some of which are widely familiar, whereas others appear strikingly novel.⁸

Deciphering the term, ‘new’ does not imply that such transformation constitutes a wholesale new reality. It may not be encountered everywhere, nor is it ‘new’ everywhere, and certainly only part of ‘the story’ (that is socio-spatial dimensions of human life). ‘New’ rather alludes to is overarching scope, affecting all manner and type of human-space interrelationships, as well as to the speed with which it is developing in global-scale directions and multifold geographical manifestations. Therefore, the term refers to trends and tendencies, whose consequences and repercussions are far from obvious and definitive, as it is still evolving. Nonetheless, this ‘new cultural economy of spaces’ remains highly and intricately inter-connected to pre-existing older structures of thought, power, practice and meaning.⁹

Culture is considered integral to such change, as the fundamental basis of socio-spatial organization.¹⁰ However, the processes of the new cultural economy of space still constitute a very much a profit-motivated, economy-driven renegotiation of space.¹¹ The term ‘economy’ here, on the other hand, is used in its original Greek Archaic sense (‘οικονομία’), «the arrangement, mode of operation and/or management of household»,¹² or, in this context, as local affairs where the local and home/ household extend to the whole planet as home, the global scale.

Finally, the ending ‘-worldment’ to the proposed terms (‘en-worldment’, ‘un-worldment’, ‘de-worldment’, ‘trans-worldment’ and ‘re-worldment’) resonates with the ‘world-shaping’ character of these processes (whether they refer to life-worlds or to the global scene), thus aiming to express their overarching scope and consequence.

THE PROCESSES OF THE NEW CULTURAL ECONOMY OF SPACE

Processes of en-worldment and landscapes of tourism

Processes of en-worldment refer to the geographical concentration of socio-spatial forms, functions and meanings from all over the world, installing, instigating, encompassing and/ or imprinting them on the pre-existing landscape. Through these processes, places and landscapes become mirrors and simulacra of other, often very different, distant and disparate, parts of the world, for a variety of socio-

economic purposes, such as demands of the real-estate business, the call for city branding, tourism development, and/ or forces of overall consumption/ consumerism.¹³

Examples abound in transnational, mediatized, privatized and/ or highly controlled spaces and popular places of consumption, such as heritage and museum grounds, theme parks, commercial/ shopping malls, highway strips, mega event sites, golf-course suburbs, fantasy and luxury enclaves, etc.¹⁴ Accordingly, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Shanghai, Dubai and other such ‘world-cities’ export and re-export themselves as models of en-worldment.¹⁵ Las Vegas stands out as perhaps the prime example of en-worldment, initiating and re-enforcing a whole array of new culturally-contingent versions of itself, excesses in imitation of other, more marketable, lucrative, commodified versions of landscapes from around the world.

Heterogeneous schemata and processes induced by en-worldment often result in socio-spatial polarization, embedded and manifested in uneven ‘development’, socioeconomic segregation, unequal access to resources and a derailment of local livelihoods and city/ landscape character from the ways they used to be before. Cities thus tend “to become interchangeable entities, multifarious and multifunctional systems in competition with each other to attract localization of creative professionalism and intelligence... and also capital investments, as a consequence of the fact that capital has the ability to move in a rapid way towards different localisations”.¹⁶

Increasingly common in the domain of tourism and recreation, processes of en-worldment, seeking to (re)create experiences and feelings of being ‘else-where’, tend to represent an easy ‘fix’ for purposes of tourist seduction and popularized visitor satisfaction—all with a bold self-proclamation of spectacular appeal (i.e. ‘the best’, ‘the hippest’, ‘the ultimate’ tourist destination or experience). These processes and their socio-spatial repercussions are especially pronounced in the case of ‘mass’, organized, package or all-inclusive types of tourism, seeking all possible landscape pleasures and services in condensed, easily palatable and readily accessible forms, in a single location, landscape or destination.

Processes of un-worldment and landscapes of tourism

Often the outcome of the processes of en-worldment described above, un-worldment signals the undoing of geographies, histories and cultures, leading to a generation of ubiquitous landscapes. The disassociation of emerging landscapes from their geographical, historical and cultural connections and particulars engenders loss of spatial and landscape identity, character and ‘authenticity’, phenomena of ‘placelessness’ and ‘atopia’, as well loss of the sense of place or landscape as home for its inhabitants.¹⁷ The latter changes, altering and ‘un-grounding’ the character, uniqueness and distinctiveness of a place or landscape, commonly occur at mass tourist destinations or through the prolonged presence of outside influences at a landscape or locality.¹⁸

These landscapes, then, could be found anywhere, as they carry both tangible and intangible features and characteristics that become increasingly commonplace around the world, as “forces of globalization instigate processes of dissipation of all stable relations to local physical and cultural geography, the loosening of ties to any specific space”.¹⁹

On the negative side, the result of un-woldment in a tourist landscape may be detrimental to its cultural and environmental uniqueness and distinctiveness which constitute the poles of tourism attraction in the first place, obviously leading to a decline in destination attractiveness and desire for consumption by the demand side.²⁰ On the positive side, however, the sense of place or landscape as home may deepen for its inhabitants, through contact with the outside world and the ensuing development, with the onset of tourism, of a newly-acquired sense of local place/ landscape identity and uniqueness, through the opening-up of the community to the world at large.

Processes of de-worldment and landscapes of tourism

Processes of un-worldment often lapse into or converge with processes of de-worldment, which marks the disruption and often deconstruction of pre-existing local rules, principles, modes and models of spatial and landscape perception, planning, management, valorization and expropriation. The outcome tends to be the creation of more standardized, commodified, fantastical and often homogenized landscapes,²¹ in ongoing, constant want of identity and character: “the postmodern apprehension of the world emphasizes the inherent instability of meaning, the human ability to invert signs and symbols, to recycle them in a different context, and thus transform their reference”.²² Furthermore, closely interlinked with processes of de-worldment, tend to be phenomena of growing socio-spatial de-differentiation among the realms of home, leisure/ tourism, shopping, work, culture, economic sustenance, comfort, play, familiarity etc.

Such phenomena of de-worldment lead to the contestation, devaluation and derailment, or even dissolution, of previous tenets, values and priorities vis-à-vis the landscape—that is, they lead to landscapes of ‘no-where’. An example of such outcomes are artificial islands encountered around the world (e.g. the tulip-shaped island in the Netherlands), golf courses in unlikely geographical locations such as the California desert, the ‘Pearl’ in Qatar, etc. This creation of fictitious, commercialized, ephemeral, disposable, staged and ‘inauthentic’ landscapes and worlds, through touristification, commercialization and cultural banalization has also been described as ‘Disneyfication’.

The products of these forces at play may resemble skewed or surreal spatial entities (i.e. Foucault’s ‘heterotopias’ and Baudrillard’s ‘hyperspace’), or contrived realities whereby the artificial, the virtual and the staged imitate the ‘real’ or the natural, and even seek to surpass them in terms of originality.²³

Un-worldment processes find extensive application in landscapes of tourism, purposefully or inadvertently creating or inviting ever more versions and quests for new landscapes, as tourists/ recreationists seek ever new thrills and more exciting or sensational destinations.

Processes of trans-worldment and landscapes of tourism

Trans-worldment is set into motion through the interlinking of all parts of the planet into a system and network of interconnections, interactions and flows of people, information, actions and messages, both tangible and intangible.²⁴ Rapidly accelerated or made possible through the 4th technological revolution and the rampant digitalization of most expressions of human life and culture, these processes, firmly ensconced in the ‘First World’, are steadily spreading all over the planet. These processes transcend and dissolve socio-spatial borders and boundaries characteristic of the postmodern age. They refer to multi-scalar, inter-scalar and intra-scalar functions, trends and outcomes of ‘globalization’ augmented through geographical connectivity.

They manifest into the continuous reshaping of ‘landscapes of everywhere’ through actual, virtual or imaginary means of production, reproduction, representation, valorization, symbolization and consumption—where image predominates over word or even sound. These processes are aptly described by Jackson and della Dora: “late modern socio-economic assemblages of meaning, interaction and technicity... through different encounters in sites, places and discursive spaces by which they both multiply in resonances and become shaped (or translated) in turn... [construct] relationships along mimetic axes of repetition, as well as differentiation... They move around. Indeed, they take life from their very ability to circulate globally as texts and thus as new imaginary forms (whether through the Web, satellite television or Google Earth). And like any travelling text, they are continuously appropriated and reappropriated, shaped and reshaped by economic imperatives and territorial imaginations” (2087-98).²⁵

Stereotypical images of tourism destinations are thus mass-produced by the tourism industry, with the purpose of establishing and promoting tourism landscape identities, thus shaping the destination

physiognomy/ character, the basis on which tourist attraction and seduction are developed, e.g. the ‘exotic’ beach, the body beautiful, the ‘Mediterranean-style’ resort, the emblematic palm-tree, etc. Accordingly, the supply side of tourism selectively borrows or constructs images of landscapes of tourism from a wide variety of thematic options (either globally circulating or locally developed), on which it composes and sells the tourist dream and experience. Los Angeles represents perhaps the quintessential landscape of trans-worldment as follows: “Beyond the sprinklers playing across iridescent green lawns and exotic verdure, with natural spaces and environments carefully preserved for active recreation, and through an ever-expanding array of commercial leisure opportunities” (75).²⁶

Processes of re-worldment and landscapes of tourism

Finally, processes of re-wordment may originate in the more or less genuine, often bottom-up, need and desire for responses, solutions or opposition to the above processes of the new cultural economy of space, and, here again, culture seems to play a crucial and fundamental role.²⁷ In all of its forms and manifestations, both tangible and intangible, inspired by either heritage or creativity, rooted in ‘tradition’ or in novelty, referring to values, symbolism, meaning, or simply speaking to lifestyles, livelihoods and modes of life, culture emerges as the generative power of all aspects and workings of re-worldment: art and craft; public works and infrastructures; changing settings of everyday lifeworlds; grand-scale landscape projects in the public domain; instigation of new forms of landscape-sensitive and landscape-appropriate tourism, such as alternative and special-interest tourism (i.e. bird-watching, ‘slow tourism’, agro-tourism, etc.) and many more.

Individual, but especially collective, actions, initiatives and motives increasingly constitute an enormous bottom-up dynamic in the workings of re-worldment, resulting in landscapes of ‘somewhere’, where ‘somewhere’ may refer more or less to pre-existing landscape forms and patterns, functions and practices, meanings and values, conceptions, uses and stewardship, etc.²⁸ In post-colonial contexts, for instance, locals may claim their spaces, by asserting themselves through their choices and actions, as, for example vis-à-vis tourism in non-heterotopic tourist destinations.²⁹

Processes of re-worldment in tourism thus result into new forms, assemblages, arrangements, and products, carrying a range of meanings and implications, from empowering to uneasy to elusive. Such new forms, functions, systems and networks may refer to all aspects of life, forming new scalar spatialities, new landscapes/ places, and ‘new presences and absences’.³⁰ Whether they are aimed at direct gratification and actual satisfaction, or serving as a source of perpetual tourist yearning and fantasy,³¹ individual and collective human imagination and creativity inform new landscape versions and possibilities, in all realms of life. They do so, increasingly through widespread digitalization, artificial intelligence and new ICTs, serving the ongoing tourist quest for personal and collective empowerment and regeneration, as exemplified in the current rise in ‘wellness’ tourism, voluntourism, the co-creation and co-governance movements, etc.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Change is obviously always new, always relative and always (con)temporary. Indeed, “the newness and imaginary, often speculative, complexities [of these processes of change] reveal multiple, and frequently competing, discourses significant for thinking about contemporary socio-spatial reorganization” (2091).³² Furthermore, although presented separately for analytical purposes, all of the aforementioned processes of the new cultural economy of space remain interconnected and interweaving into each other, in their overarching inter-scalar context and multifold socio-spatial interfaces.³³

This study represented an effort to organize and make sense of the spatial dynamics of global contemporary change,³⁴ in the terms in which these ongoing macro-geographical transformational forces are affecting and shaping the landscape, with an emphasis on tourism. It did so through a critical lens, aiming at being an integrative and synthetic approach, serving theoretical and epistemological purposes, while highlighting the centrality of culture.

Concluding, despite the general acknowledgment of ongoing and often escalating tensions brought about by forces of contemporary change, we cannot but acknowledge, even revel in, the richly imaginative ways in which people continue to live and ‘world’ their landscapes.³⁵

NOTES

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FLORENCE 2040: TRADITION, DENSITY, INNOVATION, ECOLOGY, AND DIVERSITY, A PILOT STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is the first of four papers related to the design of a new neighbourhood for Florence in 2040. It presents a pilot study derived from the work of a six-week graduate study abroad at an urban design studio held in Florence, Italy.

In 2019, four graduate students Randy Begin, Mike Bernal, Bryan Hurlburt, and Raudra Patel, took up residence in Florence, Italy – Figure 1. They spent the first two weeks traveling throughout Italy, documenting their urban experiences via sketches, photographs, and journals. Their first week in Florence was spent researching and analysing varied precedents, everything from urban theory, planning examples, Eco infrastructure, and relevant Italian architecture. Four districts in the historic centre of Florence were also analysed to better understand the phenomenology of Tuscany. Based on this scholarship, students were asked to make value judgments and evaluate schemes, realizing two preliminary urban design proposals.



Figure 1. Florence Team: Top Row – Brian Hurlburt, Dr. Ted Sawruk, Randy Begin Bottom Row – Mike Bernal, Professor Hope Hui Rising, and Raudra Patel.

The City of Florence presented students with significant challenges and great opportunities. Let us not mince words: to propose change in this city is a difficult task. Urban designers need that rare mix of vision and pragmatism. As such, the mission was to explore ways to improve the city, ameliorate problems, and contribute to civic life. The site is a mile-long industrial/rural landscape west of the city centre along the Arno River. The studio aimed to create a new urban district, hosting community

residents, including Syrian refugee families, young Italian families, urban professionals, university students, and retired/elderly individuals. The new district necessitated integrating a complex program, landmark buildings, public piazzas, various arterial streets, and numerous meandering pedestrian pathways.¹ Various housing types were intricately woven into the commercial fabric, with various institutional buildings as focal points. The proposed streetscapes needed to be rich with interactive events, creating various physical, visual, and sensory experiences.²

Consequently, these student proposals explore urban design as a complex field of study that combines various disciplines. Beyond the city's physical fabric, the students engaged in unseen forces, such as human behavior - evolving social values, human interaction, and the emigration and exodus of individuals and groups. This larger picture revealed a hybrid of traditional patterns and technological innovations that maintained the urban character of Florence,³ while increasing urban density within energy-efficient, often net-zero, exemplars.⁴ The scholarly outcomes seek to delineate a 2040 future for Florence. A raft of challenges faces new housing design, at the forefront of which is a triumvirate of interrelated needs – to make dwellings more spacious, more affordable and less damaging to the environment. Each of these is important in their own right, but are they reconcilable? Conventional thinking suggests larger dwellings cost more, as does increasing their environmental sustainability, so consequently they become less affordable.

This paper explores these apparently conflicting priorities. It draws on a broad range of research, and argues that by thinking creatively it is possible to make advances in each separate area to mutual advantage. In so doing, housing can be created, which is more spacious, sustainable and affordable.

URBAN DESIGN ISSUES

As architects, we are responsible for developing solutions to problems within the built environment. This statement applies to projects of any scale, from a single room to an entire city. The urban fabric is one of the most exciting environments within human society. Everyone on the planet is integrated and involved with urban life somehow. Whether living in a city, using varied transportation, or participating in social or cultural events.

Additionally, while providing a public space physically is easy, it is an entirely different challenge to have that space promote social activity. Achieving successful social interaction does not necessarily have to have its own apparatus to be successful. Existing elements can be sensitively arranged to promote these aspects. Discovering new ways to accomplish this mission is at the heart of this research study and is one of the most feasible ways to help improve people's lives today.

Interdisciplinary in nature, the field of urban design utilizes elements of many built environment professions, including landscape architecture, urban planning, architecture, civil engineering, and municipal engineering. As such, it is common for professionals in all these disciplines to practice urban design. More recently, urban design has evolved into various subfields, such as strategic urban design, tactical urbanism, water-sensitive urban design, and ecological/sustainable urbanism. Urban design also demands understanding a wide range of subjects, from physical geography to social science, and an appreciation for related disciplines, such as real estate development, urban economics, political economy, and social theory.

Urban design theory primarily engages the design, management and structure of public space (i.e., the 'public domain') and more specifically, the phenomenological use of public places.

Urban designer and planners believe that "public space includes the totality of spaces used freely daily by the general public, such as streets, plazas, parks and public infrastructure. Some aspects of privately owned spaces, such as building facades or domestic gardens, also contribute to public space," and therefore within the realm of urban design theory.⁵

THE STUDENT RESEARCH FOCUS

During the summer semester of 2019, a group of graduate students from the University of Hartford were able to put this premise to the test with the design projects they developed while studying in Florence, Italy. A city like Florence is interesting because it has had the same structure and circulation for the past 600 years. While the existing Renaissance infrastructure has been very successful over many centuries, it may not be able to transition into the future. With the rapid advancement of technology and current climate events, it will lose its effectiveness over the next century. Our research proposal seeks to discover a way to expand the city of Florence, while still preserving the character and social disposition that has made it an international urban landmark.⁶ The students sought to accomplish this objective by using the urban masterplan project as a tool to help redefine the city and its people.

Urban design or urban form is based on planning policies & regulations, spatial layouts, infrastructure, and zoning. An urban proposal can restrict or promote varied activities, contributing to or limiting the quality of life of the community. The following program is only a start, serving as a list of possible programmatic inclusions. Other components were introduced or removed to determine individual interpretations of the final proposal. The students were asked to consider, “How will you address the following issues?”⁷

Object vs background buildings

Public access vs individual privacy

Quality of street life & safety

Spatial orientation & hierarchy

Sequence of experiences

Connections vs destinations

Residents vs tourists

Public celebrations & festivals



Figure 2. Site in relation to the historic center of Florence.

THE SITE

The site utilized in this exercise is a mile long industrial/rural landscape west of the city center along the Arno River – Figure 2. The goal was to create a new urban district, hosting residents that included, Syrian refugee families, young Italian families, urban professionals, university students, and retired/elderly individuals.

Currently, Firenze has a shortage of residential housing, as many existing residences are rented out throughout the year to tourists in the historic center. Additionally, the population of Firenze is augmented by a seasonal influx of college students, studying in the city. While this transition has been financially good for the region, it has created problems for local families who want or need to live close to the city center.⁸

This new neighborhood will be placed on tracks of rural/industrial land. At the moment, the area has no discernible identity nor amenities. Its location, and easy access to the historic center, makes it an ideal site for redevelopment. However, the undeveloped fields have long served as a seasonal flood plain. As such, any development of this site will require the development of a flood control system. Defenses such as levees, bunds, reservoirs, and weirs are proposed to protect the site and regulate the flow of the Arno River. The series of levees dams, and flood gates will also raise the water level in the river, providing enhanced water recreation throughout the city of Florence.⁹

COURSE METHODOLOGY

Over a six-week period, the students charretted an urban design for the site. The term charrette is not well known among lay people, but it is familiar to architects. A charrette is an intensive brainstorming session over several days that focuses on a particular issue or problem. This methodology has historically proved successful in revealing numerous options, which can be further evaluated over time. A four-part research methodology was then introduced to advance their analysis. The students spend the first three weeks researching varied precedents, everything from urban theory, planning examples, local infrastructure, and relevant Italian architecture. Based on this scholarship, they value formulated social discernments and identified architectonic models.

Architectural design is more than merely the organization of programmatic spaces. Architecture is the thoughtful creation and manipulation of space and its edges in response to a specific idea or set of ideas about habitation, art, man and nature, etc. Creativity in architecture must utilize an approach to the design problem that recognizes the coexistence, through time, of a diverse spectrum of disciplines. The synthesis of such issues as art, architecture, engineering, psychology (to name a few) into an architectural product requires the ability to identify, to interpret, and to evaluate design issues that present themselves during the design process. The act of design requires an ability to recognize, to minimize, and/or to resolve conflicting issues. In addition, it is sometimes necessary to create conflict in order to test design decisions.

These capacities were developed through a series of design exercises, and sketches, augmented by lectures, readings, field trips, class critiques and student presentations. These first series of projects facilitated the investigation of basic design concepts. Further projects, presented in related papers, will explore more complex architectural principles through studio projects, presented in both model and graphic forms.

Project One: Urban Analysis During Travel

Throughout the student travels, they visited various urban spaces of significance throughout Italy. Naples, Rome, Siena, Bologna, Vicenza, Venice and Turin were served as first-hand case studies. Ancient presidents, such as Pompeii, the Roman Forum, and medieval Lucca, were also studied as urban constructs. Additionally, San Gimignano with its unique skyline of medieval towers was highly considered as the presence of tall structures was the norm in Tuscany during the Middle Ages. This introduction to the contest was used to observe, analyze, and document the varied phenomenological experiences. The students utilized this as a method of gathering sensory experiences, understanding dynamics, and documenting relationships. The resultant documents are not presentation sketches, but instead analytical notes. Urban spaces should be recorded using words, diagrams, plans, perspectives,

and sections. While there was no defined way to record, it was necessary to create quality ‘sketches,’ rich with insight.¹⁰



Figure 3. Examples of precedent analysis conducted during Project Two study.

Project Two: Scholarly Analysis of Precedents

There are many reasons to study precedents before embarking on design research. The most important is the analysis of built work by historic or contemporary architects. As such, the analysis conducted by the students had to be critical in nature. They could not simply show examples of existing buildings. Criticism uses various methods; comparing the work to various theories, equating the project with ideal or “iconic” work, exploring the project through comparison to basic principles – such as basic design.¹¹ An important part of precedent analysis will include “conclusions” about each precedent studied. Each of the four students analyzed a precedent related to 1) urban form, 2) green building innovation, 3) an outstanding urban center, and 4) an Italian architect – Figure 3. These insights served as a foundation and informed the development of their urban design proposals.

Additionally, critical regionalism and district identity weighed heavily throughout the design process. To that end, the writings of Ebenezer Howard (1898, 1902), Christian Norbert-Shultz,¹² Kenneth Frampton and Robert Venturi¹³ were critically analyzed. With regards to postmodern urban criticism, Leon Krier,¹⁴ Andres Duany (2000, 2011), and Aldo Rossi¹⁵ were reviewed.

Project Three: Analysis of a District in Florence

Throughout the design studio, students utilized the FeliCity-3D-Webtool, an innovative on-line tool to assist in strategic energy planning, to assess the sustainability of their proposed designs.¹⁶ Due to a lack of time, I will reserve a through description for the final paper. However, the tool uses a comprehensive European 3D building database, which serves as a basis for real-time thermal simulation and data visualization. FeliCity will be utilized to evaluate the student proposals and assess their merit as future prototypes. The existing status of the city’s built infrastructure will be assessed and its current sustainable grade will be revealed – Figure 4.

The city of Florence covers almost 40 square miles, and is administratively divided into five main Municipalities or “districts:” Historic Center, Rifredi, Campo Di Marte, Isolotto Legnaia, and Salluzzo Gavinana. For the purposes of this scholarship, it is critical to understand how the city

functions, both in the historic district and in the surrounding neighborhoods. As such, each student was assigned a district of Florence to analyze, so as to become acquainted with the nuances of the Florentine urban fabric. In this way, Florence is not one urban center, but a collection of interlocking urban centers, some grand, others more intimate. Each district is identified by a landmark building, a public piazza, and various artery streets that function primarily as pedestrian streets. Housing is intricately woven into the commercial fabric, with various institutional buildings serving as focal points. The streets are meandering, rich with interactive events, creating a variety of physical, visual, and sensory experiences. If the intent of this scholarship was to maintain the unique character of Florence, while realizing an innovative and advanced urbanity, it was critical that the designers understand the physical and social nuances that distinguish the historic urban fabric.

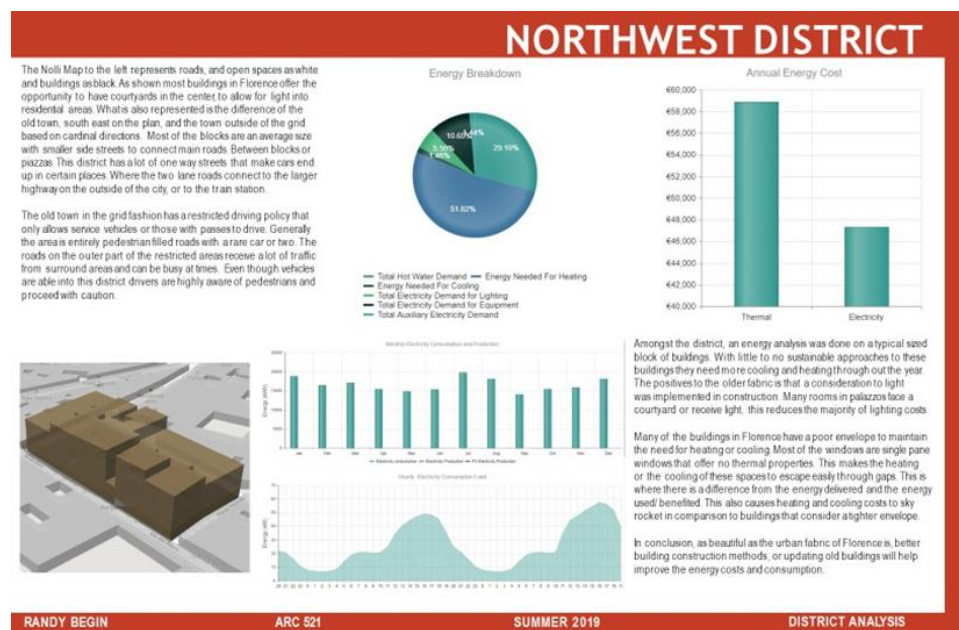


Figure 4. FeliCity-3D-Webtool utilized to analyze the northwest district of the historic city center.

Project Four: New District for Florence

The designer team of Begin and Patel considered the local urban fabric when utilizing the existing road grid to divide the site into six urban blocks – Figure 5. They began by continuing the two-lane residential N/S roads found in the adjacent residential neighborhood across the site, and then by introducing single lane one-way streets within those blocks. They next enhanced the existing E/W neighborhood streets along both the existing neighborhood to the south and the river front street to the north, creating four-lane boulevards. The river street was augmented by a transit rail connecting the new district with the university across the river and the historic city center. In turn, an E/W pedestrian street was introduced, bisecting the residential blocks, creating an alternative access to all urban amenities. It also serves to break the grid, meandering through the orthographic blocks and creating vibrant urban vistas. As it developed, the pedestrian pathway was lined with a combination of commercial and residential units, and linking a sequence of religious/civic centers.



Figure 5. Evolution of Urban Fabric and Figure 6. Final layout and Land Use Plan

Embracing traditional Garden City principles,¹⁷ a green space was introduced via a large park located in the second block. This incorporated the existing pond and wetlands landscape, enriching them as an English landscape setting.¹⁸ The new park serves as a recreation space and connects the existing residential neighborhood to the south with the Arno river to the north. Additionally, a linear green space was established along the Arno river, providing enhance recreation in coordination with critical flood prevention planning. A relatively unused asset in Florence, the Arno riverfront was reconsidered as an athletic and aquatic leisure

center. Running paths, picnic areas, sports fields, and a sculpture park were envisioned, along with swimming, boating and fishing. Furthermore, within the varied neighborhoods, a spattering of pocket parks is indicated, providing safe, accessible, and localized recreation spaces for children and the elderly – Figure 6.¹⁹ Throughout the district fifteen urban farm structures are also proposed. Employing a multi-level hydroponic system, these farms will provide easily accessible food sources throughout the year.



Figure 7. Final Urban Plan for New District

The final scheme –Figure 7, building on IMCL ten-minute neighborhood concepts,²⁰ proposes four residential blocks with three urban parkscapes. Five piazzas are incorporated with related civic and religious supports and aligned with the new streets and pedestrian pathway. Of key consideration was a piazza with a mosque as the religious focal point – Figure 8. More than fifty thousand Muslims live in Florence, with only two small store-front mosque serving as centers of worship.²¹ Following the urban protocol granted to Christian churches, the new piazza was developed to support this growing religious minority. The mosque and related piazza would therefore serve as a focus for the new residential neighborhood housing Syrian Refugees.

Other civic amenities include, a new museum (as an extension of the Uffizi), a botanical garden with a conservatory/winter garden, a hotel/convention center, a new elementary school, a mosque, a church, a library, and a theater/concert hall. While the new district was conceived to house local residents, it was also seen as an opportunity to expand the cities tourist attractions and cultural amenities.

Utilizing the residential studies attained by the district analysis, the residential street sections proposed to recreate many urban relationships currently found in the historic city center. While the apartments would be of a contemporary vernacular design, the scale, character, and ambiance will be consistent with Florence. Additionally, the precedent of medieval Tuscan towers, allowed the introduction of residential “pencil” towers into the mix – Figure 9.¹⁸ Borrowing from Bologna and San Gimignano, the distribution of individual towers throughout the district and the concentration of towers in significant areas serves to tie the contemporary skyline with its Tuscan past.



Figure 8. New Mosque complex with related Piazza proposed.



Figure 9. New River Walk, Comercial Center and High-rise Housing proposed.

While some areas of this scheme remain undeveloped, some key features serve to ground the proposal. The transportation layout and the green space distribution are well considered. Housing typologies and street profiles are also well established. And focused residential areas for university students, Syrian refugees and young professionals are carefully advanced. As such, the urban planning is piloted, the architectural character still needs to be further explored.

CONCLUSION

While this proposal does not engage the design of individual structures, nor does it propose the character of the urban center, it does postulate varied transformative options available to urban designers. It provides the raw materials, which if properly combined, could realize an innovative new district for Florence, one that serves to continue the qualities that make Florence a desired tourist destination and a vibrant living community. The design expands much needed housing for locals, incorporates the needs of the growing Muslim community, addresses the effects of flooding and climate change, while proposing a critically regional, sustainable future. While not fully resolved, the student proposals from the research charrette made significant advances to attaining a new residential district for Florence by 2040.

NOTES

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“SEE YOU AT IKEA!”: THE RISE OF FURNITURE STORES AS HETEROTOPIC SETTINGS FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS IN HONG KONG

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INTRODUCTION

The global furniture and houseware brand IKEA is known for its classic ‘big blue box’ showrooms, located on the outskirts of cities all over the world. Here, customers can discover, test and purchase products before bringing them home and enjoy a meal at the restaurant to enhance the shopping journey. Based on its ‘access for everyone’ principle, in recent years, IKEA has developed a new urban retail format that has already been rolled out in cities like Hong Kong, Taipei and Copenhagen. These shops are smaller, located in city centres, and aim is to establish showrooms in areas where people live, move and work.

This paper focuses on IKEA’s urban store format in Hong Kong, revealing its role as a space of hyper consumption in which local groups have gradually established social spaces under the constraints of a neoliberal urban ethos. Combined with their policy of allowing visitors to try out their furniture in home-like settings, IKEA’s spacious and accommodating environments and accessible locations serve as ideal settings for informal encounters among specific social groups, such as the youth, the elderly and migrant domestic workers (MDW)—groups that would not necessarily purchase products in the stores and mix in the city under normal circumstances.

Based on unobtrusive observations and interviews with users in a centrally located store and an in-depth interview with a retail design representative to understand the intentions behind the brand’s concept, this paper identifies different types of informal activities, discusses and compares these activities to those in other similar spaces of consumption and explores them as a tactical reinterpretation of social space by groups in the city that are in dire need of space.

BACKGROUND

A matter of space (or lack thereof)

Hong Kong has been defined as a mall city.¹ Consumer-oriented spaces are ingrained in the daily life of the city through a particular urban form that spatially integrates commercial complexes with mass office and hotel spaces, public transit, and public and residential buildings. Entry points to the transit system are strategically placed at mall entrances.² Thus, for millions of residents, part of everyday life happens on commercial premises. There are several conditions for spaces of consumption to become

everyday spaces in Hong Kong. Land is government owned and most of the public revenue comes from selling the land. As a result, the city has the world's highest real estate prices. Residential spaces are extremely small, and living rooms or outdoor private spaces are a rare luxury in the city. In fact, Hong Kong has the lowest amount of public space per capita (2.7–2.8 m²) compared to other Asian cities, such as Shanghai, Singapore and Tokyo.³ The public spaces available in urban areas generally lack quality, and their design is not conducive to social or group activities.⁴ The governance of public space tends to be particularly unfavourable to vulnerable groups (e.g. children, older adults, and migrants) and their informal activities, including playing, dancing and gathering in large groups.⁵ The extreme weather conditions of the city, with hot and humid summer months and rainy seasons, further contribute to the development of weather-controlled indoor spaces. In the globalised commercial spaces of this high-density city, privately owned public spaces (POPS) rapidly expanded.⁶ Highly patrolled by security staff, POPS generally do not cater to public use by vulnerable groups. However, in Hong Kong, other hyper globalised commercial spaces, such as McDonald's stores, allow diverse users, such as migrants or homeless individuals to use their spaces for extensive periods of time.⁷ Similarly, IKEA stores have emerged as settings wherein non-buying activities are tolerated and groups of vulnerable users repeatedly reclaim the space.

Beyond the blue box

In Hong Kong, hyper consumption spaces are –at times– settings for civic uses.⁸ The same spaces are tactically reinterpreted by the vulnerable groups in the city, who are in dire need of space. IKEA has five stores in Hong Kong (Figure 1). The stores in Hong Kong are generally smaller than the suburban 'big blue box' format, and they are located inside shopping complexes. They belong to the category of 'urban stores' which are implemented in central areas of larger cities, where people live and go about their daily lives. Here, larger stores cannot be established; as a result, smaller versions are integrated into mass transit neighbourhoods that are highly accessible by public transportation and close to residential areas.

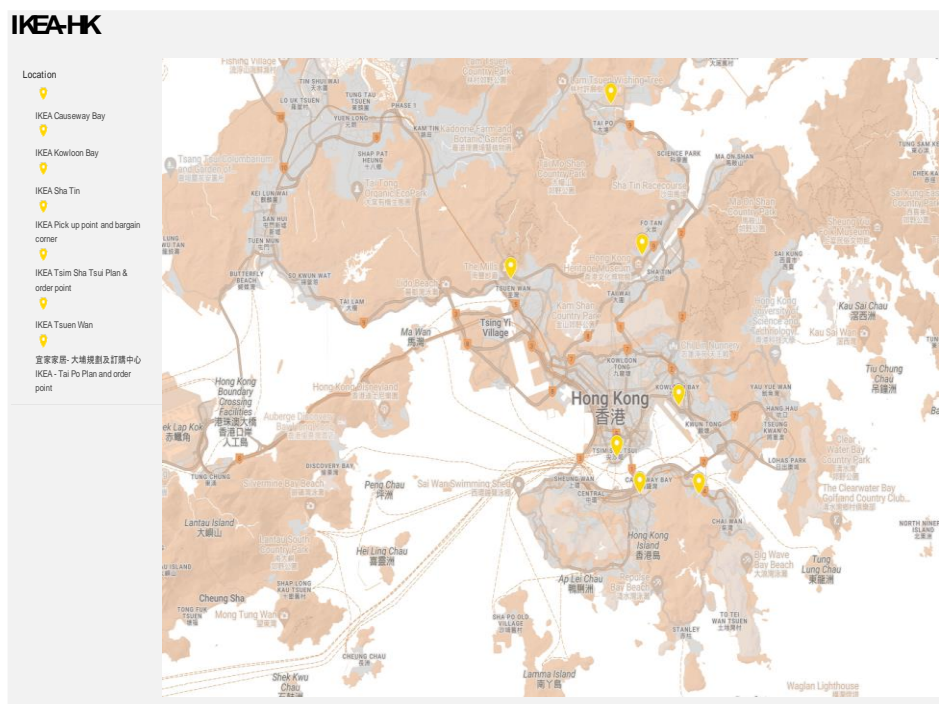


Figure 1. Location of IKEA showrooms in Hong Kong (Source – Google My Maps)

CASE STUDY

This study is part of a larger project that aims to explore the volumetric development of public spaces in high-density Asian cities. In this study, we explore spaces that might cater to vulnerable groups and the role of commercial interiors in this context. A case study approach and qualitative research methods were adopted, including unobtrusive observations, in-situ semi-structured interviews with individuals and groups of consumers and one expert interview with an IKEA retail design representative. The IKEA Causeway Bay store was chosen for the case study due to its long-term establishment and location in a busy central commercial district in Hong Kong.

Unobtrusive observations and semi-structured interviews

Six observation studies were conducted in the period between June 2021 and November 2022. Observations were used to identify types of non-buying activities and to explore the connection between the store environment and these activities. We observed how the store was a place for informal encounters among different social groups that would not necessarily mix in the city. These groups comprise migrant domestic workers, older adults, teenagers and young couples. During the observation studies, we observed a high number of non-buying users on Sundays—when domestic workers have their day off—and on rainy or hot days.

Pilot study

In July 2022, a pilot study was conducted comprising unobtrusive observations and short individual interviews (N = 9) with users who were Hong Kong locals and migrant domestic workers. The pilot was used to observe the user segments and diversity of non-buying activities and to identify the appropriate format and time to conduct semi-structured interviews.

Based on the observation studies and pilot study, we decided to focus our interviews on groups of migrant domestic workers visiting IKEA on Sundays.

Semi-structured interviews

Six group interviews (group interviews #1 to #6) with migrant domestic workers were conducted in situ on November 27, 2022 with the assistance of one Tagalog native speaker research assistant. The groups were approached by the Tagalog-speaking assistant and were asked if the group would consent to participate in this research. If the group accepted, the assistant introduced the researcher, who conducted the interview in English. Support with English and Tagalog translation was sought for when needed. The interview with IKEA's retail design representative was conducted online in February 2023. The expert was identified through one of the researchers' networks.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Environmental characteristics conducive to (semi-)public use

The impact of physical spaces on users' emotions and behaviour is well recognised. In 1973, Kotler introduced the concept of 'atmospherics' as the deliberate design of space to evoke specific effects in buyers, emphasising the potential influence of a store's ambiance over its products.⁹ Drawing on Mehrabian and Russell's stimulus–organism–response (SOR) model from environmental psychology, subsequent research has examined how sensory stimuli like lighting, sound and colour affect consumers' emotional states and evaluations, influencing behaviours such as spending behaviours or dwelling time.¹⁰ However, the majority of these studies have concentrated on the impact on purchasers, with less regard for non-purchasing visitors. Turley and Milliman¹¹ identified 57 atmospheric variables that affect consumer behaviour and can be categorised into exterior, general interior, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration and human variables. These factors

suggest that store location, layout, interior design, product presentation and staff behaviour can significantly shape the shopping atmosphere, affecting both buyers and non-buyers.

During the observations, we found several environmental characteristics that are known as atmospheric components in stores and are also conducive to diverse public activities. First, regarding accessibility, the store is situated in a commercial district surrounded by shops and restaurants in the immediate proximity of a mass transit railway station and Victoria Park, a long-established gathering place of migrant domestic workers. Second, the interiors, featuring an air-conditioned atmosphere and climate walls that protect against extreme weather conditions while also shielding from the city's noise, ensure a comfortable stay. Aspects such as shade, shelter from noise and extreme weather, and comfortable temperatures are appealing in public spaces.¹²

Third, the store features micro-domestic settings. These are presented in various sizes and thus appeal to different group sizes. For instance, couples often opt for small sofas facing the centre of the store's interior, while larger groups prefer sitting around big dining tables with more chairs. The settings also consist of furniture with varying comfort levels. Here, we observed behaviours such as sleeping or cuddling (Figure 1) occurring in low, soft furniture, like beds or sofas, whereas dynamic conversations among groups took place around dining tables or on large sofa arrangements around coffee tables. Additionally, we observed how moveable furniture, including chairs, tables, sofas and beds, was personalised (e.g. with pillows) and rearranged. The choice of settings, moveable furniture and the option to personalise the space are crucial aspects of a high-quality public space.¹³

The soft positional lighting, music, access to Wi-Fi and phone charging stations were other observed factors that could contribute to lingering and non-buying activities. In addition, the availability of affordable food options is considered an essential element for stationary activities in public spaces. The store features a food court in which local snacks are sold at an affordable price. Overall, the interviewees defined the IKEA store environment as *comfortable, chill and crowded*.

Observed and expressed activities

The most frequent activities observed included relaxing on the sofas or beds as individuals or in groups, playing or watching videos on the phone, chatting with friends, waiting for friends and spending time between activities elsewhere or before going back to the employer's home (Figure 2). The erratic nature of migrant domestic workers' activities on Sundays was noted in the group interview with three women from the Philippines.

When we have free time after meeting some friends, we stay here [at IKEA] before going back to our employer's [house]. We are NPA: no permanent address. Sometimes we go to Central. (Interview #1, Member A, November 27, 2022)

We normally call 'no permanent address' like going somewhere, having no steady place. (Interview #1, Member B, November 27, 2022)

Besides high numbers of visitors during extreme weather conditions, the store is highly visited on Sundays between 4 pm and 6 pm. Our informants agreed that this was the typical period when they visited IKEA before reaching home at 7 pm. Typically, the interviewees avoided mentioning the amount of time spent in the store, probably out of fear of judgement. During our observations, we saw groups and individuals spend up to two hours in the sofa area of the store.

The extreme dwelling conditions of Hong Kong, with houses that rarely include living or common rooms, result in even more limited residential spaces for live-in carers (e.g. a mere bed space); living rooms are often precluded to them. In a short interview, a respondent unveiled that the items she bought at IKEA were decorations for her small room to make her feel at home. Outside of home and during their day off, most migrant domestic workers gather in groups in public spaces. Seeing familiar faces (of other MDWs) in IKEA made our interviewees feel welcomed in the store (Interview #5),

even if it was not a public space. Interestingly, a group of women and other interviewees explained that while in the store, they would think about their future home back in their home countries. One interviewee elaborated:

I imagine my home to be like this [referring to one-room display]. I take pictures and send them home. I really used to send the [IKEA] booklet home, because if I want that pattern [shown in the Ikea booklet], I can just like show, you know, the exact [page] number. (Interview #2, November 27, 2022)

Gathering in the IKEA settings that provide layouts of living rooms, dining rooms and bedrooms seemed to provide space to (re)create a sense of domesticity for the migrant women working far from their home.



Figure 2. Non-buying activities in Ikea Causeway Bay

Comparison between the IKEA settings and other local commercial environments

The social and diverse non-buying activities that take place in the store redefine and push the boundaries of activities allowed in public. Compared to other commercial spaces, including other furniture stores, the IKEA settings were perceived to be more accommodating (Interview #2, November 27, 2022). Users occupying the sofa areas or gathering in the dining room showrooms were rarely asked to move, typically only when other customers asked to check specific features of the furniture. One interviewee noted a different approach to customer service in other commercial spaces:

In Hong Kong, some shopping malls are a bit posh. If you are Filipina [the shop assistants] don't entertain you better. I think the staff here at IKEA are pretty nice. (Interview #2, November 27 2022)

The presence of security or staff patrolling the store is common in other commercial spaces in Hong Kong, such as shopping malls or individual stores. Guards with uniforms are a recurrent presence in the atria of shopping complexes. Similarly, staff guarding privately owned public spaces often targets vulnerable groups and compels them to vacate the space.¹⁴ During our observations, we did not record any instance of IKEA staff asking users to move. However, interviewees noted that sometimes groups of older adults tended to feel more entitled to the same spaces.

We examined IKEA's perspective on non-shopping consumers in stores by interviewing Ms. Anna Benckert retail store developer based at the IKEA headquarters in Sweden. The informant provided insights into the brand's values and strategies, which provided us with possible explanations for why non-buying consumers feel welcome in IKEA. For example, IKEA ensures that new stores offer activities for the community and invite people who do not make purchases. Examples are the implementation of free events and the establishment of affordable restaurants and playgrounds.

Bencker noted that in a new Shanghai store, IKEA introduced makers hubs and labs for activities such as cooking classes. Furthermore, in a new urban store in Copenhagen, we observed how IKEA had created a public rooftop park atop the building, providing a space for visitors to enjoy.

Benckert described specific and deliberate strategies to attract customers. Accommodating non-shopping consumers in the furniture exhibition areas was not articulated as an intended strategy. However, she explained that this tolerance for non-shopping consumers might reflect the fundamental values of the brand. She explained that IKEA is known for its welcoming atmosphere and stated that visitors say they feel at home in the stores and behave accordingly. The interviewee mentioned that she is not precisely sure how this atmosphere arose, but she believes it is rooted in IKEA's values. Here, she refers to the IKEA staff testament written by their founder Ingvar Kamprad, where it is stated, among other things, what is expected of IKEA staff:

We shall stand on the side of the many people, which involves taking on more responsibility than might at first seem to be the case. Standing on the side of the many people means representing the interests of ordinary people, regardless of whether that's good or bad for our own short-term interest. (Kamprad, 1976, 22)

Through the interview, we learned that IKEA's staff is not evaluated based on sales figures but rather on the extent to which they adhere to the values outlined in the testament. Benckert believes that the values described in the testament, which revolve around treating each other well and taking responsibility for one's actions, are basic common sense. This dedication and commitment to representing ordinary people's interests could explain why visitors feel welcome in IKEA's environment. It can be assumed that these values are kept in mind by those designing and operating the stores. Therefore, values may be reflected in interior design and services, and they can influence the entire customer experience.

CONCLUSION

Rapid urbanisation, migration and climate change will require future cities to plan for more inclusive public spaces that accommodate diverse public uses in weather-controlled environments. Our case study showed that in high-density Asian cities, indoor commercial environments are, at times, settings of informal non-buying activities. In Hong Kong, social spaces are carved in consumption-oriented settings. The IKEA store examined in this article emerges as a heterotopic location of compensation,¹⁵ a place where vulnerable groups may experience a life different from their current reality 'as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled'.¹⁶ While we focused on the activities of migrant domestic workers, other users performed similar activities individually or in groups. The case can serve as a reference for future scholarship on alternative public uses in commercial spaces and pave the way for future studies on accommodating commercial spaces and the brand loyalty of non-buying consumers.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that there were no conflicts of interest in this study.

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LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY ACTIONS BOARDS IN COLOMBIA: A CASE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

This research describes, evidences and understands those leadership experiences that have allowed to gather efforts and resources in the community action boards of the municipality of Floridablanca (Santander, Colombia) to seek the solution of the most felt needs of the community.

Within the analysis it was determined that the representatives of the community action boards of the municipality of Floridablanca (Santander, Colombia) of the last five years collect characteristics of different types of leadership, has a vision and a projection of transformation, innovation and empathy, which contributes to the improvement of the coexistence of the communities, favoring and strengthening social, emotional and communicative bonds, promoting the union between being and feeling, understanding the subjects as a whole and at the same time as a single being.

The context

The municipality of Floridablanca is part of the Metropolitan Area, with a territorial extension of 98.68 km², has an altitude of 925 meters above sea level and its total population is 300,730.¹ The urban area has an average temperature of 23 °C and its limits are to the North with Bucaramanga and Tona, to the east Tona and Piedecuesta to the south and to the west Girón and Bucaramanga.

In relation to the population distribution by age in 2005, the highest percentage of the population of both males and females was between 10 and 14 years old, with 10.33% and 8.91% respectively. It was followed by the 15 to 19 age range with 9.93% for men and 9.15% for women and the 20 to 24 age range with 9.29% for men and 9.37% for women. This shows that the bulk of the population in Floridablanca 15 years ago was teenagers and young people.

Regarding age by gender in 2019, between 20 and 24 the highest number of both men and women is concentrated with 9.24% and 8.56% respectively. It is followed by the range of 25 to 29 years old, with 8.91% and 8.30% respectively and from 30 to 34 with 8.03% and 7.63%, which indicates that a large part of the population is young and therefore of productive age, this being a very relevant factor for the municipality in terms of labor market.

In Floridablanca, the index for 2019 was 48.28, which means that, for every 100 children and adolescents under 15 years of age, there are 48.28 people over 65 years of age in the municipality.

THE PROBLEM

In Colombia, 67% of children grow up in poverty,² this means that more than 11 million children and adolescents in Colombia are poor. Of these, 8.3 million live in monetary poverty and 3,171,671 in extreme poverty, according to data from the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE),³ which makes them vulnerable to violence, poor nutrition and precarious health conditions.

With regard to domestic violence, 85 out of every 100 households say that someone beats and/or applies physical, humiliating or degrading punishment against children at home; or that, in 2022, 6,321 children were examined in cases of domestic violence, where the father, The mother and stepfather were the perpetrators in 77 percent of these situations.⁴

Children are not only victims of violence inside their homes. According to figures from the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, in 2022, 12 children were victims of homicide every week, for a total of 634 per year. Crimes that were mostly against adolescents: between 15 and 17 years old were the ones that reported the most cases, with 445 violent deaths. These deaths were also compounded by the terrible homicide of 41 children between the ages of 0 and 4.⁵

Meanwhile, other types of violence against children also continue to show signs and come from familiar hands. An example of this are the 8,445 occasions in which in 2022 children came to Forensic Medicine for interpersonal violence, cases in which in 63 percent of the time it was an acquaintance who was the architect of the aggressions; or that of 20,879 cases of alleged sexual offences against children and adolescents in 2023 (57 every day), in 50 percent of them, the alleged aggressor was a family member.

This tells us that COLOMBIA is a dangerous country for children. What to do to stop this problem? Below are some actions developed during the years 2021, 2022 and 2023 by leaders of Floridablanca, a municipality in Colombia, to confront it.

Health Sector

All children and adolescents must live in safe and protective environments; Therefore, the environments in which they spend their lives must guarantee the material and social conditions for the full exercise of rights and the reduction of risks and threats to the physical and psychological integrity of the subjects.⁶ This implies promoting the development of capacities to prevent, avoid and also act appropriately in situations of risk or threat to their dignity and integral development, or to another. Parental involvement, cooperative relationships and community solidarity are essential, supported by public policies consistent with this purpose of the integral development of children and adolescents.

Nationwide, there was a significant increase in the mortality rate in children under 1 year of age in 2020 compared to 2019 (11.21 vs 9.25). For the years 2021 and 2022, the data is not yet available. Compared to indicators from the municipality of Floridablanca that show that in 2020 the infant mortality rate was 8.90 deaths per 1,000 live births, a lower rate compared to 2019 where 9.25 deaths per 1,000 live births were recorded.⁷

In order to guarantee the right to life in children under 1 year of age and to meet the product target each year, a series of strategies were implemented for the period from 2020 to 2023 to train health personnel and follow up on the clinical IMCI care model in the IPS with emphasis on Acute Diarrheal Disease (ADD) and Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI). being a strategy that aims to reduce mortality and morbidity among children between the ages of zero and five, and to improve the quality of care they receive in health services and at home.

Health is a fundamental right, and its recognition implies actions to promote development and health, in a comprehensive health perspective in interdependence with other rights and within the framework of intersectoral action. The health system has the responsibility to generate conditions of quality, relevance and reasonable adjustments in services, in accordance with the time of life, the

characteristics of the population and the territory, as well as with the recognition of families and communities as collective subjects of rights, as part of relational processes and the promotion of the integral development of girls, children and adolescents.

In the same way, every child and adolescent has the right to healthy food and adequate nutrition and to the conditions of food security of their families and communities. Likewise, they are encouraged to live in a safe and protected environment that preserves their health, recognizing the importance of healthy environments.

Environments should promote healthy lifestyles that allow children and adolescents to recognize the importance of self-care by strengthening their capacities for the prevention of risks associated with physical, social, and emotional health. The health and nutrition of children and adolescents must be guaranteed from the beginning and throughout their lives with the active participation of their families, respecting their context and culture.

Some of the actions carried out during the 2020-2023 period were:

Promote Exclusive Breastfeeding

Promotion of breastfeeding up to 12 months and healthy complementary feeding for those over 6 months to 1 year and over 1 year of age, 154 mothers participating in the prenatal control program and 141 pregnant and lactating women were impacted.

Women's and Children's Friendly Institutions Programme – IAMI – ⁸ and the nutritional status of children aged 0 to 17 years

This Strategy proposes to institutions that provide care services to women, pregnant women, mothers, children and adolescents a methodology that allows them to systematically assess themselves, analyze their care practices, make an improvement plan, make the necessary adjustments, be evaluated by professionals external to the institution and finally be recognized as a Women and Child Friendly Institution with a Comprehensive Approach. IAMI following its pillars of comprehensiveness, quality and continuity.

Vaccinate 100% of children under 5 years of age every year

The Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) is a public health policy priority for the most susceptible populations, aimed at eradicating, eliminating and controlling vaccine-preventable diseases. The municipality of Floridablanca has six (6) IPS in charge of the programming, planning and execution of the vaccination service of the Regular Scheme and National Plan of vaccination against Covid19. Three (3) IPS out of the six (6) authorized carry out extramural activities in accordance with the programming, availability of biological. The coverage achieved in relation to the tracer biologics for the years 2020-2021-2022 and as of March 2023 according to the traffic light system of the Ministry of Health and Protection (see Table 1).

CUMPLIMIENTO COBERTURA DE VACUNACION ESQUEMA REGULAR MUNICIPIO DE FLORIDABLANCA					
POBLACION	BIOLOGICO	AÑO 2020	AÑO 2021	AÑO 2022	AÑO 2023
Población menor de 1 año	% B. C.G (Tuberculosis) en Recién Nacidos	95,5	86	85,1	31,4
	% HB RN	97	85,6	84,6	31,9
	% (VIP) PARENTERAL < DE 1 AÑO	77,6	66,7	69,4	18,4
	% 3ras. Dosis de Polio	78,7	67,4	65,4	18,3
	% 3ras. Dosis de Pentavalente Menores de 1 año	78,3	66,8	65	18,1
	% Neumo 2ra dosis	70,9	68,1	65,2	19,5
	% Rota 2das	69,2	67,2	63,8	19,5
Población de 1 año	% de SRP (Triple Viral) al Año de edad	80,4	67,9	70,6	18,6
	% HA 1 AÑO UNICA	80,5	68,5	70	21
	% F.A.	68,4	67,4	64,6	16,7
	% DPT 1er Ref.	69,4	61,6	62,6	16,1
Población de 5 años	% VARICELA	71,5	63	64	18,8
	% SRP (Triple Viral) Ref. 5 años	81,7	63	66,8	16,3
Población de 9 a 17 años	% DPT 5 AÑOS	83,2	64,1	63,8	18,2
	% VPH Niñas de 9 años 1as Dosis	9,6	12,5	18,6	5,4
	% VPH Niñas de 9 años 2as Dosis	1,6	1,8	3,3	18,5

Table 1. Compliance Vaccination Coverage Regular Schedule Municipality of Floridablanca

This was achieved using the strategies of: Search for susceptible population; cohort follow-up of the target population PAI – Expanded Program on Immunizations; channeling and induced demand to the PAI target population; extended Hours Offer; advertising on municipal administration networks, EPS, IPS campaign; house-to-house vaccination and free demand for vaccination services.

Strategy to maintain the 0% maternal mortality indicator

During the period from 2020 to 2023, the units of analysis have been carried out according to the notification of maternal mortality events, follow-up of the IPS in the prenatal control and family planning program, and the promotion of the importance of the timely entry of pregnant women into the prenatal control program and attendance at controls

Prevention of early pregnancy for students ages 10 to 19

Mediante la elaboración de graphic pieces published on social networks with a reach of 12,522 people; activities for the prevention of pregnancy with adolescents where 76 of the following schools benefited: G. García Márquez Institute, Minca Institute and youth seed group; an exclusive telephone line disseminating the program of friendly services to the Minca Institute to guidance teachers, reaching an impact of 2,734 people on Facebook and 2,313 on Instagram; dissemination of video clips aimed at students from 10 to 19 years old socialized at the San Bernardo Institute, with grades 9, 10, 11, Isidro Caballero School headquarters D, La Cumbre Technical College, Metropolitan College of the South to 167 students; celebration of the Andean Week with a total of 319 people intervened. Through the ludisex game, educational institutions are intervened: INSTITUTO TÉCNICO LA CUMBRE, COLEGIO TECNICO MICROEMPRESARIAL EL CARMEN, COLEGIO METROPOLITANO DEL SUR, COLEGIO RAFAEL POMBO and COLEGIO ISIDRO CABALLERO.

Socialize care routes on sexual abuse and family violence

In this strategy they were developed and socialized 1500 infographics disseminated to 1400 people in urban areas and 100 to people in rural areas; elaboration and socialization of 1500 booklets distributed in the urban area, 1400 to 3 primary educational institutions such as La Cumbre Institute, Metropolitan School of the South, Isidro Caballero School and 100 in the rural area Duarte Alemán School, Ecological School Palmeras, Guayanas, Mantilla, Cauchos and Casiano Bajo Ecological School; elaboration, socialization and delivery of 50 wall calendars in 50 homes in the Ruitoque villages, 161 calendars in the CDI of Floridablanca, 250 calendars in the Ruitoque Bajo and

Helechales villages; technical assistance verifying compliance with the comprehensive care on sexual abuse and family violence route to the following IPS: ESE CLINICA GUANE, AVANCE FOS, IPS ALIANZA DIAGNOSTICA CAÑAVERAL, IPS REDINSALUD, IPS COOMULTRASAN, IPS HOSPITAL SDF, IPS FCV, IPS FOSCAL, IPS ALIANZA BUCARICA, ESE GUANE HEALTH CENTERS.

Education Sector

Todo niño tiene derecho a la educación. Esto es lo que establece la Convención de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Derechos del Niño. El objetivo de la educación es permitir al niño desarrollar su potencial en la mayor medida posible y aprender a respetar los derechos humanos y las libertades fundamentales. Los principios generales de la Convención relacionados con la educación comprenden la no discriminación, el interés superior del niño, el derecho del niño a la vida, a la sobrevivencia y al desarrollo y el derecho del niño a expresar libremente sus opiniones. Estos principios pueden ser un instrumento de gran utilidad para llevar a cabo reformas en el sistema escolar.⁹ Las siguientes son las estrategias adoptadas durante el periodo 2020-2023 en el municipio de Floridablanca (Santander, Colombia) para alcanzar este objetivo.

PAE School Feeding Program

The School Feeding Programme provided food rations to children and adolescents in the 16 official educational institutions in the municipality of Floridablanca, identified within the targeting criteria. These define the procedure for progressively attending to the beneficiary population; technical exercise that must be carried out by the coverage area and the PAE team of the Certified Territorial Entities, and validated by the Territorial Planning and Monitoring Committee of the PAE, determining the venues and grades where the School Feeding Program will be implemented and the number of rations assigned to each establishment and headquarters.

Free Education

Free education has been guaranteed to school-age students enrolled in las Official Educational Institutions (OElS).

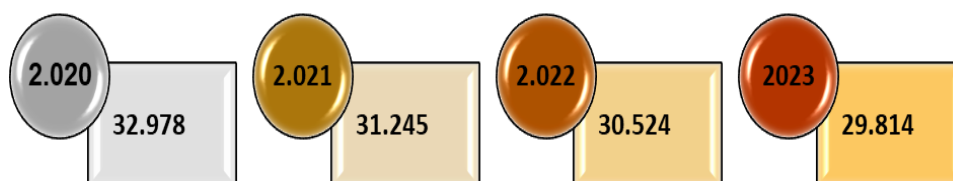


Figure 1. Data on students enrolled in school-age OElS

School transport

School transport service was guaranteed to students in the rural sector, according to a needs study



Figure 2. Data on students enrolled in school-age OEIs

Opportunities for Access to Higher Education

The result is evidenced in the ranking of official schools of Floridablanca according to SABER 11 Tests of 2022, published by the ICFES on December 28/2022,¹⁰ where the José Antonio Galán Institute, Gabriela Mistral Institute, José Elías Puyana Technical College, Madre del Buen Consejo Institute, Rafael Pombo Institute, Vicente Azuero Technical College and the San Bernardo Integrated Institute, they excelled in the A classification.

Strengthening School Governments

A strategy was developed that allowed the strengthening of the leadership of the student representatives of the OEIs, as an exercise for the knowledge of the public function, becoming multipliers of the training with the other students

Citizen Coexistence Sector

Campaigns and prevention in Official Educational Institutions

Socialization days of the routes of attention to school coexistence and attention to the population with disabilities, with students, teachers and student mediators from public and private educational institutions. Socialization sessions on the care route in sexual abuse, in the crime of human trafficking, domestic violence and disintegration of the family unit and child labor, aimed at primary and secondary school students, the parents of students and teachers in general, and official and private educational institutions.

Campaigns and Family Strengthening

Sensitization to parents of IEO students in the different mechanisms and tools provided by law for conflict resolution, to prevent acts of violence and intolerance within the institutions and in the family nucleus. They were carried out focused on the prevention of sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons and the route of attention in the event that people are victims of this scourge was announced.

Sports Sector

Articulation of Sports Tournaments



Figure 3. Articulation of 14 sports tournaments

Promotion of learning, foundation and improvement in different sports disciplines

In the 2021-2022 and 2023 periods, the sports training schools program is aimed at boys and girls from 6 to 17 years old and young people and adults in the municipality of Floridablanca to promote learning, foundation and improvement in different sports disciplines, strengthening their comprehensive training as people and athletes in Basketball, Soccer, Microsoccer, Volleyball, Futsal, Skating, Chess, Boxing, Taekwondo, Cycling, Futsal, Table Tennis, Olympic Wrestling, Swimming, Athletics

Culture

Artistic and cultural holidays

We benefited 1.833 children and adolescents from the different communes, villages and rural sectors of the Municipality where recreational-recreational activities were developed, as well as artistic and cultural exhibitions.

Musical and literary activities

We benefited 3.052 children and adolescents from the different communes, villages and rural sectors of the Municipality with massive musical activities with artists of local, departmental and national categories.

Artistic and cultural training workshops

We benefited 3.114 children as new students, added to the population enrolled in the previous term of the different communes, villages and rural sectors of the Municipality, increasing the participation of the community, in artistic-cultural training programs offered by the Casa de la Cultura Piedra del Sol in the Municipality of Floridablanca

Promotion of Reading

We benefited 2.064 children as new students, added to the population enrolled in the previous term of the different communes, villages and rural sectors of the Municipality, increasing the participation of the community, through the promotion of reading as a library extension.

Social Development

Celebrating Childhood and Infance

In 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, activities were carried out to celebrate the month of children annually, within the framework of the compass strategy, which promotes play and participation as a fundamental element of the fundamental development of children.

Comprehensive care for children in early childhood

In 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, comprehensive care was provided to 2400 children in early childhood, childhood and adolescence with a differential approach.

CONCLUSION

The costs paid by a country that does not protect its children, adolescents and young people are very high. It's not just a matter of human dignity and that we have a prevalence of rights over children, but it's also a bad idea, which no one wins as a society.

It is a situation that not only impacts the individual in their life, but all the people who will depend on them and the society they belong to, limiting their ability to lead projects or processes. It is not social capital for a nation that wants to develop. It's not good, it doesn't pay, the costs are very high also in areas such as education.

The actions presented here can be replicated in any of the 1000 or so municipalities of Colombia and in many of Latin America, but do not forget: The solution is not only in the leaders of countries, states, departments, municipalities, communes, townships, neighborhoods, villages, it is in the home of each one of us.

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SCRATCHING BENEATH THE SURFACE: AN ENQUIRY INTO THE READING OF CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE IN AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND

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Architecture is meant to be ‘read’, it is a language that operates within a semiotic system relevant to cultural, social and political values and behaviours. As a ‘language’ system we require understanding of it in order to make meaning, and through this meaning we establish an identity whereby we see ourselves through its (the architectural form) representational attributes. This is the obligation of architecture as a form of cultural narrative.

Aotearoa, New Zealand, is culturally and legally grounded in principles of biculturalism under the nation’s founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Treaty of Waitangi.¹ The term biculturalism itself is complex to define, as it is politically charged. The political concept of biculturalism stems from a colonial agenda. In other words, rather than the two being woven together, it developed from the assimilation and integration of Māori culture *in to* Pakeha. It makes sense therefore, that as a country we are grappling with how to represent ourselves through architecture that is truly bicultural in nature. As tangata te Tiriti,² how can we engage in this conversation appropriately, critically, and authentically? This is what we are questioning.

Traditionally, Māori cultural narratives were translated through oral and performative cultural practices as opposed to written records. Visual depictions of these narratives were often transcribed onto the walls and structure of wharenui (meeting houses) as a manifestation of ancestral connections and whakapapa (genealogy).³ These motifs and symbols were strongly rooted in specific ‘dialects’ of the many iwi and hapu throughout the country. Colonising activities in the years following the signing of Te Tiriti led to the subjugation of cultural representation (through oral, visual and creative expressions), which in turn reduced these highly localised, place-specific practices to a homogenised grammar of ornamentation.

Antoine Picon discusses that, historically, architecture that was ornamented was based on the understanding that architecture is a social production.⁴ This means that the application of motifs and symbols have social and cultural meaning and therefore need to be integrated with the form both tectonically and structurally in order to contextualise it. However, when reviewing the current approaches to representing bi-culture through an architectural lens we are faced with the realisation that ‘our’ architecture fails to transcend the surface. This reinforces architectural theorist Owen Jones’s earlier proposition that the ‘grammar’ of ornamentation is subservient to architecture and as such suggests a division between surface articulation and structure.⁵

In recent years, the re-adoption of Māori motifs has been used widely as a recognised method of cultural expression. Architecturally, this has centred around the use of Māori motifs and symbols as ornamentation applied to a building's façade – in essence, a form that is decorated. This is problematic, given that the exterior of a building acts as a signpost, a social mediator that represents a shared language of cultural identity. The use of symbols in this sense allows a contextual 'reading' that is widely understood but often dislocated from a deeper narrative. The risk of this practice is the dilution of highly specific ideations to a national 'language' of architecture as opposed to a dialectic approach that is specific to a particular iwi, hapū, or whānau (tribe, sub-tribe, family).

In the process of developing new architectural practises that embrace our bicultural context, the ongoing appropriation and use of pre-colonial symbolism to portray the rich cultural narrative of former practises has regrettably been accepted as the status quo. The use of applied metaphor through cladding systems (allegorical cloaks, woven baskets, for example) is seen in a number of civic and community buildings that are fundamentally eurocentric in their layout and construction. The Supreme Court of New Zealand in Wellington (completed 2010) is characterised through a glazed skin wrapped in an abstract bronze screen depicting native flora and fauna as a means to "signify the protective wisdom of community elders".⁶ The severing of this narrative at the edges of the building suggests an apprehension by the architects to fully embrace the expression of biculturalism. What this highlights, is the inherent disparity between what the building proclaims to be, versus what it *is*.

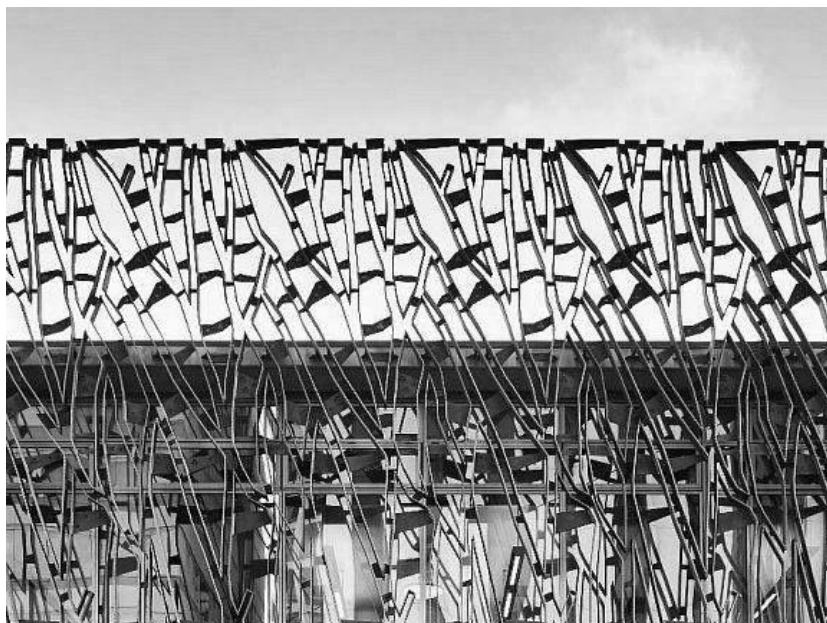


Figure 1. Façade detail of the Supreme Court of New Zealand; Wellington, New Zealand.

Metaphorically, the materiality suggests transparency – referencing the notion of an open, transparent justice system. The deliberate use of porous elements shows a willingness to engage in our future narrative 'openly' however this articulation could also be viewed as a 'mask', a performative covering where the core business (the court room itself) is housed in an armoured shell. In this instance the use of nature-based symbols, despite their significance, is a tentative attempt to create a nationally relevant dialogue (language) in order to bring *us* together. Here, using natural elements are 'safe' but as they lack specificity in meaning their use as an authentic cultural device is subjective.

When symbols and motifs are purposefully applied to a form under the guise of "bicultural" architecture, it can be difficult to challenge because this practise is, or has been, widely accepted. Understanding the appropriate use of ornamental facadism is crucial here in order to avoid the

homogenization of culture through a generic set of ‘signs and symbols’, a widely accepted post-modern practice.⁷ Architecture of the post-modern era emerged from a quest for significance, which involved examining customs and their overall worth to society. Symbols and motifs were frequently employed as a means of reinstating meaning in a communal context. These semiotic devices attempted to be all-encompassing, but upon closer inspection, they lacked the particularity necessary to foster a feeling of self.

Within an Aotearoa, New Zealand, context this ideology has been heavily informed by David Mitchell’s seminal text *The elegant shed : New Zealand architecture since 1945*, which portrayed concepts of NZ architecture aligning to understated, utilitarian precedents (the vernacular shed typology).⁸ According to Owen Jones, the contextual interpretation of form as a social mediator suggests a division between surface articulation and structure.⁹ This is indicated through the act of ‘decorating the shed’.



Figure 2. Exterior detail of Waikato Museum of Art and History; Hamilton, New Zealand.

A critical interrogation of early efforts to embody biculturalism in our architecture, as cited in McCarthy, suggests that the 1980s and 1990s were characterised by tentative and somewhat naive attempts at developing a distinctively ‘kiwi’ architectural language.¹⁰ McCarthy discusses a particularly brutal 1988 appraisal by Barry Rae of JASMaD’s Waikato Museum of Art and History in Hamilton, in which the author suggests the inclusion of Māori representation through a symbolic whare jutting from the rear of the building to be a trivial move. Rae posited that the signposting through architectural language was so weak that physical signs were necessary for both wayfinding and identity of the building. Expanding on his critique through a review of the interior of the Tainui gallery he stated:

the poupou and rafters are completely unrelated to structure, space or light. The result is a confusing pastiche of tacked on surface decoration completely unrelated to the architecture. ... No attempt has been made to explore new ways of integrating art and architecture of finding a new symbolism appropriate to contemporary buildings, new functions and a new age. ... The architecture of this building does not teach me much about Maori culture.¹¹

Two things come from this appropriation: first, the meaning of those applied symbols is reduced to an iconographic status thereby eroding their cultural significance. Second, selectively appropriating and

decontextualising Māori elements to an inherently Western building reinforces the imbalance of power established through the colonising process.

Latterly, although we are moving closer towards an understanding of what it means to practice biculturally, evidence suggests that the overall approach is still lacking confidence to transcend the notion of ‘decorating the shed’. An approach that is frequently used in Aotearoa, New Zealand, is patterns embossed on concrete slabs, a method of proclaiming bicultural-ness through façade ornamentation. Athfield Architects’ 2005 ‘Te Māori’ Waiwhetu Cultural Centre, for example, is clad in concrete panels with imprinted patikitiki designs, resembling the tukutuku panels seen within whareniui, and literally turning the building inside out. If New Zealand architecture continues to be seen as dichotomous (in vs out, structure vs skin...), then considering our facades as symbolic claddings - such as cloaks and woven baskets - is insufficient to create deeply meaningful representation.

We acknowledge that different typologies require very specific treatments to the surface/structure articulation as this reinforces the local and national ‘dialects’ represented architecturally. When embedded, as opposed to applied, metaphor (symbols/motifs) contributes to this discourse and serves as proof of the site-specific nature of architecture as a cultural signifier. This more integrated approach requires a deeper understanding of ornamentation vs decoration. To ornament is to bring an elevated presence to something and relates to the whole. What is and has been practised often is a treatment of the ‘skin’ of the building, a fabric articulation attached to the tectonic structure. This is decoration, and by its nature it can be removed without loss to the structure that it adheres to.¹²

However, when traditional 19th-century whareniui is examined as an early example of post-colonial form,¹³ it becomes clear that the interior is covered in woven narratives based on the oral histories of particular iwi. This is symbolic narration woven into the form’s walls, not covering it like a decorative fabric does, but integrated into the structure. As a result, rather than being interpreted aesthetically, the features incorporated into the architectural environment must be understood spatially. These are symbols of cultural confluence rather than ornamental objects embellishing the form.

Reviewing this approach from a contemporary perspective, Te Rau Karamu Marae at Massey University’s Wellington campus, designed by Te Kāhui Toi and Athfield Architects and completed in 2021, exemplifies the potential of a commitment to genuine collaboration between iwi, artists, makers, and architects. This building operates on multiple levels of complexity, allowing connections with a broad range of users through familiar tropes that acknowledge past, present, and future simultaneously. The use of both digital and analogue practices allows for a rich, haptic experience. In essence, it performs as a portal - between earth and sky, past and present, in and out, the physical and spiritual worlds.

Form is the conceptual building block of Western architecture; walls enclose the horizon, ceiling symbolises the sky, and floor represents the earth.¹⁴ This practice of ‘enclosing’ emerged as a way to create a physical, protective barrier between oneself and the dangerous outside world. By implication, the inside/outside dichotomy found in Western architectural vocabulary is employed to govern or dominate the existing landscape it is situated within, suggesting varying degrees of permanency.

For Māori, the relationship between built form and landscape is completely intertwined; the phrase ‘whenua,’ which refers to land or landscape, has two meanings: it can both be alive, and it can give life. Meads states: “the word whenua means more than land: it also means ‘placenta’, ‘ground’, ‘country’ and ‘state’ ... Whenua, as placenta, sustains life and the connection between the foetus and the placenta is through the umbilical cord. This fact of life is a metaphor for whenua, as land, and is the basis for the high value placed on land.”¹⁵ Architectural form is understood as a manifestation of iwi particularity and ancestral continuum, and carefully respects the link to its setting. In this sense,

philosophically speaking, the physical representation is enabling participation in an additional spatial dimension rather than isolating or containing it. Here, space *is* time.

In te reo Māori the word for both space and time is the same: wā. Everything that takes place is connected through that entity. This goes against the traditional Western notions of space and time. Linda Smith writes “space is often viewed in Western thinking as being static or divorced from time” as a mechanism for sense making just as the people of the Pacific did conversely”.¹⁶

Fundamentally, the concept of time and space as porous, as opposed to linear, allows for a broader engagement by architectural practitioners and academics beyond the inherently Western lens in which we largely operate. In this case, utilising the notion of wā is an attempt to initiate architectural explorations that are less about the demarcation of space and more about space as a mediator.

Moving forward, instead, we consider the zone where space + time are interwoven as interstitial, and connect fluidly to past, present, and future (as in Te Rau Karamu Marae, above). This promotes an alternative methodology for authentic bi-cultural practices to evolve. Mossman describes this ‘third space’ as a site of negotiation between indigenous and western perspectives, a place where “differences touch, interact, disrupt, unsettle and de-centre pre-existing narratives to produce a structure for marginalised cultures to symbolize themselves to their counterparts.”¹⁷ This is, and should be, unsettling and uncomfortable for all parties, as it demands an honest review of assumptions and unconscious bias.

In the late John Scott’s (1924-1992) work, architecture functions as a link between the past and the present, acting as a bridge to connect us to our current and future selves and to the embodiment of all that has come before. Scott’s spaces are temporally occupied, and as a result, their function is neither fixed nor made specific to a single purpose or set of programmatic rituals; rather, the interior space permits the establishment, formation, and reform of multiple identities in response to connections and relationships, as well as protocols. This is broadly recognised in the much-studied 1961 Futuna Chapel; however, we see value in his approach to domestic space, which is highly regionalised and place-specific. These homes exhibit space that is temporal, have a deep connection to whenua, and translate Māori spatial principles to the domestic scale. To illustrate this, the spatial programming is often set out as a series of spaces radiating from a central core (a metaphorical poū), not aligned along a grid, or programmed from public to private. Deirdre Brown describes John Scott’s poū as “the heart of the building around which everything else unfolds.”¹⁸ This transcends the 21st century Western view of ‘the heart / hearth of the home’ as an emotive notion; poū is fundamental as a tectonic, structural, symbolic, spatial, and cultural centre-point.

By understanding this concept of porosity, the exemplary work of John Scott brings together Western and Māori spirituality and spatial continuity. Scott provides us with a framework for drawing parallels between the tangible and intangible aspects of place, through architecture that portrays a culturally rich dialogue without the reliance on pre-colonial symbolism. Conceptually, his work was a manifestation of bringing into view the relationship between Papatūānuku (earth mother) and Ranginui (sky father), in order to provide an opportunity to work in the space of connection. Architecturally, he utilised the duality of light, edge and volume. This was reinforced by the profound comprehension of architecture as a phenomenological encounter.

The significance in referring to Scott’s methodologies and principles offers an insight into a bi-cultural epistemology whereby architecture is to be a vessel for temporality. Often, we limit space through the mechanisms of containment, ownership, and demarcation. However, if we are to open the opportunity for a new language of architecture to develop, one that embodies our unique cultural context here in Aotearoa, New Zealand, then we must consciously shift how we see space and time represented through built form. We do not support the ongoing (reductive) appropriation of cultural symbols when used as a surface level gesture to proclaim a bi-cultural narrative. Utilisation of

symbols and motifs must have a deeper value attributed to them than what is commonly practised as decoration, i.e., applied as an aesthetic treatment. These rich iconographic representations operate as a type of shorthand, in that they embody a broader significance that transcends the graphic depiction itself and instead links to highly specific oral and visual histories. To continue with the status-quo is to continue to downplay the importance of these histories to our collective identity.

If we are willing to dig deeper, to remove the propensity to operate passively, to be willing to address the colonial bias that privileges some and diminishes others, then we will lean into a more collective future. This metaphorical removal of the (superficial) outer layer is necessary in order to reveal the potential that lies beneath - a generator of a new 'language' of architecture, one that is appropriate, critical, and authentic.

NOTES

- ¹“Te Tiriti o Waitangi Workbook,” National Library of New Zealand, accessed February 15, 2024, <https://natlib.govt.nz/he-tohu/learning/discover-more/te-tiriti-o-waitangi-workbook>
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STRADDLING A BORDER: ON THE COLONIAL CONSTRUCTION OF INDIGENOUS ILLEGALITY

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INTRODUCTION

In the modern geopolitical imagination, borders are typically crossed unidirectionally. Nation-states define and fortify borders, individuals properly belong on one side, and those who do cross do so in one direction seeking to gain something on the other side. Less well understood, however, are the processes that generate transborder living—or straddling a border—in which people routinely cross borders. Such border hoppers are cast as illegal, or at the very least, transgressive and suspect, tainted by their rootlessness. However, the politico-economic conditions that generate such straddling of borders are critical to understand if just and humane policies, including those of Indigenous lands rights, are to be fashioned.

This paper traces the colonial construction of Indigenous illegality in the borderlands between Mexico and British Honduras (Belize) in the late nineteenth century. Several factors rooted in European imperialism (Indigenous rebellion in Mexico; commercial, export-oriented mahogany extraction; the munitions trade; a regional system of labor based on debt servitude; semi-feudal labor relations; and border disputes) created the conditions in which Indigenous Maya people had the best chances of physical survival, making a livelihood, evading debt, and remaining free of bondage if they routinely crossed the presumed border, marked by the Hondo River. They could erect houses on one side, farm on the other, and flee whenever necessary from rent and tax collectors, military raids, military drafts, and “masters.” This creative strategy of transborder living, however, earned them the opprobrium and suspicion of British Honduran officials and employers and cemented the misperception of them as “immigrants,” thus setting them up for subsequent exclusion from collective land rights.

THE MUTUAL CONSTITUTION OF BORDERS AND MOBILITY

In the Westphalian international system, we tend to think of the world as divided into territorially bounded nation-states into which individuals are sorted. Citizens have “homelands” in which they belong, and those who cross the border are out of place (“aliens”) unless and until they submit to a process of legalization. This Westphalian geopolitical model rests upon an assumption that the default position is fixed settlement rather than mobility. This model is extended to Indigenous people within settler colonies. The general expectation is that they have a fixed homeland from time immemorial; consequently, when it comes to Indigenous land claims, the only question is that of determining the boundaries of that fixed homeland.

However, what if these baseline assumptions are completely wrong? What if, historically, mobility is more common than fixed settlement? Additionally, what if borders actually trigger cross-border

movement? Sorting out sovereignty and land claims in the present requires a historical perspective. In every case, we should be asking: How did *x* border emerge and how did that development generate new patterns of movement? Did the imperial borders ultimately create a category of Indigenous “immigrants”—displaced and dispossessed? How does that complicate land claims in the present?

Across several disciplines, a growing body of scholarship is exploring how borders and patterns of mobility shape one another over time. Political borders, their qualities, and the patterns and frequencies of cross-border movement are all variables that change over time. The differential distribution of goods and regulatory schemes on either side of a border sets up imbalances that stimulate cross-border flows. Taking a historical view, we can see how borders and patterns of mobility have shaped one another over time. In Willem van Schendel’s words: “extra-territorial flows of goods and people do not stand in simple opposition to territorial organizations but in a relationship of mutual constitution.”¹ We often think about cross-border movement as unidirectional (such as people crossing in search of higher-paying jobs), but cross-border mobility takes various forms. In circular migration, people live abroad for a period of time and return home, and in seasonal migration, such circular migration is often linked to agricultural cycles. Some circular migration is diurnal, and in the context of labor migration, is typically called “cross-border commuting,” but that term could also be applied to everyday cross-border trips for shopping, attending school, tourist outings, and medical tourism. As regulatory regimes on either side of the border morph over time, so do patterns of cross-border mobility.

A critical distinction, of course, is the ease with which a border is crossed. In historical eras in which a border was imagined, but not surveilled or securitized (or only partly so), cross-border movement was relatively easy.² The greatest ease of movement in the modern era is seen in the European Union, which has expanded the number of people who live their lives across both sides of a border, alternately working, shopping, and living on either side, taking advantage of resources and relatively lax regulations, and altering patterns once again, as conditions shift. O’Dell coined the term “regionauts” to refer to such people.³ I use the term transborder living to refer to patterns of frequently crossing a border in both directions—when movement across an imagined border becomes part of one’s routine habits and comprehensive strategy for living.

The celebration of cross-border living in the European Union contrasts substantially with official views of cross-border mobility in most other cases since the emergence of the Westphalian system in the nineteenth century, in which cross-border mobility is frequently cast as shadowy, disloyal, immoral, and illicit, if not illegal.⁴ Increasing securitization and surveillance of borders, such as the US-Canadian border in the post-9/11 period and the US-Mexico border, since the mid-twentieth century onward, have not put an end to cross-border mobility, although they have slowed it, while also changing conceptions of the border⁵ and strategies of solidarity in mixed-status families.⁶ Even as borders are increasingly securitized, it is often precisely the existence of a supposed border that lures people across it. By definition, contrasting regulatory schemes exist on opposite sides of a border, be they policies or laws regarding pricing, taxation, trade, labor, land tenure, or simply, criminal jurisdiction. These differentials represent opportunities for people to take advantage of. In Beverley’s terms, unevenly administered borderlands are “productive” of cross-border mobility. In colonial India, for example, “social bandits” operated on either side of the border separating the Bombay Presidency and the autonomous Hyderabad, escaping capture and imprisonment by hopping back and forth, as needed.⁷

Attending solely to the present—an era in which the territorially defined nation-state is taken for granted—it is difficult to grasp Schendel’s idea that territorially defined polities and transborder crossings are mutually constitutive. For this, a historical example works best, as we can trace their

interplay over time. The supposed border between the newly imagined colony of British Honduras and the newly independent nation of Mexico in the nineteenth century serves as an excellent example.

DELINEATING BRITISH HONDURAS

What is now the independent nation of Belize started as a small English timber-extraction enterprise in the southern part of the Yucatán peninsula in the eighteenth century. Within the context of Anglo-Spanish competition in the Americas, treaties in 1763, 1783, and 1786 conferred upon England the right to extract timber in the region upon certain lands claimed by Spain. In 1798, the British defeated the Spanish at the Battle of St. George's Key, convincing British officials of their sovereign dominion, and they claimed the Hondo River as the northern border of what they came to call the colony of British Honduras.⁸

Indigenous Maya people lived in the region, and the Hondo River posed no barrier to their movements. In the prehispanic period, Indigenous Maya traders used the many rivers and streams to traverse the peninsula, transporting goods from one region to the next. In the fifteenth century, internecine disputes in the north triggered the southward relocation of Itzá rulers.⁹ Additionally, swidden (shifting) agriculture routinely encouraged the search for new garden plots. During the sixteenth century, when Spanish colonialists raided Indigenous settlements and established exploitative patterns of forced labor, tribute, and resettlement, primarily in the northern half of the peninsula, thousands of Maya fled these depredations, seeking refuge south of the river, where the Spaniards had very little control.¹⁰ These were longstanding patterns of movement across the Hondo River, but that line was not yet considered a border between polities—not really until the late eighteenth century.

In the late eighteenth century, under the aforementioned treaties with Spain, British loggers were granted usufruct rights to extract valuable timber (first logwood, and later mahogany) from the area between the Hondo and Belize Rivers—thereby establishing the Hondo River as the imagined northern limit of the British settlement. Enslaved Africans and African-descended people were the primary workers on the logging crews, and in a pattern identified by Matthew Restall, these enslaved people frequently fled across the limits of the British use-rights region in order, they thought, to escape bondage and find freedom.¹¹ Such patterns of flight rested upon a recognition of certain limits as delineating “Spanish” versus “British” territory. These patterns of flight, therefore, lent credence to an emerging sense of British territory and its borders. The cross-border flight of enslaved people, in other words, served to define the borders as real. The borders, consequently, existed not only in the minds of British colonialists, but also in the minds of escaped slaves who acted with reference to those imagined borders. The borders became real as people adjusted their strategies in relationship to them.

At the same time, in the late eighteenth century, and through the mid-nineteenth century, in the northern part of the peninsula, regimes of taxation and the alienation of communal Indigenous lands facilitated the proliferation and expansion of large-scale commercial plantations.¹² Thousands of Maya workers became trapped as indebted servants, but many escaped southward into the region increasingly plied by British loggers.¹³ Here again, flight across the Hondo presupposed a boundary separating Spanish (and later, Mexican) territory from British territory. Once again, flight motivated by the desire to find freedom within a new polity help bring into existence a spatial division between territories.

WAR, DEBT, AND THE BORDER

The patterns of cross-border movement discussed thus far—enslaved people fleeing northward and indebted peons fleeing southward—were unidirectional. The emergence of regular, transborder movement (frequent movement back and forth across a line increasingly recognized as a border) began in the mid-nineteenth century, triggered by the Social War of Yucatán (1847-1901, more commonly known as the Caste War), which began essentially as a Maya rebellion against Spanish-descended Yucatecan elites. In violation of prior Anglo-Spanish treaties, British merchants sold copious amounts of guns and gunpowder to the Maya rebels, while purchasing mahogany timber from them and shipping it to markets in the US and Britain. Mahogany was a primary source of war financing for two groups of armed Maya fighters, and individual logging crews routinely extracted timber from both sides of the Hondo River, which was efficient, but in violation of British and Mexican visions of their territories. Guns and gunpowder were also transported by canoe up the Hondo River. The river, therefore, became a conduit of illicit (if not illegal) trade. Both Yucatecan and British officials began inspecting canoes moving along the river—which was the first manifestation of border securitization.¹⁴

Beginning in 1848, thousands of Yucatecans (of both Maya and Spanish descent) fled the violence to the north and resettled south of the Hondo River, where they expected to be safe in British-claimed territory. In the meantime, most of the northern British Honduran region was claimed as private property by a very small number of timber companies. In the absence of open land upon which they could settle, they ended up as tenants on British-owned land, paying rent, and providing the workforce for landowners who were keen to take advantage of their knowledge of sugarcane and rum production. In a short period of time, Yucatecan patterns of trapping laborers in cycles of debt were adopted by British Honduran landowners and timber companies. Consequently, those crossing the Hondo River hoping to find freedom would again become trapped in debt servitude on the other side of the river—but perhaps they could cross the river once again and keep up this cycle of debt and flight across the river indefinitely? Those best able to preserve their freedom were those who could manage to farm their own garden plots and kept their expenses to a minimum. In the era of land monopolization, though, where were they to find open farmland? North of the river, the two armed Maya forces offered Maya settlers the right to farm on lands the soldiers had secured in battle, but with the proviso that they submit to a military draft and pay rent. Under these conditions, remaining solely on one side of the river was a sure path to debt servitude, military raids, forced military service, or all three.

Consequently, in the 1860s, a new pattern of transborder living emerged, in which many Maya farmed to the north of the Hondo River, on lands claimed by one of the armed Maya groups, but they erected their houses south of the river. By doing so, they aimed to evade the obligatory military service and paying rent on their garden plots. This strategy was risky, because Maya soldiers would cross the river to capture those they considered deserters and absconded debtors. Moreover, they still had to pay British landowners rent for their house lots. However, when finding themselves in a jam on one side, they could cross to the other and hopefully start with a clean balance sheet. In the 1860s, consequently, a series of new Maya settlements sprang up on the banks all along the river, settled by these border hoppers—people who found transborder living to be their best chance of survival and freedom. In 1868, when the British Honduran government formed a Frontier Police, naturally they were concerned with the cross-border movement of armed fighters and munitions. Of equal concern to them were these transborder residents, whose presence (as debt absconders and deserters) attracted raids by Maya fighters. In a curious twist of fate, then, to forestall Maya raids into presumed British territory, the chief of the Frontier Police began collecting rent in villages on the southern banks from

people who were said to owe it to the Maya armed groups whose lands they farmed (to the north of the river).¹⁵

The Maya who lived along and routinely crossed the Hondo River obviously pursued a creative strategy of survival, taking full advantage of the fact that different polities claimed the right to regulate affairs on opposite sides of the river. Their transborder pattern of residence and mobility presupposed this spatial political division, and the concentration of houses along the river constituted a material manifestation of that border. Routine and strategic crossing of this line, in one direction and then the other, therefore, both presupposed and instantiated a boundary between two territorially distinctive polities. In sum, the border and transborder living were mutually constitutive.

INDIGENOUS IMMIGRANTS?

For the Maya, though, this pattern of transborder living had regrettable long-term consequences. The people living in villages along the river gained a reputation as both disloyal and a nuisance. In addition, in those riverine villages clustered people involved in a variety of illicit and shadowy activities: munitions sales, armed rebellion, smuggling, escape from imprisonment, unlicensed rum production, timber theft, corruption, in addition to desertion and dodging rent and debt service. Notions of illegality compounded notions of disloyalty and nuisance. Despite longstanding patterns of settlement and mobility throughout the region, the Yucatec Maya in British Honduras were cast as “immigrants,” and many smeared as undesirable for their participation in illicit activities. Characterized as immigrants, they have been unable, in almost every case, to make a successful bid for collective lands as Indigenous people.¹⁶ The creation of a territorially based colony, therefore, transformed Indigenous settlers into a suspect immigrant group—not directly, but indirectly, through generating the conditions that triggered transborder living.

On a final note, this research problematizes the notion of “homeland.” “Homeland” is like “nation-state” in its presupposition of a people tied to a contiguous, delineated territory for time immemorial. Just as mobility is characteristic of human history, so, too, are the various types of mobility triggered by expanding empires and imposed and reconfigured borders. Indigenous land claims cases should, in every instance, not presume a fixed and readily identifiable “homeland,” but seriously examine the regional history of mobilities linked to shifting and destabilizing power centers and networks.

NOTES

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- ² Helena Ruotsala, “From Crime to Cultural Heritage: Cross-border Activities and Relationships in the Tornio River Valley,” *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 18, no. 1 (2009): 39–49, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3167/ajec.2009.180103>; Kees Terlouw, “Border Surfers and Euroregions: Unplanned Cross-Border Behaviour and Planned Territorial Structures of Cross-Border Governance,” *Planning Practice and Research* 27, no. 3 (2012): 351–366, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2012.670939>.
- ³ Tom O’Dell, “Øresund and the Regionauts,” in *Culture and Cooperation in Europe’s Borderland*, eds. James A. Anderson, Liam O’Dowd, and Thomas M. Wilson (London: Brill, 2003) 35–53, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401201391_003. See also: Orvar Löfgren, “Regionauts: The Transformation of Cross-border Regions in Scandinavia,” *European Urban and Regional Studies* 15, no. 3 (2008): 195–209, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0969776408090418>; Markus Idvall, “Across, Along and Around the Öresund Region: How Pleasure Boaters Live the Swedish-Danish Border Area,” *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 18, no. 1 (2009): 10–29, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43234480>; Terlouw, “Border Surfers.”
- ⁴ Eric Lewis Beverley, “Frontier as Resource: Law, Crime, and Sovereignty on the Margins of Empire,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 2 (2013): 241–272, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0010417513000029>; Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018); Ruotsala, “From Crime to Cultural Heritage”; Bianca B. Szytniewski, Bas Spierings, and Martin van der Velde, “Stretching the Border: Shopping, Petty Trade and Everyday Life Experiences in the Polish–Ukrainian Borderland,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 44, no. 3 (2020): 469–483, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12857>.
- ⁵ Victor Konrad, “Evolving Canada–United States Cross-border Mobility in the Cascade Gateway,” *Research in Transportation Business and Management* 16 (2015): 121–130, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.rtbm.2015.08.004>.
- ⁶ Heide Castañeda, *Borders of Belonging: Struggle and Solidarity in Mixed-status Immigrant Families* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019); Ruth Gomberg-Múñoz, *Becoming Legal: Immigration Law and Mixed-status Families* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).
- ⁷ Beverley, “Frontier as Resource.”
- ⁸ R. A. Humphreys, *The Diplomatic History of British Honduras, 1638–1901* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).
- ⁹ Grant D. Jones, *Maya Resistance to Spanish Rule: Time and History on a Colonial Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).
- ¹⁰ Nancy M. Farriss, “Nucleation versus Dispersal: The Dynamics of Population Movement in Colonial Yucatan,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, no. 2 (1978): 187–216, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2513085>; Jones, *Maya Resistance*.
- ¹¹ Matthew Restall, “Crossing to Safety? Frontier Flight in Eighteenth-Century Belize and Yucatan,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 94, no. 3 (2014): 385, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-2694300>.
- ¹² Robert W. Patch, *Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1648–1812* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).
- ¹³ Christine A. Kray, *Maya-British Conflict at the Edge of the Yucatecan Caste War* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2023), 47–50.
- ¹⁴ Kray, 55–57.
- ¹⁵ Kray, 157–170.
- ¹⁶ Kray, 176–179.

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DECOLONIZING DESIGN PERSPECTIVES: RETHINKING SOUTH AFRICAN WRITING SYSTEMS

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INTRODUCTION

How do we examine the potential for rewriting South African writing systems within the framework of decolonizing design? Drawing upon Dori Tunstall's "Decolonizing Design",¹ Amollo Ambole's "Rethinking Design Making and Design Thinking in Africa",² and Million Meshesha's "Indigenous Scripts of African Languages",³ this study explores the need to challenge and transform colonial legacies embedded in writing systems within the South African context, but also contribute to the ongoing discourse on decolonization of the African design education system, by examining the transformative potential of reimagining and revitalizing indigenous writing systems.

Tunstall's work on decolonizing design highlights the importance of acknowledging and dismantling the power structures perpetuated by Western-centric design practices.⁴ By critically engaging with existing writing systems on the African continent, South Africa can challenge the dominance of Western scripts and redefine its own linguistic and cultural narratives.

Ambole's perspective on design making and design thinking in Africa emphasizes the significance of local contexts, cultures and languages in design processes. Building upon this approach, rewriting South African writing systems necessitates a deep understanding of the country's diverse linguistic and cultural landscape. It requires inclusive participation and collaboration with local communities, linguists and designers to ensure that the resulting writing systems reflect the richness and nuances of South African identities.

Meshesha's exploration of indigenous scripts of African languages further underscores the potential for revitalizing and reimagining traditional writing systems. A more inclusive and culturally relevant approach can be achieved by incorporating indigenous scripts into contemporary South African writing systems. Such an endeavour would empower marginalized communities and contribute to preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages.

Therefore, this study advocates for a multidisciplinary approach that combines design, linguistics, and community engagement to rewrite South Africa's writing systems, specifically the Nguni language group comprising isiZulu, isNdebele, isiXhosa, and siSwati. It proposes a process that involves collaborative research and consultation with language experts, cultural custodians and the broader public. Additionally, the study recognizes the importance of providing accessible educational resources and tools to facilitate potential adoption and usage in various contexts in South Africa, eventually fostering a sense of identity and empowerment among these communities.

Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the ongoing efforts of decolonization in South Africa by challenging the existing hegemony of writing systems and fostering a more inclusive, culturally

rooted and empowering linguistic landscape through design and design thinking. The proposals, designs and research may inform future initiatives to reimagine writing systems in Africa, paving the way for a more inclusive, culturally grounded approach to communication and knowledge representation.

CONTEXT

In 2015, the United Nations delineated 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), prescribing ambitious targets for global achievement by 2030. The fourth goal advocates for ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, emphasizing the imperative to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all individuals.⁵

Developing a compelling solution for lifelong learning, grounded in the nexus between cultural identity and representation, necessitates a thorough exploration of the linguistic dimension. Innovative approaches have unveiled the erosion of cultural identity embedded in indigenous languages while concurrently acknowledging and preserving ancestral legacies, rituals, cultural practices, architectural heritage, artefacts, environmental considerations, and familial ties through a written script.

This discourse prompts an inquiry into the prospective impact of implementing a writing system tailored to native languages in the African continent, at first, with further expansion into South America and Australia, specifically focusing on its potential to foster equity in design education.

Moreover, the comparative analysis of indigenous language-focused educational interventions in diverse global contexts, as expounded upon by Ramaoupi,⁶ provides a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics at play. These investigations underscore the potential of linguistic inclusivity to bridge educational disparities by fostering a sense of belonging and cultural relevance, thereby contributing to decolonising the education system and the overarching goal of achieving equitable design education.

The primary aims and objectives of this study are multifaceted. Firstly, it seeks to confront and question the enduring impact of colonial legacies within design education. Secondly, the study challenges these colonial legacies, specifically within linguistic representation. Furthermore, the research endeavours to emphasize and exemplify the pivotal role of place in shaping culture and identity, thereby highlighting the significance of geographical context. Additionally, the study strives to elucidate the intricate connection between culture and society, exploring how these intertwined elements collectively influence linguistic representation. The research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between colonial histories, cultural influences, and linguistic expression through these objectives.

CASE STUDIES

In Saki Mafundikwa's 2013 TED talk entitled “*Ingenuity and elegance in ancient African alphabets*” he stated that African writing systems were a visual language based on the African creative heritage.⁷

Numerous historical writing systems, distinct from the widely recognized hieroglyphic script, have marked the cultural landscape. Among these, the Nsibidi script, employed by the Ejagham people in present-day Nigeria and Cameroon, is a venerable example, dating back more than a millennium. Comprising a repertoire of several hundred pictograms, Nsibidi was a pedagogical tool in educational settings, where it was imparted to children, as explained by Amanda Carlson in their writings on the Nsibidi writing system. This ancient script was principally concerned with themes of love, warfare, and ritualistic practices, with classifications such as those on warfare and sacred rites shrouded in secrecy.⁸

In addition to Nsibidi, other ancient writing systems contribute to the rich tapestry of linguistic heritage. Noteworthy among these is the Andikra script associated with the Akan people in Ghana and

Côte d'Ivoire and can be seen in Ghanaian fabrics, motifs, and contemporary use in lifetime milestones like birth, marriage and death with each symbol associated with a specific proverb or phrase.⁹ One such symbol is the Sankofa symbol, which urges us to look to our past to inform our future.¹⁰

Furthermore, the Bete Syllabary, originating in 1952 through the creative endeavours of Ivorian artist Frederic Boubare, serves as a contemporary testament to the malleability and adaptability of linguistic representation. It is said that Boubare visited Bekora, a small village in Bete county, and found markings on stones scattered around it. The villagers told him that they were ancient spiritual stones. He then used these marks to develop a bete syllabary.¹¹ The development of the Bete Syllabary underscores the capacity of diverse design influences to engender literacy and agency within extant languages.

Exploring historical writing systems is essential for understanding the evolution of linguistic expression and cultural identity. These investigations collectively affirm the dynamic interplay between cultural nuances, linguistic representation, and the transformative potential of design in fostering literacy and agency within indigenous languages.

The examination of historical writing systems, exemplified by Nsibidi, Andikra, and the Bete Syllabary, illuminates the intricate intersections of culture, education, and linguistic representation. This discussion contributes to a nuanced understanding of indigenous scripts' historical continuity and adaptability, accentuating their enduring relevance in contemporary linguistic and cultural discourse necessary in the steps to decolonise the design education system.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

In contemplating the written languages of Southern Africa, an examination of the prevailing use of Latin/Roman scripts for linguistic representation¹² prompts critical inquiries into the efficacy and historical accuracy of this contemporary linguistic convention. A salient concern emerges regarding the potential gap in the historical narrative of written languages in Southern Africa, prompting speculation on whether such narratives are absent or misconstrued, perhaps due to historical losses or censorship during the colonial era.

This inquiry delves into the fate of Southern Africa's indigenous written languages, raising questions about their preservation, misinterpretation, or potential suppression during the colonial era. South Africa boasts a rich linguistic diversity with about 34 historically established languages.¹³ It recognizes 11 official languages, categorized into four distinct indigenous language groupings: *Nguni*, *Sotho*, *Venda* and *Tshonga*.¹⁴ While investigations have been conducted on nine of the official languages, this study will specifically concentrate on two languages belonging to the Nguni language grouping: *isiZulu* and *siSwati*.

To address these historical contingencies and envision a new understanding of Southern African languages, design research methodologies offer strategic pathways. Leveraging prototyping and mock-ups, as advocated by strategic designer Lucy Kimbell who argues for a practise-oriented approach that takes the focus away from the designer by giving importance to design prototypes and relating them to the contexts and actions from which they emerge.¹⁵ Design prototyping and mock-ups facilitate a tangible exploration of alternative writing systems that authentically capture the nuances of cultural diversity. Ethnographic research serves to uncover indigenous perspectives on linguistic representation, contributing valuable qualitative data to the discourse. Historical research methodologies, are essential for uncovering latent narratives and reinstating historical accuracies in written languages.

Furthermore, qualitative research methodologies provide a comprehensive lens through which to understand the subjective dimensions of linguistic experiences and the cultural resonances embedded in written forms.

This research was conducted in the classroom with students aged 18 to 25 for three weeks in 2022 and 2023. The students were from various design disciplines, interior, multimedia, and graphic design, from various levels of education, including higher certificate, first, second, and third-year undergraduate students at a design school in Johannesburg, South Africa. Interior, graphic and multimedia lecturers guided them through the workshop, design thinking, mark making, research and prototyping of the written scripts.

Using the design thinking process helps to facilitate a veer away from colonial bias, biases that actual linguists or anthropologists could form for this interdisciplinary approach, synthesizing design research methodologies with historical, ethnographic, and qualitative research, constitutes a robust framework for the reconsideration and potential decolonization of South African writing systems. Through these concerted efforts, there lies the prospect of restoring historical integrity and celebrating the rich cultural diversity inherent in the visual manifestations of language.

DESIGN INFORMANTS

Social Informant:

Where the examination of symbolism, social practices, art, and social hierarchy within South African communities was explored and considered, providing a holistic understanding of the intersection between social dynamics and linguistic expression.

Construction and Architecture Informant:

Exploring spatial interaction, symbolism, structural elements, and material components in the context of indigenous South African construction and architecture offers insights into the relationship between physical structures and linguistic representation.

Indigenous Knowledge Informant:

This is where specialized knowledge in indigenous knowledge systems used to describe ways of knowing, seeing and thinking that are passed down orally and visually from one generation to the next¹⁶, encompassing artefacts, scientific principles, traditional skills, and expertise indigenous to South Africa provides a comprehensive understanding of the rich indigenous knowledge systems and their linguistic implications.

Spiritual & Ritual Informant:

Where authority in investigating spiritual and ritual practices within South African communities, encompassing traditional ceremonies, artefacts, and conceptual frameworks, facilitates an in-depth exploration of the spiritual dimensions of linguistic expression.

Foreign framings have [often] reinforced misrepresentations of local stories in ways that hurt the identity and confidence of Africa's colonized communities,¹⁷ therefore these research informants collectively contribute diverse perspectives and expertise, forming a multidisciplinary foundation for the re-evaluation and reimagining of writing systems in the South African context.

REIMAGINED WRITING SYSTEMS

The following writing conventions have been formulated through a meticulous synthesis of insights derived from the design informants, establishing a foundational framework for the orthographic systems of two distinct indigenous languages in the Southern Hemisphere namely *isiZulu* and *siSwati*.

This pedagogical approach reframes design-led research by centring Indigenous research principles, guided by a belief in a transformational experience that creates the possibility for reorientation of the future of design.¹⁸

This study is supported by a comprehensive exploration of linguistic revitalization efforts, one such being the National Plan Commission Vision for 2030¹⁹ which speaks about the imperative of preserving linguistic diversity and the 2008 Soudien Report where the then Minister of Education in South Africa, Naledi Pandor, sheds light on the potential of such efforts to promote linguistic diversity for positive cultural identity and educational outcomes. She states that success in life and in education is organically related to language mastery [and] is the gateway to culture, knowledge and people.²⁰

The synthesis of the social, construction, indigenous knowledge and ritual research informant perspectives, forms the basis for the articulated writing conventions. This approach ensures a robust and well-informed foundation for developing orthographic systems tailored to the unique linguistic and cultural characteristics of the indigenous languages in the Southern Hemisphere, specifically *isiZulu* and *siSwati*.

Zulu from South Africa

Spatial interaction, exemplified in the conventional Zulu homestead configuration referred to as the *kraal*, the hierarchical structuring of familial dwellings, and customary rituals associated with life-cycle events intertwined with ancestral reverence have significantly informed the conceptualization of the envisaged writing system. A salient aspect worthy of consideration is the discernible influence of the extant Zulu writing system known as the Zulu Love Letters,²¹ as manifested in their intricate beadwork, which has notably played a contributory role in shaping the trajectory of this reimagined textual framework as seen in figure 1.



Figure 1. Zulu Love Letters, Earth Africa

In the classroom, after having rigorously explored and researched the four design informants as they pertain to *isiZulu*, the participating students shared their language symbols and pictogram iterations with their classmates. Using different mark-making tools like sponges, brushes, sticks, ink and paint to write said symbols with a concerted effort to engage the entire body to honour the language and its representation pre-digitization. They then received feedback from their peers as to whether the symbols or pictograms generated were visually and mentally accessible allowing for an iterative process based on not just the language, but the universality of specific phrases, or words and their representation.

It was concluded that the *kraal*, the most significant part of Zulu culture, for it represents the homestead and heart of the family, would be used to develop the grid for the *isiZulu* writing system. Circles represented people and lines; verticals, horizontals, or diagonals, would represent unity.

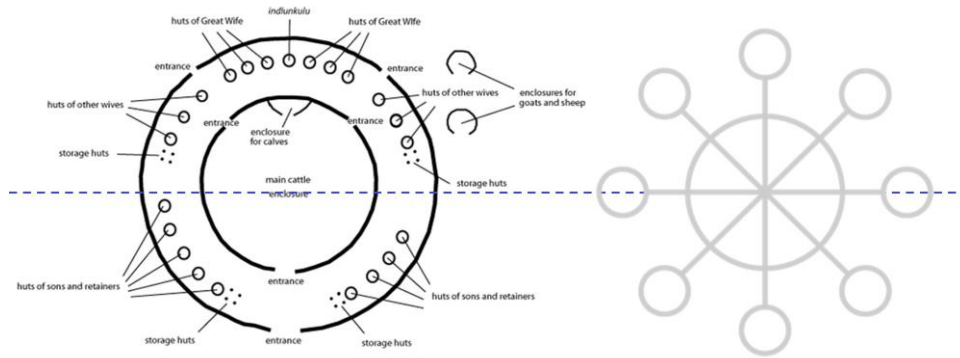


Figure 2a. A plan of the Zulu Khaya alongside Figure 2b. The proposed isiZulu Writing system grid

A horizontal axis (see figure 2a & b) was then added to run through the grid to indicate the relationship between the Zulu and their ancestors, an important part of traditional Zulu family life and practice.²² That which sat above the horizontal axis represented life, and below it represented the afterlife and ancestors stressing the importance of life and death and not separating it from the day to day existence of the Zulu.

Furthermore, the adaptation of the extant Zulu Love Letter writing system, its circles, triangles and square designs and shapes, as seen in their beadwork, is contextualized within the broader discourse on indigenous writing systems. Several keys were generated and then used to represent different elements. The keys were placed along the grid to formulate the isiZulu writing system (see figure 3).

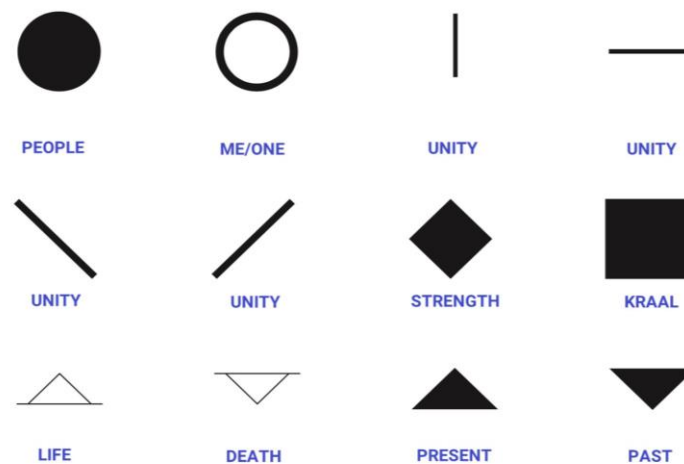


Figure 3. The proposed isiZulu writing system key

As discussed by Rapoport, the dynamics of spatial interaction within Zulu *kraal* illuminate the intricate symbiosis between physical space and sociocultural constructs, stating that a house is a cultural phenomenon, its form and organization, greatly influenced by the cultural milieu to which it belongs.²³

Swati from Eswatini

The reimagined siSwati writing system, similarly had architectural, ritual and material informants. These informants were influenced by the reed dance and reed and grass material used in the construction of the Swati huts, *lilondwe*.²⁴ These *lilondwe*, were constructed primarily by women, who

collaborated in a circular formation. They focused on intricately weaving grass materials to bind and thatch the structure, utilizing braided split reeds and grass.²⁵



Figure 4. A collection of Swati lilondwe

The students went through the same iterative process with their classmates to prove concept and used different mark making tools to further explore the shapes of their writing system symbols.

A grid was then designed to emulate the plan view of a *lilondwe*, with a clear view of the structure of the roof and the grass braiding in between. These grids were then overlapped to illustrate the five most important aspects of the Swati culture, the being (person), time and place, the mental state, emotion and action, with being becoming the centre of all as seen in figure 4.

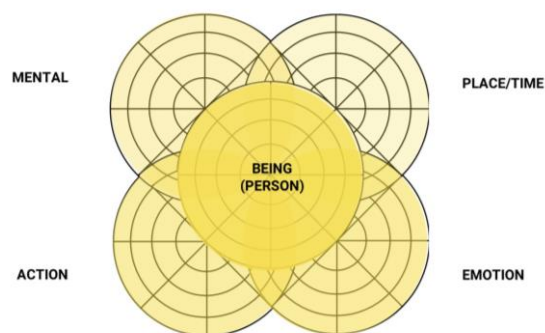


Figure 5. siSwati proposed writing system grid

Each quadrant, depending on how it was filled in, illustrated a key emotion, action, or state of being. This then formed a key, which when overlapped created a word and each word was strung together to formulate a sentence as seen in figure 5.

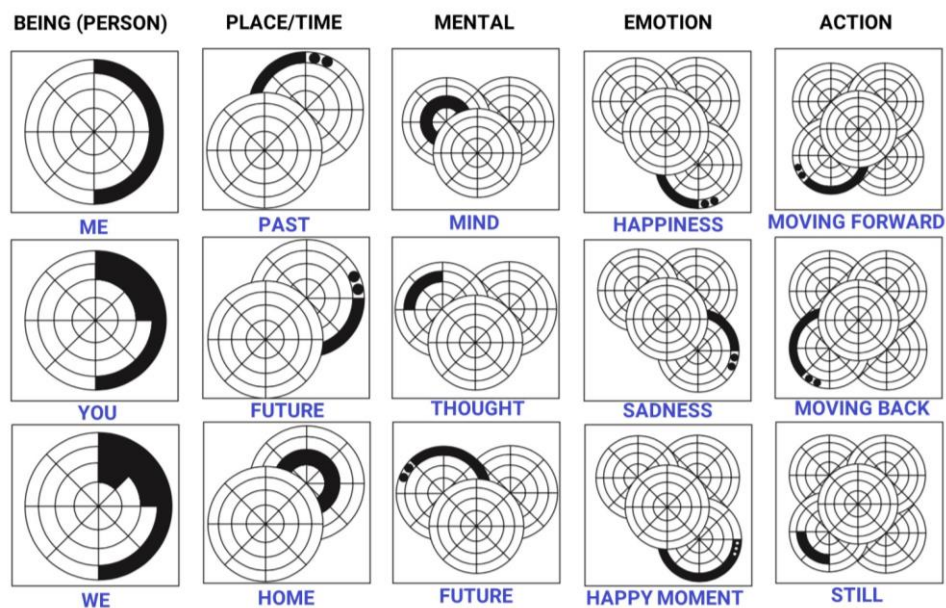


Figure 6. Proposed siSwati writing system key

RESULTS

We, the lecturers, then created a phrase in English and asked the students from each language group to write the sentence in their respective language, paying close attention to word or symbol placement and the direction in which the sentence would be read.

In English; Together we Create Memories in Environments Honouring our State of Being.

In isiZulu; *Sisonke Sakha Isikhumbuzo Sangunaphakade Sesimo Sobunjalo Bethu*

The sentence would be read from left to right.

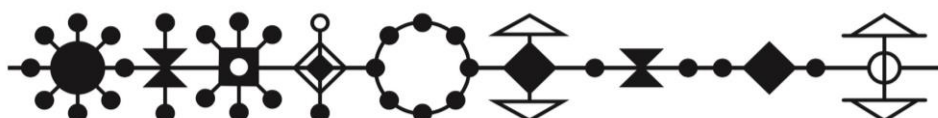


Figure 7. isiZulu sentence, *Sisonke Sakha Isikhumbuzo Sangunaphakade Sesimo Sobunjalo Bethu*

In siSwati; *Kanyekanye Senta Sikhumbuto Endzaweni Kukhomba Bungitsi*

The sentence would be read from bottom to top as if to emulate how the women would braid the grass towards themselves in an upward trajectory.



Figure 8. *siSwati sentence, Kanyekanye Senta Sikhumbuto Endzaweni Kukhomba Bungitsi*

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this exploration into rewriting South African writing systems within the decolonizing design and design education framework has illuminated the inherent connection between design and communication. This study advocates for a multidisciplinary approach that merges design, linguistics, and community engagement to re-envision South Africa's writing systems, with a specific focus on *isiZulu* and *siSwati*. At its core, design is a means of conveying ideas—whether personal or innovative concepts. Contrary to the misconception that the ancestors did not engage in design, it has become evident that their modes of communication and written scripts were, in fact, manifestations of design and design thinking. This realization, encompassing overt and nuanced elements, underscores the symbiotic relationship between design and effective communication.

As a designer, proficiency in the craft is inseparable from the ability to communicate effectively. The amalgamation of diagrams, images, and words is the conduit through which ideas are transmitted and comprehended. The journey of becoming a designer and the journey of becoming a better communicator are linked. In the context of South African identity and heritage, the integration of ancestral ways of communication, rooted in diverse cultural expressions such as Zulu, Swati, and others, has significantly enriched the design and design studio practice. This process deepened the understanding of design's historical significance and empowered a meaningful contribution to the evolving narrative of African design. Ultimately, this exploration has reinforced the notion that design is a dynamic vehicle for cultural expression and an integral part of the broader discourse on decolonization within design education.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader endeavours of decolonisation in South Africa by challenging the hegemony of existing writing systems and advocating for a more inclusive, culturally rooted, and empowering linguistic landscape through the lens of design and design thinking. The proposed initiatives, designs, and research outcomes hold the potential to inform future endeavours aimed at reimagining writing systems in Africa, paving the way for a communication and knowledge representation approach that is not only culturally grounded but also fosters inclusivity and empowerment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research, teaching and learning project is undertaken on Tswana land in the Interior, Graphic and Multimedia Design program at the Greenside Design Center, Johannesburg. This paper acknowledges the context of the project and the participation and support of the elders, cultural advisers, studio leaders and students who have agreed to share the work.

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IN BETWEEN THE TRANSPACIFIC, A THEORY/THEORIST YET-TO-COME

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PRELUDE

This paper lives between the papers already written about the transpacific and the ones yet-written. It takes shape through a querying of the transpacific flows between the unceded Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh (MST) lands¹ and other pacific worlds. We planners, whose job is “land”, know these financial, material, and labour flows, culminate into real estate that prolong imperial geographies. We know the “trans” in the transpacific moves the Pacific at such speeds that theory and practice cannot chart, let alone solve the mounting transpacific woes. Nonetheless, how can planning theory engage with these imperial flows, while refusing planning’s dominant view of historical progress, while acknowledging the transpacific’s unimageability? To do this, planning theory may have to refuse its usual function to offer models and solutions. What then would planning theory-writing look like? Blocs of textual, conceptual, and visual forces to be joined with other blocs of words, activisms, (un)-built designs, etc.? This paper is a writing experiment to make these blocs of forces, to explore theory’s *other* uses. If this experiment has any political powers, hopefully they may unsettle planning theory’s place in the Pacific’s ongoing imperial geography.

The idea of refusal as a political move is explored in four sections, to be read sequentially or individually: Section One (“Unimaging the Transpacific”) explores how the transpacific’s unimageability, *and* the unimageable gap between the transpacific and theory, changes the shape of theory-writing. Section Two (“Ideas inside Feelings”) explores thinking through the materiality of the Pacific and the body. Section Three (“Theory Yet-to-Come”) suggests, writing which refuse solutions, and only hint at something yet-to-come (people, places, theories, solidarities, etc.), can be a strategy to unsettle theory’s role in planning’s imperialism. Section Four (“Where is the Theorist’s ‘I?’”) explores how blurring the subject-object binary can challenge a planning theorist and planning’s gaze.

UNIMAGING THE TRANSPACIFIC

This paper’s is still being written on the unceded Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh (MST) lands. It queries the transpacific flows connecting the MST lands to other pacific worlds. It draws lines between events: A waterfront development in Vancouver’s False Creek North Neighbourhood, built by a Southeast Asian conglomerate with palm-oil history. Displaced communities in Indonesia’s Riau province due to palm-oil-driven deforestation. This displacement yields the capital to acquire the waterfront site, and produce the palm-oil derivatives for construction machineries.² These transpacific flows intensify the historical ethno-economic-spatial tensions in both MST lands and Riau.

These transpacific flows should concern the planning discipline, given these flows impact land, and planning's job is to govern land. Plus, there are the legal, economic, institutional, and political demands on planning theory and practice to produce readily-applicable solutions *for* the land. Producing solutions helps to secure not just funding but planning's intellectual and institutional legitimacy. Yet, some solutions may intensify ethno-economic-spatial tensions, especially if those solutions equate progress as Indigenous and socioeconomically oppressed people being reproduced as the dominant economy's subjects. How can planning theory intervene on these flows and processes, to refuse planning's view of progress?³ How to write theory *transpacific-ally* toward new yet-seen liberations? How to write despite the transpacific's unimageability *and* the unimageable gap between theory and the transpacific? What *other* modes of theory-writing can be made, when the transpacific is uncontainable as theory's object?

One way to explore *other* modes of theory-writing is to attend to the site/space where writing happens. Conventionally, planning theory adopts an 'on' or 'about' relation to its object of study; it maintains a mental and spatiotemporal distance, to dispassionately write *on/about* a site's physical and non-physical constitutive forces. But what if we also query *how these forces shape the shape of how we write*. How is a theorist shaped or affected, corporeally and mentally? How are transpacific forces shaping *this* paper's writing-thinking process, pushing it beyond its secured zone?

Attending to the connections criss-crossing the site of this paper's writing: This paper was written in a 1990s Vancouver condo built during the "mass migration period" from pre-1997 Hongkong. The abovementioned waterfront can be seen from this condo. Both had the same architect. The waterfront's density and height were increased as part of Vancouver's housing policies to solve the "housing crisis." Are housing policies indirectly incentivising transpacific palm-oil finances to reconfigure MST lands? The False Creek flows between the 1990s condo and the waterfront site, and a "Red Tide" dyed the creek pink the summer this paper was written. Watching the Red Tide, palpable lines are drawn from False Creek to Riau. (See Figure 1) Can palm-oil deforestation contribute to algae blooms across the pacific? Books and PDFs read in preparation for this paper emit textual and conceptual forces that begin to intertwine with these transpacific events. At the convergence of fingers, keyboard, eyes, creeks, palm-oil fields, the brain's anxious synapses, books, is a feeling. It might be a feeling that outside this state of transpacific affairs, yet-imageable places, solidarities, people, hopes, and even theories, can emerge somewhere *around* this paper. Even though these places, solidarities, people, and hopes, are unimageable, we still think of them. But we can only think of them, as unimageable as they are, *through* the physicality of Red Tides, waterfront sites, palm-oil, etc. Nigel Thrift noted, thinking takes place *in* things. "Objects make thought do-able."⁴

While the waterfront, palm-oil fields, etc., make thinking doable, *the transpacific still exceeds the sum of these things*. And, transpacific woes cannot be quelled by the sum of *all* solutions for these events and sites. Solving the Red Tide's threats on marine life, harvesting sustainable palm-oil,⁵ moratoriums on market housing, etc., are insufficient to counter the ever-changing harmful transpacific flows. Likewise, the sum of *all* theoretical texts addressing transpacific issues cannot comprehensively theorise the transpacific. Theory cannot represent *the* liberated universal transpacific subject or a Pax Pacifica. No matter how detail the attention given to the site where writing happens is, details have (yet-known) details. Theory is never minute enough to detailly describe the MST lands and Riau province, nor broad enough to encapsulate *all* of the transpacific.⁶

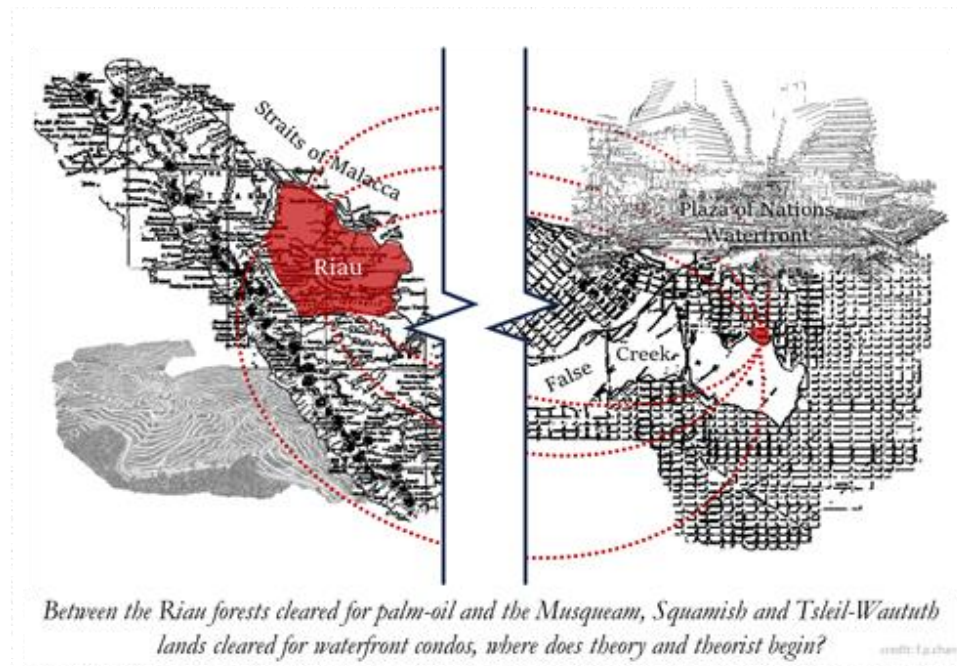


Figure 1.

The “trans” in the transpacific is a spatial-temporal element that propels the transpacific to change not just by degrees (increase or decrease), but a change in kind – a becoming. *All* the words typed in *all* the theoretical texts *in* the transpacific cannot keep up with not just the transpacific’s changing speed and space-time extensions, but also its becoming. So, how does theory *write with* this becoming? Given theory’s spatiotemporal intertwinement with the transpacific, if a “transpacific theory” is written, it is never *about* the transpacific. Nonetheless, even if the transpacific *and* transpacific theory are unimageable, their realities can still be felt.

IDEAS INSIDE FEELINGS

Being *in* the transpacific flows, thinking of it is not a choice. Confronting ever-growing transpacific events, our unified body-mind⁷ may be swayed beyond our control. Affected by transpacific stimuli, this body-mind anxiously maps possible ethical relations between the fluctuating Chinese housing market’s impacts on housing affordability in other pacific cities; transpacific telecommunications competitions; Red Tides; transborder Southeast Asian smogs, etc.⁸ This mapping happens despite the absence of any end-point ethics. Thinking and mapping happens even with a decision to not think, as thinking is often not willed by the “I”. Deleuze wrote,

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition, but of a fundamental encounter. What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple, or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it *can only be sensed*.⁹

Thinking can be a feeling, stirring, or urge, which *can only be sensed* – a unified corporeal-mental movement. Here, one recalls a line from Goddard’s “Pierrot le Fou”. The character Marianne was told she has no ideas and only feelings; to which she replied, “There are ideas inside feelings.” How do ideas and thinking thrive in feelings? Take this: The more one maps new transpacific ethics between the geopolitical, architectural, environmental, etc. forces, the less that masterplanner logic is able to image such ethics’ totality. But despite the unimageability of a totalising ethics, an urge to ponder this ethics lingers. Perhaps, to write, even if feelings is the only beacon, is a political, epistemological,

endeavour to ensure “thinking” remains unceded to a masterplanner’s reliance on models. An absence of models is not an absence of thinking or ethics. Perhaps, writing that generates *just* feelings is a space where the power of the “yet-to-come” intervenes planning’s image of progress. Ideas are the “feelings” in our fingers poised to type.¹⁰

THEORY YET-TO-COME

Approaching the transpacific as unimageable is not an absence of hope. Rather, theory’s inability to image the transpacific can be a power that sustains and renews hopes for futures that can resist planning and capital’s imaging machines? Potentials for *more* potentials. Writing without prescribing *the* future may be a way to creatively forget¹¹ planning’s binarised historical progress of a less-than-ideal present versus *the* ideal future. (It is not idealising the present either.) To creatively forget the binary entails refusing an imperial cartography that naturalises some spaces or times as better.

Homi Bhabha noted, forgetting the binary can help politicise theory-writing. Theory-writing gains political capacity not from “a mimetic reflection of an a priori political principle or theoretical commitment.” To be *post* the colonial (and *post* the post-colonial), theory-writing works to “overcome the given grounds of oppositions,” beyond “identikit political idealism.” This is because, an overt reliance on binaries just reverses the terms of the binary, installing the formerly oppressed as the new master.¹² Planning’s chronology of “isms” exemplifies this binary: Each successive “ism” puts itself as the rightful successor replacing an oppressive forebear. For example, rapid densification is seen as winning a moral war against low density neighbourhoods: “Density equals affordability.” But what if planning theory *forgets* these binaries of “isms”? Could theory-writing be, as Bhabha wrote,

A place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, where the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes [...] the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics [...] The event of theory becomes the negotiation of contradictory and antagonistic instances that open up hybrid sites and objectives of struggle, and destroy those negative polarities between knowledge and its objects, and between theory and practical-political reason.¹³

The historical moment of political action must be thought of as part of the history of the form of its writing. This is not to state the obvious, that there is no knowledge – political or otherwise – outside representation. It is to suggest that the dynamics of writing and textuality requires to us to rethink the logics of causality and determinacy through which we recognise the ‘political’ as a form of circulation and strategic action dedicated to social transformation.¹⁴

For Bhabha, *reshaping the shape of how we write* may increase theory-writing’s political capacity. Theory-writing’s purpose is constantly reshaped as it is neither not anterior to, nor an afterthought of, political actions’ impacts on history. Instead of representing *the* ‘true’ future, theory-writing (and reading) is a “process of emergence.” What is written is always *in media res* (middle of things).¹⁵ Likewise, this paper is *always* re-emerging amidst the shifting forces of Red Tides, trade-routes between Sumatran ports and Vancouver waterfronts, housing policies, activisms, the historical “All Red Route” that linked Vancouver to other British ports like Singapore and Hongkong. With each re-emergence, *this* paper is rewritten. Its purpose or “use,” always yet-to-come.

When Bhabha noted how political action and writing’s form are tied, one might read this as saying, changing a theoretical text’s form (not just content) influences its political capacities. Augmenting a theoretical text’s political capacity is a philosophical-political and textual-aesthetical-linguistic-visual experiment.¹⁶ Perhaps, creatively misuse words and images to draw critical allusions and necessary illusions.¹⁷ Use writing to reassemble theory’s common compositional, linguistic, methodological, and epistemological expectations. Drawing from Ellen Lupton and Abbot Miller’s call for communication

design to “critically engage the mechanisms of representation,”¹⁸ perhaps planning’s theoretical texts (even policy-writing) could

Generate a trail of argument in excess of the seemingly self-contained body of the work. The organs of the text are sites for elaboration, expansion, overflow, like the body’s periodic release semen or blood.¹⁹

Excess and overflow may be the elements that refuse to let die²⁰ the (thinking and theorising of) yet-to-come people between Sumatran ports, Vancouver waterfronts, etc.

For theoretical texts to overflow with new connections and purposes, how a concept is written (shaped) matters: Does it challenge its own interiority? No doubt, a concept disavowing its own interiority is frightful. But this can be a political action that makes a theoretical text “a place of hybridity,” as Bhabha calls it, where its words and concepts meet other words and concepts to become politicised. A concept without an interiority *has to* connect with concepts, to be further articulated. Deleuze and Guattari noted, “A concept is not paradigmatic but syntagmatic; not projective but connective; not hierarchical but linking.” It is not hermetic. Connections politicise concepts.²¹ For them, theory-writing’s purpose is not to rehearse expected imageries, but to use words to craft concepts that initiate new conjugations with other concepts.²² A concept is a territory, unforming and reterritorialising through different connections and milieus. A concept’s form is “that which was not yet.”²³ *Here*, one asks, how has *this* paper’s concept of “writing transpacific-ally” changed, as *you* the reader connect it to forces outside this paper, hybridise it, in your reading process?

The “yet-to-come” is not something already-known, and we await its arrival. The yet-to-come might be a feeling of an intensifying condensation of innumerable potential solidarities: Between displaced MST peoples and Southeast Asian activists’ fighting slash-and-burn clearance for palm-oil that causes seasonal smogs. Between Pacific Northwest housing advocates and Southeast Asia environmentalists highlighting the violence of “green” construction; etc. Theory cannot wholly image the intensifying condensation of potential solidarities. With each attempt to image it, this condensation further intensifies, or dissipates, leaving us *feeling* that the transpacific and its future peoples and lands are always yet-to-come; always clever enough to elude our gaze. The “theorised” is yet-to-come.

Theory-writing that summons only inklings of the yet-to-come, instead of solutions, is a refusal to participate in planning’s dogmatic image of history.²⁴ This mode of writing expresses, what Bhabha calls, a “representational undecidability” that can undermine capitalism’s homogenising effects,²⁵ and planning’s symbols, methods, and myths. Yet-known futures, yet-known pasts, yet-known theories, cannot be representationally, but they can be felt *at the side of* words.

WHERE IS A THEORIST’S “I”?

Where is planning’s “I”? Commonly, “planning” is seen as espousing a rational thinking “I” (its subject) which can unbiasedly determine good values and design corresponding outcomes. “Good” planning *must* use established models, values, and solutions to shape space. The “good” is assumed to reflect planning’s “I”, the “bad” does not. Yet, as Jean Hillier noted, planners do “prefer some values to the relative repression and exclusion of others,” due to planning’s economic, political entwinements. Binaries are repeated, agonisms hidden.²⁶

We are socialised to use recognisable models and solutions. But as Deleuze noted, in this approach, “difference is crucified.”²⁷ Describing the yet-describable using familiar analogies and binaries, reduces the yet-describable’s being to “like-A” or “not-like-A”. Encounters with the yet-describable are reduced to standard procedures. This limits the encounter from being a space to experiment with new ways of thinking and acting with others. It limits the “I” from changing *with* others; reiterating the imperial geographer. Against these limits, Deleuze asked, can “*difference itself*” be embraced? “*Difference itself*” is non-representational, non-recognitional, non-identitarian.²⁸ It is non-recognisable

because its “identity [is] swallowed up in difference [...] *Difference must be shown differing.*”²⁹ It is not “A differs from B,” but “A is becoming A_{1,2,3...}” Difference *differing from itself* expresses a newness, but not new like it will soon be recognised and established. Newness is a continual push against imageability. Deleuze wrote,

For the new – in other words, difference – calls forth forces in thought which are not the forces of recognition [...] but the powers a completely other model, from an unrecognised and unrecognisable terra incognita.³⁰

The “terra incognita” can push planning’s understanding of space; perhaps, because the terra incognita can only be felt. For instance, models can be used to explain a list of things – Red Tides, displaced Riau people, etc. The list can be inexhaustibly long, but insofar as each thing can be explained by models, each thing becomes a “terra cognita”. However, to give a totalising image of this list’s inexhaustibility is undoable.³¹ Contending with this inexhaustibility – growing connections between things, potentials of potentials – planning’s “I” is no longer steadfast.³²

Describing the terra incognita and the transpacific’s unimageability is an unimageable act. The more words are typed to describe the terra incognita, the more theorist and theory may find it hard to pinpoint their location to/within this terra incognita. Yet, this inability to pinpoint affirms the terra incognita’s powers. A theorist or theory is neither in nor out of the terra incognita; they *are* (part of) it. Where is a theorist’s “I”? Are theorists a people yet-to-come?

ANOTHER PRELUDE

In the space-time of writing this paper, there are many ways to restart and re-end it. At this point, one might ask, is *this* paper useful for the democratisation of the pacific? This question also interrogates planning’s understands “usefulness”. *This* paper would be useless if “usefulness” denotes a utilitarian function (E.g., Readily applicable for practitioners to use and produce quantifiable futures). However, what if a text’s usefulness and political capacity is its refusal to cede thinking over to an image of a masterplanned Pacific? Could a refusal of imageability be a refusal to terminate thinking? A refusal to stop thinking of yet-to-come people and lands, yet-to-come transpacific theories? Useful uselessness? In each sentence that says, “The transpacific is...,” innumerable other “is-not’s” and “is’s” lie abound.³³ This paper is *still* being written between the papers already written about the transpacific and the ones yet-written.

NOTES

¹ The area known internationally as “Vancouver” was named after Captain George Vancouver of the Royal Navy. But through history, it remains the unceded lands of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) people; it remains a resistance.

² In some postcolonial states, burning rainforests and displacing local peoples for the growth of the palm-oil industry are seen as necessary sacrifices for postcoloniality to advance. This sacrifice is not for plantations but also for rapid urbanisation processes that have separated families, communities, and traditional livelihoods in the name of building housing, commercial centres, and ports. In this way, postcoloniality continues imperial geographies. See Max Haiven. *Palm Oil: The Grease of Empire* (Chicago: Pluto Press). 2022.

³ This paper’s refusal to present images of what a collective Pacific peoples’ future should be is partly due to the spatial-temporal impossibility to map the uncountable relations between different(iating) peoples and places in the Pacific. But more so, it is being cautious of the dangers of overt representation in the current economies. For example, Glen Coulthard noted how neoliberal economy’s desire to represent the “other” can actually limit indigenous struggles; this extends capitalist-colonial generative structures. Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt’s works also observed how capitalist-colonialist structures can co-opt “alternative” identities into its production of surplus economic. See Glen Coulthard. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) 2014. Also See Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press), 2000.

⁴ Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory* (London & New York: Routledge) 2008, 60.

⁵ The “Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil” is a multination organisation started in Geneva and Kuala Lumpur to explore less environmentally damaging ways to harvest palm oil, like replanting trees in clear-cut forests, or policing illegal slash-and-burn methods. However, apart from these measures often being not upkept by participating nations, the other industries palm-oil are used is not addressed. For example, palm-oil used in construction machineries makes a direct tie to the fields of planning and architecture

⁶ Engaging with the transpacific is not scaling up from a city or region to the Pacific. The transpacific *is not* the Pacific, nor the sum of all individual Pacific bioregions, cultures, economies, etc. As such, the spatial, geopolitical, methodological, and epistemological frameworks we are accustomed to in planning or architecture may be insufficient to address the transpacific. It might require a rethink of what is epistemology/thinking and methodology when engaging with the transpacific.

⁷ Baruch Spinoza reminds us that when affected by forces around us, what is affected is never the mind or the body separately. Against the Cartesian notion that the “thinking ‘I’” precedes the physical body, Spinoza wrote, “No one has yet come to know the structure of the body so accurately that he could explain all its functions... This shows well enough that the body itself, simply from the laws of its own nature, can do many things which its mind wonders at [...] Again, no one knows how, or by what means, the mind moves the body, nor how many degrees of motion it can give the body, nor with what speed it can move it.” Here, Spinoza is noting how the mind can never fully give a picture of the body because they cannot be engaged apart; the mind cannot dispassionately analyze the body. As soon as a physical body is affected and transformed by forces around, the mind is simultaneously affected. But Spinoza is also careful to not conflate the mind and body into a single entity. A mind can develop capacities that are proper to the event of thinking, and so does the body. But each’s capacities cannot proceed without the other. It is Spinoza’s body-mind relation that this paper considers when addressing how a theorist writes and thinks amidst the corporeality of the transpacific flows. See Baruch Spinoza. *Ethics*, trans. Edwin Curley. (London & New York: Penguin Books), 1996. Book 3, Prop. 2, Scholium.

⁸ Social media makes these events ever-present. Social media does not mediate or buffer these events’ affective realities that can bring thinking and acting beyond limits one can comfortably rationalise. Media amplify them, producing blocs of visual, textual, spatiotemporal, auditory forces in the various spaces we inhabit. Here, one does not just anxiously image new ethical relations (even solutions) between Red Tides, East Asian real estate, housing affordability, transpacific telecom competitions, and seasonal smogs, but one anxiously ponders how to *make oneself* amidst the affective forces produced in these events and the media. It is not just these events that have affective dimensions; their media (re)presentation produces an affective dimension – blocs of interlinked yet-describable forces – that enmeshes these events’ geopolitical forces and relations with forces at a personal, corporeal level. This is perhaps how the transpacific is never just theory or theorist’s object of study.

⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 139. Italics mine.

¹⁰ Conventionally, society and philosophers (not restricted to the “West”) have placed thinking as a faculty above the other more sensate faculties, because it is assumed that thinking can take place without the senses, most

famously summed up in Descartes' "I think therefore I am." But Deleuze counters this approach to thinking, and proposed thinking takes place in the body. The thinking "I" along with the formation of thoughts are actually disperse across the different senses or faculties. Material, corporeal senses can be thinking's ground. As Deleuze commented, "it is not a sensible being but the being of the sensible." It is that which is not recognisable, almost imperceptible, only sensate, that makes thinking. Philosopher Gregg Lambert, commenting on Deleuze's work on the mind-body problem, suggested knowledge is produced only when "life' is implicated with matter." See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 140, 236-37. Also see Gregg Lambert, *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, (London: Continuum Books), 2002, 41.

¹¹ This paper's understanding of "creative forgetting" draws from Friedrich Nietzsche's idea that to forget is to be done with a slave morality which can bind us to binary thinking (e.g., oppressed versus oppressor). However, forgetting does not mean not engaging with the past anymore, or giving up or lacking knowledge. Rather, it is to develop new ways to relate to history and materials. See Friedrich Nietzsche. "On the Genealogy of Morals" in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Modern Library Press), 2000.

¹² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge) 1994, 25.

¹³ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 25. When Bhabha writes, the event of theory becomes a "Negotiation," it does not mean a compromise or balance between polarities. Rather, it suggests an event of constant exchanges, in order to forge new relations between different(iating) bodies. In this negotiation, bodies, peoples, spaces, and thoughts do not stay the identical to themselves.

¹⁴ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 22-23.

¹⁵ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 22. For Bhabha, to politicise theory-writing is to break the common logic of causality and determinacy between theory and practice. Theory is not placed *before* practice, as if theory must provide models for practitioners to actualise. Additionally, theory also does not come *after* practice, as if it merely analyses practices and events that had happened. Instead, theory and practice occur concurrently. In this concurrency, one might suggest, theory's medium can be more than just words; it is not restricted to essays, and other text formats. Likewise, practice's medium is not restricted to political art, protests, and other non-text formats. A medium becomes a space for thinking and politics rather than simply a vessel to contain preformed concepts. As such, theory-writing, thinking, articles of knowledge, is always moving between mediums.

¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, (New York: Columbia University Press), 1994. 176. For Deleuze and Guattari, writing (even philosophical writing) can learn from painting and literature. The purpose of theory-writing is not just to represent a people or what people should be. The text offers forces that may stir sensations in the body/mind so that new lines of thinking are 'forced'. "The writer twists language, makes it vibrate, seizes hold of it, and rends it in order to wrest percepts from perceptions, the affect from affections, the sensation from opinion – in view, one hopes, of that still-missing people."

¹⁷ This paper's idea to rethink theory-writing's function by pushing its theory-writing's compositional, linguistic, methodological, media, and epistemological forms draws from both Jane Rendell's "Site Writing" and Hélène Frichot's notion of "Dirty Theory." See Jane Rendell, *Site Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*, (London & New York: I.B. Tauris), 2010. See Hélène Frichot, *Dirty Theory: Troubling Architecture*, (Bamberg: AADR), 2019.

¹⁸ Ellen Lupton & J. Abbot Miller, *Design Writing Research: Writing on Graphic Design* (London & New York: Phaidon Press) 1999, 23.

¹⁹ Lupton & Miller, *Design Writing Research: Writing on Graphic Design*, 51.

²⁰ It is through reshaping the space of the written text that the yet-to-come always overflows, always multiplying the "yet", expanding what could be. Deleuze and Guattari noted, a life prescribed in advance bears an indifference to life. It is a still-life. Hence, a refusal to say what life must be and let it overflow preserves life. This is even for philosophy. For Deleuze and Guattari, philosophy is not a guide on what life must be. Philosophy is a bloc of particular forces, even tools, to sustain thinking hence living; albeit it can be a "dangerous exercise" of "groping experimentations involving measures that are not very respectable, rational or reasonable." See Deleuze & Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 41.

²¹ Deleuze & Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 23 & 91.

²² Deleuze & Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 90.

²³ Deleuze & Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 100-101, 208. Deleuze & Guattari asked, "what would thinking be if it did not constantly confront chaos?" Forming new concepts is always a "chaoid state," insofar as concepts are always reconnectable and re-expressible. Elsewhere Deleuze noted, creating new concepts cannot be understood in a historically relative or chronological order, "as though the established values were new in their time and the new values simply needed time to become established." Creating new concepts concerns a difference in kind. It entails new ways of articulation – new ways of writing and speaking. This may include inventing modes of writing that never settles for a *fully*-communicable meaning. Instead, it expresses a "power of

beginning *and* beginning again.” As such, each instance of communication “remains forever new,” always “yet-to-come.” This mode of communication, renewed at each instance, inflects the body-mind to always be reconfiguring itself with the changing forces around to speak new words and perform new actions to invent new ways of being with others. Also see Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, (London: Continuum Books) 1994, 136.

²⁴ The “dogmatic image of history” used in this paper references Deleuze’s notion of the dogmatic image of thought, which denotes the conventional “image” of thinking, a process that conflates thinking with recognising already-formed ideas and processes, instead of embracing the anxieties and potentials of “non-thought,” which may comprise of other senses besides what we conventionally call the intellect. The dogmatic image of history, similar to the dogmatic image of thought, is largely concerned only with recognising what is supposed to be the “correct” flow of history. This approach to history can be seen in city-plans, international development plans, progress reports, schedules, etc.

²⁵ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 35.

²⁶ Jean Hillier, “Agonizing Over Consensus: Why Habermasian Ideals cannot be ‘Real’”, *Planning Theory* 2(1) (2003): 37-59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095203002001005>. Elsewhere, Hillier also notes planning’s treatment of the world as wholly representable, and planning methods as value-free tools that can unproblematically represent the world limits plurality. See Jean Hillier, “Plan(e) Speaking: Multiplanar Theory of Spatial Planning”, *Planning Theory* 7(1) (2008): 24-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095207085664>

²⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 138. Deleuze notes, commonly, “difference becomes an object of representation always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagine opposition or perceived similitude.” This commonly-used “model of recognition” only directs thinking to align with established concepts and principles. More importantly, it assumes the physical body’s interaction with the material world is secondary to the faculty of mind. Hence, in an encounter, thinking is reduced to fitting complex bodies into pre-established categories. This negates true difference, that is a “difference” where a body can *differentiate from itself*.

²⁸ The “non” is not the opposite of “have” or a lack. The “non” moves beyond the binary, towards an opening to the many. Hence, “non-binary” is not the opposite of “binary.” Similarly, the “non-recognitional” is not a lack but an opening. Nothing can fill it to make it recognisable.

²⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 56. Tracing Deleuze’s thoughts, one might suggest, non-recognisability expresses a newness that is not predicated on improving the old. It is not incremental nor judgeable by degrees of similitude. Degree of similitude can even be found in statements like, “this is unrecognisable because I cannot detect familiar “A” traits in “B””. Here, “B” is still judged in relation to established “A” traits. Thus, “B” is merely encountered as “Not-A”; a binary identity remains. Non-recognition is something that cannot be judged according to a proper category. Non-recognition gains its power to inflect thinking, because it cannot be encountered as “Not-A”. “B” is “B’s” own future divergences. Moreover, that which is different may have extralinguistic and extracorporeal attributes that are uncapturable by existing concepts or metaphors. In non-recognition, passive object that the theorist’s “I” is supposed to comprehend is undone.

³⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 136.

³¹ The term “undoable” suggests an absolute impossibility. It is not something that one can find the correct methods or range of study, and then be able to properly give an image of the inexhaustibility of a list of every potential relation, every *potential* potential in the transpacific.

³² The impossibility of describing the inexhaustible list (or the inexhaustibility of describing the inexhaustible list) suggests some ways of approaching the infinite or inexhaustible are more immense than others. Perhaps, like how Hilbert’s Grand Hotel’s total number of rooms – to draw its floor-plan – is unimageable, even if we can still describe each individual room.

³³ Here, the idea that the transpacific has an innumerable “is’s” and “is-not’s” is partly drawn from Giorgio Agamben’s writings on potentiality. Specifically, Agamben noted every potentiality is both a “potential to do” and “potential to not-do,” or “potential to not pass into actuality.” Each potential is capable of reserving their own “impotentiality,” even if a potential does get actualised. Each potential’s impotentiality is always outside of what can be represented within identity, analogy, resemblance and opposition. As such, each potential, even if it does become imageable, retains a side that is forever unimageable. See Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), 1999, 180-182.

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DREAMING BIG: DEEP LISTENING IN DESIGN STUDIOS

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INTRODUCTION

An ever-increasing feature of architecture school design studio programs in Australia is to set project briefs grounded in real-world problem scenarios of Indigenous peoples. Mediated by the studio coordinator, students participate in project-based learning related to specific situational and contextual elements derived from the community setting. Little has been explored in how deep listening methods are employed within the context of design studio teaching in relation to visualising, valuing and informing the aspirational dreams of Indigenous communities. Employing critical reflective methods, this paper will explore relational approaches to project-based problem learning which employ ‘deep listening’ methods to meet, capture and elaborate three dreams of Indigenous communities, senior Elders, leaders and knowledge holders, explored within three Indigenous-led design studios by three built environment academics. Many Indigenous communities express aspirational dreams as part of their Story; these are often ‘big’ and ambitious and have remained unrealised due to a lack of resources, land title and/tenure and the ability to navigate regulatory or governmental barriers. The paper will focus *not* on how deep listening techniques are taught to students, but rather how the authors as design studio leaders engage in deep listening methods that are particular to each studio context.

Author context

Carroll Go-Sam, an Indigenous graduate of architecture, will explore approaches to deep listening in the context of spatial tactic within Indigenous university community dream, tested within Design Studio at the University of Queensland. Christine Phillips, a non-Indigenous architect will share her critical reflections on employing deep listening techniques in relation to the dreams of well-respected Elder she explores within Design Studio teaching in the Architecture Program at RMIT University with her co-teaching partner, Stasinos Mantzis. Jock Gilbert, a non-indigenous landscape architect will critically reflect on his understanding of deep listening in relation to the dreams of an Indigenous community explored through Design Studio teaching within the Landscape Architecture Program at RMIT University.

Phillips and Gilbert will not be identifying the Elders and community groups they are working with to shift the subject from being research *about* the Indigenous partner, to that of the authors/educators.¹

Research context and methodology

Drawing on critical reflective methods that are critical, descriptive and analytical, the paper contributes to current research and practices operating within Australia's built environment.² The last decade has witnessed a major shift within the built environment profession to rethink nationhood, inclusion and identity recalibrating how we design, build, educate and practice on the lands of Australia's First Nations people in light of 250 years of the injustices of colonisation. This is of particular importance as the built environment professions reflect the broader societal understanding that all design is conducted on lands whose sovereignty remains [00]. This presents challenges for design education in the context of design studios which are confined by university schedules, limited budgets and studio programs that make engagement more transactional. Respectful engagement with deep listening at its centre is now recognised as embedding reciprocal relationships established between the design practitioners, the majority [00] and First Nations peoples to ensure there is a mutual benefit for all stakeholders.⁴ =This has been a necessary shift due to Indigenous perceptions of non-indigenous researchers and partners being transactional and extractive in the way they have managed relationships.⁵

Design studio is a pedagogical model in which design is taught and learnt by doing design – often in real world scenarios. It is the dominant teaching mode in architecture and urban design where students, tutors and partners engage to explore an issue through mutual enquiry.

For the three authors, the design studio is an important mechanism for relationality and the building of relationships with First Nations communities, but also for the visualisation of the dream in a way that affords reciprocity - student works are made available and presented back to community at the conclusion of each studio.

Deep Listening

In cross-cultural practice, deep listening is situated between Indigenous and non-Indigenous practices and interpretations. McGaw & Pieris⁶ trace recent academic use of the term to “liberation epistemologies” developed by First Nations researchers. To listen respectfully and deeply, not superficially, involving mutual sharing of one's own story with others is a common application. In Australia, Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers variously identify deep listening with Indigenous storytelling associated with expectations of responsive action upon listening, so that voices not heard in normative research and project practice are amplified and comprehended.⁷ Attempts to equate different Indigenous language terms with the English equivalent, ‘deep listening’ has resulted in less nuanced comprehension of listening in intra-cultural practice settings.

Our approach here is we each individually approach listening respectfully, involving mutual sharing of one's own story, involving repeated interactions with community leaders with the intent to privilege Indigenous aspirations and dreams, while being cognizant of tensions created by the demands of educational requirements for studio learning outcomes.

The University of Queensland (UQ) Indigenous community Dream: Carroll Go-Sam

I personally don't use the term deep listening in my teaching practice. For Dyrirbal people, listening patiently or *nambal* is translated as “hear, listen” - what this can mean in practice is both contextual based on setting, place, purpose and people present. One understanding involves not hurrying the speaker even when they tell you a tangential story. Talking around the main purpose, prioritising the others story is a tactic and way of building relationality first, by minimizing the risk of having a direct request rejected. It conveys your purpose is not extractive or transactional. For Indigenous people the term ‘deep listening’ has captured shared values about meaningful engagement in cross-cultural contexts as a means “foregrounding Indigenous voices”.⁸ Indigenous researcher Kovach⁹ expresses

reservations about being able to control both the setting, reception and application of relational, oral based knowledge, positing motivation for positive policy and practice outcomes for Indigenous people.

Start with relationality

As an Indigenous academic, slowly building on each interaction before making a request is an important feature of relationality, each social encounter sets aside the project focused. The UQ studio differed from the other two cited in the sense, I was working with a newly appointed UQ Indigenous leader, not officially tasked with overseeing a new Indigenous Centre. Although, Indigenous research and teaching are increasingly becoming a part of 21st century University programs, such programs do not occupy purpose-built spaces, with many dispersed throughout campus/es. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Engagement (PVCIE) was not my line manager and as someone unfamiliar, I first approached the PVCIE at a project launch and then later discussed the studio proposal for a new Indigenous Centre.

Prior to formulating the final brief, I offered to take the PVCIE on an architectural tour to Western Australia, Edith Cowan University to see facilities Kurongkurl Katitjin, a centre for Indigenous teaching and health research programs, and Ngoolark, a general Student Services Building. The tour initially planned before bedding down the brief, was delayed due to the PVCIE heavy work commitments and rescheduled after the studio commenced.

UQ Indigenous Centre Dream

The Dream for UQ Indigenous Centre commenced in the late 1980s, it had been spoken about by UQ Indigenous staff. Very little was recorded about these earlier aspirations held by - Jeanie Bell, Michael Williams and Jackie Huggins, to name a few who framed the Dream as both practical and resistant to spatial dominance. The Dream had emerged then and now from constant relocation and inadequate accommodation to house Indigenous student support services. Current accommodation was universally disliked and fueled strategic desire to deterritorialize¹⁰ and carve out Indigenous controlled space. The PVCIE had expressed on a number of occasions that hosting local, national and international Indigenous visitors at UQ was a problem because they couldn't be appropriately welcomed into an Indigenous space. The capture of the Dream is a tactical place identity maneuver to give form and advance a bigger Dream. The studio program became an opportunity to bring together disassociated units - the Office of the PVCIE, health research, Indigenous academics, student support services and UQ Anthropology Museum. Strategically prominent sites identified by the PVCIE also related to the attachment Indigenous staff and students had to UQ Lakes surrounds. A single face-to-face meeting with the PVCIE sketched the outline of the studio brief along with three preferred sites overlooking the lakes. Due to the PVCIE demanding work schedule, subsequent communication was carried out by phone conversations with her Executive Assistant and email.

I met again prior to finalising the electronic course profile to request if the PVCIE could participate in an Indigenous panel of UQ staff and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Oogeroo Unit. After the commencement of studio and completion of the panel, further interactions with PVCIE finalised the three-day visit to Edith Cowan, Western Australia where we developed a common understanding and vision for the new Indigenous Centre. We also shared more details about each other's personal stories, family background and how the trip could inform the dream at UQ. The PVCIE attended the studio review and I continue to have ongoing discussions about the Dream several years after the studio and during the course of other projects at UQ.¹¹

Uncle's Dream: Christine Phillips

Deep Listening is not a term Uncle has ever used with me. Instead, he says things like: “Are you listening?”, or “listen now...”. I learnt about deep listening via McGaw and Pieris,¹² *The Australian Indigenous Design Charter*¹³ and Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr.¹⁴ I applied these understandings to a relational model underpinned by a reciprocal relationship that responds to Uncle's dream. This meant ensuring our relationship offers mutual benefit to Uncle and myself and co-teacher as we grow our knowledge together and commit to a long-term relationship. This relationship began in 2018 following an invitation from Uncle for RMIT architecture students to work with him on a vision he has to build a facility to address the needs of his community. I have since co-led yearly, semester-long design studios within the Bachelor and Master of Architecture Programs from 2019-2023 with my co-teacher, Stasinios Mantzis. Students are required to respond to Uncle's dream through a design response which is gifted and presented to Uncle and the community at the end of the semester.

Understanding Uncle's dream through deep listening commenced with a 4-hour train trip to Uncle's Country. I spent the day with Uncle listening to stories about Uncle's community, ancestors, the community's current struggles and how his dream could begin to address these challenges. Shortly after I returned to Uncle's with my co-teacher, Mantzis, and together the three of us developed a studio brief in response to Uncle's dream. On reflection, this preliminary investment to the relationship has contributed to the length and success of the relationship today. In *Decolonizing Solidarity*, non-Indigenous author, Clare Land, explains the importance of being prepared to travel to an Indigenous person's Country to practice values of reciprocity.¹⁵

Understanding and nurturing the dream

Understanding Uncle's dream has been an ongoing process, demanding a long-term commitment to comprehending the needs of Uncle and his community. Regular check-ins with Uncle have allowed us to adjust the curricula, accordingly, ensuring alignment with his evolving vision and priorities. This iterative process underscores the importance of clarifying mutual benefits at the outset and adapting our capabilities to meet Uncle's expectations. One of the key lessons I've learned is the necessity of expanding my skill set beyond traditional design studio teaching requirements. Uncle's desire for RMIT's continuous support compelled me to develop skills in grant writing, stakeholder engagement, and organizational development. These efforts, though time-consuming, are integral to the deep listening approach, demonstrating a commitment to advancing Uncle's dream beyond the classroom.

Central to nurturing the relationship is the practice of self-reflection and regular communication. While the friendship that has developed between Uncle and me is meaningful, it's essential to ensure that our interactions remain rooted in addressing Uncle's needs. As Clare Land emphasizes in *Decolonizing Solidarity*, assumptions about friendship and personal gain can hinder genuine solidarity efforts: “Non-Indigenous people may come to solidarity relationships with Indigenous people bearing a number of assumptions” such as “They might think that they will gain friends among Aboriginal people they work to support politically, or work with towards some political gain.”¹⁶ Thus, ongoing reflection and dialogue are crucial in maintaining a responsible and equitable partnership. This introspective process led me to question the frequency of design studios on Uncle's Country and the balance of mutual benefit in our relationship. Engaging Uncle in these discussions revealed his openness to exploring partnerships beyond architecture and signaled a shift towards broader collaboration within the university. This evolution underscores the dynamic nature of deep listening and the importance of adapting our approach to meet the evolving needs of our Indigenous partners.

Community Dream: Jock Gilbert

In this community, the dream is for a hub or meeting place to be located on a pastoral property under Aboriginal ownership. The hub represents the dream of the community in facilitating the development of cultural tourism and education offerings to support Aboriginal self-determination.

My role as an academic has been to support and advance this dream with various government and non-government authorities and organisations also similarly involved.

With leadership of the community, Uncle's oft-repeated admonition (sometimes directed to me but also to family members, bureaucrats and government representatives) is: "you've gotta listen". As described earlier, this has always been received as an invocation to deep listening as a tool of relationality. In this context, my understanding of deep listening (from my own perspective as a non-Indigenous academic) draws on the work of built environment academics Anoma Pieris and Janet McGaw who note that:

"At the heart of deep listening lies a commitment to respecting Indigenous knowledge systems as different yet equal...deep listening begins with sharing stories and offering an opportunity for each party to situate themselves in the story of the other. It is a process that takes time and requires patience."¹⁷

My understanding of Uncle's place in the dispossession of his people is critical here. A deeply ingrained fear of sharing information with authorities and institutions, which have, as an Aboriginal person, forced him into bureaucratic compliance all his life rendering anything worthwhile or hard won to be taken away at the stroke of a bureaucratic pen. Practical matters often intervene: "where are the boundaries?" when boundaries are always clearly marked, "where's the snakebite?" (the unexpected clause or circumstance which negates all his work and authority but also more clear examples of avoidance, "what's next?" which often leads to a new and seemingly unrelated project. Working with Uncle, the Dream is always one step further on - and seems to be held there always, waiting. In many ways, this is a logical response in relation to his story.

As a researcher I am asked to respond to or to meet an invitation, generously extended, to join in relation with the dream through the holders of that dream. This dream is not a fixed or 'fixable' entity or space and requires a meeting of the dream which in turn is neither fixed or fixable. I have recognised the need to move away from my own established modes - academic, personal and practical - in order to meet the dream on terms other than my own - to encounter the dream, to truly meet it.

Paul Carter considers the encounter to be fundamental to meeting and consideration of this encounter to be requisite in the design of a place where meeting might occur. He notes that "encounter is potential in the environment."¹⁸ Rather than occurring in a fixed or fixable entity, Carter posits '...a shadow land of potential encounter flows around and through any meeting'. In this sense, the project of the development of the dream is in itself the opportunity for a place of meeting, one predicated not on a singular outcome achieved in a particular time-frame but which accounts for and allows for the possibility of such flows - of the embodiment of the tangible and intangible elements of place. As a development project this is difficult to reconcile with funding models, community expectations and education regimes. Carter instead points us to the critical role of 'waiting' in the encounter; 'waiting is ...the degree of separation that makes the idea of meeting attractive'. The concept of 'waiting' is requisite then in meeting the dream. It is inherent in the injunction that 'you've got to listen' and yet it is antithetical to normative western education. Waiting requires one to abandon the notion of entitlement, to not know or to know one's place in relation to that of another. Waiting is listening, waiting is learning, waiting is central to deep listening.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the dreams of these three Indigenous communities has not only shaped our collective and collaborative endeavors but also transformed and strengthened our understandings of deep listening, partnership and tactic. Through ongoing dialogue, mutual respect, and a commitment to action, we continue to nurture our relationships, through individual and contextual understandings by advancing the visions and dreams for these communities. This journey exemplifies the transformative power of deep listening in fostering meaningful connections and driving positive change. Deep listening is indeed a necessary aspect of working with Indigenous communities for educators in design studio.

NOTES

¹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonising Research Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, (London: Zed Books), 2012, 1.

² There are over 250 distinct groups in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia, each one with its own distinct culture, customs, language and laws that have contributed to the shaping and reshaping the lands and waterways across Australia and the Torres Strait Islands for over 65,000 years.

³ In 2017, there were 13,567 registered architects in Australia. Less than ten of these, were architects identifying as First Nations. 'Industry Profile: The Profession of Architecture in Australia, February 2018', accessed 13 February 2024.

chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcgclcfndmkaj/https://aaca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Industry-Profile.pdf

⁴ A fear of not wanting to repeat the atrocities of colonisation within built environment profession led to an inertia where architects and landscape architects were not wanting to engage with Indigenous knowledges and knowledge holders at all until recently for fear of 'getting it wrong.' In response, several Indigenous-led resources have become available to assist non-Indigenous design practitioners in respectful engagement. Of note is the NSW's Governments' 'Connecting with Country Framework' (first issued in 2020) and the monthly online 'Deadly Djurumin Yarns' series supported by Parlour. Many architecture and landscape architecture practices across Australia have now also implemented Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs).

⁵ Several Indigenous and non-indigenous design practitioners and academics including but not limited to Professor Paul Memmott, Carroll Go-Sam, Timothy O'Rourke, Kelly Greenop, Kevin O'Brien, Dillon Kombumerri, Alison Page, Danielle Hromek, Sarah Lynn Rees, Jefa Greenaway, Janet McGaw and Anoma Pieris, have been instrumental in driving progress in this area.

⁶ Janet McGaw and Anoma Pieris. *Assembling the Centre: Architecture for Indigenous Cultures Australia and Beyond*, (New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁷ Norm Sheehan and Polly Walker. 'The Purga Project: Indigenous Knowledge Research' in *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 29:2, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1326011100001344>, 11-17; Russell John Kennedy, 'Designing with Indigenous Knowledge: Policy and protocols for respectful and authentic cross-cultural representation in communication design practice', PhD dissertation, (Melbourne: Swinburne University of Technology, 2000): 2, 31.

⁸ Beth B. Swadener and Kagendo Mutua, (2008) *Decolonizing Performances: Deconstructing the Global Postcolonial in Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, 31 Chapter DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483385686>.

⁹ Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 11.

¹⁰ McGaw and Pieris, (2015, 9-11) on de-territorialisation as having strategic value through tactic for those who lack social, economic or institutional power.

¹¹ 'The Campuses on Countries' project, undertaken in 2021 and launched in 2022 involved the development of the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Design Framework and Engagement report' at the University of Queensland. The Pro Vice Chancellor of Indigenous Education was a key member of the Project Control Group. UQ later explored a proposal to relocate student support services.

¹² McGaw and Pieris, *Assembling the Centre*.

¹³ Russell Kennedy, Meghan Kelly, Jefa Greenaway, Brian Martin, *International Indigenous Design Charter: Protocols for sharing Indigenous knowledge in professional practice*, (Geelong: Deakin University Press, 2018).

¹⁴ Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr, 'DADIRRI', accessed Wed 14 February, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tow2tR_ezL8.

¹⁵ Clare Land, *Decolonizing Solidarity: Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles* (London: Zed Books, 2015), 18,19.

¹⁶ Land, *Decolonizing Solidarity*, 117.

¹⁷ McGaw and Pieris, *Assembling the Centre*, 19, 20.

¹⁸ Paul Carter, *Meeting Place: The Human Encounter and the Challenge of Coexistence*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 10.

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“COMMUNAL LIVING WOULD KILL ME”: THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF EXCLUDING AUTISTIC VOICES FROM THE RESIDENTIAL CARE BUILDING DESIGN PROCESS.

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INTRODUCTION

The UK is approaching a social care crisis regarding older autistic people. Current residential care facility design often makes these buildings inaccessible to autistic people, negatively impacting their quality of life. Historically, autistic people have been excluded from autism research, with researchers using non-autistic ‘experts’ such as parents and carers as primary sources of information. This research suggests that the non-autistic decision makers involved in the design of residential care facilities do not have an accurate view of the architectural needs and preferences of autistic people. Furthermore, it argues that relying on non-autistic participants contributes to a medical model/deficit-based discourse regarding autistic building design needs.

This research used a phenomenological grounded theory approach, with mixed methods data collection via a questionnaire undertaken by autistic (n=105) and non-autistic expert (n=41) participants. The research questions addressed autistic people’s needs and preferences within six architectural themes identified in an earlier pilot study, namely: Sensory Needs, Happiness and Well-Being, Health and Hygiene, Independence, Socialising, and Accessibility.

There was a statistically significant difference between the autistic and non-autistic responses in 31.1% of the quantitative questions asked, including regarding whether autistic people would consider living in a communal living group. The results also show that an unsuitable living environment can be catastrophic for autistic people, causing mental and physical distress.

Context

The United Kingdom is facing a social care crisis regarding the care of older autistic people. Autism has the same prevalence across the lifespan,¹ and autistic people are more likely to need social care compared to non-autistic people.² Autistic people are also more likely to experience co-occurring conditions such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and mental ill health.³ The main form of care for autistic people in Europe is informal care, which is care provided by family or friends.⁴ Informal care can be fragile, and “The potential for sudden breakdowns in caring arrangements is high, and too many people with autism may find themselves hurriedly placed in settings that may be expensive, distant, inappropriate, or all three”.⁵

Autistic people often live in environments that do not consider their specific environmental needs,⁶ as autistic people are “usually ignored in design”.⁷ This can negatively impact their well-being and

mental health.⁸ There is little information available for social care providers and architects regarding which specific architectural elements affect autistic people's well-being.⁹

What research does exist often focuses on the architectural needs of children, which is in line with autism research in general, where only 3.5%¹⁰ - 15%¹¹ of published research includes or focuses on adults. This statistic is smaller still for gerontological autistic research - just 0.4% addresses the needs of older autistic people.¹² These leaves autistic people facing an uncertain future, as "we know virtually nothing about what happens to us, autistic people...as we pass through middle and older age".¹³ The existing research also often takes a medical model or deficit based approach, with the aim of using the built environment to manage behaviours¹⁴ or force autistic people to "build tolerance" to sensory inputs they find distressing.¹⁵ Much of this research also does not include active participation from autistic people: in Tola et al's¹⁶ literature review, only four out of twenty-one research projects had active autistic participation. Conversely, it can be argued that autistic people should be considered the experts in their own lived experience, especially as autistic people likely have heightened empathy towards the struggle of other autistic people.¹⁷

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The researcher designed an online questionnaire with a grounded theory and phenomenological approach, as part of a larger research project. The questionnaire design was informed by extensive literature reviews, a pilot questionnaire, and feedback from relevant volunteers. Autistic people and non-autistic experts involved in the building design and social care sectors were asked about autistic architectural preferences in relation to six topics: Sensory preferences; Health, Hygiene, and Independence; Socialising; Special Interests and Hobbies; Accessibility and Ideal Dwelling; and Communal Living. The researcher collected a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to allow for the discovery of themes and theories, as well as statistical testing.

Quantitative questions offered three radio button choices with the aim of limiting decision fatigue. All questions were written in an easy read format, as outlined by the Autistic Self Advocacy Network.¹⁸

The researcher recruited participants via convenience and snowball sampling via academic institutions, social media, and autism charities and organisations. 105 autistic participants and 41 non-autistic participants who lived in the United Kingdom responded, though not all participants answered every question.

The researcher used reflexive thematic analysis¹⁹ with an inductive approach when analysing the qualitative data. Data was coded at a semantic level through the lens of critical realism.²⁰ Quantitative data was tested for statistically significant differences between the responses of autistic and non-autistic participants, with a p value of less than 0.05 considered statistically significant. A Chi-square test was used when less than 20% of cells had an expected count of less than 5.²¹ When more than 20% of cells had an expected count of less than 5, either Fischer's exact test (for 2x2 tables),²² or the Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact test (for 2x3 tables)²³ was used.

RESULTS

Autistic participants were asked a range of questions regarding their architectural needs and preferences, and non-autistic experts involved in the building design or social care sector were asked what they thought autistic people's needs and preferences were. There were statistically significant differences between the autistic and non-autistic answers in 31.1% of variables, some of which are highlighted by Table 1 and Table 2.

Participants were asked whether they would ever consider living in a communal living situation, and those that said 'yes' or 'maybe' were asked what building typology they would consider.

Autistic Responses (n=88) (Would you ever consider living as part of a communal living group?)			Non-Autistic Responses (n=26) (Do you think autistic people would ever consider living as part of a communal living group?)			Pearson square asymptotic significance	Chi-test
Yes	Maybe	No	Yes	Maybe	No		
13 (14.8%)	31 (35.2%)	44 (50%)	9 (34.6%)	16 (61.5%)	1 (3.8%)	<0.001	

Table 1. Consideration of living as part of a communal living group

	Autistic Responses (n=44) (Would you like to live as part of these types of communal living?)			Non-Autistic Responses (n=25) (Do you think autistic people would like to live as part of these types of communal living?)			Pearson Chi-square test	Fisher-Freeman - Halton Exact Test (2 sided)
	Yes	Maybe	No	Yes	Maybe	No		
Individual homes with access to communal spaces across several buildings	29 (65.9%)	10 (22.7%)	5 (11.4%)	14 (56.0%)	9 (36.0%)	2 (8.0%)	0.485	0.600
A group of flats with communal spaces in the same building	22 (50%)	17 (38.6%)	5 (11.4%)	13 (52.0%)	12 (48.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0.203	0.246
A group of flats with communal spaces in another building	13 (29.5%)	18 (40.9%)	13 (29.5%)	9 (36.0%)	10 (40.0%)	6 (24.0%)	0.823	-
A bedroom within a shared house	7 (15.9%)	9 (20.5%)	28 (63.6%)	5 (20.0%)	17 (68.0%)	3 (12.0%)	<0.001	-
A bedroom within a shared house, with communal spaces in another building	1 (2.3%)	10 (22.7%)	33 (75.0%)	4 (16.0%)	13 (52.0%)	8 (32.0%)	0.001	<0.001

Table 2. Communal living group building typology

This research establishes there are significant differences between the self-reported architectural needs and preferences of autistic people, and their preferences as perceived by others. As a result of this, combined with the absence of autistic voices in existing research, the researcher has chosen to report autistic responses in the thematic analysis. Thematic analysis of autistic participants' responses revealed three overarching themes within the concerns autistic participants had regarding communal living; interaction with other people, loss of sanctuary and loss of autonomy, and sensory input.

Interaction with other people

Forced Socialisation

Participants were concerned with the forced socialisation that would result from “too much sharing spaces” and “multiple people using facilities at once”. Participants did not want any kind of “forced interaction” or “forced socialisation”, and they feared “pressure to socialise too much” and “expectations to interact in the right way”. One person said they “can barely live with my partner and children because I find sharing my space overwhelming”. Forced socialisation could prevent autistic people being able to “re-charge” as they “need a lot of time to themselves”, and find masking tiring. Concern over forced social interaction would stop autistic people moving into residential care.

Threat to Safety and Well-being

Communal living would be “too stressful” for some participants, and threaten their safety and well-being. Their “anxiety would be awful”, and even thinking about living with a group of people “drained their energy”. Some were concerned about “bullying or angry people” and a “lack of boundaries”, as well as being able to escape other people’s “unpredictability” and “emotional volatility”. For some communal living could be life threatening: “I do not 'dislike' socialising and spending time with people - it literally makes me ill. I have to take beta blockers to visit my doctor or leave my house or spend time on Zoom with anyone other than my counsellor. Communal living would kill me”. Others were specifically concerned about being forced to live with non-autistic people, who may “treat us like animals to be stared at” and “try to negotiate my limits, behaviours and my social capacities in such a way that makes me feel out of control and unsafe”. One participant stated that communal living and forced proximity of others could expose them to prejudice due to other aspects of their identity, such as being “queer, fat, disabled and non-binary”. The threat communal living poses to autistic people is multi-faceted.

Clashing Lifestyles

Some participants did not want to live with people who had clashing needs and lifestyles, stating that they would find it hard to share spaces with “people with needs potentially extremely different than mine”, and were concerned about “not choosing who they lived with”. This included “unorganised communal spaces” or people who were “messy in communal spaces”, or had differing socialisation needs. Some were concerned about the sensory implications of clashing lifestyles, such as other people being “super loud all the time”, and others worried about the affected they had on others, such as needing to be “up late at night when other people are asleep”. One person had even been “advised not to” live with others as “people found them difficult”. Participants reported that clashing lifestyles would cause distress and may prevent them from being to meet their own social and sensory needs.

Loss of sanctuary and autonomy

Keeping other people out

The ability to control who entered their private domain was mentioned by several participants: “My space is very private and a sanctuary - I am very protective of it & only let certain people in as it is where I feel safest from the vagaries of the world”. One person said “My home is my safe place and I won't let anyone in unless arranged and agreed. I won't answer the door if not expecting anyone.” And another stated “it's a safe haven - I don't like letting any 'outsiders' in”. Participants repeatedly described their private domain as their “territory” and their “sanctuary”. Being able to control who can and cannot enter is vital to maintaining that sense of sanctuary.

Privacy, Dignity, Choice, and Control

Participants were concerned by the “longer term loss of independence and self-respect”.

Participants reported needing “privacy and control over their surroundings to feel safe and be able to relax”, and that it was “paramount for their mental health and well-being”. This privacy allowed them to “become themselves fully” and for there to be “no masking...between it's walls”.

One person said that the lack of control offered by care homes “filled them with dread”: “Not my bed, can't control food, can't control lighting or noise, people wandering in and out of my room all day...No no no no no! I'd rather die first”. Others discussed the importance of control over their belongings, say that they “get very distressed when people touch my things, especially without asking”. The need for control and choice extends to concern over “rules and regulations that don't suit” their needs, and that they couldn't live somewhere that “dictated my routine or décor...or how I was to behave”.

Dislike of having to share spaces

Several participants mentioned “needing their own space” and not wanting to share spaces with others. Having to share spaces such as living spaces, bathrooms, and kitchens, would stop them being able to live in a communal living situation. One person said “having my own space that is entirely mine, even within the house I share with my life-partner, is critical to my wellbeing”.

Sensory

Sensory Challenges of the Building

The building design itself can pose sensory challenges that would make autistic people not want to live in residential care. The building's location can bring sound from neighbours, “traffic noises” and “sirens”. A lack of sufficient sound proofing within the building can also be a problem: “I don't want to be scared that the flat downstairs will complain if I want to dance or bounce, I don't want to hear everything from next door all day etc”. The building may not sufficiently control other sensory inputs, such as lighting, or cooking smells.

Shared spaces pose their own specific sensory challenges, and could result in “lots of overlapping noises”, unwanted smells, and painful echoes.

Sensory Challenge of other People

The presence of other people also creates sensory challenges that may stop autistic people wanting to live in a communal living situation: “People actually irritate me, the noises they make and not having patience to deal with it”. This is especially true of shared spaces, where “other people's noise and smells” may be a barrier to daily activities: “I can't eat with the smells and sounds of others eating”. One person said “People! Their smell, noise, and unpredictability” would stop them living with other people.

DISCUSSION

These results show that there are many barriers that may stop autistic people living in residential care, and that a lack of consideration for autistic needs in residential care design can have disastrous consequences for autistic people. These results also suggest that those involved in the building design and social care sectors do not have an accurate view on the architectural needs and preferences of autistic people. For example, these results suggest that an autistic person only having a bedroom in a shared house as their private domain would greatly negatively impact them, but 88% of non-autistic participants thought autistic people would at least consider it. This limited provision of private space is also reflected in existing research, which often only discusses offering autistic people their own bedroom.²⁴

This lack of private living space would also contribute to forced socialisation and an inability to control social interaction, which this research indicates autistic people also do not want. This is despite some research suggesting that building design should “encourage the least social to interact at least once a day”.²⁵ This reliance on shared or communal spaces for daily activities could also create conflict points for those with differing lifestyles, and prevent autistic people feeling like their home is their sanctuary. Instead, these results support the idea that best practice would be offering autistic people individual homes/flats, with access to communal spaces if they wished. This approach is reflected in Andersen and Kirstensen’s²⁶ Model Programme for designing for older autistic people. This approach would also help negate some of the negative impact communal living would have on the autistic person’s sensory environment, as it would minimise the negative sensory impact other people had on their day-to-day life.

Communal living can pose insurmountable sensory challenges if not catered for in design. Some argue that it shouldn’t be fully catered for, and instead spaces should build sensory tolerance²⁷ as this is more realistic of ‘typical’ environments. However, why should autistic people’s homes, their sanctuaries, be places that are designed to be uncomfortable for them, rather than be places that meet their needs and where they can be their true, authentic selves? Brand and Gaudion highlight that autistic people’s responses to their sensory environment are involuntary and can be destructive,²⁸ which could contribute to feelings of being unsafe.

CONCLUSION

Excluding autistic people from the residential care building design process can make it difficult for them to access residential care in later life. Buildings that are designed without consideration for autistic needs can have negative impacts on their physical health and mental well-being. It is not enough to rely on non-autistic experts for information on autistic needs, as their perceptions may not be accurate. Little of the existing research on the subject has active autistic participation, which likely contributes to the problem. It can be argued that for autistic people to be able to access residential care, they need their own private space that includes more than just a bedroom, that considers their sensory needs, and allows them to control their level of social interaction without forcing it.

NOTES

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QUEER MALE SOCIAL-SEXUAL SPACES

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines male-to-male social-sexual activity in the subaltern world of male sexual spaces. The importance of such spaces is examined regarding history and socio-politico-cultural perspectives of male-to-male sexual expression through social-sexual activity and time-limited communal engagement for sexual pleasure and affirmation. This contrasts greatly from normative societal expectations, partly due to core queer cultural premises being that of sex and sexuality and partly due to the ongoing oppression towards queer men. The establishment of space designed as social-sexual places for queer men to engage with each other, serves several socio-cultural needs that link local and global experiences. Additionally, the public and private spheres of such spaces are somewhat blurred, yet through social etiquette navigable. Through methods of hard copy and online content analysis and immersive observational-participatory ethnography in the subaltern world of gay male sexual spaces such as bathhouses, circuit clubs, fetish balls, sex clubs, backrooms, and dark rooms, studied is a self-monitored subculture that creates its own tribal rituals at various odds with both mainstream societal and LGBTQ movement norms. By deviating from and resisting such norms, this tribe demonstrates how it maintains a core drive of their liberated sexuality outside of mainstreamed sexual governance. Premised on both spatial theory and queer liberation theory, the former focusing on the deconstruction of space and place with regard to the creation and preservation of male-to-male social-sexual activities, the latter supporting self-defined queer social-sexual expression from intimacy to hardcore sex.

SOCIAL-SEXUAL SPACES – QUEER MALE PLACES

Definitions

In order to identify the populations and the particularized activities being focused on terminology is outlined. With a primary focus being on social-sexual spaces, the seeking and engaging in sexual activities between men is about men who have sex with men (MSM). Their sexual orientation is not necessarily indicated. Such men could be gay, bisexual, straight, or trans. They could be cisgendered, transitioning, transgender, or gender neutral. Their sexuality and/or gender could be essentialized or fluid. Point being, the men who enter and participate in these spaces do so to engage in sex with other men. This speaks to an open definition that allows for gender and sexual fluidity within the realms of maleness. Most MSM spaces for social-sexual purposes cater to those who identify as gay or bisexual, with some permitting transgender males. The term ‘queer males,’ for the purposes of this paper, is both an umbrella term to capture these sexual orientations as well as MSM and transgender individuals all of whom identify as male. Queer is also recognized politically as progressive, sex

positive, and in resistance to heteronormativity.¹ Analogously, the term ‘tribe’ is used to describe men who seek out social-sexual spaces and places to have sex with each other. A subset of the LGBTQ and even mainstream communities, these men seek to explore, engage, and release their inner sexual desires. As for the spaces, part or all their physicality permits sexual activity to take place on the premises – sex on the premises (SOP). Often time-limited and in relation to an advertised theme, some are continuous (i.e., twenty-four-hour bathhouses).

Theoretical Perspectives

This research is premised on sociological spatial theory, and given the focus on venues of sexual pleasure, Simmel’s work on the modern world’s leisure spaces² and the role of secrecy as part of complex human interactions involving mutually agreeable connections, yet without expectations of total revelations.³ Such spaces provide opportunities for human exploration and expression beyond their normative existence. Soja⁴ builds on Lefebvre⁵ and Foucault⁶ in positing the ‘thirdspace,’ that allows for a unique place of the coming together of diametrically opposed conceptions. Within such ‘backspaces’,⁷ individuals can express their ‘back self’ as opposed to their daily public ‘front self’⁸ expressing a side of themselves without social repercussions. Hence, a queer male can move from a conventional role in a corporate job to a sexual personae by entering into and engaging in a space that Thrift⁹ refers to as creating, defining, interacting, and transforming – a place for male-to-male sexual interactions.

There is also the interaction between individuals and spaces referred to as ‘spatial configurations,’¹⁰ a bundling of spatial arrangements (SOPs) and human practice (sexual activities). These physical liminoid spaces¹¹ that Redmon¹² notes provide, “a liminal license for people to transgress norms, participate in playful deviance, and present their secret self”,¹³ the emotional context of backspaces, where liminoid pursuits represent opportunities to be “apart together [...] rejecting usual norms,” according to Huizinga (p. 12).¹⁴

Such backspaces allow individuals to explore and express their back selves,¹⁵ which for queer men is sexually liberating, given climates of hostility and discrimination and minimal existences of such spaces.¹⁶ Queer liberation theory points to a segment of the LGBTQ movement that prioritizes equity over equality, is non-assimilationist, eschewing mainstream society’s cis-heteronormativity, instead holding up its diversity by celebrating difference.¹⁷ Male-to-male sexual activity relates to queer liberation theory as it captures queer male sexual spaces and places and their role in facilitating sexual expression as part of our lives (sexual health) and societal existence (accommodations for normal human activity).¹⁸

Historical Significance

There is a long history of sex-segregated communal spaces in which men gathered and dependent on circumstances and through subtle gestures and flirtations could lead to sexual activity. Bathhouses for example offer spaces for men to gather, bathe, which can potentially lead homoerotic and sexual encounters. The history of bathhouses is often uncovered through criminal offenses highlighting the persecution of male-to-male sexual activity. Documentation includes purges against the “vice of sodomy” in 1492 Florence, Italy, regarding illicit sexual activity between boys and men in taverns, baths, and casini.¹⁹ Also, that year, Catholic Queen Isabel shut down public baths in the Muslim city of Granada as a means of suppressing homosexual activity.²⁰ The Parisian Bains de Gymnase bathhouse was raided by police in 1876, with six men charged with an “offense against public decency,”²¹ and management and a couple of employees with “facilitating pederasty”²² as the charged were between the ages of fourteen and twenty-two.²³ In 1903, New York police raided the Ariston Hotel Baths arresting twenty-six men, with twelve tried for sodomy charges and seven receiving

prison sentences between four and twenty years.²⁴ An underlying theme is that of police repression of same-sex sexual activity between men, motivated by morality-based discretionary powers to raid, humiliate, and discourage queers from congregating, whether socially or for consensual sexual relations.

Such law enforcement impositions on queer spaces over the years has led to major riots and historic scenes of resistance and mobilization of the LGBTQ movement. Raids and arrests continue in modern times. In Canada a powerful gay liberation movement was ignited due to the infamous bathhouse raids of 1981.²⁵ In varying forms, police actions on gay bathhouses continued with raids in 1999 against the Bijou sex club in Toronto,²⁶ in 2000 at a women's night at the Club Toronto bathhouse,²⁷ in 2002 at Goliath's in Calgary,²⁸ and in 2004 the "inspection" of the Warehouse Spa and Bath in Hamilton.²⁹ Due to health directives, the New York City Health Department ordered all gay bathhouses closed in 1985 due to the HIV/AIDS crisis³⁰ contrasting Toronto emphasizing safer sex practices.³¹ In Beijing, China, a series of police raids took place at gay bathhouses and meeting spots in 2008.³² Galvanized responses by LGBTQ communities to such raids demonstrate the importance of queer social-sexual spaces as safe places for them to be themselves and meet others like them.

Beyond bathhouses, parties have been organized in the United States by and for gay men to create sexual play environments since the 1960s. These include boy parties for young queers, circuit parties for those who can afford fly-in soirees, retreats hosted by the Radical Fairies for the androgynous and nature-connected, and leather contests for those into leather/BDSM.³³ The creation of male-to-male sexual spaces by both management and patrons, has played a role in counteracting and transforming attempts at sexually ordering people based on hegemonic normative sexual notions. These attempts gave rise to radicals and revolutionaries, such as the LGBTQ movement who challenged society's rigid codes of sexual ideations, desires, and practices.³⁴ Sexual freedom for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, is a key factor the gay liberation movement fought for and was exemplified by the response to the Toronto bathhouse raids,³⁵ contributing a major principle of queer liberation theory.³⁶

Queer Male Social-Sexual Spaces

Today queer male social-sexual spaces are creatively varied in their established venues. These include bathhouses, circuit clubs, fetish balls, sex clubs, backrooms, and dark rooms. What all these spaces have in common is that they are usually commercial, managed, with a set of rules, and indoor providing a degree of privacy, safety, and anonymity – all important to their patrons. Indoor venues can also include non-commercial privately organized gatherings such as sex parties or orgies in an organizer's home or hotel room. Both commercial and non-commercial sexual spaces intersect the private/public sphere³⁷ in that the space provides for a level of privacy, yet the participant is interacting with members of the public. This study is not considering outdoor sexual spaces such as parks, washrooms, alleyways, etc., which have higher public sphere, exposure, and risk ramifications. In a world in which hostility, persecution, and oppression towards queer men is ongoing – 61 nations criminalize consensual same-sex sexual acts of which six impose the death penalty³⁸ – these liminal social-sexual spaces for queer men can be found in parts of the globe in which queer male sexual relations are not criminalized and transgressive sexual activities can be engaged in.

Methods

With this work in progress, I share preliminary observations on an ongoing exploratory qualitative study in which I examine social-sexual spaces that become defined places for men to engage in spatial practices of sexual activities. An ethnographic approach³⁹ in immersive, participatory research,⁴⁰ in which I immerse myself in the social-sexual spaces for this study is employed. This methodological

approach captures not only observing but also living phenomena. Data is collected through hard-copy and online content analysis of advertisements as pathways to queer male social-sexual spaces and entries in a research diary, updated following each physical visit, outlining thoughts, reflections, and other noteworthy insights. This ongoing study has to date taken place in male-to-male social-sexual spaces in Melbourne and Sydney in Australia; Amsterdam, Berlin, Budapest, London, and Prague in Europe; and Chicago, Montreal, New York City, San Francisco, Toronto, and Vancouver in North America.

Queer Male Social-Sexual Spaces as Critical Spatial Practice

Fraser's concept of subaltern counterpublics,⁴¹ is useful as they are alternative discursive spaces that subordinated social groups create, occupy, and live within. Warner⁴² links this with a queer spatiality of counterpublics in which the progressive, sex-positive, liberationist segments of gay and bisexual male communities counter mainstreamed gay and bisexual males, who aspire to monogamy, same-sex marriage, and possibly parenting.⁴³ Society's repeated attempts at repressing this sexuality spurs the creation of spaces that accommodate these very desires. The drive for sexual release is hardwired and difficult to contain subjectively and systemically, inclusive of male-to-male sex, as evidenced throughout history.⁴⁴ This sexual drive also drives the creation of SOP spaces that include, but are not limited to, the aforementioned bathhouses, circuit clubs, dark rooms, fetish balls, porn theaters, sex clubs, and shops. Many of these spaces are created within capitalist societies and managed with a profit motive. Hence, class status undergirds accessibility to such spaces, allowing those with economic means to afford visiting these venues either locally or globally in liberal international settings.

Spatial practices address activities carried out between actors (male-to-male) in a space formulated into a place for particular (sexual) activities. Such places break from the monotony of daily life by creating a permissive setting that allows one to uninhibitedly delve into their sexual core, in turn being a critical spatial practice.⁴⁵ These spaces represent opportunity structures, via their rules—some outlined, others unspoken. Judgment should be withheld regarding sexual proclivities and fetishes of the patrons, only consensual sexual play is permitted, all interactions are to be respectful (including gentle declinations), responses of “no” are honored, and engagement in safer sex practices whenever requested otherwise patrons need take leave of the scene. Permission is sought to join an already underway scene and in more involved scenarios discussions of interests, limits, and risk-taking boundaries as well as safe words, should be engaged. This non-conclusive etiquette⁴⁶ is applicable regardless of what substances patrons are under the influence of, albeit some venues restrict substances, and some have staff/monitors to ensure rules are followed.

The structural elements venue managers put in place in these spaces coalesce into a counterpublic,⁴⁷ queer male subculture.⁴⁸ Some patrons regularly balance their need for play, others pursue deviant sexual tourism⁴⁹—to engage in a hedonic, cultural, tribal⁵⁰ critical spatial practice⁵¹ of embracing their back selves⁵² and that of other men. This is a unique experience of being temporally ‘apart together’ (p. 32).⁵³ These social-sexual spaces commonly orchestrate elements such as black ice, lighting, music, video, sexual performances, pleasure, and MSM desire sometimes through unauthorized drugs—meth, in particular—to facilitate liminal atmospheres of sexual liberation. All these elements combined can create an intoxicating euphoria that, from the outset, frames this tribe as deviant⁵⁴ yet is a deviational liminal opportunity from the monotony of the mundaneness of our everyday lives – an expression of queer sexual liberation starkly contrasting a world of heterosexually-dominated spaces. What emerges from this qualitative immersive approach are concepts of identity and self, contingent upon interactions with others⁵⁵ within critical spatial practices influencing the patrons aligned with the themes of the venues.⁵⁶ In turn, a self-monitored subculture that creates its own tribal rituals at

various odds with both mainstream societal and LGBTQ movement norms develop. A concrete example is the queer male who travels to a foreign setting where they are not known nor known to the other patrons,⁵⁷ assisting with lowered inhibition while engaging in deviant tourism. By patronizing and engaging in social-sexual activities in these spaces they are engaging in critical spatial practices by exploring and expressing their back self⁵⁸ through liminoid experiences.⁵⁹ Whether international guests or the locals, such settings create temporary social-sexual community to meet core sexual needs. Queer male social-sexual spaces become opportunity structures in which subaltern norms are created to form an ongoing underground tribalism.

Subaltern Queer Sexual Liberation: Challenges and Resiliency

Dependent upon the socio-politico-cultural setting, these spatial practices can be deemed deviant (gatherings of male-to-male sexual interactions vs. normative day-to-day existence) rendering such spaces vulnerable on many fronts. These include predatory developers threatening to replace such spaces with imposing new gentrifying properties reminiscent of Delany's⁶⁰ lament on the decline of porn theatres in New York City's Times Square; conservatized LGBTQ communities (read same-sex marriage);⁶¹ concerns regarding STIs (including HIV);⁶² occasional equal space controversies (e.g., limited similar space opportunities for women; including trans bodies in such spaces); and technology's ubiquity of dating/hookup apps. Some such male-to-male sexual spaces include BDSM/kink, which may challenge community standards. Although Western and some Australasian countries have SOP spaces, for numerous other countries the risks are heightened due to severe penal laws that could result in imprisonment and, for a minority of others, the death penalty.⁶³ Subjective challenges among tribesmen can include abilities, age, class (e.g., costs for entrance and gear dependent on theme), HIV status, safer sex practices,⁶⁴ race/racial differences,⁶⁵ trans status, etc. These challenges can place such spaces in precarious circumstances. Nevertheless, history shows that through ongoing resistance, transgressions, and reinvention they resurface repeatedly and find new ways to thrive. Underpinning the resurfacing of male-to-male sexual spaces is of the sociopolitical tribal culture of men for whom such interactions are important. In patronizing such spaces, they are "rejecting heterosexism, resisting homonormativity, liberating oneself from the mundane, and embracing one's inner sexual desires".⁶⁶ One of the tenets of queer liberation theory⁶⁷ speaks to sexual freedom aligned with such tribal motivations. As Goffman⁶⁸ indicates, the human body and the spirit need balance, that between the "front self" and the "back self", work and play, conforming and non-conforming. Through our increasingly mobilized world, such male-to-male sexual tribalism⁶⁹ produces a diversity of men and freedoms of sexual expression, that can transcend class (although for some admittance fees can prove prohibitive) and other socially located differences. Local social-sexual spaces in liberal large urban centres create opportunities globally for transgressive sexual tourists.

CONCLUSION

Emerging from this ongoing study is the importance of queer male social-sexual spaces to the men who engage in them, to queer male culture, and for the opportunity they provide for the sexual expression of queer liberation. Both sociological spatial theory⁷⁰ and its links to currently being developed queer liberation theory⁷¹ assist in contextualizing the study of queer male social-sexual spaces. The long history of the existence of such spaces and repeated attempts to shut them down and ongoing hostility towards male-to-male sexual activity, highlight the counterpublics⁷² of their very existence and the queer spatiality⁷³ they produce for critical spatial practices.⁷⁴ In essence, a time-limited, subaltern liminal⁷⁵ opportunity structure, which allows for spatial practices of core queer male sexual desires. I argue against the challenges to such spaces for their repressive attempts to suppress a

marginalized group of queer men within the marginalized LGBTQI+ communities. These tribalistic practices distinguish this group of men for exploring and indulging their same-sex sexual desires both defining their sense of self and contributing to the diversity of society.

NOTES

- ¹ It is acknowledged that 'queer' is not a term embraced by all gay, bisexual, trans or MSM, as some are still offended by its derogatory origins and have not taken up the reclamation process. Nevertheless, it is being used here for the reasons given in the text, and for the increased understanding of same.
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- ¹⁵ Kostas Tomazos et al. "From Leisure to Tourism: How BDSM Demonstrates the Transition of Deviant Pursuits to Mainstream Products," *Tourism Management* 60 (June 2017): 30–41, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.10.018>.
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- ⁶¹ Progressive queer members of the LGBTQ movement are critical of the pursuit and legalization of same-sex marriage, seeing it as engaging in homonormativity by buying into the privileges of a heterosexual institution while marginalizing other types of relationships. See Mulé (2010) to learn more about this.

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COMMUNING WITH ROBOTS: A PUBLIC ART EXPERIMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses *Communing with robots*,¹ a post-digital artwork shown at Curiosity, the outdoor exhibition for The World Science Festival Brisbane 2022.² The work questions how an individual's sense of trust, privacy, and security might be affected in cities increasingly mediated by invasive information communications technologies. Notions of the so-called Smart City³ background the creative work, which conceives the urban environment transformed into a panoptic schema⁴ of surveillance capitalism.⁵ If left unchecked, the asymmetries of informational power,⁶ exacerbated by the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Tech's commercial agendas,⁷ and the Internet of Everything (IoE)⁸— where networked structures connect people, machines, data, objects, and urban infrastructure—will permeate all aspects of everyday public life and transform it into a capital commodity.

The installation of *Communing with robots* in the South Bank Parklands proposed a slightly subversive creative transformation of a tiny part of the public sphere.⁹ This playful civic hack¹⁰ aimed to provide cathartic relief to the pervasive nature of technologies by undermining the rhetoric surrounding them. Its ontological structures metaphor the network effect¹¹ through a fusion of satirical self-referential parodies. A standing reserve of surplus data,¹² extracted from the World Wide Web with artificial intelligence, was used to create satirical nonsense prose and poetry, remixed with abstracted depictions of the urban environment conceived as pseudo-surveillance imagery. Paradoxically, while the work aimed to subvert the socio-technical commoditisation of the public sphere, it unintentionally evolved into a pseudo-surveillance-advertising device.

Satirical AI remix

Communing with robots used the InferKit web interface¹³ to access the OpenAI GPT-2 algorithm to mine data from a neural network and create hybrid textual remixes. This activity was a relatively obscure and emergent practice in 2022. However, by January 2023, within a year of the *Communing with robots*' conception, the rapid worldwide communion with ChatGPT-3.5 had reached 100 million monthly active users just two months after its launch— 'the fastest-growing consumer application in history'.¹⁴ This phenomenon indicates the speed at which industrialised AI can reduce global populations' everyday social and mental experiences into a capital commodity.

Rhetoric and trust

Communing with robots repeatedly asked GPT-2 the same question: Can I trust you? In each instance, it responded differently. GPT-2 randomly scraped ‘raw’ behavioural surplus data from eight million web pages and generated conditional ‘synthetic text’.¹⁵ The diverse responses—from an indeterminate number of unidentifiable sources—gradually coalesced as strangely beautiful non-sensical prose resembling absurdist poetry. This co-creation by human and non-human actors connected in multi-dimensional networks is conceived as a Latourian ‘network tracing activity’¹⁶ that leverages AI to generate fictional narratives, bizarre characters, and oddly familiar situations.

These satirical texts draw attention away from the use of AI for political, social, and economic interests in public space where the ‘smart everything paradigm’ presents ‘business opportunities’ for data collection in the urban environment.¹⁷ Satire, a primary technique for ‘social criticism’,¹⁸ was used as a rhetorical tool to expose the non-humanness of the AI and challenge its programmers’ perceived wisdom, authority, and goodwill behind its conception and use. An audience would not necessarily associate such poetic nonsense with advanced or threatening technologies. The satire subverts the rhetoric surrounding the technical operations of AI, which are intentionally concealed and often centred on cultures of fear and the dangers of its malicious use, which includes automated cyberattacks, data poisoning, hacking, novel attacks that use impersonation, deep fakes, and speech synthesis; attacks that use physical systems such as drones and autonomous vehicles; and targeted political persuasion and propaganda that undermine democracy and public debates by modifying human behaviours, moods, and beliefs.¹⁹ When OpenAI released GPT-2, it announced that it did not release the training model due to ‘concerns about malicious applications of the technology’.²⁰ According to OpenAI, ‘extremist groups can use GPT-2 for misuse, specifically by fine-tuning GPT-2 models on four ideological positions: white supremacy, Marxism, jihadist Islamism, and anarchism’.²¹ However, the fallibility of AI language models often leads to text that is ‘incredibly degenerate [...] awkward [...] incoherent and almost unrelated to the context’,²² which subverts its credibility because it reveals what the AI might or might not know, thus undermining its use and the public's trust.

Rather than conforming with logical reasoning for AI use or the dangers of its misuse, the poetic relief creates a situation that allows human imagination to fill in the rhetorical gaps that the incoherent gibberish opens. Despite GPT-2’s ability to use billions of detection parameters to identify, analyse and generate a text’s syntax, grammar, and style,²³ the text omits the social and cultural histories and contexts of the audience—the ‘stuff swirling around outside the text’ that is the richness of rhetoric perceived by humans.²⁴ Even the ubiquitous and much debated ChatGPT, released a year after the creation of *Communing with robots*, refuses rhetoric. The algorithm’s training ‘misleads the model because the ideal answer depends on what the model knows, rather than what the human demonstrator knows’,²⁵ and it cannot comprehend the context of the audience.²⁶

Incoherent gibberish

The incoherence of *Communing with robots*’ texts was enhanced using the InferKit web interface’s probability threshold controls. Inputs with high ‘probability’ threshold values generate text from more sourced samples, which discards ‘unlikely text’ during sampling, and low-value inputs produce ‘less variety and more repetition’ because the network ‘prefers’ text that is ‘most probable’.²⁷ The ‘temperature’ controls the randomness of sampling or the AI’s potential for ‘creativity’—where low values produce repetitive texts, higher values produce less coherent ‘low-probability’ texts.²⁸ Differing probability thresholds and randomness temperatures were used over *Communing with robots*’ six minutes to produce diverse texts, some with relatively coherent yet sporadic and incomplete narrative flows, with fictional characters and scenarios (see Figure 1).

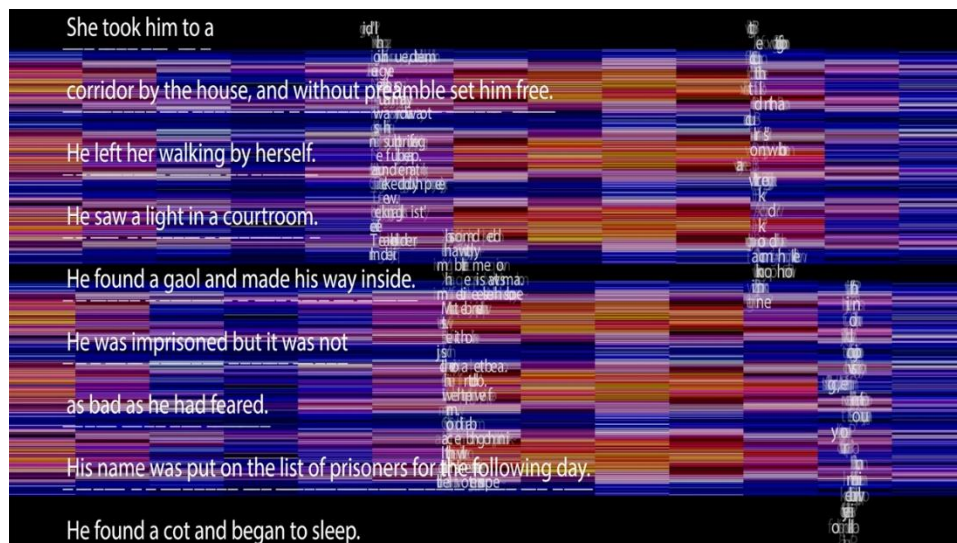


Figure 1. *Communing with robots, 2022*. This image shows a video frame at 00:00:26:01 in the video, showing text made by sampling with a high probability threshold and a relatively low 'temperature' with less randomly sourced samples, which produced text with a higher probability of making sense.

In the final sample, however, where a high degree of randomness and low probability threshold were used, GPT-2 produced nonsensical, incoherent, illogical gibberish with an aesthetic and rhythmic characteristic of absurd poetry, and the emergence of stunning neologisms—*Slamgarock*, *Crazymummaka*, and *ghuffazz light warrior* (see Figure 2). These neologisms demonstrate ambivalence toward explicit meaning, which contradicts the technical purpose that AIs and GPTs are generally designed to enhance:

Mister Saizo likes big open fields.
 Bandits of four companies
 A trio of Quleitus appearing.
 Goliath ghazi elite rock guys,
 Maybe twenty days north of Teambao
 Thousand waves coming but storm itself will prevail
 Fortunately, our course may stop the Tenctribounli which even strikes stone
 Lylat System Despite encountering much noise he recently drowned Gia
 Subblue Maybe shakli ate thunder Ladupiang
 That Akatsuki went Akitu Day game
 If someone might hack pretty pro turn
 36 Ultimate Tea can of Super Slamgarock called Lost Gonk
 Life Straw Bird
 Crazymummaka
 We are Jedi and enter,
 gree small things...
 Black Magic Thrust wheel
 ghuffazz light warrior

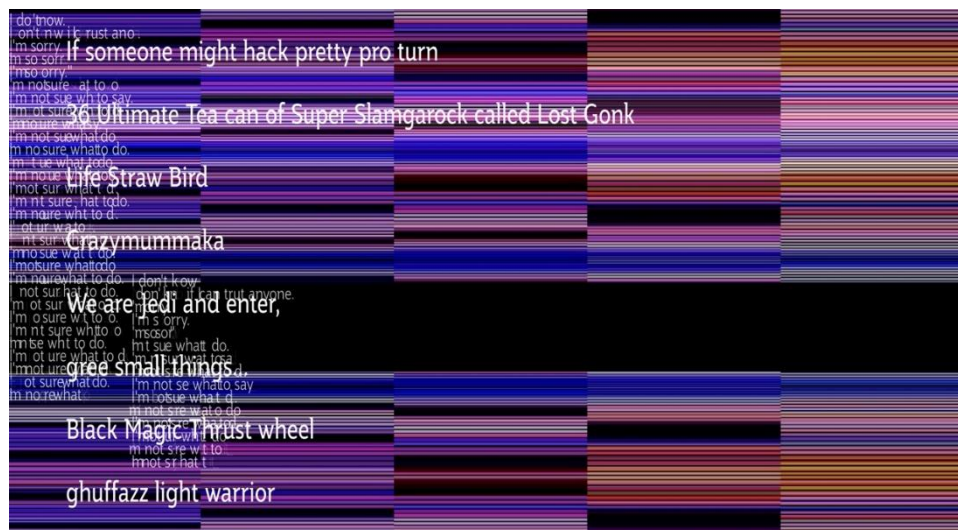


Figure 2. *Communing with robots, 2022*. This image shows a video frame, at 00:05:23:26 in the video file, with text samples made with a high degree of randomness and low probability threshold where GPT-2 produced incoherent gibberish.

Furthermore, nonsense provokes subjective interpretations of what might captivate an audience through childish playfulness. While the structure of the text is far from sophisticated poetry, the neologisms are reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*, a literary text 'comparable only to itself' that far exceeded the obvious in its content and meaning as it 'crossed the line' that distinguishes 'serious' adult semantic texts from children's stories, which principally deal with 'the fantastic'.²⁹ This linguistic 'game' reveals the complexity and subjectivity of language, where the rhyme, meter, and verbal structures create fragments of humorous, archaic 'Anglo-Saxon alliterations' which both mock and rely on modern rhyme and 'lull us into a tacit faith in the validity of the nonsense':³⁰

Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
 All mimsy were the borogroves,
 And the mome raths outgrabe.³¹

MIMETIC PSEUDO-SURVEILLANCE IMAGERY

The animated background to *Communing with robot's* AI nonsense, conceived as pseudo-surveillance imagery, was made heuristically as a subversively playful mode of artistic inquiry into public space surveillance in Brisbane's South Bank precinct. The work imagines how networked surveillance camera algorithms might see, understand, and re-interpret the world to re-present it to the citizens under their constant watch. Outdoor surveillance camera networks can identify single persons with facial recognition or conduct multiple persons tracking to analyse group behaviours. They usually comprise static and PTZ cameras that capture information from multiple points of view using geometric localisation, triangulation and tracking to follow a subject once detected before the image data is abstracted, fused, and reconfigured for person identification and recognition by an algorithm.³² Like the AI nonsense conception, the pseudo-surveillance imagery is mimetic. Its dysfunctional glitchy motion mimics the operations of the PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) surveillance cameras I observed attempting to track and monitor my activities as I recorded them in the street (see Figure 3). The architectural facades that support these cameras were recorded and algorithmically reconfigured as a mode of de-identification and misrecognition of the urban environments' dominant aesthetic—a derivative of the modernist geometries typified by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's influence on how

buildings ‘should look’, which imbues urban environments with the Pythagorean and Platonic conceptions of mathematical order and heavenly proportions to manipulate the observers’ perceptions.³³ A century of conformity with these architectural traditions—‘a formless condition that can manifest itself as building anywhere and be (re) combined in an infinite number of configurations’³⁴ has produced the banal modernity that manifests in buildings globally (see Figure 4).



Figure 3. This PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) surveillance camera at Grey St., South Bank, appeared to respond to my presence and observe and track my motion as I used my iPhone to record it.

AN ACUPUNTURAL CIVIC HACK

Conceived a civic hack,³⁵ *Communing with robot's* sought to disrupt the standardisation of urban aesthetics by the state, private organisations, bureaucrats, and politicians. As a ‘bottom-up’³⁶ act of situational resistance, the buildings' harmonious symmetries and rational logic were visually appropriated, interfered with and abstracted, de-realising their appearances (see Figure 4). The disintegration of the buildings' benign surfaces sought to connect aesthetics to the normalisation of surveillance and invisible predictive data analytics that occupy public space, a technological metastasis that harms citizens' privacy, trust, freedom, and democratic rights.

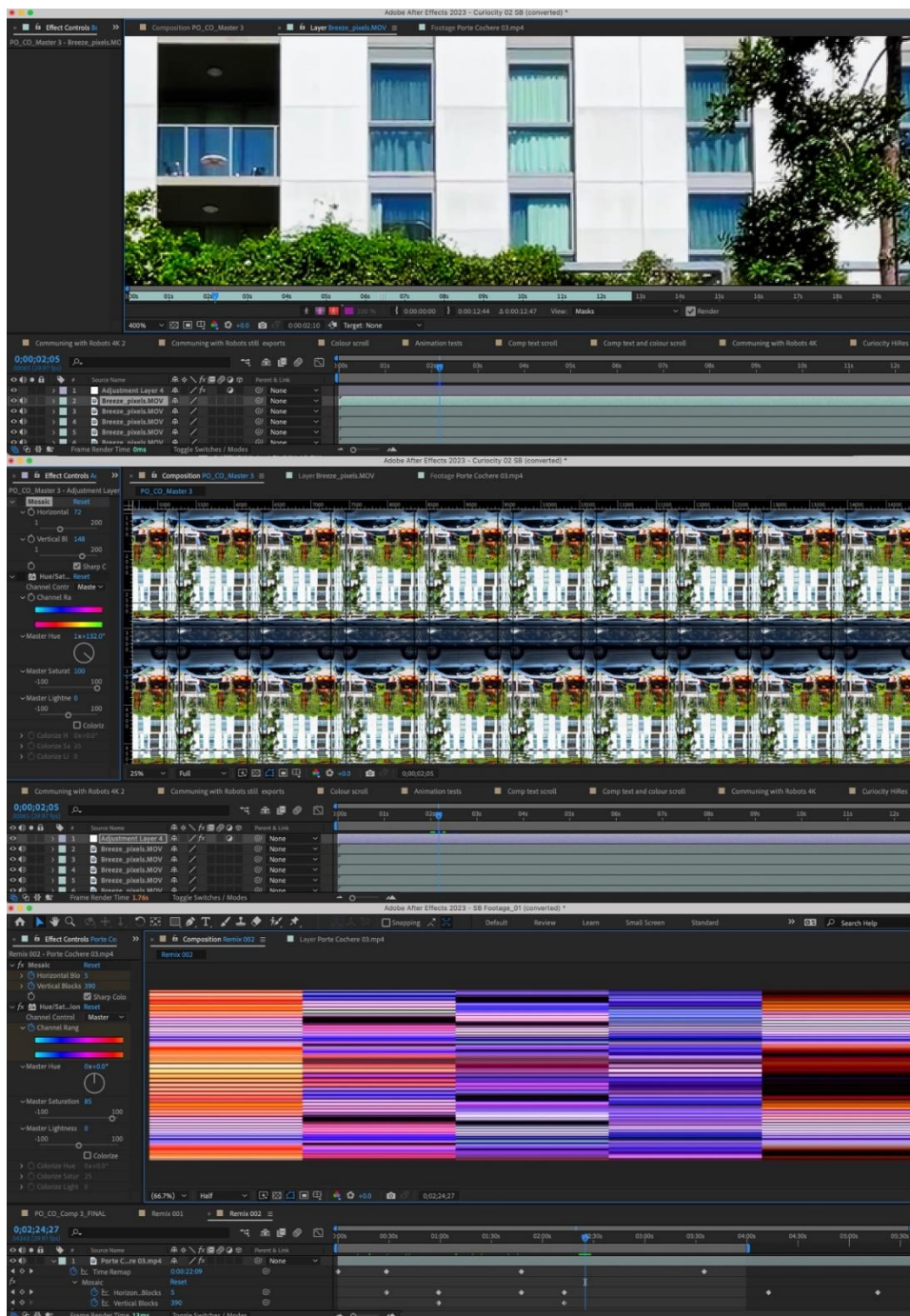


Figure 4. Top: RAW footage of the building facades on Grey St in the After Effects interface. Middle: The imagery is fragmented, abstracted, reconfigured, and fused. Bottom: The streetscape harmonic proportions are reduced to a grid section of five horizontal sections and 390 vertical lines of pure geometry and colour information that de-identify the imagery for misrecognition.

Projecting the pseudo-surveillance imagery and illogical AI gibberish back into the city could infuse it with acupunctural flows of ‘new energy’³⁷ and also challenge the dominance of the banal advertising screens that pollute the urban environment with advertising ‘infotoxin’,³⁸ which drives the catastrophic levels of overproduction and consumption that eventually leads to the destruction of the natural world.³⁹ These theatrics propose the artwork's ‘pharmacological’ agency,⁴⁰ which lies beyond the physical world and relies on a ‘quasi-magical’ remedial effect on the ‘recipient as a patient’, where

they are momentarily freed from the sensations of conformity with authority through an ‘aesthetics of repair’ that responds to the dominant power structures that seek to standardise, control, or threaten the ‘public commons’ with the undemocratic politics of concealed technologies’.⁴¹

A paradoxical pseudo-advertising device

Communing with robots was installed by Curiocity as a standard LED video wall measuring 4.5m x 2.5m comprised of multiple modular panels (see Figure 5) —the type used for urban informatics that influences public mobility and the advertising that trains consumers’ attention. The festival rejected the initial proposal for *Communing with robots*, which specified projecting the work onto the exterior of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music because it required daytime viewing. The mock-up image from that proposal shows a video frame superimposed onto an image of the building’s northern facade to illustrate how the Conservatorium’s architecture could be altered by transposing *Communing with robots*’ erratic grids onto its surface (see Figure 6). The final format was unexpected and changed how *Communing with robots* was perceived, and it was not until after documenting the finished exhibition installation that the subliminal influences on the work’s aesthetic development became apparent and significant. On reflection, the LED installation compounded the metaphoric suggestions of *Communing with robots*’ scrolling texts. It gestures to ubiquitous smart devices loaded with the AdTech⁴² that monitors and influences citizens to modify their behaviours.

In the case of *Communing with robots* at Curiocity, its rhetorical and aesthetic potential to mimic and undermine the tropes of urban screens used for advertising and informatics in the Smart City is paradoxical. Ironically, while the artwork attempted to subvert these mechanisms of mass consumption, it became one.

Top down

The final format of the work exhibited at the South Bank Parklands was subject to the ‘top-down’⁴³ approval processes of the exhibition organisers and city officials, without which the pseudo-surveillance imagery and AI gibberish would constitute a ‘prohibited advertising device’.⁴⁴ According to the Brisbane City Council’s definitions, the installation’s greater than four square metres illuminated form characterises it as a ‘high impact electronic display component sign’,⁴⁵ which also raises concerns for public safety and the efficiency of the transport network operations, including the movement of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. However, the many ‘permitted advertising devices’—which include approved commercial and political signs that face the South Bank Parklands, election signs, display home and estate sales signs, furniture advertising signs, business promotion signs, commercial flags, pop-up information booths, awning fascia signs, blind or canopy signs, boundary fence signs, footway signs, under-awning signs, vertical freestanding banner signs, and projecting flag signs—‘do not require Council approval’.⁴⁶ Thus, had the LED installation been used to promote products, services, real estate, or political ideologies at a slightly reduced physical scale, it would have been considered a permitted advertising device that would not compromise the mobility or safety of citizens.



Figure 5. This image shows the 4.5m wide x 2.5m high multi-channel LED video installation that The Queensland Museum Network commissioned for the public art exhibition *Curiosity* at The World Science Festival, Brisbane, 2022. The installation was exhibited at the South Bank Precinct from the 24th of June to the 10th of July 2022, with seating and a grassy area for citizens to relax.

Furthermore, the South Bank Parklands and its surrounding environment are encoded for leisure activities that subordinate the art experience to its consumption as peripheral entertainment. Typical of many urban recreational centres and cultural precincts, the parks are beautifully landscaped with an artificial rainforest and lagoons, public swimming pools, a giant Ferris wheel, and winding walkways lined with sculptural forms along the banks of the Brisbane River. This utopic schema provides a visual background for the rows of restaurants, bars, cafes, and entertainment facilities on the adjacent streets and thoroughfares, interspersed with self-referential advertisements and informational signage, which integrated *Communing with robots*. In this sense, the artwork's legitimacy as social criticism relates to its ironic interrelations with the city's policies and definitions concerning advertising and public art and how the policymakers define citizens' experiences in public spaces relative to commodity values and consumption. As Henri Lefebvre⁴⁷ contends, urban parks are subject to urban neutralisation and systematic degradation into artificial representations and utopic simulations of nature, which are reduced to a function of passive observation because urban societies tend toward the hegemonic authority of a technological class of industrial, corporate, and state powers legitimised by capitalism and advertising rhetoric, which reduces everyday social and mental experiences into a commodity logic.



Figure 6. This mock-up image, made in Adobe Photoshop, was used to communicate how the proposed installation of *Communing with robots* would appear as projected imagery on the northern facade of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music to virtually re-configure the building's proportions and manipulate the observer's perceptions.

The urban sublime

On reflection, the degree to which the affective nature of the urban information architectures that mediate the city had had on my subconscious throughout my daily existence—my mobility as I travel to and from the city each day—had also transposed into the creative work in ways I had not consciously recognised during its making. The ontological structures of the standardised informational LCD screens distributed around South Bank Station (see Figure 7) and the surrounding buildings—their geometric forms, colours, proportions, visual hierarchies, and integrated surveillance systems (see Figure 8)—had subliminally transposed into *Communing with robots*' aesthetics over

extended periods. The power of these socio-technical forces had, as Lefebvre⁴⁸ puts it, blinded me to the extent to which a black box-enabled commodity sphere governs my urban reality, and although I knew 'what goes in' I had 'no idea what takes place inside' until I was 'amazed at what comes out'. This realisation was further compounded by the branded publicity messaging inserted into the installation's end frames by Curiosity (see Figure 9). Thus, *Communing with robots* became a fully formed pseudo-surveillance-advertising device.

These phenomena reveal how the banal city infrastructure, which had fused with my subconscious over many years, had transformed my creative intuition within a Virilian 'vision machine', an 'optoelectronic' system of power and control designed to monitor society and induce standardised behaviour⁴⁹—a situation with which I had been complicit and other than through a failed attempt to create subversive mimetic art, was powerless to intervene. This outcome is suggestive of Lefebvre's 'urban problematic', a situation where 'the search for solutions and modalities unique to urban society is foremost'; however, for a transformative 'urban revolution' to occur, society must critically overcome the dominance of industrialised models.⁵⁰ While revolutionary events can take place through an exchange of words, signs, writings, and things in the street, urbanism is often reduced to a spectacle of decorative images and objects arranged in uniform grids, colours, displays and networks organised for and by consumption' accompanied by 'passive contemplation'.⁵¹

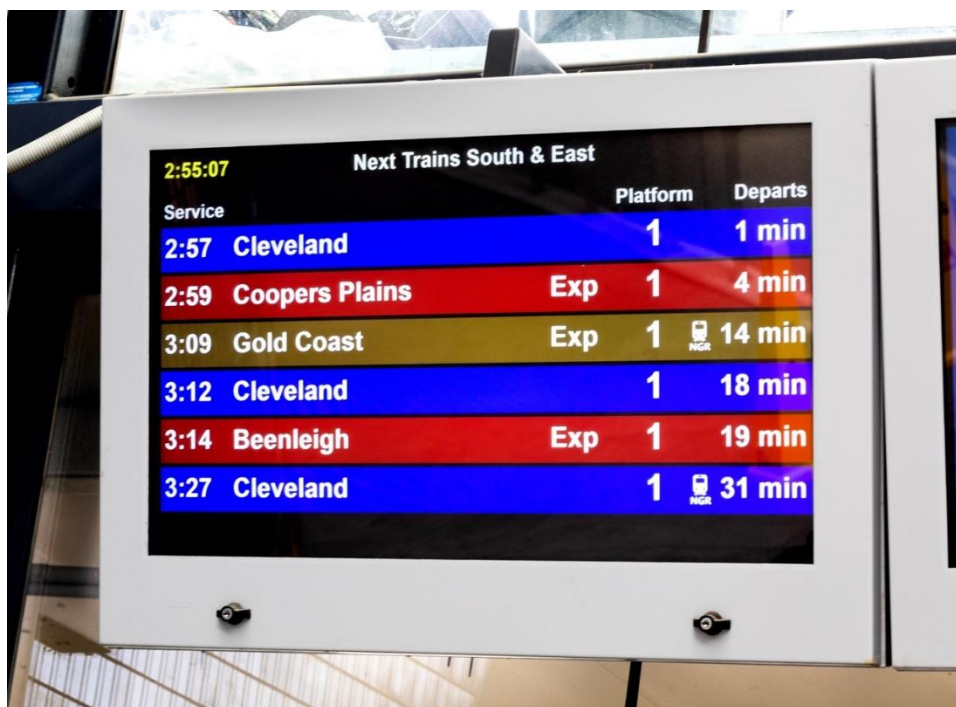


Figure 7. An LCD screen at South Bank Station presents the train timetables I use on my way to and from the city. My embodied experience of their ontological structures had subliminally transposed into *Communing with Robots*' aesthetics.



Figure 8. The building directly opposite Platform 1 at South Bank Station supports two surveillance cameras, a Foucauldian panoptic schema within a Virilian vision machine for behaviour modification, which had subconsciously transposed into *Communing with robot's* making.



Figure 9. The end frame of *Communing with robots* transformed the subversive post-digital artwork's AI nonsense prose and pseudo-surveillance imagery into a publicly branded pseudo-advertising device.

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed *Communing with robots*, an artwork that used satire to explore concerns surrounding AI and surveillance, which affect an individual's sense of trust, privacy, and security in the city. AI language modelling was used to generate AI nonsense prose and poetry from a global reserve of surplus data to highlight the fallibility of AI. The playful semantics and absurd neologisms that emerged were used to contradict rationalist understandings of AI to offer poetic relief from the rhetorical dangers of its misuse. The nonsensical texts were remixed with pseudo-surveillance

imagery, which de-identified and misrepresented the city's architecture and surveillance systems by mimicking and subverting their dominant aesthetic and functionality.

The artmaking conceived a bottom-up acupunctural intervention with the city's public space. It used reparatory pharmacological aesthetics to provide cathartic relief to the asymmetrical technology used in the networked city and its impact on everyday life. However, the work unexpectedly emerged in ways not recognised during its making. The latent memories and everyday associations of existence within the city—mediated by the information communications and surveillance technologies that aggregate, analyse, and commodify individual citizen's behaviours and mobility—and the causal links between daily cognitive perceptions and embodied experiences of the city's technological infrastructure, had subliminally fused with the work's aesthetics and ontological structures.

Paradoxically, due to the top-down constraints of city officiality, *Communing with robots*' irrational visual discord devolved into a banal, unintentional pseudo-surveillance-advertising device. In its final presentation in a public parkland, *Communing with robots* became a ubiquitous urban screen for urban informatics and advertising that capitalised on private citizens' mobility. This problem reflects a situation where public art is often subordinated to the encoding of urban spaces by industrial, corporate, and state powers for efficiency, consumption, entertainment value, and, consequently, the modification of citizens' behaviours in the city to these ends.

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URBAN TRANSFORMATION FOR RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Climate change impacts cascade across sectors and regions affecting all of humanity. The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) advise global warming is ‘heading towards two-point-two degrees to three-point-five degrees above pre-industrial levels.’¹ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimate that three-point-three to three-point-six billion human lives are endangered by climate change.² Global hotspots for high human vulnerability to climate change impacts are concentrated in East, Central and West Africa, South Asia, Central and South America, Small Island Developing States (SIDs) and the Arctic.³ From 2020 to 2040, some sixty-eight-point-eleven million people are at risk of coastal flooding due to sea level rise.⁴ Small Islands are the regions with the highest certainty for adverse impacts affecting human settlements, ecosystems, health, water supply and food production.⁵ Some territories will be inundated by sea level rise and will no longer be habitable, in parts or completely, requiring the relocation or migration of resident populations, as well as the development of new climate resilient, sustainable communities, critical infrastructure, services, and amenities in safe zones.

Climate change impacts are already evident, with spatial and socio-economic consequences that require immediate action, such as the accommodation and integration of climate change refugees into host societies,⁶ the need to prepare for the imminent risk of new pandemics,⁷ and recurring economic crisis and terrorism, in urban areas.⁸

The climate crisis is so urgent that the IPCC are asking developed countries to decarbonize by 2040, instead of 2050, in conjunction with global efforts to reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions, while eliminating inequality.⁹ The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) advise that to address the challenge of climate change, developed countries will need to rebuild existing city infrastructure, and developing nations should be supported to adopt resilient, sustainable infrastructure technologies.¹⁰ The UNEP, estimate that some seventy-five percent of the infrastructure required in cities by 2050 has not been planned or constructed.¹¹

The significance of the IPCC’s and UNEP’s information is that climate adaptation measures need to accelerate to halve carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions in 2020-2030, inclusive of retrofitting and rebuilding existing urban infrastructure. Adaptation and mitigation measures encompass urban settlements, sustainable green urban infrastructure, energy efficiency, and the sustainable transition of industry sectors, including water, energy, transport, food production, waste, finance and investment.¹² The IPCC also highlight the importance of protecting habitats, species, and biodiversity, inclusive of a fifty-percent allocation for nature reserves.¹³

Measures to adapt to climate change integrates sustainable, climate resilient design and development, including advance and planned relocation of vulnerable human settlements,¹⁴ with actions to reduce or avoid emissions and provide wider benefits for all, such as improving peoples' health and livelihoods; reducing poverty and hunger; clean energy, water and air.¹⁵

The Urban Design and physical, spatial issues highlighted require Urban Design and spatial solutions. However, academic researchers identify a gap in academic knowledge and research on Urban Design and spatial planning interventions for climate change mitigation and adaptation at the neighbourhood and district scale,¹⁶ particularly a dearth in knowledge of how scientific climate change projections should be interpreted, to inform spatial urban design solutions across different regions.¹⁷

CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING AND HAZARD RISK ASSESSMENT

Furthermore, for climate change vulnerable regions, predominantly in the Global South, there is a lack of data on hazard risk assessment and climate change preparedness planning.¹⁸ From an assessment of two-hundred and fifty-seven Global City Climate Action Plans (CAPs), Aboagye and Sharifi, find that only two-percent of CAPs have strong sustainability; over fifty-percent of plans have a medium level of suitability, including Africa and Latin America; and forty-percent of all CAPs are weak.¹⁹

Accordingly, there is a need for jurisdictions and built environment professionals, specifically Urban Designers, to proactively transform existing urban human settlements and design new neighborhood communities that are climate change resilient, sustainable, and prepared for related population density fluctuations due to relocation and migration.



Figure 1. Hazard Vulnerability Assessment and Preparedness Process

Source: Author (Adapted from Burby et al., 2000; Watson, 2016)

Figure 1. outlines five steps to assess hazard vulnerability and prepare for climate change. *Hazard Identification*, and *Vulnerability Assessment* requires holistic and comprehensive assessment of physical natural, spatial built environment and infrastructure vulnerabilities to climate risks, especially sea level rise. Multi-actor participation is important to complete the *Risk Assessment* and create hazard maps and conversely identify land areas in safe zones. These maps inform the *Resilience Action Plan* which includes comprehensive development and redevelopment masterplans with accompanying natural and built environment design guidelines and policies, with agreed multiagency and community stakeholder responsibilities. The penultimate step is the *Implementation Action Plan* encompassing the funding and phasing of projects, and consensus on multiagency and community stakeholder action and management. The final step is the *Implementation Review and Resilience Improvements* which encompasses surveys, inspections, community forums etc. Multiple agencies and community stakeholders need to work collaboratively to conduct these reviews to identify successes and opportunities for additional climate resilience strategies. The *Hazard Vulnerability Assessment and Preparedness Process* can be repeated as necessary, in response to new or evolving risks and hazards. Regional collaborations are encouraged to ensure no region and no populations are left behind regarding climate hazard adaptation and mitigation. It is important to note that local governance, institutions and urban communities with a considered land use masterplan and hazard or risk

mitigation strategies, can build urban human settlements that facilitate adaptation and resilience to natural disasters.²⁰

URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

To address climate change hazards, two urbanism movements are particularly relevant, Sustainable Urbanism (2000s) and Resilient Urbanism (1900s). Sustainable Urbanism balances social, economic, ecological²¹ and spatial considerations, redressing material consumption and automobile centric design of the urban environment through compact urban form.²² Inherent in Sustainable Urbanism are reduced waste and pollution, reuse and recycling of materials²³ and recycling of resources for example water,²⁴ affordable housing, a local economy,²⁵ livability and sustainable governance.²⁶ Sustainable Urbanism incorporates Urban Design Principles of: *Renewable Energy Production, Self-Sufficiency, Neighborhood Completeness, Mixed Uses,*²⁷ *Connectivity, Walkability and Active Travel,*²⁸ *Urban Transport, Urban Agriculture, Urban Greening, Blue and Green Infrastructure* including *Sustainable Urban Drainage*, and ecology.²⁹

Urban Designers incorporate renewable, sustainable energy sources³⁰ into design proposals, (where possible), to reduce or eliminate reliance on non-renewable energy sources, with the benefit of reducing natural resource consumption, and promoting living in harmony with nature.³¹ Urban Designers also utilize passive solar design, in addition to designing for diversity,³² food production, higher densities,³³ while mitigating urban heat island impacts.³⁴

Similarly, in a climate crisis context, Resilient Urbanism is an important tool in the pursuit of zero carbon, zero waste and zero pollution, equitable, self-sufficient, climate change resilient, and sustainable urban living. Resilient Urbanism known as the Urbanism of Crisis,³⁵ addresses: heat, drought, flooding, food production, water harvesting and recycling, emissions reduction, improving air quality, limiting the transmission of disease, to realize climate change resilient, sustainable, existing and new urban settlements.³⁶ Resilient Urbanism promotes Urban Design Principles such as a mix of land uses that support local production and markets, especially for environmentally friendly products³⁷ providing economic stability from increased local food production and water security.³⁸ In Resilient Urbanism, the Urban Design Principles that address climate resilience considerations include: *Renewal and Utilization* or renovation, redevelopment, and reuse of existing assets; *Intensification* or the efficient use of urban land; *Densification* or increasing activity and density to reduce land take; *Urban Greening*, including *Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) & Nature-Based Solutions* for infrastructure; *Passive Solar Design* with regionally appropriate building types for example Passivhaus standard buildings, hurricane impact resistant buildings, flood resilient buildings, fire resistant buildings or seismic resistant buildings. There are Urban Design Principles common to both Urbanism Movements, as one Urban Design Principle can solve a myriad of spatial issues.

SPATIAL INTERVENTIONS

The previously mentioned Urban Design Principles, shape urban space through the organization of spatial components to achieve desired objectives, thus informing the relationship of a village, with a town, or a town with a city, including patterns of movement, socio-economic activity, and environmental change.³⁹ Thus, it is important to understand how guiding Urban Design Principles shape the form of the urban built environments across different scales, and contexts, to contribute new knowledge on Urban Transformation and support climate change resilience and sustainability in urban settlements.⁴⁰

The Urban Design masterplan or Urban Design proposal, may address four or more spatial interventions as follows:

1. The buildings, plots and circulation network orientation, and spatial volume⁴¹ for cross ventilation and passive solar design;
 2. The circulation or transportation network for active travel such as walking and cycling paths, public transport and private vehicles;
 3. Any attendant requirements for parking for example bicycles, bus stops, electric vehicle charging bays;
 4. The spatial distribution of green areas⁴² and the use of Blue and Green Infrastructure;⁴³
 5. The mix of land uses for neighborhood completeness⁴⁴ which determines access to employment, education, shopping, healthcare, leisure, recreation, services, amenities, social and cultural institutions;
 6. Any material recommendations for the entire Built Environment informed by: color (light or white), albedo or reflectivity, thermal properties,⁴⁵ material manufacture processes and sustainability credentials, material recycling, local material availability and material transport emissions.
- The example pictured below in Figure 2., is of a one-to-three story height restricted residential-led, mixed-use development, which details considerations for circulation and access, parking requirements, greenspace, and the mix of land uses. Also illustrated are the building plots and the building heights for each plot.



Figure 2. One-to-three story, height-restricted residential-led, mixed-use Development Proposal

SPATIAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The importance of, and need for, new spatial considerations in the Urban Design of neighborhoods is evidenced in the experience of Lockdowns during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. Pandemic resilient spatial requirements prioritize infilling and revitalizing existing urban settlements, so neighborhoods are complete.⁴⁶ Neighbourhood completeness is a measure of the number of desirable pedestrian destinations necessary for daily life, located within walking distance of residents' homes. Walking distance is taken to be a quarter to half a mile or four-hundred metres to eight-hundred metres. The type of desirable pedestrian destination may vary by culture and region. However universal requirements include: food, water, clothing, housing (and sanitation), healthcare, leisure, education, and employment.⁴⁷ Global North examples of desirable pedestrian destinations and land uses include: childcare, convenience-store, hardware-store, community centre, medical-dental office, live-work-housing, school, post-office, senior care, supermarket, third-place, haircare, parks, pharmacy, police-fire station, bank, transit stops etc. Neighbourhoods with seventy-percent walkable destinations are considered excellent. Neighbourhoods with thirty-to-seventy percent walkable destinations are satisfactory. Neighbourhoods with ten-to-thirty-percent walkable destinations are minimal and less than ten-percent is poor.

In London, to realize complete neighborhoods, the areas to address include: the provision of healthy food shops, active travel infrastructure, i.e. walking and cycling, well-ventilated buildings, flexible space for working and learning from home, with separate household kitchens and bathrooms, and access to outdoor space for e.g. balconies.⁴⁸ Other dwelling space considerations include fenestration for cross ventilation, and increased floor to ceiling heights to improve daylighting for mental health and energy saving benefits. Academic researchers also highlight the importance of providing quality green space within walking distance of homes.⁴⁹



Figure 3. Two-to-Ten story height London residential-led mixed-use Concept Proposal

Figure 3. illustrates an urban design proposal for an eight-hundred-meter diameter or ten-minute walkable, sustainable, urban neighborhood community with integrated, interspersed, affordable and social housing. Design considerations encompass green spaces; shops selling healthy food; walking, cycling, public transport and electric vehicle charging infrastructure; housing with adequate internal and outdoor space, for example roof terraces or gardens; and amenities necessary for daily life, aging-in-place, live-work, education, healthcare, multi-generational housing; and community-owned assets. The synthesis of Six Design Principles for Future Communities applicable to various urban contexts, is informed by an online questionnaire survey of one-hundred-and-fifty Londoners utilising convenience and snowball sampling. The survey is designed to capture residents’ insights on their needs for their homes and neighbourhoods and suggestions for improvement, arising from their experience of Lockdown due to Covid-19. The resulting principles are:

1. Community- led and community owned assets e.g. community- centre, children’s play area, sports pitch, community garden, garden centre and central park.
2. Social, affordable & mixed tenure.
3. Covid-19 safe healthy homes & WELL buildings.
4. Sustainable infill development & retrofitting e.g. solar panels, permeable paving.
5. Climate change adaptation, urban greening, habitat & biodiversity protection e.g. interior block podium parks and green roofs.
6. Eight-hundred-meter diameter, liveable, diverse, complete, inclusive neighbourhood, where people can age-in-place, that is walkable in approximately five-minutes from centre to edge.



Figure 4. Detail of Community-owned Garden, Garden Centre and Sports Pitch

Figure 5. is a Summary Sheet of the Urban Design Principles, Sustainability Considerations and Sustainability Features utilised in the Figure 3. Concept Proposal. Also noted are the relevant Urbanism Movements including: Sustainable Urbanism, Resilient Urbanism, Responsive Environments, and New Urbanism.

URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES :	SUSTAINABILITY	SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES
<p>PRINCIPLES UTILISED INCLUDE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WALKABILITY (SU, RU) • QUALITY PUBLIC REALM (SU) • CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE (RE) • EASE OF MOVEMENT (SU) & PERMEABILITY (RE) • LEGIBILITY, (RE) • CHARACTER (RE) • VARIETY (RE) • ADAPTABILITY OR ROBUSTNESS (RE) <p style="text-align: center; color: #4F81BD;">KEY</p> <p>SU = SUSTAINABLE URBANISM RU = RESILIENT URBANISM RE = RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENTS NU = NEW URBANISM</p>	<p>SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS WERE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •COOL THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT •PLAN COMPACT DEVELOPMENT (SU, RU) • DENSIFY EXISTING AREAS (RU) •CREATE ATTRACTIVE PLACES WITH A CENTRE & IDENTITY (SU) •MIX LAND USES, (SU, RU) • URBAN GREENING, SUD'S PRESERVE NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS, ENVIRONMENTS & WILDLIFE, (SU,) • INCORPORATE BLUE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE (RU) •RECYCLE & REPURPOSE URBAN LAND & BUILDINGS (RE, RU) •MAKE COMPLETE NEIGHBOURHOODS & STREETS (SU) •MAKE PLACES WALKABLE & BICYCLE-FRIENDLY (SU) •IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY (SU) • MAKE WAY FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT, & TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (NU, SU) • PLAN FOR PEOPLE TO AGE IN PLACE 	<p>SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES INCLUDE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOLAR PANELS (RU) GREEN ROOFS & WALLS(SU) HARVESTED & RECYCLED RAINWATER-FOUNTAIN (RU) STREET TREES & TREE PITS (SU) ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING (SU) CYCLE LANES (SU) COMMUNITY GARDEN WITH COMPOSTING (SU, RU) PERMEABLE PAVING (SU,RU) PARKS & GREEN SPACE (SU,RU) SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE (SUD'S) (SU, RU)

Figure 5. Summary Sheet of Urban Design Principles, and sustainability features utilised in Figure 3

BARRIERS TO CLIMATE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DESIGN

The Urbanism Movements previously mentioned have incorporated sustainability and climate change resilience strategies to varying degrees. According to academic researchers, awareness of climate change impacts is improving; however, the increased incidence of a climate change events has not translated into urgent, rapid action to decarbonize.⁵⁰ The Global South is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts⁵¹ and academic researchers highlight the need for more studies focused on the Global South.⁵²

Academics ascribe the limited progress in climate action to inadequate political, corporate, and wider societal support, due to a communication gap in climate science knowledge.⁵³ Climate Experts are asked to revisit communication strategies, and incorporate educational techniques such as

visualizations, demonstrations, precedent pilot projects and media campaigns promoting successful case studies and best practice project examples to raise public, corporate, practitioner and politician awareness.⁵⁴ Climate action is also hindered by the separation between science and practice especially climate science.⁵⁵ McCormick and others, cite fragmented research activities in Urban Design practice and planning, in conjunction with limited coordination at local, regional, national, and international levels.⁵⁶

However, the translation of regionally relevant climate change scientific knowledge into accessible Urban Design strategies, would accelerate with collaborations between Climate Experts and Urban Designers who design the built environment.⁵⁷ The current widespread demand for the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge in climate change research requires more applied research and actionable knowledge.⁵⁸ Fazey and others, argue “much of the climate innovations come from the world of practice”.⁵⁹ Researcher-practitioners are well placed to take “a much more active role in research as they are often in better positions to learn about practice than an external researcher”.⁶⁰ Academic researchers also advocate for professional continuous lifelong learning, particularly for actors who advise other actors on implementing climate change interventions.⁶¹ In the current climate crisis, educating all actors on climate risks, mitigation, and adaptation strategies⁶² for their respective regions, is essential to both bridge the climate change knowledge gap and accelerate climate change action. Actors of interest include Climate Scientists, Urban Designers, transportation engineers, politicians, residents, businesses and corporations, developers, especially mass home builders and other Built Environment professionals such as planners. At the individual building scale, planners utilize regulatory instruments to guide architects and engineers, who are responsible for climate change resilience and sustainability in the design of individual buildings. Developers, contractors, project managers and self-builders are responsible for the quality of building construction or renovation. According to the type of contract selected, design specifications may be altered, during the procurement, construction or renovation process, and inappropriate substitutions made, hence the need for cross sectoral and multi-actor climate change action education.

CONCLUSION

Integrating climate science, Urban Design and spatial planning is recognised as becoming increasingly urgent, particularly in Developing Countries.⁶³ Several academic researchers have highlighted the need to prioritize Urban Design-Led Urban Transformation⁶⁴ and urban adaptation⁶⁵ that integrates climate science knowledge with Urban Design and spatial planning,⁶⁶ citing ‘a time limited opportunity to work towards widespread and transformational adaptation and climate-resilient development’.⁶⁷ Ece Kaya, and Erbaş, argue that ‘it is imperative to devise integrated and sustainable Urban Transformation strategies tailored to the unique dynamics of each region.’⁶⁸ Accordingly, to address climate hazards in all vulnerable regions especially the Global South, the following strategies are proposed for actors, particularly Urban Designers and researcher-practitioners:

1. Collaborate with climate change scientists on regionally appropriate Urban Design and spatial climate actions that address the regional climate challenges as identified by the IPCC.
2. Scale interventions to the neighborhood level to ensure neighborhood completeness, scalability and transferability of sustainability and climate resilience measures, suited to regions with varying climate hazards, site contexts, land areas and population densities, to protect both lives and livelihoods.
3. Conduct local climate hazard risk assessment and prepare spatial strategies and local adaptation, mitigation and development masterplans for climate action, implementation, and hazard preparedness, and participate in multi-actor and multiagency collaborations.
4. Continue adapting and evolving Urban Design Principles for climate change resilient, responsive, and sustainable, regionally appropriate Urban Design.

5. Disseminate climate science knowledge and advise other actors on design strategies and climate actions for a changing climate by conducting and participating in educational lifelong learning programs.

In closing, as a matter of urgency, the above strategies require further researcher-practitioner academic research with Urban Designers and climate change scientists, in addition to wider actor collaborations on climate change mitigation/adaptation proposals and projects in vulnerable regions.

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MULTICULTURALISM AS A PROMOTER OF CULTURAL HOMOGENISATION? REINTERPRETING THE CASE OF ITAEWON, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

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INTRODUCTION

During the last decade or two, the neighbourhood of Itaewon has been widely perceived as a symbol of multiculturalism in South Korea not only for its demographic characteristic but also for its commercial landscape with high concentration of businesses that appear ethnic. However, on the other side of its symbolic status, urban problems such as marginalisation of migrants, geared along with excessive commercialisation and serial gentrification, remain as contradictions that have yet been hardly explained.

The present study claims for a need to set these issues as agenda for scholarly discussion and attempts to manage this task by perceiving Itaewon, as a space of empirical multiculturalism, within the context of the ways the relationship between Korean society and multiculturalism has been constructed. Positing a thesis that multiculturalism, as a ‘normative way of dealing with cultural differences¹’ of Korea, has conditioned the construction of a logic that eclipses the loss of authentic multiculturalism with the ‘fake sense’ of cultural diversity constructed/articulated by the gentrifying agents, the study reviews how the ‘normative Korean way of dealing with cultural difference (which I shall name *Damunhwa Ideology*² to avoid confuse)’ has developed and explores the possibility that the *Ideology* has provided the socio-cultural contexts of the contradictions of Itaewon.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO ITAEWON

Itaewon, located adjacent to the Yongsan Garrison, which was occupied by the US military in 1953 in place of the defeated Japanese forces, began to develop as its commercial hinterland during the 1970s, marked by a significant increase in the number of stationed US troops. Foreign embassies and major facilities such as the Seoul Central Masjid were also located by the Korean government due to its physical proximity to the US military base; concurrently, upscale residential developments emerged to accommodate mostly diplomats, US military families, and United Nations officers and technicians. Through this process, Itaewon transformed into the only foreigner-dense residential area within Seoul and a region where English was commonly spoken.³

In this context, Itaewon's local economy saw the emergence of goods, services, and stores that were rare to find in Korean society at the time. This transformation turned Itaewon into a shopping-tourism spot for travellers from overseas in the 1980s. The continuous interactions with the US military, diplomats, and tourists contributed to the formation of a pro-foreigner atmosphere, owing to which it

functioned as a gateway town for working class immigrants who entered the country in the 1990s. Up until the explosive increase in young Koreans as the primary leisure district in the 2010s, Itaewon had firmly established itself as the 'foreigner zone'.⁴ Thus far, researchers have reaffirmed this, viewing it as a "a de-territorialized space⁵" or "a separate cultural territory⁶" where structures that are distant from the Korean norm operate. In the 2010s, with the emergence of the new trend pursuing ethnic culinary experiences, researchers such as S. Kim⁷ understood it as a place where 'everyday multiculturalism' is 'signified'.

PROBLEMATIZING THE CONTRADICTION

As mentioned earlier, while Itaewon has been perceived as a symbol of multiculturalism, the neighbourhood and its adjacent areas including Haebangchon and Gyeongnidan-gil, however, have been impacted by a series of gentrification since the mid-2010s.⁸ Alongside this was the displacement of the migrants and small-scale business owners who originally sustained the economic and socio-cultural structures of Itaewon, resulting in their migration to relatively isolated areas such as Haebangchon or further outside Yongsan-gu.⁹

Scholarly interest in Itaewon seems to have been consistently expressed since the 2000s, though through handful number of publications. Setting aside the discussions whose foci are less relevant to the question the present study aims to address,¹⁰ the perspective which perceives and problematizes the 'contradiction' – the persistence of symbolism despite the marginalisation of authentic multiculturalism (or the migrants as its source) – is also scarce within the existing literature on gentrification of, and post-gentrified Itaewon. For example, studies by J. Kim¹¹ or H. Shin¹² illuminate the emergence of the group who are identifiable as the 'creative class'¹³ and their role in shifting the sense of place of Itaewon, thus, making themselves distant from the issues of marginalised authenticity.

Meanwhile, a study by Kyung and Jeong¹⁴ that reveals that the demands of the newly emerged Korean visitors, identifiable as creative class, for upscale and symbolically meaningful consuming experiences of exoticism paved the way of economic restructuring of the neighbourhood appears to be relevant to the topic of question in the sense that the multicultural characteristic of Itaewon is seen as what the process of gentrification capitalised on; however, it does not provide deeper explanations of the contexts in which such 'gentrification of taste' took place, and, in a more fundamental sense, in which the loss of authentic multiculturalism cultivated by the migrant population could possibly be eclipsed by the manipulated, material multiculturalism. Without scrutinising these contexts, the marginalisation of ethnic population is equated with the defeat of the economically disadvantaged, and the complex relationship that these population has had with the new clientele of young generation Koreans – as dominant subjects of Korea's socio-cultural structures – of Itaewon is reduced to a matter of social stratification. Alike Zukin in her discussion on Bryant Park conceives the working of capitalist ideologies camouflaged by the promotion of 'public safety',¹⁵ this study aims to explore the possibility that *Damunhwa Ideology* has functioned as the super-structure within which the myriad practices regarding Itaewon's multiculturalism have been mediated.

METHODOLOGY

As an exploration of the influence of *Damunhwa Ideology* that developed in a specific way within the contexts of Korean society on the transformations of Itaewon's socio-cultural structures, this research operates within the following theoretical framework: Firstly, as mentioned earlier, *Damunhwa Ideology* is understood as a system that has shaped the society's normative perspectives on immigrants and foreigners. To grasp how the *Ideology* has been developed and what it should be understood as, the study scrutinises the discourses that are assumed to have played significant role in

reflecting and (re)producing ideologies¹⁶ regarding the topics relevant to multiculturalism – migrants, foreigners, and so forth – which shall be marked as *Damunhwa Discourse*. This task is conducted by analysing editorials published by five major newspaper companies, the specific genre of which can be understood as itself an ideological device.¹⁷ Here, the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, especially of the three-dimensional analytical model suggested by Fairclough,¹⁸ that puts particular emphasis on deconstructing, and, thus, revealing the ideologies underlying text production provided analytical insights. The dataset was composed of editorials containing the keywords of [*Oegukin* (foreigner)], [*Yijumin* (migrant)], [*Gyopo* (overseas Koreans)], [*Dongpo* (Koreans with foreign nationality)], and [*Damunhwa* (multiculture)], published between 1990 and 2021. Following the normative method deployed by the media and communication studies of Korea,¹⁹ the data was collected primarily through Big KINDS,²⁰ an official news database moderated by the government of Korea, supplemented by official websites of each newspaper companies and Naver’s News Library²¹ to prevent missing data.

Secondly, the neighbourhood of Itaewon is regarded as place where the normative perspectives on immigrants and foreigners shaped by the working of *Damunhwa Ideology* have become empirically materialised by the social agents – in other words, people. Building upon the perspectives raised by Wise, Velayutham et al.²² and Prato et al.²³ that emphasise the need for context-specific, ground-level, thus, ethnographic understandings of ethnic relations and practices, the study conducted twenty-eight in-depth interviews in total. Among these, the first cohort that consisted of eighteen regular visitors of Itaewon (interview Band A) randomly recruited through online were interviewed between August 2021 to February 2022. Interviewing these participants, the main foci were on exploring what are the general thoughts and perceptions of migrants and foreigners and how they consume Itaewon and its multicultural characteristics. The second cohort, consisting of ten long-term residents or visitors (interview Band B) randomly recruited on-field and online were interviewed between June and July 2022. The main foci of interviewing these participants who were relatively older than the first cohort interviewees were on collecting thick and vivid data regarding how Korean society perceived migrants and foreigners back in the 1990s and 2000s, how their perception changed, and how the landscape (economic, socio-cultural, and demographic) of Itaewon has changed through time. Given the objective of the study that is little relevant to exploration of group specificities, no separate sampling process was performed.

DAMUNHWA DISCOURSE AND DAMUNHWA IDEOLOGY

The findings from analysis on the editorials suggest the following: First, within the time frame from 1990 to 2021, a steady turn towards acceptance and appreciation of migrant and foreigners had been evident in the ways the editorials have rendered migrants and foreigners in general. In short, in the early 1990s, during early discussions on the need for labour importation, the editorials represented immigrants as ‘threat’, rendering them as labour ecosystem disturbance, subjects of irresistible invasion, and potential criminals. By the mid-1990s, as labour shortage in manufacturing industry remained unmitigated, migrant workers were represented as ‘necessary evil,’ often described as painful final resort or temporary fittings to economic problems. It was not until the late 1990s that their human rights became central agenda for the *Discourse*, which started to render migrant workers as the vulnerable and as the assessors of Korea’s reputation. From the mid-2000s, amidst excessive urbanisation leading to rural decline, low birth rates, and aging, marriage migrant women became central to the *Discourse*, being acknowledged for their instrumental utility as ‘mothers of future generation’ and ‘rural community invigorators.’ From the late 2000s onwards, various types of immigrants such as the children of marriage migrants, international students and ethnic Koreans with foreign nationality were brought into the *Discourse* and were portrayed as ‘future human resources’

and ‘elites’ for being equipped with knowledge in two different cultures and languages. In the 2010s, integration of migrants was rendered as means to prevent concrete crises of terrorism and civil unrest. Secondly, broadly speaking, the ideological underpinnings and orientations of the *Damunhwa Discourse* have demonstrated a pro-multicultural shift; however, nationalist ideologies have persisted. For instance, the ideological underpinning in the early 1990s was found to strict ethno-nationalism that prioritised ethnic singularity of the nation, often reflected in the term ‘*Pitjul* (bloodline)’. In contrast, from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s, the values stressed by the instrumental approach to migrant population often reflected the yearning for ‘globalisation’ which translated to economic and political development of Korea. The late 2000s witnessed the emergence of integrationist discourse that succeeded onto the 2010s; however, the emphasis on its necessity frequently centred on issues such as terrorism, civil unrest, highlighting the preventive role of integration against foreseeable racial conflicts. This indicates that until this period, *Damunhwa Ideology* distributed through *Damunhwa Discourse* had never recognised the intrinsic value of migrants but instrumental and extrinsic values. Thirdly, of greater significance, the discursive strategies employed to bolster the persuasive efficacy of the *Damunhwa Discourse* are identified as mechanisms for subtle discrimination. This is particularly evident through the sustained utilisation of the term ‘*Uri* (we/us/our)’ and its juxtaposition with arousing national sentiments. For instance, by presenting empathy to historical events such as forced labour and massacres during the Japanese colonial period as a default response expected of readers, the *Discourse* functioned as what naturally excluded from the target audience of the texts or pressure towards assimilation the presumed ‘others’ lacking such sentiment or knowledge of the historical backgrounds of it.²⁴ This subtle form of discrimination also operates through the emulation of the Western countries, seen as economically powerful and thus advanced, as the desirable model of Korea as a society increasingly becoming multicultural – by which the economically impoverished societies are simply excluded from the list to be considered in conceiving multicultural Korea, whereas the absolute majority of the so-called ‘multicultural members’ of Korea has been migrants from such countries. In essence, by such strategy the migrants are framed as mere ingredients for Korea’s development.

To give a brief conclusion, *Damunhwa Discourse* can be defined as the ‘language of persuasion’ that has constantly performed the role of justifying the necessity of migrants, foreigners, and of their social integration, in the use of which the consumers of the *Discourse*, ‘*Uri*’, have been limited to a specific group of people – who are assimilated to or willing to adapt to ‘*Uri*’ (our) culture – through various discursive strategies. In other words, the issues of inflow of migrants and foreigners, and of their settlement and integration have continuously been rendered as what are subject to ‘our’ approval – the unequal power relation of which has been constantly naturalised by the working of *Damunhwa Ideology*.

ITAEWON AS EMPIRICAL SIMULATOR OF DAMUNHWA IDEOLOGY?

Through the interviews the study found the following: Firstly, during the 1990s, Itaewon had a generally terrible reputation among the Korean population, often perceived as an off-limit area or a “foreigner ghetto²⁵” even for foreigners. It was found that during this period interacting with foreigners, particularly represented by the US troops, was seen as a violation of the ethno-nationalist values that emphasise ethnic homogeneity. Particularly, Korean women involved in such relationships were further disparaged with the derogatory name of ‘*Yanggongju*.²⁶’ Multiple informants confirmed that this perception often functioned as a pervasive stigma that labelled any female population visiting Itaewon, making the neighbourhood further ghettoised.²⁷ Such phenomena can be interpreted as the materialisation of the ideas articulated through *Damunhwa Discourse* of the 1990s, which viewed migrant populations as threats and advocated for their rejection or temporary accommodation at best,

despite acknowledging their instrumental utility. This normative perspective may have contributed to the stigmatisation of Itaewon, where interactions with foreigners were perceived as a deviation from traditional Korean values and norms.

Meanwhile, in the 2000s, a small number of Korean individuals began to appear as customers in Itaewon; however, there was a scarcity of substantial cross-cultural interactions. According to an interview, Korean visitors at the time tended to consume Itaewon in a manner akin to a “foreigner zoo,²⁸” merely engaging in passive observation of foreigners. This phenomenon could be attributed to desires for learning English or building friendships with foreigners, hindered by linguistic barriers.²⁹ By the mid-2000s, greater volume of cross-cultural engagement was found to emerge, however, with the central role of cultural intermediation by the returning of the first generation ‘*Yuhaksaeng* (studied-abroad Koreans)’ being crucial.³⁰ I argue that this could be interpreted as an empirical manifestation of the *Ideology* of the 2000s that is characterised by a lack of recognition of foreigners as subjects of substantial integration and everyday exchange.

The 2010s marked a dramatic transformation for Itaewon, driven by the emergence of a so-called ‘*Gukjehwa* (internationalisation) generation’ equipped with substantial overseas experience compared to the previous generations, who matured into the area's primary clientele. This generation, distinguished by their extensive overseas experiences, became the area's predominant clientele, fostering a more open and active engagement with foreigners compared to previous generations. However, interviews revealed a prevailing ambivalence³¹ among this generation towards migrants and foreigners: while they expressed general acceptance, real-life interactions were often avoided. Values such as freedom, tolerance, and emancipation from conservative culture³² were celebrated within Itaewon's cultural milieu, yet the presence of immigrants did not significantly impact consumption patterns. This phenomenon, I argue, can be understood as a consequence of the pervasive *Damunhwa Discourse*, which instrumentalises migrants and foreigners by highlighting their extrinsic values, perpetuated by *Damunhwa Ideology*. This ideology, which entrusts the legitimacy of migrants and foreigners to Korean society's judgment, intersects with market logic, relegating them to commodities 'to be consumed.' Consequently, consumers opt for 'gentrified exotic experiences³³' facilitated by incoming capital, overlooking migrants and foreigners as authentic contributors to Itaewon's cultural landscape. This dynamic results in the marginalisation of migrant populations, yet the symbolism of multiculturalism endures as an ideology conflating material multiculturalism with authenticity.

CONCLUSION

This study introduces the concept of *Damunhwa Ideology* as a mental framework that categorizes immigrants and foreigners as ‘others’ existing to be consumed, shedding light on the paradoxical phenomena of the marginalisation of migrants or cultural homogenisation persisting in the symbolic status and meaning of the ‘multicultural city.’ In summary, this study discusses how the way Korean society consumes Itaewon reflects the mental framework of *Damunhwa Ideology* constructed through the working of *Damunhwa Discourse*, wherein Itaewon has transitioned from being perceived as a ‘foreigner ghetto’ from a racial nationalist perspective, to serving as a ‘foreigner zoo’ fulfilling a role in globalisation from an instrumental perspective, and finally to immigrants’ presence consistently being framed merely as ‘material’ within the context of Itaewon, rather than as essential components of the region's economic and socio-cultural structure, thus reducing their existence to that of ‘consumables.’

Of course, I express this study as an exploration of possibilities rather than presenting it as finalised knowledge, as many may agree. This is because a definitive answer regarding whether behavioural patterns in Itaewon are unequivocally influenced by ideology disseminated through discourse cannot be provided. However, despite anticipated criticism, I believe that revisiting Hall and van Dijk's

definitions of ideology could offer some insight: ideology serves as the “mental framework³⁴” that naturalises power relations.³⁵ In other words, until deconstructed, ideology remains a vast system and superstructure, camouflaged within various social conventions – represented by *Damunhwa Discourse* in this study. For instance, an interviewee in their 30s, who expressed anti-foreigner sentiments after watching news about foreigner-related crimes, claimed that their perspective was a ‘natural’ reaction based on empirical facts. However, this case illustrates how layered ideologies, including societal implications of foreigners and crime, genre conventions of news, and the perceived inevitability of resentment, operate as the basis for value judgments without being consciously recognised. From this perspective, dismissing the influence of *Damunhwa Ideology* on behavioural patterns in Itaewon would be an unrealistic assertion, and I hope that this study’s validity will be acknowledged to some extent.

NOTES

- ¹ Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 6.
- ² This study coins the term of ‘*Damunhwa Ideology*’ as the structure of thoughts regarding non-native population developed specific to the contexts of Korea and differentiate it from ‘*Damunhwa-ju*’ which is normally used as a straight translation from the English term ‘multiculturalism.’; In speaking of the term ‘ideology’ I adopt Hall’s discussion that defines it as the “mental frameworks,” by the working of which the power relations are camouflaged and naturalised; Stuart Hall, “The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 29; Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Hillside, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988).
- ³ Do-Young Song, Dan-Bi Gu, and Sang-Il Choi, “Spatial Structures and Cultural Territories,” in *Itaewon: Space and Life*, ed. Hong-Bin Kang, Sang-Bin Park, and Sang-Soo Kim (Seoul: Seoul Museum of History, 2010), 139.
- ⁴ Do-Young Song, Dan-Bi Gu, and Sang-Il Choi, “Spatial Structures and Cultural Territories,” in *Itaewon: Space and Life*, ed. Hong-Bin Kang, Sang-Bin Park, and Sang-Soo Kim (Seoul: Seoul Museum of History, 2010), 139.
- ⁵ Eun-Shil Kim, “Itaewon as an Alien Space within the Nation-State and a Place in the Globalization Era,” *Korea Journal* 44, no. 3 (2004): 37.
- ⁶ Do-Young Song, Dan-Bi Gu, and Sang-Il Choi, “Spatial Structures and Cultural Territories,” in *Itaewon: Space and Life*, ed. Hong-Bin Kang, Sang-Bin Park, and Sang-Soo Kim (Seoul: Seoul Museum of History, 2010), 139.
- ⁷ Soochul Kim, “The Shifting Food Politics of Ethnic Food and Everyday Multiculturalism since the early 2010s,” *Culture and Politics* 5, no. 3 (2018): 70-72.
- ⁸ Shinwon Kyung and Kyuri Jeong, “Who are the people leading the gentrification process in Itaewon?,” *Seoul Studies* 20, no. 2 (2018): 12-14.
- ⁹ Interviewee B1 (local tradesperson), in discussion with the author, Seoul, South Korea, July 2022.
- ¹⁰ For example, Soyoung Lee, “Making ‘Exoticness’ of Korean Merchants in Itaewon: A Historical Approach to Itaewon’s Place Identity,” *Cross-Cultural Studies* 28, no. 2 (2022): 49–96; Doyoung Song, “Spatial Process and Cultural Territory of Islamic Food Restaurants in Itaewon, Seoul,” in *Migration and Diversity in Asian Contexts*, ed. Ah Eng Lai, Francis Leo Collins, and Brenda S. A. Yeoh (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Publishing, 2012), 233–53; Jong-il Choi, “A Study on ‘Americanization’ Expressed in Itaewon Space” (Seoul National University, 2003); Do Young Song, “Formation and Communication Strategies for an Urban Multicultural District of Korea: A Case Study of Itaewon, Seoul,” *Discourse201* 14, no. 4 (2011): 5–39; Jae-Yeon Choi and Heung-Soon Kim, “The Place Image and Satisfaction of an Ethnic Place - Comparing Koreans with Foreigners in Itaewon, Seoul,” *Journal of Korea Planning Association* 48, no. 7 (2013): 37–54; Jongsoo Park, “Characteristics of Itaewon as a Religious Area and Its Understanding as a Multicultural Space,” *The Journal of Seoul Studies* 51 (2013): 155–79.
- ¹¹ Ji Youn Kim, “Cultural entrepreneurs and urban regeneration in Itaewon, Seoul,” *Cities* 56 (2016): 132-140.
- ¹² Hyunjoon Shin, “Creative Classes and the Production of Contested Places in Hannamdong (Yongsan, Seoul): Another Cultural-Economic Communities of Strangers,” *Journal of the Economic Geographical Society of Korea* 19, no. 1 (2016): 33-50; Hyunjoon Shin, “From Foreign Community to Creative Town? Creativity and Contestation in Itaewon, Seoul,” in *Re-Imaging Creative Cities in Twenty-First Century Asia*, ed. Xin Gu et al. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020): 95-111.
- ¹³ Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).
- ¹⁴ Shinwon Kyung and Kyuri Jeong, “Who are the people leading the gentrification process in Itaewon?,” *Seoul Studies* 20, no. 2 (2018): 1-17.
- ¹⁵ Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995): 38-47.
- ¹⁶ Stuart Hall, “The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 28-29.
- ¹⁷ Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Hillside, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988); Frances Henry and Carol Tator, *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-Language Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).
- ¹⁸ In this study I adapt to Fairclough’s (1989) model of three-dimensional analysis with slight modifications. Whereas the suggested model performs analysis on text, discursive practice – regarding production, consumption and distribution of text, and social practice, I examine the following: How relevant topics are rendered at text level, how the consumers of the text are defined and who are identified as such, and what ideologies are underpinning and promoted by the discourses; Norman Fairclough, *Language as Power* (New York: Longman, 1989): 25.

- ¹⁹ Jeongwon Yang and Sunhee Lee, "Framing the MERS Information Crisis: An Analysis on Online News Media's Rumour Coverage," *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 28, no. 4 (2020): 386–98; Dongkuk Lee and Hyuksoo Kwon, "Keyword Analysis of the Mass Media's News Articles on Maker Education in South Korea," *International Journal of Technology and Design Education* 32, no. 1 (2022): 333–53.
- ²⁰ An online database which archives newspaper articles under monitoring of Korea Press Foundation. <https://www.bigkinds.or.kr/>.
- ²¹ An online database which archives newspaper articles published before 2000, run by Naver Inc. <https://newslibrary.naver.com/>.
- ²² Amanda Wise and Selvaraj Velayutham, eds., *Everyday Multiculturalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
- ²³ Giuliana B. Prato, ed., *Beyond Multiculturalism: Views from Anthropology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).
- ²⁴ Vladimir Tikhonov, *Your Republic of Korea* (Seoul: Hankyoreh, 2001).
- ²⁵ Interviewee B10 (former GI at Yongsan garrison and long-term American expat living in Seoul), in online discussion with the author, August 2022.
- ²⁶ The term *Yanggongju*, initially denoting female prostitutes catering primarily to US troops during the 1960s and 1970s, was found to have evolved to derogatorily refer to Korean women who engaged in personal relationship with the US military, irrespective of their involvement in prostitution.
- ²⁷ Interviews B6, B7 and B9 (long-term local residents), separate discussions with the author, Seoul, South Korea, July 2022.
- ²⁸ Interviewee B10, in online discussion with the author, August 2022.
- ²⁹ Interviewee B3 (long-term local merchant and resident), in discussion with the author, Seoul, South Korea, July 2022.
- ³⁰ Interviewee B9 (long-term local resident), in discussion with the author, Seoul, South Korea, July 2022.
- ³¹ As explored by a studies on Koreans' attitudes towards migrants and foreigners; Sang-Soo Ahn et al., "A Study on Multicultural Acceptability in Korea" (Seoul: Ministry of Gender Equality and Families, 2012); E-Seon Kim et al., "The 2018 Study on Multicultural Acceptability in Korea" (Seoul: Ministry of Gender Equality and Families, 2018); Sang-Soo Ahn et al., "The 2015 Study on Multicultural Acceptability in Korea" (Seoul: Ministry of Gender Equality and Families, 2015).
- ³² Interviewees A1, A2, A3, A5, A6, A11, A15 and A16 (regular visitors), in separate online discussions with the author, August-December 2021.
- ³³ Shinwon Kyung and Kyuri Jeong, "Who are the people leading the gentrification process in Itaewon?," *Seoul Studies* 20, no. 2 (2018): 1-17.
- ³⁴ Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 28-29.
- ³⁵ Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 28-44; Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988).

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BODY, RITUAL, AND PLACE: ADVANCING THEIR *CHRONOTOPIC* INTERRELATIONSHIP IN DESIGN PRAXIS AND PEDAGOGY THROUGH AN EXPLORATION OF JUXTAPOSED SURFACES, THRESHOLD SITES OF DIALOGIC ENCOUNTER, AND COLLAGE

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INTRODUCTION

Echoing philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin's *chronotope*, an 'intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships,'¹ our work explores the interrelation of the body, ritual, and place as a *chronotopic* site of design and pedagogy. This exploration reaffirms architecture's grounding in people, their inhabitation of place, and spatial form, an interrelatedness too often underexamined within architectural education.² First positioning ritual thematically, our discussion addresses three interrelated issues: the role of juxtaposed *ritual surfaces* in activating the body, ritual and place; the potential of ritual surfaces as *threshold sites of dialogic encounter*;³ and collage as a medium to investigate and communicate the interrelationship of body, ritual and place. Our exploration has been advanced through 'the "migratory" cross-disciplinary drift of the Bakhtinian method,'⁴ bringing together architecture, cultural anthropology, the fine arts, and philosophy. Simultaneously, through action research we critically examine our design pedagogy in work with Master of Architecture students. Our critical examination of this pedagogy, which intertwines the subject matter and method of our study, brings together thinking and acting, reflective of ritual's potential as a simultaneity of socio-cultural product and process.⁵ Emergent is a greater recognition of an interrelatedness of body, ritual, and place and their potential as a site of design pedagogy.

The Body, Ritual and Place

What do we mean by ritual?

We understand ritual as including, but not limited to, traditional socio-cultural or religious ceremonies with prescribed orders and rites;⁶ equally we recognise but are not restrained by narrow ideas of ritual as mere routine.⁷ Problematising any definition of ritual however is that there is no consensus.⁸ More useful is understanding what ritual does;⁹ it "is a way of acting that is designated and orchestrated to distinguish [...] what is being done in comparison to the other, usually more quotidian, activities."¹⁰ Through ritual we: make sense of the world and how to operate within it;¹¹ structure space and situate ourselves within it;¹² structure the world as we would like it to be;¹³ operate creatively;¹⁴ and cultivate who we are and our sensibilities towards the world.¹⁵ Within our pedagogy what ritual offers is a way of examining chronotopic experience and analysing its meaning.

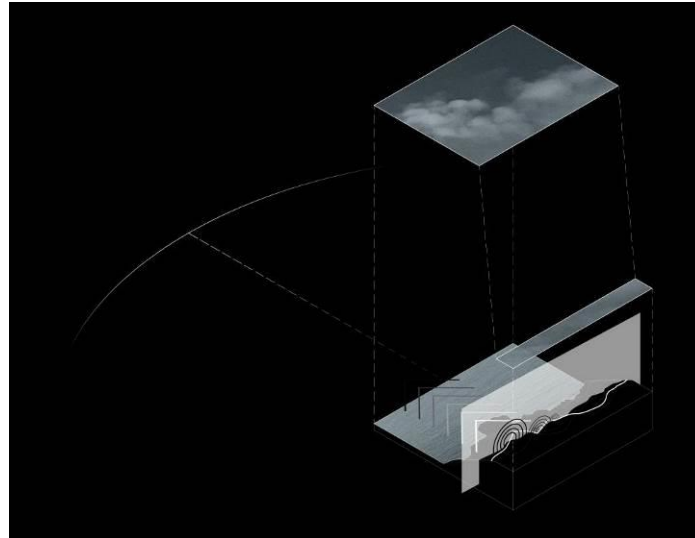


Figure 1. S. Brazier, “Arrival” and “Interstitial commonality,” 2023.
Study of home as a framed view, and proposal for bird watching structure in a salt marsh.

Why study ritual?

Central to our interest in ritual is how people use ritual to ‘make and remake their worlds.’¹⁶ This intention is echoed by anthropologists, sociologists, historians and philosophers increasing use of ritual as a tool for understanding; ‘few other terms [...] are more fundamental in defining issues basic to culture (and) society.’¹⁷ Despite serving as a site of interest in other fields,¹⁸ ritual is mostly overlooked in architecture. Seminal architectural texts¹⁹ with a self-proclaimed grounding in the origin of architecture²⁰ give scant if any attention to ritual. A few contemporary architectural texts refer to ritual but focus on its spiritual representations in architecture,²¹ or ritual-specific architecture (notably ceremonial spaces) and how architecture informs ritual.²² Comparatively, the recent *Anthropology for Architects*²³ provides extensive inter-subjective study of ritual and architecture, though is written from a perspective of anthropology on architecture. What we seek is a more architecturally oriented exploration of the interrelatedness of body, ritual, and place. More useful (in our agency) is landscape architect Randolph Hester Jr.’s probing exploration of ritual and place in ‘Sacred Structures and Everyday Life.’²⁴ Yet while useful, this has served simply as a beginning point of reference for our own discourse and praxis.

Further driving our agency is concern for inherited tendencies within Western²⁵ architectural discourse and practice valuing the formal, geometric, and perceptual,²⁶ and meanings reflective of these values.²⁷ Within these received perspectives emphasis is placed on the visual²⁸ and cognitive.²⁹ Intrinsic to this are arguments of the shaping influence buildings have on people’s lives.³⁰ While wary of these inherited tendencies, our intention is not to act in opposition,³¹ but rather to dialogically³² embrace what they offer while moving beyond the limitations they impose. Nor is our aim to propose a meta-theory and meta-methodology³³ supplanting existing architectural pedagogy. Rather, our intention is to explore how sensibilities grounded in the interrelatedness of body, ritual, and place can inform teaching and learning on the making of place.



*Figure 2. T. Gowlett, "reflected expanse," 2024.
Study examining interrelation of surfaces of water, ground,
horizon and sky experience in a walk along the water's edge.*

Embodiment, Emplacement and Critical Circularity

Ritual and embodiment

Central to ritual is the body. As ritual theorist Ronald Grimes highlights, '[n]o body, no ritual.'³⁴ Rituals are rooted in and acted out through the body. Through ritual, repeated distinct acts become embodied; that is, our bodies (and minds) come to know the ritual and specific body movements within those acts, a knowing that is embodied.³⁵ As ritual is enacted in space, our body equally comes to know place; i.e., our spatial orientation becomes embedded within the body.³⁶ Repeated over time, this embodied enactment creates a ritualized body;³⁷ concurrently, our knowing the ritual becomes embodied, infused with innate sensibilities towards ritual, the place of the ritual's enactment, and the body itself.

Ritual and emplacement

As our bodies develop these sensibilities, so too these embodied sensibilities alter our knowing of the world.³⁸ While given a physical geometry by place, through enactment of ritual and sensibilities activated by that enactment, we come to know and remember that place as the site of the ritual,³⁹ and so re-schematize the environment.⁴⁰ 'The meaning of the place is not solely latent within it and realized simply through our reaction to it; rather we subjectively emplace upon the environment our own understanding.'⁴¹

Ritual and critical circularity

Paramount in embodiment and emplacement is their interdependence. Critically intertwined, each is informed by and informs the other. In this critical circularity, the body is framed by the enactment of the ritual (i.e., embodiment) while simultaneously meaning is projected onto place (emplacement).⁴² Thus we respond to place not only just as what it is and as experienced by our bodies, but equally through the meaning we emplace upon it through rituals we enact within that place.



Figure 3. A. Williams, “Entangled contract,” 2024.
Study examining a shared family ritual of beachcombing.

RITUALIZED SURFACES AND JUXTAPOSITION

Our delineation of the *chronotopic* interrelatedness of body, ritual and place has drawn on a disciplinary migration across architecture, cultural anthropology, the fine arts, and philosophy, as well as our own writing.⁴³ Further extension of this inquiry comes through exploring the *chronotopic* interrelatedness of body, ritual, and place as a potential site of design pedagogy. Our exploration is not however structured in a positivist succession as if a sequence of factual lines to follow; rather, we conceptualize our praxis and pedagogy as if on a surface, allowing for a richness and imaginal thought in bringing multiple concepts together.⁴⁴ Enabled on this surface are both anticipated and unexpected ‘threshold encounters’⁴⁵ between various concepts, drawing upon both *a priori* and new design and pedagogic experiences and knowledge, from which newly emergent and re-emergent relationships are revealed.

Our exploration on this surface includes re-visiting paradigms⁴⁶ from art and architecture, through the chronotope of body, ritual, and place. Re-presented though this re-visitation is less the paradigm’s overall spatial-form with inherited emphasis on the formal, geometric, and perceptual; rather, prioritized is the body and ritual, and their interrelation with place. This foregrounding of the body and ritual enables students to readily grasp the interrelation of the body, ritual, and place. Revealed is the presence of distinct surfaces – which we came to call ritual surfaces – on which rituals are enacted and with which the body engages in enacting these rituals.

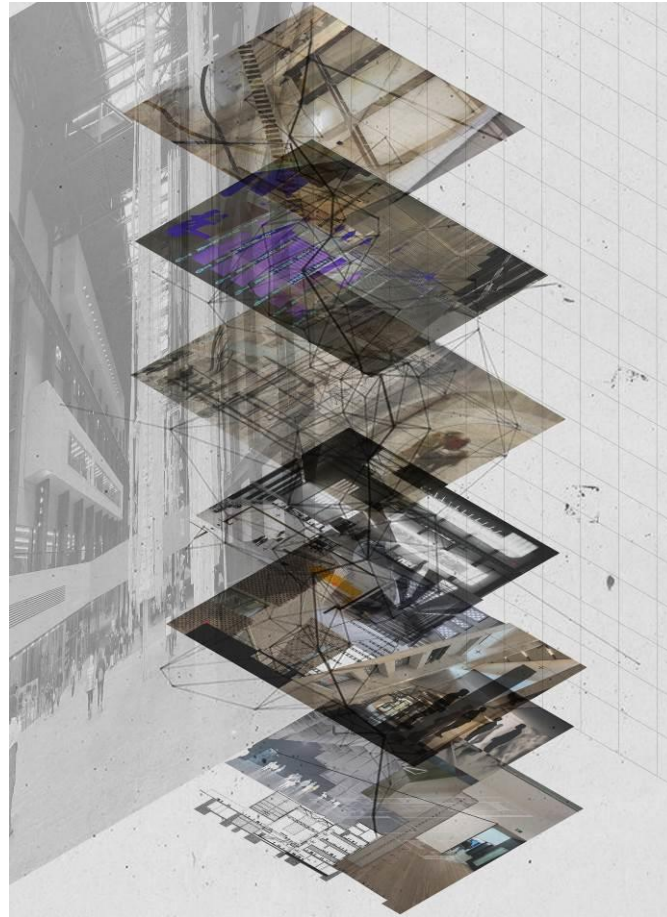


Figure 4. C. Salem, "The Overlays of the Rituals," 2024.
Study examining the interrelationship of the body, rituals and space.

Further understanding is enabled through re-activating these surfaces by emphasizing their haptic nature.⁴⁷ Revealed by this haptic re-activation of ritual surfaces is the role of juxtaposition. This juxtaposition is present in contrasts, if not oppositions, including of color, durability (including patina), materiality, perceived scale, and texture; other juxtapositions include (but are not limited to) dialectics of here/there,⁴⁸ interiority/exteriority, light/dark, openness/enclosure, structural type (shell/frame), and vertical/horizontal orientation. Evoking Bakhtin's notion of aesthetics, valued in this juxtaposition is how one element comes together with others within a composition of relational things, and the enhanced meaning afforded by their juxtaposed relationship.⁴⁹ Also present was the way these surfaces are positioned in relation to each other to create spatial sequences experientially compressing and expanding the body as the body moves through this spatial sequence. Both singularly and in combination these juxtapositions activate individual surfaces in relation to one another, and simultaneously activate the body through the body's heightened sensibility of these surfaces owing to their juxtaposition; equally heightened are sensibilities towards the rituals which occur at these juxtapositions.

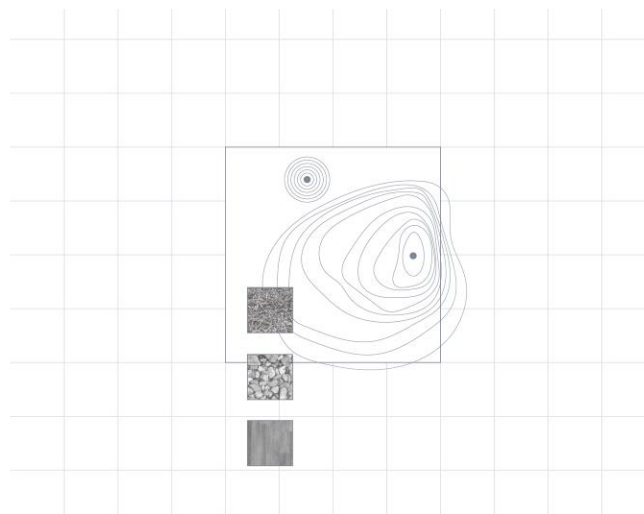
THRESHOLD SITES OF ENCOUNTER

Equally central to our understanding of ritual is the opportunity afforded for engagement with an *other*. Ritual is a social way of being-in-the world, orientating ourselves towards others,⁵⁰ and crossing the boundaries lying between us. Drawing on Bakhtin's dialogism, rather than

conceptualizing boundaries as a divides we might think of them as conditions that joins us; as Bakhtin notes, our lives are lived not as 'that which takes place within, but that which takes place on the boundary between one's own and someone else's consciousness, on the *threshold*.⁵¹ In this sense rituals, and the ritualised surfaces on which they occur, can act as a threshold site of encounter with another.

Our work moves us beyond conventional definitions of thresholds as a physical mark at a beginning or ending of space, pattern or movement,⁵² as if bounded and self-contained, distinct from other spaces around it.⁵³ Nor do we delimit a threshold as a transitional element from one space to another,⁵⁴ notably as entry⁵⁵ or as a liminal space between interior semi-public/private space and exterior public space.⁵⁶ Rather, we extend our sense of threshold, echoing how definitions of public space have been extended in recent years.⁵⁷ This recognises a threshold as situated within a wider multifarious context (i.e., a surface) of various networks of activity, interrelations, knowledge and movement.⁵⁸

We conceptualise thresholds as gathering points enabling encounters between people with each other and/or place, drawing on Bakhtin's discussion of thresholds in Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels. In Dostoevsky's writings, the key action occurs at thresholds – e.g., doorways, foyers, stairways, stair landings, and even public squares. 'The threshold...take(s) on the meaning of a "point" where crisis, radical change, an unexpected turn of fate takes place, where decisions are made, where the forbidden line is overstepped, where one is renewed or perishes.'⁵⁹ Our inquiry builds from this, exploring the potential of elemental surfaces to act as thresholds; these include but are not limited to floor (or ground), walls, and roofs when articulated as inhabitable surfaces. Further representation of threshold is found in hybrid spaces; both/and spaces; circulation; niches, nooks, and crannies; and even fittings and furnishings.⁶⁰



*Figure 5.1. Smoker, "Sensory sentimentality," 2024.
Study exploring the connectivity between body movement,
ground as surface, and sky as a canopy above.*

Central to these surfaces is their dialogical nature, i.e., that they are not totalized in a deterministic, monological condition, but rather evidence ambiguity and malleability allowing for different forms of appropriation and reinterpretation by those who inhabit them. To be clear, we are not suggesting a universal space that accommodates presumably everything, but in reality, nothing. Rather, this threshold implies and opens itself up to what people can bring to it and can make of it. Further characteristic of this ambiguity is that this threshold accommodates different chronotopes at different

times, and different chronotopes simultaneously; crucial is these chronotopes do not negate each other and can inform each other through their co-presence.⁶¹

Equally central to this dialogic threshold is playfulness. While it can be disruptive and challenging, playfulness is equally respectful of its place. Yet simultaneously place is open to reinterpretation, inviting users to re-imagine, (re)make it, and take possession of it even if momentarily. It affords opportunity to find new, even lateral ways of inhabiting place, and so redefine its meaning. Dialogic in nature, it can stimulate new expressions, knowledge and even values.⁶²

COLLAGE

Collage emerged in the early 20th Century, adopted to afford both new ways of thinking about the world and its representation, and embraced as a means of enabling the everyday to become vivid.⁶³

Collage is a transformative artistic technique that integrates pictorial fragments from diverse sources to create a unified, evocative image, film, or sculpture, imbued with new meanings and narratives, reflecting the dynamic interplay of consciousness and perception. Elaborating on this concept of duality, architect, Juhani Pallasmaa argues collages 'lead double lives; the collaged ingredients are suspended between their original essences and the new roles assigned to them by the artistic ensemble.'⁶⁴ In her text, *Collage and Architecture*, Jennifer Shields draws comparison between processes and assemblages of collages with those of architecture and the built environment; suggesting 'architecture turns from a spatial abstraction into a lived situation, ambience and metaphor.'⁶⁵ Similarly, architect, Steven Holl proposes architecture is like a collage; revealing something of experience, sensorial phenomena and questions of meaning / idea generation.⁶⁶ Furthering this notion, architect Peter Cook strives for an architecture that embodies 'this notion of the endlessly and cyclical layered, but dynamic collage of speculation,'⁶⁷ crediting collage as a medium to pushing these new ways of thinking. Within this conception of collage and architecture are a specific set of interconnected, chronotopic ideas that our work explores around the role of architecture, and specifically how elemental surfaces and thresholds can enable people, place, and event relationships.

Within this praxis, our turn to ritual theories is a way of deepening our understanding of the human condition and embodied behaviours in relation to these chronotopes - in particular recognising ritual as a specific form of human behaviour that can distinguish place and project meaning onto it.⁶⁸ Just as collage 'leads a double life', so too does ritual – whereby the enactment of ritual is the creation of an entirely new and particular experience; a new place, a new sensibility and a re-imagined set of ideas associated with the act. Although a ritual may involve repeated ritual features and attributes, applying them to a new ritual context forms a different experience closely tied to place:

*'[t]he creation of ritual contexts comes, not only from acting bodies, but also from the environments that contain them. Bodies do not act in a vacuum. Whether in a house, a neighbourhood, or a shrine, it is necessary to take ritual environments as seriously as the ritual bodies that act in them.'*⁶⁹

To examine this ritualized and symbiotic process between body and the experience of surfaces and thresholds, our students experiment with collage-making for its capacity to encapsulate new meanings whilst borrowing from existing fragments. Processes of assembling borrowed imagery supports students in their reach for representation of meaning and giving of new meaning in a playful manner. Their emerging praxis, whether an analytical inquiry of spatial placement within temporal events, a design study testing surface conditions, or final representation in three-dimensional form, recognises (and embraces) that 'the multivalence...of spatial and material conditions inherent in collage-making creates the potential for a multiplicity of interpretations and experiences in the design process and the resultant work of architecture.'⁷⁰ This approach is illustrated through the below examples of student graphic narratives.

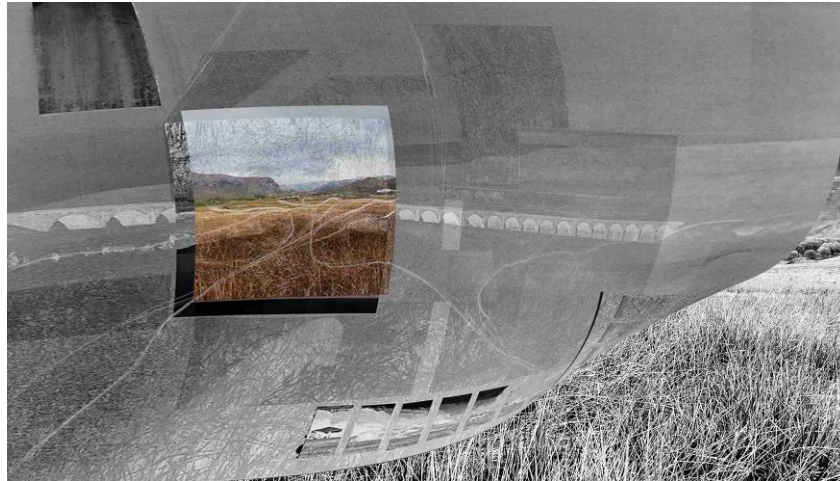


Figure 6. C. Thadwald, “Metaphorical concept of palimpsest through dialogism,” 2024.
Use of collage to reveal spatial and textural relationships experienced in a walk.

Layers of collage and drawings are used as a haptic medium for conveying a sense or feeling of a particular ritualized experience and/ or memory. Within these, fragments of conventional architectural drawings can be seen alongside more abstracted experiential photographic studies and diagrams – recognising something of the sense-making at play and disciplinary sensibility. Architect, Ben Nichols argues collage ‘is part of everyone’s experience’, in that a collage represents the way our minds collect, collate and translate our experiences through visual cues and ideas; he describes a collage as ‘a group of ephemeral things brought together by a logic that disturbs, or negates, the status of the individual elements.’⁷¹ As such, collage increasingly becomes useful tool for us as architects, to dwell in the many dimensions of experience we are yet to fully articulate through language and more conventional means.

CONCLUSION

Our discussion here builds on our work to date in exploring the interrelation of the body, ritual, and place as a *chrontopic* site of design pedagogy. As such, it is neither complete nor fixed, and rather a thought-in-formation.⁷² This construction benefits from our continuing journey together with students. At the same time, what has been enacted has met with positive reception, evidenced in prizes won by students in international awards (e.g., multiple gold, silver, bronze and honorable mention in the Creative Conscience Awards, and a commendation in the RIBA Silver Medals). Further weight to the merit of this work is commentary by the architectural press, external examiners, and the RIBA on the students’ socio-culturally engaged exploration of the interrelation of people, their inhabitation of place, and spatial form.



Figure 7. G. Cameron, “Plan is not always the generator” and “A ‘pinch’ of salt,” 2023. Study of home as corporal change, and proposal for a space of well-being in a salt marsh.

Such recognition reaffirms the potential of architecture’s grounding in the interrelatedness of body, ritual, and place. Our engagement with ritual builds off an understanding enabled by a cross-disciplinary migration across architecture, cultural anthropology, the fine arts, and philosophy, and our own writing. Our work has enabled us to advance three interrelated issues: the role of juxtaposed ritual surfaces in activating the body, ritual, and place; the potential of ritual surfaces as threshold sites of dialogic encounter; and collage as a medium to investigate and communicate the interrelationship of body, ritual, and place. Simultaneously, our exploration builds from action research critically examining our own design-based pedagogy in work with Master of Architecture students. Central to this is a co-joining of the subject matter of our study (i.e., juxtaposed ritual surfaces, and ritual surfaces as threshold sites of encounter) and our method of study (i.e., collage as a medium which acts like a threshold, bringing together multiple surfaces and so revealing relationships generated between these surfaces and the bodies and rituals present within them). This inquiry is reflective of ritual’s potential as a simultaneity of socio-cultural product and process. Emergent is a greater recognition of an interrelatedness of body, ritual, and place and their potential as a site of design pedagogy.⁷³

NOTES

- ¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel," in *The Dialogical Imagination. Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Ceryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84.
- ² This critique builds off commentary from a previous Master of Architecture External Examiner at our university, Dr. Nathaniel Coleman of Newcastle University; it also reflects commendations from Royal Institute of British Architects Validation Panels received by our School for engagement with these issues, notably via a socio-cultural agency.
- ³ The phrase "threshold site of encounter" owes a debt to film critic Robert Stam's reference to fostering "threshold encounters" between different disciplinary knowledge. Robert Stam, *Subversive Pleasures. Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 16.
- ⁴ Stam, 16-17.
- ⁵ Kevin Schilbrack, "Introduction – On the use of philosophy in the study of rituals," *Thinking Through Rituals – Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Kevin Schilbrack (London: Routledge, 2004).
- ⁶ "Ritual," Merriam-Webster, accessed 12 November 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ritual#:~:text=2%20of%20,noun,prescribed%20for%20a%20religious%20ceremony.> "Ritual,"
- ⁷ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Satsuki Kawano, *Ritual practice in modern Japan: Ordering place, people, and action* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005).
- ⁸ Peter Blundell Jones, Peter. *Architecture and Ritual – How Buildings Shape Society* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Schilbrack, "Introduction."
- ⁹ Schilbrack.
- ¹⁰ Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 74.
- ¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
- ¹² Neil Leach, "Belonging: towards a Theory of Identification with Space, in *Habitus: A Sense of Place*, ed. Jean Hillier and Emma Rooksby, (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2005, 2nd ed.), 297-311.
- ¹³ Blundell Jones, *Architecture and Ritual*.
- ¹⁴ Schilbrack, "Introduction."
- ¹⁵ Graham Parkes, "Ways of Japanese Thinking," in *Japanese Aesthetics and Culture*, ed. Nancy Hume (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 77-109.
- ¹⁶ Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 3.
- ¹⁷ Bell, 3.
- ¹⁸ Schilbrack, "Introduction."
- ¹⁹ See for example: Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An Essay on Architecture*, trans. Wolfgang Herrmann and Anni Herrmann (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1977); Gottfried Semper. *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, trans. Harry Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011 [1851]); and Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, trans. Richard Schofield (London: Penguin Classics, 2009).
- ²⁰ We are critical of claims to authenticity intrinsic to claims of origin. See for example: Theodor Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will (London: Routledge, 2003 [1964, 1973]); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, Massachusetts, Blackwell, 1991 [1974, 1984]); and Doreen Massey, *for space*, (London: Sage, 2005).
- ²¹ Pier Vittorio Aureli and Maria Sheherazade Guidici, Maria, eds., *Rituals and Walls: The Architecture of Sacred Space* (London: Architectural Association, 2016).
- ²² Blundell Jones, *Architecture and Ritual*.
- ²³ Ray Lucas, *Anthropology for Architects – Social Relations and the Built Environment* (London: Bloomsbury 2020).
- ²⁴ Randolph Hester Jr., "Sacred Spaces and Everyday Life: A Return to Manteo, North Carolina," in *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing - Toward a Phenomenological Ecology*, ed. David Seamon (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 271-297.
- ²⁵ 'Western' is used here based on its common currency in discourse. We regard the term with caution however, owing to its use to distinguish the other, notably in how 'Western' and with it 'Eastern', 'North', and 'South', have been manipulated to serve ideologies. Equally wariness arises from how such terms have been used to delineate

culture as fixed and not as something more malleable and permeable. Robert Brown, "The Elusiveness of Culture," in *Engaging in Architectural Education*, ed. Peter Beacock, et. al. (London: London Metropolitan University, 2011), 49-53; and Robert Brown, and Daniel Maudlin, "Concepts of Vernacular Architecture," in *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory*, eds. Greig Crysler, Hilde Heynen and Stephen Cairns (London: Sage, 2012) 340-355. See also: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

²⁶ See for example: Kimberly Dovey, "Putting Geometry in its Place: Toward Phenomenology of the Design Process, in *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing - Toward a Phenomenological Ecology*, ed. David Seamon (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 247-269; and Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.

²⁷ See for example: Linda Groat, "Meaning in Post-Modern Architecture: An Examination Using the Multiple Sorting Task," *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, September 47/1 (1982): 3-9; and Amos Rapoport, *The Meaning of the Built Environment* (Beverly Hills, California: 1982).

²⁸ See for example: Augustin Berque, *Japan. Nature, Artifice and Japanese Culture*, trans. Ros Schwartz, (Yelverton Manor, United Kingdom, 1997); and Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Thinking Hand: Existential and Embodied Wisdom in Architecture* (Wiley, 2009).

²⁹ See for example: Parkes, "Ways of Japanese Thinking,"; and Charles Taylor, "To Follow a Rule..." in *Bourdieu – A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 29-44.

³⁰ See for example: Blundell Jones, *Architecture and Ritual*.

³¹ We note here a wariness of those who generate an opposition figure or threat as means to justify one's own argument. See for example: Katherine Ruedi, "A Commentary on Architectural Education," *Journal of Architectural Education* 51/3 (1998): 148-152.

³² For a discussion of embrace across difference, see: Mikhail Bakhtin, "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov and Kenneth Brostrom (Austin: University of Texas, 1990), 4-256.

³³ Greig Crysler, *Writing Spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism, and the Built Environment, 1960-2000* (London Routledge, 2003).

³⁴ Robert Grimes, "Ritual Theory and The Environment," *The Sociological Review* 51(2_suppl) (2003): 31-45.

³⁵ Crossley, Nick. "Ritual, body technique, and (inter)subjectivity." In *Thinking Through Rituals – Philosophical Perspectives*, edited by Kevin Schilback, 31-51. London: Routledge, 2004; and Parkes, "Ways of Japanese Thinking."

³⁶ Blundell Jones, *Architecture and Ritual*; and Parkes, "Ways of Japanese Thinking."

³⁷ Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*; and Kawano, *Ritual practice in modern Japan*.

³⁸ Crossley, "Ritual, body technique, and (inter)subjectivity."

³⁹ Kawano, *Ritual practice in modern Japan*.

⁴⁰ Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*.

⁴¹ Robert Brown, "Emplacement, Embodiment and Ritual: Some considerations from *shikii wo matagu* for our understanding of place and identity," in *The Territories of Identity: Architecture in the Age of Evolving Globalisation*, eds. S. Bandyopadhyay and G. Garma-Montiel (London: Routledge, 2013) 34.

⁴² Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*.

⁴³ Robert Brown, "Learning through Ritual," in *Transactions*, Vol. 4, No. 1, April, (2007): 55-75. [Online], Available at www.cebe.heacademy.ac.uk/transactions; Brown, "Emplacement, Embodiment and Ritual: Some considerations from *shikii wo matagu* for our understanding of place and identity;" Zoe Latham and Robert Brown, "Shenzen's Urban Villages: Dialogical cultural landscapes and resilient rituals," *Socio.Hu*, 6 (2018): doi: 10.18030/socio.hu.2018en.51.

⁴⁴ Vilem Flusser, *writings*, ed. Andreas Strohl, trans. Erick Eisel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

⁴⁵ Stam, *Subversive Pleasures*.

⁴⁶ Examination of these paradigms is beyond the scope of this text; key art installations examined include Rebecca Horn's *Measure Box* (1970); Richard Serra's *Reading Cones* (1989); and Richard Wilson's 20:50 (1987). Key architectural paradigms examined include: Herman Hertzberger's Central Beheer (1972); Roche Dinkerloo's Ford Foundation (1967) and Oakland Museum (1969); OMA's Kunsthalle (1992); Walters and Cohen's KwaZulu Natal Society of the Arts (1996); Alvar Aalto's Saynatsalo Town Hall (1949); Michelangelo's Piazza del Campodoglio (16th Century); Renzo Piano and Richard Roger's Centre Pompidou (1977); Steven Holl's Storefront for Art and Architecture (1993); Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982); Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye (1931); and Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple (1908).

- ⁴⁷ This sense of the haptic draws on the following: Pallasmaa, *The Thinking Hand: Existential and Embodied Wisdom in Architecture*; and Kent Bloomer and Charles Moore, *Body Memory and Architecture* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University, 1977).
- ⁴⁸ This draws on discussion of the concept of here and there in urban form in Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 1971 [1961]).
- ⁴⁹ Latham and Brown, "Shenzen's Urban Villages, 65-66.
- ⁵⁰ Crossley, "Ritual, body technique, and (inter)subjectivity."
- ⁵¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, "Appendix II: Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book," in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. Ceryl Emerson, trans. Ceryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 287.
- ⁵² James Eckler, *Language of Space and Form* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).
- ⁵³ Julie Charlesworth and Allan Cochrane, "Anglicising the American Dream – Tragedy, farce and the 'postmodern' city", in *Imagining Cities – Scripts, signs, memories*, eds. Sallie Westwood and John Williams (London: Routledge, 1997), 219 – 232.
- ⁵⁴ James Eckler, *Language of Space and Form* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).
- ⁵⁵ Till Boettger, *Threshold Spaces – Transitions in architecture. Analysis and design tools* (Birkhauser, 2014).
- ⁵⁶ Laurence Kimmel, *Architecture of Threshold Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2022).
- ⁵⁷ Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, *Cities – Reimagining the Urban* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002); Matthew Carmona, "Contemporary public space: critique and classification, part one: critique," *Journal of Urban Design*, 15(1), (2010): 123-148; and Fran Tonkiss, *Space, The City and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).
- ⁵⁸ Amin and Thrift, *Cities – Reimagining the Urban*.
- ⁵⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin, "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics," in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. Ceryl Emerson, trans. Ceryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 169.
- ⁶⁰ See for example: Brown, "Emplacement, Embodiment and Ritual;" and Robert Brown, "Bachelard, Besson and Bakhtin: A dialogical discourse on the potential of intimate space," *Space & Culture* (2022)
DOI:10.1177/12063312221092621
- ⁶¹ Robert Brown, et. al., "Community Campus as Threshold: a space of dialogue for academia and the community," *Journal of Dialogue Studies*, 9 (2022), 70-96.
- ⁶² Miguel Sicart, *Play Matters* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014).
- ⁶³ Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory – An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002).
- ⁶⁴ Juhani Pallasmaa, preface to *Collage and Architecture*, by Jennifer Shields (London: Routledge, 2024, xx).
- ⁶⁵ Jennifer Shields, *Collage and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2024).
- ⁶⁶ Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Alberto Perez-Gomez. In *Questions of Perception. Phenomenology of architecture. Architecture and Urbanism* July, Special Issue (1994).
- ⁶⁷ Peter Cook. "Accurate Reminiscences," in *Archigram: Symposium zur Ausstellung*, eds. Louis Eleonora et al., (1967) 39.
- ⁶⁸ Kawano, *Ritual practice in modern Japan*.
- ⁶⁹ Kawano, 7.
- ⁷⁰ Shields, *Collage and Architecture*, 14.
- ⁷¹ Ben Nicholson, "Collage making," in *Appliance House* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990) 16.
- ⁷² We are inspired here by educator Andrea Kahn's discussion of site representation as an act of constructing knowledge, a 'thought in formation.' Andrea Kahn, 'Defining Urban Sites,' in *Site Matters – Design Concepts, Histories, and Strategies*, eds. Carol Burns and Andrea Kahn (New York: Routledge, 2005), 289.
- ⁷³ Mystery reference??? When we try to delete this the Bibliography disappears.

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DEVELOPING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY TO ENHANCE THE GLOBAL CULTURAL IDENTITY IN DUBAI AL SEEF

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INTRODUCTION

The Al Seef project in Dubai aims to attract global tourists by providing a leisure destination infused with Dubai's cultural values. In general, there are two directions for improving global cultural identity through re-creating the global image. One is establishing a standardised consumption pattern for place-selling, such as Disney Land; the other is re-creating the uniqueness of locality to improve global culture. If the Al Seef project expects to establish a more sustainable strategy for attracting global tourists, it is crucial to create authentic experiences which preserve and promote local traditions instead of only engaging in tourist activities or commodifying culture.

To preserve and promote local traditions, at the conceptual design stage, two principles could be followed: focusing on historical traces in the urban fabric, and establishing a more harmonious relationship between the local community and tourists. These two principles make tourism attraction transform place-selling into place-making. In one of the place-making practices, Xi'an's Muslim Quarter in China provides a reference for the Dubai Al Seef project. This precedent either meets the expectations of visitors in terms of performance and remembrance or being positioned as a shopping district for global tourists.

Consumption is both an economic activity and a social practice as Michel de Certeau¹ states. In a tourist place, a portion of the cultural experience is mediated through the consumption behaviours of tourists, and culture is regarded as a commodity. If tourists' experiences can be shifted from 'experience economy' to 'experience of architecture',² while local architecture provides a situated place to experience the culture, visitors' engagement within the place will become more profound.

To preserve and redevelop the local architecture, as Henri Lefebvre states,³ representational space heavily relies on the user's scenario, which can constitute a subjective space shaped by their experiences and emotions. As a conceived space, supposing the tourist place becomes a standardized touring pattern, the place will deprive the site of its original authenticity and uniqueness. Therefore, the standardized approach fails to recognise their individuality in everyday life practices. If a tourist place can integrate aspects of consumption with the subjective experiences of users, a process of de-alienation between tourists and the destination occurs. This integration ensures a more comprehensive representation of the destination's uniqueness, providing tourists with a higher-quality travel experience.

A STANDARDISED CONSUMPTION PATTERN

The tourist place has been described as a place inscribed in circles of anticipation, performance and remembrance,⁴ because there are no obvious boundaries. This place has been set ‘in play’ in relationship to multiple tourist gazes stretching in, through and over apparently distinct places. With the aim of attracting more tourists and extending the networked relationship with buildings, many tourist place designs focus on themes rather than creating a space. At the stage of the conceptual design, visual considerations, such as aesthetic design, patterns, forms and themes become essential, and tourist consumption is the first element to be considered in the initial design stage. Eventually, the result of the design work related to the ‘experience of architecture’ could be shifted to the ‘experience economy’.⁵

The ‘experience economy’ relies on design for sensations such as enjoyment, because it offers a place and resulting pleasures of emotions evoked, but lacks the formal design that determines quality, due to that this design approach primarily focuses on strengthening the power of engaging visitors emotionally, bodily and mentally in a tourist place.⁶ The approach to designing the tourist is primarily considered by place-selling instead of place-making and is restricted to the reconstruction of images for marketing purposes. In fact, this is a process of image creation has already been made in the sense that they have had a distinct place.⁷ For instance, the Bicester Village in the UK⁸ is a clearly positioned shopping district, resulting in a more defined architectural design theme, with a more modern and uniform architectural style. Furthermore, the boundaries of Bicester Village are more distinct, and tourist activities tend to be more focused, with shopping being the primary purpose for visitors. Particularly in terms of population composition, Bicester Village is mainly composed of tourists and staff serving the tourists.

CREATING UNIQUENESS OF LOCALITIES

The sustainability of a place relies on many factors which contribute to its liveability, quality and identity.⁹ Contrasting to a tourist place represented by a standardized consumption pattern, the uniqueness of localities as one important factor contributes to maintaining the sustainable quality of this place, because ‘local’ and ‘localities’ are not only to residents but also to ‘outsiders’, such as tourists.¹⁰ The authenticity of everyday life is presented by local residents and real effects on their local community. Tourist visits become a part of local residents’ everyday lives, meanwhile, their everyday lives become a part of the scene of tourist appreciation. These two exact differences of experience are intertwined together, which could promote the global impact of this uniqueness of localities.

DUBAI Al Seef

The Dubai Al Seef is economically and culturally produced through networked mobilities of capital, persons, signs and information. This site in Dubai, initially established by local settlers, is the historic area of the Al Bastakiya¹¹ on the southern Creek shore. In 1890, this village comprised 60 houses in a labyrinth of winding narrow streets, but in 1980 much of this area was demolished and redeveloped. In order to preserve alleys, souks and the characteristic local wind towers, the developers, named Meeras, redeveloped an adjacent 1.6km Creekside stretch, with the intention of strengthening the image of Old Dubai. Al Seef, the name of this project, means coast or shore in Arabic, and the project is designed to celebrate the story of Dubai City’s vibrant maritime roots and the ever-evolving multi-national culture.¹²

The masterplan and hospitality of the Al Seef project was designed by Godwin Austen Johnson,¹³ whose proposal was to build up a transformed area and provide an authentic heritage experience. With this design intention, they preserved and showcased traditional Emirati architecture and local trades.¹⁴

According to the judges of the Landezine International Landscape Award, this project represents a highly detailed and authentic expression of the past. Nonetheless, this project is limited to the manifestation of restoration by ageing techniques and craftship. To provide an authentic heritage experience, architects might need to consider a more complex and messy reality of the world, not only relying on highly skilled restoration techniques but also presenting a palimpsest of different periods.¹⁵ For example, Rome¹⁶ is an urban example showing a city layered in time; meanwhile, the urban fabric is imprinted in this laying of historical traces as historical evidence.

Figure 1 shows the approximate percentage of different functional buildings in this area. Most buildings are hospitality architecture, accompanied by some cultural architecture such as museums, and religious architecture such as mosques. By adopting highly skilled ageing techniques and craftship, the ‘shade structure’ in the public realm was restored to represent the characteristic souks, as illustrated in Figure 2. According to Landezine description, Dubai’s local vernacular was recreated and represented to try to capture different decades of the city’s history through natural weathering and construction.¹⁷ Figure 3 shows restored building typologies for the Al Seef mosque.

As Dubai Al Seef is a commercial project, for which aesthetic design, patterns, forms and themes are the essential elements to be considered at the conceptual design stage to attract more tourists. One of the ambitions of this project is to harmonise old and new Dubai by incorporating both heritage and contemporary areas. Therefore, the architects must place greater emphasis on the ‘experience of architecture’ than on the ‘experience economy’.

Modern tourism development increasingly indicates that developing new place-making approaches to create the tourist place is based on two principles: a focus on the creative use of intangible assets and heritage, and the establishment of a more harmonious relationship between the local community and tourists.¹⁸ From this perspective, to define the ‘quality’ of the tourist space, in addition to tangible elements such as the physical design of adding historical traces, some intangible elements such as relationships with local communities are important.

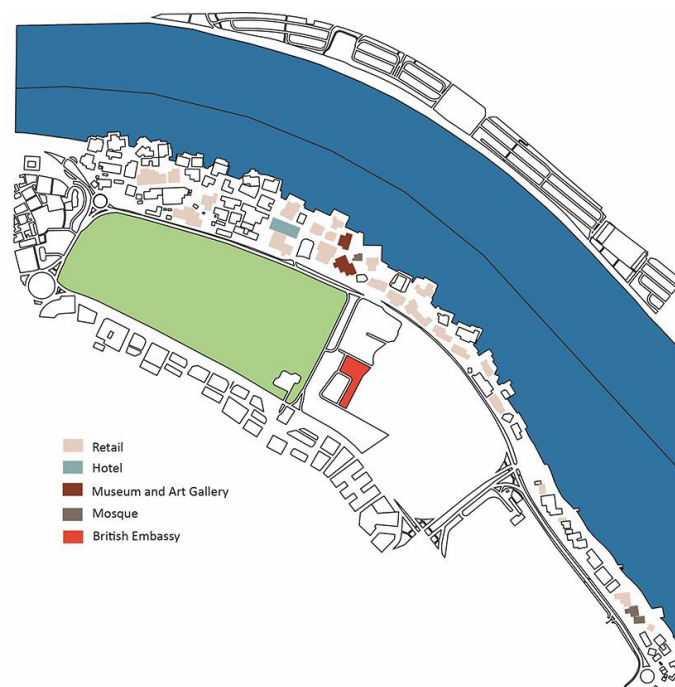


Figure 1. The approximate percentage of different functional buildings in Dubai Al Seef



Figure 2. The 'shade structure' in the public realm of Dubai Al Seef



Figure 3. The building typology for the restored Al Seef Mosque

Historical Traces in Urban Fabric

The accumulated traces of tectonic events imprinted on building fabric represent both the thickness of time in architecture and the aliveness within the fabric of the world.¹⁹ Similarly, historical traces in urban fabric also form a complexity of perception through the materiality of experience for individuals.

Xi'an, an ancient imperial capital and eastern departure point of the Silk Road, has long been an important crossroads for people from China, Central Asia and the Middle East.²⁰ The city became a hub of diverse ethnic identities and religious beliefs when Muslim people engaged in the trading business, thereby creating the Muslim Quarter, as illustrated in Figure 4. The characteristics of urban

fabric in Xi'an can be traced back to the southern and Northern Song dynasties. Muslim merchants gradually merged with the local residents, becoming the embryonic form of the Hui ethnic group. In the mid-Qing Dynasty, as the local residents continued to grow, their local culture merged with Han culture, thereby producing some folk architectures such as Cheng Huang Temple. In the site of the Muslim Quarter, this population is not only composed of tourists and staff, there are a considerable number of Muslim residents residing, with some of them making a living in the tourism industry.

In the process of cultural evolution, urban fabric as the physical form of the city represented an ongoing multi-cultural process, one element of which is historical architecture, such as Cheng Huang Temple (1387), Bell Tower (1380), and Drum Tower (1384), and several various-sized mosques such as Huajue mosque (1368-1398), as illustrated in Figure 5. The urban fabric showcases a fusion of Islamic and traditional Chinese architectural elements, but the intention of preserving it is not only to serve valuable research and display but also to serve as an active space for local residents and tourists. Naturally, this social space has evolved into a tourist attraction and the potential commercial value continues to develop alongside the local cultural value.

In contrast, the Al Seef project's design philosophy was to show Dubai's development history, starting with the architecture of the 1890s. The idea was to create a public realm which could capture different decades of the city's history. However, the result of the representation falls halfway between the 'experience of architecture' and the 'experience economy'. From the perspective of 'experience of architecture', the building fabric was restored by ageing techniques, it lacks imprinted historical traces as important historical pieces of evidence.

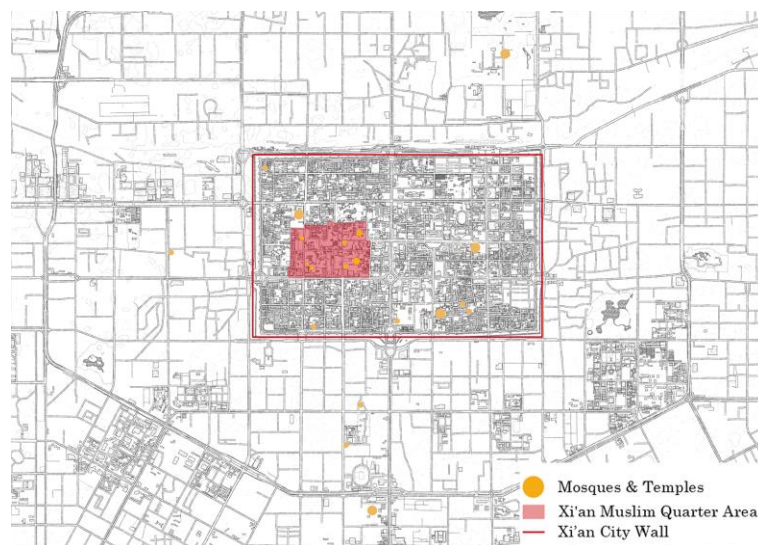


Figure 4. The location of Muslim Quarter Area in the City of Xi'an

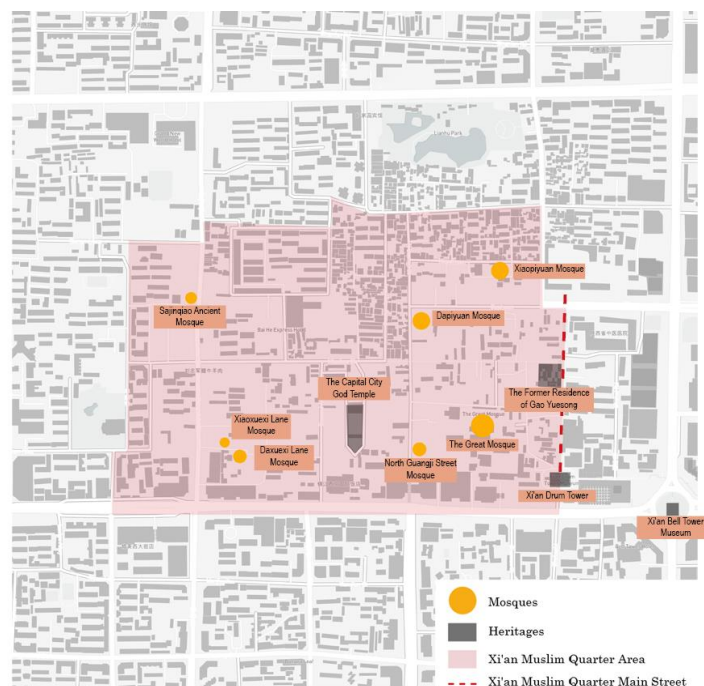


Figure 5. The location of Cheng Huang Temple, Bell Tower, Drum Tower, and several various-sized mosques in the City of Xi'an

Harmonious Relationship with Local Residents

The Al Seef project is a leisure destination infused with Dubai's cultural values; originally inspired by the daily activities of local settlements, it sought to create a physically authentic representation of the local tradition. However, the place-making approach has become detached from the real community networks and daily activities, producing a performance solely for global tourists. While quality place-making needs to be based on the local community's engagement and combine domestic and foreign empirical experiences, the traditional visual-artistic place-making model cannot contribute to sustainable tourist development.²¹ A higher quality model, one that increases social cohesion and stimulates the long-term regeneration of public spaces, might contribute more to tourism attractiveness.

In contrast, Xi'an's Muslim Quarter can be considered a typical tourist destination, excelling in meeting the expectations of visitors in terms of performance and remembrance. Similar to Al Seef, the Muslim Quarter itself is a heritage district with its own historical background and cultural significance. The Bell and Drum Towers of Xi'an are located in close proximity to the Muslim Quarter, with various-sized mosques scattered throughout the area, making them crucial attractions in the region. From the perspectives of performance and remembrance, the Muslim Quarter in Xi'an has gradually become the gathering place for the city's Muslim population, starting from the Ming and Qing dynasties until the present, with approximately half of the city's Muslim population now residing here. The main street of the Muslim Quarter includes century-old eateries and offers a variety of local snacks, as well as folk performances such as shadow puppetry, which extend the architectural experience for visitors within the current context, as illustrated in Figure 6. However, as visitors stroll into the side streets of the Muslim Quarter, they will still find Muslim residents living here, and tourists have become a part of the daily activities of the residents, creating a delicate balance between tourist attractions, economic experiences, and the everyday life of residents.

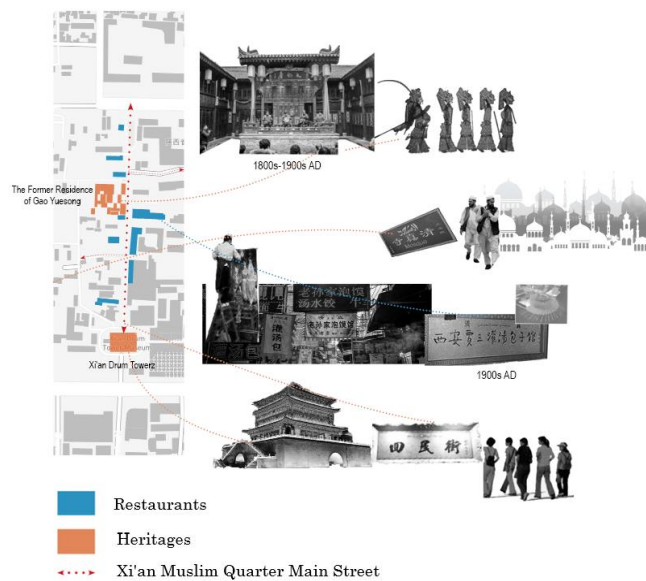


Figure 6. The main street of the Muslim Quarter in the City of Xi'an

DEVELOPING LOCAL COMMUNITY-BASED GLOBAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

In Henri Lefebvre's perspective, space can be defined as a conceptual triad comprising spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space.²² On the one side, representations of space, as conceived space, are predetermined by practitioners such as governments, administrators, and architects; on the other side, the representational space heavily relies on the user's scenario, constituting a subjective space shaped by experiences and emotions. Therefore, the design intention of tourist attractions aims to achieve some specific purposes, including anticipating the everyday life patterns of space users, including production, consumption, and behavior. Tourist attractions exist as pre-established spaces, the potential of which can be fully developed with sufficient capital investment, but which also must adhere to accompanying systems and management. This way might impose restrictions on the daily life patterns of local residents, because a healthy and sustainable social space integrates all occupants with the surrounding conditions, embracing diverse cultural perceptions and lifestyles.

When consumers visit tourist attractions and encounter cultural representations, consumption becomes a natural and inevitable behavior. Michel de Certeau²³ believes that consumption is not only an economic activity but also a social practice. Power relations exist within consumption dynamics, encompassing the use of power and the shaping of identity in the production and consumption of culture, including the use of commodities. In the Muslim Quarter in China, for example, when the daily lives of residents are encroached upon by tourism activities, the residents adapt to becoming part of the daily life of the tourist area, integrating it into their own lives. This practice is an individual expression and resistance to power at the micro level. In this case, a balance and harmony is established between tourists and residents. In the Dubai Al Seef, the tourist area model leans more towards a structure and consumption pattern predetermined by managers and designers. It effectively preserves and promotes local architecture and culture. Once the consumption patterns of tourists as consumers are set, their interaction with the place becomes less profound. The spirit of a meaningful tourist attraction should strive to manifest the emotions, images, and thoughts of all occupants in

tangible materials. Furthermore, a sustainable tourist place is expected to be ‘in play’ in relationship to multiple tourist gazes, and extends the relationship with users located in this place without distinct boundaries, such as time and place. In the meantime, developing restoration craftship for physical representation, and creating uniqueness of localities can also extend the distinct physical boundary from place to placeness, constituting a fictional story for the imagination and enhancing place memory.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we analyzed the global cultural identity of the Dubai Al Seef project, based on the theories of Henri Lefebvre's everyday life practices and Michel de Certeau's concept that consumption is a social practice. Simultaneously, we introduced another similar case for comparison: Xi'an's Muslim Quarter as a contrasting precedent to Al Seef. Dubai and Xi'an share many similarities in terms of historical and economic development; both are trade hubs attracting people from diverse backgrounds, resulting in a harmonious blend of cultures and exchanges, and fostering the growth of the tourism industry.

For the Dubai Al Seef project, the goal is to build up a more sustainable global image ingrained in people's memories. Achieving this requires spreading the global image of Dubai Al Seef through daily life and social activities. Similarly, Xi'an, historically the starting point of the Silk Road, attracted traders from Central and West Asia due to trade development, leading to settlements. This period left a rich cultural heritage, including the preservation of Muslim architecture, a contributing factor to the formation of the Muslim Quarter. The formation of the Muslim Quarter reflects the importance of harmonious relationships with residents. As Henri Lefebvre's theory of representational space, this quarter represents a quality place-making that was generated which should be based on the local community's engagement. Furthermore, the characteristics of architecture combining all ethnic groups can be preserved well. Due to that space users are either tourists or residents, it reflects Michel de Certeau's theory of social consumption. Nowadays, under the national strategy of the modern Silk Road, the fusion of architectural and ethnic characteristics has become a crucial factor in attracting more global tourists.

The historical and economic similarities between Dubai and Xi'an allow Xi'an to offer valuable insights to Dubai in terms of enhancing its global cultural identity. Both cities provide a profound background for establishing the tourist attraction, it is not only a convergence and exchange point for global cultures but also a residence. Preserving historical traces and establishing a more harmonious relationship between the local community and tourists, are essential for sustaining the charm of both cities and its culture, ensuring its uniqueness within a global context.

NOTES

- ¹ Michel de Certeau, “‘Making Do’: Uses and Tactics,” in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 29–42.
- ² John Urry and Jonas Larsen, “Places, Buildings and Design,” in *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, 2011, 119–154.
- ³ Henri Lefebvre was a French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, he analyzes each historical mode as a three-part dialectic between everyday practices, representations of space and the spatial imagination of the time.
- ⁴ Urry and Larsen, “Places, Buildings and Design.”
- ⁵ Urry and Larsen.
- ⁶ Urry and Larsen.
- ⁷ Trevor Sofield, Jaume Guia, and Jan Specht, “Organic ‘Folkloric’ Community Driven Place-Making and Tourism,” *Tourism Management* 61 (August 2017): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.01.002>.
- ⁸ Bicester Village is a designer outlet shopping centre on the outskirts of Bicester, a town in Oxfordshire, England.
- ⁹ Marichela Sepe, “Case Studies Section III Enhancing Place Identity,” 1st ed. (Routledge, 2023).227-228.
- ¹⁰ Sofield, Guia, and Specht, “Organic ‘Folkloric’ Community Driven Place-Making and Tourism.”
- ¹¹ “Al Seef Dubai, UAE,” Godwin Austen Johson, accessed December 7, 2023, <https://www.godwinaustenjohnson.com/alseef>.
- ¹² “Al Seef Heritage Waterfront by Cracknell,” Landezine International Landscape Award, accessed December 07 2023. <https://landezine-award.com/al-seef-heritage-waterfront/>.
- ¹³ Godwin Austen Johson is one of the largest and longest-established UK architectural and design practices in the UAE.
- ¹⁴ “Al Seef Dubai, UAE,” Godwin Austen Johson, accessed December 7, 2023, <https://www.godwinaustenjohnson.com/alseef>.
- ¹⁵ Frederick Fisher and Stephen Harby. *Robert Venturi’s Rome*. Novato, (CA: ORO Editions, 2018), 15.
- ¹⁶ Rome is the capital city of Italy, and its history spans 28 centuries.
- ¹⁷ “Al Seef Heritage Waterfront by Cracknell,” Landezine International Landscape Award, accessed December 07 2023. <https://landezine-award.com/al-seef-heritage-waterfront/>.
- ¹⁸ Ives Vodanović Lukić, “Placemaking, Local Community and Tourism,” *Hrvatski Geografski Glasnik* 83, no. 1 (2021): 77–104, <https://doi.org/10.21861/HGG.2021.83.01.04>.
- ¹⁹ Jonathan Hale, *Merleau-Ponty for Architects* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 82.
- ²⁰ “Xi’an”, UNESCO, accessed December 7, 2023 <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/xian>.
- ²¹ Ensiyeh Ghavampour et al. “Revisiting the ‘Model of Place’: A Comparative Study of Placemaking and Sustainability.” *Urban Planning* 4, no. 2 Public Space in the New Urban Agenda: Research into Implementation (2019): 196–206. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v4i2.2015>.
- ²² Kong Zixian and Wang Changzhu, “Lefebvre’s Theory of ‘Critique of Everyday Life’: Logical Starting Point, Principal Line, and Contemporary Enlightenment,” *Social Sciences Journal of Universities in Shanxi* 35, no. 9 (2023): 25–31, <https://doi.org/10.16396/j.cnki.sxgskxb.2023.09.005>.
- ²³ de Certeau, “‘Making Do’: Uses and Tactics.”

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THE WELLBEING OF THE USERS IN THE APARTMENTS REGARDING BIOPHILIC DESIGN: CASES IN FAMAGUSTA

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INTRODUCTION

In today's diverse world, where migration and crowded urban life pose challenges, nature remains a mutual element that people connect with physically and emotionally. Cyprus, a Mediterranean island with a rich cultural history, has faced the impact of migration while struggling with architectural challenges in adopting apartment living. This study aims to offer practical biophilic design solutions for improving living conditions in North Cyprus's expanding cities.

The research, using qualitative and quantitative methods, involves interviews and surveys with local and immigrant occupants. Four apartments in Famagusta, a historically vital city in North Cyprus, are selected for study. The goal is to address the negative effects of apartment living on families and provide insights for better living environments.

Methodology

The study included both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The first component of the case study is qualitative. This section of the fieldwork includes observations, photographs, sketches, and an interview.

The second part contains a questionnaire technique with residents. The questionnaire is divided into three pieces. The first part includes close ended questions about the respondent, the second part includes close-ended questions about the awareness of the respondent of their built and natural surroundings. The third part includes a Likert scale to gather the perception of the respondents about natural elements in the built environment and answer the questions like Do they believe that more interaction with nature at home will improve their well-being? What is their perception on local furniture and craft? SPSS statistics data editor is used to measure the data.

Biophilia

The word 'biophilia' was first used by the American psychoanalyst Erich Fromm. The word 'biophilia' was described as "the passionate love of life and of all that is alive". Interacting with nature is still crucial for people's well-being both physically and mentally.¹ Biophilia is about the human reaction to the natural world, which is affected by sensory experiences including sound, smell, light, wind, weather, water, flora, animals, and landscapes. People's well-being in today's urban society is strongly linked to their interactions with nature. This relationship is not a luxury, but rather a necessary condition for living a fulfilling and healthy life.² Biologist Edward Wilson defined

biophilia as the inherent inclination to focus on living organisms and life-like structures, fostering emotional attachments in specific contexts. This notion transcends biological life, encompassing entities perceived as alive or lifelike.³

Biophilic Design Patterns

Several attempts have been made to categorize and link the numerous factors and characteristics of biophilic design in order to build a coherent hypothesis for biophilia in architecture and related fields. Kellert and Wilson,⁴ Browning et al., and Söderlund and Newman represent three of the most well-known examples of this.⁵ Browning et al. released a research defining 14 patterns of biophilic design, which are divided into three basic categories: Nature in the Space, Natural Analogues, and Nature of the Space, to create a common framework for debate and better organize the diverse concept.⁶ Downton and colleagues determined that an arrangement, identified as Pattern 15, which acknowledges simulated or substitute visual links "to a blend of organic features, biological systems, and natural phenomena," is necessary.⁷

Culture and Nature

It is essential to remember that natural components function as mutual reminders of cultural identity in architectural design.

Every nation has a distinct connection with things such as trees, flowers, mountains, or special animals, which reflect a cultural thread woven into the fabric of its identity.⁸

Our objective is to determine how Cypriot culture may play a role in these environments. From traditional designs to locally obtained materials, we want inhabitants to feel deeply connected to Cyprus' rich heritage.

In multicultural Cyprus, our goal extends beyond individual requirements. We seek to create environments that appreciate ethnic diversity and use nature as a shared language. Sensory aspects in biophilic design engage our senses, connecting us to our surroundings and boosting overall well-being. Our senses affect how we see space, thus sensory encounters that recall nature are vital in biophilic settings. This strategy promotes a feeling of community by breaking down cultural barriers and strengthening our connection to the natural world.

Factors of Study

Kellert defines the biophilic hypothesis based on a love of living beings, with animals, plants, and fire as fundamental factors.⁹ However, contemporary design frequently uses fire metaphorically or symbolically to reduce fire risks.¹⁰ Other significant features of biophilic design are the use of dynamic and diffuse light, temperature, and airflow variation, and the presence of water.¹¹

Connections to natural processes, such as weather and the changes, ages, and patina of time, are also essential. Natural shapes and forms, as well as natural materials, may be included by using biomorphic forms and patterns and material connection to nature.

To determine the most important features of biophilic design in contemporary urban architecture, it is necessary to analyze the various frameworks that have been proposed and identify those elements that are used most frequently or overlap in multiple patterns. By considering all of these, there are nine factors that limited the observation of the case study and these factors are view, daylight, garden or greenery, natural and local materials, cultural entities (natural motifs, folkloric art, balconies and courtyards etc.), ventilation, animals and water. These factors were selected for observation by the author due to their significance as key elements in biophilic design, which occur in both apartment interior and exterior spaces and are connected to human senses that directly impact emotions and well-being.

CASE AREA

Nestled on the eastern coast of Cyprus, Famagusta is a city steeped in history and cultural richness. As a historical town, it has passed through various hands over the years; Lusignan, Venetian, Ottoman, and British influences are some of them. Cyprus received independence from Great Britain in 1960 and had been self-governing until 1974 when the island split into two separate nations.

The city of Famagusta has seen significant transformations in recent years, owing mostly to two big events. The first and most significant of them was the foundation of Eastern Mediterranean University in 1986, which resulted in a significant increase in the number of international students in the city.¹² The Annan Plan is the following event which was a UN proposal to reunify Cyprus, offering a federal structure with power-sharing between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.¹³

This has resulted in a major surge in construction activity throughout the whole island of Cyprus, known as the "construction boom. Some analysts have even described the entire island as “a construction site on a macrocosmic scale”¹⁴ – as illustrated in Figure 1. However, after the Varosha (closed maraş), opened and served as an open museum for tourists. Famagusta has recently gained popularity as a unique destination and have potential to grow and become a metropole in the future.

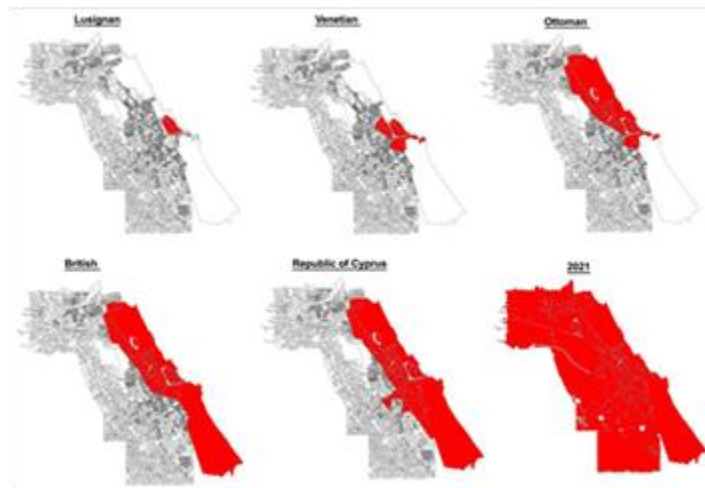


Figure 1. Famagusta map showing growth of city through time.¹⁵

Problem Statement

The Famagusta area, where rising population density and construction have pushed the city toward concrete and made engagement with nature even more difficult. Because of buildings created only for economic reasons, this can be led lack of cross ventilation, sunshine, and outdoor areas, all of these regarded as essential components of Cyprus traditional housing and main fundamental problem regarded as apartment living. Furthermore, individuals are complaining about insects such as mosquitoes in the summer and bad odors from nearby regions, which have a direct impact on their health and quality of life. Furthermore, the designs lack innovative and creative solutions to fulfill the demands of modern living. Simultaneously, the younger population in Cyprus is growing increasingly detached from nature, and the destruction of parks and natural ecosystems may lead to more serious problems in the future. Small residences that are unsuited for family life and lack natural features can have a negative influence on the elderly and those who must stay at home for a long period due to illness or other concerns, these issues studied and analyzed. Famagusta is surrounded by the sea at the east, green line at south (border of Greek side) and UK military base at the west-as shown in Figure 2.

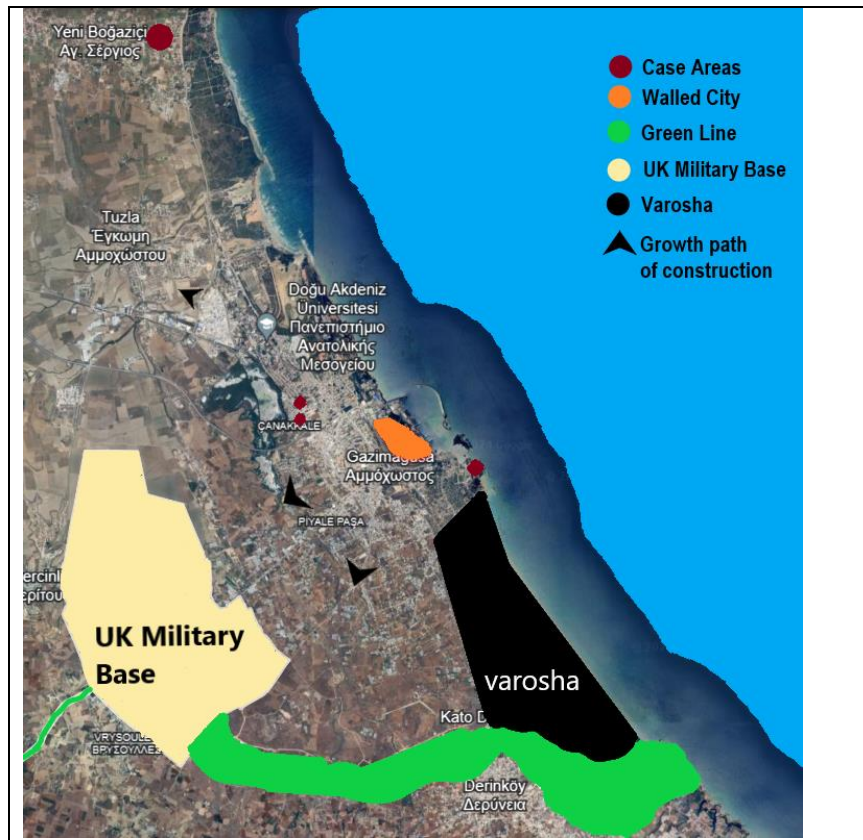


Figure 2. Famagusta map showing case areas and borders

Four cases located in Famagusta were selected for the study. One vaqf (foundation) apartment, which is Case 1, Laguna Apartment, and three from big companies (Case 2 to 4 respectively, namely Park View Tower, Alasya Park, and Erbatu Real Trust Apartment). Ten occupants from each apartment answered the survey.

Case 1

The Deniz Yıldızı Apartments, popularly known as the Laguna Apartments, are rental residences held by a Vaqf (devoted assets institute) and developed by Lordos Seagate Court. Construction on the flats began in 1968 but was stopped by the island's partition into northern and southern halves. The project was ultimately finished in 1976.¹⁶ The project is made up of five blocks of differing heights and number of floors, each with a different unit size and kind. The two-bedroom design is the most frequent for apartments. While water can be seen as an important element in biophilic design and can enrich the atmosphere, it was observed that it can lead to some problems in buildings. In this case, water has seeped into the basement of Laguna Apartment, causing problems for residents in the flats above. A persistent mosquito issue for the past year was mentioned by one person due to water pooling underneath. Although living near the sea is desirable, it also brings challenges.

It's important to note that people of various income levels reside in this apartment complex, and there's a mix of different types of families, like singles and couples with kids. However, the small balconies and living spaces don't allow for growing plants- as illustrated in Table 2.

Some residents think that increasing open spaces, getting more sunlight and air, and maximizing views could improve their well-being.

Case 2

The project is located on the outskirts of Yeniboğaziçi village, surrounded by 2-story villas- location shown in Figure 2 at the top. Despite this serene setting, residents mainly voice concerns about the prevalence of pigeons in the area.

Cyprus holds significance for birds, with many species passing through or unique to the region.¹⁷ Residents have taken it upon themselves to address this issue, often resorting to installing wind roses and speakers emitting sounds mimicking predatory birds, such as hawks, to deter the pigeons. While effective in dispersing the birds, the resulting noise pollution is unwelcome and bothersome, occurring frequently.

The pool is situated on one side of the building, limiting visibility for users on the other side. Although depicted with lush vegetation in renderings, in reality, the surrounding area consists mainly of concrete.

The building's height offers the potential for stunning views of the area but has also inadvertently created challenges. This underscores the importance of designing with careful consideration for nature's demands and conducting thorough environmental analyses to prevent such issues from arising.

Case 3

Alasya Park boasts a prime location, offering splendid city and pond views from its upper levels, along with amenities like a courtyard, car park, and children's playground. However, the proximity to the pond brings along challenges such as unpleasant odors, noise, and mosquito issues during the summer months.

The project offers a variety of floor plans, catering to both families and students. The façade is intelligently designed to provide shade, shielding residents from Cyprus's abundant sunlight, while allowing for natural light and ventilation without disrupting internal thermal comfort. Ample space is allocated for outdoor plant growth, complemented by ground gardens and trees within the courtyard.

Interestingly, some residents even keep pets like birds within their flats, adding to the diverse community ambiance.

Case 4

The smallest apartment analyzed in this thesis is the Erbatu apartment, spanning five floors and situated in close proximity to the university and Alasya Park. It is surrounded by slightly taller buildings, limiting its view to neighboring structures, the road, and adjacent empty land.

Each level of the Erbatu apartment, except for the top two penthouses, comprises four 2+1 apartments. There are no gardens or water features nearby. Pets, including dogs, are allowed inside the apartments, although only a few residents use balcony for plants.

Unfortunately, the elevator has been out of service for over five years, as has the stairwell lighting, due to a lack of site management and a predominance of tenant occupancy.

The apartments feature modest living areas and kitchens separated by dining tables. Parquet flooring is used throughout except in the bathrooms, and the windowsills are made of wood-like plastic. The furniture and wall colors predominantly consist of warm brown tones, contributing to a cozy ambiance.

However, there are issues with the bathroom window, which is small and difficult to open fully, leading to mold growth on the walls. One respondent mentioned that she feels better than other residents due to the presence of open space in front of the building.

RESULTS

There were three parts in the study to illustrate participants' information about themselves and living environment and preferences. To define the results, it's important to note that aspects such as location, daylight, natural motifs, water elements, courtyards, local materials and view have been analyzed, and the following outcomes have been found.

Part 1

In the initial phase of the study, information regarding participants and their home environments was collected. The findings indicate that the majority of participants were between 35 and 60 years old, with a marital status distribution of 60% married and 40% single. Additionally, only nine individuals had spent more than nine years in their apartments. Twenty-five percent expressed a desire to leave within a year, while 32.5% indicated a desire to stay for an extended period, as shown in Table 1.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	less than a year	10	25,0	25,0	25,0
	1-2	4	10,0	10,0	35,0
	till our family gets bigger	11	27,5	27,5	62,5
	for a long time	13	32,5	32,5	95,0
	other	2	5,0	5,0	100,0
	Total	40	100,0	100,0	

Table 1. The additional time participants contemplated staying in the apartment.

Part 2

The most significant factors for choosing a home were found to be, respectively, the location, daylight, and view, followed by the area, garden, number of rooms, living room and kitchen separation, with the courtyard being the least important factor. Interestingly, the courtyard was a common design element in traditional housing in Cyprus. Additionally, while the economy of the clients was deemed important, it was not taken into account in this study.


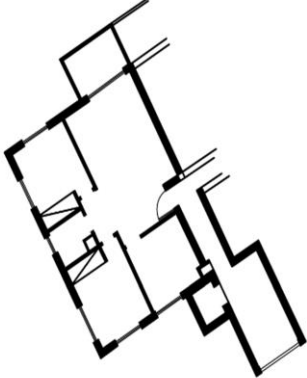

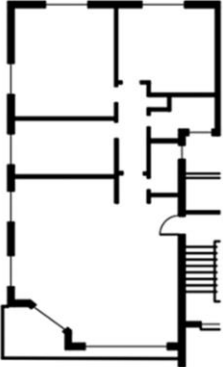

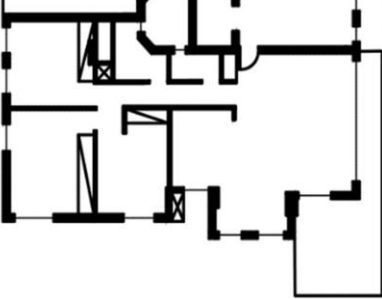

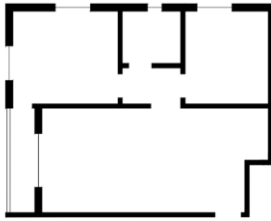
Case Name	Case Photos	Case Plan Type Example
Deniz Yıldızı (Laguma)		
Park View Tower		
Alasya Park		
Erbatu Real Trust		

Table 2. Case photos and plan examples

Part 3

In general, the answers for every Likert scale question were almost identical among the respondents, except for a few questions about their own home environment.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I like nature motifs in furniture.	39	3,2308	1,32708
I prefer natural materials	40	4,1500	1,07537
I believe that my home provides enough nature or needs for every individual for their wellbeing	39	3,5641	1,11909
I like to have at least one folk art piece in my home (laces, wood carvings, wicker chair, lefkara and other types of local furniture	40	3,5500	1,25983
I found folk art piece and local furniture old fashioned	39	2,7436	1,42751
I would like to have a wicker chair	39	3,4872	1,39306
I prefer the local wicker chair to the modern style wooden chair	40	3,2000	1,30482
I prefer modern furniture to local ones.	40	3,1250	1,34331
I would like artificial lighting to be close to daylight.	40	3,4500	1,35779

Table 3. Survey Results

It has been observed that people in Famagusta tend to prefer a more minimalist lifestyle compared to the past. However, regardless of whether they live in close proximity to nature or not, they still seek out nature and natural components in their living environment, as shown in Table 3.

According to observations, residents desire child parks near their buildings. Conversely, those living in buildings without nearby parks perceive this absence as a negative factor, especially for families.

The highest percentage of people feeling good at home is reported in Alasya Park, whereas the lowest percentage is observed in Erbatu. Regarding satisfaction with the view from home, Laguna Apartment significantly outperforms others. However, individuals who believe that their surroundings provide sufficient nature and well-being are most prevalent in Alasya Park and Park View. It was not unexpected for Erbatu to receive the lowest ratings across all questions.

RECOMMEDATIONS

Considering the data gathered from our research, to enhance the environmental quality and cultural resonance of Famagusta, the following recommendations are proposed for future studies:

Incorporate more natural and local materials, particularly those with distinctive smells and textures that can positively influence the atmosphere.

Launch educational initiatives aimed at Famagusta residents to raise awareness about the benefits of utilizing local materials, addressing the current lack of information on this matter.

Introduce more greenery, water features, and recreational areas for children within communal spaces, fostering a sense of well-being and community engagement.

Prioritize thorough environmental assessments and analyses prior to commencing any construction projects, ensuring a deeper understanding of the local ecosystem and its dynamics.

Foster a more integrated urban fabric that celebrates Famagusta's multicultural identity while harmonizing with its unique climate, promoting a sense of inclusivity and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Designers play a crucial role in enhancing the ambiance of spaces while mitigating external nuisances such as odors and noise. This can be achieved by creating clean and natural environments and optimizing projects to maximize natural light and airflow. Effective project analysis is key, considering the diverse needs of individuals, influenced by factors like climate and culture.

Research indicates that incorporating biophilic elements can significantly enhance well-being in residential settings and improve the quality of life for families. Numerous studies such as Kaplan¹⁸ have highlighted the health benefits associated with environments that incorporate elements of nature, sought after by individuals seeking both physical and psychological well-being. Similar results were observed in Cyprus, emphasizing the importance of integrating biophilic design principles into urban environments.

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ROOTING ARCHITECTURAL TRAINING IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION

Great architectural schools were built on rediscovering architecture's objective truths. The Ecole des Beaux-Arts built on the Enlightenment to reimagine Classicism as abstract concepts rather than a stylistic language it rejected of the Mannerist styles prevalent in its time. So too, did the Bauhaus reject the Expressionist styles in search for a new objective truth in architecture suitable for the Modern age. Today, we see schools build on Decolonisation to uncover truths in the architectural cultures diminished or lost over the past centuries.

However, this paper proposes a different approach to building new architectural training models that does not rely on finding architecture's underlying truth or authenticity in previous cultures. The outcome of this approach should be treated as an entirely new practice that is distinct from its origins and not a derivative of them. Although there would be clear similarities between them, we should not overestimate these similarities to mean that the new model gains authenticity from the old ones. Nor should we underestimate how disruptive the translation process is.

This paper develops a methodology for this approach. It translates aspects from the training of architects at the Bauhaus and the Beaux-Arts and the training of African traditional healers to inform an architectural training model. These practices are explored in their historical and cultural contexts, dissected, and speculated on for their potential application in architectural education. The outcome of this paper is the iterative grafting process as a methodology whereby educators can draw on traditional practices and translate them for architectural education. This project presents its first iteration in this translation.

APPROACH AND GRAFTING METHODOLOGY

We call our approach grafting in reference to the concept in botany where it is used as a technique to transplant branches from one plant to another. As an approach, grafting means that we need not start from scratch to define what architectural training would look like and allows us to draw from varied established conventions outside the architectural discipline. It offers a surgical way to deal with complex heritages where we can transplant desired aspects from existing cultures and practices into new ones. In order to do this, we develop a methodology for dissecting elements from existing practices and translating them into new contexts and uses. For this, we draw on the Beaux-Arts and Bauhaus architectural training models that most closely resemble the functional requirements of the profession and the training of African traditional healers that introduces a different philosophical basis for architectural training.

The methodology involves five steps to understand a practice, dissect it into elements, speculate on the needs of the desired element once isolated from the original practice, translate that element into a new context, and resolve its relation to other elements in the new practice.

To understand a practice, we must study its historic and cultural dimensions, which may include its origins, the worldview it is based on, the roles it assigns to participants, and the spaces involved in the practice. Dissecting the existing practice occurs in two ways: first, dissecting its narrative into the different stages of its process, and second, dissecting its material and spiritual (grounding) dimensions to recognise their relationship. Isolating a desired element from the original practice allows us to focus on its requirements in terms of process, materialisation, and grounding. Translating involves identifying an appropriate place for the element in a new practice primarily in terms of its sequencing. Resolving requires us to reconcile the element's materialisation and grounding within the new context.

This project aims to develop low-detail training model for architecture. A training model illustrates how the training process operates and what attitudes and policies are assigned for each of its stages. From observing the practices in this project, we have identified five stages that are typical of a training process: admission, orientation, teaching, evaluation, and graduation.

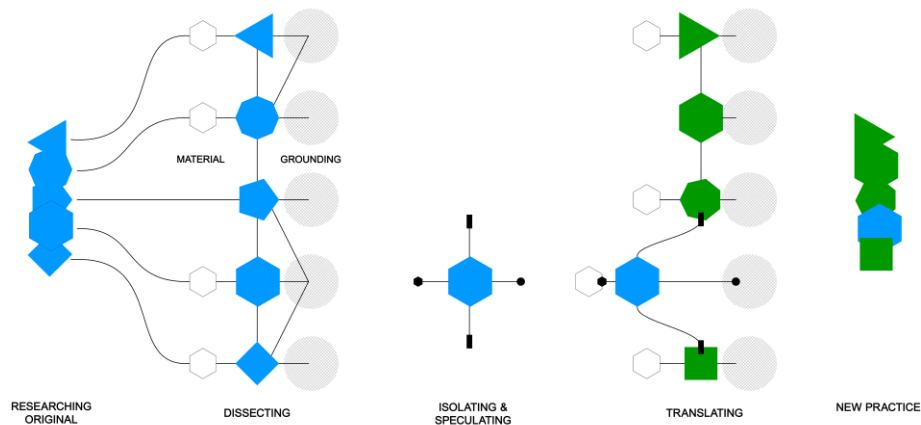


Figure 1. A diagram illustrating the five stages of the grafting methodology process.

Admission is the process whereby the student and the teacher are brought into contact with one another together. Orientation can be a specific process the student undergoes to orient them to the institution's culture, but it also deals with the institution's values and paradigms and are thus also spread throughout the model. Teaching is where skills and knowledge transfer primarily takes place between the teacher and student. Evaluation is where the student must demonstrate their knowledge and skills to a sufficient level to graduate. Graduation is where the transition of the student's status from student to graduate takes place. These stages can be used to dissect the narrative of each practice into process stages.

ARCHITECTURAL TRAINING MODELS

The Ecole Des Beaux-Arts

The Ecole des Beaux-Arts was founded after the French Revolution in 1819 on the back of the Enlightenment by merging architectural training with the fine arts.¹ The school was greatly influenced by the Classicism of the time and adopted a positivist approach to architectural design thinking that involved the universal principles that underly good designs. The school maintained the duality by separating theory, taught in lectures, from practice, taught in studios, where teachers were referred to

as masters. Although there is no exact mention of the spaces involved in the education, we can be speculated on as being lecture halls, architectural offices, and studios.

Dissection

To be admitted to the school, the applicant must be, and remain, under the age of thirty and have passed the entrance exams that were held twice a year.² Once admitted, the school assumes the student is mature enough to manage their own education and were allowed to join whichever studio they preferred and were responsible for managing their education. Initially, it represented the same structure as the academies, which included lectures in history, mathematics, and construction, and studios where students worked as apprentices to architects.³ Over time, the real design work in these studios reduced to only theoretical design projects. Teaching was competitive where the students were encouraged compete in regional and national competitions that taught them abstract design skills and resourcefulness. Students would approach their tutors when they believed they were ready to be evaluated for graduation. Once, admitted to the diploma examination, the We could not find any information specific to graduation as a process or a ceremony undertaken at the school.

The Bauhaus

The Bauhaus was founded by Walter Gropius in 1919 in the Weimar Republic after the First World War. It combined the traditional academies with the arts and crafts movement of the time. Gropius used the model of the craft guilds to structure education at Bauhaus.⁴ He had envisioned that students would learn to design architecture solely through the crafts and that no lectures on architectural styles or theory would be needed. After the first year, however, he had to concede to lectures being incorporated. Teachers were also called masters in light of their crafts mastery and students adopted the role of apprentices. Its central teaching space was the workshop where students would craft designs and objects that were also opened to the public for purchase.⁵

Dissection

We could not find any information on the specific entrance requirements or processes at the Bauhaus. Its teaching was oriented towards project-specific architectural solutions as opposed to universal principles.⁶ Teaching at the Bauhaus was divided into the teaching of crafts in the workshop, where they would produce designs and objects, and teaching design principles in lectures initially established in Romanticist traditions where students must identify their own responses to the properties of materials and forms and later in Neo-classical traditions where students had to identify their inherent properties free from subjective speculation. No information could be uncovered into the specific evaluation methods students underwent in order to progress through their studies or allow them to graduate. We could also not find any information specific to how students graduated at the Bauhaus or if any particular ceremonies were involved.

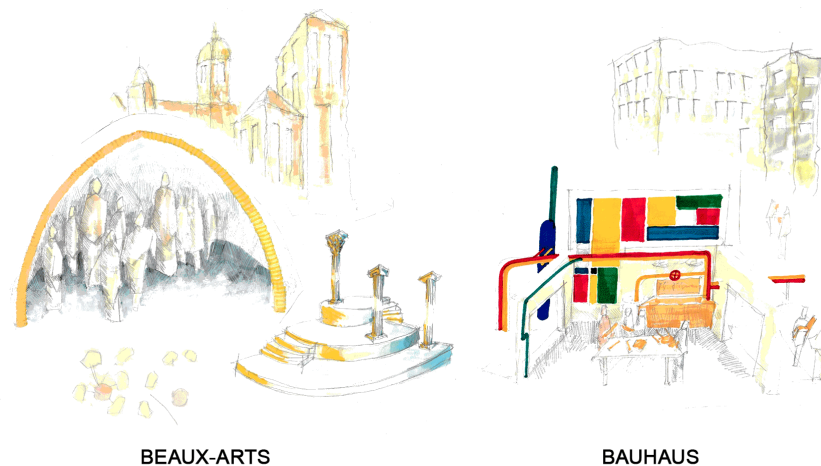


Figure 2. Drawing illustrating key elements of the architectural training models. The Beaux-Arts as an insular academic space within a Classicist context, where the education is based on simulations in studios and competitions. The Bauhaus has the workshop as its central space and is situated in a modern, technological context with an interface with community through the workshop.

Sangoma Training

African spiritualism places a strong emphasis on community.⁷ Spiritual practices are not solely individual; they involve the collective, reinforcing a sense of shared identity and responsibility. African cosmology often revolves around the concept of balance and harmony in the universe.⁸ Events in the physical world are believed to be influenced by spiritual forces, and maintaining equilibrium is essential for individual and communal wellbeing. Many African spiritual traditions recognise the sacredness of nature.⁹ Animistic beliefs involve attributing spiritual significance to natural elements like trees, rivers, and animals. These elements are seen as embodying spiritual forces. Ancestors hold a central place in African spiritualism.¹⁰ They are revered as guiding spirits, and people seek out their wisdom for various aspects of life. Practices often involve rituals, ceremonies, and offerings to honour and communicate with the ancestors. Rituals play a crucial role in African spiritual practices.¹¹ These ceremonies mark important life events, transitions, and seasonal changes. They often involve music, dance, and symbolic gestures to connect with the divine. Many African cultures employ divination practices to seek guidance from spiritual forces.¹² Diviners or priests use various methods, such as casting lots or interpreting natural signs, to gain insights into the spiritual realm.

Being a Sangoma is a calling from the ancestors that according to one source, cannot be ignored without great consequence.¹³ It is announced in symbols through dreams, visions, and daily activities where the name and location of the teacher, the new name of the initiate and their kind of healing is communicated to them. The must seek out the advice of an experienced Sangoma who would confirm or deny their calling. The training is very personal and intimate where the student takes the role of a grandchild to the teacher's grandparent role.

The spatial aspect of Sangoma training reflects a progression from the familiar physical settings of daily life into symbolic and transformative spaces.¹⁴ Each location contributes to the holistic understanding and integration of spiritual practices within the context of the individual's journey to becoming a Sangoma. Physical spaces are typically within the sangoma's community to reflect their grounded connection to their cultural community and in the teacher's dwelling as an intimate setting

where the teacher imparts knowledge to the student.¹⁵ During the training, the student aligns with the spiritual realm and there is a symbolic transition into spaces associated with the ancestors and spirits.¹⁶ This could be represented through rituals conducted in sacred areas or designated ritual spaces. Creating and maintaining personal shrines with sacred objects is integral to Sangoma training.¹⁷ These spaces serve as focal points for spiritual practices and connections. Initiation grounds hold significant symbolic meaning for initiation ceremonies, representing a threshold between the student's former self and their new identity as a sangoma.¹⁸ Testing grounds are transitional spaces where the student encounters physical and spiritual challenges and tests during their training. Success in these spaces indicates their readiness to progress to the next phase. As the student evolves into a Sangoma, their interactions within the community become transformative spaces.¹⁹ The community's perception of the individual also shifts to recognise their newfound status.

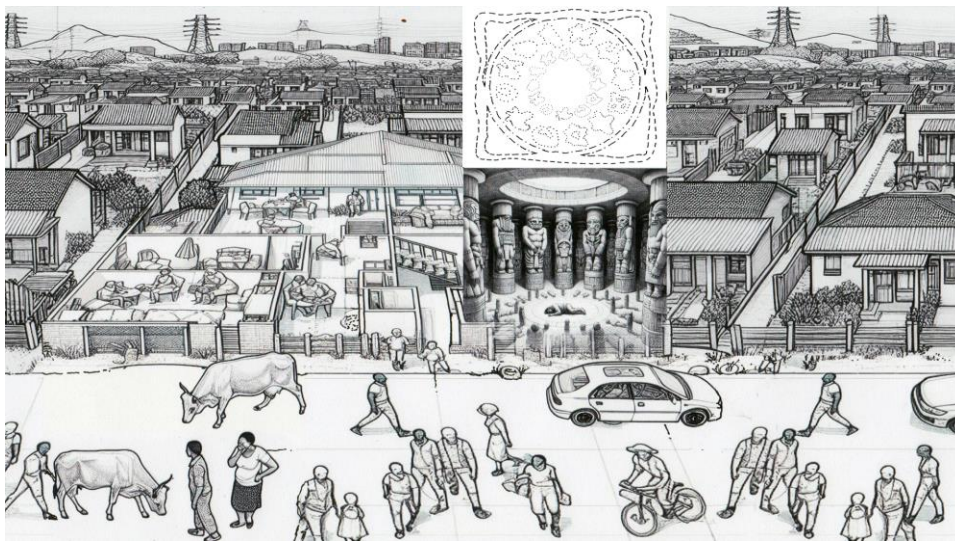


Figure 3. A drawing depicting the spatial aspect of Sangoma training and the progression from familiar to symbolic spaces, these different locations and stages of the training process depict how Sangomas use their homes and communities as sacred spaces and thresholds in Sangoma initiation and testing, and how they represent a transformation of identity and status. The most sacred site, the initiation space, is depicted as a metaphysical space that employs Totemism (as symbols of columns to characterise different ancestral clans), here, the sangoma gains direct access to the ancestral plane.

Dissection

The student approaches the teacher the ancestors chose and provide proof of their calling. The teacher admits the student based on their own assessment of their physical and mental wellbeing and on their ancestors' advice.²⁰ The student must then undergo a cleansing ceremony to ready them for training. The ancestors of the teacher and the student largely define the teaching process and determine its length and inform the teacher on how to proceed. The training can last for several months depending on whether the ancestors believe the student is ready to be initiated as a Sangoma. The training is gruelling as it aligns the student to the spiritual realm. This requires various rituals, like waking up in the early morning to bathe in cold water, specific attire that would not be offensive to the ancestors, and eating and drinking specific foods that cleanse the body of impurities.²¹ The training may include lessons in history, culture, rituals, myths, medicines, divination, and the ethics around being a Sangoma in a community. Parts of the training requires the student to prove their abilities and knowledge. At the end of their training, the student must graduate and be initiated as a Sangoma. This

may include a final initiation ceremony where they must prove their readiness, knowledge, and skills. However, each imitation process differs on the discipline, the specific traditions, and the teacher. Once the student becomes a Sangoma, their identity in the community is changed. Friends and family treat them with greater respect and often fear. Others may treat them with contempt and suspicion.²² Sangomas have a sincere duty to their community and are expected to respond immediately to any need.²³

ROOTED ARCHITECTURAL TRAINING MODEL

Translation

Admission: The candidate presents themselves to the institution and a tutor measures their readiness to receive teaching. This is an aspect from Sangoma training where students would present themselves to an experienced Sangoma to confirm their calling, as well as the teacher evaluating if the student is ready for training. The teacher is then responsible to understand the candidate's needs and judge whether they are ready to undergo the training ahead.

Orientation: Tutors present themselves to students so they can decide who they want to learn under. This aspect comes from the Beaux-Arts model where student may choose who they want to learn under. But this is also an important aspect stemming from the Sangoma training where the teaching is very personal and intimate. In order to establish that level of trust, some choice in who to build a relationship with may be important.

Teaching: Teaching orients the student towards their obligation to the community, which in general comes from African philosophy and in specific cases such as in Sangoma training. The teaching takes place in three settings: intimate, one-on-one with tutor, where the intimate one-on-one relationship is directly related to the Sangoma training; through the tutor's studio in the community with community members. The studio teaching is an amalgamation of the studio from the Beaux-Arts model and the underlying community approach in African spiritualism. And lastly, teaching is based around projects for the community, building again the community approach and bringing in the directness of architectural responses from the Bauhaus model.

Evaluation: Similar to the Beaux-Arts model. the student approaches the tutor when they feel they are ready to graduate. The tutor, having built a relationship with the student and understanding their knowledge and skills, decides if they're ready to progress to evaluation. The evaluation is in front of a series of trusted tutors and community members (maybe those the student has worked with during their training) and is based on the work they have done and the professional traits they have demonstrated towards the community.

Graduation: During the graduation, the student transitions into a professional. Trusted tutors, community members, (family, and friends) offer wisdom on professionalism, community, and life to help them step into their new role and the responsibilities it entails. This stems greatly from initiation ceremonies where it is important for the graduate to be presented to the community to demonstrate their transition and their newfound role.

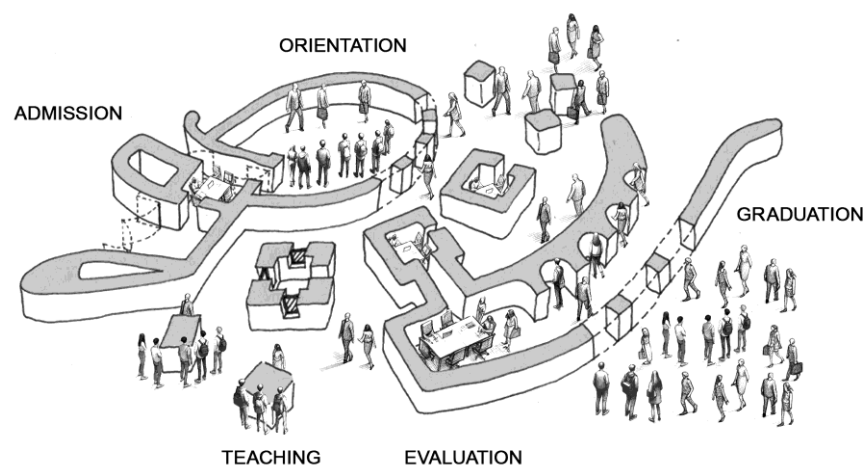


Figure 4. An illustration of the model that describes the teaching process and the kinds of relationships envisioned between people and between the institution and the community in each stage. The process is read from left to right. The model has a privacy gradient where the small central rooms represent the most personal aspects of the process; and the outer edges represent the most public aspects. Large, open spaces denote public settings and participatory relationships, while small, closed-off spaces denote intimate settings and intimate relationships.

CONCLUSION

Through this paper, we aim to provide a starting point for deconstructing historical practices but also encourage speculation on their possibilities in architectural education. We believe our approach emphasises the significance of local ways of knowing and highlighting the role of ontologies and epistemologies in shaping the future of the field.

This research has been one iteration of this grafting process whereby three practices were grafted together into a new one. It took from Sangoma training its attitudes towards community and our place in the world, and from architectural practices, it took specific approaches to building relationships. The model presented is thus far a low-detailed model with one iteration of the methodology that focuses, inherently, on establishing the process. Future iterations must address further details: such as how the material aspects are translated from original practices to the new one; how grounding can be isolated from a practice and introduced into the new one.

While the practical implementation of this approach in formal education is beyond the scope of this paper, its conceptual approach lays the groundwork for transformative changes within African architectural education. The model can also be developed a formalised through practice. This requires implementing its teaching component in existing architectural schools and documenting its adaptations. There would also be a need to address policies for implementing such a model as a whole to have admission policies that tertiary institutions can accommodate and evaluation policies that both tertiary institutions and regulatory bodies might accept.

NOTES

- ¹ Mark Gelernter, *Sources of architectural form: A critical history of Western design theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 187-194.
- ² Paul Cret, "The Ecole des Beaux-Arts and Architectural Education," *The Journal of the American Society of Architectural Historians* 1, no. 2 (1941): 3-15.
- ³ Gelernter, 193.
- ⁴ Gelernter, 241.
- ⁵ Yashaen Luckan, *The Transformation of Architectural Pedagogy Towards a New Model for Architectural Education at Universities of Technology in South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2020): 97
- ⁶ Luckan, 96.
- ⁷ Charlene Singh and Raisuyah Bhagwan, "African spirituality: unearthing beliefs and practices for the helping professions," *Social Work* 56, no. 4 (2020):352-366.
- ⁸ Advice Viriri and Mungwini Pascah, "African Cosmology and the Duality of Western Hegemony: The Search for an African Identity," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 3, no. 6 (2010):27-42.
- ⁹ Edward Simon Mgaya, "The meaning, spiritual foundation, and mythology of African sacred landscapes: The case of sacred forests among the Bena of Njombe, Tanzania" *Journal of Religion in Africa* 53, no.3-4 (2023):289-314.
- ¹⁰ This position of African spiritualism is supported by Mgaya, 109-128 and Kurt Buhring, *The Spirit(s) in Black Religion: fire on the inside* (Online: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 21-43.
- ¹¹ Singh and Bhagwan.
- ¹² Philip Peek, "The Silent Voices of African Divination," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 41, no. 3-4 (2013): 40-45.
- ¹³ Buhring, 29.
- ¹⁴ Jo Thobeka Wreford, *Ukusebenza nethongo (Working with Spirit): the role of sangoma in contemporary South Africa* (University of Cape Town, 2005).
- ¹⁵ Magdel le Roux, "Ngoma Lungundu: An African Ark of the Covenant," *Old Testament Essays* 22, no. 1, (2009): 102-125.
- ¹⁶ Robert Thornton, "The Transmission of Knowledge in South African Traditional Healing," *Africa* 79 (2009): 29-31 doi:10.3366/E0001972008000582
- ¹⁷ Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Sacred and Profane Beauty: The Holy in Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- ¹⁸ Wreford.
- ¹⁹ le Roux.
- ²⁰ Thornton.
- ²¹ Ingrid Jonker, *A Study of How a Sangoma Makes Sense of Her 'Sangomahood' through Narrative* (University of Pretoria, 2006), 59-84.
- ²² Jonker, 71-72.
- ²³ Thornton, 30.

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SHWAY^x: PRODUCT DESIGN, ONE STEP AT A TIME

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INTRODUCTION

Shway^x is a product that captures and celebrates the cultural attitude expressed in the Arabic phrase *shway-shway*. The Arabic word, *shway*, means “a bit;” said twice, it means “bit-by-bit.” As used by locals, the phrase is a reminder to take life one step at a time. It is a common expression, but also a culturally ingrained approach to life.

Shway culture is easy to spot; it is embedded in gestures, in physical movements and in the local attitude toward time. Actions are never overtly rushed or hurried; people take the time they need to get from one place or activity to the next. To the unacquainted, events might appear to be unfolding at a leisurely pace, but the emphasis on patience and contemplation is highly valued.

Shway-shway is a phrase that succinctly summarizes this cultural preference towards a measured approach to life. The *shway* attitude inspired *Shway^x*, which leverages this local wisdom, providing a tool anyone can use to plan the pace of the day ahead. The product allows paper of custom length to be fed between two rollers and embossed, at regular intervals, with the word *shway* and a check box, producing a customized daily checklist. The resulting, embossed list acts as a reminder to take life one-day-at-a-time, to slow down, to live in the moment and to enjoy life.

Shway^x

Shway^x is a souvenir, tied to a particular place, which aims to do more than simply represent a place; it is designed to capture, preserve, embody, and disseminate cultural wisdom. The experiential role of *Shway^x* is to provide people a moment of peace, allowing them to gather their thoughts. By using pressure to emboss the word *shway* into a sheet of paper, as many times as one wishes, the tool produces a customized checklist. These embossed marks, white-on-white, break the day’s tasks into manageable, *shway* steps. The resulting *shway*-list is softer and kinder than your everyday, run-of-the-mill, hastily-scribbled to-do list.

More explicitly, it’s a conscious rejection of the to-do list and a critical reaction to society’s demand for ever-escalating productivity. Research figures by the Economic Policy Institute show that over the last 40 years, net productivity has risen by 64.6%, while hourly pay has failed to keep pace, increasing by just 17.3%.¹ Society has become obsessed with “doing *more*, striving for *more*, offering *more* and doing it all faster.”² The unhealthy emphasis on productivity leads to predictable effects, what cultural writer Anne Helen Peterson calls “millennial burnout,” and what philosopher Byung Chul Han calls “burnout society.” Peterson explains that it begins to feel as if “everything that’s good is bad, everything that’s bad is good.”³ It reflects a warped sense of fulfillment that has become part of our modern experience. In summary, things that should feel bad, like working all day, start to feel good

because of the perceived importance of being productive. Conversely, things that should feel good, like leisure and rest, start to feel bad, due to guilt.

However, in contrast to common belief, rest plays an important role in enhancing productivity. MD Srinii Pillay explains that our brains are wired for focus and “unfocus” to work together.⁴ Therefore, if one did value productivity, one would need to “unfocus” in order to increase the ability to be focused. *Shway*^x intends to be that small trigger in a normal day to create small moments of “unfocus” for the user. *Shway*^x repurposes the to-do list by replacing its pressure to be productive all day, every day, by instead, reminding us to appreciate every step of the journey.

Shway^x not only captures the culture of *shway*, it celebrates and reinforces it. Borrowing from philosopher, Byung Cul Han, who points out the importance of a contemplative life, in the midst of a hyperactive life, *Shway*^x nudges a user to seek meaning from a productive life.⁵ Han suggests that combining meaning and productivity will bring balance to lifestyle. In line with this thought, *Shway*^x highlights the value of practicing patience and introspection. *Shway*^x reshapes one’s relationship with the to-do list; by helping to contemplate the moment and the time ahead.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE OBJECT

Shway^x started as a student project in a graduate design course and evolved into a commercial product proposal, with support from the Boost Lab. The Boost Lab is a product development platform, situated within the Institute for Creative Research, at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar. The goal of the lab is to bridge the gap between artists, designers and the world of business. The intention is to mentor artists and designers who are interested in monetizing their creative insight.

Within the framework of the Boost Lab, *Shway*^x transformed from an abstract representation of *shway* into a souvenir that captures the culture of *shway*. Further, the product celebrates and reinforces *shway*, in the form of a novel product: a checklist embosser.

The project evolved through a series of revisions and demonstrates a design-led approach to product development. Stages of development included: 1. Concept formalization. 2. Practical production methods. 3. Easily recognizable visual form. 4. Simplification 5. Holistic experience 6. Visual refinement and identity. 7. Flawless functionality.

Phase One

As seen in Figure 1, the first iteration of the product represented the idea of *shway* by alluding to the mechanics of a clock. It abstractly borrowed from an existing tool, used to measure time, to communicate the concept of time to the user. The solution, at this early stage, faced many problems, but the main one was that it was constructed from 30 separately printed parts, and the final outcome’s success depended on the outcome of each one. This meant that not only would the production processes be inefficient, but there was also a higher likelihood of manifesting faulty or uncomfortable user experiences.

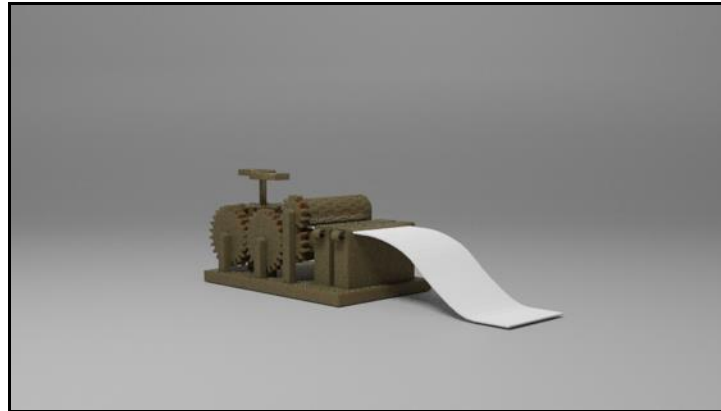


Figure 1. Model inspired by the gears of the clock

Phase Two

The second iteration shown in Figure 2, drastically simplified the whole product and looked for the most practical production method, and simultaneously a smoother user experience. It borrowed from an existing archetype: the tape dispenser. In this iteration, the focus shifted too far toward ease of production, and focused too much on usability, at the expense of visual and conceptual ties to the concept of *shway*.



Figure 2. Model inspired by the tape dispenser

Phase Three

The third iteration of the project was when the Boost Lab collaboration started. This phase rendered a range of results, seen in Figure 3. It was important to rethink how *shway* could be captured in a consumer-focused manner. As a result, the process involved removing initial perspectives and expanding design considerations. This process was led by my reflections from the first two phases; it was to look for the best way of representing *shway* in a recognizable way while considering functionality and possibility as a backbone of the process. In order to brainstorm an informed visual outcome, I revisited the origins of the observation. The concept of *shway* was inspired by my observations related to the walking pace of locals. Hence, I explored what kind of movement could emboss the word *shway* effectively. I allowed myself the freedom to generate versions in this phase that weren't functional. This freedom gave insight into an area of investigation, and generated a figure, clothed in traditional Qatari attire. The next step was to develop a working function.

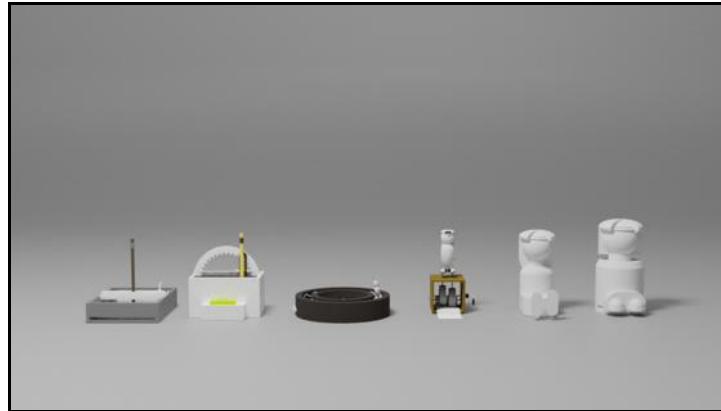


Figure 3. Expanding ideas in search for better visual identity

Phase Four

This iteration, shown in Figure 4, was derived from the explorations of the previous phase. I reduced the elements involved as much as possible, to allow the device to function more simply. For the first time, I was satisfied with the visual look of the object. Hence, the process carried forward to the improvement of functionality. During the refinement process of the embosser, I suddenly recognized a big flaw in the object. Conceptually the movement resembled a stomp—quick, or *yalla* in Arabic, rather than slow and *shway*. My pursuit of functionality had overshadowed the concept.



Figure 4. Model that visually represents the male Qatari figure

Phase Five

With this realization, I returned to the ideation phase. The leading concern for this phase was to find a way to connect the concept of *shway* to the visual form of Qatari figures through function. To do this, I recognized that I needed to reintroduce the gears, as that was the most effective way of embodying the experience of *shway*. The gears paved way to this formal solution using the two rollers. This model in Figure 5 was a breakthrough, but it needed development.



Figure 5. Functionally representing shway with gears

Phase Six

By this point, I had developed a diamond checklist of my learnings, this included: representation of concept, legibility, functional capability and possibility, and novelty. In order to tick off this checklist, it meant that the object needed to be able to respond to each point. For concept, the object conveys the experience of *shway* through the movement of gears. To improve legibility of the object, it visually represents traditionally dressed locals. To ensure functional capability and possibility, the process had to determine functional feasibility through research of existing embossers. Finally, novelty was ensured through using the concept of *shway* as a souvenir. When the checklist was covered, it was important to push the function into practice from the research. It was vital to understand the system of the embossing gears.

The next variations, shown in Figure 6, explored what made the object function better in a user-friendly manner. Functional improvements involved the height of the pillars, shape of the connecting parts, and by the placement of the handle. Somewhat in alignment, comfort of the object developed from the shape of the handle, width of the area of hand placement, and the total size of the product.

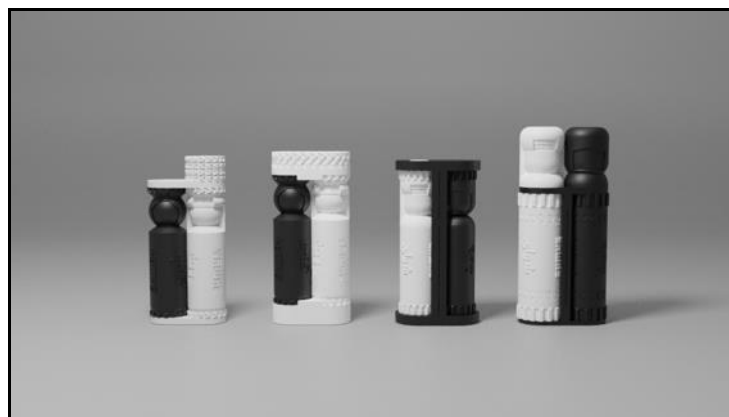


Figure 6. Fine tuning to create an experientially better object

Phase Seven

A process of exploration produced a few deductions. First, the length cannot be too tall, as it causes the whole model to twist. Second, the model needs to be enclosed vertically for gears to run correctly. Third, the handle must be larger than one centimeter to be comfortable, which makes it a chunky

design element. Fourth, the model cannot really be used while being stood vertically as the platform is unbalanced. With these realizations, the final model of *shway* was developed as seen in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Final model of *shway*^x

Evaluation

During each revision, I subconsciously questioned the object's value. I had two key doubts: How useful would users find the product? And would users understand the product's function and meaning? It was quite difficult to achieve positive answers to these questions.

The thinking processes behind commercialization of a product was very different to design in the realms of academia. As a student, a project is successful when it gives a justified form to a concept. The outcome can be poetic or vague in messaging, as you have opportunities to guide your audience through your project. In contrast, the commercial outcome has no support once it's put on a shelf and has to be self-evident. It becomes significantly more vital that the product can sell itself. In the end, a commercial project is successful when it is desirable to the user. Hence, the design must be accessible, especially considering the wide disposition of consumers. Summarized, a student project is successful if it gives form to a concept, but a commercial product needs to offer customers added value.

The product development process uncovered tips to a successful outcome. It's important to constantly guide the project with 4 main parameters: user relatability, effortless functionality, conceptual clarity, and novelty. The parameters are visually represented in Figure 8. Essentially, we need users to understand what the object is without having to over-explain. Fundamentally, the object has to function the best that it can. The object has to convey or produce the intended concept. Lastly, the object must maintain its novelty throughout the process in order to have good market value.

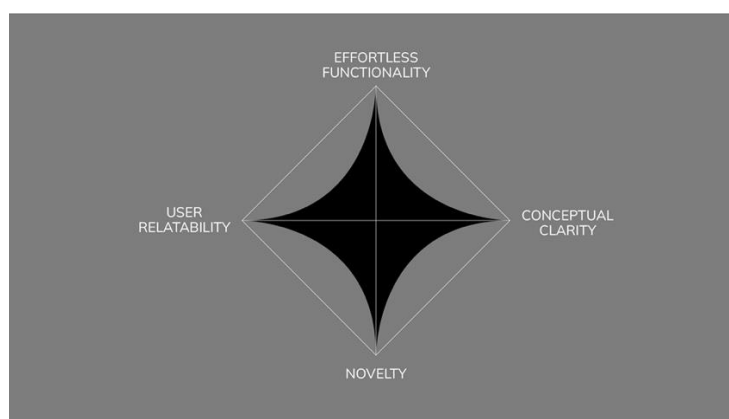


Figure 8. Four found parameters of commercialization

Novelty and the Market

Though novelty gives added value, it can also influence its place in the market. My work as a student always concentrated on novelty as a design advantage. However, it soon became evident that, radical novelty could be a marketplace liability without careful consideration. The raw novelty of *Shway*^x, which is arguably a design advantage, produces a dilemma in the marketplace. From a user's perspective, it is difficult to gauge customers' expectations for a product like this, because there is no point of comparison. It doesn't currently exist. From a market research perspective, the problem was the difficulty of identifying a relevant existing product category. Some questions that arose from this process that are not yet resolved include:

1. How do you approach retailers with a proposal for a product they've never seen or used?
2. How do you appeal to consumers who don't know how they will benefit from using a *Shway*^x dispenser?

I acknowledge these questions are still open-ended and remain slated for further exploration. My current solutions to these questions are as follows.

1. To find a niche retail store that caters to designer objects.
2. To find a connection to an object that has a place in a marketplace. *Shway*^x connected to the category of souvenirs. Because *shway* ties strongly to a sense of place, it worked perfectly to have it represent it as a takeaway of Qatar

There is still some analysis to be done. Sufficient data is needed to discover the extent that users can benefit from the purest intentions of the *Shway*^x dispenser.

Even if the novelty triggers some unanswered questions, it is one of the most valuable assets that designers and artists can give from a design-led process. We can offer something new or a new way of thinking about something. But it's important to recognize when to see the differences from a designer's perspective and designing for marketplace appeal.

The Four Parameters for Commercialization

To design for commercialization, designers should identify the four aforementioned parameters (user relatability, effortless functionality, conceptual clarity, and novelty) from the outset. There has to be conscious effort to return to the parameters after each iterative cycle to evaluate success. This process is important to make sure we are restructuring the designer's output into a product for success in the marketplace. My processes show that each point of the diamond should be balanced. When one point is given too much focus, the object reflects it, and only highlights one of the four parameters. In development of the *Shway*^x dispenser, when the balance broke, the object also exponentially declined in visible business value. The parameters are important to guide the design process in order to excel in marketplace expectations.

Through trial and error, *Shway*^x found its way to create a balanced diamond of 4 parameters. It answers the parameter of user relatability as it targets the main audience of Qatari locals through the use of traditional attire. Effortless functionality is proven as it embosses well on various types of paper. Conceptual clarity is experienced as the object utilizes the gear system to produce a slow emboss system. Last, the object shows novelty as embossing *shway* provides a newfound experience of a to-do list. Altogether, the product produces a novel cultural object.

Relevance of Cultural Objects

The importance of creating such designed objects around cultural observations work on multiple levels. The more immediate layer is its role in preservation of a piece of culture. The value of culture is personally a hard one to define well, but to borrow words, some call it "the way of life for an entire

society.”⁶ Culture shapes how people interpret information, and therefore shapes the way that a specific society will function.

Shway^x intends to do more than store a piece of culture, it is built to spread cultural insight. One evident design choice to help the dissemination of the concept *shway* is through its bilingual approach. The local Arabic language is respected, but also transliterated into English. English was chosen as the second language as it is a secondary language in Qatar and is also widely used in international communication. It aims to connect to as many people as it can. Spreading culture to a wider audience ensures a stronger upkeep of memory and preservation of culture.

The broader value in spreading culture lies in the power of learning. Learning beyond cultures is valuable because each person’s “attitudes, awareness and behavior are largely driven by the framework of their own culture.”⁷ American political scientist and author Milton Cummings describes cultural exchange as a method to “foster mutual understanding.”⁸ So, when people take souvenirs back to their country, *Shway*^x provides an opportunity for an extended audience to understand local unique behavior. The larger global population is then able to have better approaches to future cross-cultural interactions. The process of cultural globalization helps broaden human perspective to understand people living in different parts of the world.

Shway^x illustrates how cultural insight can inspire a novel, locally inspired product with global appeal. It’s also becoming more important to have novelty and locality in product design as the global market is becoming saturated with similar objects in function and form. In order to gain identity, cultural features can prove to be “unique characters to embed a product, both for the enhancement of its identity in the global market and for the fulfillment of the individual consumer’s experiences.”⁹

Beyond sharing cultural insight to consumers, *Shway*^x is designed to inspire moments of daily contemplation and reflection. *Shway*^x is a souvenir that captures *shway* and intends to inspire people to live it in their everyday lives. The *shway* embosser hacks into the normal to-do list that inspires a hyperactive life, to instead celebrate the meaning that a contemplative life can give. The object functions as a reminder to enjoy life, bit-by-bit.

NOTES

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AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE: THE MULTI-SCALE ARCHITECTURAL DIMENSION OF THE ORCHARD

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INTRODUCTION

The history of agriculture dates back to the appearance of the first settlements where human work with the land generated agrarian structures, many of which have been perpetuated until today, giving rise to a valuable legacy and allowing the conformation of complex spatial landscape systems. The evolution of agricultural practices has generated, in turn, a rich heritage whose multi-scale character increases its historical relevance. This heritage is known as agricultural heritage.

In Spain, traditional irrigated lands – orchards, locally called *huertas* – constitute a characteristic agrarian system that has been identified as one of the main Mediterranean cultural landscapes.¹ Currently, this traditional spatial organization is subject to various pressures. The main factors that threaten it are its loss of profitability under present market conditions and land occupation driven by accelerated urban growth, which leads to the transformation of soils dedicated to cultivation into built-up spaces diminishing the presence of agricultural activity and its heritage.²

Within the multiscale approach supported by various contemporary contributions,³ this research aims to confront the exclusionary condition of much of the historical narrative and focus on forgotten issues considered until now as tangential or subordinate to others of a permanent nature or of a much more traditional understanding of the landscape and agricultural heritage. The criteria for the selection of the case study are given by the review of this theoretical framework and also with the aim of developing an emerging reality, the orchard of Nerja in Malaga, Spain.

LANDSCAPE AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

In the context of heritage, the notion of the concept itself has been updated since the overcoming of its objectual condition since the second half of the 20th century.⁴ This gave rise to an unprecedented opportunity: the consideration of new heritage realities. In parallel, in the framework of landscape, the European Landscape Convention recognizes since 2000 all types of landscapes, both emblematic and those considered more ordinary in close relation to the communities that inhabit them. The agricultural landscape is included within the productive rural landscapes capable of transforming the territory by the presence and evolution of anthropic processes.⁵

When in 2003 UNESCO broadened the concept of heritage to include the tangible and intangible approach, it increased the number of heritage sites related to agricultural elements. UNESCO has mentioned two different categories of agricultural heritage related in this respect. One of them

contains agricultural landscapes and some mixed natural and cultural heritage sites that have been designated as World Heritage Sites. The other is intangible heritage, such as agrarian activities, traditions and farmers' skills.⁶

The Baeza Charter on Agrarian Heritage generated a specific initiatory document driven by calling attention to these realities for the sake of their recognition and protection alluding to the lack of specific theoretical work around agrarian heritage, since the existing approach is given from an extrapolation of studies of other heritages.⁷ In 2017 ICOMOS-IFLA with the title Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage specifically coined a definition of the agrarian landscape that recognizes its heritage value.⁸

In parallel, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) created in 2002 the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems Program (GIAHS).⁹ Although the FAO did not apply extraordinarily rigorous and detailed indications to evaluate the heritage value of the sites, especially with regard to traditional systems, its selection criteria ranged from tangible aspects relating to manual work tools, small maintenance and storage structures and cultivation infrastructures, to intangible aspects such as knowledge, toponymy, rites and festivities. Alluding in turn to its expansiveness from the local to entire regions.

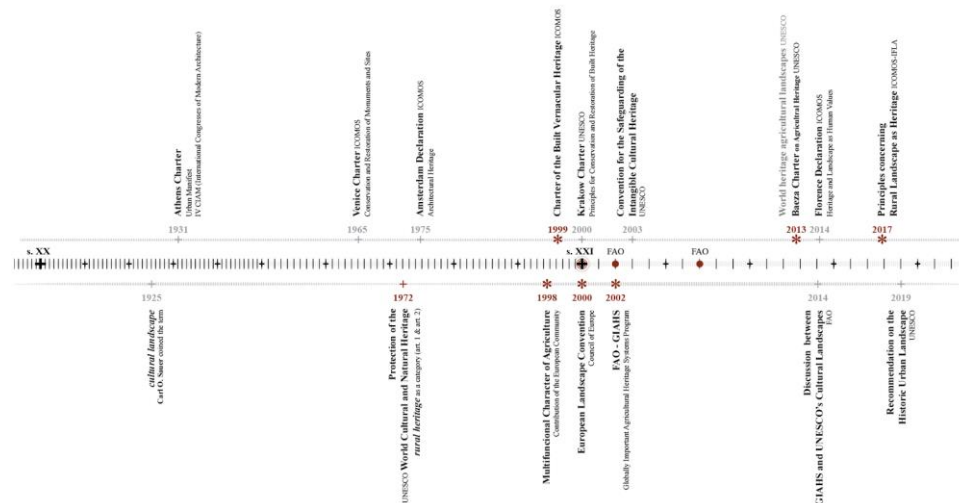


Figure 1. Timeline of the main documents of the theoretical framework. Author's creation.

As can be seen in summarized form in Figure 1, the situation is beginning to change in recent years, on the one hand due to the progress made in the concept of heritage and, on the other, to the evolution of the understanding of agriculture itself.¹⁰ For the first time, agricultural activity is considered a valuable asset and a driving force for the creation and, more importantly, the maintenance of agricultural heritage. At the same time, agrarian realities are recognized not so much associated with built elements as with systems of occupation and work of the land: enclosures, irrigation ditches, walls...¹¹ In particular, the orchard, as a specific agrarian structure, is particularly suitable within this casuistry due to its expansive behavior capable of being present at all scales.

THE MULTI-SCALE DIMENSION

As evidenced in the study of these two frameworks, the scales represent a nexus of action between agricultural heritage and landscape given their complementarity and convergence. Despite this, a better understanding of the scales is required, specifically and their interactions,¹² which in turn goes beyond the limits of a restrictive heritage conception and addresses all the dynamic, living and

functional components.¹³ In order to establish a dialogue between these two theoretical frameworks, the approach from the architectural scales that allow a reciprocal articulation with the agrarian scales is of great help.

The way to access this approach begins with the study of the type as an initiatory structure capable of generating a system and perpetuating it. Agricultural activity establishes its own system associated with foundational processes, not only of cultivation spaces but also of settlements, following the practices of agriculture as origin.¹⁴ The permanence of a type in time and space implies its complexity, being structures whose historical sedimentation is much more resistant due to the links it establishes at higher levels. The relationship with urban morphology in turn causes a broader dimensional level, which can be defined, as far as its formal aspects are concerned, from the internal structure of the fabric, constituted by repetition and according to the degree of distribution determined.¹⁵ If we study this phenomenon starting from the ancient agrarian structures, we can analyze a strong general pattern of permanence. This change of operational dimension, treated by authors such as Aldo Rossi¹⁶ from the urban theoretical field, argues that the city is the product of intrinsic dynamics and forces. Cities follow axes of development with the meaning and form of older, often even remote, facts. From this arose a totally reoriented reading of the territory that tries to identify the still present traces of lost territorial processes, such as the formation of the soil fabric with a strong agrarian component.¹⁷

Appropriate methods are needed to analyze these situations. Scaling consists of transferring data or information from one scale to another, and therefore requires the identification of the factors operative at a given level of observation, their congruence with those at lower and higher scales, and the limitations and feedbacks of these factors.¹⁸ The multiscale approach also more reliably addresses the importance of society by recognizing all the scales at which people interact with place. From the people who inhabit it connected more directly, in a productive and traditional sense given their close relationship with the land as part of their immediate environment, to those people who have a more superficial and momentary perception.¹⁹ This holistic approach regarding its spatial expansion has already been taken by other researchers who apply the use of scales to the knowledge of agrarian heritage.²⁰ Overcoming the elitist and deterritorialized vision of heritage that until recently was not very applicable to a living and dynamic activity such as agriculture and to the dominant dual vision in the world of heritage focused, on the one hand, on the most emblematic elements of cities (cultural heritage) and, on the other hand, on spaces of recognized naturalistic value (natural heritage).²¹

This multiscale approach allows us to study our central hypothesis: the orchards are capable of constituting realities ranging from the minimum typological expression to urban settlements and the vast complex territory within a relationship that intertwines and complexifies the recognition of many other realities that shape the landscape and agricultural heritage.

CASE STUDY

The orchard of Nerja, Málaga

Located in the southeast of Spain, in the Costa del Sol of Malaga in the region of Axarquía, the municipality of Nerja is situated in a position near the coast combining the presence of a strategic historical site of military defense with large cultivated land that favors an irrigated agriculture based primarily on horticultural production.

Since ancient times, its various settlers have founded several settlements, as was the case of a primitive medieval military building. This type of initiation model became popular in this area, since to ensure its defense a system was organized consisting of a series of fortifications to protect the coast.²² At the turn of the century from the 9th to the 10th century, there are references that speak of this building of a farmhouse, with an agricultural estate that would gradually form small rural

communities made up of one or more families, who were dedicated to exploiting the surrounding land for their livelihood. A few years earlier it was decided to build another military building, somewhat distant, in an uninhabited place on the same coast that would eventually play a decisive role in the birth of contemporary Nerja and its layout. In the first half of the seventeenth century the relationship between these two buildings was consolidated with the construction of twenty-six houses within an agricultural plot of orchards given from the original farm that had arisen with the same idiosyncrasies in the surroundings of that first farm.²³ This hamlet would develop in parallel to the agricultural plot, the garden house being the typological unit of urban growth.

The situation of Nerja on this coast, as well as the difficulties derived from its accesses by road, kept this city engrossed in its agricultural activities, although not absent of potential growth associated with them since then Nerja would not stop expanding due to the high agricultural productivity. From a primary cruciform structure, the urban morphology acquires very special characteristics due to the topography due to its intermediate position between the mountain and the sea, which has represented a determining element in its existence and development process. One of the characteristics of this locality has been the continuity of the integration of houses and orchards in the same space, inheritance of those first settlements and constituting an agrarian urban model. Since the end of the 16th century, when the cultivation of sugar cane was introduced, an important relationship between agriculture and industry began to develop, reaching its peak in the second half of the 19th century with the establishment of several sugar factories in both towns.²⁴

To this process of creation of a city where the orchard and the buildings followed one another in parallel for centuries, another process of much more accelerated destruction has occurred. The conversion of Nerja into a tourist resort of the first magnitude around the sixties attracted a small but qualified national and international tourism. In 1960 Nerja had 7,094 inhabitants, in 1970 there were 8,498, modest growth compared to other explosive cases that were known in that decade in the Western Costa del Sol but that hinted at the potential trajectory.²⁵ The agricultural activity of long genealogy, dated with centuries of continuous presence of productivity – as illustrated in Figure 2 –, went to the background. The urbanizing impulse that lives the municipality makes present and definitive the relegation of this occupation, in which the agrarian dimension and the urban one are fought and opposed from an economic field of play harangued by the incipient tourist potential of the coast.

The deep attachment of its citizenship has led to a history of resistance of more than 25 years; actions and public demands that have crystallized from the local entities of the community of Nerja. The use of productive spaces as elements of social protest is noteworthy, with the most significant event being the enclosure that took place in 1996 against the perpetuation of the historical leases that prevented the acquisition of farmland by farmers beyond the tenants.²⁶ To this we can add the various current mobilizations in opposition to the tourist saturation that has been evidenced in manifestos in which local entities and experts express their urgency.



Figure 2. Collection of images showing the complete production cycle of Nerja. Virtual Library of the province of Malaga. Legado Temborry.

Scale domains: territorial, urban and typological

The process of locating and specifying the scales of this research involves the application of the theoretical framework to the case, beginning with the selection of the subject matter. The agricultural activity constitutes in the town of Nerja a historical spatial deployment of what could be understood as a complete and multidimensional productive cycle. In order to study it, we proceed with the documentation with sources that are grouped in graphic documents: topographic plans, anchorage plans, urban plans, lease plans; documentary archives: historical annals, written testimonies, memoirs; images: historical photographs, current photographs; planning documents: cadastral plans, urban plans, territorial plans...; aerial image resources: GEE, historical orthophotos; and GIS data: mainly the Geographic Information System of Agricultural Plots (SIGPAC). The importance of these last two groups of resources should be emphasized, as they have allowed a more reliable observation of agricultural activity and its direct consequences in space. In turn, the information obtained from SIGPAC of the current orchards, with respect to their spatial information, cadastral reference and use, has allowed the historical comparison and the inventory model for the registry. Figure 3 below shows the scale domain areas with their spatial delimitation and the information collected, respectively.



Figure 3. Scheme of the general context of the scale domains. Orthophoto obtained from Google Earth Engine 2023. Author's creation.

The general framework for action is the Axarquía region, a very specific geographical area characterized by the Sierras de Alhama, Tejeda and Almirajara to the North and East, the Montes and Hoya de Malaga to the West and the Mediterranean to the South. It is the limits established by these geographical elements, being the main ones the topography and the hydrography, which allow the first climbing approach. The strong contrast in level generates a surface of around 2000 meters wide in the form of a longitudinal strip. The municipality of Nerja delimits a space that exceeds this topographic limit but the territorial scale is selected according to the arable land due to the geographical conditions where the historical development of orchards has taken place. The infrastructural elements such as water channels, cattle trails and communications that exceed this area are recorded, understanding the continuities with other towns such as Maro and Frigiliana. The same procedure is applied to the small groups of orchards that are located in areas where the slope allows it; many of these are not in direct contact with the plot but are linked to the other elements of the system.

The urban scale is centered in what is currently known as the center of the town of Nerja. It is approximately at the meeting of the two urban roads, Pintada street and Carabeo street, where the settlement originated. It is on this scale, keeping the orchards and infrastructures that lead to the historic center, where its evolution unfolds temporarily, marking the permanence and losses. To this is added the information of the cultivation, the plot, the surface and the slopes. From this area, the study examples of the fundamental typological scale are decided. The orchards of Carabeo Street exemplify the main qualities of the type: orchards of around 1000m² of surfaces, associated with housing in its rear facade, producing additions in an adjacent way. It is at this scale where the relationship with the built elements is studied, being these mainly houses, and we proceed to add the elements of delimitation and containment of the orchards in detail, in addition to other unique elements. The

graphic representation of the orchard is combined with the representation of other dynamics such as: detailed information on cultivation, seasonal customs, oral testimonies... among other intangible values.

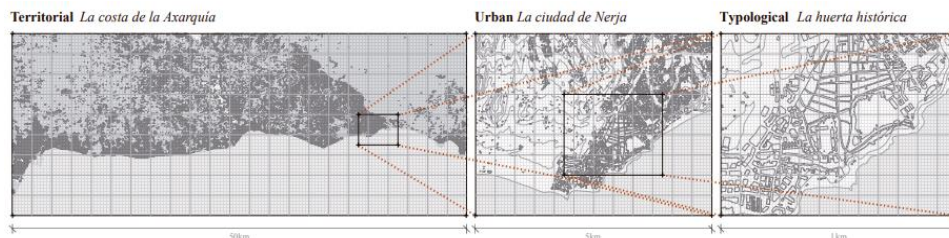


Figure 4. Scale domains. Author's creation.

As we can see in Figure 4 the orchard is the constant in these spaces. Its behavior as an agrarian structure of small dimension is able to generate an expansive spatial structure that can be collected and therefore valued in a quantitative and qualitative way. The result of this first work of selection of the scales scopes gives as immediate result a set of unpublished documents of the orchard, in which all the orchards units are recognized, located and inventoried in the form of graphic documents and specific data and directed to the generation of an argumentation from the agrarian.

CONCLUSION

Agricultural heritage is an essential topic when investigating the evolution, development and current behavior of our environment. The multiscale approach offers a holistic vision that allows the control of all the aspects that compose it, tangible and intangible, and at the same time avoids the reduction of the agricultural activity to a homogeneous stain or on the contrary to a mere aesthetic perception. The diachronic aspect is also included given the heritage approach and extended to all scales. Although landscapes represent possibly the most operative scale for understanding and configuring the relationship between society and the land, one should not tend to generalize and homogenize their reading.

The study through scales is especially effective in the case of the orchard due to its uniqueness as a unique structure and behavior as a system by addition. Previous periods were transmitters of an interesting heritage legacy but its current presence in the city calls into question the attention paid to different elements and spaces compared to others. This is the case of the orchard of Nerja, the very soils of the cultivation plots form a corpus has been lost at a hurried pace, being replaced by new buildings due to its conversion into one of the most important tourist centers of the Costa del Sol. A construction derived against the logic of transformation and growth of the city itself and detached from its origin that fragments, degrades and isolates the remaining areas.

The agricultural activity is the trigger of a typology that generates an urban settlement with an agricultural plot and that in turn produces a close relationship with the territory, and its operation is the fundamental act for its maintenance. Its conservation and continuation contributes to inherit values that surpass the patrimonial vision reaching other stages, that including the historical and the memory of its inhabitants, reflect other aspects such as biodiversity, culture, local economy... To the statement: "The small is beautiful, but the big is powerful", Ramón Folch responds in search of the aesthetic and opportunistic overcoming towards the land: "May the beautiful be powerful."²⁷ It is this allusion to power and not to the concrete scale that can allow a shift in the valuation of the agrarian heritage.

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²³Francisco Capilla Luque. “El Castillo Bajo de Nerja (1502-1811). Origen y evolución de una fortaleza desaparecida.” *Boletín de Arte*, Universidad de Málaga 26-27, no. 1 (2006): 93-116. doi: 10.24310/BoLArte.2006.v0i26-27.4545.

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²⁶Antonio Rivas Reales, “Las cuevas turísticas como elementos de protesta social. El caso del encierro en la cueva de Nerja en diciembre de 1996”, in *Las cuevas turísticas como activos económicos: conservación e innovación*, ed. Juan José Durán Valsero and Pedro Agustín Robledo Ardila (Madrid: Instituto Geológico y Minero de España, Asociación de Cuevas Turísticas Española, 2012), 435–446.

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URBANALITY OF THE CIVIL: A REPORT ON SHADOW STUDIES, THEIR FUNCTION, LIMITS, AND POTENTIALS

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INTRODUCTION

Shadow studies are a key part of planning. They help determine how different options of increased building heights, geometries, and densities will shadow the surrounding areas. One might hear a planner say, “Option A allows more sunlight on the sidewalks than Option B.” Allowing something suggests that what is allowed did not exist or was prohibited before a permission was granted. Was sunlight disallowed before Option A’s realisation? Might this phrase conceal harm? Querying why well-intentioned planners might say this, this paper draws from Hannah Arendt’s question: How banal, normal, and even legal frameworks can result in harm? This is not to equate planners with Eichmann, nor planning with fascism. It is to ask how quasi-legal practices like shadow studies may conceal forces that exacerbate displacements and imperial geography. To query a planner’s ease with saying “allowing more sunlight,” and their faith in dominant planning narratives, the paper also turns to Baruch Spinoza’s question: Why do people fight for their servitude as if it was salvation? For instance, what forces can sway planners to do work that may lead to their own potential evictions as a result of their plans? Linking Arendt and Spinoza, two questions are raised: (1) If planners intend no harm, why do their plans for the “civil” city often not bode well for many? (2) Evoking Arendt¹ and Spinoza’s² liberatory politics as a love for difference, this paper asks, how can planners act otherwise?

QUERYING THE CIVIL

While the paper’s title references Arendt’s *Banality of Evil*, it does not equate planners to Eichmann nor planning to historical fascism. But it does evoke Arendt’s question on how acting legally can still produce harm, to query, why do the planners’ civic plans for “everyone” not bode well for many, even if they mean no harm? Why are civic plans’ outcomes often asymmetrical to their civil intentions?

What is the civil for planning? Civil implies civility, and by association, fairness, unbiasedness, and being ethical. This tie between the civil and being ethical is present in the planner’s professional code of ethics: The Planning Institute of British Columbia’s *Code of Ethics* states, a planner must “balance the interests of communities with the interests of individuals,” while exercising “their professional judgment independently and without bias.”³ The wording suggests the ethical is achieved by unbiasedly balancing competing interests. Often, a “trade-off” is used to achieve balance. Planners should unbiasedly deliberate on what a community or individual can give up for balance, and for civil society’s betterment. A planner may reason portions of a sunny sidewalk can be given up in exchange for more housing units for “everyone”, knowing this means bigger buildings with more shadows. But

who is this “everyone”? Can privileging this “everyone” hide a bias? Can rezoning the land to increase market housing density impact reconciliation efforts such indigenous land reparations? Despite these issues, planning is rarely seen as imperial because its civil goals are assumed to be universal. But perhaps, because planning *begins* with the civil that its imperial character intensifies.

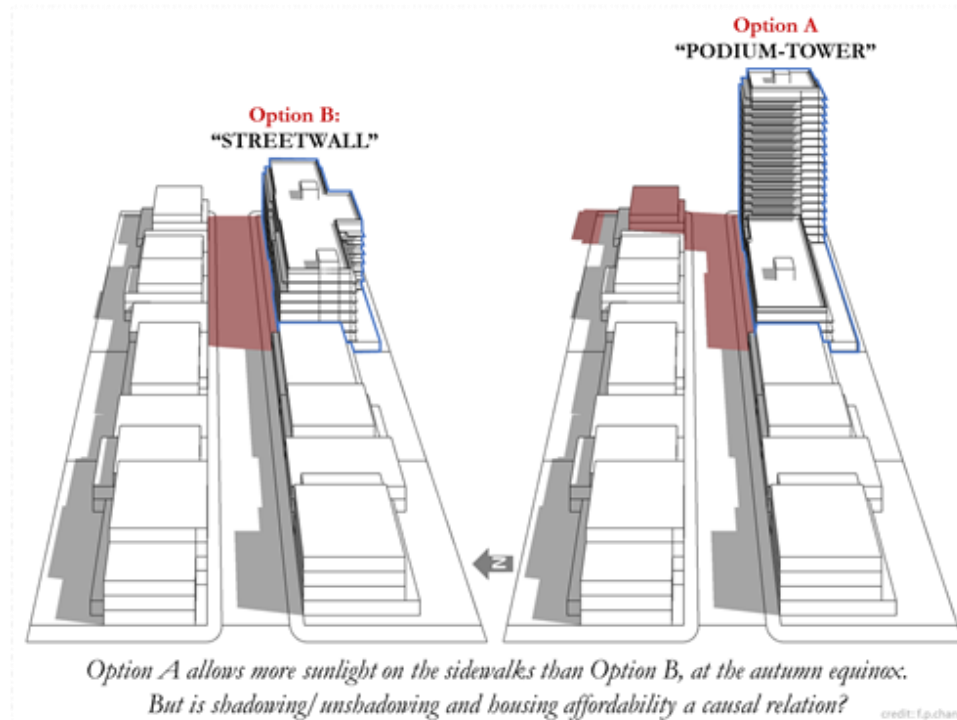


Figure 1.

QUERYING THE SPACE OF A SHADOW STUDY

Sunny sidewalks are important in wintry cities like Vancouver. Like many cities, Vancouver adopts the surplus-supply model to address housing unaffordability. Hence, its planners are tasked to balance sunny sidewalks and housing. Two typologies were proposed: A six to ten storeys streetwall building was initially considered. However, its shadows shaded the whole sidewalk across the street by mid-summer. Planners needed a building that could keep shadows off the sidewalks until at least the autumn equinox. So, the podium-tower (POTO) was proposed as an alternative: It has a four storeys podium and a slim twenty-plus storeys tower. The podium’s shadows barely touch the sidewalks at the equinoxes. However, its tower component does cast a much longer shadow. But the area shaded by the tower’s longer shadow is considered something that can be traded off, if housing densities are met and part of the immediate sidewalks remain sunny. The POTO became the optimum solution to balance sunny spaces with housing, a mark of civil society.⁴ (See Figure 1)

In some planning reports, POTOs are said to allow more sunlight on the sidewalks, compared to streetwall buildings. “To allow” suggests what is allowed did not exist or was prohibited before permission was granted. Was sunlight non-existent or unpermitted prior to the POTO’s conception? What kind of forces produce this peculiar understanding of sunlight and shadow? Might the graphic and visual forces of the software used for shadow studies play a part? Consider this: In SketchUp, when no buildings are placed in its model-space, even if the “sun” is on, the model-space gets no brighter or darker. Sunlight is not an existing condition here, and only perceptible as the shadow’s negative space. In the model-space’s isolated “logic”, buildings indeed allow light.

Shadow studies often begin with an assumption that taller denser buildings with more shadows are necessary.⁵ Planners are given density targets (for economic feasibility) to achieve; their task questions neither the cause and effects of these targets, nor the surplus-supply model. This is not being anti-densification, but to point out shadow studies are often limited to moulding the shadows' geometries, not asking why or where densification is needed. Missing are queries about the relations between market-driven densification, rising land prices, and displacement. Moreover, increased land costs can hamper land reparations as governments tend to hold on to "valuable" land, thus prolonging imperial geography. An effect of shadow studies is the exacerbation of ethno-economic tensions. Does every extra metre of shadow equal to one family saved from housing precarity?⁶ Can the forces that produced the housing shortage narrative be the same ones that validate the way shadow studies are conducted? Is a shadow study only considered as successful when its technical appearance conceals its constitutive socioeconomic forces? By not deciphering the constitutive forces and relations, causes and effects, are shadow studies actually presenting ill-defined problems? It is not ill-defined due to knowledge gaps, but ill-defined by design.

WHY DO PLANNERS FIGHT FOR THEIR EVICTION AS IF IT WAS THEIR SALVATION?

Smaller, older, low-rent buildings may get demolished to make way for the POTOs. The possibility of many young planners living in these low-rent buildings is high, and young planners are usually the ones doing technical work like shadow studies. From this angle, shadow studies can be seen as indirectly hastening a young planner's potential eviction. So, why do young planners do this work? Job precarity is one factor. But the possibility of a sense of achievement and happiness forming when a planner's work is praised, cannot be discounted. They may even see their use of quasi-legal and objective tool like shadow studies, as an unbiased contribution to a balanced delivery of housing and sunny sidewalks. This sense of achievement might even quell the anxieties for potential eviction.

What forces might move a planner to do work that can potentially diminish their well-being? One helpful conceptual frame to address this question is Spinoza's question: Why do people fight for their own servitude as if it was their salvation?⁷ Here, Spinoza queried the nature of obedience, by noting, a "sovereign's power is not strictly confined to their power of coercion by fear," but how a sovereign (or any dominant body) can induce people to obey. Coercion is insufficient to compel obedience. Often, obedience is not only driven by a higher motive (e.g., a promised future), but *by the act of being obedient itself*.⁸ What then drives people to *obey the act of obedience*? For this, Spinoza located faith as a force that "moves the heart to obedience." However, this is not a faith driven strictly by truths or dogmas. Rather, it is driven by one's own beliefs that what one is promised is true, as opposed to the truthfulness of what one is promised.⁹ The difference is, the former suggests that the act of "I believe in my beliefs" is more important than truth. In this "*I believe in my beliefs*," faith and obedience are not externally imposed or coerced, but cultivated *within* an individual. Faith, obedience and (one's own) beliefs presuppose and reinforce each other, in the planning bureau. (See Figure 2)

What forces motivate this "I believe in my beliefs"? Take a religious person: They invent or improve on their own rituals to affirm their faith, without clergy or God's dictations. The rituals produce physical, psychological and social forces that can form a personal-collective milieu, which affirms and sustains one's own beliefs, faith, and obedience. Beliefs, faith, and obedience can even be *for* the ritual itself, rather than a future promised by religions, authorities, or city plans. The mental-physical satisfaction experienced from the ritual becomes *the* promised future itself. The flesh is made word.

Can shadow studies (e.g., tweaking building massing to shape shadows; making diagrams and reports, etc.) be the rituals that sustain beliefs, faith, and obedience? More precisely, can the satisfaction from ritualistically doing shadow studies affirm and solidify a planner's faith, beliefs, and obedience in the surplus-supply narrative? Can this satisfaction override needs to decipher the surplus-supply

narrative's validity? As philosopher Jason Read wrote, "the most effective form of control or obedience is when people obey the state, or capital, while appearing to obey only themselves."¹⁰ Planners do shadow studies that can hasten their potential eviction, as if it was salvation, not because the surplus-supply narrative is coercive. They continue the work, as if the work produces and affirms their subjectivity, their personal "I"; as if the work affirms their faith in themselves as planners.

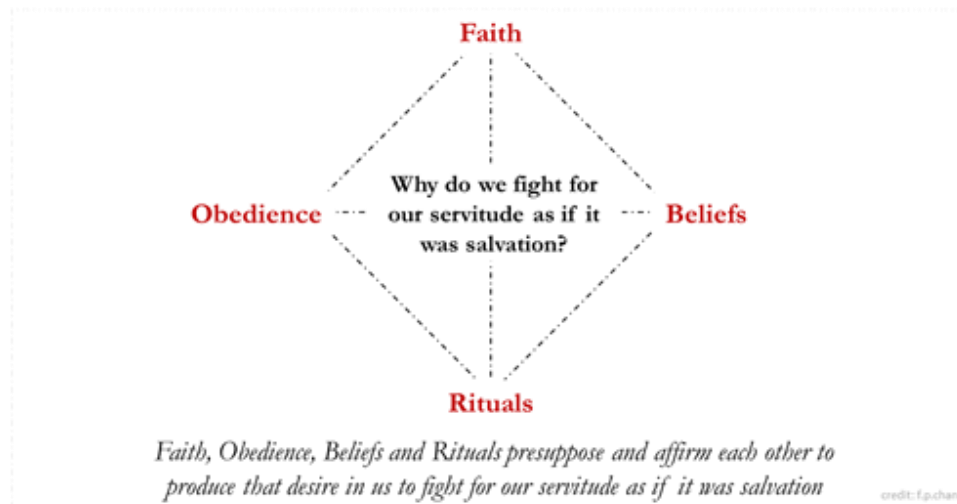


Figure 2.

WHEN AFFECTED INTO PASSIVITY, FAITH REPLACES CONSCIENCE

Quantifying shadows by length and area gives shadow studies a quasi-legal status. This status may lead planners to believe that if their task is legal, then its results must be legal too, since the law cannot harm. Here, Arendt's idea of "legal crimes" in her observation of Eichmann is helpful to explore the planners' faith in the shadow studies' quasi-legality. She observed Eichmann as not diabolical but "banal", almost normal. A bureaucrat dedicated to implementing the law. But he exhibited a "sheer thoughtlessness." For him, implementing the law supersedes thinking critically. This inability to think beyond his job produced a "strange interdependence of thoughtlessness and evil,"¹¹ which allows him to act as if he "did not have to fall back on his conscience."¹²

When does one not have to fall back on their conscience? Perhaps it is when they can fall back on the faith they have in their job and rituals. For planners, reliance on the ritual of going through a shadow study's supposed unbiased methodology and quasi-legal process, can displace conscience or critical thinking. In this reliance, the planner does not just implement the shadow study's purported civil conscience and desires; the planner *sees as* the shadow study. The economist Frédéric Lordon further pushed this notion of *seeing as* one's job. He noted, today's economy encourages us to innovate new kinds of "suitable desires" to be added to, but also sustain, the dominant socioeconomic system.¹³ This is akin to the religious person who (self)-improves on rituals to affirm their faith, and to make the future seem like it belongs to them. This is beyond the coercive governance in Scott's "seeing like a State." Here, the economy and State *see like us*. It is not just faith in the system; but faith in ourselves *as* the system. Faith replaces conscience, and now it is the conscience of an ever-mutating legal, spatial, socioeconomic regime where mutations help assimilate unsuitable desires.

What forces produce these "suitable desires"? One might look at a planning office. Successful shadow studies win promotions and raises; this may enable the purchase of a flat in a POTO. This cultivates economic and sociocultural forces that can sway a planner toward certain social events, people, books,

milieus, but exclude others. Promotions, raises, and participation in certain social events become extensions of the shadow study rituals. Planners do not just desire the rituals, they may even *desire to have these desires* (of the rituals).

These socioeconomic and cultural forces that sway planners toward this mode of desiring produces what Spinoza called “passive affections.” These forces make us passive by diminishing our capacities to think and act beyond our present milieu.¹⁴ Being affected into passivity is a form of bondage where we not only have no control over how we are affected, we do not know we are being controlled.¹⁵ Yet, passive affections do not completely sadden us. Spinoza scholar Beth Lord noted, passive affections still produce a “passive joy.” But this joy relies on something external to ‘cause’ us to smile for things we receive or experience (e.g., promotions).¹⁶ However, this is not a coerced joy, for promotions do cause smiles that are involuntary muscle contractions.¹⁷ Nevertheless, even if we imagine our upward-mobility are of our own making (like the rituals we construct to hasten promotions), we remain in bondage to an economic regime with a narrow view of housing. Sure, this is a fluid economy; this economy can even adjust itself to be more “personalised” for us, but we simultaneously adjust ourselves *for* it. Insofar as we are bonded and moving *with* this economy’s trajectory, we still do not know we *can* develop *other* capacities to query the surplus-supply narrative and our shadow studies.

How might querying the surplus-supply narrative be initiated? This is a question of developing ways to liberate ourselves from bondage, and how to increase our potentials to cultivate difference beyond established categories. Spinoza proposed one way to break from bondage is to critically decipher the causes and effects of the forces that make us passive.¹⁸ In doing so, even if we are still in proximity to these forces, through a more adequate understanding of their powers, causes and effects, we may change our relations with them to modes that can increase our capacities to think, act and create differences, even ones that are yet-categorisable. More importantly, to cultivate ways of living that maintain an ever-critical relationship with these forces. For Spinoza, increasing our capacity also make us *become* the “cause” (creator) of our thoughts and actions, to incite a will to actively experiment, and not just passively produce (after being driven by external influences). These transformed relations produce “active affections,” or to say, we are affected in ways that heighten our capacity and will to be active.¹⁹ When affected to become active, we also experience an “active joy,” a joy that “does not depend on external things, but arises when we act from our own nature.”²⁰ A joy arising from creating newness that is not hinged on just adjusting existing models that bond us. Active joy occasions a new kind of desire – “a desire to know ever more things,” always deciphering evolving fields of causes and effects. This desire is a love to open new thoughts and actions, rather than a drive towards *the* end-state.²¹ Yes, there is no fixed method to critically decipher and re-relate to these passive-affecting forces; but to cultivate a will to always create new methods is loving life.

COGS CAN FORM NEW MACHINES

Does the phrase “planners do not intend harm” mean they are faultless cogs? For Arendt, it is the effects of actions that matter, not if one is a cog or mastermind. Guilt is not attributable to only intents.²² Furthermore, cogs are not subordinate to the machine; they make up the machine. For example, the planning machine is not cleanly divisible into a policy-making “head” versus subordinate policy-implementing cogs. In today’s economy, young planners doing shadow studies are encouraged to innovate ways to improve the methodology, processes, and even draft policies to recalibrate the sunlight-housing balance.²³ Together, policy-making and implementation iteratively invent new ways to sustain the surplus-supply narrative. Passive joys may fuel legal crimes.

However, for Arendt and Spinoza, resistance seems possible even if we are in a machine.²⁴ Machines are not hermetic. For instance, the planning machine’s encouragement to innovate or to “break the mould” can be approached in a critical and even subversive manner. What if breaking the mould is

more than just widening planning's range of moulds or established rituals? What if it is to be done with moulds or bondage? What if it is to decipher the forces that make us passive, then re-relate to these forces in ways to increase our capacities to think, act and create, hence cultivate active joys? Practically speaking, this can mean when we encounter "others" who do not fit planning's limited notion of "everyone" or "civility," they are not simply assigned an identity that fit planning's narratives, trade-offs, processes or moulds (good or bad). The "others" are the auditory, corporeal, spatial forces that may problematise planning's problematic, fuelling the process of bondage-breaking. It is to experiment with "others" to form "mutually joyful encounters" where bodies collectively increase their capacities to exist, think and act, without diminishing each other.²⁵ It is not only encounters with other humans that may spur active joys, we can differently use planning tools: Use shadow studies as spaces to raise new problems – even problems without answers. Push visual and spatial representations' limits; make the shadows flow beyond the model-space. (See Figure 3)

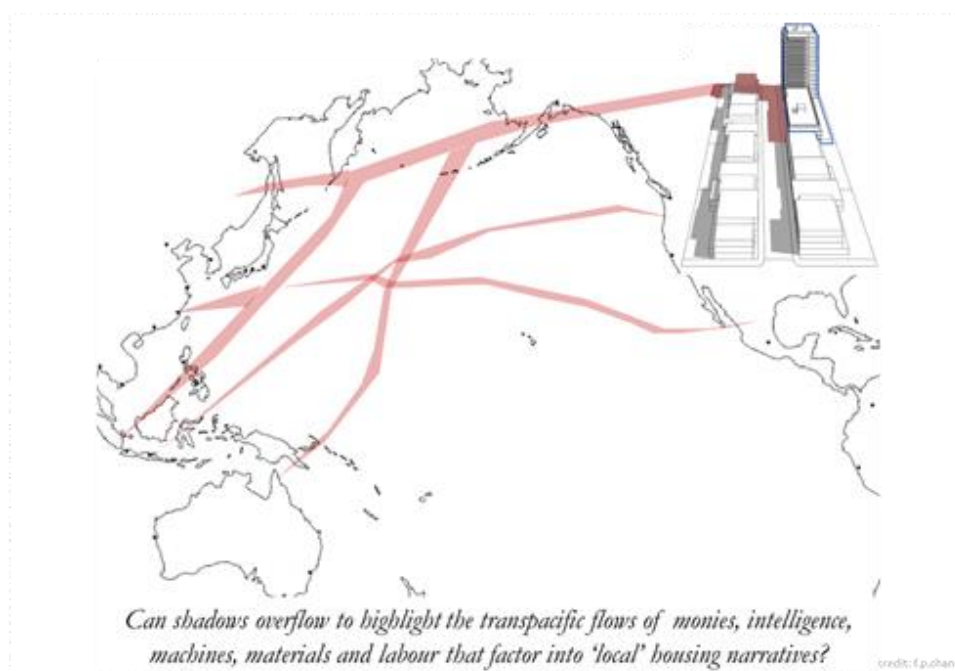


Figure 3.

Remake shadow studies into a space-event to re-relate to passive forces. It is changing the cogs' functions that machines that are vigilante against passive faith and rituals become possible.²⁶

PRELUDE FOR ANOTHER KIND OF LIGHT

Questions for planners wondering why protests against their civil plans persist: Could the faith in the civil and planning's neutrality conceal a biased unbiasedness? Could the civil be the element that extends an elusive but violent imperial territorialisation? Might the banality of the civil be a prelude to the urbanity of evil? How then can a prelude for another kind of light be cultivated?²⁷

NOTES

¹ For Arendt, (political) liberation is not an absolute end-state, but an ever-renewing potential in the form of an “I-can”. The “I-can” exceeds the readily-knowable “I-am” or “I-must”. See Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: The Groundbreaking Investigation on How We Think* (New York & London: Harvest Book), 1978. 200.

² For Spinoza, liberation is not just a personal pursuit, but a collective one. Thus, an ethical form of liberation happens when people unite to develop and increase new capacities to think and act, without a ruler who dictating what life must be. See Baruch Spinoza, *A Political Treatise*, trans. R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications), 2004, Chapter 2 (On Natural Rights)

³ Planning Institute British Columbia. *Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct*, https://www.pibc.bc.ca/sites/default/files/internal_pages_pdfs/about-us/Code-Of-Ethics&Professional-Conduct-Bylaws2016.pdf (Accessed: 2023-11-05). In the PIBC’s *Code of Ethics*, planners are to balance the interests of the community versus the individual. Does this wording suggest the individual is likely only motivated by self(ish) interests, versus the unselfish community? If so, has Planning already assumed the “community” as its universal subject which represents planning’s notion of civil society? Planning’s universal community/subject becomes a fixed entity, rather than a morphing collective body capable of differences beyond measure. And, is there not social and linguistic a bias in this hierarchical binary between (planning’s privileged) community versus the selfish individual?

⁴ Choosing the Podium-Tower (POTO) over the streetwall building is not easy in Vancouver. This is because, until recently, the POTO stands in contrast to Vancouver’s mostly low-rise fabric. And, the early developers of these towers were Hongkong-based developers like Li Ka-Shing. As such, the tower form often becomes associated with Asian real estate wealth, hence “foreignness”.

⁵ A recent news-article put forth an argument that given climate warming, taller denser buildings will provide the much-needed shade to shield us from harmful UV rays. This article reiterates the narrative that housing unaffordability is due only to shortage, and minimising shadows deters the quick increase of housing stock. See Alex Bozickovic, “Cities are leery of tall buildings casting too much shade. In a warming climate, does that still make sense?.” *Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-architecture-apartments-shade/> (Accessed: 2023-12-06)

⁶ James C. Scott wrote that a key feature of statecraft is to turn qualitative things, like sunlight or the coldness of shadows, from their “raw form” into something “legible” and calculable. Rawness is considered to impede planning. This is why shadow studies often measure sunlight and shadows in terms of buildable housing units. See James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 1998, 24.

⁷ The phrasing of Spinoza’s question shown in this paper is Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s reading of Spinoza’s original question in his *Theological-Political Treatise*: “Granted, then, that the supreme mystery of despotism, its prop and stay, is to keep men in a state of deception, and with the specious title of religion to cloak the fear by which they must be held in check, so that they will fight for their servitude as if for salvation, and count it no shame, but the highest honour, to spend their blood and their lives for the glorification of one man.” Deleuze and Guattari advanced Spinoza’s prompt, and asked: Why do people tolerate not only humiliation and hardship for others, but for themselves? They suggested people do that not because of ignorance, mass illusion, or even historical fascism’s coercion. Rather, particular blocs of forces that can steer people to actually desire a diminishment of their own well-being. See Baruch Spinoza, “Theological-Political Treatise” in *The Complete Works of Spinoza*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing) 2002, 389-390. Also see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 2000, 38.

⁸ Spinoza, “Theological-Political Treatise”, 536.

⁹ Spinoza, “Theological-Political Treatise”, 516.

¹⁰ Jason Read, *Fighting for Subjection as if it was Rebellion: Spinoza and Servitude Today*. <http://www.unemployednegativity.com/2021/08/fighting-for-subjection-as-if-it-was.html> (Accessed 2023-06-06)

¹¹ Hannah Arendt, “Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil” in *The Portable Hannah Arendt* (London: Penguin Books) 2000, 379. Related to Arendt’s concept of legal crimes is how an overreliance on rights-based models for decision-making can do harm. For example, the development rights granted by the by-laws to developers may mean new buildings can legally be built, but in this process, displacements can occur. With the work-from-home trend, many planning departments and developers have argued for rezoning more industrial lands to residential ones. However, many artists also rent low-cost spaces in these industrial buildings. The development rights to rezone these industrial lands may be legal, but those rights are grounded in very specific socioeconomic networks that may exclude the artists’ well-being.

¹² Arendt, "Eichmann in Jerusalem", 384.

¹³ Frédéric Lordon, *Willing slaves of Capital: Spinoza and Marx on Desire*, trans. Gabriel Ash (London: Verso) 2014, 49.

¹⁴ Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. Edwin Curley (London: Penguin Press) 1996, Book 3. Definitions 1 to 3.

¹⁵ Spinoza, *Ethics*, Book 4. Preface.

¹⁶ Beth Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) 2010, 101.

¹⁷ In his commentary on Spinoza's understanding of obedience, philosopher Etienne Balibar noted, the process of being affected into passivity is never just the mind being affected first, followed by the body; or even vice versa. For Spinoza, the mind and body are united. As such, forces that affect a physical body into passivity (or activity) can simultaneously affect the mind into passivity (or activity). These forces that can affect a face to move (smile or frown), along with any mental changes, in ways that are involuntary to the mind alone. See Etienne Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, trans. Peter Snowdon (New York + London: Verso), 2008, 88-90.

¹⁸ Spinoza wrote that once we can separate out the specific external forces which are controlling our happiness or sadness, we might then be able to join these forces to other forces that can increase our abilities to think and act. As such, those formerly passivity-inducing forces may no longer be able to control us. In this sense, what made us passive can actually be used or controlled by us. It is to turn them into forces that now increase our abilities to think and act. They become forces that make us "active". Of course, Spinoza and others have observed, in any given encounter, forces that make us either active or passive can both be present. Whether one becomes more active or passive can depend on the existing forces that constitute us at that moment. A body already composed primarily of more active forces can more readily repel passive forces; and vice versa. See Spinoza, *Ethics*, Book 5, Propositions 2 and 3.

¹⁹ Spinoza, *Ethics*, Book 3. Definitions 1 to 3.

²⁰ Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, 128.

²¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books), 1992, 304-305.

²² Arendt wrote, "All the cogs in the machinery, no matter how insignificant, are in court forthwith transformed back into perpetrators, that is to say, into human beings." This statement hints at Arendt's position that criticality can be cultivated despite the intolerable. It is asking, what is one's part in the machine. It might begin with seeing how one is in a machine. See Arendt, "Eichmann in Jerusalem", 381.

²³ Encouraging young planners to participate in refining shadow studies methodologies, processes, and even redefining what is a good sunlight versus housing balance, can be seen as a form of control, where the means of control are set up by the same persons being controlled. This form of control is well discussed in the essay *Postscript on the Societies of Control* by Gilles Deleuze, where the body is no longer disciplined externally, but controls itself to thrive in certain milieus. Control of self, even at possibilities of self detriment, becomes second nature. In a work discussion on how to better 'evolve' balancing housing and sunlight, a young planner suggested, instead of focusing on direct sunlight/shadows, we should focus on how much open-skies is visible when standing at a junction. Their rationale is, even if one is standing in shadows, but if one can still see the sky, hence one still has some contact with sunlight, since sunlight is ambient and fills the skies. Ambient lighting becomes treated the same as direct sunlight. In this proposal, the conventional shadow study would be obsolete, since shadows are no longer measured; it would not matter how long (or short) the shadows are.

²⁴ Arendt wrote, "Those few who were still able to tell right from wrong went really only by their own judgments, and they did so freely; there were no rules to be abided by, under which the particular cases with which they were confronted could be subsumed. They had to decide each instance as it arose, because no rules existed for the unprecedented." In this passage, she noted the numerous people who continued resisting Nazi ideologies even when the Reich demand their submission. See Arendt, "Eichmann in Jerusalem", 385.

²⁵ Simone Bignall suggested, ethics can be reframed as "finding agreements." However, to find agreements is not just to find what we presently have in common; hence ethical relations are not produced by eliminating differences or categorising what is encountered as yet-imageable or representable into preestablished identities. And it is not about each body sacrificing a little to come to compromise, nor conforming to an existing shared identity. Writing in consideration of postcolonial discourse, Bignall noted, finding agreements involves each body transforming their desires to develop new bodies and minds that can work together without effacing each other's difference. A connection and solidarity without synthesis. Here, Bignall drew from Spinoza, who wrote that ethics emerge when "the good which everyone who seek virtue wants for themselves, they also desire for the other people." Again, this is not a trade-off or sacrifice in order to meet balance. We all develop a striving towards an ever-changing mutual love. See Simone Bignall, "Affective Assemblages: Ethics beyond Enjoyment" in *Deleuze*

and the Postcolonial, eds. Simone Bignall and Paul Patton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) 2010, 89. Also see Spinoza, *Ethics*, Book 4, Proposition 37.

²⁶ With the threat of job precarity, and the various legal restrictions preventing architects and planners from critiquing the work they are working on, their employers, or clients, it may mean that breaking bondages have to be conducted clandestinely. As such, these subversive interventions on shadow studies may have to be conducted in spaces parallel to mainstream planning. Practically, this can mean planners learning by deliberately engaging with events, thoughts, and peoples that fall outside the proper definition of the “built environment.”

²⁷ The paper’s concluding line drew its power from the opening lines of Audre Lorde’s essay Poetry is not a Luxury: “The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized. This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are – until the poem – nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt.” Writing in the context of black women’s struggles, Lorde pointed out in this essay the importance of creating (poesis / poetry) as a resistance, even if what in the process of creation cannot readily be named. Yet, poetry is at least the process we can “give name to the nameless so it can be thought.” See Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New York: Crossing Press) 1984. 36-37.

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CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD: EXAMINING HEAT AND HISTORICAL INEQUITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Toledo, Ohio, in the U.S. midwest, like many other cities across the globe, is grappling with rising temperatures. With long-term climate change, average global temperatures are rising, and in addition, extreme weather events such as heat waves are expected to get more frequent, more severe and last longer.¹ The impacts of rising heat are going to be experienced unevenly. In cities, one major factor contributing to unevenness in prolonged high temperatures across neighborhoods is the phenomenon of Urban Heat Islands (UHIs). These are urban areas that are significantly warmer than their surroundings chiefly because of concentrated heat emitted from the built environment, vehicles and industrial land uses. There are social dimensions to UHIs as well. Some research has shown that UHIs are far more likely to be in poor and minority neighborhoods rather than in affluent white neighborhoods.² Similarly, although tree canopies can mitigate some of the effects, researchers have found an inverse relationship between the number of trees in a neighborhood and the degree of segregation in a metropolitan area.³

Thus, the impacts of climate change, for example through the formation of UHIs, are felt unevenly across a landscape and are correlated both with the physical and social characteristics of a place. Old industrial or ‘legacy’ cities, facing persistent population loss, economic decline, sparsely populated cores and historic racial segregation offer a particular set of challenges when addressing climate change and heat events. Using Toledo, Ohio, as a case study, we take a long view to examine whether residents’ current experience of heat might have any relationship to historically unjust urban planning and investment practices. First, we critically review the city’s history of planning, with a focus on redlining. We then map social and demographic factors such as poverty and unemployment, land surface temperatures, and tree cover to analyze if and how historic inequities continue to play out across neighborhoods, in this case, with reference to heat. We conclude with an example of what a climate responsive architecture and planning pedagogy/practice could look like.

Toledo – Profile and Planning History

Located in the heart of the U.S. midwest industrial belt, Toledo, Ohio, is an integral part of the auto industry that developed around Detroit. But as manufacturing jobs have left the region over the past few decades, Toledo has experienced population loss and economic decline. The population has fallen from a peak of about 384,000 in 1970 to about 271,000 in 2020.⁴ In the past 30 years, manufacturing

employment has fallen from about 55,000 workers (in 1993) to 44,000 workers in 2023, a drop of about 20%. Only about 15% of the labor force is now engaged in manufacturing. Three sectors, Education and Health Services; Government; and Trade Transportation and Utilities each employ a higher percentage of workers.⁵

The auto industry and associated manufacturing were the drivers of Toledo's prosperity. In 1960, Toledo was home to six Fortune 500 companies. Now, only Owens Corning has a presence in the city. Today, residents of Toledo are also poorer than the national average. In 2023, approximately 25% of the city's residents lived in poverty compared to 12% for the country. The median household income in the city was \$45,000 compared to \$75,000 in the country; the per capita income in the city was \$26,000 in the city compared to \$41,000 in the country.⁶ By multiple measures, Toledo's residents face deep economic struggles.

Toledo's evolution since the dawn of the auto age in the U.S. is like many other cities in the region, but auto-centric planning has a particularly interesting history in the city. In 1944, following the Great Depression and worried about the city's image and opportunities for a resurgence in fortunes, the publisher of the local newspaper underwrote a pamphlet about Toledo, and placed advertisements promoting the city in trade journals and New York newspapers.⁷ The publisher, Paul Block, then hired Norman Bel Geddes to develop a plan for Toledo. The Toledo Tomorrow plan,⁸ whose influence is evident in today's city, was built around the efficient movement of traffic. The automobile took center stage and a system of highways and feeder roads crisscrossed the city.

While the ideas in Toledo Tomorrow were not implemented at the time, subsequent planning efforts in the 1950s, including urban renewal programs and new highway projects changed the city's morphology. Efforts to build new roads and widen existing ones destroyed largely Black communities in the city. In addition, the great national wave of suburbanization and 'white flight' around this time affected Toledo as well, as residents moved to new single-family homes in larger lots in the suburbs. Since 1970, when the city of Toledo's population peaked, the city has lost 113,000 residents or about 30% of its population but most of the suburban and rural parts of Lucas County, of which Toledo is a part, have gained population, some of them experiencing double or even triple digit growth during this time frame. In neighboring, mostly rural Wood County, the population increased by about 40,000 residents or 30%.⁹ In neighboring Fulton County, also largely rural, the population rose by about 9000 residents or an increase of about 27%.¹⁰ During the same period, the city's black population has risen, from about 14% in 1970 to 27% in 2020.¹¹

Redlining has also had a profound influence on the development of the city. Set up in the 1930s as part of the New Deal, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) created a series of color-coded maps for cities around the county that evaluated the risks of lending in particular neighborhoods. Those neighborhoods shaded red – or redlined – were deemed the highest risk and those owning homes in these neighborhoods were least likely to get federal home loans through agencies such as the Federal Housing Administration (FHA).¹² These maps were also explicitly racist, as a result of which housing investments were directed away from redlined neighborhoods, which were predominantly Black and often poor, to the blue and green, which were majority white and wealthier. Given that these maps covered almost all Black residents living in cities and about half of the white population living in cities, they had a profound impact on racial dimensions of urban housing.¹³

Comprehensive Planning

There have been several planning efforts in Toledo over the years, although many of them, in keeping with their times, were focused on downtown. The city's first comprehensive plan was developed in 1952 and was updated almost half a century later in a second comprehensive plan for the city titled Toledo 20/20. This ambitious plan, developed in 2000 and updated in 2011, was to be implemented

roughly between the years 2000 and 2020 suggested that the city had all the pieces in place for a renaissance in its fortunes and aimed to bring all these pieces together in a comprehensive way.¹⁴ The plan however, also anticipated enormous population growth, which, given the larger challenges buffeting the region, never came to pass. Toledo is now in the midst of a new comprehensive planning process.

Interspersed between these large comprehensive plans have been several smaller, neighborhood-scale plans, though the majority of them have been focused on downtown. Among these plans were the 1977 Downtown Toledo Master Plan which focused on the riverfront; the 2002 Downtown Plan which was a public-private effort and the first to focus on the central business district; the 2011 Downtown Plan that built on ideas from the 2002 plan; the 2017 Downtown Plan which identified 12 actions that would serve as catalytic projects; and, an update of the 2017 Downtown Plan in 2023. Neighborhood plans have included corridor plans such as the Summit Street Plan or the Cherry Street Plan as well as district plans such the Marina District Plan or the Uptown Plan.

Some of the neighborhood plans, such as the Marina District Plan, resulted in a lot of investment as there was developable land, but in other neighborhood plans, the changes have been much smaller in scale. The greatest focus, and the greatest change, has been in the city's downtown. Over the years, there have been efforts to revitalize the city through investments downtown. Among these have been a convention center (1982), a government center building (1983), a festival marketplace (1984), a minor-league baseball park (2003), and a multipurpose arena (2009) all within a relatively short radius. Historically, neighborhoods have not received a lot of investment, but in recent years there have been some, such as in school buildings, (from tobacco settlement money from the state), through a program called New Schools, New Neighborhoods; in the building and renovation of neighborhood libraries; in the Toledo Lucas County Land Bank's programs to demolish buildings in poor condition and assemble land for sale, or acquire and sell homes that are in reasonable condition; and in neighborhood clinics and pharmacies by a large, multi-state health-care system headquartered in Toledo. Even so, these neighborhood investments have been scattered and incremental and have not yet fundamentally changed the experience of living there.

Segregation and Uneven Impacts

The impact of all these policies - redlining, population loss, demolitions due to urban renewal, highway building, a focus on downtown revitalization, and so on – was not across the landscape. But together, as Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 show, the neighborhoods most negatively affected were those close to the city center which are also the neighborhoods where the city's poorer residents, minority residents, renters and unemployed are concentrated. These figures also show that in Toledo, as in many other cities, historically redlined areas overlap strongly with census tracts where there are relatively higher percentages of Black residents (Figure 1), persons living in poverty (Figure 2), renters (Figure 3), and the unemployed (Figure 4). Eisenhower-era highways were also often designed to go through largely yellow and redlined areas.¹⁵ In Toledo, this is visible in the curvilinear path that the interstate highway I-75 takes through the city (Figure 5).

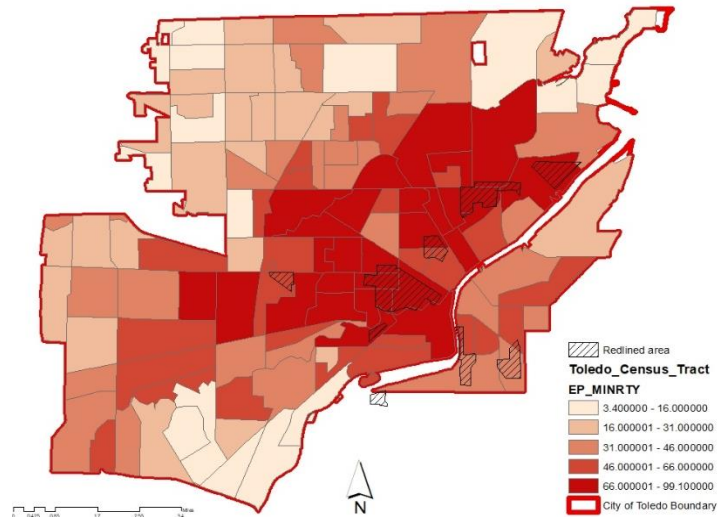


Figure 1. Historically red-lined areas and current percent of minority residents, by census tract, in Toledo

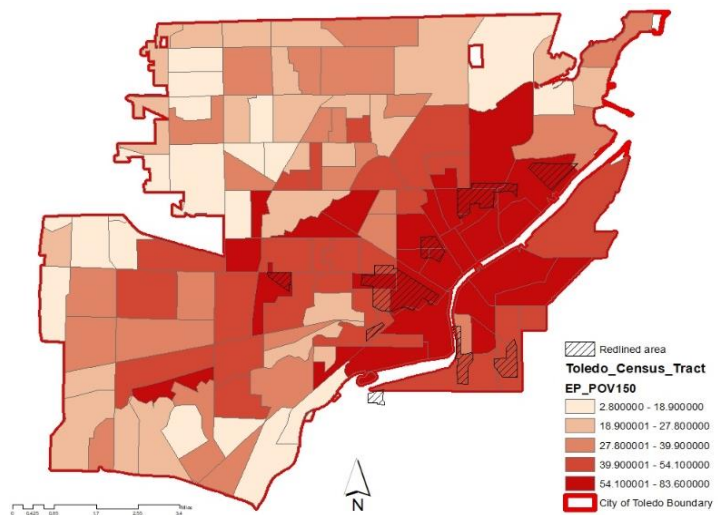


Figure 2. Historically red-lined areas and current percent of residents living in poverty, by census tract, in Toledo

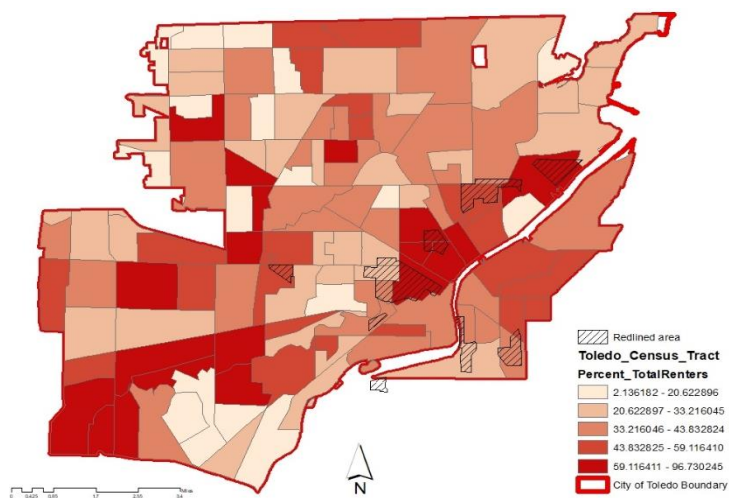


Figure 3. Historically red-lined areas and current percent of residents who are renters, by census tract, in Toledo

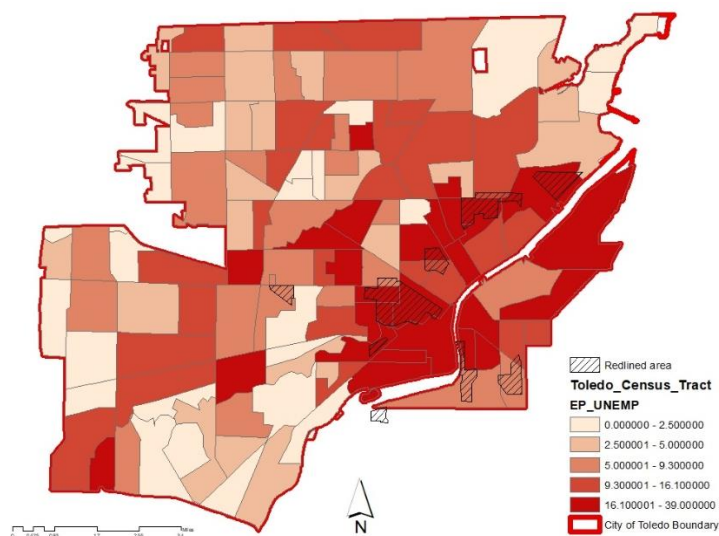


Figure 4. Historically red-lined areas and current percent of residents who are unemployed, by census tract, in Toledo

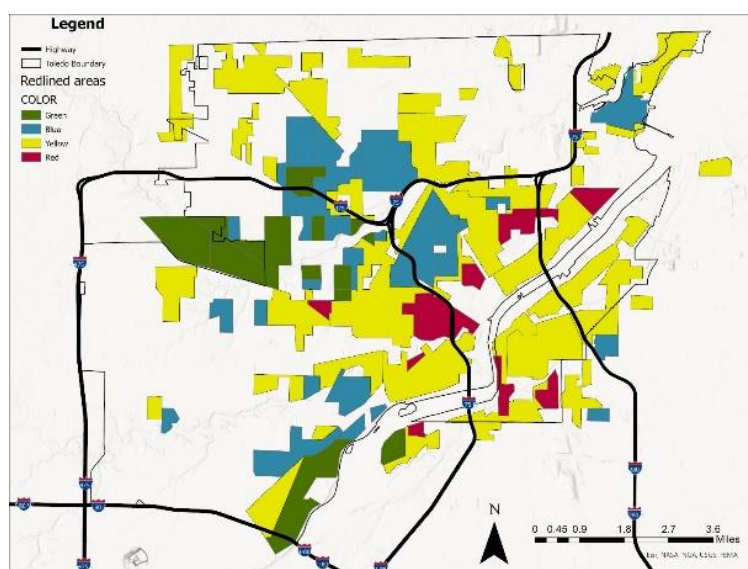


Figure 5. I-75 built to go through largely yellow and redlined sections of the city

Toledo is a segregated city by many measures. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses Racially or Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty (R/ECAP) to identify concentrations of disadvantage. These are census tracts that have a non-white population of 50 percent or more with 40 percent or more of individuals living at or below the poverty line.¹⁶ As Figure 6 shows, in Toledo, these R/ECAP census tracts are clustered around the central city.¹⁷

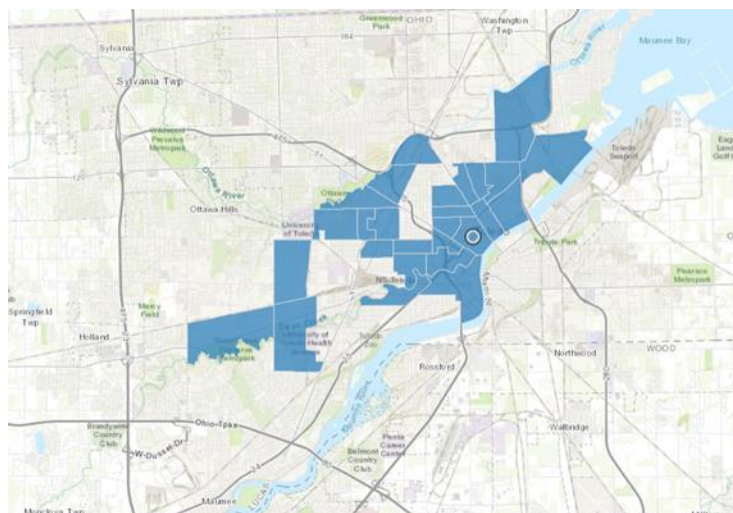


Figure 6. Racially or Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty in the City of Toledo (Source: HUD)

The Toledo metropolitan area is considered to have ‘high segregation’ by race.¹⁸ The city’s population is approximately 60% White alone and approximately 28% Black alone.¹⁹ Yet as seen in Figure 7, where the orange dots represent White residents and green dots represent Black residents, the latter are clustered in the neighborhoods around the central city. Of additional interest is the fact that the Black population is clustered around the HUD-designated Racially or Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty in the city, outlined in purple.

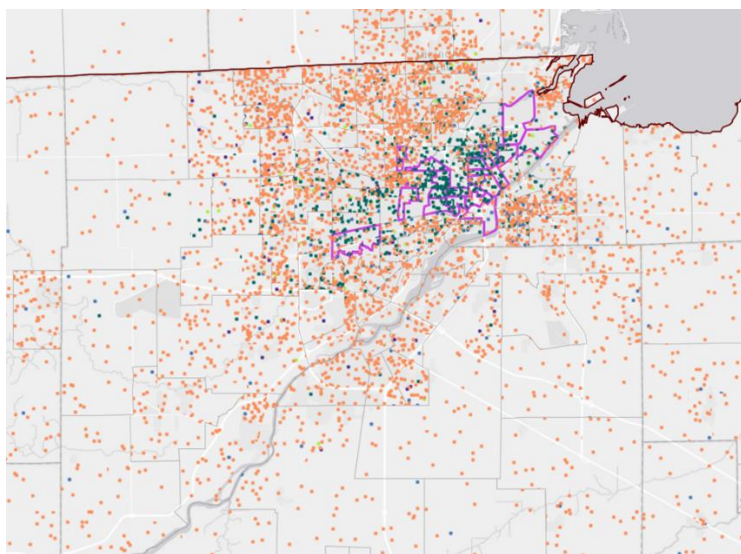


Figure 7. Racial Segregation in Toledo (Source: HUD)

Overlapping with this uneven pattern of socio-economic characteristics, with concentrated pockets of disadvantaged census tracts around the central city, are concentrated pockets of heat. As Figure 8 shows, Land Surface Temperature (LST) data shows the hottest temperatures clustered around the same central city neighborhoods, and also overlapping historically redlined areas. These are also the parts of the city that have the least tree cover (Figure 9).

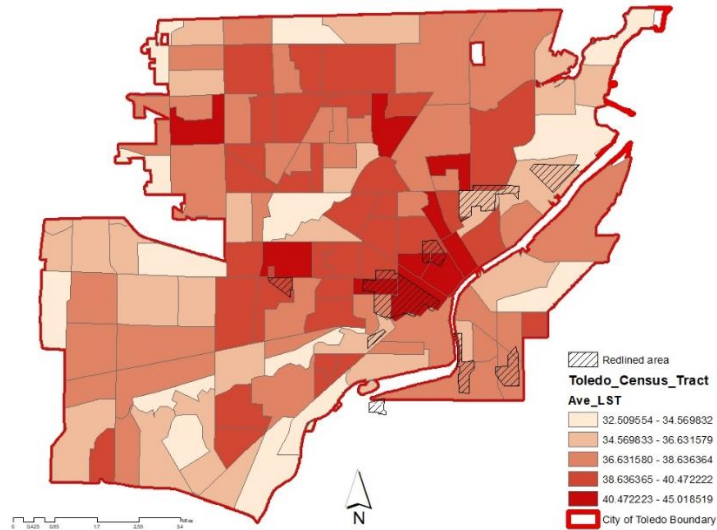


Figure 8. Historically red-lined areas and average LST, by census tract, June 16, 2022, in Toledo

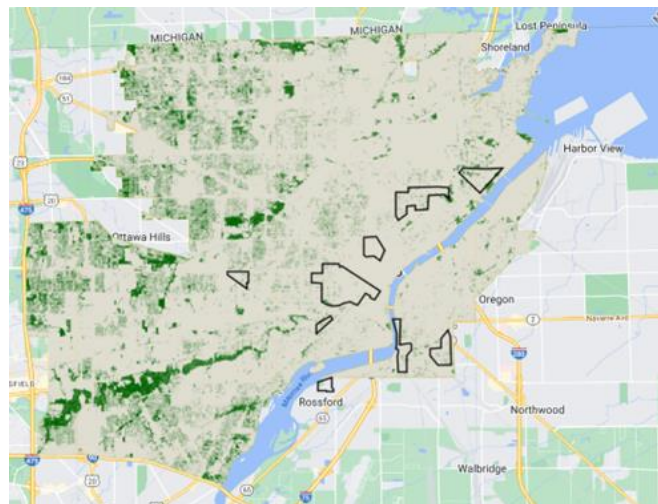


Figure 9. Historically redlined areas and tree cover in Toledo

These conditions are borne out by the scatter plots (Figures 10) that show a correlation between average LST and percent minority, and average LST and percent of population living below the poverty line, by census tract, in Toledo, consistent with Lagomarsino, et al. (2022).²⁰

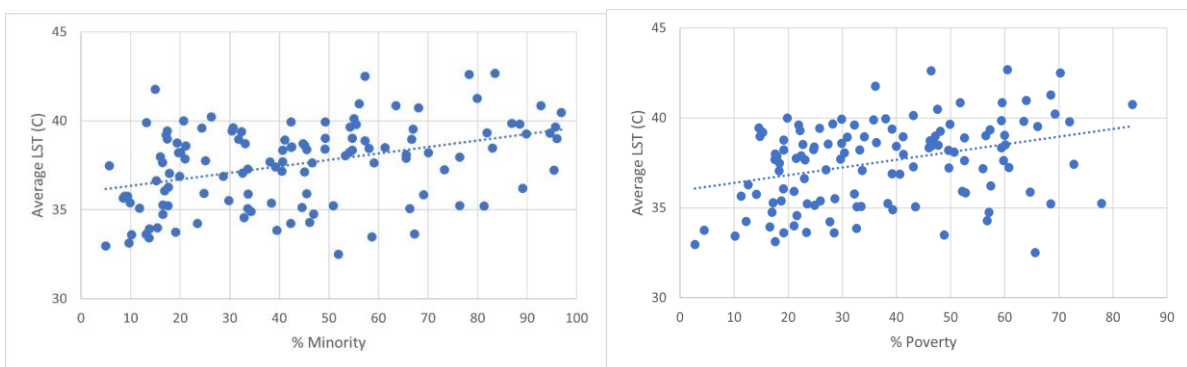


Figure 10. Scatter plots - average Land Surface Temperature (LST) vs percent minority, and average LST vs percent poverty

What Might a Climate-Responsive Architecture and Planning Model Look Like?

Given this strong correlation between heat, a history of racialized planning and current spatial inequities - as reflected in correlations between heat; concentrations of poverty, minority populations or renters; and redlined districts – the question is what climate responsive architecture/planning practice in this context looks like. We sought to explore this in a collaborative studio between architecture and planning students from two different universities, focusing on sites in the city of Toledo.

After researching UHIs more broadly, a) in the context of climate and environmental justice including the federal Justice40 initiative and b) developing case studies of cities that have addressed UHIs in order to compile a range of successful mitigation strategies, students analyzed Toledo through a spatial lens to understand concentrations of certain characteristics such as poverty, minority populations, heat, or the lingering impact of redlining. Students developed a catalog of approaches to achieve reductions in heat islands. In some ways, they were designing “green lungs” for the city. Based on their research and their field work, they focused on six measures that could be considered as a broad menu of heat reduction interventions and that could be combined in different ways to respond to specific contexts. These approaches were:

1. Unsealing hard surfaces and greening (including by increasing the tree canopy) spaces of both rest and movement in the city to catalyze various forms of public interaction and encourage stewardship of the green public realm.
2. Increasing the connectivity between green spaces to prompt a shift in aesthetic values away for example, from manicured lawns, to embrace more textured landscapes that support greater biodiversity and urban ecological value.
3. Establishing water in urban areas as a tool to think broadly about the integration of ecology into the built environment.
4. Designing for rainwater retention and absorption rather than run-off, to increase vegetation cover and habitat value.
5. Greening building roofs and facades as a way of generating additional natural surfaces.
6. Using building and landscaping materials with high albedo (heat reflectivity) to design a holistic system that will lower the surface air temperature in the neighborhood.

Also based on their research, mapping and planning analysis, and field work including conversations with local ‘stakeholders,’ they developed specific architecture /planning interventions for the sites they were assigned. In the architecture/planning interventions they proposed, they were responding specifically to the demographic and socio-economic context of the city and their site, to address both heat and historic inequities. These approaches were:

1. Reviving infrastructure
2. Connecting systems across scales
3. Enhancing programs for outdoor and indoor community spaces
4. Converting or replacing single-family housing with multifamily inter-generational living communities
5. Connecting diverse water systems such as water features, small ponds and bioswales
6. Celebrating biodiversity, for example changing zoning to allow orchards within the city

Within the larger context of who lives in a neighborhood, their experience of heat at the neighborhood level, the history of inequity, the community assets in the neighborhood (both physical, e.g., parks, and social, e.g., faith-based organizations) etc., correlating the architecture/planning interventions with very specific heat-island reduction tools, gave the students’ proposals both relevance to their specific communities/sites and a design coherence (Table 1).

Architecture/ Planning Intervention or Model	Unsealing and greening areas of rest and movement	Connecting green spaces	Establishing water in urban areas	Designing for rainwater retention and absorption	Greening roofs and facades	Using materials with high albedo
○ Reviving infrastructure	●			●		●
○ Connecting systems across scales		●	●			
○ Enhancing programs for outdoor and indoor community spaces	●	●	●			
○ Converting or replacing single-family housing with multifamily inter-generational living communities					●	●
○ Connecting diverse water systems			●	●		
○ Celebrating biodiversity	●	●			●	

Table 1. Green Lungs: Design Strategies to Heat-Island Reduction

CONCLUSION

As climate change leads to heat events that are longer and more severe, UHIs exacerbate the experience of heat for urban residents. A history of racialized planning which has led to racially and economically segregated cities, disinvestment in the poorer and minority neighborhoods, and combined with the particular challenges that come from population and economic decline, have led to conditions where the urban heat is felt most keenly in disinvested neighborhoods in legacy cities.

A case study of Toledo, Ohio, a legacy city, shows that residents are spatially segregated based on key socio-economic and demographic factors. Analysis shows concentrations by race, by poverty, by unemployment status and by homeownership status. Analysis also shows overlap between areas of concentrated minority populations, poverty, unemployment and homeownership status and areas that were redlined under the federal HOLC program in the 1940s. There is also overlap between redlined areas, average high land surface temperatures and lower percentage of tree canopy. This is consistent with previous research.

Architects and planners addressing the challenge of climate change in cities, especially urban heat, face the additional challenge of responding to the uneven impact of urban heat on residents because of the confounding factors outlined above. We sought to examine what a climate-responsive architecture and planning practice could be. As this studio experience shows, we believe that it should be one that centers a) social and spatial inequities both historical and current, b) collaboration with residents and stakeholders, and c) combines architecture/planning models or approaches with specific heat reduction best practices to develop plans that arise from the local context. Our experience showed that this is easier said than done, but it might be something to which architecture and planning practice can aspire.

NOTES

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ARCHITECTURE, ETHICS, AND TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY: EXPLORING THE DECOLONIZATION AND RE-DIAGRAMMING OF INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING AND RESIDENTIAL SPACES

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the #Feesmustfall movement in South African Higher Education from 2015 onward, coupled with calls for decolonisation and reparations within university spaces and curriculums, prompted a fundamental re-evaluation of teaching practices and course materials by educators. This necessitated critically examining their own subjectivities and the subject matter co-created within and outside classrooms, assignments, and projects.

Informed by Guattari's concept of transversality and affective onto-epistemological ethics of relationality, this paper explores a process of transformative spatial diagramming within the Honors in Architecture course at the University of the Free State (UFS). Part of a broader decolonisation project at UFS, this paper deliberates on a transversal visualisation developed in two interconnected institutional spaces: the pedagogical space of learning and teaching and a real campus space comprising a four-resident cluster. To the former, the existing curriculum and pedagogy were scrutinised and reimagined, aiming to transform not only what and how educators teach relationally but also to ethically address pedagogical spaces shaped by students, facilitators, and political constructs. This transformation effort generated the latter: a new student design project exploring transforming an institutional living space on the UFS campus. (Figure 1)

Through this design project, titled "(Re)diagramming Residences: A Transversal Lens for Transformation," students investigated existing non-relational and territorial residences on campus. Their goal was to discover new possibilities of "becoming-together" within these institutional spaces by converting insular residence spaces into more permeable private spaces connected through communal and urban-like areas. The paper argues that these reparational efforts relating to what, how, where, and for whom we learn and teach and to what, how, where, and for whom we design may foster diverse forms of "becoming-together" and enhance deterritorialised, decolonised, and posthumanist processes of subjectification.¹

Drawing on the work of Bozalek and Zembylas, this paper examines the entanglement of ethics and architectural education, emphasising the importance of socially just pedagogies that nurture relational values such as care, compassion, respect, and solidarity.² It suggests that the conceptual tools of

Deleuze and Guattari, particularly Guattari's transversal methodology and Barrad's ethical-onto-epistemology, offer valuable frameworks to interrogate the intersection of ethics, politics, and subjectivity in architectural education.³

The paper contextualises the imperative for decolonisation in university spaces, framing affective onto-epistemological ethics of relationality through a Deleuzoguattarian lens, and explicating the transversal methodology. Subsequently, it illustrates the application of this methodology in diagramming relational architecture, pedagogies, and ethics to repair two institutional spaces.

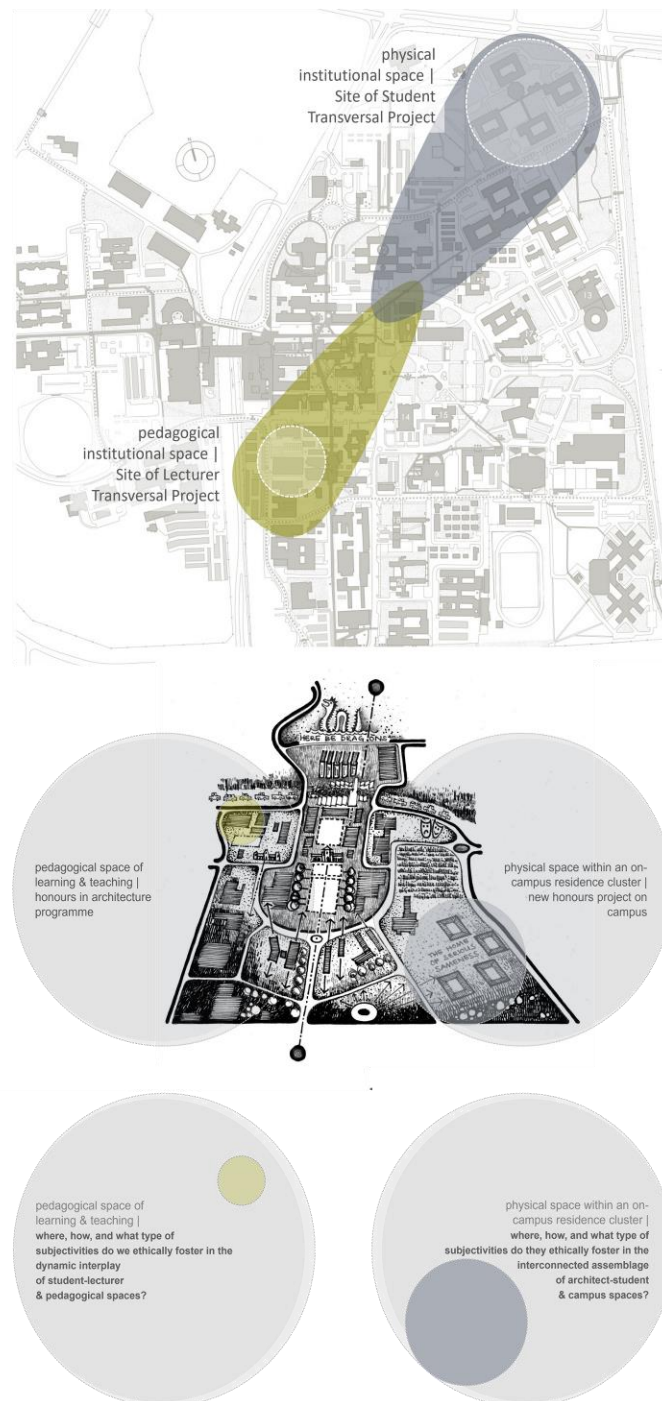


Figure 1. Campus map and diagrams of two institutional spaces by authors, hand drawing by student

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Within the national #Feesmustfall protests of 2015/2016, incidents at the UFS highlighted the local need for transformative interventions to address territorialised and racialised subjectivities, as stressed in reports, following a racially motivated initiation incident at a UFS residence and racial conflict at a UFS sports match.⁴ Transformative policies, processes and procedures were implemented as integration interventions.⁵ Interventions included appointing residence heads, including the first author, to promote social cohesion in racially segregated on-campus residences. Serving as a residence manager at a predominantly white female residence, the first author conducted research on racial integration employing a Deleuzoguattarian lens.⁶

Concurrently, informal fragmented conversations among the authors in the female residence the first author headed, converged through transversal dialogue, sparking new possibilities for curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and a design project addressing spatial effects and racialised insularity. These discussions prompted introspection on white subjectivities, merging research, diagramming, and daily life into a singular endeavour and the possibility of architecturally transforming the specific female residence and its relation to three other residences in the residence cluster.

THEORETICAL FRAMING

In envisioning a decolonised architecture education guided by socially just pedagogical methodologies, the authors' conversations delved into the intricacies of past injustices and the creative envisioning of spatially just places at the UFS. Directed by Leibowitz, this undertaking aimed not only to foster compassion and social solidarity among students but also to cultivate technical and strategic competence.⁷ Central to our approach was a critical examination of the subjectivities and spaces engendered through teaching practices, curriculum, and theories, focusing on addressing complicity in perpetuating unjust societal norms. We advocated for constructing non-hegemonic knowledge and diverse subjectivities, in other words, different ways of “being/becoming-together” through collective practices, to guide the exploration of socially just teaching methods and studio spaces.⁸

Building on Crysler's perspective, critical pedagogy in architecture education interrogates the production of knowledge, design skills, and curriculum content, questioning power relations and dominant pedagogical practices.⁹ Who creates knowledge, and for whom is this created and with what purpose? This inquiry extends to the institutional and curricular practices, facilitating transformative and empowering teaching approaches and approaches towards “being/becoming-together”.¹⁰

Ontological assumptions of assembled subjectivity

Our exploration of subjectivity aligns with Livesey's notion of assemblage, which views subjectivity as assembled, affective, and constituted in relation to other human, non-human, material, and immaterial entities.¹¹ Accentuating multiplicity, change, and “becoming”, Deleuze and Guattari's perspective of subjectivity as assembled challenges the centrality of the individual subject and prioritises relationality over fixed identities. Coleman and Ringrose emphasise the Deleuzoguattarian notion of subjectivity, defining it as a by-product of the assembled process of subjectification driven by affects, intensities, and flows between heterogeneous elements on a plane of immanence.¹² They underline that assemblage focuses on the process of change and “becoming”, rather than on the essence of being. Hence, the precedence lies in the relationships among elements and bodies rather than the individual elements, as bodies are formed through these affective and immanent interactions and connections.¹³ We draw on key concepts such as assemblages, lines of flight, the rhizome, and

“becoming” to elucidate this ontological positioning and the dynamic and interconnected nature of subject formation.

Assemblages, whether subjectivities or terrains, can undergo fixed states via territorialisation or fluid states through deterritorialisation. Deterritorialisation, facilitating the escape from a specific territory, is pivotal for change and creativity within an assemblage. Territorialisation, deterritorialisation, and reterritorialisation processes inherently shape terrains or subjectivities in social contexts. Lines of flight and deterritorialisation are intertwined, with a successful line of flight triggering assemblage deterritorialisation. This disruption fosters new connections and reorders elements within the assemblage.¹⁴

The line of flight, characterised by a series of mutations, induces a creative metamorphosis that impacts the assemblage and other interconnected assemblages.¹⁵ It represents the actualisation of implicit or virtual connections between bodies, generating new forces that enable novel capacities and possibilities for action.¹⁶

The rhizome, employed by Deleuze and Guattari to explore multiplicity, non-linearity, and connections, diverges from the traditional arboreal image of thought. Unlike the arboreal image of thought with a central taproot, the rhizome grows in any direction from the middle, forming multiple connections without hierarchy and facilitating an experimental mode of thinking.¹⁷ Described as a map rather than a tracing, the rhizome fosters an experimental approach to mapping that creates, rather than reproduces, unconscious associations. Deleuze and Guattari explicate how the rhizome, along with the assemblage, enables a multiplicitous perspective that disrupts binary oppositions.¹⁸ Bifurcating horizontally in unpredictable directions without a definite beginning or end, the rhizome challenges traditional modes of thought by facilitating connections across various sections of an assemblage or different assemblages.¹⁹ This disturbance of conventional thinking engenders change and “becoming”, fostering an unpredictable and endless understanding of subjectivity that diverges from the rational-centred Cartesian subject.²⁰

Affective ethico-onto-epistemology

Grounded in Spinozian ethics, our approach underscores the ethical significance of affective interactions in shaping subjectivities. Ethical considerations are intertwined with ontological “becoming”, as interactions that enhance the capacity to act are deemed ethically good, while those that inhibit agency are considered detrimental.²¹ This ethical framework underscores the importance of fostering positive affects and enabling diverse “becomings” within architectural education and space-making. In South Africa, where the legal framework materially and immanently inhibited the “becoming” of the racialised other, there is a compelling argument for linking “becoming” and ethics as the foundation for a socially just pedagogy and space-making. Barad discusses an ethico-onto-epistemology, accenting the interconnectedness of ethics, knowledge, and existence, highlighting our entanglement with the world.²²

"Since each intra-action matters, since the possibilities for what the world may become call out in the pause that precedes each breath before a moment comes into being and the world is remade again because the “becoming” of the world is a deeply ethical matter." Barad²³

The types of assemblages we foster in our pedagogies and in the spaces we design shape the kinds of “becomings” that are privileged over others. If architecture constitutes subjectivity (together with the human, nonhuman, material and immaterial forces, flows, intensities and affects), architectural education and production should work actively towards socially just pedagogical methods and spaces.²⁴

Transversal methodology

To operationalise our socially just pedagogy, we employ Guattari's concept of transversality as an analytical method to traverse disciplinary boundaries and connect diverse perspectives.²⁵ Transversality is a diagonal movement or dimension in an institution that disrupts verticality (power hierarchies, fixed roles, and impenetrable levels) and horizontality (insular, familiar, and homogenised spaces).²⁶ A transversal methodology can permeate the formal, rigid, and forced state of a curriculum, lecturer-student dynamics, and design thinking skills, facilitating an inclusive and equitable educational and spatial environment.²⁷ We frame transversality as an analytical method that can transverse multiple fields while connecting differences productively. By fostering open communication and collaboration across different levels and fields, transversality promotes communal knowledge and spatial production.²⁸

By implementing Guattari's concept of transversality, the curriculum was reimaged to transcend traditional power structures and encourage collaborative student engagement. This transversal approach also influenced the development of students' critical thinking and design skills, requiring them to incorporate concepts such as the rhizome and the line of flight while conceptualising socially inclusive and equitable architectural spaces. The significance of employing a transversal methodology lies in its potential to effect transformative change within institutional frameworks, reshaping how individuals perceive themselves and their relationships within the educational setting.²⁹

In summary, our theoretical framework integrates ontological assumptions of subjectivity, affective ethics, and transversal methodology to inform a socially just pedagogy in architecture education. This framework underpins our curricular interventions and underscores the imperative of fostering diverse subjectivities and relational ethics within educational and design practices.

EXPLORING TRANSFORMATION THROUGH MORPHOGENETIC VISUALIZATIONS

To examine the transformative potential of morphogenetic visualisations within institutional settings, we followed a dual process; revising the Honours pedagogy and first-semester design project.

The morphogenetic challenges encountered in the transformation process of both the former curriculum-pedagogy space and the latter residence living spaces were approached to experiment with alternative possibilities of “becoming-together”. These processes were interconnected; the challenges faced by our visualisation of the curriculum-pedagogy space resonated with the challenges faced by students in reimagining the existing residence-cluster space on the UFS campus.

In both instances, the dual transformation process was contingent upon the complex interactions between individuals, communities, and the broader institutional context. While ethically interrogating course materials, teaching methodologies, design processes and a design project to create more just and inclusive learning and dwelling spaces in the institutional environments.

The design project provided students with an opportunity to challenge and reimagine the static gendered-racial-spatial configurations within a specific residence-cluster. Similarly, the curriculum-pedagogical space underwent a process of examination and reconfiguration of nonrelevant, nonflexible and nonresponsive educational practices. Through these intertwined dual transformation processes, our aim was to uncover new pathways for fostering inclusive and just environments within our learning and teaching, and the physical residential spaces.

Transformation of the institutional learning space

In the first semester honours students engage in projects focusing on designing sustainable complex buildings within urban settings, specifically the local CBD, aiming to cultivate critical evaluation and responsibility in architectural design.³⁰

Through transversal mapping, the first-semester honours program revealed siloed, static, Euro-centric curricula and learning spaces lacking an urban ethics component. Studio spaces were detached from the multifaceted, dense, and diverse urban environment, and hierarchical classroom and studio setups hindered knowledge discovery. Different projects' repeated outcomes and limited students' tempo-spatial immersion in urban realities perpetuated a narrow understanding of urban dynamics, overlooking multiplicities and relational spaces.³¹

Due to this pedagogical space, past projects often displayed contextual indifference and partiality towards the new building itself, neglecting urban dweller subjectivities and social fabric.³² A significant reason for the lack of relational care towards the urban environment can be attributed to students' general unfamiliarity with what Muminovic unpacks as the “real essences” or multiplicities of the CBD.³³ These tendencies reflect a curriculum and facilitation approach that falls short in introducing and addressing urban complexities and fostering an ethic of relationality among students towards the human and non-human urban environment.³⁴

Addressing these shortcomings, Design, Theory, and History content was reviewed and repackaged thematically, transversally, and transdisciplinary, incorporating knowledge from various academic and popular fields and stitching all forms of knowledge into the local dense urban environments. Multiple first-semester projects were reduced to a single project consisting of small creative assignments that transcended boundaries between silos. Class-flip and peer-led discussions rendered lecturers' facilitators and allowed students to actively participate in information sharing, new knowledge production, and course adaptation based on their own feedback, desires, and needs. Urban walks, on-site discussions, and guerrilla installations familiarised students with human and non-human elements within complex urban networks and dematerialised the pedagogical spaces of the class and campus, promoting dialogue and reflection.

Addressing students' unfamiliarity with the CBD, the "(Re)diagramming Residences" project introduced urbanity – the residence-cluster sited on our small city-like campus analogously introduced the figurations of urbanity. Within a single project, smaller explorative exercises enabled students to map, discover, question, and creatively reconnect the needs, desires, and multiple essences of subjectivities, elements, and bodies in the campus assemblage. Ethical considerations were foregrounded in the curriculum, challenging students to critically examine the values and needs shaping their design decisions.

Transformation of the institutional residential space

In situating the residence-cluster project, the authors perceived the campus as a territorial enclave resembling a gated community with a modernist layout in concentric circles. The rectorate dominates the core, surrounded by academic and administrative faculties, with support and residence spaces located in the outermost peripheral circle. This campus configuration underscores spatial separation between the institutional core and residences, with limited mediation between them. To the authors' minds, the hierarchical and arboreal spatial organisation impacts social interactions and community cohesion. (Figure 2)

The residence-cluster – the focus of the "(Re)diagramming Residences" project – is adjacent to the main gate, accessed via various campus security checkpoints, and comprises four identical residences surrounding a central service space. Each three-storey building features corridors, single-sex dormitory rooms, and communal bathrooms placed around a central courtyard. Despite the presence of semi-private communal spaces on the ground floor, the courtyard remains predominantly underutilised. We typologically assessed the residence-cluster as four static territorialised spaces, each an island on the arboreal campus assemblage. However, our pre-evaluation was not communicated to students. What we did introduce during informal class discussion were the Deleuzeguattarian figures

and ethical frame, and the transversal method of questioning assemblages and mutating fixed connections.

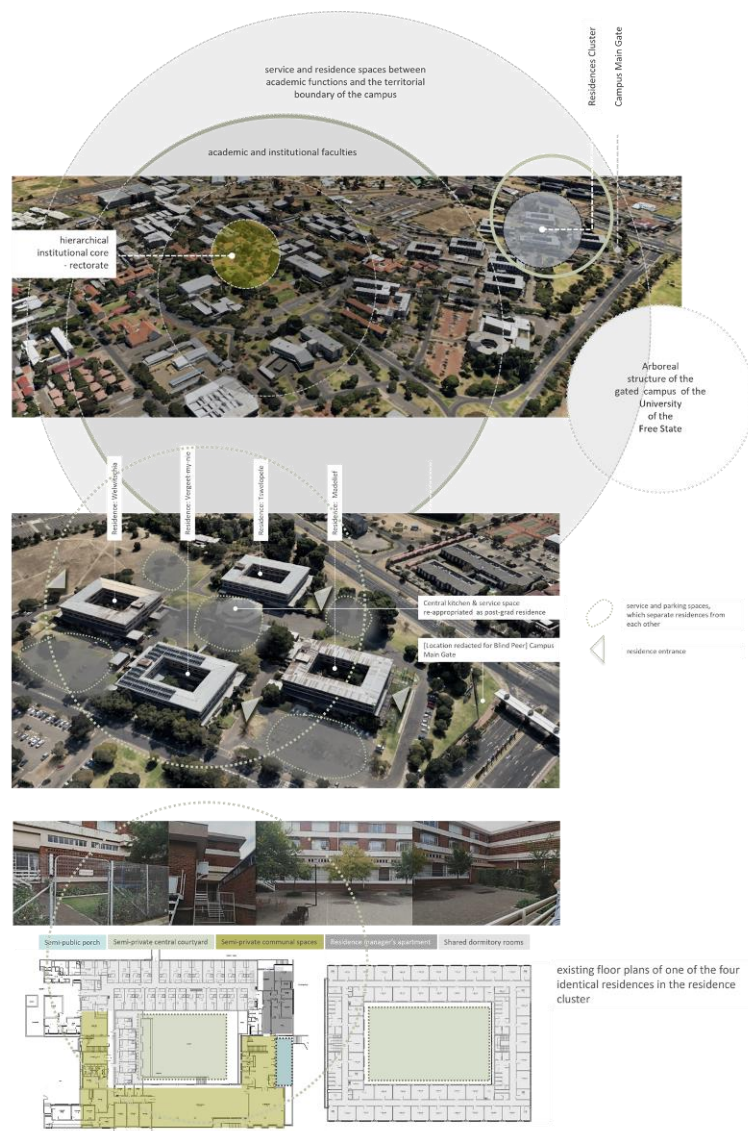


Figure 2. Campus and residence-cluster layout and residence plans by authors

Students mapped, engaged, and reimagined the campus as a just social space, specifically the residence cluster, constantly asking: “What kind of subjectivities emerge from design practices in this space?” Relentlessly thinking with Deleuze and Guattari.

Five-member student-partnerships embarked on a transdisciplinary journey involving design, history, and theory. Through various assignments, they sought to redefine the boundaries of the campus and the essences of the resident-cluster.³⁵

The use of abstract maps became a pivotal tool in diagramming historical and current relationships, transcending traditional notions of space and showing the relational connections and affects between temporal and emplaced subjectivities and bodies. Showcased in a school exhibition, these maps advanced student-led discussions and interpretations. Rather than reducing entities to a single essence, students embraced the dynamic interplay of expressive and material intensities, forming fluid concepts of place and recognising multiplicities. (Figure 3)

The perceived functional planning order prompted critical questions about meeting spaces, connections to the outside, linkages to pathways, orientation of residences, recreational facilities, trees, building conversations, and considerations for student mothers and day-care.

The transversal method facilitated the exploration of collective changes, starting at the campus boundary, moving to the socio-spatial environments on campus, the missing networks and connection between the residence cluster and ending with redesigned residence rooms, challenging conventional territories and edges, transcending binary qualifications of space. (Figure 4)

This project ignited students’ capabilities to unravel unknowns within the familiar campus, recognising diverse relationships and repressed voices, ultimately cultivating greater relationships with the human and non-human subjectivities and bodies on campus.

Through rhizomatic questioning, students deterritorialised the rigid residential territory, creating flows and lines of flight, addressing these queries. Designs aimed at inclusive, diverse transformations that could foster new subjectivities and “becomings”, challenging the normative institutional space and its impact on racialised and gendered subjectivities.

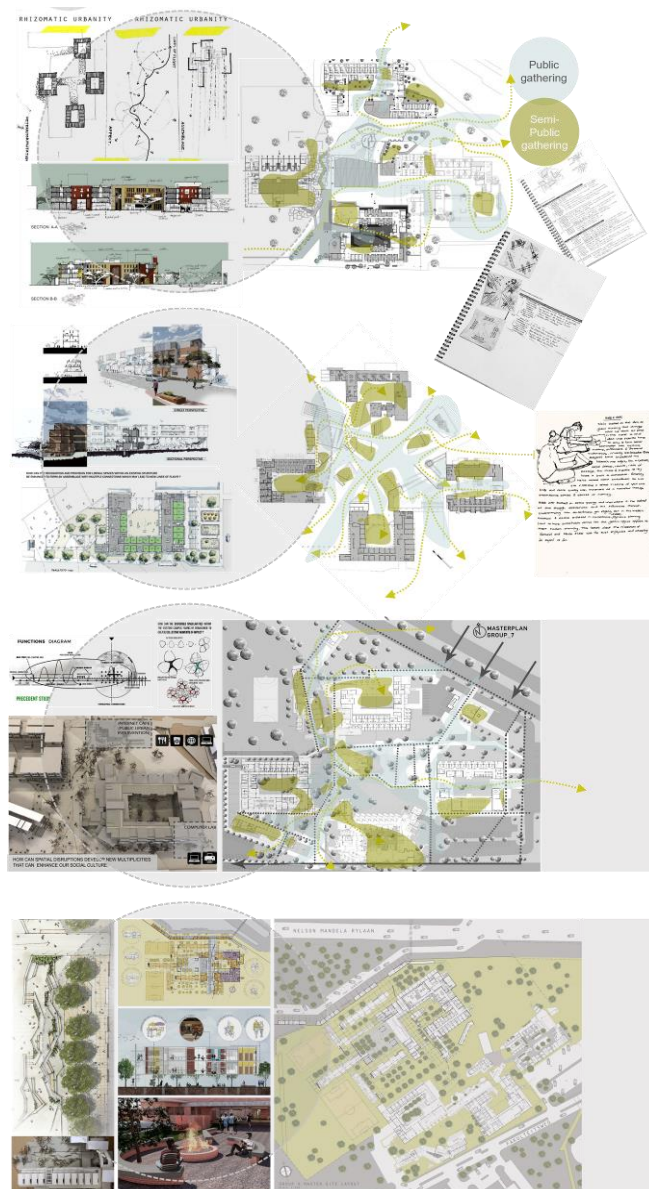


Figure 4. Final designs by students

CONCLUSION

Challenges in both transformation processes underscore the need for a holistic approach considering the interplay between various subjectivities and the urban environment. The residence-cluster project allowed students to apply theoretical concepts to a real-world context, starting with our own campus as a case study. Pedagogically, we sought to disrupt spatial hierarchies and empower students as active participants in knowledge creation and dissemination.

Together, students and lecturers explored the entanglement of ethics, architecture, and architectural education, considering socially just pedagogical and physical spaces.³⁶

The transformation of both the pedagogical space and the residence cluster emerged from group discussions, fostering a non-hierarchical transversal knowledge production process. Guided by the rhizome, deterritorialisation, multiplicity, and the line of flight, we and then students attempted to intervene, probe, diagram, and redesign the affects spaces have on the type of subjectivities we hope to foster.

Ultimately, with its failures, the student-lecturer assemblage aimed to be mindful of how elements within an assemblage can enhance the capacity to act, and produce joyful affected subjectivities, opening new processes of “becoming-together”.

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- ¹¹ Graham Livesey, "Assemblage," in *The Deleuze Dictionary: Revised Edition*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 18-19.
- ¹² Rebecca Coleman and Jessica Ringrose, "Introduction: Deleuze and Research Methodologies," in *Deleuze and Research Methodologies*, eds. Rebecca Coleman and Jessica Ringrose (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 5;
Henk Oosterling, and Siebe Thissen, *Chaos Ex Machina: Het Ecosofisch Werk van Félix Guattari op die Kaart Gezet* (Rotterdam: Centrum Filosofie en Kunst, 1998);
Diana Masny, "Rhizoanalytic Pathways in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 19, no.5 (2013): 339-348, doi: 10.1177/1077800413479559.
- ¹³ Jon Roffe and Hannah Stark, *Deleuze and the Non/Human* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- ¹⁴ Adrian Parr, "Deterritorialisation/Reterritorialisation," in *The Deleuze Dictionary: Revised Edition*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 71-72.
- ¹⁵ Tamsin Lorraine, "Lines of Flight," in *The Deleuze Dictionary: Revised Edition*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 147.
Paul Patton, "Freedom," in *The Deleuze Dictionary: Revised Edition*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 117-118;
Kenneth Surin, "Micropolitics," *The Deleuze Dictionary: Revised Edition*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 164.
- ¹⁶ Lorraine, "Lines of flight," 147.
- ¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze, and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 26.

¹⁸ Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2008).

¹⁹ Deleuze, 6-7; Masny, "Rhizoanalytic Pathways in Qualitative Research," 344.

²⁰ Masny, 339.

²¹ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory. The Portable Rosi Braidotti* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Baruch Spinoza, *The Ethics of Spinoza: The Road to Inner Freedom* (New York: Citadel Press, 1957); Edward Thornton, *On lines of flight: A Study of Deleuze and Guattari's Concept* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Royal Holloway, University of London, 2018).

²² Barad, "Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter," 185.

²³ Barad, 185.

²⁴ Simone Brott, *Architecture for a Free Subjectivity: Deleuze and Guattari at the Horizon of the Real* (London: Routledge, 2016).

²⁵ Guattari, *Psychoanalysis and transversality: Texts and interviews 1955-1971*.

²⁶ Guattari, 112.

²⁷ Katerina Matsa, "The Relationship inside the Psychiatric Institution between the Clinic and the Politics of Emancipation, according to Félix Guattari: The experience of 18Up," in *Schizoanalysis and Ecosophy: Reading Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2018), 231-241.

²⁸ Tan, "Decolonizing Architectural Education: Towards an Affective Pedagogy."

²⁹ Andrew Goffey, "Guattari and transversality: Institutions, Analysis and Experimentation," *Radical Philosophy* 195 (Jan-Feb 2016): 42.

³⁰ Conventionally, the first semester of the honour's Design program facilitates projects focusing on the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of complex buildings in complex heterogenic urban settings. This 14-week program guides the architect-students to critically evaluate and take responsibility for designing a new multi-story, multi-functional building in the local CBD. Assessment outcomes concentrate on attentive listening and critical response to the self-selected client (usually a private company or public institution) and urban environment's needs and desires.

³¹ Existing knowledge sources offered cross-module learning and included the needed learning outcomes for honours level, however the information sources were mostly packed in silos and resulted in: (a) the retrospective application of theoretical justification to an already conceived design solution, and (b) Insular history essays, which did not concern the historiography of the past or history of the specific context within which students engage with Design; as well as (c) once-off urban site visit and analysis. Due to time restrictions, such site visits quickly lead to an analogue interpretation of the meso-context which informs and intertwines with the specific design project's site. Students tended to retract from the non-relatable urban challenges. Working from above, as opposed to working from within the urban street, many students overlooked what Jane Jacobs calls the sensual urban experience within the politics of public space. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992); Jane Jacobs, *The Economy of Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969).

At the same time the potentiality within the expressive and material context of the street as a place where social interaction is constructed, diversities are experiences, and social relationships are affected, were overlooked.

³² Although past design projects successfully explored environmentally sustainable principles within complex buildings, social responsibility was directed only to the new building itself, the urban noumena, image, and map, and the newly designed building's homogenous user and client. Responsibility towards urban "real essences" and the surrounding urban social fabric was differentiated from the socio-economic and environmental sustainability principles operative on the boundary and inside the newly designed, static, and insular buildings. Non-porous boundaries distinguished the client and occupant, who belonged inside the newly designed building (on an open urban site), from the non-relatable urban sphere surrounding it. Design solutions illustrated contextual indifference and, subsequently architectural singularity. The buildings were responsible entities in themselves but only engaged hastily in making socially just urban spaces. Projects often perpetuated the urban apathy and inhumanness attuned to the broad criticism levelled against modernist architecture and functionalist urbanism. Many designs did not accommodate the human and non-human differences and entanglements immanent in complex 'real' urban settings. In review, designs seemed to latch on to the qualification of implicit gentrification, more than social and spatial justice.

³³ Building on Deleuze's notion of "real essences," as well as Baugh and Delanda's mediations on this concept, Muminovic summarises "real essences" or multiplicities as a reconceptualisation of the sole permanent essence of a being. Entities consist of transformative expressive intensities and material intensities, forming the essences of place. Muminovic defines place as an assemblage consisting of a mixture of different levels of material and expressive roles, making it a fluid and fixed concept.

Milica Muminovic, (2015). "Places as Assemblages: Paradigm Shift or Fashionable Nonsense?," *Athens Journal of Architecture* 1, no.4 (October 2015): 303-305.

Bruce Baugh, "Real Essences without Essentialism," in *Deleuze and Philosophy*, Constantin V. Boundas (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 31; 37;

Manuel Delanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 9-10.

³⁴ In reflection, we ascribed the shortcomings in the curriculum to three factors: First, the students generally had limited pre-understanding of urban complexity, especially in the 'real' South African context. Secondly, the programmatic and functional complexity of conventional design projects hampered students' engagement with unfamiliar urban challenges. Lastly, the lack of urban experiences offered to students in the course, as well as the lack of a clear urban ethics content. Lectures on the history of urbanity were also generally Euro-centric, dependent on cartography, images, and planning precedents leading to an understanding of typological continuities and indifference towards urban change, multiplicities, and relational just spaces.

³⁵ The diagramming process began with discussing our own subjectivities, values, and vulnerabilities and writing a haiku on an individual essence. PechaKuchas interpreted campus fragilities and boundaries, revealing control, segregation, and exclusion. Partnerships abstracted edges and thresholds, identifying weaknesses and presenting findings in-studio discussions. Student-designed guerrilla installations, strategically placed in potential gathering points, captured the multiple essences of campus communities and their interactions with non-human elements offering potential lines of flight from established spatial and societal norms. A collaborative theory-design assignment envisioned the transformation of edge conditions to create new, porous social assemblages and connections between the campus and the city.

³⁶ Working in groups and being intertwined in student-partnerships, students and lecturers delved into their unique subjectivities, questioning and re-imagining possible connections between social and spatial elements in the learning and residence spaces.

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A WINDOW TO GLOBAL INTERACTION THROUGH OMAN CULTURE AND TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE, CASE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Oman is a Middle Eastern country and a member of the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council). It is generally an oil-based economy. However, recently the Sultanate of Oman had to deal with a serious threat of global oil price fluctuations causing economic uncertainty.¹

All over the world, tourism started to be recognized as a strategic path for economic diversification². Oman has everything to provide to its visitors, natural resources, a wealth of vernacular architecture and archaeological sites.³ Accordingly, in 1999, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos started to give his guidelines in his speech commemorating the 29th National day to prepare a new strategy to grow the tourism industry as a sustainable socio-economic activity. The adopted vision was to reflect Oman's historic, environmental, and cultural heritage, and the mission was to assist economic diversification and conservation of cultural integrity.⁴ Since then, important steps have been taken to support tourism to be the next prime source of income after gas and oil.⁵ The Ministry of Heritage and Culture started a program of documentation and listing the rich heritage, besides devising strategic master plans for adaptive reuse. An agreement with Nottingham Trent University was signed a Funding and Technical Support.⁶ The state has earmarked on an eight-year plan (2011-2015) when they designated a large budget for the development of tourism infrastructure; road networks, new airport construction, besides the inauguration of an extra 3000 hotel rooms. Also, tourism as a key feature in economic diversification is highlighted in the 2020-2040 Vision. In addition, the state allocated a sizeable budget to support human resources for all specializations including the tourism field.⁷ Moreover, the selected strategy towards the ONSS (Oman National Spatial Strategy) prepared in 2023, considered "tourism" a prime economic pillar in creating career opportunities, improving cultural heritage and sustainable economic development.⁸ Despite the previously mentioned high potential for tourism in Oman and those noteworthy efforts and policies, Oman was ranked 74th in the world as a tourism destination in the year 2021, Figure 1 illustrates the number of tourists in Oman compared to the average of the 12 countries in Western Asia represented by the red line between 1995-2022.⁹

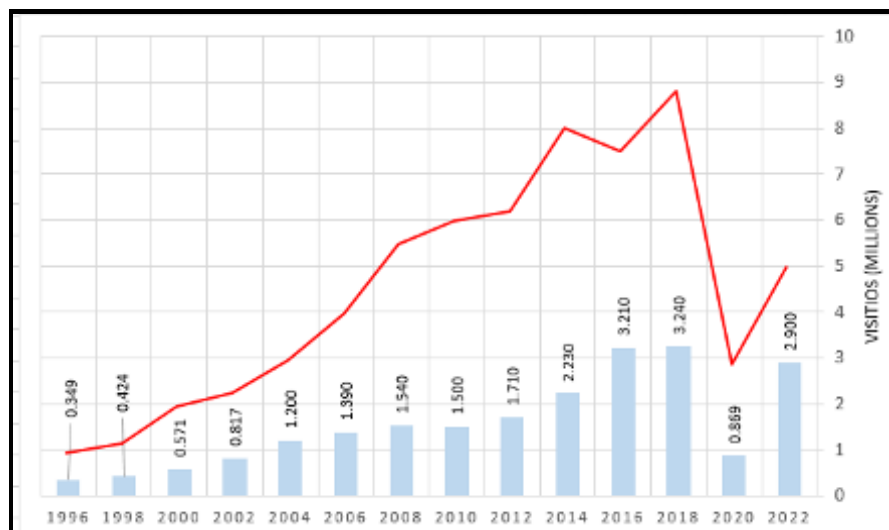


Figure 1. A comparison between the number of tourists in Oman and the 12 countries of Western Asia.¹⁰ (Prepared by Dr. Alaa Edein Qoussini).

During the first two decades of the twenty first century, entrepreneurship started to play a vital role, all over the world as a development driver. Oman started to enact legislations to place the entrepreneurial theme into practice.¹¹ The first usufruct contract was signed in 2017 with the Bawader International Company – a local entrepreneur to invest in the Nizwa Fort historical monument. The new vision of the company for Nizwa Fort to be as a medium to experience the Omani intangible history throughout a variety of events, resulted in increasing the number of visitors by 251% between 2021 & 2022.¹² Jibal Al Hajr- Hotels and Resorts Company, which signed a usufruct with TMHC in 2021, adopted the same vision for Muttrah Fort besides taking advantage of the magnificent panoramic view of the Muttrah Corniche, resulted in an increase of visitors by 365%, between 2021 and 2022.¹³ Those two examples provided a window to global interaction through the charming experience of the Omani culture within a vernacular architecture framework. They were also considered as a new approach to achieve Oman Vision 2020-2040 for economic diversification. Consequently, an extra 13 historical sites were assigned to local entrepreneurs between the years of 2021-2023, with a plan to sign an additional 25 usufruct contracts until 2025.¹⁴

The main objective of this research is to discuss the new vision of historic monuments provided by the Omani entrepreneurs as an approach for global communications and revealing the opportunities and challenges in two case studies in Oman. In addition, some obstacles confronting the development of tourism as an economic pillar in Oman and similar countries are explicated.

As a quick review of prior literature; Helen Spencer discussed a compilation of quotations about culture in 2012¹⁵ and Simon Nowell discussed the Omani culture in 2024.¹⁶ In addition, a universal guide to merge intercultural learning was discussed in 2013 by Jeremy Jones.¹⁷ With respect to traditional Architecture, Salma Samar Damluji outlined the architecture of Oman in 1998,¹⁸ and Khalid Ali and Einar Hasen advanced Oman's heritage as an extra ordinary journey in 2023.¹⁹ As for entrepreneurship, guidelines for the entrepreneurs were provided by Alice Bentinct and Matt Clifford in 2022,²⁰ also by Hayley Paige in 2023,²¹ and finally, by Catalina Daniels and James Sherman in 2023.²² Patricia Adam discussed female entrepreneurs' challenges in 2022.²³ Globalization was discussed in many editions. For example, Roni Kay and Devin Joshi discussed globalization and international evolution in 2024.²⁴ Also, Manfred Steger discussed in 2024 globalization in the current century.²⁵ Finally, cultural tourism which was discussed recently in many references; Melanie Smith provides a framework to analyze the complication of cultural tourism in 2016,²⁶ while Hilary Gros

provided cultural tourism in 2020 that tourism as an umbrella approach for cultural tourism.²⁷ Cultural Heritage and Tourism, the same area of this paper was discussed by Dallen Timothy in 2020.²⁸ Finally, Greg Richards called for the rethinking of Cultural Tourism from an innovative approach in 2021.²⁹

This paper starts with a study of definitions, then a glance at Oman's vernacular architecture. Next, a discussion of tourism in Oman - opportunities and weaknesses. Finally, the two case studies will be elucidated, followed by a conclusion.

The methodology applied is a close interpretation and scanning of previous literature, besides interviews with the two most successful entrepreneurs who were authorized to run two historical monuments. Another interview was conducted with a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (TMHT). Those three interviews were the only source of information for the case study analysis in the fourth point - to the best knowledge of the author-there are no released documents or reports about the entrepreneurship in the tourism sector in Oman. Finally, a conclusion. In addition, charts, were prepared and conducted through Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet Software to analyze some of the collected data. The main findings were that involving the entrepreneurs with their business acumen, innovative ideas, and controlled risks, which resulted in a dramatic rise of visitors, supports the Sultanate's plans of economic diversification. In addition, the new vision of the entrepreneurs of the traditional monuments as lively destinations in order to experience the Omani intangible culture added interesting and enjoyable aspects to the visitors' perception. In effect, this opened a window for global interconnection.

STUDY OF RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

This research starts by going briefly through some definitions of the main keywords of the research.

Culture

Merriam Webster's Dictionary refers to culture as the social forms, customary thoughts, tangible features of a religious, ethnic, or social group of people.³⁰ Also, Friedrich Ragette provided another definition of culture as if it was prepared to cover the intangible hypothesis, styles, regulations, values and issues of community.³¹

Globalization

Stephen Magu provided a comprehensive definition of "Globalization" merging between the ones mentioned in three different references as "the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual".³²

Tourism

Merriam Webster defines tourism as the experience of traveling for entertainment.³³ Another definition was given by John Walton as the procedure and act of going away from home seeking relaxation and pleasure.³⁴

Architecture

Merriam Webster gives four definitions for architecture, the most important one is; Architecture is the practice of art of designing and structure construction.³⁵ Peter Collins et al. defines "Architecture" as the art and method of designing and construction as a recognized form to responding to practical, aesthetic, and functional purposes.³⁶

Entrepreneur

Dr. Sokhalingam et al. mentioned that “Innovation” is the main concept of entrepreneurship that means to do things in a diverse way than the common ones away from the strict rules.³⁷

Adam Hays defines an “Entrepreneur” as a one who starts a new business, affording many risks, taking many initiatives, and basking the rewards.³⁸

A GLANCE AT THE VERNACULAR OMANI ARCHITECTURE

Oman’s culture and architecture are stretched in history over thousands of years³⁹. Oman possesses a fabric of more historical buildings per square kilometer than most of the Arab countries; There are more than 500 forts⁴⁰ and 1,000 archaeological sites,⁴¹ some of them are listed as UNESCO world heritage sites.⁴² The Omani architecture was shaped through centuries, keeps a harmonious feature with fabulous sensitivity, estimate of the surrounding environment, colors, human scale and materials.⁴³ The Omani ancient settlements are brilliant examples of people’s capability to deal with harsh environmental situations and challenging topography.⁴⁴ The citadels and forts of Oman are the most prominent features of the Sultanate’s architecture.⁴⁵ One of the Omani forts-Bahla fort is included in the UNESCO world heritage monuments.⁴⁶ When Oman started its modernization in the 1970, a type of sustainability between the traditional architecture fabric and the contemporary one with a harmony blend of height, color, and style,⁴⁷ which gives the urban areas a unique sense of authenticity as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. *The Harmony Between Vernacular Omani Architecture and Contemporary One.*⁴⁸

TOURISM IN OMAN - OPPORTUNITIES AND WEAKNESSES

Globally, tourism was acknowledged as a key player in socio-economic development. It is a part of the “Global Village Concept”.⁴⁹ The tourism industry proved its economic potential through the commercialization of history, culture, nature, religions, and traditions. Oman is gifted with an amazing variation of tourism amenities. According to the International Travel Magazine, the Sultanate is among the top ten tourist destinations. In addition to its wealth of vernacular architecture, Oman has a real wealth of natural resources; long shore line with pristine coast, the globe’s best rolling sand dunes, shaped beautiful mountains, and Musandam pointed out as Norway of Arabia. Furthermore, the Sultanate is an inexpensive, safe tourist destination with genuinely friendly people provide incomparable hospitality.⁵⁰ Given the fact that Oman is facing a threat with its oil- economic base

with its fluctuating price, the political leadership of Oman decided to adopt economic diversification as a decisive option.⁵¹ His Majesty Sultan Qaboos as was mentioned before, announced in his speech during the 29th National Day that a new strategy to develop the tourism industry has to be set and fully supported to find a place in an intense and highly competitive international market.⁵² Once the decision of supporting tourism as a second economic base was taken in 1999, all the state authorities commenced to set plans, schemes, and take action as was clarified in the introduction.

There is no doubt that there is a noticeable development in both infra- and superstructure that helps and maintains traditions, culture, religion, and archaeological sites in all the Sultanate's regions. For example, Sumahram lost city in Dhofar, development of airports in Muscat, Sohar, Salalah, Ras-Al Had, Duqum, and Adam, upgrading the seaports at Shalala, Muscat, Khasab, and Sohar. Also, the beautification of Muttrah corniche, old Muscat, and Muscat city.

All the mentioned developments and efforts reflected positively on regional development over tourism. However, to check the success of the Omani authorities in accomplishing the set objectives and plans, the following statistics and facts have to be revealed. The government's plans to prepare the Omani human resources for the tourism industry assumed that in the Ministerial decree No. 165/2003 Omani employment by 2007 was 100% in restaurants, 83% in airlines, 80% in travel agents and 75% in 5/4/3 star hotels, In spite of a robust support by the government, the achieved rates were not met. The achieved rates in 2013- are 59.3% in airline agencies, 53.36% in tourism agencies, 29.19% in accommodation, and 62.87% in car rental agencies with 39.61%.⁵³ In addition, the Ministry of Tourism was established at the beginning of the current century, aiming to achieve four objectives. One of them is developing the tourism industry's contribution to the GDP from 0.8% to about 5% in the year 2020,⁵⁴ the recent statistics show that the tourism industry's contribution to the GDP is 2.4% in the year 2022.⁵⁵

Based on the above-mentioned, new approaches have to be adopted, which will be discussed in the following point.

CAS STUDY- NIZWA FORT AND MUTTRAH FORT

“Innovation is the core concept of entrepreneurship”.⁵⁶ This is exemplified in the following two local case studies. In addition, another principle was successfully applied that “Tourism is entertainment”. This perspective focused on cultural tourism to be diversity event-centered, which provides the required type of entertainment.⁵⁷

Case Study 1- Nizwa Fort

Nizwa Fort was built in the 9th century and renovated in the 17th century.⁵⁸ Figure 3.



Figure 3. Nizwa Fort and Some Current Activities' Photos⁵⁹

Ms. Badria Al Busaidia, Director of the Department of Castles, Forts and Historical Monuments, mentioned that the inception of this cooperation with local entrepreneurs dated back to 2016, by the initiative of Bawader International L.L.C. Company to sign a usufruct contract with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to invest in Nizwa Fort. The said company proposed to turn the fort into an event-centered destination to experience the Omani intangible culture, history, local folklore -500 performances were conducted over the previous 5 years-, handicrafts, environment, and artworks, besides local food. The proposal also included the involvement of the local community by creating financial support for the house-wives through preparing local food meals during the events, handicrafts men by providing them with an allocated space and marketing their products, besides the local traditional folklore bands which supports the sustainability of traditional arts.⁶⁰

During a site visit, an interview was conducted with the chairman of the mentioned company; Mohsen Ambusaidi, who identified the allocated architectural are as shown in figure 4.⁶¹

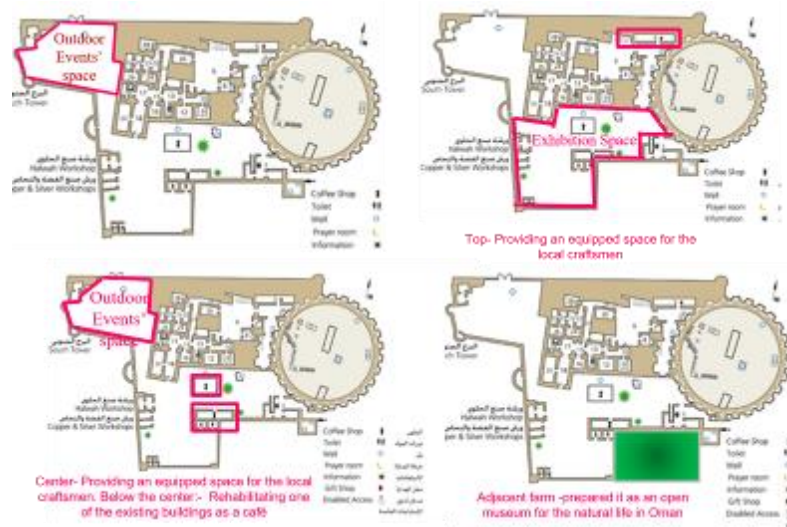


Figure 4. The Added Activities to Nizwa Fort and Allocated Spaces⁶²

The above-mentioned was reflected positively on increasing the number of visitors in 2022, to reach 193,000, compared with the other two forts that were most visited in the same governorate; the Interior Governorate is shown in Figure 5. It is worth mentioning that the Jibrin Fort was also assigned to another local entrepreneur. Both of the assigned forts to entrepreneurs achieved a higher number of visitors than Bahla Fort, which is listed in the UNESCO world heritage monuments.

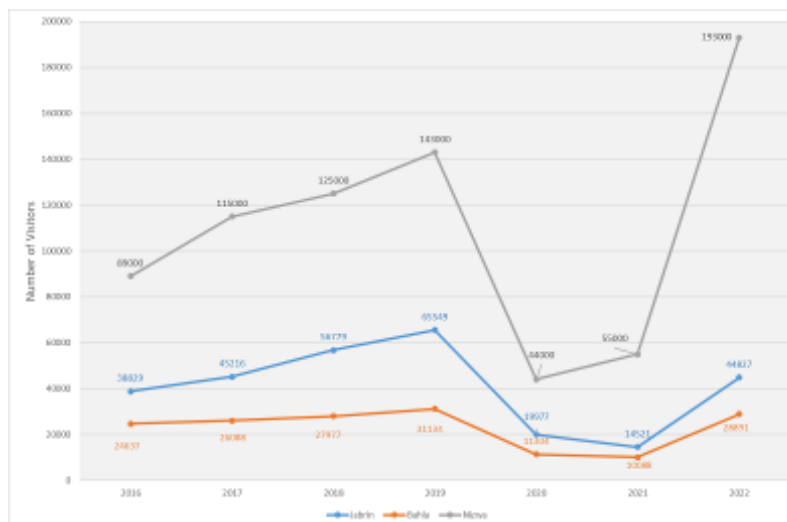


Figure 5. A study of the sum of visitors to the most three visited traditional Forts in the Interior Governorate including the Case Study; Nizwa Fort⁶³ (Chart prepared by Dr. Alaa Edein Quossini)

Case Study 2- Muttrah Fort

Muttrah Fort is located in Muscat, the capital. It is believed to be built in 1507 and restored in 1980. However, it was opened for visitors in 2018.⁶⁴ Figure 6.



Figure 6. Muttrah Fort and Some Current Activities' Photos⁶⁵

The usufruct of Muttrah Fort was assigned to Jibal Al Hajr-Hotels and Resorts Company in 2022. A meeting was conducted with Mr. Hani Al Kindi, Chief Executive Officer of the said company. Mr Al Kindi said that the original agreement with TMHC was to turn the fort into a library. However, with a business sense, Mr Hani took the full responsibility of adopting a new vision of the project to turn it into a café. The Ministry showed enough flexibility to accept this new situation based on the tremendous increase in the visitors' numbers. Some other decisions have been taken shared with the above reason for the mentioned success; the best café brands were selected with a special design of the cups to reflect the glory of the monument, and a space was dedicated for events and exhibitions. The first event was a theatrical performance with Omani artists' painting works, local handicrafts, and gifts. The event had a resounding success such that 4,000 guests in four days, including some diplomatic corps members, attended it. This number of attendees is sharply contrasted with the previous rate of 35 visitors per day, taking into account that the capacity of the fort is 120 standing up, and 85 seats. In addition, the company facilitated opportunities for extra community participation by

offering a selling outlet for the fabrics inspired by Omani arts, prepared by the 30 women of the” Sidab Women Society” and conducting a variety of workshops. Allocated spaces to the activities in muttrah fort are shown in Figure 7.⁶⁶

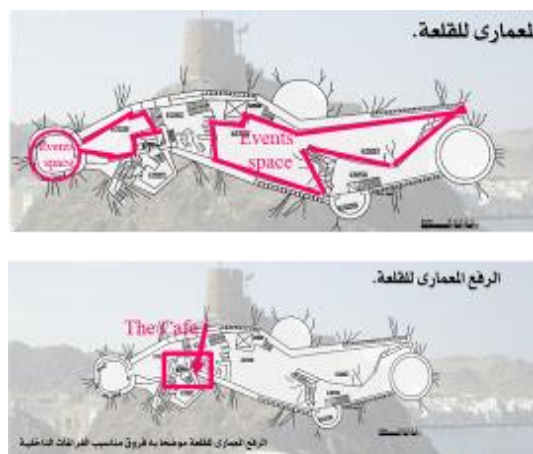


Figure 7. Allocated Spaces to The Activities in Muttrah Fort⁶⁷

The abovementioned new perspective of Muttrah Fort led to an enormous increase of visitors to the fort during one year, as shown in Figure 8, with a total number of 37,700 visitors compared with the other two forts that were most visited; Bait Mokm and Qurayat Fort which are run by TMHC.

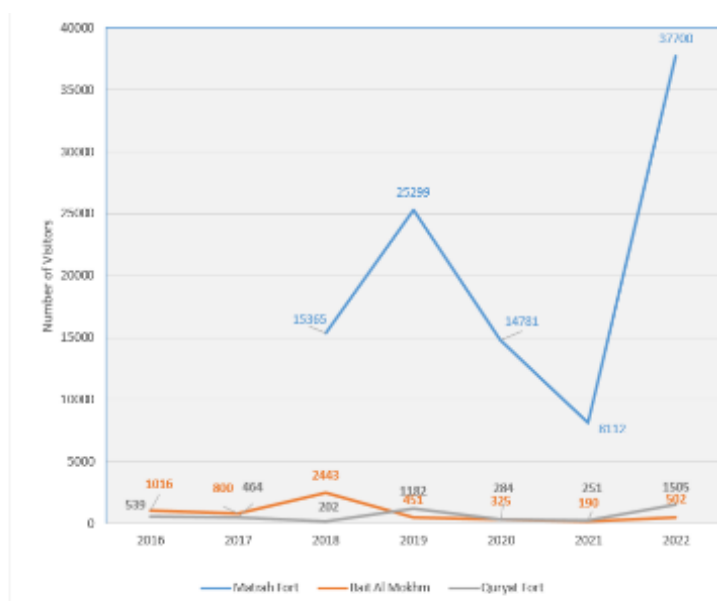


Figure 8. Comparison between the Number of Visitors to the Most Three Visited Forts in Muscat.⁶⁸ (Chart prepared by Dr. Alaa Edein Quossini)

Moreover, to overcome an important obstacle, the café level is +38 m high, with 120 steps, which limits the accessibility to the elderly and handicapped. Jibal Al Hajr proposed to add an inclined electric lift, with a capacity of up to 16 people and signed an agreement with a specialized company in Greece in July 2023⁶⁹. Figure 9.



Figure 9. A Proposal for an Inclined Electric Lift to Enhance Accessibility to The Elderly and Handicapped ⁷⁰

However, The Muscat municipality did not approve the proposal yet for fear of the mountain's safety, in spite of proposing concrete injection option by the specialized international company.

CONCLUSION

- The economic diversification adopted by almost all the oil-based economies of the GCC countries is a crucial target that requires the cooperation of all a nation's state authorities, communities, media, and investors.
- The overall value of the tourism sector in a state's comprehensive development is has been recognized globally, and that led to many countries pursuing tourism development as a major priority.
- In spite of Oman possessing a remarkable variety of touristic experiences and destinations, the current policies, schemes, and procedures were not enough to achieve the state strategic goal of increasing tourism to be the second biggest industry in the country after oil and gas.
- The new path adopted by of Oman to allow local entrepreneurs with their innovative ideas, business sense, flexibility, community outreach and controlled risk ability, provided a very successful approach to support the state's strategic goals of economic diversification.
- The government and official authorities have to show more flexibility in dealing with those entrepreneurial tourism projects.
- The directions set by the Omani political leadership to support tourism from the perspective of Omani culture and identity contributed to preserving Omani heritage, securing the cultural sustainability, and safeguarding Oman's wealth of heritage to the coming generations.
- Finally, it is worth mentioning that the remarkable traditional monuments with their free form and human scale provided a charming and attractive ambience for conducting events, rather than those contemporary straight lines and cold spaces, which means that traditional architecture has more to offer than contemporary ones.

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TRAUMA APPROACH IN SOCIO-SPATIAL STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION

The connection between trauma and socio-spatial studies is rooted in the profound impact traumatic events can exert on individuals' external world, influencing their subjective experiences of pain, particularly when such events lead to the deterioration of their interpersonal connections. Trauma, in this context, encompasses distressing experiences that can leave lasting psychological and emotional effects on social relations, concurrently influencing spatial dynamics from personal spaces to entire communities and cities, notably shaping their approach to planning, spatial practice, and narrative production.

Researching trauma within culture, as expressed through pathos, involves identifying clues and signs within cultures marked by ruptures and silences. Traumatic processes within the psyche bear resemblance to the concept of the death drive, manifesting as disruptions, silences, and obstacles to symbolic representation. This often results in alienated projective identifications, leading to displaced manifestations, particularly evident in ex-centric urban environments. Thus, architecture emerges as an empirical signifier in this endeavour.

The paper proceeds by looking at the insights into trauma within socio-spatial studies, focusing on small-scale spaces such as small towns, villages, and quilombos. To accomplish this, we turn to Regência Augusta, situated approximately 75 miles from the capital of Espírito Santo in southeastern Brazil. Regência Augusta serves as a particular case study, offering insights into trauma within socio-spatial contexts following the socio-environmental disaster of the Fundão iron ore dam collapse in 2015.

Trauma, Ferenczi and collective memory

Trauma transcends the defensive capacities of the psyche, implicating both internal psychic processes and external events. It signifies a breakdown in the relationship between the individual and the big Other,¹ representing an encounter with the unrepresentable aspects of suffering. Trauma introduces a unique temporality characterized by an absence of conventional time, wherein the present is unattainable and elusive, akin to a state of suspended existence. This temporal distortion, akin to death, defies representation by the unconscious and disrupts the subject's historical temporality, imparting an ineffable knowledge.

In moments of trauma, individuals confront the unknown within themselves, experiencing an overwhelming excess that leads to an encounter with the Other, perceived as a stranger within oneself. This rupture in the relationship between trauma and memory subverts conventional memory

processes, leading to figural resonances devoid of coherent narratives. Traumatic experiences linger as sensory impressions, interrupting the process of introjection advocated by Ferenczi, manifesting as unassimilated deposits within the psyche.

Sándor Ferenczi, a Hungarian psychoanalyst contemporary to Sigmund Freud, offered a distinct perspective on trauma, diverging from Freud's emphasis on repressed memories and internal conflicts. Ferenczi viewed trauma as a disruption in normal developmental processes, leading to pathological symptoms. Their perspectives differed in terms of the origin of trauma, the role of repression, and therapeutic approaches, with Freud focusing on internal conflicts and repression, contrasting Ferenczi's emphasis on real traumas and the importance of a supportive therapeutic relationship.

Ferenczi highlighted that the impact of trauma extends beyond the event itself, affecting psychological and relational dynamics. Trauma involves the internalization of painful experiences, potentially leading to collective introjection within communities, shaping perceptions of safety, trust, and spatial relationships across generations.²

Failure to address and heal traumatic experiences can result in transgenerational transmission, shaping the socio-spatial dynamics of communities over time. Collective trauma may erode subjectivity, particularly when testimonies are disregarded, and historical and cultural bonds may internalize traumatic events, influencing collective memory and shaping social expressions, such as architecture, where traumatic experiences find stability amidst appeals of monumentality and beauty.

Social Trauma in Brazil

In the modern socio-spatial formation of Brazil, historical processes of social, economic, and political relations were shaped by power structures and domination,³ deeply influenced by colonial legacies. Concurrently, the narratives constructed around Brazil played a crucial role in internalizing contradictions, often mitigating socio-spatial conflicts while perpetuating subalternization.⁴

Firstly, it's crucial to recognize architecture as a tangible manifestation of social life's narrative. The socio-spatial arrangement of architectural structures, interacting with lived experiences over time, reflects and encapsulates contradictions, offering insights into the affective, aesthetic, and political dimensions embedded within urban planning. These dimensions, aimed at mitigating discursive violence and suffering, particularly stemming from historical injustices like slavery and miscegenation, are deeply ingrained within the built environment.

"Casa Grande and Senzala"⁵ are two architectural types of colonial Brazil that simultaneously embody both a material (building) and a symbolic perspective, reflecting the foundation of one of the social traumas that shaped the structure of Brazilian society. These buildings (Casa Grande and Senzala), with their social and architectural complexities, became paradoxically integrated into cities, in different temporalities and in different architectural types, but preserving as a signifier of Brazilian traumatic social-spatial structure of inequality and breakdown.

In Brazil, the concept of affective authoritarianism, as proposed by Gisálio Cerqueira Filho, has historically upheld a discourse entrenched in violence and suffering, often overshadowed by ideals of purity and alignment with European notions of 'civilization'.⁶

It is argued that violence and suffering, deeply ingrained in the "Brazilian soul" and urban culture, were displaced from collective consciousness into the built environment and the unconscious mind. The unconscious serves as a repository for collective imagination, enabling the suppression of memories concerning Brazil's violent past, while perpetuating a sanitized narrative of national identity. This phenomenon represents more than just a loss of memory regarding Brazil's socio-political formation; it serves as a mechanism for perpetuating affective authoritarianism, promoting Brazil's civilizing and modernization projects while maintaining socio-spatial hierarchies.

The main contention is that antagonisms are reconfigured into relativized differences, preserving diversity as a controlled construct within the dominant culture. Pathos, understood as a social symptom, reflects the deep psychological wounds inflicted during colonization, continuing to influence Brazil's collective consciousness. The trauma inflicted during this period is conceptualized as a psychic injury, persisting in the nation's psyche and influencing its emotional and mental well-being.

Violence and Racism Spatialized as a Social Trauma

In essence, wherever human activity occurs, it engenders a production of space influenced by both productive forces and the knowledge systems shaping these forces. This dynamic gives rise to what we perceive as landscape, a multifaceted reflection of productive forces operating within a specific geographic area. Consequently, the relationship between labor dynamics and spatial production plays a pivotal role in shaping landscapes, serving as a dialectical expression of humanity's role in shaping space and being shaped by it.⁷ This interaction manifests in the heterogeneous layers of history embedded within urban environments.

Within contemporary cities, there exists a contentious interplay between ideological influences on subjective experiences, termed here as the "architecture of subjectivities." This interplay between psychic structures and social realities offers insights into symptomatic factors of erasure, particularly amidst neoliberal trends that influence our understanding and classification of suffering.⁸

Thus, the geometrical dimensions of architecture and city layouts intersect with subjective overload and discursive structures, delineating spaces of expression and repression, and perpetuating territorialized lines of stigmatization.

SPATIALIZED TRAUMA

Architecture in Brazil functions not only as a cultural artifact⁹, but also as a medium for political and social expression, encapsulating what can be termed as pathos, the emotional and psychological undercurrents of societal experiences. One notable aspect of this expression is the manifestation of psychological suffering, such as mutilation, within the urban landscape. Mutilation, understood as a symbolic act of inscribing unspoken anguish onto the body, finds resonance not only in individual bodies but also in the architectural and urban fabric. Here, geometry and spatial dimensions establish a connection with subjective experiences and discursive structures embedded within the built environment.

Thus, the inherent tendencies of capitalist systems to generate spatial disparities in economic growth, infrastructure development, and social outcomes that uneven spatial development is not merely a byproduct of capitalism but is fundamentally intertwined with its operation. Factors such as market dynamics, profit maximization, and uneven access to resources contribute to the concentration of wealth and opportunities in certain regions while leaving others marginalized.¹⁰

The process of identification with a city can evoke feelings of familiarity and belonging,¹¹ akin to an extension of oneself. However, in the face of a traumatic social order, subjective experiences of urban life can become fragmented, resulting in illness both at the individual and urban level.

HOW REGÊNCIA MODULATES TRAUMA

Regência Augusta, situated near the mouth of the Rio Doce River, approximately 75 miles from the capital of Espírito Santo, serves as a compelling case study for understanding the socio-spatial implications of traumatic events. Specifically, the catastrophic collapse of the Fundão iron ore dam in 2015, which resulted in significant environmental devastation and loss of lives, had a profound impact

on the communities spatially connected to the Rio Doce River. This event instilled a deep sense of helplessness among the residents who relied on the river for their socio-spatial interactions.

Prior to the disaster, Regência had long relied on the Rio Doce River and the adjacent ocean for its economic and cultural activities. As a village situated at the confluence of the river and the sea, water held both tangible and symbolic significance, influencing the community's experiences and resilience throughout its history.

The village's economic activities, such as fishing, tourism, marine-themed handicrafts, surfing, and folkloric events, centered around its relationship with water, reflecting a commitment to preserving local biodiversity and traditional ways of life. Additionally, initiatives like Projeto Tamar, focused on marine turtle conservation, played a vital role in environmental stewardship, recognizing Regência as a significant breeding site for loggerhead and leatherback turtles along the Brazilian coast.¹²

The river and the ocean served as the lifeblood of community existence, shaping the rhythms of daily life and forging a collective identity deeply rooted in natural surroundings. In small urban spaces situated along riverbanks or coastlines, the dynamic relationship with water takes on additional layers, symbolizing both economic opportunity and cultural heritage. This dual role contributes to the identity formation of small urban communities, as residents navigate the challenges of modernity while preserving their connection to the water.

The socio-spatial structures within communities like Regência represent innovative initiatives aimed at mitigating the adverse impacts of cultural dynamics associated with late capitalism. Cultural practices infused with marine motifs and representations of biodiversity serve as a form of resistance, offering outlets for labor, creativity, and sociability among the citizens of Regência.

Modulating Trauma by Community Recovery

The production of crafts in Regência Augusta serves as a potent mechanism for socio-spatial healing. Crafting not only enables individuals to generate economic value but also plays a crucial role in preserving elements of their cultural identity. Moreover, it serves as a communal activity that transcends individual efforts, contributing to the restoration of social bonds within the community. This healing process is particularly evident in the shared spaces where crafting takes place, fostering a sense of belonging and interconnectedness among community members.

Prior to November 2015, social connections in Regência Augusta were characterized by harmonious coexistence among families of fishermen who engaged in various activities. These activities included exchanging fish for other necessities and providing mutual assistance in civil construction through self-construction labor. This collaborative spirit further strengthened social ties within the community, facilitating mutual support and resource-sharing among its members.¹³

Anne:¹⁴ *Aqui em Regência Augusta era um lugar que nem parecia Brasil porque era tudo normal... se trocavam as coisas... eu sou de um tempo que se trocava beiju por peixe, por farinha, por abóbora. Essa troca... deve ter uns 20 anos que acabou. Mas, a doação de peixe até 2 anos atrás, antes da lama, ainda se fazia isso. Para o povo de fora eles ainda vendiam, mas pra gente que ia lá eles davam, mas dava muito peixe, na época do bagre, da manjuba, da guaibira, de trazer e ficar de 5 a 6 meses, eu mesma ficava. Eu fazia baldes “deste tamanho” de conserva de manjuba e comia por muito tempo mesmo. Foi uma mudança radical na vida da gente*

Anne: *Here in Regência Augusta it was a place that didn't even look like Brazil because everything was normal... things were exchanged... I'm from a time when beiju¹⁵ were exchanged for fish, for flour, for pumpkin. This exchange... must have been over for about 20 years. But, until 2 years ago, before the mud, donating fish was still done. They still sold them to people outside, but to people who went there they gave them, but there was a lot of fish, during the catfish, manjuba, guaibira season,*

when they brought it and stayed for 5 to 6 months, I stayed there myself. I made buckets “this size” of manjuba preserves and ate them for a long time. It was a radical change in our lives.

Maria: Se a gente ficar de braços cruzados esperando fazer alguma coisa, a gente realmente morre de fome. Aí, a gente se une. A gente nunca teve desunião. Cada um compreende o outro. Todo mundo bem ligado mesmo. A gente é bem flexível.

Maria: If we sit idly by and wait to do something, we really die of hunger. Then, we come together. We never had disunity. Each understands the other. Everyone really connected. We are very flexible.

Furthermore, the communal aspect of craft production fosters a sense of solidarity among women and their families. Crafting circles and artisan associations have emerged as spaces not only for economic cooperation but also for sharing experiences and providing emotional support. Crafting, therefore, transcends its utilitarian purpose and becomes a vehicle for the communal elaboration of trauma. When applied to socio-spatial territories, Ferenczi's concept of trauma suggests that local spaces should address not only individual psychological needs but also the collective psychological well-being of communities, acknowledging the influence of past traumas on how individuals interact with and shape their physical environment.

Popular cultural manifestations in local spaces

Some socio-spatial narratives manifested in public spaces in Regência shape communal identity from a traumatic process. Foremost, the scale of popular local cultural manifestations plays a crucial role in healing collective trauma. In the aftermath of profound adversity, such as natural or anthropogenic disasters, these cultural expressions are powerful tools for rebuilding a sense of existence beyond suffering and processing the architecture of subjectivities.

One of the fundamental aspects of popular local cultural manifestations is their ability to provide a platform for collective storytelling. In Regência, the rituals, ceremonies, music, dance, art, surf and other forms of creative expression, express individual narratives of life in a collective space. Usually, during the period of this research (from 2018 to 2023) residents of Regência are receptive with "outsiders" and enthusiastic to share their experiences, even though in some part of conversation, the disaster-event of 2015 emerges as an important disruptive sign of their existence. In this sense, it's notable that these narratives not only acknowledge the trauma but also empower individuals to reclaim their agency and shape their own collective narrative.

The Caboclo Bernardo Festival is an artistic expression linked to folkloric festivals and religious syncretism. The history of Regência's myth intersects with the Rio Doce as a character. In 1887, a cruiser operated by the Brazilian Imperial Navy collided with the sandbar at the mouth of the Rio Doce. Indigenous Bernardo José dos Santos rescued 128 lives; an event honored by the Crown. Bernardo became a myth in the imagination of local fishermen as a hero and later a cultural icon. This festival merges Congo (African origin culture) with the cult of the image of São Benedito (Portuguese Christian culture). The gathering of Congo in the village square and in front of the Catholic church, along with bands at the festival, fosters a meeting of different groups, creating a flow of local culture and hosting a network of traditional people's narratives. This signifies a foray into symbolic efficacy.

Architectural narratives of Regência's images, before the disaster-event, may incorporate elements of storytelling to emotionally elaborate on the trauma. Thus far, cultural events, art and crafts, and artistic expressions in Regência Augusta could be designed with symbolic elements or visual motifs that narrate the story of these people's recovery and the community's journey through adversity.

Furthermore, these cultural expressions often provide a space for collective catharsis and emotional release. Whether through communal ceremonies or spontaneous gatherings, people can come together to mourn losses, express solidarity, and envision a path forward. The act of creating art or

participating in cultural activities can also serve as a form of therapy, allowing individuals to channel their emotions constructively and find meaning amidst chaos.

Importantly, popular local cultural manifestations can foster social cohesion and solidarity within communities for a “good city”. By bringing people together across diverse backgrounds and experiences, these cultural events promote empathy, understanding, and mutual support. They remind individuals that they are not alone in their suffering and that they have a network of support to lean on during difficult times. Thus, these efforts reflect a broader shift towards "good cities" that prioritize quality of life, environmental sustainability, and social equity.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

In contemporary psychoanalytic practice, it is imperative to engage with sensory communication, which comprises bodily memories consisting of fragments of impressions and sensations. These memories may surface during personal or collective analysis. Reconnecting words to the original sensations that gave them meaning imbues language with substance. Thus, psychoanalytic theory and clinical technique facilitate the expression of evoked sensations and allow for articulating what was once silenced or unsaid, yet not forgotten.

There is an urgent need in urban planning to address the production of livelihoods at the local level while considering the modulation of trauma in social terms. It is also essential to acknowledge the plurality inherent in culture, contrasting with the notion of "civilization," which promotes the imposition of dominant forms of life onto subjugated ones. Popular myths gain significance over bourgeois myths, and oral transmission within family structures becomes the bridge between generations. Consequently, the world of objects and the relationships among them are imparted. In this context, the functional value of objects dissolves within the emotional and imaginative frameworks of those transmitting them, establishing networks of meaning around these objects.

NOTES

- ¹ The concept of the "big Other" presented by Jacques Lacan entails an imagined observer who closely monitors all our actions and dialogues, whose dictates we adhere to and whose expectations we strive to fulfill.
- ² Sándor Ferenczi, *Some thoughts on trauma. Further contributions to the theory and technique of psychoanalysis* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1980) 216-79.
- ³ Gizlene Neder. "Cultura, Poder e Violência." *Revista Latinoamericana De Psicopatologia Fundamental* 12, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 17–30, accessed January 05, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1590/s1415-47142009000100002>.
- ⁴ Márcia Barros Ferreira Rodrigues, *Paradigmas para o século XXI: Possibilidades de Aplicação do Paradigma Indiciário de Corte Psicanalítico às Ciências Humanas e Sociais (Passagens* 6, no. 2, January 1, 2014): 234–53, accessed January 05, 2024, <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/3373/337330681003.pdf>.
- ⁵ "Casa Grande e Senzala" holds a material connotation, referring to the large houses owned by plantation owners (Casa Grande) and the slave quarters (Senzala). Additionally, it carries a sociological connotation, serving as a reference to the Brazilian social structure anchored in profound social inequalities. This expression is introduced in the book "Casa Grande e Senzala" by Gilberto Freyre, first published in 1933.
- ⁶ Gisálio Cerqueira Filho. "Teoria Política e Pensamento Social Na América Latina". (*Revista Angolana de Sociologia*, no. 10, December 1, 2012): 21–33, accessed January 05, 2024, doi: 10.4000/ras.188.
- ⁷ Edward Soja. *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*. (London: Macmillan, 1985).
- ⁸ Bernardo Tanis, Magda Guimarães Khouri (Org.). *A psicanálise nas tramas da cidade*. (São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo, 2009).
- ⁹ Günter Weimer. *Arquitetura popular brasileira*. (São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2005).
- ¹⁰ John Browett, "On the Necessity and Inevitability of Uneven Spatial Development under Capitalism" (*International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 8, no. 2, June 1, 1984): 155–76, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.1984.tb00606.x>.
- ¹¹ Eduardo Marandola J. "Place and Placeness." *Mercator* 19 April 2020. Accessed January 05, 2024 <https://doi.org/10.4215/rm2020.e19008>.
- ¹² Fundação Projeto Tamar. "Tartaruga-cabeçuda ou tartaruga-mestiça". Accessed January 05, 2024. <https://tamar.org.br/tartaruga.php?cod=18>
- ¹³ Tamara Lopes Teixeira., "A casa e a praça: Regência Augusta-ES no contexto pós-desastre socioambiental" (v. 1 n° 1, 2019: *Revista Discente Planície Científica*), accessed January 05, 2024. <https://periodicos.uff.br/planiciecientifica/article/view/29006>
- ¹⁴ Anne and Maria are fictional names to protect the identity of the interviewee.
- ¹⁵ Beijú or biju is a typical Brazilian delicacy, of indigenous origin and made with tapioca (starch extracted from cassava, usually granulated), which when spread on a heated plate or frying pan coagulates and becomes a type of pancake.
- ¹⁶ Peter Hall, *Good Cities, Better Living – How Europe Discovered the Lost Art of Urbanism*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) 262.

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KHIPU AS A CREATIVE PRACTICE METHODOLOGY IN DESIGN

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INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the past and the present of Khipu, and two ways of exploring the Khipu as a creative practice methodology for design. This research is based on the critical need of unfolding practices to build respectful cross-cultural relationships within the design curriculum. Khipu methodology, is a knot-based analytical technology drawn from a precolonial Andean tool that was traditionally used for writing, accounting, and divination in South America. During the Spanish colony, traditional Khipu-making was banished and silenced by the Spaniards. In present times the reemergence of Khipu include: historical attempts to decipher the code for writing; education that promotes a sense of identity linked to the Andean culture; symbolism used in official ceremonies; and artistic expressions that resignify Khipu from a contemporary perspective. Khipu as a methodology derives from this artistic approach, which investigates the knotting language as a way of mapping erased ways of doing, thinking and seeing. The Khipu methodology allows the exploration of listening, assembling and embodying stories and histories by knotting, while repositioning relational epistemologies. This paper explores the Khipu methodology in two ways: one is knotting from interactions with participants, and the second one is knotting to analyse complex data. In both instances the Khipu revealed unique aspects that otherwise would have remained hidden by using standard ‘community engagement’ or ‘literature review’ approaches. The Khipu’s materiality took shape depending on the data collected, showing the interrelatedness of key elements. In doing so, this also transformed the researcher’s perspective.

By integrating the legacy of this traditional technology, this paper contributes to a growing body of research that advocates for alternative creative methods to inform design pedagogies, practice and research.

This work has been prepared with appreciation to the Traditional Custodians from the land I live¹ and the Andean people in South America, who have been practicing textile traditions over generations and are a source of inspiration for this work. This appreciation also extends to the work Indigenous peoples are doing around the world in giving continuity to their knowledge and legacies.

Positioning

The lenses that frame this work are my life experiences including the teachings from my birth-land next to the Andes mountains in the Valley of Santiago, and the port of Valparaiso where I studied Architecture. My perspective is also informed by my experience of migration to Naarm/Melbourne,

which currently makes me understand myself as a Chilena mestiza (a person of mixed heritage between Indigenous, Spaniards and other unknowns). I am currently practicing design as Landscape Architect and Urban Designer, while doing doctoral studies on cultural landscapes and participatory design.

My journey exploring the Khipu started with the question: *what elements from my birth land can assist in research methods for design?*

I was introduced to the Khipu during my masters studies on Landscape Architecture by my friend Sarita, a Chilean artist and researcher in education who also explored the Khipu in her Doctoral studies.² I started exploring the Khipu during the course of a design studio and later in my masters thesis.

THE KHIPU

Khipu means ‘knot’ in Quechua Language.³ It is also found as Quipu, its equivalent in Spanish. Khipu is a textile communication technology based on knotted threads made from natural fibres and used as a record keeping device by Andean cultures in the south of the American continent.⁴ The Khipu expresses different physical qualities depending on the values encoded within it. Khipu expressions vary depending on the type of fibre, width of threads, colours, amount and type of knots, direction and tightness of twist.⁵ Khipu can be used as an archive to collect memories/stories, as a record keeping device, while at the same time is a language based on corporeal thinking.⁶ Knots do not necessarily relate to words as in written language, but it relates to things.⁷ Codes used in archaeological Khipus remain greatly undeciphered.⁸



Figure 1. Compilation of different Khipus from pre colonial times.⁹

THE PAST

The origins of Khipu date back thousands of years. Archaeological records have found evidence of Khipu in Andean cultures dated around 3000 BC.¹⁰ The technique was carried through to the Inka culture until the arrival of the Spaniards. Its use was extended along the lands of the Andes Mountains in what is known today as Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina.

Khipus were made and read by Khipucamayocs, the Khipu keepers,¹¹ these Khipu-makers not only knew how to codify information from oral tradition, but also knew how to see the world through the act of making Khipus. This is based on the relational epistemology from the Andean culture, which

considers a continuous relationship between all existing things.¹² In that sense, the Khipu practice mirrors socio-cultural processes and was under constant transformation.¹³



Figure 2. Drawings illustrating the use of Khipus done by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (1535-1616), a Quechua chronicler who draw Inkan customs and spaces while denouncing abuses from the Spaniards¹⁴

Historical Khipu researchers, such as Frank Salomon, Gary Urton and Galen Brokaw, have identified some possible uses of Khipu during precolonial times as follows.¹⁵

One of its possible uses was for the administrative accounting. A numerical decimal-based instrument to record numerical data, such as collection of tribute, censuses, inventories and other quantitative information.¹⁶

A second use of Khipu was for narrative keeping and storytelling functions as a support of oral traditions and memory, archiving poetry, songs and stories.¹⁷

Another use is related to oracle and divinatory practices, also known as Khipumancy. As noted by Frank Salomon, this practice is similar to cartomancy but using the knots to reach information beyond the knots themselves.¹⁸ Khipumancy is considered a pathway of knowledge to foretell the future, revealing information about weather, lost objects, causes of illness or foreseeing outcomes.¹⁹

Since the arrival of Spaniards in fifteen fifty-three to the American continent and the establishment of the Viceroyalty of Peru, the Khipu practice was vastly silenced.²⁰ Khipu making was considered a profane activity by the new law, and therefore banned.²¹ During colonial times many Khipus were destroyed and buried, while in some instances the practice survived at the edges of the colony, for example in the Tupicocha community in the highlands of Huarochiri region, and Yumani group in the Island of the Sun, in Lake Titicaca. In these remote areas the Khipu practice co-existed with Spanish writing until early to mid 20th century.²²

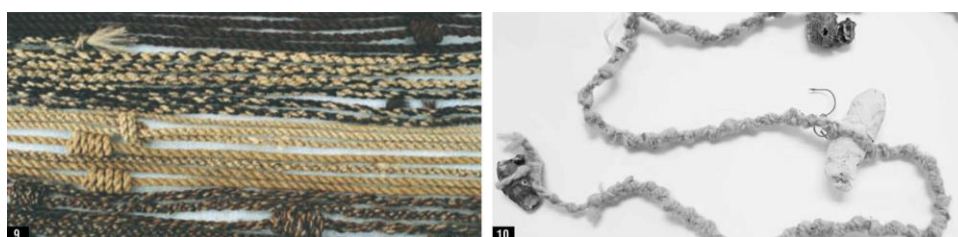


Figure 3. Detail of a two Khipus²³

THE PRESENT

Responding to the question from Edgar Garcia ‘*If the meanings of the sign system are lost, how can its forms continue to affect the meanings of contemporary reality?*’²⁴ I have undertaken a desktop research to find four different contemporary approaches to Khipu.

Historic Approach

From an anthropological point of view the historic approach seeks to understand the past of Andean culture by analysing the Khipus as a material legacy. This approach includes attempts to decipher the code used to make them. Researchers from the social sciences have been investigating the archaeological Khipus, which so far add up over 600 items.²⁵ Analyses done by researchers include the examination of their physical characteristics (type of fibre, width of the thread, colour, number and types of knots, direction and tightness of twist);²⁶ Deciphering transcriptions called ‘Paper Khipus’, which were Khipus read at loud and transcribed by a scribe, during colonial times;²⁷ Ethnographic studies based on conversations with Andean people who carry knowledge about ancient Khipus;²⁸ and, the use of digital technologies to perform large scale analysis of digital data gathered from archaeological Khipus.²⁹ So far, the Khipu has resisted to be fully interpreted and what the knots mean remains unknown.³⁰

Educational Approach

The educational approach seeks to promote a sense of identity linked to the Andean culture and legacy. Khipu-making workshops have been introduced to school and museum contexts for children and broader audiences in both online and in-person formats.³¹ In these workshops participants can learn what a Khipu is, and have the opportunity to make their own Khipus, drawing from the aesthetics of the archaeological examples.



Figure 4. Khipu-making workshops³²

Symbolic Approach

For some communities, such as the Tupicocha, khipus are considered the most important symbolic elements as legacy from their Andean ancestors.³³ Ancient Khipus are a sign of power and are used by community authorities for performances during official ceremonies, such as cambios de mando or the Huayrona.³⁴ Even though the ability to read and make Khipus from Tupicocha community has been silenced, community members recognise Khipus as an almanac that records their law.³⁵



Figure 5. Khipus on display during the Huayrona meeting in Tupicocha.³⁶

Artistic Approach

The artistic approach seeks to resignify and revalue the precolonial origin of Khipus from a contemporary art perspective, while honouring its ancient depth beyond historiographic approaches. Latin American artists have been engaging with Khipu to open new ways of communicating and responding to their mestizo identity.³⁷

Who has currently been exploring the Khipu?

Paola Torres unifies Khipu artist's voices in her Neokhipucamayok manifesto. This manifesto stresses ethical principles of respect and responsibility that should lead the way for a 'neo' Latin American identity to embrace its Andean cultural heritage. This approach seeks to uplift silenced ancient memories that are still in the land, bodies and tools people use.³⁸

In a similar way, Cecilia Vicuna's art uses the structural function of ancient Khipu to allow new epistemological codes, that are dialogues with the remaining of ancient Latin American identities, their land and history, by using Andean elements in her art practice.³⁹ In this perspective, Khipus are textile narratives sitting in a non-temporal dimension where the past and future coexist. In that way, her artistic statement is 'to reclaim what time has erased'.⁴⁰

This contemporary artistic approach moves beyond replicating archaeological Khipus, it connects the maker with the present and the context, through an 'active contemplation' that links the maker to the Indigenous memories of the continent.⁴¹ This connection happens through tactile sensorial body experiences, which allows an intimate connection by knotting, touching, rubbing, caring and stretching.⁴²

Contemporary Khipu-making can be understood as an art practice that resists the project of 'Modernity'.⁴³ In such approach, Khipu-making can open pathways under a new ethic of participation⁴⁴ that resists modernity while acknowledging ancient ways of doing, thinking and seeing.⁴⁵

Another artist engaging with Khipu is Tanya Aguiniga⁴⁶, who created Border Quipu, a project that expands the notion of Khipu, using it as a framework to record the migrations at the US/Mexico border on a daily basis. Border commuters were engaged at both sides of the border, they were invited

to share their experiences by tying a knot. To tie the knot, participants were prompted by the question: ‘*What are your thoughts when you cross this border?*’⁴⁷ participants were invited to write in a piece of paper their thoughts and make a knot reflecting on their crossing experience. All knots collected daily are tied together and assembled into a large-scale quipu displayed in a key viewpoint, visible for people waiting to cross.⁴⁸

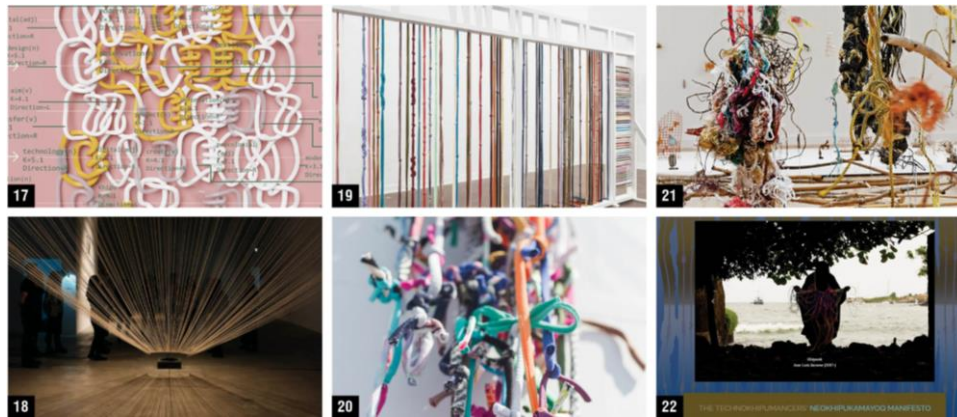


Figure 6. Compilation of different expressions of artistic Khipu approaches

How does this relate to my own practice?

I have been exploring Khipu as a methodology underpinned by the artistic approach. This creative methodology allows listening, assembling and embodying stories and histories, by knotting, while repositioning relational epistemologies. I have explored Khipu in two scenarios:

The first scenario is using Khipu for gathering data from interactions with participants by knotting stories into coloured threads as part of a common Khipu. I used this method to delve into questions about landscape/open space features with individual members from a culturally diverse group in Naarm/Melbourne and a Māori group in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

I started the Khipu making a main cord, element which holds the coloured threads (refer to Figure 23, 24). I assigned a theme to each of the threads in relation to the enquiry. In this case was about the cultural practices in open spaces and water spaces. After having set up the threads I elaborate prompt questions, which triggers the conversation in relation to the enquiry. I meet with each of the participants individually, I introduce the activity and start the conversation. While I listen, I knot the quality of the responses in the way the knot is tied. The conversation finishes when the participant have described their experiences with each of the threads, some of them take up more space while others are less active. Before we finish, I told the story knotted in the Khipu back to the participant, in that way the person creates an identification with the knots. After the activity is finished, I proceed to tag the knots with identifiers, in that way the ‘code’ embedded in each knot can be read in the future assisted by the tags. Conversations were continued with a series of participants, where each participants’ story formed a horizon in the Khipu. In that way, the quality of stories started to shape the Khipu’s body.

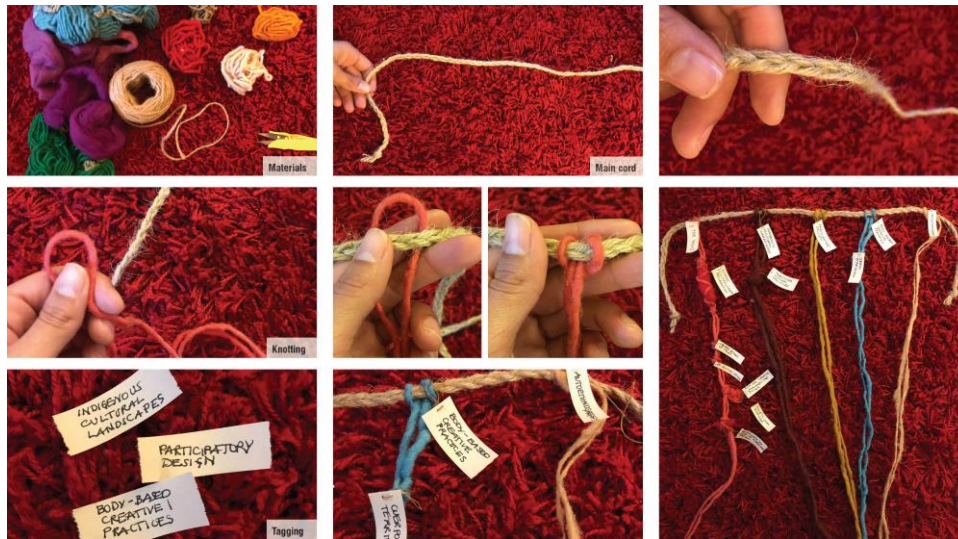


Figure 7. Materials and key elements for a work-in-progress Khipu produced by the author in 2023.

The tridimensionality or Khipu-body expressed tensions, connections and distances in different intensities between the knots. This method allowed me to see beyond each individual story, but instead to reveal relationships between elements from the stories, which otherwise will have remained hidden. The relationships found were used as key inputs for a landscape concept design for the Māori community. In that way, the stories from community members were a fundamental component to deliver a culturally appropriate design response.

This method allowed building trust in a context where English was not the native language, validating the sense of being heard, as people could see their stories taking shape, while also making space to reflect on their everyday practices.

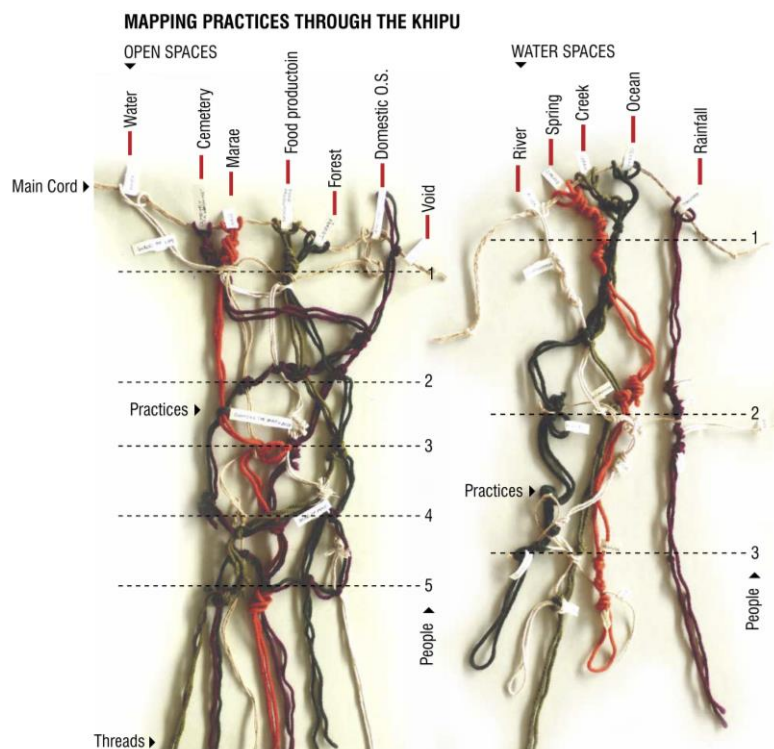


Figure 8. Khipus developed by the author during a Studio Travelling with a Maori community as part of the Master of Landscape Architecture, The University of Melbourne in 2019.

A second scenario is using Khipu for knotting to analyse complex data, which I developed for my masters thesis in Landscape Architecture. In the process of preparing the literature review, I explored the Khipu in a similar way, however instead of knotting participants' stories, I knotted the voices of authors from varied sources including historical, archaeological, cultural, social and environmental fields. In this approach, the emphasis was centred in the process of knotting and unknotting concepts to understand the different entanglements. The relationships revealed through this Khipu-making process were design principles and strategies, informing the final outcomes of the thesis, which was a landscape concept design.



Figure 9. Khipu developed by the author during the Master Thesis of Landscape Architecture, The University of Melbourne in 2019.

In both instances the Khipu-body took shape depending on the contents carefully listened and knotted. This allowed me to analyse the elements expressed through the Khipu-body, where the tactile and tridimensional features revealed the interrelatedness of key elements which otherwise would have been unnoticed. In doing so, my perspective was transformed as I was able not only to see connections that informed the design outcome, but also link the original sources with the design intent.

THE FUTURE

It is important to consider these contemporary approaches to Khipu beyond a universal response to assist design research methodologies. Instead, it is necessary to start seeking ways to integrate and develop our own creative languages in the design practice and teaching. We need to start making questions about *what we feel drawn to explore to bring new expressions in design, what are the expressions coming from our lands and what are the ways to practice them in a respectful and meaningful manner.* The use of analogue tools such as the Khipu, allow a time for appreciation which happens with the body itself in the act of making. This time results in a nourishing space of becoming, which may be a pathway to respectfully access relational thinking while honouring the ancient roots

of the language through the very act of practicing it. In doing so, recognising the vital legacy of traditional knowledges for design pedagogies, practice and research.

As a design practitioner and researcher, I will continue unfolding my journey with Khipu in the upcoming years during my PhD. I will allow reflective time to be taken by my creative practice to explore the edges of it, assembling situated dialogues with the land I am, connecting with its depth, and informing my practice as landscape architect. The development of new languages and methodologies is a task in continuous exploration within the Design discipline, and a responsibility of design practitioners to bring substantial meaning into their practice. This will not only transform the way we practice and teach design but also how the world is built, understood and experienced.



Figure 10. The author practicing Khipu-making in Aotearoa/New Zealand during a Travelling Studio in 2019.

NOTES

¹ This work has been done in the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people, whom I respect for their continued resilience and endeavour in caring for Country over thousands of years. Being an uninvited guest on Wurundjeri land had made me appreciate their resilience and continuous connection to Country.

² Sarita Galvez explored the Khipu as a methodology in her doctoral thesis 'A Quipu of the Chilean chair in post-Pinochet Chile: propositions towards South-South pedagogical possibilities' Maria Sarita Galvez, "A Quipu of the Chilean Chair in Post-Pinochet Chile: Propositions towards South-South Pedagogical Possibilities" (Doctoral Dissertation, Monash University, 2019).

³ Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Fray: Art and Textile Politics* (University of Chicago Press, 2017), <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.7208/9780226369822-001/html>. It was vanished during colonial times by the Spaniards, however, it continues being practiced particularly in the high lands of the Andes mountains.

⁴ Catherine J. Allen, "Knot-Words or Not Words," *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, no. 4 (2005): 981–96, <https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2005.0048>; Bryan-Wilson, *Fray: Art and Textile Politics*.

⁵ Laddy Patricia Cadavid Hinojosa, "Knotting the Memory. Encoding Th Khipu: Reuse of an Ancient Andean Device as NIME," *International Conference on New Interfaces for Musical Expression*, 2020.

⁶ Allen, "Knot-Words or Not Words"; Galvez, "A Quipu of the Chilean Chair in Post-Pinochet Chile: Propositions towards South-South Pedagogical Possibilities."

⁷ Allen, "Knot-Words or Not Words."

⁸ Gary Urton, *Signs of the Inka Khipu* (University of Texas Press, 2003).

⁹ Figure 1: based on (1) Marcia Ascher and Robert Ascher, *Code of the Quipu: A Study in Media, Mathematics, and Culture* (Ann Arbor, Mich: The Univ. of Michigan Press, 1981). (2) MALI, "Wari Khipus," 2023, <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/mali-museo-de-arte-de-lima>. (3) MALI, "The Double Khipu," 2023, <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/WQXRQRtFolidSA..> (4) MALI, "Khipu Found in Inkawasi, Cañete," 2023, https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/khipu-found-in-inkawasi-ca%C3%B1ete-inca-culture/igEVy_-qrBU_kQ?hl=en. (5) MALI, "Khipu Rolled Found in Incawasi, Cañete," 2023, <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/khipu-rolled-found-in-incawasi-ca%C3%B1ete-inca-culture/1wFFAxNOAz5p3Q?hl=en>. (6) MALI, "Khipu from UNMSM Collection," 2023, <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/khipu-from-unmsm-collection/JAHuUJWpgB1XMw?hl=en>. (7) MALI, "Khipu, UNMSM Colección Radicati de Quipus, Fundación Temple Radicati - UNMSM," 2023, <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/colecci%C3%B3n-radicati-de-quipus-fundaci%C3%B3n-temple-radicati-unmsm/kgHfSMM7xXPjQw?childAssetId=igHnoqB9ZFgZAw&hl=en>.

¹⁰ Bryan-Wilson, *Fray: Art and Textile Politics*; José Manuel Zavala, Dagmar Bachraty, and Gertrudis Payás, "El Pron o Quipu Mapuche según fuentes coloniales y datos arqueológicos: Antecedentes sobre su origen, uso y función," *Boletín del Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino* 26, no. 1 (2021): 41–55, <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-68942021000100041>.

¹¹ Margot Beyersdorff, "Writing Without Words/Words Without Writing: The Culture of the Khipu," *Latin American Research Review* 40, no. 3 (2005): 294–311, <https://doi.org/10.1353/lar.2005.0037>.

¹² Verónica Cereceda, "Semiología de los textiles andinos: Las talegas de isluga," *Revista de Antropología Chilena* 42, no. 1 (2010): 181–98.

¹³ Allen, "Knot-Words or Not Words"; Galvez, "A Quipu of the Chilean Chair in Post-Pinochet Chile: Propositions towards South-South Pedagogical Possibilities."

¹⁴ Figure 2 is based on adapted drawings from: Leo Harris, "The Quipu of the Incas: Its Place in the History of Communication," *Postal History Journal* 146 (2010); Frank Salomon, "Los Khipus Patrimoniales de Tupicocha y Rapaz" (Museo de Arte de Lima, 2020), https://mali.pe/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Los-khipus-patrimoniales-de-Tupicocha-y-Rapaz_2.pdf; Edwin C. Krupp, "Astronomy and Power," in *Handbook of Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy*, ed. Clive L.N. Ruggles (New York, NY: Springer New York, 2015), 67–91, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-6141-8_5.

¹⁵ Allen, "Knot-Words or Not Words"; Beyersdorff, "Writing Without Words/Words Without Writing"; Galen Brokaw, "A History of the Khipu," *Cambridge University Press*, 2010.

¹⁶ Sheila Arup, "Book Review: Narrative Threads: Accounting and Recounting in Andean Khipu," *Textile* 2, no. 1 (2004): 104–7, <https://doi.org/10.7560/769038>; Brokaw, "A History of the Khipu"; Manuel Medrano, "Khipu Transcription Typologies: A Corpus-Based Study of the *Textos Andinos*," *Ethnohistory* 68, no. 2 (April 1, 2021): 311–41, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-8801912>.

- ¹⁷ Dagmar Bachraty, “Un acto de tejer y destejer la memoria. Los quipus de Cecilia Vicuña y el arte actual,” *H-ART. Revista de historia, teoría y crítica de arte*, no. 5 (July 2019): 195–212, <https://doi.org/10.25025/hart05.2019.10>; Beyersdorff, “Writing Without Words/Words Without Writing”; Bryan-Wilson, *Fray: Art and Textile Politics*.
- ¹⁸ Frank Salomon, *The Cord Keepers. Khipus and Cultural Life in a Peruvian Village* (Duke University Press, 2004), <https://www.dukeupress.edu/the-cord-keepers>.
- ¹⁹ Salomon.
- ²⁰ Arup, “Narrative Threads.”
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- ²³ Figures 3 is sourced from (9) Salomon, *The Cord Keepers. Khipus and Cultural Life in a Peruvian Village*. and (10) Ascher and Ascher, *Code of the Quipu*.
- ²⁴ On Page 185, Garcia mentions this question about Khipu in relation to Cecilia Vicuña’s contemporary approach to Khipu. On Edgar Garcia, *Signs of the Americas. A Poetics of Pictography, Hieroglyphs and Khipu* (The University of Chicago Press, 2020).
- ²⁵ Carolina Diaz, “Cecilia Vicuña’s Quipu-Making as a Theory of Time,” *A Contracorriente: Una Revista De Estudios Latinoamericanos* 16, no. 1 (2018): 174–202.
- ²⁶ Ascher and Ascher, *Code of the Quipu*; Museo de Arte de Lima, “Historias Detrás Del Color: Khipus Coloniales y Postcoloniales,” 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLt8-NvJo48&t=17s>.
- ²⁷ Medrano, “Khipu Transcription Typologies”; José Carlos De La Puente Luna, “That Which Belongs to All: Khipus, Community, and Indigenous Legal Activism in the Early Colonial Andes,” *The Americas* 72, no. 1 (January 2015): 19–54, <https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2014.4>.
- ²⁸ Museo de Arte de Lima, “¿Por Quién Tuercen Las Cuerdas? Khipus, Patrimonio e Identidad,” 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGpz_wyE87M&t=14s.
- ²⁹ Manuel Medrano, “Keys to Mathematical Treasure Chests: Andean Khipus – Collections Organized by Style and Period,” Mathematical Association of America, 2024, <https://maa.org/book/export/html/3521596>.
- ³⁰ Galvez, “A Quipu of the Chilean Chair in Post-Pinochet Chile: Propositions towards South-South Pedagogical Possibilities.”
- ³¹ Workshops included activities in Chile, Peru and Argentina such as Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, “Vacaciones de invierno en el MNBA,” Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, June 28, 2023, <https://www.mnba.gob.cl/noticias/vacaciones-de-invierno-en-el-mnba>; Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino, “Taller Haciendo Quipus En Museo Precolombino,” July 8, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRNVIngin7o>; Museo de Sitio y Santuario Arqueológico de Pachacamac, “Taller Elaboración de Quipus,” May 28, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKtWY_Q4G60; Municipalidad de Lima, “Taller: Mi Quipu Prehispánico,” April 1, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9m8uH8OKfl>; Secretaria de Cultura de la Nacion, “Taller de quipus,” 2023, <https://www.cultura.gob.ar/taller-de-quipus-12722/>.
- ³² Figures 4 sourced from: (11) Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, “Vacaciones de invierno en el MNBA”; (12) Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino, “Taller Haciendo Quipus En Museo Precolombino”; (13) Museo de Sitio y Santuario Arqueológico de Pachacamac, “Taller Elaboración de Quipus”; (14) Municipalidad de Lima, “Taller.”
- ³³ Museo de Arte de Lima, “¿Por Quién Tuercen Las Cuerdas? Khipus, Patrimonio e Identidad.”
- ³⁴ Cambio de mando is the ceremony of passing the power from the current authority to a new one. De La Puente Luna, “That Which Belongs to All”; Gary Urton and Primitivo Nina Llanos, *Narrative Threads. Accounting and Recounting in Andean Khipu*, 1st University of Texas Press ed (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997).
- ³⁵ Urton and Nina Llanos, *The Social Life of Numbers*.
- ³⁶ Urton and Nina Llanos.
- ³⁷ Paola Torres Núñez Del Prado, “Manifiesto Neokhipukamayoq Desde La Tecnokhipumancia,” The Neokhipukamayoqs, 2021, <https://khipumantes.github.io/es.html>.
- ³⁸ Torres Núñez Del Prado.
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- ⁴¹ Karina Bidaseca, ed., *Poéticas de los feminismos descoloniales desde el Sur* (Buenos Aires: Red de Pensamiento Decolonial, 2016).

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- ⁴⁸ Aguiñiga.
- ⁴⁹ Figure 6: based on (17) Codes in Knows, 2020 by Nayeli Vega Vargas, (18) Proyecto Khipu, 2019 by Constanza Piña (19) Perfil de la mujer peruana – Propuesta II, 1981 by Teresa Burga, (20) Border Quipu/ Quipu Fronterizo, 2023, Tanya Aguiñiga, (21) About to Happen, 2020 by Cecilia Vicuña, (22), Neokhipukamayoq Manifiesto, 2021 by Paola Torres Núñez del Prado.

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CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND PLACE ATTACHMENT PREFERENCES TO PUBLIC OPEN PLACES IN GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA

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INTRODUCTION

Immigrants face many integration challenges, experiencing displacement and a sense of loss.¹ Migration disrupts place attachment,² which is vital for adaptation and integration into the host countries.³ Scholars have also confirmed that various places, including houses,⁴ neighbourhoods,⁵ and cities⁶ can improve immigrants' place attachment.

This research focuses on public open spaces for two main reasons. Firstly,⁷ remarked that public open places' social and recreational activities facilitated immigrants' attachment to new environments. However, the existing research on public open places and immigrants' place attachment rarely considers the effects of cultural differences.⁸ This gap could help policymakers and urban designers develop more culturally sensitive public open places and facilitate immigrants' integration. Secondly, identity, as a dimension of place attachment, is expressed through inclusion and exclusion in the built environment,⁹ particularly in public places.¹⁰ Specifically,¹¹ referred to immigrants' inclusion in public open places to improve their attachment. However, previous studies have seldom used public places based on immigrants' cultural differences to deliver more inclusive urban design guidelines.

Therefore, this research addresses these two gaps by investigating immigrants from different cultures and investigating what aspects should be considered for evaluating immigrants' place attachment in public places to improve urban design. The next section presents the method, which is followed by the results, discussion, and conclusion.

METHOD

Study area and participants

This study was conducted on the Gold Coast, Australia, a multicultural city¹² with ~31% overseas-born residents in 2021.¹³ Despite some research on place attachment in the Gold Coast,¹⁴ no prior studies specifically addressed immigrants' place attachment in public open spaces in this city.

This research is part of a larger study on international students in Australia due to their significant immigration numbers (569,204 from Jan to Sep 2022),¹⁵ that impact urban infrastructures. Additionally, fostering place attachment is crucial for immigrant students' adaptation to a new culture and educational environment.¹⁶ The Gold Coast city, hosting 45,450 students in universities or tertiary institutions,¹⁷ was selected for its relevance.

Most international students are from China and India, 27% and 16% respectively.¹⁸ Consequently, Indian, and Chinese immigrant students were selected. Although Iranian students represent only 0.4% of international students in Australia, it was convenient to recruit them as one of the authors has an Iranian background. To mitigate bias and compare locals with immigrants, Australian students were also selected.

Procedure

This study explores cultural influences on place attachment using an online questionnaire with a map selection which helped participants visually remember and locate places¹⁹ without recalling their names.²⁰

The questionnaire included 39 open-ended and closed-ended questions (Figure 1). The first seven questions collected demographic information. Then, participants selected the three top public open places to which they were most attached on the Gold Coast map. After each place selection, participants were asked to explain the rationale of their attachment to that place. Additionally, eight open-ended and closed-ended questions, derived from the literature, were asked, evaluating the qualities of each selected public place.



Figure 1. Type of data collected with the questionnaire

Mehta²¹ consider inclusiveness, accessibility, safety, comfort, and meaningful activities as qualities of public places. However,²² proposed that inclusive public spaces should consider public life and public places' qualities (e.g., accessibility, security, and comfort) as a whole. Therefore, using Gehl's point of view, our questionnaire considers the following criteria for evaluating public open space qualities: accessibility, comfort, safety, enjoyment, suitability for diverse people, activities, and social interactions.

Four Likert scale questions were employed to quantitatively assess the comfort, safety, enjoyability, and diversity of activities. To evaluate diversity, we asked participants whether they thought there is 'people diversity' in the chosen place and why. The final two questions provided a list of optional and social activities, and participants could select or add any other activities not listed.

Participants were recruited through random sampling on social media groups and academic forums. Additionally, in-person questionnaire distribution occurred on campus within faculties and during university gatherings for international students.

Data analysis

Following the three types of data collected, we developed three analytical approaches: categorizing map locations, evaluating participants' attachment to selected places, and assessing participants' evaluations of public open places' qualities.

Public open places categories

The selected public open places were categorized through an agile process: initially guided by the literature review criteria, then revised and refined with the survey data. The literature review²³ classifies public open spaces as “Built-up” or “Natural”, with “Natural” further subdivided into “Green” and “Waterside”. However, the questionnaire results showed places that would benefit from more specification. The selected places were displayed on an ArcGIS map and²⁴ was used to define the boundaries of neighbourhoods. The selected places were classified firstly based on their neighbourhoods to clarify their geographical context. This process contributed to seven categories, ranging from “Built-up” to “Natural” (Figure 2).

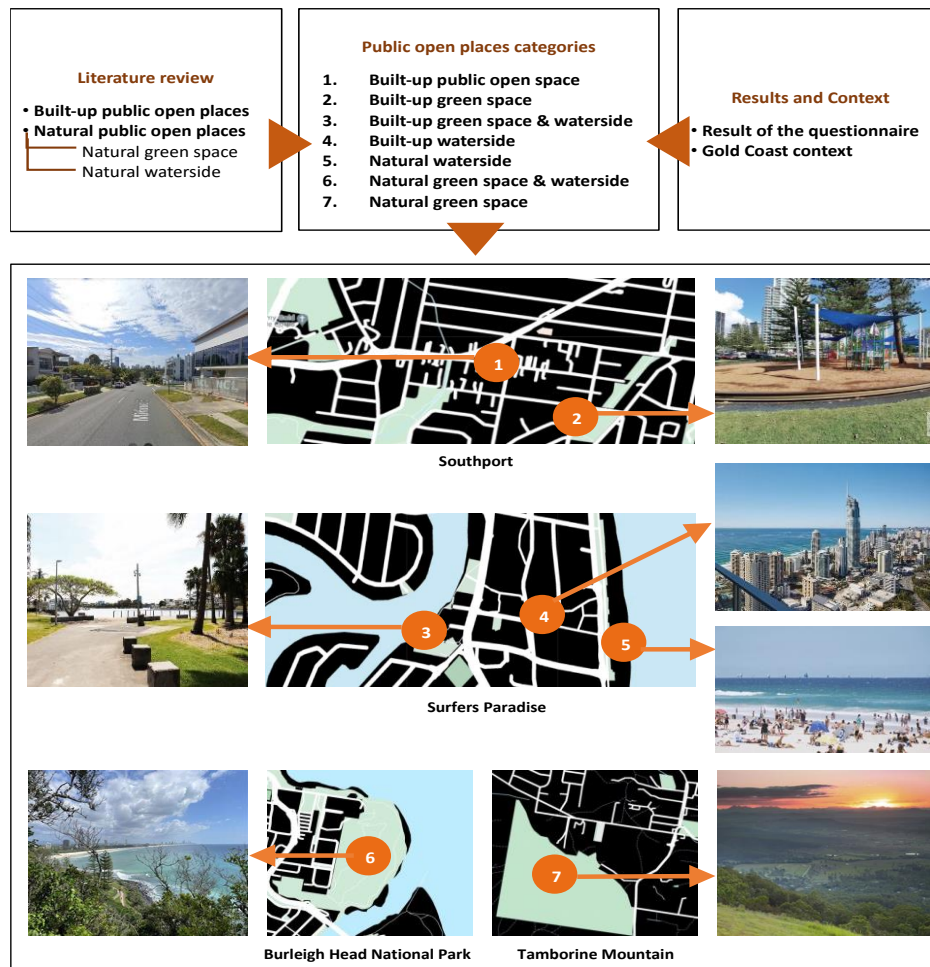


Figure 2. Public open places categories

To determine the proximity of selected places to participants’ homes, distances were measured in Google Maps and categorized into five groups: very short (less than 1.6 Kilometres), short (1.6 to 8 Kilometres), moderate (8 to 16 Kilometres), long (16 to 24 Kilometres), and extended (more than 24 Kilometres).

Classification and analysis of participants’ attachment

Answers regarding place attachment were processed in NVivo, using a coding framework with four main categories and subcategories (Figure 3) derived from the literature review.²⁵ Initially, these subcategories served as guides for coding participants’ responses. Some statements could belong into two subcategories. Data were reviewed and coded multiple times for categorization reliability.

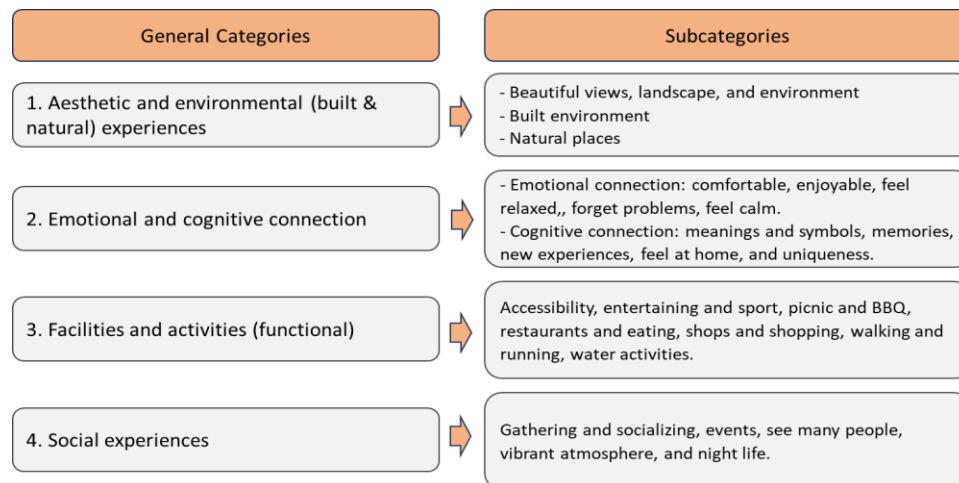


Figure 3. Defined categories for participants' place attachment

Evaluations of public open places qualities

Quantitative data regarding places' qualities was analysed using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Close-ended questions about qualities like accessibility, comfortability, and safety were considered as individual variables. Frequency comparisons were made for perceived qualities, and a one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test determined significant mean differences between nationalities. The mean difference was considered significant when the P-value was less than 0.05, and the specific nationalities that exhibited distinctions from others were identified through the ANOVA test. Moreover, the Pearson's correlation analysis was used to assess relationships between variables within cultural groups, with significance defined by a P-value below 0.01.

Qualitative data on diversity considerations were coded in NVivo. According to different studies,²⁶ public places should be for diverse age groups, genders, cultural groups, and physical abilities. Using these studies and the answers given by participants, the coding was conducted with the following categories: diversity of age groups, genders, cultural groups, activities and facilities, availability of many people, and no limitation to entry.

RESULTS

Characteristics of respondents

Out of 92 participants, 85 were included in the final analysis, excluding non-selected nationalities and places outside the Gold Coast. Respondents were balanced (male 54%) with a mean age of 27. Nationalities included 32 Indians, 25 Chinese, 15 Australians, and 13 Iranians.

Selected public open places

The 85 participants selected a total of 255 public open places as displayed on an ArcGIS map (Figure 4); most of the chosen locations are waterside public open places.

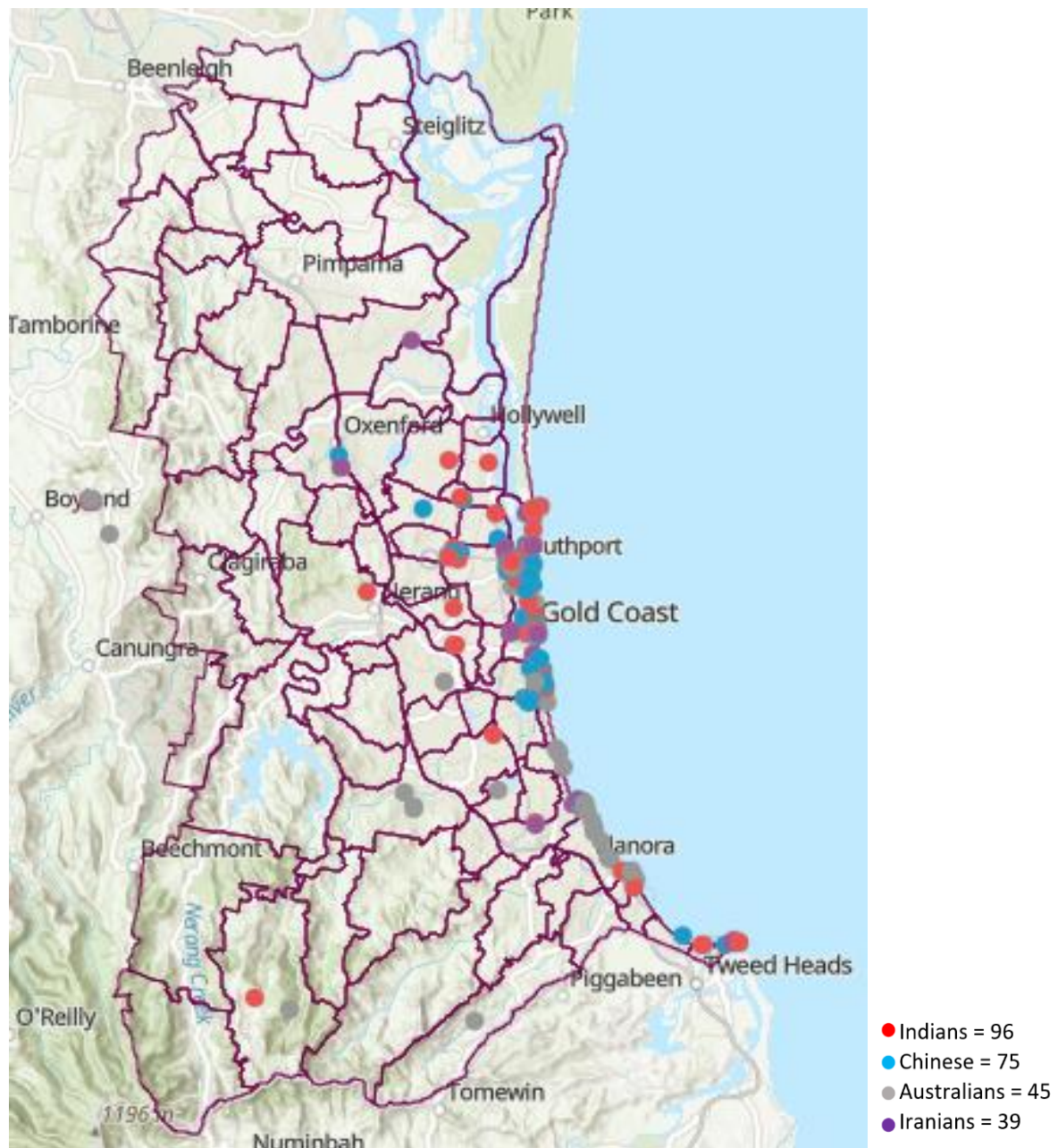


Figure 4. Selected public open places on the Gold Coast by nationality

From a neighbourhood perspective, Southport was the most selected for Indians (25/96) and Chinese (24/75). In contrast, Iranians (12/39) seem to prefer more Surfers Paradise, while Australians (7/45) exhibit a greater concentration in Palm Beach.

Regarding the distribution of the selected places across the seven categories (Figure 5), “Built-up green waterside” (30.2%) and “Natural waterside” (29%) are the top choices overall. Across nationalities, mostly waterside public open spaces were selected; however, they present similarities and differences. The most significant one is that Iranians (48.7%) and Chinese (29.3%) chose mainly “Built-up green waterside”, while Australians (48.9%) preferred “Natural waterside”, and Indians favoured both categories equally (32.3%).

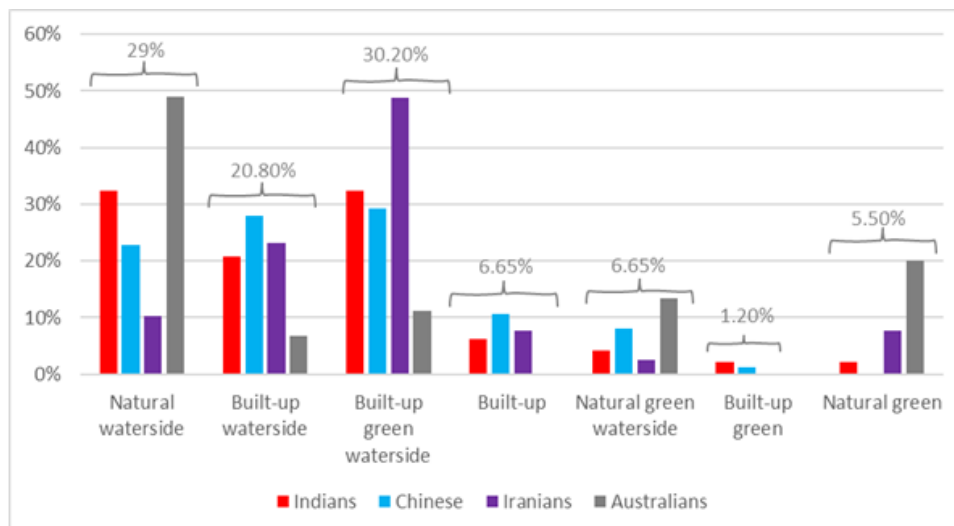


Figure 5. Selected public open places within the seven categories

Figure 6 shows that overseas-born participants, including Iranians (46.1%), Indians (57.3%), and Chinese (61.4%), display short distances to their selected places, while Australians (35.5%) predominantly show moderate distances but also a higher preference for long and extended distances.

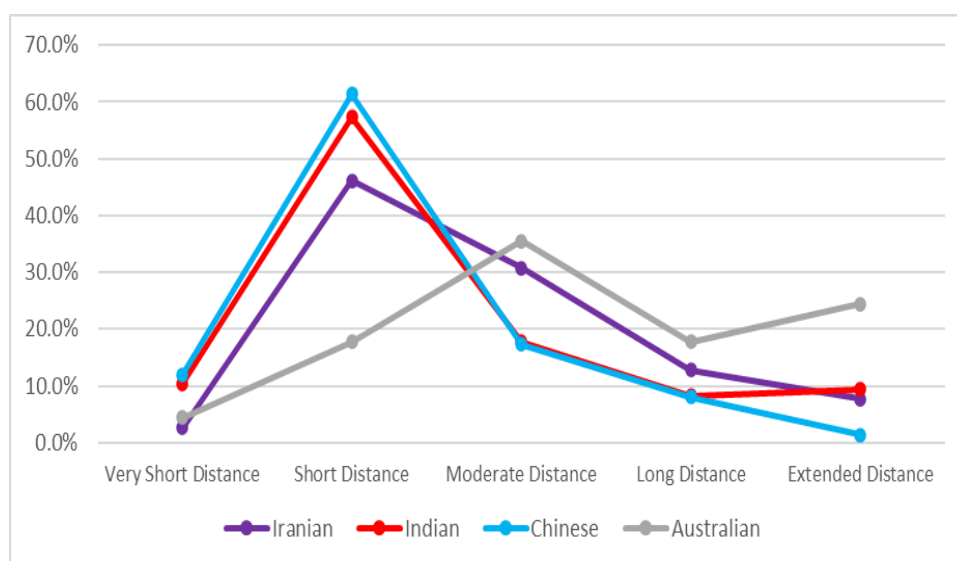


Figure 6. Proximity of participants' houses to their selected public open places

Reasons for attachment to public open places

There were 255 responses regarding attachment to public open places, with some providing multiple reasons. In total, 537 reasons were coded in NVivo based on the framework in Figure 3. When analysing the results by nationalities (Figure 7), the most common reasons for place attachment revolve around facilities and activities for Australians (41.4%), Indians (30.3%), and Chinese (34.5%), while it is based on aesthetic and environmental experiences for Iranians (27.4%). The social experience category has significantly fewer reasons than the other categories for all nationalities. However, for Iranians, the number of reasons in this category is similar to the other categories, all of which are around 20.

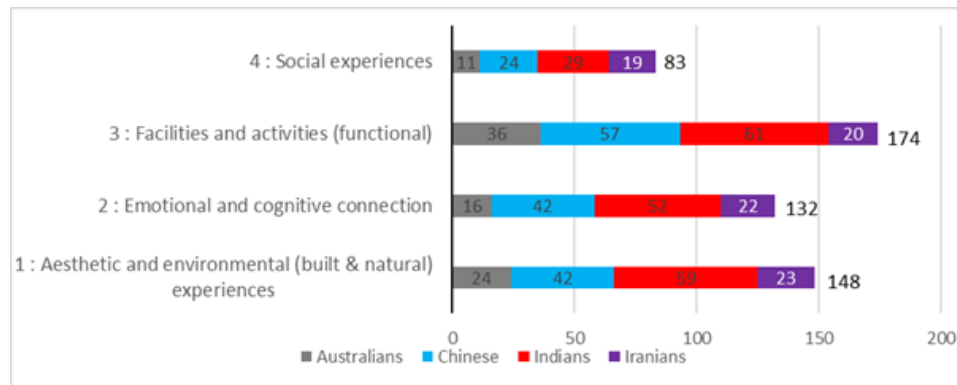


Figure 7. Cross-cultural analysis of participants' attachment

Furthermore, since each category of place attachment contains sub-categories, it was found that within each nationality, the predominant sub-category for attachment varies as follows: Chinese (15.7%) and Indians (18.9%) mostly referred to the emotional connection sub-category, Iranians (15.5%) preferred the beautiful views and outlooks, while Australians (25.3%) commonly mentioned water activities.

Public open places qualities

Table 1 presents the frequencies of responses to perceived qualities of public open places within and across nationalities. These results indicate similarities and differences between nationalities.

Qualities	Scales	Iranian	Indian	Chinese	Australian	4 nationalities
Accessibility	poorly accessible	4	11	7	0	22
	moderately accessible	1★	33	27	23★	100
	easily accessible	18	52	41	22	133
Comfortability	uncomfortable	2	0	0	0	2
	somewhat comfortable	2★	42	36	23	123
	very comfortable	15	54	39	22	130
Safety	not safe	0	0	0	0	0
	not sure	3	18★	7	1	29
	somewhat safe	13	24	28	23★	86
	very safe	23	54	40	22	140
Diversity of activities	low diversity	2	6	5	5	18
	moderate diversity	2★	40	31	31★	126
	high diversity	13	50	39	9	111
Enjoyable appearance and design	not enjoyable	0	0	0	0	0
	somewhat enjoyable	18	27	31	23	99
	very much enjoyable	21	69★	44	22	156
Optional activities	one activity	3	0	7	0	10
	two activities	4	21	15	5	45
	three activities	14	28	16	15	73
	four activities	6	17	13	14	50
	five activities	5	9	8	5	27
	six activities and more	7	2★	16★	6	50
Social activities	one activity	10	21	21	9	61
	two activities	11	25	24	16	76
	three activities	13	33	11	9	66
	four activities	2	14	16★	9	41
	five activities and more	3	3	3	2	11

★ Similar ★ Different

Table 1. The frequency of responses to the perceived qualities

As the result of the one-way ANOVA test, Table 2 was provided to refine the precision of cross-national comparisons in assessing public open places' qualities. Mean comparisons highlight nationality-based variations, in the enjoyability of appearance and design, and the diversity of activities, with associated p-values below 0.05 (Table 2), confirming differences between nationalities in these terms.

Qualities	Mean				P-value
	Iranian	Indian	Chinese	Australian	
Accessibility	13.59	14.27	14.53	14.89	0.822
Safety	15.13	13.75	14.40	14.89	0.684
Comfortability	13.33	15.53	15.20	14.89	0.130
Enjoyability of appearance and design	15.39	17.19	15.87	14.89	0.035
Diversity of activities	12.82	14.58	14.53	10.89	0.003
Optional activities	36.92	38.02	36.40	38.22	0.876
Social activities	24.10	25.10	24.13	25.33	0.910

Table 2. Summary of one-way ANOVA results

To analyse the relationships between public open places’ qualities within nationalities, we collected the Pearson’s correlation results in Table 3. We indicate significant correlations (P-value<0.01) with asterisks (*) and use colours to show the strength of these correlations (r). Specifically, the data revealed the most strong and positive correlation between the number of optional and social activities in public open places for both Chinese (r=0.64) and Australians (r=0.66). Comfortability and enjoyability of public open spaces are most strongly correlated (r=0.61) for Indians. Among Iranians, the diversity of activities and social activities in public places have the strongest correlation (r=0.66).

Correlations All public places	Nationalities								
		Comfortability	Accessibility	Safety	Diversity of activities	Optional activities	Social activities	Enjoyable appearance and design	Enjoyable appearance and design
Comfortability	Australians	1							1
	Iranians	0.37							0.24
	Chinese	0.02							0.59*
	Indians	0.21							0.55*
	Australians	0.39*	1						0.51*
	Iranians	0.37	0.34	1					0.66*
	Chinese	0.51*	0.26*	0.29	1				0.58*
	Indians	0.52*	0.37*	0.11	0.23	1			0.64*
Accessibility	Australians	0.42*	0.51*	0.16	0.07	0.23	0.51*	0.66*	0.47*
	Iranians	0.51*	0.34	0.28	0.17	0.30	0.55*	0.62*	0.48*
	Chinese	0.27	0.11	0.11	0.23	0.18	0.64*	0.39*	0.35*
	Indians	0.42*	0.32*	0.25	0.25	0.11	0.51*	0.54*	0.35*
	Australians	0.51*	0.12	0.03	0.34	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.26
	Iranians	0.52*	0.22	0.04	0.30	0.52*	0.50*	0.50*	0.50*
	Chinese	0.35*	0.24	0.34	0.29	0.29	0.31*	0.31*	0.31*
	Indians	0.53*	0.11	0.19	0.27	0.35*	0.27	0.27	0.27
Safety	Australians	0.61*	0.46*	0.11	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Iranians	0.46*	0.36	0.19	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Chinese	0.49*	0.36	0.20	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Indians	0.61*	0.11	0.11	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Australians	0.35*	0.35	0.04	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Iranians	0.57*	0.35	0.34	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Chinese	0.49*	0.35	0.19	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Indians	0.61*	0.11	0.11	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Diversity of activities	Australians	0.42*	0.52*	0.03	0.07	0.23	0.51*	0.66*	0.47*
	Iranians	0.51*	0.34	0.28	0.17	0.30	0.55*	0.62*	0.48*
	Chinese	0.27	0.11	0.11	0.23	0.18	0.64*	0.39*	0.35*
	Indians	0.42*	0.32*	0.25	0.25	0.11	0.51*	0.54*	0.35*
	Australians	0.51*	0.12	0.03	0.34	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.26
	Iranians	0.52*	0.22	0.04	0.30	0.52*	0.50*	0.50*	0.50*
	Chinese	0.35*	0.24	0.34	0.29	0.29	0.31*	0.31*	0.31*
	Indians	0.61*	0.11	0.19	0.27	0.35*	0.27	0.27	0.27
Optional activities	Australians	0.61*	0.46*	0.11	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Iranians	0.46*	0.36	0.19	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Chinese	0.49*	0.36	0.20	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Indians	0.61*	0.11	0.11	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Australians	0.35*	0.35	0.04	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Iranians	0.57*	0.35	0.34	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Chinese	0.49*	0.35	0.19	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Indians	0.61*	0.11	0.11	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Social activities	Australians	0.42*	0.52*	0.03	0.07	0.23	0.51*	0.66*	0.47*
	Iranians	0.51*	0.34	0.28	0.17	0.30	0.55*	0.62*	0.48*
	Chinese	0.27	0.11	0.11	0.23	0.18	0.64*	0.39*	0.35*
	Indians	0.42*	0.32*	0.25	0.25	0.11	0.51*	0.54*	0.35*
	Australians	0.51*	0.12	0.03	0.34	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.26
	Iranians	0.52*	0.22	0.04	0.30	0.52*	0.50*	0.50*	0.50*
	Chinese	0.35*	0.24	0.34	0.29	0.29	0.31*	0.31*	0.31*
	Indians	0.61*	0.11	0.19	0.27	0.35*	0.27	0.27	0.27
Enjoyable appearance and design	Australians	0.42*	0.52*	0.03	0.07	0.23	0.51*	0.66*	0.47*
	Iranians	0.51*	0.34	0.28	0.17	0.30	0.55*	0.62*	0.48*
	Chinese	0.27	0.11	0.11	0.23	0.18	0.64*	0.39*	0.35*
	Indians	0.42*	0.32*	0.25	0.25	0.11	0.51*	0.54*	0.35*
	Australians	0.51*	0.12	0.03	0.34	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.26
	Iranians	0.52*	0.22	0.04	0.30	0.52*	0.50*	0.50*	0.50*
	Chinese	0.35*	0.24	0.34	0.29	0.29	0.31*	0.31*	0.31*
	Indians	0.61*	0.11	0.19	0.27	0.35*	0.27	0.27	0.27

Table 3. The Pearson’s correlation results between public open places’ qualities

People diversity in public open places

Regarding diversity (Figure 8), Australians (27.7%) primarily attribute diversity to various facilities and activities, Iranians (29.4%) to different age groups, and Indians (38.5%) and Chinese (39.7%) to people from diverse cultures and nationalities.

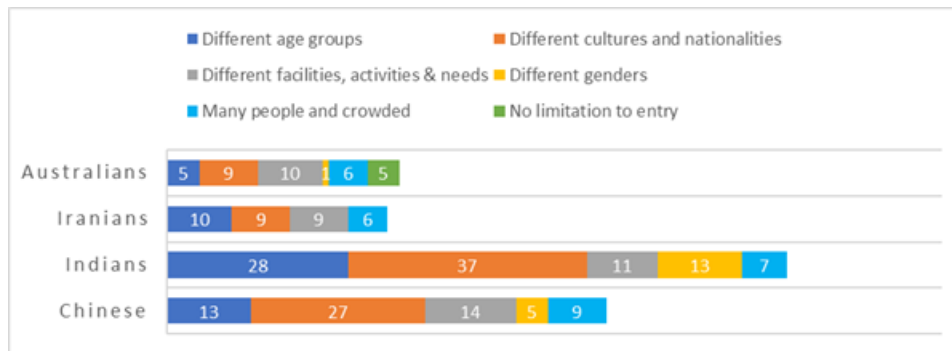


Figure 8. Reasons for people diversity

DISCUSSION

Cultural preferences and attachment

Our results support the argument that cultural influences can shape and modify preferences towards built-up and natural environments, resulting in preference variation between groups and subcultures.²⁷ Cultural preferences theory emphasizes the role of individual characteristics, social and cultural norms, memories, and experiences in landscape perception.²⁸ In several studies²⁹, immigrants' preferences for public open places shaped place attachment. Therefore, considering individuals' cultural preferences is crucial for improving place attachment, especially in countries like Australia with one-third of foreign-born population.³⁰ However, urban designers often neglect cultural differences, as demonstrated in the work of.³¹

This study aligns with³² assertion of universality in some landscape preferences, particularly the widespread preference for waterside places across cultures. They also noted that other preferences depend on individual characteristics and cultural backgrounds. Notably, 86.6% of selected places were near the waterside, indicating a universal preference. Recognizing widespread preferences is crucial for industries, including tourism and urban planning, as it can guide the development of accommodations and recreational facilities, fostering an attractive and inclusive environment for residents and tourists.

The research also identified specific cultural preferences among overseas-born participants. For example, many Chinese (25.3%) selected places near Chinatown, indicating a preference for local Chinese settings. This aligns with previous studies⁽³³⁾. Li, and McKercher³⁴ found that many Chinese immigrants maintain a strong sense of 'Chineseness' after immigration.

³⁵ indicated that Indian immigrants easily acculturated to new environments. Similarly, our study found that some Indian participants (13.5%) selected places mostly used by locals and not selected by other immigrants. Another example regards the Iranians and their attachment to places developed family and friend relationships.³⁶ Our results also showed that gathering and socializing were more important for Iranians than other cultures.

Overall, the findings have crucial implications for policymaking and urban design practices, suggesting a shift from objectivist to more subjectivist approaches prioritizing existing communities and their cultural preferences. Revising design guidelines and policymaking in this direction could create more responsive public places with increased attachment.

Cultural differences and inclusiveness

Our research supports³⁷ idea of inclusiveness in public spaces, emphasizing the importance of considering diverse cultural backgrounds. Regarding cultural differences, the results of the study revealed significant variations in individuals' evaluations of public open spaces' qualities. The study highlights a knowledge gap in research regarding how cultural diversity influences participants' evaluations. In conclusion, our research underscores the importance of planning practices that account for cultural diversity in evaluating public spaces.

In line with Mehta's perspective,³⁸ mentioned that to design urban spaces in an era of migration and globalization, multicultural patterns of using these places should be considered. Inclusive public spaces allow different cultures to use them³⁹ and improve the feeling of ownership and attachment. These findings align to create a more harmonious and integrated society in an increasingly multicultural world.

Discussing methods

The online map selection method, which was combined with a questionnaire, unveiled two principal benefits for architects and urban designers.

First, ⁴⁰ emphasize the impact of tangible elements on immigrants' place attachment. In our study, participants selected various places with different tangible elements on the map; however, we discovered similarities regarding tangible elements such as water. This method of place selection helps architects and urban designers identify similar tangible elements that influence immigrants' place attachments.

Researchers, including,⁴¹ argued that architects should consider human values to design meaningful places. Additionally,⁴² have underscored that the fundamental reason for cultural connection to places is human values and experiences. In our study, an open-ended question about place attachment preferences was used to uncover participants' values and cultural connections. Open-ended questions help architects and urban designers uncover participants' values, shaping design guidelines for more inclusive and user-centred public open spaces.

However, the map selection approach, while valuable, has limitations: it relies on individual preferences and experiences, which might not represent a comprehensive view of cultural preferences. Additionally, this method focuses on positive preferences and attachments but could disregard negative aspects. Lastly, the method captures place preferences and attachments but may not consider changes in those preferences and attachments over time or with increased familiarity.

Direction for future research

Research⁴³ consistently shows that facilities, and experiences similar to immigrants' countries improve their familiarity and place attachment. However, in our research, some immigrants expressed attachment to new and unique facilities and experiences, not available in their countries such as swimming and surfing. Future research should examine how unique experiences enhance immigrants' place attachment, and how long the resulting excitement lasts for immigrants.

Our study shows that over 50% of immigrants favoured two neighbourhoods, Surfers Paradise and Southport, while locals evenly chose across various areas. This disparity may stem from locals' familiarity with places, the accessibility of the mentioned neighbourhoods for immigrants, or other potential reasons. Future research should discover these variations to uncover potential social or cultural barriers or opportunities in public spaces. Addressing these barriers and opportunities can help policymakers and community organizations promote social inclusion and cohesion that benefit immigrants and locals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the significance of public open places for fostering place attachment, particularly among immigrants in a culturally diverse city. It reveals similarities and differences in place selections, attachment preferences, and evaluations of public open places among participants. In a multicultural context, urban designers and policymakers should prioritize the cultural preferences of diverse groups for inclusive public places while preserving the cultural identity of local communities.

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GETTING TO KNOW LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH BACKYARDS: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC REFLECTION

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INTRODUCTION

This paper departs from an on-the-ground pilot case titled “In My Backyard? A citizen science pilot project on home farming and gardening”,¹ led by Rio Neiva – Environmental NGO and its partner CEA – Municipal Centre for Environmental Education of Esposende, Portugal, aiming to support a long-term transition to sustainable backyards.² It focused on a semi-rural region of northern Portugal, between the cities of Esposende and Viana do Castelo, during 2020.

The premise was based on the need for more information on home farming and gardening practices on this geographical area, where backyards are a common feature and part of a local family's cultural heritage. It's a region where living in houses is more common than in buildings and most of them have a backyard or an area for growing vegetables, plants and raising animals on a small scale – for consumption by the family that owns the land or for distribution among neighbours. Considering the unavailability of information and knowledge regarding backyards and the need to capture this reality, the project has taken an open definition of backyards as long as they are privately owned and managed within a domestic context, thus excluding any professional farming and gardening. Backyards can play an essential role in the well-being and health of those who deal directly with them. It's a physical outdoor activity, close to nature, and can contribute to a balanced diet free of harmful chemicals. Although the backyards studied in this project are private spaces, they can also significantly impact (positive or negative) far beyond the boundaries of a house or private land, playing a crucial role in local environmental sustainability and human health. Considering this scenario, our work focused on 1) collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data and 2) promoting knowledge transfer workshops on sustainable home farming and gardening practices. In short, citizens' participation was essential to meet the project's objectives, whether by answering our questions and welcoming us into their homes or participating in workshops and training courses. In this paper, we will highlight two outputs produced to process this data and reflect on the knowledge transfer activities: the care breviary with tips and knowledge we collected from people in their homes; and the documentary “In My Backyard”, which tells the story of the project and its participants.

In addition to describing and reflecting on the process, mainly the fieldwork carried out with a multidisciplinary team between February and September 2020, we aim to contribute to discussing citizen science models in the context of semi-rural communities, going beyond its traditional hard-

data methodologies and adding an ethnographic, design-led approach. To articulate this discussion, this paper will be divided into the following parts: Leadership and local community, describing the particularities of the organisations involved and the work team; Fieldwork and approach, presenting the methodological approach strategies in the field; Results and feedback for the community; and Conclusions.

LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL COMMUNITY

The project was promoted by Rio Neiva Environmental NGO and its partner CEA - Municipal Centre for Environmental Education, as a way to ground the project in the local community where the NGO is located and to empower it with a public authority reach and feedback.

Since 1989, when Rio Neiva was founded by members from the local community concerned about the region's environmental challenges – as the arrival of new industries close to the Neiva River – the NGO has been an active agent of local transformation towards a sustainable, inclusive, and participatory territory.³ Having more than 30 years of action in the territory, focused on the local scale, contributes to the relationship of trust and recognition of the local community, in addition to the location of its building on the banks of the Neiva River, in a very popular region with residents of the cities of Esposende and Viana do Castelo for outdoor walks and activities.

These factors contribute to a project of this nature, which deals with private space and the necessary trust of the participants to welcome the team into their homes and feel comfortable sharing information about their daily lives and their relationships with their backyards. The NGO's leadership favoured our ethnographic work and participant observation, which could have been a much slower and less successful initial phase of rapprochement.

On the other hand, CEA is a municipal infrastructure of Esposende that aims to promote environmental sustainability awareness, training and education, focusing on the local community. This partnership facilitated the collection of already existing information through the municipality or, as it turned out, the recognition that there was a lack of information on backyards in the region and the need for a project closer to and focused on the population.

This collaboration between a local NGO and the municipality was a two-way street: Rio Neiva would help to gather quality, hard-to-reach data on the region's backyards, and from this contact on the ground it would be able to convey people's main needs about sustainable practices in their backyards, and CEA helped with dissemination and free training courses inspired by the collected data.

FIELDWORK AND APPROACH

One of the most crucial aspects of a citizen-science project is how to reach and engage participants, which, as Rajul Pandya emphasised, is often a problem due to the lack of alignment between the actual demands of the population and the themes addressed by projects and researchers. While looking for people with a backyard, we had to attain two different sub-sets of this target group: local backyard owners for on-site visits and backyard owners for the online survey located anywhere in Portugal. Locals were targeted mainly through our newsletter, social media, partner contact list, local events and personal direct contacts. For the online survey, media outreach was key, as well as direct mailing to relevant organisations, fellow environmental NGOs and projects, and social media discussion groups. Between March and August 2020, we had 110 online responses; between February and September, we made 25 on-site visits.

An important moment for the project was the first event, where we had several members of the local community for a dinner made together with them, with the products that each one brought to represent their backyard (Figure 1). It was essential to engage citizens and to present the team, in addition to

stimulating networking between backyard owners in the region and recruiting potential volunteers for our field visits.



Figure 1. The project's first event with products brought by backyard owners. Photo: Ana Clara Roberti, 2020.

Online data solutions – COVID-19

Data collection is usually crucial for a citizen science project as Sherbinin et al. mentioned; ours was no different. The initial strategy was based on collecting data through a survey when doing on-site visits to backyards but still having the online version of the same survey available.⁴ With the COVID-19 lockdown in the early stages of the project, the online survey jumped to our priority list.⁵ We had to look into an online survey with the best interface possible and where we had control of the collected data.

Although our central goal was not aimed at a national scale or online data collection, the need to invest in this solution due to a situation beyond our control brought positive surprises. We observed that backyards played an important role in people's well-being during the pandemic. They were available to fill out forms and actively participate in online training provided by the project. It was possible to reach places far beyond the area where the NGO or the municipality have direct influence (Figures 2 and 3).

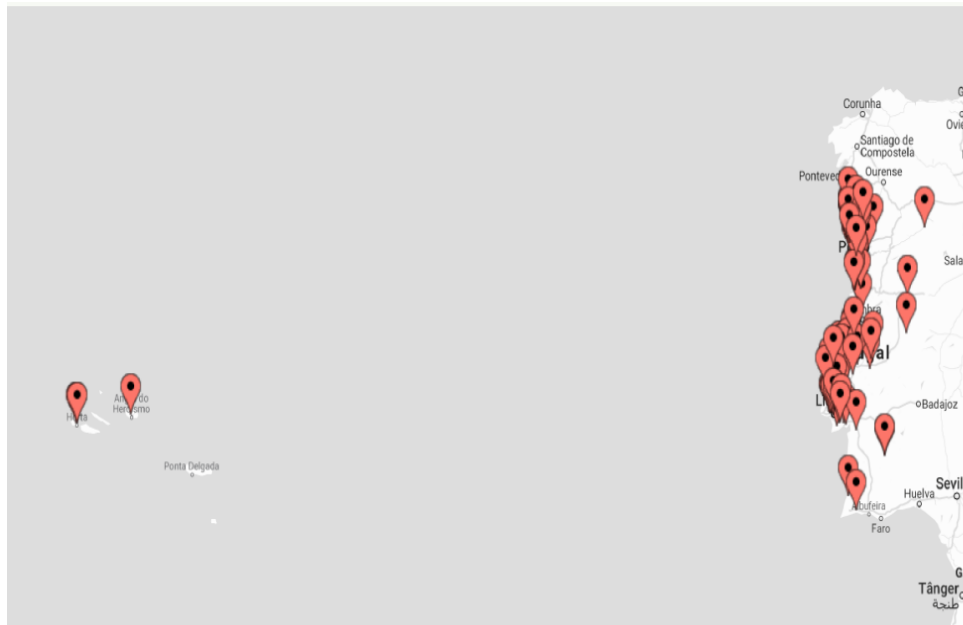


Figure 2. Citizen's location, online survey.

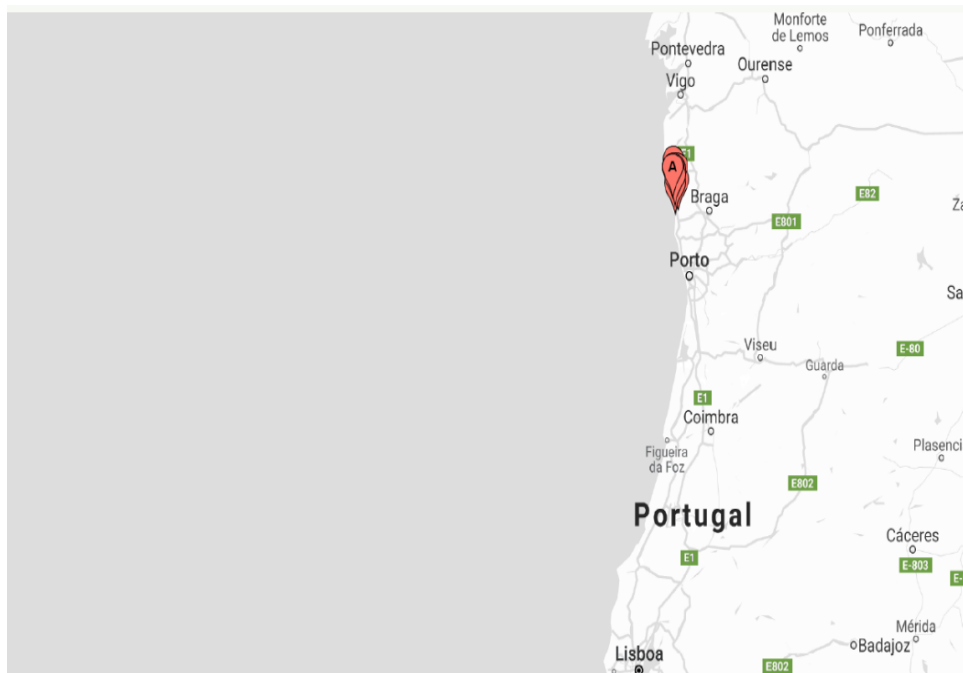


Figure 3. Citizen's location, on-site visits.

On-site visits – an ethnographic approach

Besides the online survey's interesting results and reach, the project aimed to go beyond the hard-data methodologies commonly used in citizen science. It incorporates tools from design and adopts an ethnographic approach where our engagement with participants and the interaction among participants were crucial to the process and final results.

One of the reasons justifying the importance of this approach was precisely the object of study: backyards are more than private; they are familiar spaces. This boundary is not just physical or

bureaucratic but strictly personal. In an ethnographic work, as pointed out by Allison Hurst, to access the places we intend to explore, we need to understand their rules and customs.

So, these spaces can play a crucial role in local environmental sustainability, human health, soil and water quality, the spread of invasive species, the use of pesticides, etc., but there is little to no information about them. They are difficult to access, and this absence of information is one of the reasons for the project's existence.

The idea was to understand the use of fertilisers and similar substances in the soil and, especially, to learn from the ecologically sustainable and beneficial techniques people practised. This generational and valuable knowledge is often unrecorded. Throughout the process, this focus stood out, proving the existence of much more significant and varied information than we initially anticipated, so we constantly emphasised to the participants in the field that our stance was much more to learn than to monitor them (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Fieldwork visits. Photo: Ana Clara Roberti, 2020.

We had to think carefully about our attitude in the fieldwork so that we didn't act like “inspectors”, checking whether they were using the land well or not. We listened and learnt. Otherwise, we wouldn't have even crossed these front doors.

Having a diverse and multidisciplinary team was crucial in shaping our strategies and actions in this direction. We have environmental science, ethnography, audiovisual, design, and community engagement experts. This collective expertise ensures a holistic approach to data collection and helps to enrich our understanding of the diverse facets of local life in a semi-rural community.

One crucial strategy was to invest in pilot visits right at the beginning of the project – before the COVID-19 pandemic in Portugal – with the people closest to the Rio Neiva NGO to understand how it would work. We carried out three pilot visits in very different backyards – number of family members, gender of backyard owners, type of animals raised, and food grown – and we realised that adjusting the initial plan and adapting it to the local reality would be necessary.

Initially, we had thought about making 50 visits, considering scheduling a maximum of 4 per day. With the pilot visits, we realised that we would need much more time for each visit, regardless of the size of the yards. Establishing dialogue and trust required a close relationship with people and time.

Even the time to taste the fruits and vegetables, or small meals made with products planted on site, was important for this rapprochement between the team and the citizens, but mainly for us to understand closely the relationship between people and their backyards. As a result, we reduced the number of participants (22 between June and September 2020) and adapted our questions.⁶ We had fewer participants, more qualitative information, and more proximity to the local population.

We also realised that we would need at least two team members per visit, ideally three. As we filled out a questionnaire throughout the conversation and filmed and photographed the visits, it was necessary to ensure good interaction with the people who showed us their backyards.⁷ We ensured that someone was always paying attention to what was said or shown and available to talk while other team members took notes or recorded the visit.

With this proximity and the appropriate time dedicated to each backyard – normally, each visit lasted an entire morning or afternoon, around three hours, so we never did more than two a day – we were often able to leave a house with an indication to visit another one, from a neighbour, friend or family member of the person we were with.

Over the 25 visits carried out, we found techniques passed down between generations; older adults who had backyard work as their main physical activity; health professionals at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic who believed that the time they spent taking care of their backyards was what kept them sane and made them get through the days and the emotional burden of hospitals; young people who learned from their parents and grandparents the importance of cultivating the land with care and treating animals with respect. The ethnographic work allowed us to see these situations up close, with time, patience, and availability, providing much more qualitative than quantitative knowledge but of great importance for validating the importance of studying backyards more closely (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Fieldwork visits. Photo: Ana Clara Roberti, 2020.

RESULTS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY

The essence of this project was ethnographic work and getting to know the local community. Accordingly, and as Castañeda mentioned, this is what provides meaning and value to those who participated. Being a citizen science project, the population's participation was therefore essential,

from agreeing to open the doors of their homes for the team to sharing data from their backyards and filling in forms. So, we drew up a plan of activities and results to respond to and valorise this participation (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Overall project results. Image: Rui Monteiro.

Answering questions and fostering participation

To reciprocate this citizen's involvement and keep it active, part of our strategy was to organise training events and workshops directly related to the questions and needs we collected from house to house (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Example of a project workshop. Photo: Ana Clara Roberti, 2020.

These events were open and free of charge, held either in a place that was easily accessible and close to the local community or online – because of the lockdown periods and to enable people involved in the project via the online questionnaire in other parts of the country. CEA helped find the most suitable professionals to give these training courses, ranging from people active in the local community to trainers from other regions.

As well as being feedback for the citizens involved in the project, these events had two essential functions: to support and accelerate the transition to using sustainable and environmentally friendly practices in home farming and gardening and to put backyard owners in touch with each other and stimulate the exchange of knowledge, products, and sustainable practices.

Celebrating backyards and inscribing knowledge

The quantitative data collected was processed using graphs and tables that allowed us to understand a series of more objective information about the backyards studied in person and online at a national level – size in square metres, types of produce grown, number and species of animals, forms of irrigation, use of pesticides and fertilisers, etc., as illustrated in Figure 8.

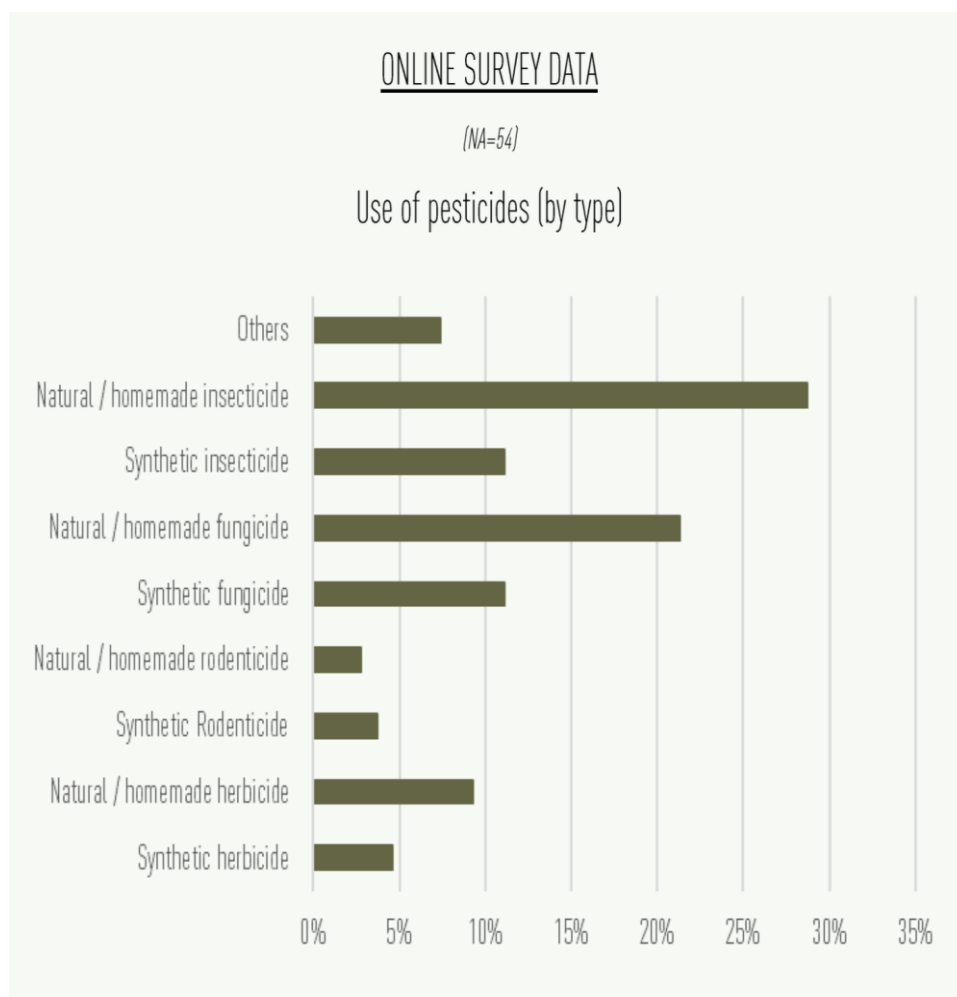


Figure 8. Example of a table produced with quantitative data collected. Image: Rui Monteiro.

To work and process the qualitative data, we used other strategies that contributed to both things: celebrating and valuing people's relationship with their backyards, which we know more deeply through the project's ethnographic work; and contributing to recording the valuable knowledge passed down among families who have taken care of their backyards for generations. In this sense, we highlight two outputs: the care breviary,⁸ with tips and knowledge we collected from people in their homes, and the documentary "In My Backyard",⁹ which tells the story of the project, these people, and their backyards.

A video documentary on a citizen science project might seem odd at first sight. Still, we sensed we required a tool to capture the personal and intimate space of a backyard, which a survey by itself would not be able to. The documentary was about the people we were engaging with, making sure they feel proud and how opening up deserves respect and empathy.

Writing a booklet on sustainable farming and gardening practices can also be intimidating. Either because it can be a never-ending job but also due to the already available vast diversity of books, blogs, videos, and so on the topic, which would make this redundant. So, the process of clarifying what this would be was challenged by what was emerging from field data. We opted to include a set of sustainable tips solely based on the shared knowledge of the backyard owners we have visited. We, therefore, believe it to be essential to inscribe and share on the ground savoir-faire and how this is also meaningful for those who have opened up.

Being a citizen science project and considering the importance of disseminating the knowledge acquired and processed during the project, these outputs are online and accessible to anyone interested in the topic.¹⁰ Before becoming public, they were presented to citizens involved in the project in an event that brought together participants and partners to watch the documentary and see the booklet.

CONCLUSION

We concluded that backyards are an untapped area that can offer a wide range of environmental, economic, or even well-being benefits, and how ethnographic and design-led qualitative data can provide critical insights into such reality. Indeed, quantitative data allowed us to understand the diversity of pesticides and fertilisers used or of existing biodiversity, and qualitative data allowed us to contextualise these findings from a citizen perspective, valuing and disseminating this rich and unwritten knowledge.

Despite being spaces that have influence far beyond their domains, backyards are private and familiar spaces, which makes immersion and access to in-depth knowledge of them difficult. In this sense, the ethnographic, patient, and participatory approach was fundamental to entering this universe with respect and trust between the team and the citizens.

COVID-19 worsened this project's essence, precisely its proximity to the field and people, forcing the team to rethink its strategies and diversify its tools. An adversity that, despite delaying field visits, made us invest online and reach more people when backyards played a special role in a difficult time for humanity.

To deal with the qualitative data and all this proximity to the local population, we opted for outputs beyond graphs and tables that usually work more objectively. We processed the knowledge collected in conversations and walks with backyard owners through two narratives that resulted in a book and an ethnographic video documentary.

Along the way, we developed the project vision: valorising backyards as an integral element in territory development due to their social, environmental, and economic importance.

NOTES

- ¹ Project official website: <https://rioneiva.com/nomeuquintal/>
- ² The project was funded by ACTION - Participatory science toolkit against pollution, in the scope of Horizon 2020.
- ³ Rio Neiva Environmental NGO mission, goals, and projects: <https://rioneiva.com/>
- ⁴ We opted for the European Commission free and open EC Survey for the In My Backyard online survey.
- ⁵ In Portugal, the COVID-19 pandemic officially began on 2 March 2020, and the In My Backyard project started in February of the same year.
- ⁶ All the on-site visits throughout the project were conducted within the safety standards indicated by the Portuguese Government and the World Health Organisation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, the field visits were suspended in March and restarted in June 2020.
- ⁷ Photo gallery of the project: <https://rioneiva.com/nomeuquintal/press-kit/>
- ⁸ Project's booklet available at:
https://rioneiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/BOOKLET_NO_MEU_QUINTAL_v2_small.pdf
- ⁹ Projects documentary available at: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/462032245>
- ¹⁰ We opted for a Creative Commons open license, which is straightforward in implementation and has legal standing across most countries. We chose the CC-BY-SA 4.0 license, which allows for open sharing and adaptation as long as credit is provided and is for non-profit uses.

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A SURF COLLOQUY: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH OF THE COASTAL COMMUNITY IN CHERATING, PAHANG OF WOMEN, SURF SPACES AND INTERSECTIONALITY

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INTRODUCTION

Cherating, a quaint coastal village located on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, has emerged as a unique space within the local surfing community. Known for its monsoon season waves, the village has cultivated a surf culture that is both vibrant and distinctive. The local surf scene is not only a hub for water-based activities but also serves as a crucible for social and cultural identity, where the act of surfing transcends sport to become a way of life.¹ This paper seeks to explore the fabric of Cherating's surf culture, examining its evolution and the role it plays in shaping the identities of its participants, particularly women surfers.

Surfing, once a fringe activity, has permeated popular culture, influencing music, fashion, literature, film, art, and youth jargon.² Its representation in media has often been synonymous with freedom, rebellion, and a connection to nature, crafting an alluring image that has captivated a global audience. However, the romanticized portrayal of surfing belies a more complex reality, one where the practice's spaces—referred to as surfscapes—are often gendered, reflecting broader societal norms and power structures.

Critical surf studies, an emerging field within the social sciences, interrogates these surfscapes, challenging the dominant narratives that have historically marginalized certain groups. Scholars within this discipline argue that surfscapes are not merely physical locations where the act of surfing is practiced but are imbued with social meaning, acting as sites where identities are constructed and contested beyond. The concept of the surfscape thus becomes a lens through which to view the intersection of the practice, culture, and social dynamics, revealing the ways in which surfing both reflects and shapes the values of those who partake in it.

In Cherating, the surfscape is a microcosm of these broader issues, particularly for women surfers who navigate a space traditionally dominated by masculine norms and values. Despite the increasing visibility and participation of women in surfing, the sport remains entrenched in patriarchal ideologies, often relegating women to the periphery. The dynamics experienced by the women surfers of Cherating imply systems of inequality based on their intersectionality relating to their gender, race, and religion, which causes unease, discomfort, and fear.³ It further indicates forms of micro-aggression and subtle to blatant sexism in these spaces where the mobility of emotional expression suffers from power play and symbolic domination.⁴ Although surfscapes are no longer a 'male preserve' practice, they remain male-dominated regarding values, conceptualisations, expectations,

participation, representation, and organization.⁵ This leaves the women surfers mediating already-established systems of complex spaces of power and prestige in various ways. The paper will explore a post-structuralist perspective that offers a frame of reference for their spaces outside of resistance while understanding the complexity of the surfscape and space in alternative ways creating new establishments for the women surfers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Surfing and Identity: The Role of Surfing in Shaping Individual and Communal Identities

Surfing, as a sport, practice, and cultural phenomenon, plays a pivotal role in the construction of individual and communal identities, offering a unique lens through which to examine the interplay between leisure activities and self-conceptualization.⁶ The act of surfing transcends mere physical engagement with the ocean; it embodies a lifestyle and set of values that deeply influence one's sense of self and belonging. Communities built around surf culture often develop distinct social norms and collective identities, which are continuously negotiated and redefined through their members' interactions with the natural environment and each other.⁷ This dynamic process of identity formation within surf culture is not only reflective of personal and group narratives but also intersects with broader societal discourses on gender, race, and class. By exploring the symbiotic relationship between surfing and identity, this paper aims to uncover the nuanced ways in which the women surfers of Cherating, Malaysia, construct and express their individual and communal identities within a complex socio-cultural landscape.

Gender Dynamics in Surfing: Historical Perspectives on the Masculinisation of Surf Culture

The masculinisation of surf culture has been extensively documented, revealing a historical trajectory where gender dynamics have been predominantly shaped by male hegemony. Seminal work traces the origins of surfing's gendered division, highlighting how colonial and post-colonial narratives have often eclipsed the contributions of women surfers.⁸ The portrayal of surfing in popular media, which has traditionally celebrated male athleticism, relegates female surfers to the margins. A critical analysis of the gendered evolution of surf culture notes persistence of patriarchal structures despite the growing presence of women in the sport. More recent studies challenge these entrenched norms, exploring the ways in which female surfers negotiate and resist the masculinised spaces of surfing.⁹ These works collectively underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of the historical and contemporary gender dynamics within surf culture, particularly in diverse and evolving surfscapes such as Cherating, Malaysia.

Intersectionality in Surf spaces and Surfscapes: Understanding How Gender, Race and Religion Intersect in the Context of Surfing

The intersectionality framework, as developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw and reflected in figure 1, is instrumental in dissecting the complex layers of identity that influence women surfer's individual experiences within surf spaces and surfscapes.¹⁰ The approach has been increasingly adopted within the social sciences to examine how gender, race, and religion intersect to shape a person's experience.

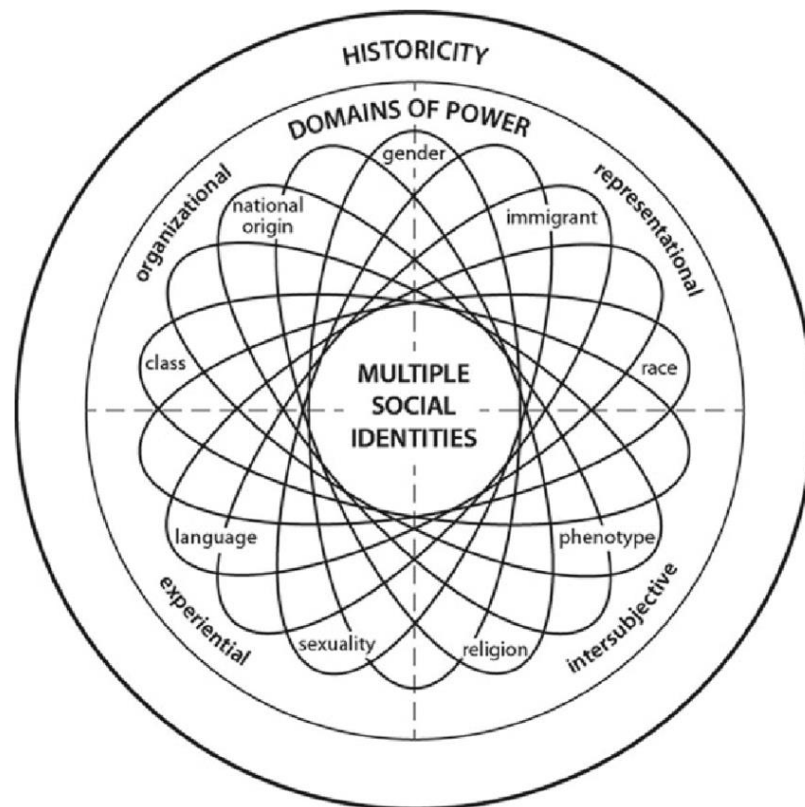


Figure 1. A multi-level model of intersectionality¹¹

Surfing in Cherating, as a practice and sport, is not merely a physical engagement with the sea but a social arena where power dynamics and cultural narratives converge. The masculinisation of surf culture in Cherating, for instance, has been a focal point of critique, highlighting the barriers faced by women and the negotiation of their identities in a traditionally male-dominated space. Additionally, the racial and religious identities of Malaysian surfers can further complicate their integration and acceptance within local surf communities. By applying an intersectional lens, it uncovers the nuanced ways in which these identities interact, revealing the inherent inequalities and the potential for empowerment within the surf culture.

Post- and Patrio-Colonial Implications: The Lingering Effects of Colonialism on Contemporary Surfscapes

The Malaysian surf community, with its rich cultural tapestry, is not immune to the residual effects of British colonialism and neo-colonialism that continue to shape its landscapes and narratives. Post- and patrio-colonial theory provides a lens through which to examine the persistent imbalances present in contemporary surfscapes. The diffusion of surfing culture often follows historical colonial routes, reinforcing Western-centric and patriarchal ideals and side-lining indigenous surf practices.¹² This also attributes to how surf culture is shaped in Cherating where the presence of women, vernacular culture and practices are ignored. The commercial aspects of surfing, including surf tourism and the industry's market dynamics, can be seen as neo colonialism becoming a modern extension of colonial economic practices, where the commodification of local surf cultures echoes a history of exploitation.¹³ Within the community, these post- and patrio-colonial influences intersect with race, gender, and religious status, influencing the access of women surfers to surfscapes, spaces and representation within the surf activities and media. Surf scholars and activists are thus called to

recognize and address these complex legacies, striving for a surf culture that honours diversity and promotes inclusivity, both in the water and beyond.

METHODOLOGY

Utilizing a post-structuralist framework in the study of women surfers' experiences offers a critical lens through which to deconstruct the complex and often intersectional identities that emerge within the surfscapes and spaces. This approach is particularly valuable in challenging the traditional binaries and normative assumptions that have historically constrained our understanding of gender in the surfing world. To delve into the intricate social fabric of women's surfing in Cherating, qualitative research methods such as informal interviews and observations are indispensable. Informal interviews provide a relaxed setting that can encourage participants to share personal narratives and reflections, thereby uncovering the nuanced ways in which they negotiate their identities and navigate the gendered landscapes of surfing.¹⁴ Observations, on the other hand, allow researchers to immerse themselves in the natural environment of the surf community, offering a first-hand look at the interactions, practices, and non-verbal cues that constitute the daily experiences of women surfers. These methods, eschewing the rigidity of structured data collection, enable a more authentic and empathetic engagement with the subject matter, capturing the dynamic and evolving nature of women's participation in the surfscape and spaces.¹⁵

THE SURFSCAPE OF CHERATING

Historical Context: The Evolution of Surfing in Cherating from the Mid-1980s to Present

The coastal village of Cherating, situated on the eastern seaboard of Peninsular Malaysia, has undergone a notable transformation in its surfing landscape from the mid-20th century to the contemporary era. Initially, the region's aquatic potential remained largely untapped, with the local economy predominantly anchored in tourism and fishing. Pioneering travelling surfers recognized the monsoon-induced swells of Cherating for their reliable surfing conditions. This discovery was later solidified by the efforts of Malaysians Kamaruzaman bin Mohd and Azman bin Razak, along with Australian surfer Brent Timothy Tristram, who played instrumental roles in the historical discovery of Cherating as a notable surf destination.

Subsequent decades witnessed a gradual but steady influx of both domestic and international surf enthusiasts, catalysed by anecdotal dissemination and social media coverage. The establishment of structured surf instruction facilities and the inception of organized competitive events have contributed to the locale's ascendancy as a recognized surf destination.

Presently, Cherating's surf scene is characterized by a symbiotic relationship between surf-related commerce, including equipment rental outlets and thematic gastronomy, and the preservation of its local heritage. The village exemplifies a microcosm of global surf culture's integration with local socioeconomic frameworks, maintaining its identity amidst the burgeoning surf tourism industry. Scientifically, the evolution of Cherating as a surf spot can be viewed through the lens of coastal recreation development, environmental dynamics influencing wave patterns, and the anthropological impact of sport on community identity and economic diversification.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND THEIR INTERSECTIONALITY IN SURF CULTURE: GENDER, RACE AND RELIGION IN THE SURFSCAPE

Challenges and Negotiations

Systems of Inequality: How intersectionality shapes the experiences of women surfers

Gender inequality in surfing is a multifaceted issue that intersects with various aspects of identity, including race, class, and sexuality. Malaysia's population is ethnically and religiously diverse reflecting Malaysia's cultural tapestry that has the women surfers of Cherating navigating complex spaces.¹⁶ The exclusion of women from surfing has led to a contemporary landscape where women often face systemic barriers to participation and recognition in the sport. This disparity is evident in the prize allocations for numerous national-level competitions hosted in Cherating, as illustrated by the assortment of event posters presented in Figure 2. The documentary "Girls Can't Surf" highlights the long-standing battle for gender equality in professional surfing, showcasing the stories of female surfers who have faced sexism and fought for change within the sport.¹⁷



Figure 2. Surf competition posters reflecting the discrepancy of prize money between men and women.

The World Surf League's initiative to equalize prize money for male and female surfers represents a progressive step toward mitigating gender disparities within the sport. However, this advancement has not been consistently reflected in the surf competitions of Malaysia's Cherating. Women surfers continue to encounter limited opportunities and unequal treatment at surf venues. When challenging these inequities, particularly the prize money discrepancies, they often face intimidation, bullying, and sexual harassment—manifestations of microaggressions that reinforce the symbolic domination of men in surfing. Symbolic domination, a concept referring to the cultural hegemony that maintains the power of certain groups by normalizing their dominance, exacerbates the marginalization of women in the sport.¹⁸

The pursuit of gender equity in surfing necessitates an unwavering commitment to dismantling the systemic obstacles confronting women. Microaggressions, ranging from disparaging remarks about women's capabilities to their exclusion from specific surf spots and the sexualization in media, significantly impede women's emotional expression and freedom of movement within surfing spaces. These subtle forms of discrimination can discourage women from engaging fully in surfing or from expressing themselves authentically within the sport.

An intersectional lens is imperative for a comprehensive understanding of how various identity facets intersect to shape experiences within surfing landscapes and public spaces. For women surfers, their interactions with the sport are influenced not only by gender but also by race, class, sexuality, and other dimensions of identity. For instance, the sexism and racism encountered by a Malay Malaysian

woman in surfing spaces may differ markedly from the challenges faced by a Chinese Malaysian woman, and both will have distinct experiences from those of a heteronormative white woman. Recognizing and addressing these intersecting identities is crucial in the ongoing struggle for a more inclusive and equitable surfing culture.

Resistance and Negotiation: Strategies Employed by Women Surfers to Navigate the Surfscapes

Employing a post-structuralist perspective, the resistance and negotiation strategies of women surfers in the surfscapes are complex and aimed at subverting established gender norms and power relations within the practice. Post-structuralism suggests that power is decentralized and subject to challenge at various junctures, allowing women surfers to utilize diverse tactics to challenge the dominant paradigm. One such strategy is the reclamation of surfscapes, where women assert their presence and skill, thereby contesting the traditional masculine ownership of the practice. This physical assertion not only challenges gendered assumptions but also redefines competence and belonging in surfing community.

Additionally, women surfers engage in discursive resistance, using media and public discourse to share their experiences and counter sexist narratives. This creates alternative representations that celebrate female participation and redefine what it means to be a part of the fabric of the surfscapes. The establishment of women-centric surf and surf related events and communities also acts as a powerful form of collective resistance. These initiatives provide supportive environments that encourage skill enhancement and solidarity, while also advocating for systemic change and gender equality within the surfing world.

Through these forms of resistance, women surfers of Cherating actively participate in reshaping the cultural landscape of surfing. Their efforts contribute to a more inclusive and equitable sport, where the diversity of participants is recognized and valued, and where the surf culture evolves to embrace a multiplicity of identities and expressions.

Beyond Resistance: New Establishments In The Surfscapes And Spaces

To navigate and transform highly masculinized spaces, women may adopt a combination of individual and collective strategies underpinned by scholarly principles and empirical evidence. Individually, women can assert agency by actively engaging in these domains, showcasing their expertise, and subverting prevailing gender norms. Mastery of domain-specific competencies and the articulation of their distinct viewpoints are critical in fostering recognition and respect within male-dominated spheres.

On a collective front, the establishment of support networks and alliances is pivotal. Such networks serve as platforms for mentorship, solidarity, and strategic advocacy, amplifying the collective voice of women and advocating for systemic reforms that advance gender parity. These alliances can also facilitate consciousness-raising endeavours that illuminate the gendered nuances of spatial dynamics and cultivate a culture of support among male counterparts.

Moreover, women can harness legal and institutional mechanisms to address gender-based disparities. This involves invoking anti-discrimination statutes, participating in diversity and inclusion programs, and ensuring female representation in governance structures.

In essence, the endeavour to challenge and reshape masculinized spaces necessitates a sustained and multifaceted approach that merges individual empowerment with collaborative efforts. Through such a synthesis, women can not only secure their rightful place but also drive the reconfiguration of these environments towards greater inclusivity and gender balance.

CONCLUSION

The study conducted on Cherating's surf culture reveals that women surfers have carved out a distinct identity within a traditionally male-dominated arena. Despite facing systemic barriers rooted in patriarchal norms, these women have demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Key findings indicate that women surfers in Cherating engage in a dynamic process of identity negotiation, often challenging and redefining gender roles through their participation in the sport. The establishment of supportive networks has been instrumental in fostering a sense of community and empowerment among female surfers. These networks not only provide mentorship and solidarity but also serve as platforms for advocating gender equity within the surf culture. Furthermore, the study finds that women surfers utilize both formal and informal strategies to navigate and reshape the surfscapes, including legal advocacy and grassroots activism. Collectively, these efforts contribute to a gradual transformation of the surfing landscape in Cherating, promoting inclusivity and diversity within the local surf community.

The experiences of women surfers lay a robust foundation for future research in several key areas. Firstly, it opens avenues for comparative studies across different cultural and geographical surfscapes to understand the universal and unique challenges faced by women in surfing. The paper's findings on identity negotiation and community support can inform broader investigations into how marginalized groups navigate and transform other male-dominated sports cultures. Additionally, the intersectional approach adopted in this study provides a template for examining the multifaceted nature of discrimination and empowerment in various social contexts. Future research can also build on the methodological framework used here, applying qualitative methods to capture the nuanced experiences of individuals within evolving cultural phenomena. Lastly, the paper's insights into the efficacy of collective action and legal advocacy in promoting gender equity can guide strategic interventions and policymaking aimed at fostering inclusivity in sports and beyond.

NOTES

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DECOLONISING PRACTICES IN AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION: POSITIONING AS A RECENT ARRIVAL

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INTRODUCTION

This essay emerges from my attempt to position myself as an academic in architecture and a South-Asian, first-generation migrant woman in relation to the newly developing decolonising practices in architectural education in Australia; in particular, a suite of new Professional Competencies (PC's) that foreground *understanding Country* – the holistic worldview held by Australia's First Nations Peoples - which students must now meet in order to obtain a Master of Architecture degree. My role as co-coordinator for a postgraduate design studio provided an entry point through which I could interpret these PC's and negotiate my own positionality and by extension, its relevance for students, a significant proportion of whom are international students who may or may not practice professionally in Australia. A central question in this essay is how do we, as those benefiting from the settler colonial process, and having a different colonising relationship to the First Nations Peoples of Australia engage meaningfully in the decolonising of the profession? Expanding on a positioning lecture delivered in the subject, this essay offers a conceptual argument through which those who identify as 'recent arrivals' to Australia (be it as first-generation migrants or international students), might contend with this movement, particularly amidst contentious questions of its relevance for new migrants and when embedded in a globalised tertiary education system. The essay draws on intersectionality and the concept of *la facultad* as introduced by Gloria Anzaldúa, to argue for an ethical framework of practice that promotes solidarity across differing subjectivities and enables the design disciplines to cultivate a more reflexive, contextual practice.

The Decolonising Project Across Higher Education

The origins of the decolonial project in higher education has been attributed to grassroots student-led movements in the global south.¹ This includes the 'Fees must Fall' and 'Rhodes must Fall' protests at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and subsequently in solidarity, the 'Why is my Curriculum White' movement in the UK which called for a broader decolonising of curricula and pedagogy in higher education. Simultaneously and complementary was the take up of Southern decolonial theory produced by Latin American scholars² which provided conceptual framing and theoretical grounding. Further momentum was added with the Black Lives Matter movement which saw many architecture schools and professional bodies committing to anti-racist agendas.³

Indigenous Professional Competencies in Australian Architectural Education

Within this context, the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA), the peak body for the profession, released its National Standard of Competency for Architects (NSCA) in 2021.⁴ Distinct amongst changes from its last iteration are an acknowledgement of First Nations Peoples' knowledges and their aspirations to care for Country through a suite of new and expanded PC's. They write, "Embedded within the practice of architecture is the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ongoing connection and custodianship of Country, and the ethical responsibilities to the physical environment and the transition to a carbon-neutral built environment. These responsibilities are fundamental to architecture practice." At the point of graduation these include: PC8, PC15, PC17, PC26, PC27, PC29, PC30, PC34 and PC36.⁵

Some of the PC's more than others can be described as contributing to the 'decolonising' of architectural education because they promote alternative sites of knowledge production and have the potential to disrupt or 'unsettle' the settler colonial logic that we have come to consider as 'normal.' These include, PC17 *'Have an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' aspirations to care for Country and how these inform architectural design,'* PC27 *'Understand how to embed the knowledge, worldviews and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, shared through engagement processes, into the conceptual design in a meaningful, respectful and appropriate way,'* and PC36 *'Be able to apply creative imagination, design precedents, emergent knowledge, critical evaluation and continued engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to produce a coherent project design. This should be resolved in terms of supporting health and wellbeing outcomes for Country, site planning, formal composition, spatial planning and circulation as appropriate to the project brief and all other factors affecting the project.'*

Some PC's such as PC15, PC26, PC29, PC30 and PC34 suggest an expanded conceptualisation of culture implying a broader call for inclusivity and cultural responsiveness.

Finding an Entry Point

I argue however, that the way the PC's have been framed and introduced by the AIA, much like the Australian Federal Government led public debate leading up to the 2023 referendum on the *Indigenous Voice to Parliament*, assumes everyone in Australia has the same colonising relationship to Australia and its First Nations Peoples.⁶ This approach disregards the internal diversity of Australian society and has the potential to alienate communities including recent migrants. While polls in the lead up to the referendum indicated mixed and complex voting patterns in multicultural communities that had high numbers of first-generation migrants,⁷ online forums, news media and conversations I had with colleagues in practice as well as students, reflected some of the attitudes and concerns of these communities with questions around relevance such as, 'why should we be involved in this – when our ancestors did not play a role in Australia's colonisation?' and, 'We came ourselves from places that have histories of colonisation and dispossession, and experience ongoing impact from that.'

The descriptor of 'new arrivals' is also applicable to international students who are a significant portion of our student cohort. They are embedded in a global, and corporatised tertiary education system that still gains its legitimacy from the intellectual authority of the global North. Characteristic to this system is narrowing sites of knowledge production which includes devaluing indigenous and local knowledges.⁸ As Raewyn Connell writes, "The global division of labour [in knowledge formation] did not arise because Europeans were the only people capable of abstract reasoning, It arose because conceptual work in other knowledge formations was excluded, in acts of power."⁹ Our students are entangled in this system that valorises Western knowledge systems and devalues other ways of knowing, even of their own places of origin. While being embedded in a such a system could

pre-condition student thinking and impact their receptivity to the foregrounding of Indigenous knowledges in the curriculum, being involved in a decolonising process through the consideration of the Indigenous PC's may impel students to question the inequity of the very systems they're embedded in. Also, as new arrivals to Australia, and some as visible minorities these students encounter everyday experiences of racism which are both structural and affective.¹⁰ And like First Nations Peoples and non-Anglo migrants, are positioned as a 'racialised other' in an Australia that is still conceptualised as a white nation.¹¹ I argue these overlapping subjectivities provide recent arrivals a common 'entry point' through which to interpret the new PC's in a meaningful way.

NEGOTIATING POSITIONALITY

Arriving around 20 years ago from a South Asian nation I would be considered a recent immigrant to Australia when considering its immigration history since British colonisation in 1787 and in relation to the continued 60000-year inhabitation of the continent by Australia's First Nations Peoples. The following section presents a conceptual argument through which I have attempted to negotiate my own positionality as a non-Anglo diasporic subject in a settler colony.

Locating Diasporic Subjects in Settler Colonialism

Scholarship on the relationship between non-Anglo migrants and Aboriginal Australia is scant.¹² Jessie Liu critiques settler colonial studies pointing out that they foreground settler colonialism through a White/Indigenous binary where migrant groups are often absent.¹³ This pairing is similarly reflected in the media leading up to the referendum, again, assuming the population has one, singular colonising relationship to the First Nations Peoples. A standout in bringing a nuanced and textured understanding is the recent special issue of *Australian Historical Studies* titled, 'Their Own Perceptions: Non-Anglo Migrants and Aboriginal Australia.'¹⁴ Drawing from multilingual sources, the articles in the issue discuss how successive immigrant populations since the removal of the White Australia policy formed complex relationships with First Nations communities, at times taking ethical stances and forming coalitions but at other times being complicit in their exploitation and perpetuating settler colonial practices through the use of their labour and the appropriation of land. Contributing to this debate Liu asks the question, "Are Asian people settlers in Australia?"¹⁵ and points to a growing body of work in Anti-colonial Asian diasporic studies that assert, "Asian settlers are beneficiaries of the exploitation and colonisation of the Indigenous lands they live on," and, "recognise how Asian subjects can engage in colonial logics and everyday practises which can end up holding or supporting the settler state."

This discourse allowed me to recognise my own settler status, and complicity in settler colonial processes through my relationship to the land and its institutions. However, this position didn't allow me to fully reconcile the everyday marginalising experiences I have as a visible minority within the discipline and in broader Australian society. A central question then formed; how do we, as those benefiting from the settler colonial process, and having a different colonising relationship to the First Nations Peoples of Australia engage meaningfully in the decolonising of the profession?

***la facultad* and Forming Alliance**

While there is migrant complicity in settler colonialism, Ann Curthoys argues immigration has both a colonising and decolonising role in Australia.¹⁶ Despite assimilatory pressures, the arrival of non-Anglo migrants during the post-war period and subsequently after the abolition of the White Australia policy resulted in epistemic diversity which has had a decolonising impact on Australian society. I have written elsewhere of the assimilatory practices that I must daily navigate as a migrant woman of colour in Australian society and draw on Latin American scholars and border theory to speculate on a

politics of sharing.¹⁷ I use that theorising and extend it here. Aida Hurtado describes one of the key attributes of Chicana feminism is its ability to hold together differing realities (1998). She attributes this to the exposure to multiple borders and with it, comes an ‘oppositional consciousness,’ or *la facultad*, (as introduced by Gloria Anzaldúa ‘...the ability to hold multiple social perspectives while simultaneously maintaining a core centre ...’(1991, 150). This she says is essential to Chicana feminism’s ability to form collaborations and political coalitions across diverse, sometimes ideologically incompatible movements. My experiences as a migrant speaks of similar exposure to multiple borders, but also to multiple temporalities and sensibilities that have sharpened my ability to mobilise different identity categories as needed. I speak languages, engage in culinary practices and replicate spatial practices sometimes in culturally guarded and tactical ways that resist assimilation. At other times I re-orient and align with the mainstream. Anzaldúa describes *la facultad* variously as a ‘vestige of a proximity sense,’ an ‘acute awareness mediated by the part of the psyche that does not speak,’ and a ‘shift in perception.’ This is a skill that not only allows us to ‘live inside with difference’ but it is also how we’re able to build coalitions with other people of colour, minorities and align ourselves with broader agendas of social justice. In this way, with the intention of forming alliance with First Nations Peoples through my own embodied decolonising presence as a new migrant, I am able to position myself meaningfully and contribute to the efforts to decolonise our profession.

GUIDING STUDENTS

This section presents an outline of a lecture I deliver that provides students guidance on negotiating their own positionality. The key outcome is a ‘positioning statement’ that prefaces their semester of study.

‘I am where I think’

Why ask students to position themselves? Positioning is considered an important decolonising method that foregrounds epistemological situatedness. As Walter Dignolo argues, “I am where I think,”¹⁸ that is, the position from which one speaks is imperative as ‘location is constitutive of thought.’¹⁹ Location here could be geographical but also knowledge traditions one might be socialised into. Articulating a position is also the starting point for reflexive practice. It is now expected in the social sciences to include a positionality statement as part of the research method. And so, we argue for students, this is not only about positioning design in a complex place or site but it is also about cultivating a reflexive, and situated practice. That is, being aware of, and open to diverse knowledges and expanding the way they engage with and understands the world. And reflexive practice begins with positioning yourself.

To get students to start thinking about this, I ask them to engage in this ‘think, pair and share’ activity in the lecture.²⁰ “What Makes Me, Me?” I bring up a slide with the following questions and ask students to write down their responses individually. The questions are as follows:

- Write down 3 words that describe your identity,
- Which of these (if any) are visible to others?
- Which of these are you most aware of on a day-to-day basis?
- Which of these affords you the most privilege?

The students are then asked to share their responses with the person sitting next to them and have a brief conversation. I then say that every person has multiple and diverse identities that combine in unique ways to shape our perspectives, and experiences and, what this illustrates is that “we experience our identities intersectionally rather than through discrete categories.”²¹

I then introduce the concept of *intersectionality* which acknowledges the complex relationship between social identities, and systems of power and oppression, saying “Intersectionality is a

framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages. It takes into account people's overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face,²² and highlight the fact that it was “originally a concept that comes from the work of legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, who used it to explain how Black women are doubly disadvantaged in the legal system.”²³

I subsequently bring up Sylvia Duckworth's *Wheel of Power/Privilege* which organizes the various identities of a person on a wheel with the identities that hold the most power in our society placed at the center, and the identities that hold the least power in our society on the outskirts.²⁴ I explain that the further out from the centre you get, the more marginalised you are and argue, by focusing on the Indigenous PC's we are centering knowledge and ways of knowing that are typically marginalised in our profession. I further argue that this thinking, of being perceptive of hierarchical power structures and wanting to bringing marginal voices to the centre is transferable to the social, cultural and economic conditions of wherever students end up practicing after they graduate. This would become the intellectual framing for students to then go and form their own positioning statement. One that is not about guilt but of use,²⁵ as Gayatri Spivak argues through her concept of *constructive complicity*, “the point is not to lament one's position but to leverage it, to discover a constructive rather than disabling complicity.”²⁶

As a take home activity, students are then asked to formulate their own positioning statements reflecting on:

- What are my different social identities and how significant are they to my work?
- What values and experiences have shaped who I am professionally? How do they compare with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's world views and ways of knowing?
- In what discipline did I train? What role did my discipline play in establishing dominant worldviews? What role do I play in this work? In what ways do I challenge or divest from some of these practices? Why and why not?²⁷

CONCLUSION

The new PC's introduced by the AIA contribute to the decolonising of architectural education by considering other ways of knowing and expanding the sites of knowledge production, thereby challenging the typically Eurocentric traditions of the profession. I argued however that the way the PC's have been currently framed, perpetuates a problematic and limiting binary that disregards the internal diversity of the profession and the student body which includes a significant portion of international students who have a different colonising relationship to Australia than descendants of white colonial settlers. Based on overlapping subjectivities I presented a common 'entry point' for new arrivals that may allow a meaningful engagement with the PC's. Central to this is Curthoys' proposition that migration has both a colonising and decolonising role in Australia. A dual role that includes complicity in settler colonialism but also an inherent decolonising potential through the multiple epistemes it introduces. This influenced the shaping of my own positionality through Anzaldúa's concept of *le facultad*, a vestigial sense of migrant sensibility that allows me to build alliances with First Nations Peoples in their efforts to decolonise the profession. In this context the Indigenous PC's can be seen as a hopeful yet powerful starting point for us to consider a broader ethical, and anti-racist framework of practice in Architecture.

NOTES

¹ See, Aneta Hayes, Kathy Luckett and Greg Misiaszek, “Possibilities and complexities of decolonising higher education: critical perspectives on praxis,” *Teaching in Higher Education* 26, no. 7-8 (2021): 887-901, DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2021.1971384, and Huda Tayob, “Race, Space and Architecture,” in *The Routledge Companion to Architectural Pedagogies of the Global South*, eds. Harriet Harriss, Ashraf M. Salama and Ane Gonzalez Lara (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 200-212.

² Hayes, Luckett and Misiaszek, “Possibilities and complexities of decolonising higher education,” 887.

³ “Statement from the ACSA Board of Directors,” *ACSA News*, accessed January 14 2024, <https://www.acsa-arch.org/acsa-board-of-directors-racial-equity-statement/>, and “Statements on Anti-racism and Diversity,” *University of Illinois, School of Architecture*, accessed January 14 2024, <https://arch.illinois.edu/about/statements/>

⁴ Architects Accreditation Council of Australia, “2021 National Standards of Competency for Architects,” accessed November 17, 2023, <https://aaca.org.au/national-standard-of-competency-for-architects/2021nsca/>

⁵ For expanded descriptions and explanatory notes on the professional competencies see, “2021 National Standards of Competency for Architects.”

⁶ This insight is inspired by the argument made by Goenpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson who writes that Aboriginal Australians consider all non-Aboriginal people to be migrants, she however acknowledges differentiation is necessary for migrants of non-Anglo backgrounds because of their positioning as a non-white other in the nation’s imaginary. Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2015).

⁷ “Scapegoating of migrant communities continues in the wake of the voice referendum,” *Women’s Agenda*, accessed January 17 2024,

<https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/soapbox/scapegoating-of-migrant-communities-continues-in-the-wake-of-the-voice-referendum/>, and Andrew Jakubowicz, “Will multicultural Australians support the Voice? The success of the outcome may hinge on it,” *The Conversation*, February 9, 2023, <https://theconversation.com/will-multicultural-australians-support-the-voice-the-success-of-the-referendum-may-hinge-on-it-199304>

⁸ Raewyn Connell, *The Good University: What Universities Actually Do and Why It’s Time for Radical Change* (Bloomsbury Press, 2019).

⁹ Connell, *The Good University*, 79.

¹⁰ Kevin Dunn, Danielle Pelleri and Karin Maeder-Han, “Attacks on Indian students: the commerce of denial in Australia,” *Race & Class* 52, no.4 (2011):71-88. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396810396603>, Lily Kuo and Katherine Murphy, “China warns students to reconsider travel to Australia for study,” accessed 20 November, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/09/china-warns-students-to-reconsider-travel-to-australia-for-study>

¹¹ Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

¹² Ann Curthoys, “An Uneasy Conversation: The Multicultural and the Indigenous,” in *Race, Colour and Identity in Australia and New Zealand*, eds. John Docker and Gerhard Fischer (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000): 21-26. For insight into the perspective of Indigenous Australians to issues of immigration read, Kevin M. Dunn, Alanna Kamp, Wendy S. Shaw, James Forrest and Yin Paradies, “Indigenous Australians’ Attitudes Towards Multiculturalism, Cultural Diversity,” *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues* 13, no. 4 (2010):19-31.

¹³ Jessie Liu, “Locating Asian Racialisation and the Asian Subject in a Settler Colony,” 6 September, 2023, video, 59:29, <https://research.unimelb.edu.au/strengths/initiatives/interdisciplinary/hallmark/anti-racism/news-and-events/Locating-Asian-Racialisation-and-the-Asian-Subject-in-a-Settler-Colony>.

¹⁴ Andonis Piperoglou and Zora Simic, “Their Own Perceptions: Non-Anglo Migrants and Aboriginal Australia,” *Australian Historical Studies* 53, no 4 (2022):519-530, DOI:10.1080/1031461X.2022.2122268.

¹⁵ Liu, “Locating Asian Racialisation and the Asian Subject in a Settler Colony.”

¹⁶ Curthoys, “An Uneasy Conversation.”

¹⁷ Anoma Pieris and Kelum Palipane, “‘Persistent’ Migrant Kitchens: Spatial Analogies and the Politics of Sharing,” *Australian Feminist Studies* 37, no.112 (2022):169-187, DOI: 10.1080/08164649.2023.2199909.

¹⁸ Benjamin P. Davis and Jason Walsh, “The politics of positionality: the difference between post-, anti-, and decolonial methods,” *Culture, Theory and Critique* 61, no.4 (2020):382, DOI: 10.1080/14735784.2020.1808801.

¹⁹ Davis and Walsh, “The politics of positionality,” 383.

²⁰ Nicole Hentrich and Annemarie Navar-Gill, “Always Already Intersectional: Introducing Intersectionality in Large lecture Courses,” *Teaching Media Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (2018) pubs.lib.umn.edu/tmq

²¹ Hentrich and Navar-Gill, “Always Already Intersectional,” 3.

²² Intersectionality and Identity, North American Interfraternity Conference (2015), https://nicfraternity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Intersectionality_Identity_DEI_Resource.pdf

²³ Hentrich and Navar-Gill, “Always Already Intersectional,” 4.

²⁴ Anna-Leena Riitaoja, Aija Virtanen, Nina Reiman, Tujja Lehtonen, Maija Yli-Jokipii, Taija Udd, and Leena Peniche-Ferreira, “Migrants at the university doorstep: How we unfairly deny access and what we could (should) do now,” *Apples - Journal of Applied Language Studies* 16, no.22 (2022):121-145, <https://doi.org/10.47862/apples.112578>

²⁵ Davis and Walsh, “The politics of positionality,” 377.

²⁶ Davis and Walsh, “The politics of positionality,” 376.

²⁷ Adapted from, Sarah Homan, “Why positioning identity matters in decolonising research and knowledge production: How to write a positionality statement,” The Equality Institute, published 15 February 2023, <https://www.equalityinstitute.org/blog/how-to-write-a-positionality-statement>.

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ANTHROPOCENE SPECTRES OF THE SALISH SEA

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INTRODUCTION

There are many ways to know a landscape. We can know it first-hand, a place we live and love, which becomes a part of our way of knowing through cultural and material practices. We can know it through stories, photos, maps, and other forms of representational media, which when produced by others, gives us a picture of place without our own experiential understanding of it. Lived experience is in real-time and the index of any representation is historical from the moment it is made. As Gan and Tsing¹ note, landscape refers to “material enactments of space and place by many historical actors – human and non-human.”² In my investigations of the past of the Salish Sea area, the material enactments between human and non-human actors are exhibited through human material practice to land underpinned by deeply held cultural beliefs of the human actors, and the juxtapositions of these have led to the writing of this piece.

This paper discusses the cultural underpinnings and material practices of humans in the Salish Sea bioregion but does so through the lens of the keystone species of the Pacific Northwest: the salmon. Egan³ describes the Pacific Northwest as “simply this: wherever the salmon can get to.” The multiple species of salmon in the bioregion have been central to ritual and sustenance for hundreds of years. Scientific evidence on the central importance of salmon to multiple other species and even the soil itself lend more weight to Egan’s elegant definition. For thousands of years, the Indigenous peoples of the Salish Sea and the salmon created a long-enduring, though still mutable, landscape together, with other species. With the settlement of the Salish Sea by Anglo-American and Anglo-Canadian colonizers, the co-creation was radically altered, with humans becoming the primary architects of the landscapes and waterways of the Salish Sea.

LIFEWAYS OF THE ACTORS

This story is a localized one, both in time and space. It is restricted to the area of the Salish Sea bioregion. The Salish Sea is a marginal sea of the Pacific Ocean, consisting of smaller bodies of water with more well-known names: Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Strait of Georgia. This marginal sea is surrounded by the Canadian province of British Columbia on its north end, and the American state of Washington on its southern side. Major regional cities on the Salish Sea include Seattle and Tacoma in Washington State and Vancouver and Victoria in British Columbia.

The temporal setting of this paper goes back to time immemorial,⁴ when the Indigenous peoples first lived in the region. Most of these Indigenous peoples are known as the Coast Salish peoples, a name applied to multiple tribal groups and First Nations peoples but include other groups such as the Makah of Washington State and the Nuu-chah-nulth of British Columbia.

In the late 18th century, the first Europeans arrived on the shores of the Salish Sea and made contact with the Indigenous peoples, before more permanent settlements were established by Canadian fur traders such as the Hudson Bay Company in the 1820s and the creation of present-day Seattle in 1851 with the arrival of the Denny Part at Alki Point. As in the case of almost all contact between Indigenous peoples in the Americas and white colonists, disease devastated the Indigenous population of the region.⁵

Salmon

Once upon a time in the Salish Sea region and in the Pacific Northwest more generally, salmon were so abundant, it is said a person could walk across a river on the back of the salmon as they migrated back to the streams in which they were spawned to reproduce and die.⁶ There are nine species of salmon native to the Salish Sea bioregion: Chinook salmon, coho salmon, chum salmon, sockeye salmon, pink salmon, steelhead trout, cutthroat trout, bull trout, and Dolly Varden trout.⁷

Salmon are strongly central to the cultural identities and material economies of the Pacific Northwest. Beyond human understandings of the regional landscape, the sheer numbers of salmon were historically essential to the region's biodiversity, echoing Egan's statement above: there is no Pacific Northwest as we know it without the salmon. Reimchen et al.⁸ demonstrated that salmon-derived nitrogen to be present in old-growth riparian forest in British Columbia, along with a "direct relationship between the salmon spawning density and 15 N enrichment in humus soil, in riparian vegetation, and in riparian insects."⁹ Hocking and Reynolds¹⁰ found strong relations between returning salmon populations and plant diversity in the Great Bear Rainforest of British Columbia. Further research by Reimchen et al. showed that one small stream that salmon migrated to for spawning supplied enough nutrients from their remains to sustain "2 martens, 4 eagles, 12 ravens, 150 glaucous-winged gulls, and 250 crows", and yet other research has shown the importance of salmon to Salish Sea region bears,¹¹ wolves,¹² and marine life.¹³

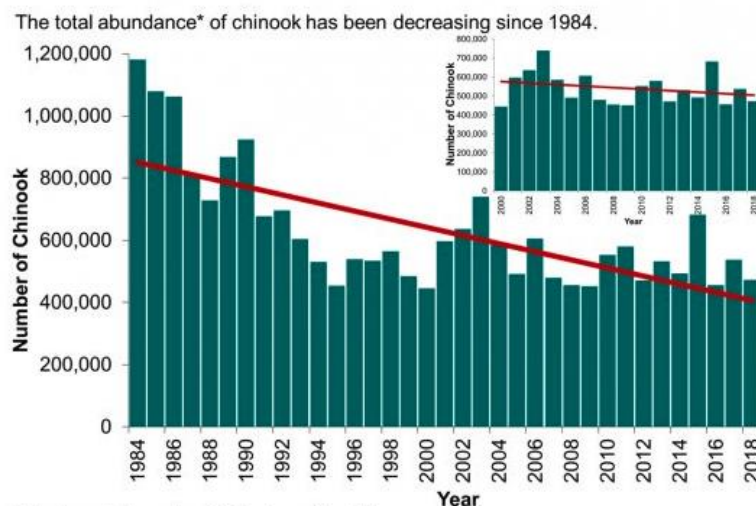


Figure 1. Graph showing total abundance of Chinook Salmon in the Salish Sea.¹⁴

Salmon species and their enactments with water, soil, and numerous other species have shaped the landscapes of the Salish Sea bioregion for at least 10,000 years. In the late nineteenth century, the salmon runs of the Puget Sound area alone were estimated to be between 13 million to 27 million salmon per year; by the late twentieth century, this had been reduced to 1.6 million per year.¹⁵ The largest of the salmon, the Chinook have declined dramatically to less than 10% of their historical

population within the Salish Sea watershed, with corresponding impacts on the ecosystems they sustain, leaving holes in the long-resilient and abundant landscapes of the Salish Sea.

Indigenous lifeways and representations

As early as 5000 B.C.E., the Indigenous peoples of the Salish Sea had established salmon as a central part of their diet throughout the year with the curing of salmon for preservation outside of the salmon migration season from July to October,¹⁶ a resiliency and a relationship that has lasted for at least 7,500 years.¹⁷ Salmon have historically and continue to be central to the diets of the first populations of the area, consisting of up to one half the caloric intake prior to colonization.¹⁸

Salmon are as central to the sociocultural imaginaries of the Indigenous peoples of the Salish Sea as they are to their diets.¹⁹ Within the Coast Salish languages, each type of salmon has distinct semantic roots in the languages, along with a generic word from salmon that derive from antecedents in at least proto-Central Salish, indicating a long history of identification for each of these species along with their individual advantages for fresh consumption or long-term storage.²⁰ Each year, at the time of the first salmon runs in June or July, tribes and First Nations of the Salish Sea hold the First Salmon Ceremony.²¹ This ceremony honors the salmon for journeying to feed the humans and was a means of establishing a respectful relationship between the salmon and human. By keeping waterways clear for the salmon to return to spawn and for the smolt to return to the open sea, and by returning the bones of the salmon to the water from whence they came, the humans honored the salmon and maintained an ongoing relationship with those they viewed as kin.²²

The cultural identities and practices of the Tribes and First Nations of the Salish Sea are not consigned to history books and forgotten memory: they are still lived reality. The First Salmon Ceremony is still celebrated annually. Leonard Forsman, chairman of the Suquamish Tribe, discusses the lived realities: “we have fisherman that go out and fish in a ceremonial basis for the tribe, so that we have traditional food for our ceremonies including memorials, funerals, and hosting canoe journeys.”²³ In reflecting on the signing of the five treaties in which the Coast Salish peoples, the Quinault, and the Makah relinquished their ancestral lands, but insisted on keeping the right to fish “in all accustomed places”, Muckleshoot historian Walter King George believed that his ancestors struck the best deal they could by giving their descendants the ability to “be Indian in the 20th, in the 21st centuries.”²⁴ Larry Petersen of the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe expresses his people’s relationship to the salmon and the land with the statement: “We are a salmon people. Salmon mean more than just money, more than just food, it’s a way of life for us. We are tied to this river [the Skagit River of coastal Washington State] by blood.”²⁵

The rights guaranteed by the United States and Canadian governments to the Indigenous peoples of the Salish Sea were not upheld until court rulings in 1974 and 1990.²⁶ Since that date, Indigenous fishery management has become a part of the governance for federally recognized tribes and First Nations around the Salish Sea. Unlike other fishery management, Indigenous fishery management is a syncretism of the traditional kinship relationships between human and salmon and of scientific resource management practices.²⁷ As an example of the modern cultural imaginary of the relation of salmon to human for the Indigenous peoples of the Salish Sea, the *Puget Sound Salmon Subway* map below, produced by the Department of Natural Resources for the Tulalip Tribe is a striking representation of both scientific understanding of the salmon and the Tulalip people’s recognition of the salmon as kin with agency.

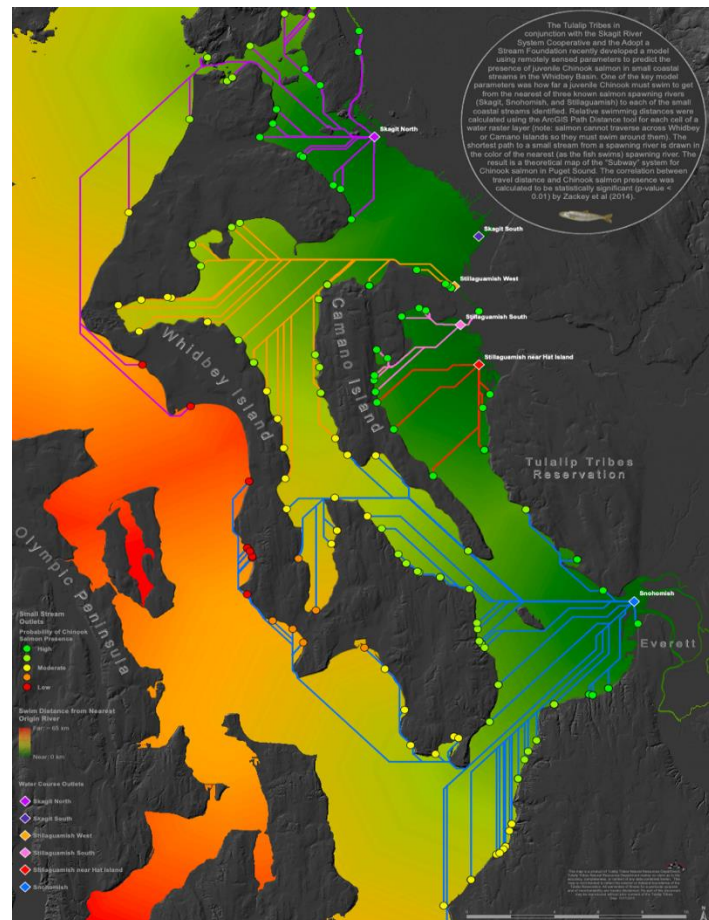


Figure 2. Puget Sound Salmon Subway Map.²⁸

COLONIAL LIFEWAYS AND REPRESENTATIONS

Anglo-American colonists to the Salish Sea area brought the dual and conflicting notions of capitalist progress and post-Romantic notions of pristine wilderness with the arrival of the Denny Party to present-day Seattle in 1851.²⁹ The industries of the early colonial settlements along the Salish Sea concentrated on the large trees of the Pacific Northwest, mining, farming, and fishing. By the 1860s, salmon canneries were in operation along the Salish Sea, with the largest salmon cannery in the world in operation in Bellingham, Washington in the early 1910s.³⁰ Colonial settlers with expertise in the commercial fisheries of the Atlantic Salmon runs came to the Pacific Northwest with a combination of “effective capture methods, (dis)assembly line processing, canning technology, and global marketing.”³¹ Industrial overfishing, along with the early massive resource reduction reduced the famed salmon runs noticeably by the 1880s.

Writings of the early twentieth century such as that of L.R. Mock’s *The Seattle Spirit* and engineer Hiram M. Chittenden’s essay, “Sentiment Versus Utility” highlight the dueling notions of progress versus immutable nature in American sociocultural depictions of landscape and material practices. Mock’s discussion of the “Seattle spirit” centers on the belief held by her and others that Seattle epitomized the “high tide of American genius and enterprise” where “nothing is good enough but must be made better.”³² Chittenden’s essay is an argument for the creation of infrastructure for water management throughout the United States, in particular calling for the creation of the Lake Washington Ship Canal through the middle of the city of Seattle, while discussing the city as being “more highly favored to scenic beauty than any other city of ancient or modern times.”³³ Neither

Mock nor Chittenden make any note of the non-human inhabitants of the Salish Sea, and Mock only gives glancing mention to the Indigenous inhabitants of the area. To both of them, there is only the universal march of progress and appreciation of immutable nature.

The Ship Canal discussed in both Chittenden and Mock was completed in 1917 with the construction of the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks.³⁴ The construction of the Ship Canal was seen as essential to the continued economic progress of the Seattle area, as there was at the time a growing steel industry in the town of Kirkland on Lake Washington and there were plans for shipyards and a naval base on the freshwater lake.³⁵ In constructing the Canal, the water level of Lake Washington was lowered by ten feet and the Black River ceased to exist, ending a path for the salmon forever.

To alleviate the migratory paths of the salmon, a fish ladder was constructed with the Locks from the beginning; this fish ladder was updated in 1976.³⁶ Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, a large number of dams were built throughout Western Washington State and British Columbia to provide water management and cheap electricity to the cities and industries of the region. Many were built with fish ladders to allow for the salmon to migrate upstream to spawn; many of these have proved inadequate. Other dams, such as the former Lower Elwha dam on the Olympic Peninsula and the Gorge, Ross, and Diablo dams on the Skagit River were constructed without any fish ladders at all, confining salmon to lower reaches of the Lower Elwha and Skagit rivers.³⁷ Even when the fish ladders are constructed, multiple studies³⁸ have shown that ladders are inadequate to allow for salmon species to flourish in the numbers needed for survival and are difficult for both smolt and adult salmon to navigate successfully versus river beds unaltered by industrial-scale human infrastructure.

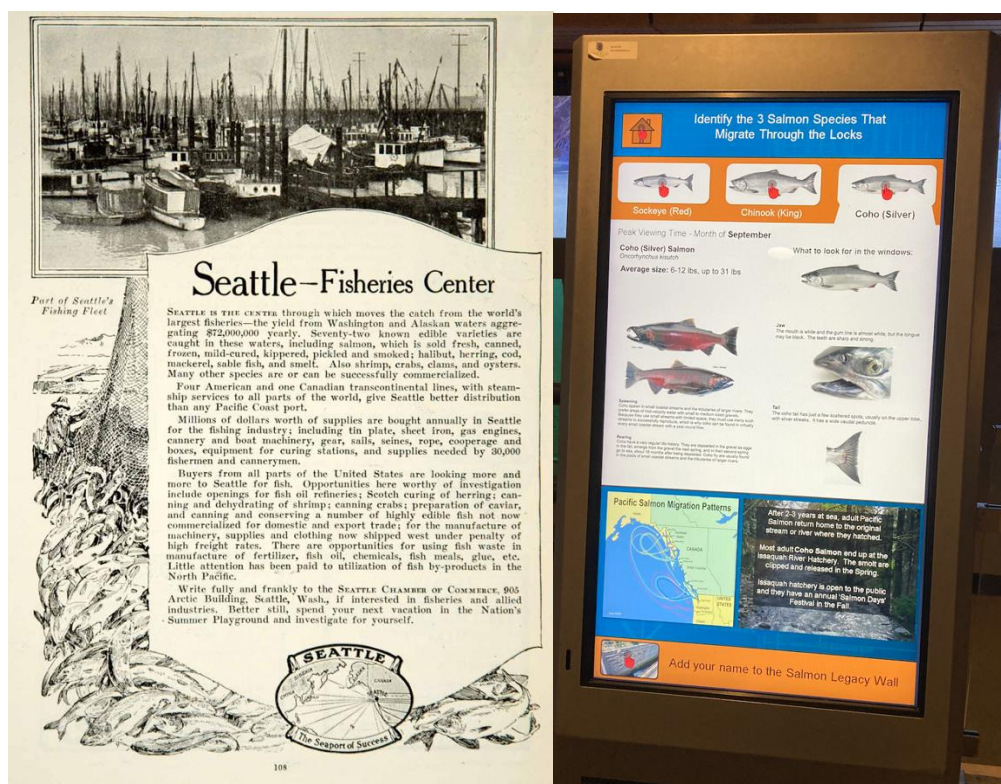


Figure 3. Left – 1922 advertisement stressing the industrial salmon fishing and its' profitability³⁹ Right: Scientific education on salmon species in the salmon viewing area of the Ballard Locks.⁴⁰

Dwindling salmon numbers has meant an end to most commercial fishing in the waters of the Salish Sea. Instead, salmon are now viewed through a scientific lens for visitors to the Locks' visitor areas, the gift shop and the viewing area at the Locks. School groups and tourists now come to view the

salmon in the fish ladder, watch videos and visit interactive exhibits to learn about the life cycles of salmon species. In July 2023, tourists did not actually see the salmon successfully navigate the ladder: the salmon were removed by fisheries' employees due to climate change as the warming waters of Lake Washington now are often fatal to migrating salmon. Salmon are now often gathered at the fish ladder and sent to a facility rather than being allowed to migrate. Humans are now the caregivers of the salmon, who can no longer survive on their own due to the death blows dealt by industrial development, overfishing, and climate change.

Future Imaginaries

In 1970, Kiowa writer M. Scott Momaday wrote, “We are what we imagine. Our best destiny is to imagine who and what and that we are. The greatest tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined.”⁴¹ For the present-day inhabitants of the Salish Sea area, the worst tragedy to befall them would be to imagine a future that did not take into account our kinship and relationship to the non-human we have failed, especially the salmon. We can't do this through science alone. As scientist Robert Lackey noted in 2003, “society will continue to chase the illusion that *wild* salmon runs can be restored without massive changes in the number, lifestyle, and philosophy of the human occupants of the Western United States and Canada.”⁴²

There are two tantalizing imagined futures I will share here that potentially point a way to a more ethical and equitable future in the Salish Sea for all its inhabitants, human and non-human. The first of these is the *We are Puget Sound* campaign, which includes a touring exhibition to educate communities around Puget Sound about what individual actions can be undertaken to improve the future of waterways and landscapes of the area, along with educating those visiting the exhibition about the multiple lifeways and species around the area. This is done with the purpose of individuals “getting to know and connect to the place where they live”, which is “essential if you want them to steward and protect it.”⁴³



Figure 4. Images from the *We are Puget Sound* exhibition.⁴⁴

The second possibility I will share here is from the 2016 thesis by University of Washington landscape student Hillary Belle Pritchett, *Concrete Nursery Logs: Spawning Biodiversity from Ballard's Century-Old Locks*. In her thesis, Pritchett proposes letting the current Chittenden Locks degrade rather than repairing them, as the process of climate change in the Salish Sea will cause sufficient sea level rise as to turn freshwater Lake Washington into a tidal inlet without further human intervention. In doing so, she proposes creating a space where salmon and herons and other species can use the former Locks as habitat, rending a space torn asunder by Captialocene progress into a space where human and salmon co-existence can once more flourish, even while acknowledging the traces of the past industrial changes cannot be erased.⁴⁵

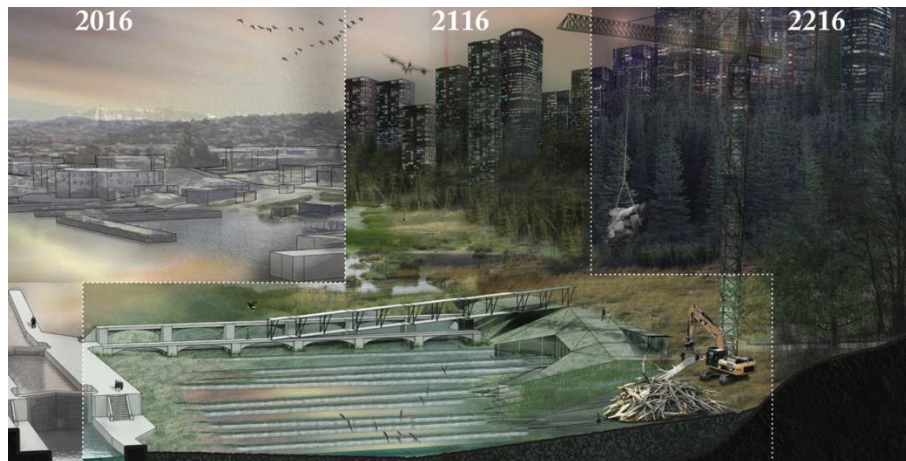


Figure 5. Pritchett's imagined present and future Ballard Locks.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

The costs of progress that have been central to the narrative of post-colonial Pacific Northwest has been the loss of the salmon that defines it. While the area has been overwhelmed by the god-trick of universal industrial capitalism, the whispers of the situated knowledge that is key to both understanding the interwoven existences that create the landscapes of the Salish Sea have continued to exist.⁴⁷ These landscapes are haunted by this knowledge and are materially haunted by the loss of the millions of salmon essential to creating these landscapes as humans have always known them.

It is not merely a change to ontologies and epistemologies that are required for the majority of humans in the Salish Sea area to begin to undo the nearly two centuries of harm that have been inflicted by the primacy of human extraction of everything that is possible. It requires a recreation of ethics that are intertwined with both, an *ethico-onto-epistemology*, as noted by Barad,⁴⁸ that does away with a metaphysics that assumes differences between “human and non-human, subject and object, mind and body, matter and discourse...” Lakota artist and scholar Suzanne Kite notes that Barad’s approach has “close affinities with Indigenous philosophies, where the arrangement of the universe is so deeply braided together that the world can only be known through communication with and through the non-human in the land.”⁴⁹ This isn’t a call to the wise Indian stereotype, but an acknowledgement that those who have lived in the land since time immemorial, both human and non-human, have centuries of lived experience that the wider society must listen to and learn from for any imagined future to be more than distant possibility.

NOTES

- ¹ Elaine Gan and Anna Tsing, “How things hold: A diagram of coordination in a Satoyama forest,” *Social Analysis* 62(4) (2018): 102-145.
- ² Gan and Tsing. “*How things hold*”, 136.
- ³ Timothy Egan, *The Good Rain: Across Time and Terrain in the Pacific Northwest*. (New York, Vintage Books, 1993).
- ⁴ *Time immemorial* is a phrase used by Indigenous peoples globally to acknowledge that they have been in their ancestral lands since “time beyond memory”
- ⁵ The most devastating of these was a smallpox epidemic among coastal peoples in the 1840s brought by trading ships along the shoreline of the Pacific Ocean.
- ⁶ “Long ago, my ancestors could walk across the river on the backs of the salmon”, Namgis First Nations Hereditary Chief Ernest Alfred. <https://feralatlus.supdigital.org/poster/my-grandparents-used-to-tell-stories-where-you-could-walk-across-the-river>; Journal of William Clark. <https://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/item/lc.jrn.1805-10-17#lc.jrn.1805-17.01>
- ⁷ The scientific and other names for the salmon species: Chinook salmon (King salmon or Tyee salmon; *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), coho salmon (silver salmon; *Oncorhynchus kisutch*), chum salmon (dog salmon; *Oncorhynchus keta*), sockeye salmon (red salmon; *Oncorhynchus nerka*), pink salmon (humpback salmon; *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*), steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkia*), bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), Dolly Varden trout (*Salvelinus malma*)
- ⁸ Thomas E. Reimchen, Deanna D. Mathewson, Morgan D. Hocking, John Moran, and D. Harris, “Isotopic evidence for enrichment of salmon-derived nutrients in vegetation, soil, and insects in riparian zones in coastal British Columbia,” *American Fisheries Society Symposium* (2003): 59-70.
- ⁹ Reimchen et al., “*Isotopic evidence for enrichment*”, 1.
- ¹⁰ Morgan D. Hocking and John D. Reynolds, “Impacts of salmon on riparian plant diversity,” *Science* 331 (2011): 1609-1612.
- ¹¹ Megan S. Adams, Christina N. Service, Andrew Bateman, Matheiu Bourbonnais, Kyle A. Artelle, Trisalyn Nelson, Paul C. Paquet, Taal Levi, and Chris T. Darimont, “Intrapopulation diversity in isotopic niche over landscapes: Spatial patterns inform conservation of bear-salmon systems,” *Ecosphere* 8(6) (2017): e01843.
- ¹² Layne G. Adams, Sean D. Farley, Craig A. Stickler, Dominic J. Demma, Gretchen H. Roffler, Dennis C. Miller, and Robert O. Rye, “Are inland wolf-ungulate systems influenced by marine subsidies of Pacific salmon?,” *Ecological Applications* 20(1) (2010): 251-262.
- ¹³ Rob Williams, Martin Krkosek, Erin Ashe, Trevor A. Branch, Steve Clark, Philip S. Hammond, Erich Hoyt, Dawn P. Noren, David Rosen, and Arliss Winship, “Competing conservation objectives for predators and prey: Estimating killer whale prey requirements for Chinook salmon,” *PLOSOne* (2011); and Jacob E. Lerner and Brian P.V. Hunt, “Seasonal variation in the lipid content of Fraser River Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and its implication for Southern Resident Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*) prey quality,” *Scientific Reports* 13(2675) (2023).
- ¹⁴ Environmental Protection Agency, <https://epa.gov/salish-sea/chinook-salmon>.
- ¹⁵ Robert T. Lackey, “Pacific Northwest salmon: Forecasting their status in 2100,” 11(1) (2003): 35-88.
- ¹⁶ Aubrey Cannon and Dongya Y. Yang, “Early storage and sedentism on the Pacific Northwest coast: Ancient DNA analysis of salmon remains from Namu, British Columbia,” *American Antiquity* 71(1) (2009): 123-140.
- ¹⁷ Sarah K. Campbell and Virginia L. Butler, “Archaeological evidence for resilience of Pacific Northwest salmon and the socioecological system over the last ~7500 years,” *Ecology and Society* 15(1) (2010).
- ¹⁸ Barbara L. Harper and Deward E. Walker, Jr., “Columbia Basin heritage fish consumption rates,” *Human Ecology* 43(1) (2015).
- ¹⁹ While Taylor (2007) would term this a *cosmic imaginary* which “makes sense of the ways in which the surrounding world figures in our lives: the ways, for instance, that it figures in our religious images and practices, including explicit cosmological doctrines; in the stories we tell about other lands and other ages; in our ways of marking the seasons and the passage of time; in the place of ‘nature’ in our moral and/or aesthetic sensibility; and in our attempts to develop a ‘scientific’ cosmology”. Instead I fall back here more on the concept of the cultural imaginary as discussed in concepts of cultural identity and representation discussed in Hall (1997) and social identities and representations’ relation to modes of production in Hall (1980).
- ²⁰ Cannon and Yang, “*Early storage and sedentism*”; and Ethan Pincott, “Contact and change in Central Salish words for salmon,” *Papers for the International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages* 47 (2018).

²¹ The First Salmon Ceremony was witnessed by Merriweather Lewis in the Columbia Basin in 1806: “there was great joy with the natives last night in consequence of the arrival of the salmon; one of those fish was caught; this was the harbinger of good news to them. They informed us that these fish would arrive in great quantities in the course of about 5 days. This fish was dressed and being divided into small peices was given to each child in the village. This custom is founded in a superstitious opinion that it will hasten the arrival of the salmon.”

<https://lewishandclarkjournals.unl.edu/item/lc.jrn.1806-04-19#lc.jrn.1806-04-19.02> (note that the author does not agree with the opinions of the writer with regards to Indigenous beliefs as superstitious)

²² “Our culture derives from the water, from that connection. Our song and our ceremony come from there. When our fishers go out on the water they all say the same thing – they’re going home. There’s an identity of place and moments in that place. Knowledge, identity, and our Tribal names come from those fishing villages because that’s where the salmon were collected. We followed the salmon. We are Salmon People. It’s the only relative we have a ceremony for, the First Salmon Ceremony.” – Darrell Hillaire, former Lummi Nation Council Member; The view of the non-human as kin is part of Indigenous ontologies throughout North America. See Kimmerer 2017, Blaeser 2003; Dalla Costa and Cunningham 2022.

²³ “A Glass Half Full,” YouTube video, 10:49, posted by The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, June 1, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBLB5NpDSAg>

²⁴ “A Glass Half Full,” 11:54; The five treaties were negotiated and signed in 1854-1855 between territorial governor Isaac Stevens and the Makah, Quileute, Quinault, Squaxin, Nisqually, Puyallup, Skokomish, Muckleshoot, Jamestown S’Klallam, Port Gamble S’Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Duwamish, Suquamish, Tulalip, Stillaguamish, Sauk-Suiattle, Upper Skagit, Swinomish, Lummi, and Nooksack tribes. These treaties were the Treaty of Medicine Creek, the Treaty of Olympia, the Treaty of Point No Point, The Treaty of Point Elliot, and the Treaty of Neah Bay, and they guaranteed “The right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and states is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory and of erecting temporary houses for the purpose of curing, together with the privilege of hunting and gathering roots and berries on open and unclaimed lands.”

²⁵ “Skagit: River of Light and Loss,” YouTube video, 21:46, posted by King5News, June 2, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKIMMrOWLKA>.

²⁶ The major decision upholding the treaty rights of Indigenous peoples in Washington state was the 1974 *Boldt* decision. Since that date, federally recognized tribes are guaranteed half of the expected salmon harvest every year in Western Washington and now have partnerships with state and federal agencies to try to manage declining salmon stocks. The situation with First Nations in British Columbia is similar after the 1990 *R v. Sparrow* decision.

²⁷ These organizations include the First Nations Fishing Council of British Columbia, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, the Tulalip Department of Natural Resources, and multiple other individual tribe and First Nations organizations.

²⁸ Tulalip Tribe Department of Natural Resources, <https://nr.tulaliptribes.com/Base/File/NR-PDF-ProgramGis-PugetSoundSystem>

²⁹ “My grandpa stood on the beach and said ‘welcome to the neighborhood’... The Dennys were looking at the maples and the Douglas Firs, and it was nothing but a cash crop to them. They were looking at this and going this is mine!” Ken Workman, great-great-great-great-grandson of Si’ahl (Chief Seattle)

³⁰ Lucy Bird Mock, *The Seattle Spirit* (Seattle: The Sign of the Mocking Bird, 1911), 75.

³¹ Joseph E. Taylor, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books), (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 62.

³² Mock, *The Seattle Spirit*, 53; The full quotes from Mock: “The Seattle spirit is the expression of the high tide of American genius and enterprise in the social and commercial activities of the day” – attributed to Richard A. Ballinger, Mayor of Seattle 1904-1906 and Secretary of the Interior 1909-1911. “The Seattle spirit is the spirit of noble discontent, where nothing is good enough, but must be made better” – attributed to Elbert Hubbard, noted by Mock as “that most interesting exponent of American sagedom.” In Mock’s own words: “Seattle is a brilliant example of the triumph of mind over matter. A brief review of some of the recent achievements of the city will convince the reader that after all, there IS something in the Seattle spirit, which is the spirit of progress in the highest sense of the world.” (Mock 1911: 56-57).

³³ Hiram M. Chittenden, “Sentiment versus utility: In a treatment of national scenery,” *Pacific Monthly* 10 (1910): 29-38, 37.

³⁴ While the Locks are named after the head of construction, Chittenden himself, they are known locally in Seattle as the Ballard Locks, for the neighborhood on the north side of the Locks.

³⁵ Within the United States, Kirkland is now best known as the generic brand sold at the Costco market chain, based in Kirkland.

³⁶ “A fish ladder, also known as a fishway, provides a detour route for migrating fish past a particular obstruction on the river. Designs vary depending on the obstruction, river flow, and species of fish affected, but the general principle is the same for all fish ladders: the ladder contains a series of ascending pools that are reached by swimming against a stream of water. Fish leap through the cascade of rushing water, rest in a pool, and then repeat the process until they are out of the ladder.” “What is a Fish Ladder?”, National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration. <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/fish-ladder.html>

³⁷ The Sauk-Suiattle and Upper Skagit Indian Tribes sued the City of Seattle, who controls the dams on the Upper Skagit River, to install adequate fish passage on the dams. After years of refusal, the City agreed to the tribes’ proposal in late 2023.

³⁸ Howard L. Raymond, “Effects of dams and impoundments on migrations of juvenile Chinook salmon and steelhead from the Snake River,” *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 108(6) (1979): 505-539; Elizabeth A. Marschall, Martha E. Mather, Donna L. Parrish, Gary W. Allison, and James R. McMenemy, “Migration delays caused by anthropogenic barriers: modelling dams, temperature, and success of migrating salmon smolts,” *Ecological Applications* 21(8) (2011): 3014-3031; J. Jed Brown, Karin E. Limburg, John R. Waldman, Kurt Stephenson, Edward P. Glenn, Francis Juanes, and Adrian Jordean, “Fish and hydropower on the U.S. Atlantic coast: Failed fisheries policies from half-way technologies,” *Conservation Letters* 6(4) (2013): 280-286; and Christopher C. Caudill, Matthew L. Keefer, Tami S. Clabough, George P. Naughton, Brian J. Burke, and Christopher A. Peery, “Temperature gradients in fish ladders slow dam passage by adult Chinook salmon and steelhead,” *PLOSOne* (2013).

³⁹ Seattle Public Library Archives

⁴⁰ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ballard Locks Visitors Center, photo by author on June 23rd, 2022.

⁴¹ N. Scott Momaday, “The man made of words,” in *Indian Voices: The Convocation of American Indian Scholars*, edited by Ruperto Costo, 49-84 (San Francisco: Indian Historical Press, 1970), 39.

⁴² Lackey “*Pacific Northwest salmon*”, 77.

⁴³ “We are Puget Sound,” accessed May 22, 2024. <https://wearepugetsound.org>

⁴⁴ “We are Puget Sound”, accessed February 2, 2024.

⁴⁵ For a definition of Capitalocene, see Haraway (2015).

⁴⁶ Hilary Belle Pritchett, “Concrete Nursery Logs: Spawning Biodiversity from Ballard’s Century-Old Locks,” Ph.Diss., (University of Washington, 2016), 103.

⁴⁷ See Haraway (1988)

⁴⁸ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Mattering*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁴⁹ Suzanne Kite, “Postmodernism is not permission,” accessed February 2nd, 2024. <https://www.kitekitekite.com/writing>.

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URBAN PLACE DEPRIVATION: CASES FROM CENTRAL ANATOLIA, TURKEY

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INTRODUCTION

Design starts with paying attention, and design behavior is motivated by paying attention to the environmental deprivation in the places we live. The Major Bronze Age civilization of Central Anatolia The Hittites have the prefix *shakk-* meaning pay attention to, the hypothetical etymological source of ‘sign’.¹ The word sign is the root of design, and *de-* means *to mark, to identify mark*. This word has also a possible etymological relation between signify and significance.

This work is a spatial research tracking series of the case-based studio experience ‘paying attention’ to Central Anatolian Settlements, designed to analyze the local building strategies in the built environment. The cases were programmed as a part of the post-stage after the theoretical framework is a part of the PhD Thesis² and implemented in the educational process to the architectural studios in the Department of Architecture at Abdullah Gül University for the 3rd year and Master Design Studios.

Urban place deprivation

Placemaking and place deprivation are two essential faces of urbanization.³ Urban geography is not only composed of the places but also potential places and non-places that are there in the urban environment as the outcome of Anti-Places.⁴ This co-existence of places and Anti-Places is still the primary problem in urban design,⁵ as in many cases of The Central Anatolian Cities.

There are seemingly identical terms in place theory separated via nuances from each other. Urban Place Deprivation is the name of the phenomenon here. Anti-Place is the designated outcome that exploits the character of places. This unintended co-existence is the anti-design solution which distorts the surrounding built formation together. Finally, Place Atrophy⁶ is the process, purposeful designation of anti-places that absorbs the significance.

Designing hybrid places is a challenge of re-settlement upon the urban geography full of tangible and intangible natural and architectural heritage, making it necessary to merge places and anti-places, which would cause place atrophy. Taking account of the co-existence problem of settlement makes us design a series of studio cases. We obtained distinctive results throughout the spatial research process regarding the design of the settlement strategies, morphogenetics and character of the Central Anatolian geography.

Place Atrophy points to the places that need care. Not only earthquakes, migration, war and pandemics, but also urbanization creates Anti-Place needs to be (re)designed as well. However, the

purposefully made Anti-Places absorb the significance of that place. While urban place deprivation is the main motive behind the design behavior, not every artefact has to be a place. In turn, Anti-Places are the potential places for urban design projects.

Place atrophy

Sometimes, the design fails. It fails because there are no alternatives likely left behind. Buildings drain the potential environment via giant masses and concrete which seems to be the new owners of the cities we try to survive. Such settlement strategies leave a dystopian effect of building through a rapid transformation of the built environment.⁷ This hybrid co-existence of places and Anti-places cultivated the character of places by creating atrophy. Urban atrophy is explored here under four modes corresponding to the atrophied feature of place.

Symbolic (spatial) atrophy

Spatial (Symbolic) atrophy is a spatial or symbolic transformation in features of a place that may be shifted or lost. The simplest form of loss is the abandonment of buildings and settlements. In addition, possible anthropological design shifts in urbanism would cause symbolic atrophy, such as gigantism, miniaturization or futurization.

The most common design disease is cookie-cutter buildings in Central Anatolia because feeding the benefits of the construction-based economy and de facto expectations of so-called ‘comfort’ and comfortable life. So, it produces boring cookie-cutter urbanism and sameness in the urban environment. In addition, cloning, duplication, and fake iconic settlement design strategies for place marketing are usually seen in any location.

Contextual atrophy

Contextual atrophy is the loss of context, composed of space and time. It is a more complex form of abandonment bounded to time, such as historical leftovers and ruins. Also, the inarticulation of architectural heritage to the contemporary urban settlement is a common form of contextual atrophy, standing as the main urban design problem for the Central Anatolian Cities.

This controversial union is to be the candidate to be the main focus of new studio works waiting to be studied. Because contemporary forms of architecture sometimes degenerate the urban context in that they co-exist by degrading the heritage. This ends with the atrophy in the contextual features of that place. Furthermore, destructions created by war, natural disasters like earthquakes, fire, flood, restricted military zones, and chemical-biological disaster areas would be in this category.

Temporal atrophy

Temporal atrophy means degeneration in the meanings of a place, as seen in the case of cloning to make new places mostly rather than designing. This form of atrophy has been one of the most studied modes in design literature. *Pseudo-Synthetic Places*, *Place Theming*, *Sub-Utopias*, *Disneyfication*, *Replications*, fake architecture, copied and pasted urban forms, *Museumisation*, *Touristification*, and *Pornscape* are some of these design attitudes that create temporal atrophy⁸. Further, so-called ‘adaptive reuse’, Other-directed Places are a bit designerly way of doing the same attitude that constitutes another co-existence problem after the transformation.

Experiential atrophy

Experiential atrophy is the most comprehensive form of place atrophy, covering context, meaning and experience. Place experience can never be the same, just as stepping into the same river again is impossible. As the human-environment experiences evolved, we reached a new level of consciousness for the places in which we live.

The hybridity of place and anti-place pregnant for new patterns of (spatial) experience. The transformation of the ontological features in urban formations is an experiential atrophy that results in lost urban and architectural entities. For instance, the design and the features of a public street have been transformed and diversified for many functions since the archaic forms of it. Today, streets are more likely to be designed between shopping malls rather than paved city centers. Greco-Roman street, modern boulevard, and American parkways all provide different experiences merged with the idea behind the street. Even though Marc Auge called malls non-place,⁹ such linear in-streets (Figure 1) between malls are more likely to identify streets as the places of new behavioral patterns in urban design today.



Figure 1. Interior in-plot street between the malls, Armada Hayat (Life) Street, 2020, Ankara, Turkey

DESIGNING HYBRID PLACES: CO-EXISTENCE PROBLEM (IN HERITAGE SITES)

The main concern of this paper is the discussion of the re-habitation and re-formation of new life patterns via studio works in the contemporary urban context facing the co-existence problem in the Central Anatolia Region. The works here are designed in a similar studio environment; Abdullah Gül University Campus is also an adaptive reuse project settled in place of The Sümerbank Textile Factory established in the 1930s. Contemporary architects presented their so-called adaptive reuse attitude on even the same buildings in the campus settlement without a holistic perspective, such as two similar cotton warehouses standing together restored indifferently (Figure 2). While Steel Building dominates the inherited warehouse on the right-hand side, the other is built contrastingly conservatively after it.

Re-habitation and re-formation bring hard-core adaptation problems in design. Undoubtedly, it is also possible to observe successful re-habitation strategies, even touristification carried out meticulously in some instances (Figure 3). Particular architectonic re-formations would sometimes create adaptive results, but in cases of disruptive urbanism, even urbanists stuck in the stereotypical settlement strategies. So, the project with the 3rd-year architectural students' trial to generate morphologic strategies on cookie-cutter urbanism could not pass the abstract stage (Figure 4 – The project on the left side). The actual cases in urbanism are much more complex than particular architectural problems waiting to be solved (Figure 4 – Actual urban scene on the right side).



Figure 2. 'So Called' Adaptive Reuse of two similar warehouse units co-exists with a disparate design attitude in Abdullah Gül University Campus, Kayseri, Turkey 2021.



Figure 3. Re-habitation for touristification to sustain the morphologic character of the place, Uçhisar, Nevşehir, Turkey, 2020

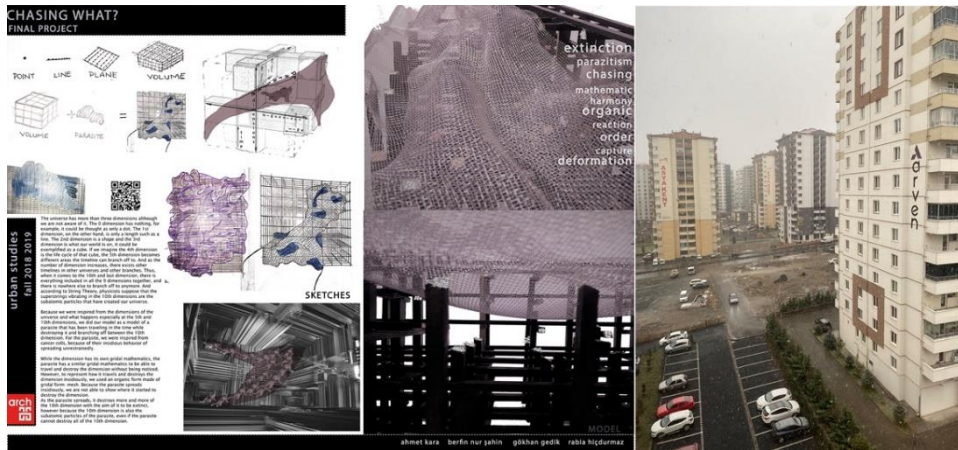


Figure 4. The student project sample remained abstract to solve the cookie-cutter urban scene without demolishing apartment buildings, Abdullah Gül University, Department of Architecture, ARCH311, Fall 2018-2019 (Right Side). The actual urban scene, Kayseri, 2022 (Left Side)

GEOMORPHISM: GEOGRAPHY BEYOND THE TOPOGRAPHY

What if one can solve the distinctive morphological parameters in urbanism and may find a chance to cultivate the morphogenetic character of the place and reproduce it? This challenging attempt becomes the master design studio objective concentrated on **re-habitation** and **re-formation** of such places in Central Anatolia. Apart from several unsuccessful attempts that could not pass to the abstract stage, an attempt named: 'Geomorphism: Geography beyond the Topography' to generate solutions for the disturbing urbanism does let us show the roots of the design strategies.

Geomorphism is a design research attempt to sustain isomorphic structures with the natural or built landform.¹⁰ The term here aims to create architectural design research on debating tectonics of how natural formations and human-made will come together in a characteristic geographical condition. The landform is not just a terrain, going beyond being a terrestrial feature. The landscape is the architecture of the city in many distinctive Central Anatolian cases.

The field of study was also a distinctive place to search architectural formations and built landforms, going beyond the topography. It was an old settlement at Ağırnas, Kayseri, Türkiye, thought to be the birthplace of Mimar Sinan, 'Sinan, The Architect'. The whole settlement area has also integrated with a halfway-discovered underground city. Indeed, two distinct urban forms intertwined in Ağırnas: a carved underground city and a constructed above-ground city. Both possess different patterns, formations, and socio-spatial organizations, serving various purposes and being utilized by diverse ethnic groups throughout history.¹¹

First, studio participants prefer to identify three (3) settlement layers (Figure 5) grow with a horizontal development strategy. The underground landform was designed to settle in the early stages. Then, buildings were placed in front of caves, and then new floors and urban patterns started to emerge upon the topography. Second, the studio groups realized that the settlement morphology is also transformed due to the vertically settled development strategy by three layers after the basis settlement is formed. Second, the studio groups realized that the settlement morphology is also transformed due to the vertically settled development strategy by three layers after the basic settlement is formed. There are underground formations, and buildings on topography but there is also a third layer providing a geomorphic interface in between them along the topography line. So, the architectural volumes transform when they go beyond the topography, the whole structure is like a geomorphic design indeed.

Finally, the studio decided to separate this morphologic typology into four. The first layer is the deepest levelled form of caves and carvings. The second layer is a geomorphic interface longing from caves to buildings. The third layer is the buildings settled upon the topography. Then, the secondary architectural formations stand upon buildings as floors of the latest.

Even so, this categorization is still not enough to comprehend the settlement morphology. The contemporary legal construction rules and legislation are also not enough to identify the distinctive patterns and complex layers of settlement intertwined over years and years. For instance, this fourth layer is sometimes a semi-public passage extended beyond plots. These extensions are distinctive ownership units constituting family complex plots. Furthermore, inhabitants of Ağırnas have reformed the caves and carvings due to the transforming ownership patterns into different needs of belongingness over time. They have a kind of three-dimensional another semi-private ownership between units at all. There are also in-plot semi-public streets and in-parcel semi-public spaces. In short, this settlement is a geomorphic structure with its transforming property relations inhabited by complex family-based social relations (Figure 6).

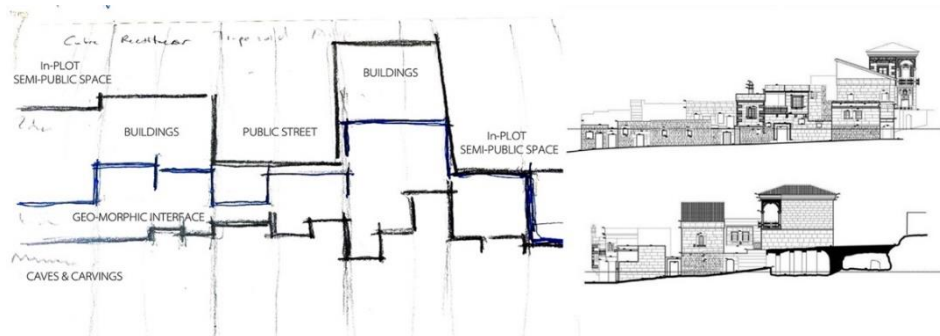


Figure 5. Three main settlement layers in section view (Right – conceptual section sketch drawn at the first stages of the studio, Left – original drawings¹²)

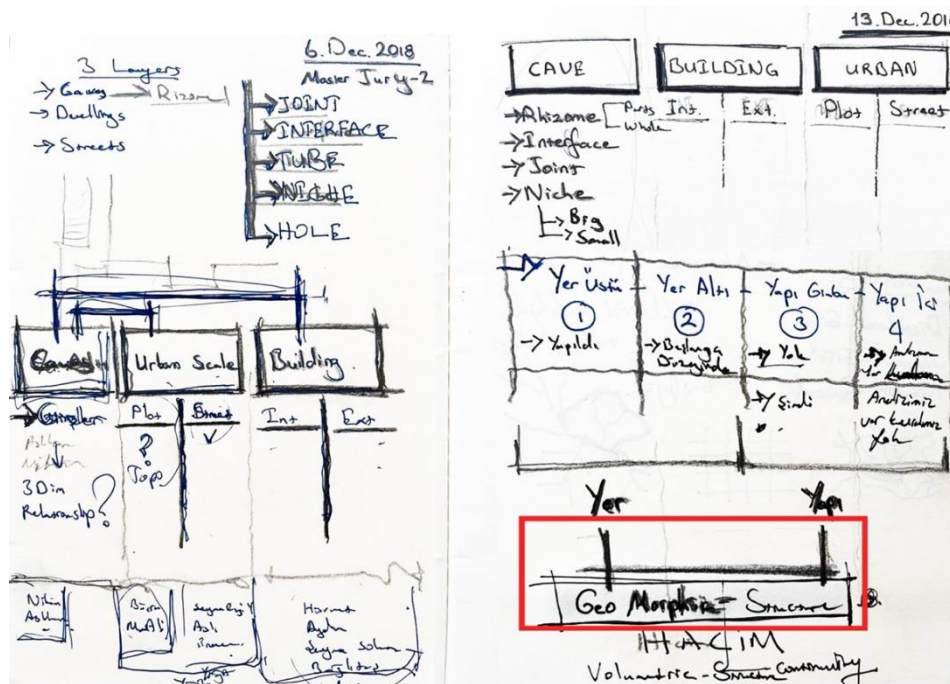


Figure 6. Geomorphic Structure: brainstorming sketches on identifying the typo morphologies of the distinctive place character in Ağırnas, Kayseri

Caves, Carvings

Caves are rhizomatic structures. They are the rooting settlements here. After making typomorphologic analyses of the caves depending on their volumes and placement strategies, studio participants achieve four (4) characteristic typological design formations by naming them rhizome, interface, joint, and niche. Those formations are also the settlement strategies reflecting themselves in the above-ground urban formations that will be discovered in the late stages of the studio procedure via group discussions.

After all the modulation of cave volumes, the studio group identified thirteen different rhizomatic structures. The aim of this group is to achieve the expanding rules of underground settlement and find a chance to reproduce them all. The first model (in Figure 7 – first column) represents the abstract reproduction strategy of the caves if it will expand depending on such a topography. The red ones are the carvings where caves touch the surface, which is a geomorphic interface between architectural entities above and architectural landforms below.

Buildings, Architectural Structures

Architectural units also manifest as the interface between caves and public places in parts of a geomorphic structure. Those are the interfacial volumes going beyond the topography.

The buildings group preferred to study interior and exterior architectural design strategies separately. While the interior group analyzed the architectural volumetric compositions and created prototypical reproduction strategies from the generated rule sets, the exterior group searched for a morphological design strategy for facades in building groups.¹³

Considering the whole geomorphic structure as a habitation, architectural units will constitute a rectangular gallery in form after the main caves. In other words, caves are like the roots of a plant and constitute the roots of the settlement. Only the surface morphology has transformed, but the spatial composition was the same, while the habitation grew from the ground like a plant.

Urban Public Spaces, Streets

The urban pattern is the latest formation in the settlement area throughout the building process. Working on the street and open public spaces, the studio generates a prototypical model (Figure 7–related column-black base model of current solid/void relation, white/transparent model is a regeneration trial of the basis) for Mimar Sinan Street and surrounding plots, assuming the same morphologic would be behind it. The urban settlement research group generated this white/transparent prototype to test whether the vertical strategy of the settlement also reflects itself on the horizontal layout of the city above the ground or not. In doing so, this studio work aims to design speculative projects in further stages about the evolution of the settlement's habitation for the following generations.

The prototype on expanding strategies of street units cannot be applied as organically as it was on the field. However, achieving a 2-dimensional, then 3-dimensional prototypical model representing the settlement codes was productive for the upcoming stages of the studio and gave a way to reproduce it.

Parcels, Plots

The urban settlement research group also analyzed the layout of the land use strategy and compositional strategies of parcels and plots. The current land use map is abstracted. The participants of this group identified ten different characteristic rule sets depending on the central plot that is ready to regenerate the urban layout in further stages. Moreover, the abstracted parcels and plots gave clues about the peripheral ending strategies of the macroform (Figure 7 – last column).

This abstract rule set is limited and strictly dependent on topologic, natural aspects, sociologic or property relations. Yet, the aim here is to conduct design research on the organic rooted settlement strategy based on rhizomatic formation grown with interface, joint, and niche that would work on the scale of parcels and plots.

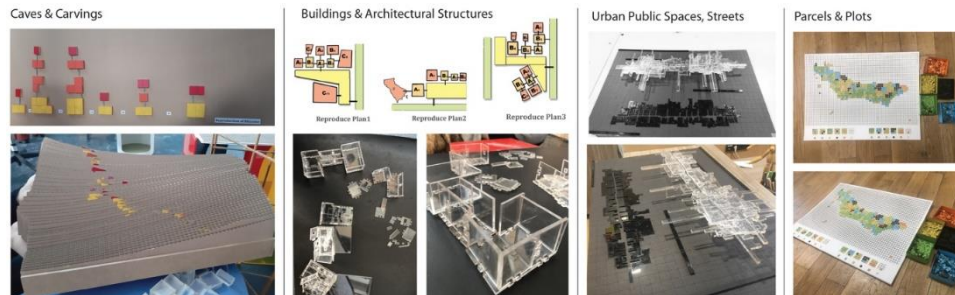


Figure 7. Prototypical morphological models produced by Abdullah Gul University, Faculty of Architecture, Arch 501/502 Master Studio, 2018-2019 Fall Semester in search for the settlement strategy behind Ağırnas, Kayseri, Turkey

AFTERWARDS

Urban place deprivation is reasoning the design behavior. Places need care, but Anti-Places need ultimate care in urban design. Anti-Places are potential places for urban design.

Anti-places transform the public character of places. Those places must be re-habited and re-formed rather than restored to sustain the architectural entity, knowledge, and experience behind them so as not to deprive them of their heritage.

In conclusion, the studio works here identified a distinctive design strategy under the philosophy of Geomorphism, which is composed of mainly four characteristic design elements: Rhizome, Joint, Interface, and Niche, having coherence with the morphogenetic heritage of the existing artefacts/place. Even though it is designed at different scales or architectural morphologies, whether above or below ground, the studio participants assumed that the design logic behind the settlement strategy did not change. So, reproducing this design strategy is an attempt at sustainable the distinctive urban design in Central Anatolia. Also, instead of stereotypical urban design projects, the characteristic settlement in Central Anatolia evolves through ontological metamorphoses, articulates, accumulates, and grows through relatively organic progress.

NOTES

- ¹ “Design, Sign and Ensign” Etymonline, Online Etymology Dictionary, accessed December 12, 2023. https://www.etymonline.com/word/sign#etymonline_v_23500.
- ² Berk Kesim, *The Atrophy of Place* (Ph.D. - Doctoral Program, Faculty of Architecture, Department of City and Regional Planning, Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 2017)
- ³ Retrieved from Mayer Spivack. “Archetypal Place.” in *Environmental Design Research: Volume One Selected Papers*, ed. Wolfgang F E Preiser (Routledge Revivals: Environmental Design Research. London: Routledge, 1973) 33,34.
- ⁴ Please note that Stanford Anderson conceptualized the potential environment. Also, Melvin Webber (1) first used the term Non-place and then the term was revisited by Marc Augé (2). Please see Stanford Anderson. “People in the Physical Environment: The Urban Ecology of Streets.” in *On Streets*, ed. Stanford Anderson, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978) 1–11. Also, please see (1) Melvin M. Webber, “The Urban Place and the Non-Place Urban Realm,” in *Explorations into Urban Structure*, ed. Melvin M. Webber et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964.), 79–147. (2) Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (Trans. John Howe. London; New York: Verso, 1995.)
- ⁵ Pls. see also Edward Relph. “The Paradox of Place and the Evolution of Placelessness,” In *Place and Placelessness Revisited*, ed. Robert Freestone and Edgar Liu (Routledge, 2016), 20–35.
- ⁶ Dan Haga first used Atrophy to describe the abandonment of buildings in America to define the deprivation phenomenon. Yet, place atrophy is a phenomenological process covering much more than the architectural abandonment in urban design. See also Dan Haga, *Urban Atrophy: Mid-Atlantic* (Schiffer Publishing, 2011.)
- ⁷ Ahmet Doğu İpek sees a hopeful future in which he depicts giant buildings and giant masses. Pls. see also Ahmet Doğu İpek. “Construction Regime, Building Porn #13.” 2015. <https://www.artnet.com/artists/ahmet-doğu-ipek/construction-regime-building-porn-13-ACXsaCsVCf9EI2KhVPkRBA2>.
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- ¹⁰ Michael U. Hensel, “Geomorphic Tectonics,” *Technology Architecture and Design* 7 (1) (2023): 15–19, doi:10.1080/24751448.2023.2176132. Also, Paolo Portoghesi, “Geomorphism, Archetypes and Symbols in Architecture.” *International Journal of Architecture, Art and Design* 2 (2017): 11–24, doi:10.19229/2464-9309/222017.
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- ¹² Ayten Gül Okyay, *Ağırnas Kentsel Sit Alanı ve Mimar Sinan Caddesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma* (İstanbul: Graduate School of Science and Engineering, Yıldız Technical University, 2007),76 . Retrieved from The archive of Nüvit Bayar, 2004
- ¹³ The exterior group could not find a distinct rule set for the facades even though they insisted on searching. Yet, the studio participants are aware that second floors have a growth strategy by merging the façade with the architectural unit of the other plot in cases.

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A REVIEW ON PUBLIC SPACES AT MUMBAI CITY, INDIA

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INTRODUCTION

Public spaces are the key spaces that provide a range of contact with the community and uniting different people. Social and cultural bonding between people becomes stronger in public spaces. These spaces are livelihood, influential, creative and have their own sense of living. Public spaces are of two types, planned and unplanned. Planned public spaces are designed for certain public activities, while some spaces are naturally a public space; spaces between buildings, left over spaces, footpaths, sidewalks, or nodes. A public space is important in an urban city to carry out activities of festive, joy, commercials and community strengthening. Some spaces develop human interactions and sustain the sense of community naturally. Some spaces allow individuals or groups to use the same space without direct communication to strangers, thus isolated spaces are equally important to maintain privacy. All the types of public spaces are equally important sometimes to bring cultural community together and at the same time other spaces provide safety and individual spaces. It depends on various aspects such as cultural, social, political and commercial. Depending on the aspect, the target to gather people at a certain public space may have different reasons and views of the users. Some individuals do not prefer crowded places because the spaces which have enough space and isolation may be considered as luxurious.

Public Space

Public space; is it spreading horizontal or vertically? As Mumbai City grows vertically i.e. high-rise buildings are taking over the space and activities, how do public spaces connect people? As compared to other countries, the Indian community has been of much greater importance thus gathering spaces during festivals highlighting culture is essential. Preservation of the existing public spaces and proposal of New Public spaces is a challenge in Mumbai metro city.¹ Land is scarce already and buildings are becoming high rise, in such cases it is very difficult to provide enough public spaces and sustain it for a longer period. Some measures should be taken and considered in the town planning aspect.²

Aim: To study the perspectives of research studies associated with Public Spaces in Mumbai City to analyze the gaps and scope of long-term preservation.

Methodology

The methodology of this paper is strongly based on literature reviewing of a Publication based on the proceedings of the seminar titled 'Public Spaces Bombay' that was held in Mumbai on December 15-16, 1995, the author being a part of this seminar, it made the urge to study future aspects of public

spaces in Mumbai from the past to present and future. Various literatures from recognized journals are reviewed, analysed and identified to understand the judgment of the present scenario. Data analysis of available literature and reviewing along with personal views put the paper together. This paper highlights the importance of public spaces as well as analysing the future long-term sustainability of the public spaces.

Literature Review

1. Conference proceedings, 'Public Spaces Bombay' 1995. ISBN No. 81-900511-1-3

Many enthusiastic authors have contributed their research towards this publication to highlight the theme during 1995. This paper contributes towards the literature review of the past three decades of the following papers and further analyses with the current situation:

Kulbhushan Jain, 'Sense of space: Spatial dynamics of the city' demonstrated the geometrical, composite and dynamic expressions of a space. Sense of a space depends on various factors. Not always geometrical planned spaces perform in the planned way, people tend to use spaces in their own perception rather than what we intend them to do.³ Activities in different spaces vary depending upon the sense of the space. The marketplace (commonly named as Bazaar in Indian cities) is the prime focus and necessary public space in any Indian city. The entrance of any public space is recognized by thresholds and linkages between spaces. The paper suggests planning concerns and various aspects to be involved while designing a public space.

Himanshu Burte, 'Launching off from the backyard: An approach towards a theoretical basis for the design of public places in India' demonstrated the realms and Indian perception and experience of a public space and its interrelationship.⁴ Theoretical basis approach is required to design a public space as each culture and personal views perceive the space in its own way. An Indian contemporary design theory needs to be developed as per the individual characteristics of the space considering individual behaviour towards public and private space. Mumbai being a huge city, a variety of people all over from India travel, visit and stay in this place while using the public spaces, every type of person has their own way of reacting to the space. The public spaces in Bombay are not only commercial spaces or recreational, but when people gather it creates a symbol of unity, community and natural interactions that works towards sustaining the community.

Kishore D Pradhan, 'Urban Green Spaces and Bombay' demonstrated green open spaces defined as the lungs of the city as they contribute towards better air quality and lifestyle of the city. Open spaces are also a part of public spaces where people gather during weekends to spend quality time and connect with the greenery.⁵ The author suggests a hierarchy of open spaces as following; street corner gardens, neighbourhood parks, city parks, sports facilities, open spaces for special purposes, green spaces (heritage), green spaces (natural), regional and national parks. The author also suggests adequate space required for open spaces in a city should be 4 acres per 1000 people. Outdoor recreational facilities are scarce and also affect the social behaviour of the citizens. The author highlights some of the existing issues and also recommends that BMRDA (now MMRDA) must have the right approach towards design and consultation of open spaces to make it more useful and valuable.

Jal R. Aria, 'People Space Public Space: Human and Physical aspects of Public places, *Bombayities* and their *Sarvajanic* spaces.' The author intends to highlight some issues identified in Public Spaces of Bombay by study projects and audit maps.⁶ Four Audit maps were produced by the faculty and students of Urban study studio 1995, Academy of Architecture, Bombay exhibited at the workshop which a part of the publication. The study project for developing 'public open space system' consisted of three stages, Process – Product – Perceived Panorama. In the early stages the terms, definitions of

‘public’, ‘open’, ‘space’ and ‘system’ were studied and its concepts towards Bombay city were analysed.

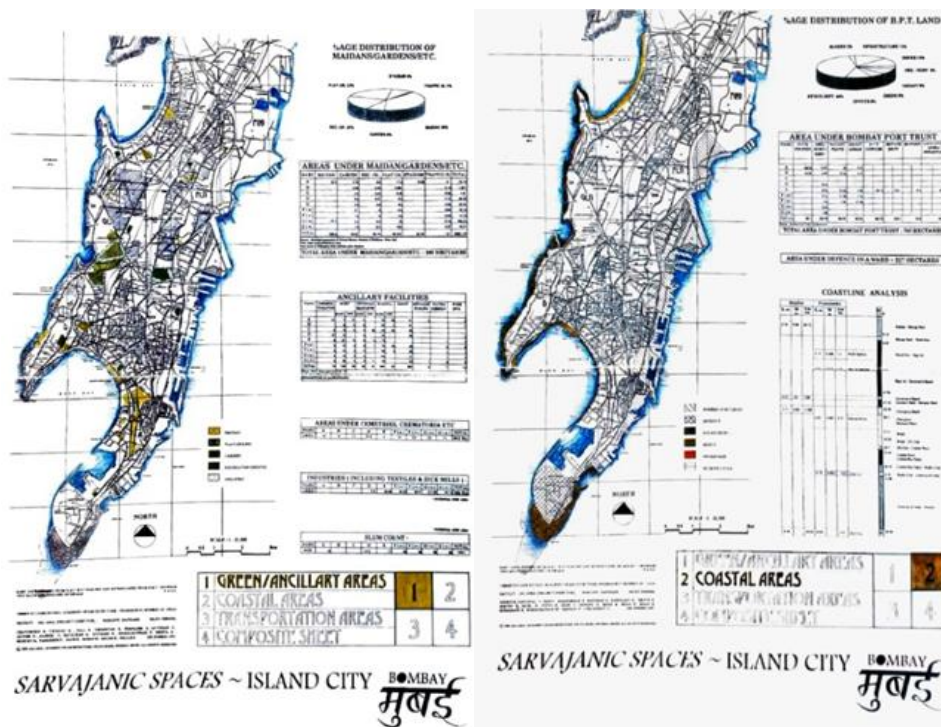


Figure 1. Audit maps showing green ancillary areas and coastal areas 1995, (Source: Author).

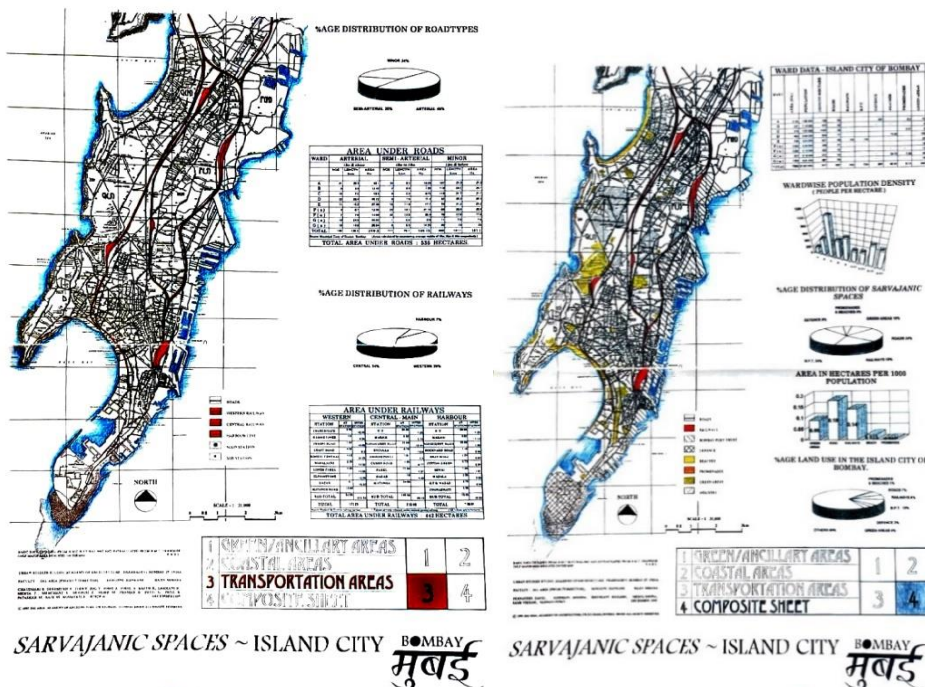


Figure 2. Audit maps showing transportation connectivity and complete landuse 1995, (Source: Author).

The concept of ‘Sarvajanic Spaces’ which is a Hindi term meaning ‘of the people’ or we can public/all people, including every caste, type, religion and no discrimination. It also includes a wide variety

of spaces and not any specific type, covered, semi covered or open space, it is a space of joy. The Island City, which is the entire city of Bombay, at that time much data was not available, thus the information was represented through 4 Audit maps consisting database and analysis for further studies. The author of this research study was also a part of creating the maps. The plans are at a scale of 1:31,000 having various landuse and statistical information.

The author demonstrated the impulse and physical factors of the study project which elaborates social, cultural, political and post-independence influences on the city pattern. The author also specifies that Bombay had the lowest amount of open space per inhabitant. Thus, improvement in planning standards is a must. The ratio of open space per person is not only adequate but should also include visual space impact and lifestyle impact. It may differ from place to place depending on the surroundings and views.

Literature Details	Content	Relevance
Shroff, Kairav, (2015)	The City's background study, issues emerging in the development plan and lack of space. Further places are identified in Mumbai which are formal or planned and informal public spaces as well. Case study analysis of design interventions and concerns. ⁷	Mumbai City has potential to become a successful sustainable city and informal places are the backbone to it.
Urban Design Research Institute, (2007)	Existing state of informal open spaces is assessed at micro-level which are not accessible to general public. Management structure and issues of development plan are highlighted.	Open space by area is 16.1m ² per person. By calculating actual ground report, area of 1.77m ² is available per person.
Burte Himanshu, (2003)	The paper defines the ground reality of public spaces focusing on Maidans (open grounds) which were widely used to play cricket. The paper discusses various conflicts and challenges in imagining the reality of public spaces.	Public spaces are influenced by people's interested activities but are also under control of politics and local governance. To cater the political conflicts, successful policy making is required.
Aditi Prajapati, Himanshu Padhya (2021)	The paper compares the land use and planning approach of Las Vegas and Mumbai city. The draft development plan does not focus on urban heritage thus they are at risk.	No major focus on recreational spaces in Mumbai. Mumbai is based on commercial activities. Open spaces are compromised.
Yun Hye Hwang, et.al., (2020)	The paper studies two cities; Mumbai and Jakarta focusing of Urban green spaces. Methodology used is geospatial data of land value, type of green space and vegetation.	The paper suggest urgency in planning policies for urban green spaces. The distribution patterns show lack of management in maintaining urban greenery. The densely developed areas with poor have less access to urban greenery.
D. Parthasarathy, (2013)	Heterotopias of globalising Mumbai city is the key focus of the paper and various points	The author attributes Mumbai's population to rural migration,

	related to rural, urban and public spaces are discussed.	refugees, and city migration. Social activities produce urban impoverished public spaces. Mining, infrastructural developments, and land acquisition for residential, resort, tourist, and industrial projects mostly affect rural, resource-dependent, socially marginalised communities.
Kelkar Ashish, et.al., (2023)	The research study explores Mumbai city's green space compared with global cities percentage of green spaces. Policies at local, state and national level are analysed	The author recommends changes in policies at local, state and national level. Comprehensive policies, urban renewal, overlapping administrative boundaries, new smart villages to decrease migration are the key important areas of consideration.
Tanu Sankalia, (2019)	The research study explores two case studies: Land's End battle and Bandra Bandstand promenade. Private development has taken over public places. The research highlights middle-class people who strive socially for public places and politics. Their presence enriches the metropolis and suburbs.	After severe open space loss, citizens created public areas for themselves. The public benefits from maintaining public areas created by popular demand. Policies can be substantially influenced by public movements.

Table 1. Literature Analysis post 2000

OVERVIEW OF MUMBAI CITY AND ITS CHALLENGES:

Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay, has experienced rapid and extensive development since gaining independence. This island city, composed of seven distinct parts, is now recognized as the third-largest economic superpower in India. However, Mumbai faces significant challenges, primarily due to its high population growth and limited land availability.⁸

The population of Mumbai continues to grow at an annual rate of 2%, compounded by the substantial migration of approximately 500,000 people each year. This influx exacerbates the demand for residential facilities and public spaces. To accommodate the growing population, Mumbai requires about 10 square kilometers of residential space annually.⁹ The Mumbai Metropolitan Region spans up to 6,500 square kilometers and includes eight municipal corporations, but sustainable growth remains elusive.

The city's expansion and development contribute significantly to global warming, presenting a formidable challenge for sustainable urban growth. As a result, public spaces are increasingly at risk of shrinking and becoming more compact.¹⁰ This trend poses a critical issue for designers and urban planners, who must strive to provide sufficient and quality public spaces amid these pressures.

KEY THEMES IN PUBLIC SPACE LITERATURE:

1. Space Per Person: Several studies emphasize the inadequate amount of public space available to Mumbai's residents. This scarcity has direct implications for the quality of life, as public spaces serve as crucial areas for recreation, social interaction, and community building.

2. Perception and Design: The design of urban public spaces significantly influences their use and perception by the public. Authors have noted that well-designed spaces can enhance social cohesion and community engagement. Conversely, poorly designed spaces can lead to underuse and neglect.

3. Population and Urban Density: The rising population and the proliferation of high-rise structures in Mumbai pose substantial challenges. These factors contribute to overcrowding and strain on existing public spaces, making it difficult to maintain the quality and accessibility of these areas.

4. Smart Cities as a Solution: To address the challenges posed by rapid urbanization, the concept of developing new smart cities has been proposed. These new urban areas aim to reduce the burden on existing cities like Mumbai by incorporating advanced planning and technology to create sustainable and liveable environments.

Analysis of Current Public Space Issues

The issues highlighted in the literature are ongoing and increasingly pressing. Despite recognizing the importance of public spaces, efforts to address the scarcity and improve the design of these areas have been insufficient. The rapid population growth and urban density in Mumbai exacerbate these problems, making it clear that new strategies and solutions are needed.¹¹

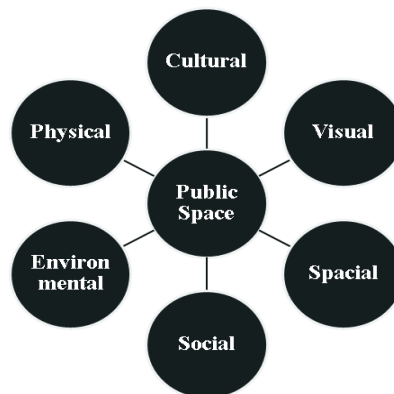


Figure 3. Aspects related to design of Public Space.

The above analysis underscores the need for innovative approaches to urban planning and public space design. Public spaces are not merely aesthetic or recreational assets; they are vital to the social fabric and overall health of urban environments. Ensuring these spaces are preserved and enhanced is crucial for maintaining the city's livability amidst its ongoing development challenges.¹²

In conclusion, while the literature provides a robust framework for understanding the complexities of public space in Mumbai, there is a clear need for more detailed and actionable strategies. These strategies should focus on creating more public spaces, improving existing ones, and developing smart cities to alleviate the pressure on Mumbai. Public spaces are essential for fostering unity and diversity within the city, and their preservation should be a top priority in urban planning initiatives.¹³

By addressing these issues comprehensively, future research and policy-making can contribute to more sustainable and inclusive urban development.

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Adding more to the public spaces research study, informal public spaces are also present naturally in the city. At city nodes, left over spaces, corners, small shops, Spaces near footpaths, etc. These spaces are not defined, nor calculated or planned but they are formed naturally. We cannot control the behavior of humans and force them to use a particular space.¹⁴ Any small space under a pleasant tree can also be a public space. These spaces are of greater value as they regulate the urban life of people.

Solutions to preserve the existing public spaces are a difficult task but only possible through strict policies. The MMRDA must set up guidelines for public spaces to restrict demolition or construction in the space and try to develop informal public spaces as well. As mentioned before, the increasing population can be reduced by creating more smart cities nearby. Some heritage unused structures can also be converted into public spaces supported with various activities to encourage people. This will help in maintenance of the structure. Existing landscapes, grounds should be well maintained. At an individual level, architects should design buildings to support public spaces and contribute to the community. Spaces near temples are also public spaces which can be improved by empowering local economies and strengthening markets. Private owned public spaces are also a good solution to ensure sufficient provision of public spaces. Profits can be made by creating a commercial plaza with a common space with different activities. Another benefit of Mumbai city is that a major coastline is present around the city. These beaches can be modified and well-designed public spaces if maintained properly.

CONCLUSION

This study offers a new viewpoint on Mumbai's public areas. The research study relies on the literature evaluation of the 1995 'Public Spaces Bombay' conference proceedings, which contributed more to the issue. Author participation in the meeting to create audit maps and analysis is commendable. Best technique to get results was to evaluate author's opinions from 1995 to 2015 to 2021 and analyze current conditions and viewpoints.

This paper is highlighting the vulnerability of public spaces in the future which have the potential to decline due to lack of space and increasing population. The benefit of this research study is that a positive outcome by the authorities or private sectors might prevent the decline of public spaces and provide awareness to this issue. As an educator, town planner and architect, the author of this paper contributes knowledge towards the fellow students, architects, planners and designers to gain awareness towards long term preservation of public spaces in a city and its importance.

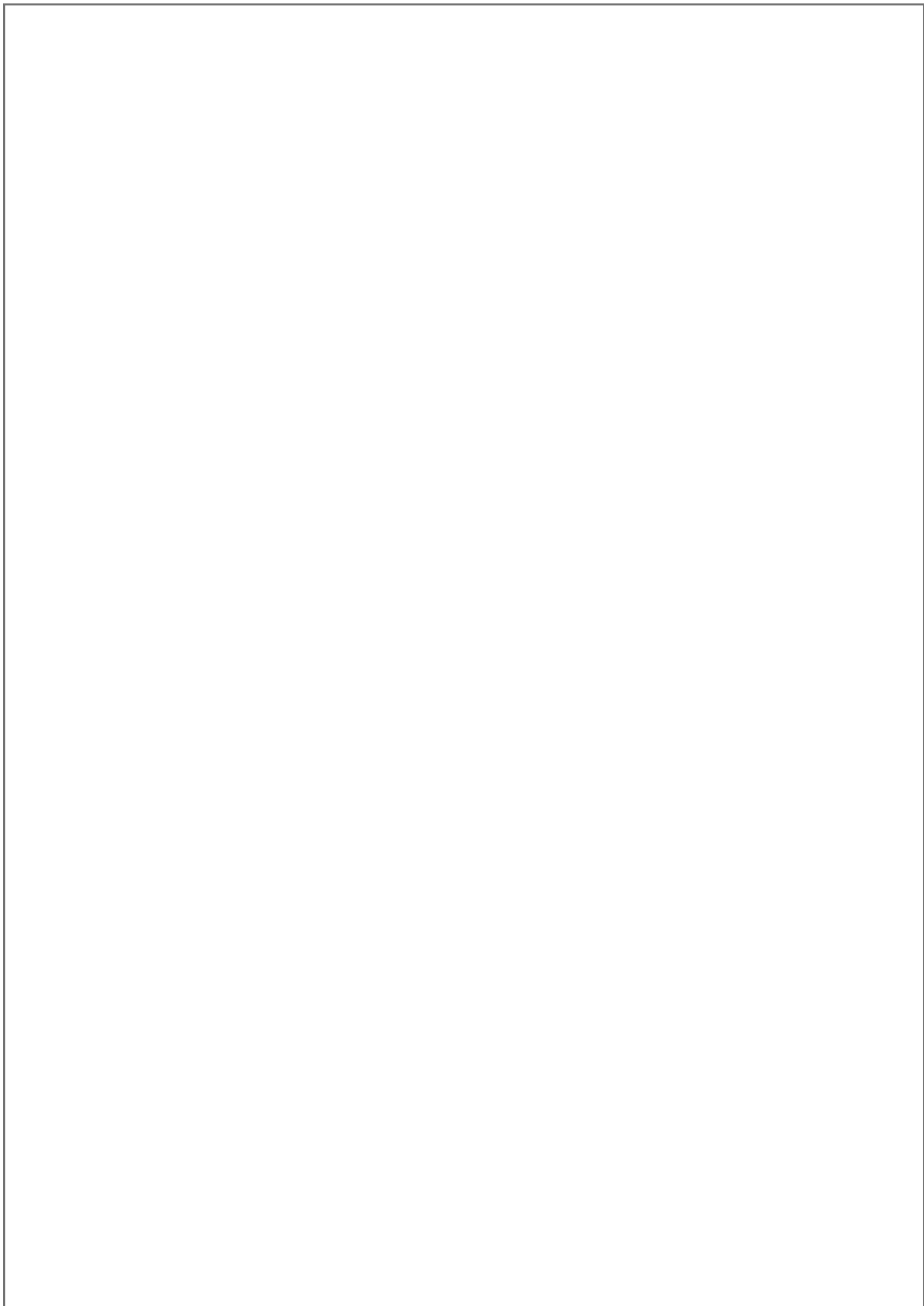
NOTES

- ¹ Aditi Prajapati and Himanshu Padhya, "Recreational Land Use: A Comparison of Mumbai, India and Las Vegas, USA," (IJRES) 9, no. 1 (2021): 58-65.
- ² Debi Goenka, "Urban Ecology and Environment," (conference proceedings, 'Public Spaces Bombay', 1996), ISBN No. 81-900511-1.
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- ⁴ Himanshu Burte, "The Space of Challenge: Reflections Upon the Relationship Between Public Space and Social Conflict In Contemporary Mumbai," (lecture, symposium "Invisible Cities. Spaces of Hope, Spaces of Citizenship", Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona, July 25-27, 2003).
- ⁵ Kishore D Pradhan, "Urban Green Spaces and Bombay," (conference proceedings, 'Public Spaces Bombay', 1996), ISBN No. 81-900511-1.
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- ⁷ Kairav Shroff, "Spaces for engagement in the city of Mumbai: Rethinking parks and public spaces in congested cities," (book, ResearchGate, 2015).
- ⁸ D. Parthasarathy, "Global flows or rural-urban connections? Temporality, public spaces and heterotopias in globalising Mumbai," Working papers, no. 9 (2013).
- ⁹ Anindita Mandal, "Limits to Urban Growth - The case of Mumbai," (book, ResearchGate, July 17, 2013).
- ¹⁰ Ashish Kelkar et al., "Governance Policies for Indian Urban Open Spaces," IJCRT 11, no. 5 (2023), ISSN: 2320-2882.
- ¹¹ Tanu Sankalia, "Public Space and Citizenship in Mumbai: Land's End and the Bandra Bandstand promenade," City (2019): Routledge Taylor and Francis group.
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- ¹³ Mohammad Ahzam and Ar. Manita Saxena, "The urban social infrastructure," International Journal of Current Research, ISSN 0975 833X.
- ¹⁴ Jeffrey W. Paller, "Everyday politics and sustainable urban development in the Global South," Area Development and Policy 6, no. 3 (2021): 319-336.

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