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- moral reasoning and behavior;
- variability and continuity in the election of styles of moral regime and/or religious identity;
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- social exclusion and inclusion;
- post-secular religious individualism;
- tolerance and merely "tolerating": their meanings, varieties and fundamental bases;
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SPECIAL ISSUE: Urban Waterfronts: Diversifying Perspectives

CONTENTS

Fluid Entanglements: Narratives of Waterfronts in the City

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ABSTRACT

This introduction to the thematic issue connects the contributors' arguments to the broader context of existing literature and to current epistemological predicaments. The notion of *waterfront* has endured for over 100 years within planning documents and policy discourses, shaping urban strategies and citizens' preferences across the world. This thematic issue examines the current state of narratives and discourses on waterfronts. Waterfronts are investigated to consider the conceptual work evoked to frame urban problems and build narratives that shape planning and policy action. It is asserted that narratives about waterfronts differ: while some define goals for city development relying on specific strands of expert knowledge to justify often questionable decisions, others capture the experiences and representations of waterfronts, including their subjective and autobiographical dimensions.

There is hardly anything more familiar than strolling along the waterfront. Waterfronts comprise the parts of a city, town, etc. beside a river, lake, or harbor. Whether it is an even pavement or a clay path, in nearly any city, the fluidity of water meets linear firm concrete or stone or soil framings—an assemblage of surfaces. One tends to get as close to water as possible and so do many other passersby. These gathering sites of urban community activity allow for encountering "the more-than-human life" of trees, grass, ducks, and insects, and in the process to enjoy, perhaps, the best parts and moments of urban materialities. Yet, when attempting to grasp this common urban pleasure with the help of existing categories and available arguments, one realizes that this is quite an elusive experience. To give just one example, I, this thematic issue editor, used to often walk along the main river of my home city, Yekaterinburg (one article of this issue is devoted to walks along this river). The name of this river is Iset, part of it became a popular reservoir, named Iset pond, in the city center. Whenever we show friends and visitors around, we rehearse the well-worn narrative of the industrialization of the Urals, the emergence of the city together with its metallurgical plant, and the construction of the dam which resulted in the pond's appearance. This narrative is, of course, just a part of a wider story of industrialization and the role rivers played in it as sources of water for manufacturing and transportation routes. Yet, every time I walk along the Iset, I am made aware of at least two more narratives. One is about urban improvement and the popularity of renovating waterfronts to make iconic places. Historically, waterfronts developed from being urban areas "for show" through becoming hard working ports to abandoned and derelict places. So, the story of waterfronts being reimagined and rebuilt into urban icons (think Belgrade, Szczecin, Budapest, or Dubrovnik), which are popular with tourists and locals alike and create lucrative urban assets, excites many. The other is an environmental narrative. Urban rivers and the parts of seas close to cities are notorious for being, often, hopelessly polluted, so waterfronts, while making possible the interactions of citizens with beautiful views, confront them also with the changing materiality of water. So, when I walk along the Iset, in a new and posh city area, called Clever Park, I can see how the signs and symptoms of both narratives collide there. On the one hand, one sees an impressive new development comprised from well-designed corporate and residential buildings. People who work and live here have a nice new waterfront at their disposal, with wooden lounge chairs to enjoy the sunset, wooden platforms to feed ducks and to be close to water, and lush lawns. The bottom of the river here was dredged to make it deeper. This is one of the few examples of how the recreational benefits of improved river quality in selected parts of the Iset river is strongly linked to class. In these parts, nearly everything looks neat and appealing. Yet knowing from environmentalist colleagues that the water in the Iset river is nothing but a toxic soup complicates this idyllic picture, making it both more ambivalent and symptomatic of the larger tendencies, unfolding on different scales, that waterfronts "crystallize".

There are urban narratives and scholarly narratives. Both kinds of narratives were tragically interrupted by the events that started on February 24, 2022. Rivers in Ukrainian cities (Cybriwsky, 2016) acquired additional importance as they often separated the fighting armies. In Russia, the word "toxicity" (which I used above

to refer to river water quality) has been often evoked metaphorically to explain why hundreds of thousands of people decided to flee their country. People flee, in part, from mental pollution. This situation might remind us of a memorial sign at Leytenanta Shmidta Embankment in St. Petersburg at the place where, in 1922, the "Philosophical Steamship," embarked with prominent figures of Russian science and culture on board. Old classical depictions of waterfronts evoke unexpected associations. To give just one example, some critics see behind the fog of the New Jersey Hoboken shoreline "allegorical apologia for the informer" (Smith, 2008, p. 87) in Elia Kazan's (1954) film *On the Waterfront*; this figure, the informer, has now acquired a new and appalling significance. Scholars now try to find new ways to continue a meaningful professional existence while many international projects that began years ago have been stopped or indefinitely suspended. All the more important, then, to see this collection of articles, to which scholars from Russia, USA, Australia, Philippines, Serbia, Turkey, and Norway (some with double or even triple affiliations, including myself) have contributed their thoughts. Taken together, these studies explore the under-researched intersections between the trajectories of waterfront property-led development, changing everyday walking practices, dreamscapes, and diverse links between places and spaces more generally. They take readers to localities which remain off-radar in mainstream academic production. And they do so with use of a wide range of methodologies and approaches.

This collection of essays represents scholars of different disciplines (urban studies, art history, environmental studies, childhood studies, human geography, etc.). It also exemplifies different strategies towards academic guidelines and scholarly objectivity. While for some authors in this collection it is important to provide sociological or economic evidence, others present work which goes against the conventional canon. The pieces presented by **Richard Read** and **Jane Costlow** strike a reader with beauty of their ideas and language, refusal to hide their attachments, longings and desires and capacity not only to stay loyal to their very own water edges but to find enviably idiosyncratic styles of writing for achieving the greatest definiteness. Their pieces have incited me to pause and to weigh in the mind the varieties of knowledge that we subconsciously or somatically possess but often stifle, mesmerized by the uniformity of academic writing formats.

Waterfronts are urban areas convenient for addressing many challenges that the humanities and social sciences face today. We have already had the benefit of a few authoritative books on this subject (Dovey, 2005; Hartig, 2019; Kaya, 2020; Macdonald, 2017; Porfyriou & Sepe, 2017), offering a refined understanding of the ways in which waterfront projects were included in neoliberal programs of urban development only to become sources of numerous and diverse conflicts (Boland et al., 2017). In this vein, Avni and Teschner (2019; see this article also for a compelling typology of the existing literature on waterfronts) examine the following sides of the planning conflicts that have emerged in conjunction with the global redevelopment of waterfronts: (a) land ownership; (b) heritage and culture; (c) social and environmental justice; and (d) environment and resilience. Waterfront redevelopment projects have been used to rehabilitate the now-obsolete industrial spaces, to give a boost to

localities, to attract affluent citizens, to claim global ambitions, and to attain prestige. Simultaneously, the controversial aspects of these redevelopments are consistently highlighted by critics. They are seen as expressions of top-down decisions, exclusion, and increased privatization of space (Gomes, 2019; Hirt, 2012; Porfyriou & Sepe, 2016). Yet, in recent years, waterfront redevelopment projects have also been increasingly recognized for their potential benefits. Plans in various cities point to a different, and promising, approach to waterfront redevelopment; for instance, The Chicago Riverwalk has been featured as an equity-inspired project, which reframes the river—mostly rhetorically so far—as a public asset for all city residents (Anzilotti, 2016). Relatedly, in this issue **Natalya Antonova** and **Anna Gurarii,** drawing on fieldwork conducted in September–November 2021 in Yekaterinburg, demonstrate the diversity of uses of embankments by young people, ranging from jogging to bird feeding. They also show that the central parts of embankments (the recently renovated ones) are pivotal for collective gatherings while more remote parts of the river shore allow for "marginal" activities.

The proximity of waterfront projects to bodies of water with their specific ecosystems, and the overlapping of economic, social, cultural, and environmental forces in waterfronts' changing existence, make such projects valuable cases for the investigation of the dialectic between centralization and recentralization. In the case of Russia, citizen mobilization has often emerged in connection to water bodies. If in Yekaterinburg in 2019 the citizens successfully defended a city park located on the shore of the local pond (Nechepurenko, 2019), in Vologda, in 2018–2019, conflicts stemmed from the sloppily implemented and problematically envisioned waterfront redevelopment. This ancient city (Vologda is as old as Stockholm), just like the Swedish capital, boasts 750 years of uninterrupted existence. **Vera Smirnova** and **Ekaterina Adrianova** look at the collisions surrounding the Vologda River embankment renovation project in Vologda city implemented in 2018–2019 from the point of view of different levels of governance at play in the Russian cities, paying particular attention to local experiences and responses. Their article examines the production of socio-spatial inequalities from the perspective of the periphery and foregrounds the discursive practices by means of which various actors negotiate and contest the uses of centrally allocated funds. They examine legal and regulatory documents, project plans and other official documents as well as media posts generated by the local protesters. In Vologda, Tyumen, and Yekaterinburg (the Russian cases in this thematic issue) the municipalities lack political and economic autonomy and need to actively lobby their interests; once they succeed in securing a project, they need to quickly achieve impressive results so that they have something to report about. After allocation by the federal government, the substantial sums need to be promptly used. Reports need to be made about the efficient use of money. The results need to be quick and visible. Shore-strengthening reconstruction followed by the redevelopment of the waterfront can, in principle, be done in various ways, including use of sustainable methods. Yet, in the eyes of the authorities, wrapping the shores in concrete hits the mark. It is not surprising that the short-termism of the local authorities periodically produces outrage on the part of educated urban

citizens, as happened in Yekaterinburg (with success) and in Vologda (to no avail). The activists in Vologda started a public campaign to explain to their fellow citizens that the measures implemented by the authorities would destroy the unique landscape and prevent citizens from using the waterfront as a public good, but the authorities quickly appointed Moscow experts who used their central authority to claim that the suggested strategies were the only ones possible. Part of the Vologda activists' motivation to launch the campaign against the problematic embankment project was local pride; the controversies behind the workings of this complex affect are investigated in the issue's third article based on Russian material.

Vladimir Bogomyakov and **Marina Chistyakova** analyze the links between hubris and pride in connection with the Tyumen Embankment. Human and social hubris is often justifiably criticized, particularly in the context of climate change. For instance, Sadler-Smith and Akstinaite (2021) posit that "collective human hubris has emerged out of the complex interactions between people, technology, goals, culture, processes, and context, which have led to behaviors that are overambitious and overconfident to the point of recklessness. Humanity's hubris has manifested in unsustainable increases in human population, GDP, energy consumption, and carbon emissions". The Tyumen-based authors, however, define hubris perceived in their fellow citizens as "creative boldness" (p. 3) and seek to understand the reasons behind the specific attractiveness of ambitious, large, spectacular projects. Waterfronts as large-scale projects are also of interest to **Ana Perić, Marija Maruna,** and **Zorica Nedović-Budić.** They look at the Belgrade Waterfront, popular with the authorities (and researchers), to consider it in the context of authoritarian entrepreneurialism in contemporary Serbia. Seen from the perspective "after February 24, 2022", this country has been severely impacted by the ban imposed by the EU and USA on investment in Yugoslavia as well as many other sanctions. The path of economic recovery followed in the 21st century was conducted rather unevenly: urban megaprojects, the authors posit, were used by the major political players to showcase their power and influence, often at the expense of the society at large. They demonstrate how nationalist narratives one-sidedly incorporated urban megaprojects to promote a vision of prosperity and to more confidently put Belgrade as the country's capital on the global map.

Waterfronts are both material and symbolic, static to an extent that they become urban landmarks but also undergoing continual refurbishment. In focusing on the different spaces where people, water and stones meet, this thematic issue is designed to uncover individual approaches to specific cases and, where possible, to further focus on the practical, political but also existential implications of these cases. Waterfronts make possible the interactions of citizens with the beauty and materiality of water. **Polina Golovatina-Mora** examines the nexus of the materiality of urban water in the context of the aftermath of Medellin's acclaimed program, "social urbanism". In spite of the wide publicity received by numerous interventions in the existence of slums inhabitants, the city's life in the last decade has been marked by numerous outbursts of unrest. The author asks whether the urban regeneration that Medellin underwent could be understood as a more inclusive "social contract" between the city and its

communities, and uses the materiality of water as the lens with which to tackle this question. How can the limited transformative effects of urban regeneration can be linked to the uses and governance of water? P. Golovatina-Mora draws on more-than-humanist ontologies to offer a utopian concept of the city as the "generation of the inclusive space that provides habitat and life for anyone who wants to live in, around, through and with the city".

Justifiably thought about as "uncooperative" (Bakker, 2003), unruly, and fluidly countering human will and design, water, perhaps, better exemplifies the roughness and unpredictability of nature than anything else. Notably, many waterfronts are marked by lines of high-water level (think St. Petersburg, Florence, or Alexandria). Yet, the techniques and technologies of managing and embellishing water edges in cities have become more and more sophisticated. Waterfronts often have a rich history stretching from industrial use to becoming busy leisure areas attracting large numbers of people, especially tourists, that have been produced as part of urban regeneration or gentrification schemes. Waterfronts are also understood as "the intersection of maritime and urban space" (Land, 2007, p. 731). They are often the most popular and visible parts of the cities. The authors of this thematic issue examine how specific waterfronts evolved over time and how this was conditioned on local circumstances. These include many material and symbolic factors including connections between cities via sea routes (in the case of port cities) and river routes (in the case of riverfronts). The authors show how waterfronts became emblematic for shifting urban conditions as well as for transformations in maritime technologies and the changes brought by globalization.

Proximity to water increases value of urban spaces and makes them popular among citizens—this is the main argument of rich work about waterfronts. The majority of those who write about these important spaces locate their studies in the urban context. Indeed, urban life, from its emergence through the activities of producing and exchanging goods to those of accumulating wealth and satisfying needs, is related to water. This link is increasingly talked about as a consequence of climate change and a related realization that water is scarce resource that needs to be protected. Several discourses interact with regard to the growing vulnerability of global water: instrumental and technocratic discourses of uses of water, including the urban ones; discourses on sustainable development; and environmental discourses. The development and management of waterfronts involves the engagement of practices, technologies, and stories, but ongoing environmental changes pose a challenge to the very understanding of human-water relations. **Megan Dixon** traces the history of the Boise Greenbelt and locates the emergence of this large area of open land meant to preserve farmland and forests from urban sprawl in the context of climate change. While greenbelts are capable of facilitating carbon storage, they are also profitable in the context of gentrification; Dixon shows how in Idaho, the city has joined the global process of "greenification" by creating its own version of a ubiquitous "park, café, riverwalk" model to cater to the recreational tastes of an affluent urban class while neglecting the ecological specificity of healthy river function. As water supply to the river system decreases under climate change, the widely applied greenbelt model faces new constraints.

Several pieces in this collection also address the place waterfronts occupy in the context of the dramatic transition from the industrial to post-industrial phase of the history of human settlements. Formerly serving as gateways to cities, closely connected to urban communities (and often communities in themselves), these embankments or riverfronts, complemented by canals and quays, were enablers of industrial and trade activities which then became unused parcels of abandoned and often polluted land by the middle of the twentieth century (Airas et al., 2015). While many of them underwent impressive renovation to accommodate a growing demand for urban land, some still remain only partially used. Their partial abandonment and the range of associations they evoke prompt scholars to link them to powerful narratives of decay and conflict. In this vein, **Jane Costlow** writes, not without irony, about her "moving through a place that can be used as emblem for all kinds of claims and multiple monikers: post-industrial decay; urban revitalization; environmental cleanup; dirty Lew, mighty Androscoggin; hybrid, invisible, abject, home". Costlow also records the ambivalent experiences of climate change (it feels good when it is warm while living in harsh climate); but more important, she claims, is to raise one's head, so to speak, from one's mundane preoccupations and to try to see the bigger picture, i.e., the whole river, from the chance for salmon to thrive again to the consequences to river streamflow of decreased snowpack.

Istanbul is the other city that has invited reflections on the consequences of deindustrialization. **Esen Gökçe Özdamar** describes the districts Cibali, Üsküdar, and Kabataş, which to every visitor to Istanbul signify areas beloved by tourists. Sightseeing tours along the Bosphorus Strait depart from Kabataş Pier, and along the shore Üsküdar one can walk toward Maiden tower. Cibaly is famous for its Cibali Gate, a part of the Byzantine walls on the Golden Horn. Yet, E. Gökçe Özdamar is focused on a little-known page of the history of industrial Istanbul— its tobacco manufacturing. Tobacco factories and warehouses were located in the above-mentioned coastal neighborhoods comprising an important part of the industrial heritage of the city. Esen Gökçe Özdamar traces components of this heritage both tangible (as the possibility of employment) and intangible (the smell of these neighborhoods). The author places the prospect of these structures' survival into the context of new development of creative industries, hoping that this will provide a renewed way for these buildings to interact with the coastline and citizens.

Two articles unravel the affective dynamics produced by waterfronts, seaside experiences, and their cultural representations while critically examining the links between autobiography and the researcher. Researcher-initiated autobiographies (Hanssen, 2019) allow the discovery of interconnections between the written, filmed, or depicted events and their effects on subjects. **Richard Read**, drawing on personal correspondence with current citizens of the Welsh seaside resort Borth where he spent his childhood holidays, wittily juxtaposes the partially successful interventions of the local university's "hydrocitizenship studies" and the pressing and genuine "water issues" of Borth locals: "urgent late-night emergency emails as colossal waves from the Irish Sea pound the backs of houses, spilling obstructive rubble through alleys between them onto the road". Read examines the film made about the bog behind

the village which runs along the shore along with his dreams filled with "jubilant, exploratory wonder at Borth and its waters". If in Read's essay it is mostly men who speak and ponder on their past and present experiences, **Aireen Grace Andal**'s article is centered around childhood memories of Viracnon women who spent their childhood along bodies of water on the coast of Virac, Catanduanes Island, Philippines. While trying to answer the question of how waterfronts are remembered and (re) constructed as gendered spaces, Andal also addresses the connections between her informants' "lived and fantasised childhoods with water". Water-related myths about sea mermaids and sea monsters, as opposed to everyday encounters in the port and coastlines, supplied her childhood memories with a mixed sense of both mystery and reality, which made feelings about water perplexing. The memories of the waterfront were also gendered: specific water-related places—the port, seaside market, and beach—produced reflections about contradicting gender roles, i.e., viewers of male bodies thought of themselves as both sexualized beings and family providers.

The articles in this issue discuss ambitious renovation plans which ignore the rising sea level and climate change in general and propose to build impressive solid structures on top of derelict surfaces and next to urban waters. Citizens have little control over the speculative investment frenzy combined with the politicians' attempts to increase their visibility through spectacular large projects. Yet, the resulting waterfronts still offer relief and relaxation to the citizens. Most of citizens will have a difficult time finding a better place to enjoy the city. All of them build their own relations to the water edges and this issue's authors offer us the ways to reflect on these and other incongruities.

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ESSAY

Words, River, Changes: Writing Lewiston, Maine

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ABSTRACT

This essay describes and reflects on the central river of a small post-industrial city in Maine (USA), interweaving the author's experience of place with the voices of three local poets, as a way of considering how the city and its river have been represented—as pastoral, abject, beautiful, and hybrid.

KEYWORDS

Androscoggin River, Lewiston Maine, Marsden Hartley, Robert Chute, Susann Pelletier, hybrid, abject, pastoral

> There is something unfathomably essential about continually perceiving things anew [...] An elegy for forgetting. A map of erasure. Ground we must dig to find the root of our current being. The inexplicable joy and irreducible complexity that accompanies simply standing in place.
>
> —Ross Gay & Richard Wehrenberg, "River"

Lewiston–Auburn (also known as L–A) is a community of 60,000, made up of two separate municipalities which sit on either side of the Androscoggin River in Maine (USA). Once a center of the textile and shoe industries, that industry is now gone; the cities are economically challenged, and include the poorest census tracts in the state[1]. The Androscoggin River, once severely polluted, is now clean enough to support aquatic life and recreation. As the river has been transformed, so the cities have sought to transform themselves through efforts by municipal governments, local NGOs, and river enthusiasts. City projects that focus on the river and its banks are sometimes articulated in terms of "turning toward the river"; fifty years ago, the river was so badly polluted that communities

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[1]   Downtown Lewiston includes three of the state's four poorest census tracts; the fourth is in Auburn (Ferguson & Keefe, 2019).

turned away from it, both literally and figuratively. For most of its history the community was—like the state where it is situated—almost entirely white. That began to change dramatically in the early 2000's, when Somali families began arriving and making the cities their home. According to 2021 data from the US Census Bureau (United States Census Bureau, n.d.), Lewiston is now approximately 15% non-white.

My reflections here are presented in essayistic form, combining my own engagement with this landscape with reflections on those who have spoken about the cities and their river—the words of poets, storytellers and city planners as well as "street terms" that are both degrading and laudatory. These reflections are informed by living in a mixed-income neighborhood near the river, by teaching that has focused on the river and often involved community-engaged projects, and by ongoing participation in local conservation groups. I draw inspiration from the work of cultural critic Lucy Lippard, who asks us to reflect on our need for place and how places are always already hybrid; from the American essayist Wendell Berry, whose essays are models of how to take place seriously; and from contemporary poet Ross Gay, whose chapbook *River* reminds us that even "effaced" places deserve to be written about.

Walking Changes

> The Androscoggin changes nothing/of its flowing…
>
> — Edmund Marsden Hartley, "The Bend of the Androscoggin"

On a bitter morning in late January, nothing about the Androscoggin seems to be flowing. I know, of course, that water is moving beneath the ice, but what is visible is as solid and cold as stone. Beneath the railroad bridge and in the broads between the Auburn Riverwalk and Simard-Payne Park, ice covers the whole expanse of water; south of the Green Bridge ice reaches up river from downstream rapids. The battered wooden houses of Laurel Hill on the Auburn side look brittle in the cold, plumes of smoke chasing out from chimneys in a stiff north wind. The three brick arches of the canal outflow under Continental Mill; the hulk of the empty mill itself; the chain-link-encircled lot with the Future Home of Museum L–A: all are immobile and deserted. "The Androscoggin changes nothing of its flowing […]"(Hartley, 1987a, p. 261). I let Hartley's line hum inside me as I make the loop along the river. Other than those plumes of smoke and a stray crow, I'm the only thing moving. I convert his statement into a question, what changes? and keep moving through a place that can be used as emblem for all kinds of claims and multiple monikers: post-industrial decay; urban revitalization; environmental cleanup; dirty Lew, mighty Androscoggin; hybrid, invisible, abject, home.

A month later we are in the middle of record warmth, over 60 degrees F and sunny. This is climate change, I think—but it feels great. What has changed is more than just the temperature: the river is almost completely unfettered of ice, my body is loose, my jacket unzipped, and where I was the only person out in January, now there are scores of people: mothers and kids, office workers on lunchbreak, homeless people hanging out with all their belongings. A Somali guy on a bike says hello and asks me how I am doing; a woman coming out of Place Ste. Marie sees me looking at yard ornaments and

greets me with a comment about how her Christmas decorations are still up… A man with a shopping cart heads into the woods behind Bonney Park, looking like he just wandered in from a Cormac McCarthy dystopia. And finally, as I head up toward West Pitch Park, there's a middle-aged woman with seven girls (I count them: seven), and they are all wearing matching black-checked dresses and light pink winter coats.

Most of them have taken the pink coats off. They're taking cell-phone pictures of runoff gushing into the river, and I wonder if they are part of a religious cult or just coming home from dance lessons.

When the painter Marsden Hartley returned to Lewiston in the 1930's, he wrote a series of poems devoted to both the city and the river. Hartley had been born in 1877 in Lewiston and called it his "native city," but he left after a difficult childhood for New York and Europe, where he encountered the work of artists from Picasso and Kandinsky to Franz Marc. After a sojourn in the American southwest he came back to Maine. In *Lewiston is a Pleasant Place* (Hartley, 1987b) he tells us he admired the city "because/it is part of the secret sacred rite/of love of place"[2] (p. 254). In the poem *The Bend of the Androscoggin* he proclaims that the river "changes nothing of its flowing" (p. 261), but then discovers alteration ("But here *is* a change") at Great Falls— the massive rock formation that gave the city's mills their power—where sea birds sit waiting for fish. What changes, Hartley insists, is not really the river, it is us: "Nothing is changed, nothing is different but ourselves/who note the change that brings us back/to nothing changed" (p. 261). A strange thing to claim of a river, since change is precisely what rivers usually symbolize. And a strange place, for many, to claim as beloved or sacred: "The secret sacred rite" of love for a place regarded by many as unlovable.

Poets have not written much about Lewiston: it is not a "poetic" city. It's a once-industrial, once-working class, once-horribly polluted city whose identity is strung out somewhere between all those "once" modifiers and an uncertain sense of just what it is becoming. Still, it can, as Hartley insisted, be a very pleasant place; and the Androscoggin has a particular beauty of its own, not just in its wild, upriver reaches, but here, at the point where it is most constrained by human construction. Even on a day when rapid melt leaves dirty snow and heaps of no-longer-hidden trash, I can find it beautiful.

Places, Names, Stories

> The poet is the sayer, the namer, and represents beauty.
>
> —Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet"

"Every place name is a story", says the cultural critic Lucy Lippard (1997), "an outcropping of the shared tales that form the bedrock of community" (p. 46). But who does the naming, and how do we read the names? The places we know as Lewiston and Auburn arose and thrived because of water power afforded by the Androscoggin and the means humans devised to use it. The Wabanaki people, who were the original inhabitants of what is now the northeastern US and maritime Canada, had called the place Amitgonpontook, "a place where you smoke meat or fish" (Hall, 2015). The

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[2]   All poems cited can be found in Hartley (1987a, 1987b, 1987c).

name of the river itself is likely a contamination of earlier Wabanaki or Penobscot names; scholars' conjecture that the name comes either from an Eastern Abenaki term meaning "river of cliff rock shelters" (literally "thus-deep-dwelling-river") or a Penobscot word signifying "river of rock shelters". "The Anglicization of the Abenaki term is likely an analogical contamination with the colonial governor Edmund Andros" (Androscoggin River, n.d.). European settlers in this river valley replaced Wabanaki names with names of their own, memorializing places they'd left behind in England (Auburn, n.d.) or celebrating a European male (Hodgkin, n.d.). It's easy to see why environmental and religious thinkers have seen the act of naming as an assertion of power and dominion, the power "to name or rename oneself and one's place [...], an aspect of ownership" (Lippard, 1997, p. 47). But there may be other ways to see it: a friend recently suggested that the act of naming is a gesture of enormous responsibility: the story of Adam naming animals suggests to him something primal and parental. To name means to take on a responsibility that is absolute, the eternal and irrevocable responsibility of the one who loves for that which is loved. But have these names—either the city names themselves, or more recent ones—been attached with any kind of responsibility, of the kind my friend mentions? When European settlers moved inland from the Atlantic coast in search of timber in the late 18th century, the Androscoggin proved a powerful enticement to human desire and remaking. Great log runs were floated down river to be sawed into boards; among other things they were made into ships that connected New England with the Atlantic trade in both goods and people (Cotton Town, 2022). In the first half of the 19th century the Androscoggin, like New England's other rivers, powered the manufacture of textiles and, with the advent of kraft technology, the making of paper from the vast forests of Maine's Northwoods (Hillard, 2021). By the late 19th century thousands of Quebecois made their way south to the mills of Lewiston and other Maine river towns. The urban infrastructure of Lewiston was laid out by Boston industrialists, who brought in Irish laborers to build the canals that put river power to use in a series of massive brick mills. The tree-lined canals and city park at the center of an industrial grid were meant to evoke the compatibility of city and country, not with any environmental concerns in mind but to reassure the families of farm girls who came to Lewiston to work—the small hands of women and children being highly prized in the delicate but difficult work of overseeing thousands of spindles and bobbins. The cold-water tenements where many of the Quebecois newcomers lived were nicknamed "Little Canada". Built downstream from the city's textile mills (and from the paper mills farther upriver), the tenements looked out on a river that by the 1920's bore the brunt of industrialization. When I interviewed an elderly local resident about his experience of floods on the river, his comment was telling: "The real disaster wasn't the flood, it was the river". The word disaster is borne out by environmental historian Richard Judd's account (1990), not merely of the Androscoggin but of the state's two other major rivers:

> By the 1920s the state's thirty-seven pulp and paper mills, eighty textile mills, and eleven tanneries were dumping thousands of tons of tanning liquors, sulfite, bleach, dye, and wool, cotton, and wood fiber into the state's rivers daily, placing enormous demands on the dissolved oxygen content of the waters. Hydroelectric

power dams created large bodies of stagnant water that compounded the pollution problem. Slabs of wood, bark, edgings, sawdust, and other errant materials drifting down from sawmills and log drives became trapped in extensive estuarian sections of the rivers, creating sawdust and sewage islands up to thirty feet thick and massive floating "plugs" trapped in the ebb and flow of the tides. (Judd, 1990, p. 53)

The runs of salmon, shad, alewives, and other fish that had led the Wabanaki to give the falls its name were long gone; fish were essentially asphyxiated in summer water when the percentage of dissolved oxygen fell to zero. Residents complained of summertime stench so powerful it induced nausea; one Lewiston jeweler found he could not keep his silver from tarnishing in the noxious air. By the 1970's the Androscoggin was one of the ten most polluted rivers in the U.S., winning it a reference in Newsweek magazine's dire cover story "The Ravaged Environment" (Auchincloss, 1970). It would be Senator Edmund Muskie—a son of the Androscoggin, born in the Milltown of Rumford and educated at Bates College in Lewiston—who spearheaded passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, landmark legislation that began the slow but steady process of cleaning up rivers and waterways.

Dams and the Whole

> We of the place have often seen the river swell, rise to the bridge, almost carry it away, as it in times past already has done, between Lewiston and lovely Auburn.
>
> —Edmund Marsden Hartley, "West Pitch at the Falls"

Like so many modern rivers, the Androscoggin is tightly controlled. Its flow is held back by over a dozen electricity-producing dams, many of them owned by Brookfield Energy, a Canadian company. The dams prevent upstream passage of the anadromous species that once teemed in these waters, including Atlantic salmon, now listed federally as an endangered species. The impoundment above Lewiston—Gulf Island Pond—is also implicated in water quality issues, because of how stagnant the water is behind it. But the dams also produce carbon-neutral power—a particularly acute problem in light of climate change—and they regulate flood waters. The power of Androscoggin floods to transform the landscape is breathtaking. In the spring of 1987, my first year in Maine, flood water reached high enough to close the Longley Bridge. There are pictures from a 1936 flood that show railcars loaded with boulders on the trestle above the falls. All those tons of rock to keep the bridge from being ripped loose. The flood of 2012 was not as destructive, but when I walked along the Riverwalk that year, I had a visceral sense of the power and fundamental wildness of this carefully controlled waterway. A reminder that in this landscape seemingly shaped by restraint and control, there is always the possibility of sudden destruction.

The force of the river at flood is extraordinary: great explosions of water over rock, thundering turbid sweeps of brown that crash and pour and throw up mist that's higher than my head from where I stand watching on high ground. On the third day of rain in

early June I head out early with my camera, making my way slowly upstream, from where the Little Andy falls into the Androscoggin, swamping back yards and parking lots with swashing, stick-strewn water, up along the Riverwalk, waves lapping over the curb behind senior housing, over the pathway where the ducks congregate in summer. I go as far as I can beneath Longley Bridge, where the water main shoots a great funnel of rainwater into the underpass, the way blocked by a back eddy of river. From farther up on the bluff above the falls I watch a whole tree sail majestically downstream, like a Venetian gondola that's lost its oarsman. Standing at the very height of the falls, out on the small observation platform with its chain-link barrier between me and the thousands of pounds of racing water crashing against glacial boulders, I think this is why Lewiston is here. This great pounding cascade of water in motion, this seemingly endless traverse from mountains to sea, this sheer and tantalizing drop from narrows to great swirling lakes of foam. Not hard at all to imagine Benjamin Bates and his brethren standing here wild-eyed like Cortez, seeing in their minds' eye the turning wheels and flashing threads, the great machines of industry powered by what they thought God had given them, for free[3].

The water that sometimes surges but more often trickles over the falls has made its way from the lakes of western Maine, from Mooselookmeguntic and Umbagog and then down the 150 or so miles to where we live. Hartley (1987a) imagined "fish that have played in black waters/among the mountains" making their way downstream to Lewiston; his Androscoggin pays no mind to Lewiston's mills and its "solemn canals"—"because it has business with the sea" (p. 264).

> the birds—the sea birds—
> someone says they wait for fish
> to fall with the turmoil of the waters,
> fish that have played in black waters
> among the mountains. (p. 264)

But who are these fish? Not salmon, since the Androscoggin's salmon were gone by the early 19th century. Creating the possibility for them to thrive again depends on establishing fish passage ladders (usually ineffective) or completely removing dams. But efforts to remove dams are fiercely resisted by municipalities and industry. And the obstacles facing restoration of salmon fisheries aren't just dams; there is increasing evidence that warming ocean waters are impacting salmon as well…

Seeing the river "whole" is at least part of what Hartley tried to do with his bird's eye view, but seeing the river whole now means seeing all the different ways in which it is used, as well as the ways in which climate change is impacting just how much water is in the river. A 2020 state-commissioned report on climate change notes

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[3]   "Seeing the potential for cotton fabric production of Lewiston's location at the Great Falls of the Androscoggin River, a syndicate of Boston investors including Thomas Hill, Lyman Nichols, George Ward, Alexander DeWitt, and, most importantly, Benjamin Bates, formed and chartered the Lewiston Water Power Company around 1850, which became Bates Manufacturing two years later. Astute and perspicacious enough to anticipate the Civil War, the syndicate stockpiled cotton during the 1850s, ensuring the company's wartime profit was enormous" (Bauman, 2012).

decreased snowpack and earlier "ice-out" dates, but says it is still unclear just how all of this will impact streamflow (Fernandez & Marvinney, 2020, p. 10).

In early fall my husband and I drive north to go hiking, and on our way home we stop at a place called Height of Land, just south of Mooselookmeguntic Lake. There is a pull-off on the highway where you can look out across deeply forested hillsides toward the lake and its two small islands. A guy in a pickup truck with a canoe in the bed has also pulled off to enjoy the view; when I ask him how the paddling was, he says he cannot believe how low the lake is. He points out toward Toothaker Island and says he could have walked most of the way there.

The late afternoon light is lovely, and we linger for a while; I read through the informational panels with images of Thoreau—his sojourns in the Maine wilderness—a map that shows where the Appalachian Trail crosses less than 500 yards away, and finally, how these lakes are the birthplace of the whole Androscoggin River watershed. I think about the trickle of water over our falls, the salmon that no longer make their way upstream, the men and women who work at the two remaining paper mills, the electricity generated by all the dams between here and the ocean.

Pastoral Lewiston

> Fresh painted green bridge girders, lace of steel, light with sun and shadow…
>
> —Robert Maurice Chute, "Crossing to the Other Side: New Auburn"[4]

If you want to walk along the Androscoggin River in central Lewiston and Auburn, start in New Auburn and set out across the Lown Bridge, also known as the Green Bridge, a traditional truss structure built in 1937 and recently repainted Kelly green (Bernard Lown Peace Bridge, n.d.), make your way through an empty parking lot outside the Continental Mill, and then head down Oxford Street by Place Ste. Marie—brick blocks built in the 1860's as workers' housing. Then turn left across the canal. This brings you to Simard-Payne Park, a reclaimed brownfield that now features a broad meadow with the remains of a railyard loading platform and clusters of trees along the river. Follow the walking path until you cross another sluice, water pouring from a spillway that once generated power, and then head up to Longley Bridge and Great Falls. To get to West Pitch Park above the falls you will have to cross the bridge and take a right—past a bank and hotel—until you come to the observation deck that Brookfield has constructed over the falls. Signs remind you how dangerous it is to step beyond the chain-link-fenced platform: when Brookfield releases water it can rise fast. Electricity transformers hum in the background. Look out over the waterscape of Lewiston and Auburn: Mill No. 5, designed by the great industrial architect Albert Kahn, lifts its signature saw-tooth roof above the traffic. Behind it is the vast hulk of Bates Mill, once famous for bedspreads. In the foreground, the mammoth boulders, the granite faces and puzzle of the falls, might help you understand why the Penobscot (Chute, 1997) knew the river as a place of "rock shelters". Boston industrialists arrived and built their own shelters out of brick.

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4   All poems cited can be found in Chute (1997).

Marsden Hartley's vision of Lewiston and the Androscoggin is deeply pastoral. He steps back from the banks of the river, away from what he remembers in the opening lines of "Lewiston is a Pleasant Place" (Hartley, 1987b) as "the harsh grinding of the mills" (p. 251) and heads instead for Franklin pasture (now site of Lewiston High School) and a walk with his father in the woods there ("[…] a cool clear stream, gathering water cresses/trilliums, dogtooth violets, and in/the fall—at times—mushrooms" [p. 251]). In "The Bend of the Androscoggin" (Hartley, 1987a) he imagines the down-stream town of Topsham as a "picture world/like a Yankee Breughel" with "French Canuck, salt Yankee skating," skating that will "smooth away/ the progress of a testy day" (p. 264). At the beginning of "West Pitch at the Falls" (Hartley, 1987c), he registers a gnawing sense that he might be mis-remembering, that he is allowing "imaginations" of the past to displace what is in front of him. The hill he is looking at—which he had "imagined [...] thickly strewn with pines" (p. 232)—is not in fact particularly wooded. He wonders if spray from "spring freshets" tricked him into thinking there were more trees there. But rather than using that moment of awareness to bring attention to the present, he shifts back into more images of times past, nostalgic genre scenes that could be lifted from Currier and Ives: a boy skating on the frozen river; men "cutting cakes of ice eighteen inches thick"; tales of girls drowned (suicides?) in "the tossing foam" (p. 234). The mills that come into the beginning of "Lewiston is a Pleasant Place" (Hartley, 1987b) with their "harsh grinding" have receded by its end.

> The mills and factories that were once gigantic
> in the vision of a child, monstrous, terrifying,
> prison-like, are now mere objects on the horizon,
> just as the garages and the filling stations have become.
> The Androscoggin flows by them all, giving them
> power through the solemn canals, minding none of
> them, going onward because it has business with the sea. (p. 255)

The poems give us a chance to follow this native son trying desperately to find in present-day Lewiston something of his childhood, of the wild-ish nature of Franklin Pasture. It is a picture that largely elides the industrial, just as it ignores the kinds of social conflict the city was renowned for: his "Canucks" and "Salt Yankees" skate together, but Lewiston had a long history of brawling among immigrant groups, and in the 1920's Lewiston—like all of Maine—saw a spike in Ku Klux Klan activity directed against Catholic Francos (Frenette, 1986, pp. 206–207). There was in fact a pastoral impulse in the way that Lewiston was laid out. By the time Benjamin Bates and his colleagues eyed the Androscoggin as a source of power, the great textile cities of Massachusetts had already been built. Architectural historians have detailed the ways in which Lewiston's planning was informed by cities like Lowell, Massachusetts, where "utopian social principles and industrialist pragmatics" informed factory layout and the provision of everything from boarding houses to lending libraries, aiming for a level of "refinement and amenity" but also wanting to reassure the families of those young farm

girls (Langenbach, 1981). This would not be Dickensian London[5]. The initial architecture was strictly utilitarian, but became more "expressive and fashionable" as the owners' ambitions evolved. At least some of the plans for Lowell became lost in "a tangle of diagonally intersecting streets. […] Only in the later cities did a single plan encompass the entire city, and only in the case of Lewiston, Maine, one of the last cities to follow Lowell's model, does the original city plan show an overall, urban design unity" (Langenbach, 1981). An 1851 plan for Lewiston lays a symmetrical grid over the curve and bulge of the river's traverse; parallel streets lead from the river—where the mills would be built to take advantage of the river's power—toward a central city park. A photograph from 1870 "shows the intentional order of the canal, the mills, and the boarding houses—all landscaped with elm trees by the developing company" (Langenbach, 1981). The canals, the elms, the park; the gracious Italianate cupolas of the mills themselves (now decapitated by an owner who got tired of repairing the roof): these were dreams that imagined the possibility of holding onto "nature" even as you exploited it.

At least some of Lewiston's riverfront is now remarkably pastoral. Simard-Payne Park was until the late 1990's an industrial brownfield, cleared in 2000 by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be safe for use as parkland (EPA, 2002). Its broad open meadow becomes the staging area for a late-summer balloon festival, a beer fest (since part of the old Bates Mill is now a brewery) and occasional Somali soccer games (Bass, 2018). It is the place I once volunteered with people teaching Somali and other inner-city kids to fish. A local land trust and folks from the National Park Service brought rods and reels, and the boys and girls—the latter in colorful hijabs and sneakers—were taught how to cast (without hooks) in the big open meadow, before they got a chance to head down to the water. There is a picture from the afternoon of me and a young girl; I am wearing a pink shirt and have my arm around her shoulder; she is in a purple headscarf and shirt over a pink and purple skirt. We are both smiling broadly. We stand in the shelter of an oak tree, with the river just visible behind us. It is a pastoral place, humane, and healthy, and hopeful, for however short a time. It is as though the Boston industrialists' and Lowell city planners' dreams have been realized, in ways wilder and stranger than their wildest dreams.

The names attached to these places, however, do not yet reflect that picture—whether it is New Americans playing soccer or their children learning to fish. The men for whom Simard-Payne is now named were police officers who died in the line of duty. Bernard Lown, whose name now graces the Green Bridge, came to Lewiston from his native Lithuania when he was 14. He became a cardiologist (and developed the defibrillator) and in 1980 founded International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War together with the Soviet physician Dr. Evgenii Chazov. Bonney Park—across the river from Simard-Payne—is also named for a police officer; and Longley Bridge, which crosses the river near the falls and joins the two cities' downtowns, is named for James Longley, born in Lewiston and elected governor of Maine in the 1970's. The other names you see as you walk the river are commercial (Gladu Roofing; Yvonne's Carwash; Baxter Brewing) or veterans' names inscribed on dark-grey panels

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[5]   Dickens visited Lowell as part of his 1842 tour of the U.S., and praised both the factory system and the girls employed there. See Archibald & Brattin (2015), chapters 1 and 2.

at Memorial Park, close to the falls. Graffiti beneath the Monty Hydro generating station shouts HOPE and LOVE to anyone looking.

The more expansively we think about names, the more inclusive, and more interesting, the story becomes. It is not just poets who are "namers" and "sayers", as Emerson puts it, even if their naming has traditionally had particular resonance and power. Over the past two decades groups within downtown Lewiston have worked hard to elevate the voices of those actually living within reach of the river, in those poorest-in-Maine census tracts.

Redevelopment in downtown Lewiston began, however, with erasure and conflict. In 2004 Lewiston officials announced the Heritage Initiative, which would have created a highway corridor through residential neighborhoods, razing the homes of 850 residents. Then-mayor Lionel Guay promoted the project as celebrating "wonderful heritage", suggesting a nostalgic vision of the city's working-class Francos, a demographic that had already begun to shift significantly (Belluck, 2002; Wright, 2009). The project immediately elicited pushback from downtown residents and their supporters, who repudiated the idea that there was no "real" community there. The City withdrew The Heritage Initiative under protest, and a group which came to call itself the Visible Community proceeded to do some city planning of their own. In 2008 they submitted *The People's Downtown Master Plan* (Visible community, 2008), which they described as "not just a plan for the future […] but a process of empowerment" (p. 4), a process that would nurture and inspire leaders from within the downtown. The authors of the Plan were clear that those outside their neighborhood "often have a very different view [of it] than residents do" (p. 5). To the negative myths that had taken hold they responded: "We see downtown as home—a place that holds our hopes and dreams for a better future and a better quality of life" (p. 5). The final report carefully summarized a deliberate and inclusive process, how issues had been identified, and what the top four goals were (better transportation, improved housing, a Community Center and increased employment opportunities).

But the legacy of the Visible Community was not just a planning document. The neighborhood found a historian/poet in Craig Saddlemire, a community activist turned film maker whose documentaries about downtown Lewiston both chronicle the work of the Visible Community and hand cameras to inner-city kids to tell their own stories (Saddlemire, 2009, 2011). Organizing in the wake of the failed Heritage Initiative led to the strengthening of various alliances among downtown residents and others from both Lewiston and Auburn. In 2019 a group of organizations from downtown Lewiston submitted a bid for $30 million in federal funding (through the Choice Neighborhoods Program of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development) that would allow for dramatically increased spending on affordable housing. The grant was awarded to the city in 2021, the first ever to be given to a city as small as Lewiston (Lewiston wins $30 million, 2021). The 250-page plan was "developed over a year and a half, with input from 400 residents speaking eight different languages," evidence of a community-focused process and a commitment to hearing different voices, in different languages[6] (Ferguson & Keefe, 2021).

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[6]   One current member of the Healthy Neighborhoods board remembers French, Somali, Arabic, Lingala, and Portuguese being among those languages for which interpretation was provided.

The Dirty Lew: Lewiston and the Abject

> …Jesus, can you save us
> from despair? The river's banks are both a spew
> of trash. The factory where your banner's nailed
> seems boarded, blind, abandoned. The Good Hope Mission
> offers a bed and bread to frustrate hope's mortician.
> Our courage at the river's crossing now is hailed:
> Jesus Greatly to be Praise—advertisement and vision
> cries from the bridge's end as from a prison.
>
> —Robert Maurice Chute, "Crossing to the Other Side: New Auburn"

It's not just former Mayor Guay who sees present-day Lewiston in negative terms. Bob Chute's poem from his 1997 collection describes a bleak urban landscape, with trashed riverbanks and a soup kitchen offering "hope" that conjures up a prison. Rivers go somewhere, but Chute's is a bridge to nowhere. Lewiston's reputation throughout Maine is as a hard-luck, grimy place, a place that stands in sharp contrast to the rugged, wild Maine of tourist brochures. This vision of Lewiston doesn't just come from other parts of Maine. Many locals—including residents of the very Tree Streets that the Visible Community sought to lift up—see downtown Lewiston in terms that are *abject.* My dictionary defines *abject* as "completely without pride or dignity; self-abasing". As a theoretical term used in visual studies, it refers to "artworks which explore themes that transgress and threaten our sense of cleanliness and propriety particularly referencing the body and bodily functions" (Abject Art, n.d.). Lewiston's vernacular nickname is "The Dirty Lew," a term that plays on the homonym lew/loo (British informal term for toilet), and which the Urban Dictionary suggests refers to "someone who is a complete douchebag" (foreal, 2005). Both loo and Lew as douchebag refer to bodily functions, the evacuation of bodily waste or the cleaning of the (female) body cavities. Rivers for most of history have, of course, been places where human waste—both bodily waste and the leavings of everyday life—were disposed of. But in these descriptions, it's as if the whole community has become refuse, an unsightly, stinking body that needs to be flushed away as quickly as possible.

While Craig Saddlemire has celebrated the dignity and diversity of downtown community, another "historian/poet" of Lewiston, the local journalist Mark LaFlamme, styles himself a connoisseur of precisely this "Dirty Lew", flamboyantly displaying his street cred in columns that regularly emphasize the grimy street life of the city (LaFlamme, 2014). Prostitution, drug deals, shady police, violence, and rumors of violence. And while it is tempting to see LaFlamme's writing as simply a last-ditch appeal by the local newspaper for a particular kind of disgruntled reader, we might also read him as someone who does not want to let go of the city's working-class identity, its rough-and-tumble past and present. In his own way, it is possible that LaFlamme as much as the Visible Community does not want to see Lewiston gentrified.

The Mighty Androscoggin Can Be So Beautiful

> Workers sweating as wheels creak and grind
> might not agree, but I, overpowered,
> as Emerson was by Rhodora's flower,
> evils of both natures set aside, find
> this beauty is its own excuse, and mine.
>
> —Robert Maurice Chute, "The Great Bowdoin Mill"

In late January a woman named Jennifer Warriner posts a photograph of Lewiston and the river on a local social media site. Taken from Auburn, the image shows an intense orange-and-yellow sunset that is reflected in glassy open water between snowy banks and near-shore ice. There are silhouettes of bare trees in the foreground, and in the distance the skyline of Lewiston: churches, city hall, the stack at Bates Mill with a whisp of smoke blowing north. Her caption assumes her readers know exactly where this is, so instead of giving us a place name, she simply states "the Mighty Androscoggin River can be so beautiful".

Bob Chute's (1997) poem about the Bowdoin Mill (downstream from Lewiston, in Topsham) quotes the American transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose poem "The Rhodora" proclaims that "beauty is its own excuse for being"—and that both poet and flower find their origins in "the self-same power" (Emerson, 1899). Chute's poem proclaims that the brick mill above the river also has a beauty that "is its own excuse, and mine" (Chute, 1997)*.* The city that Warriner has captured in her photograph (which attracted lots of approval on line, and lead others to share their photographs of the river) is the same one that is known as "the Dirty Lew". But here it is not a place of grime and abjection, it is beautiful. It is not clear when the term "the Mighty Androscoggin" was first used, although it clearly has its origin in the industrial power of the river. It is a kind of might we rarely see any more, given dams and diminished water levels, but the moniker has stuck. Warriner's Mighty Androscoggin is in any case a river in deep repose, an image that makes one think of Wordsworth's Thames, his "holy time [...] quiet with adoration" (Wordsworth, 1994, p. 135).

Maine is known nationwide—even internationally—as a place of extraordinary natural beauty. A sparsely-populated state in the northeastern-most corner of the USA, Maine's reputation is based on imagery of wilderness that has been cultivated by an array of major artists and writers, including Hartley, but also the writers Thoreau and Longfellow, and artists like Winslow Homer and Andrew Wyeth. The iconography of their work focuses on Maine's Atlantic coast, with its rocky promontories, lighthouses, and dramatic seascape—and on its thickly-forested inlands, a region that Thoreau first celebrated (for Boston readers) in his 1864 *The Maine Woods*[7]. Now successfully commodified, these artistic images help to fuel a multi-billion-dollar tourist industry that is of enormous importance to the state's economy. The image of Maine as a place offering retreat from the complexities of the modern world goes back at least into the late 19th century, spurred

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[7]   Famous Maine poets and writers include Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry Longfellow, Sarah Orne Jewett, Winslow Homer and Andrew Wyeth. Marsden Hartley's 1939 "Mount Katahdin Autumn, No. 2" is a particularly well-known image of the Maine wilds. He never painted Lewiston.

in part by the development of modern tourism and by cultural anxieties spurred by the "end" of the American frontier and increasing numbers of working-class immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. The cultural historian John Lewis (1993) documents how the state became a vacationland for tourists looking to escape to the state's camps and grand hotels. The realities of rural poverty were glossed over or transformed into virtues; Mainers themselves were cast as figures of rectitude and stoicism, fitting inhabitants for a place characterized by long winters and challenging conditions. As Lewis puts it,

> what is reflected in this myth of Maine and her people is not nature, as the myth suggests, nor the real past to which it supposedly refers. Rather, what is reflected is a constructed image that both validates and consoles those who believe in it. Myths, as Roland Barthes observed, deprive the objects of which they speak of their history. "All that is left to do is enjoy this beautiful object without wondering where it came from". (p. 151)

But if rural poverty was transformed in this vision into picturesque, quaint lobster shacks and backroads, the mills of a place like Lewiston were harder to convert. In the mythos of Maine as idyll of wild nature and virtue, there was no place for somewhere like Lewiston. To echo Barthes, Lewiston was a place that "spoke" its history in brick and foam, grit and stench. The city told a story of factory and labor, reminding anyone who looked that the state's waters and woods were being intensively used for the stuff of everyday life—from paper and bedspreads to shoes. The constructed Maine, a place that supposedly allowed travel *backwards* into a simpler, more natural life, forswore precisely the kinds of complexity a place like Lewiston embodied—pollution and tenements and the tradeoffs between industry, livelihood and public health.

Lewiston still frustrates that myth of Maine, so much so that the city can provoke in visitors a perverse resentment. In the late 1980's friends of my colleague arrived for a summer visit, and could barely contain their anger that Lewiston wasn't "Maine". No rocky coast, no picturesque lighthouses, no virtuous flannel-clad lumberjacks. But it is at least arguable that a place like Lewiston is in fact vastly *more* interesting than the mythic, nostalgic Maine—precisely for the ways in which it is changing.

Hybrid Place, for Chorus and Solo Voice

> Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories… It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there.
>
> —Lucy R. Lippard, "The Lure of the local: Senses of place in a multicentered society"

Lucy Lippard (1997) insists that all places are hybrid, and that "each time we enter a new place, we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all 'local places' consist of. By entering that hybrid, we change it" (p. 6). Attuned

to what she sees as enormous contemporary hunger for senses of place and belonging, she urges us to see place as "lived-in", informed by intimacy and the sensory, not just viewed at a distance through painterly conventions of landscape (p. 6). Among other things it is a plea to hear voices, to listen to stories, to see culture and history braided together in vernacular landscapes.

Any place is an amalagam—a mosaic—a roughshod chorus of voices, some human, some more-than-human, held together within grids shaped by natural features and human making. An infrastructure of brick and granite, streets and mills, but also of river, stone, gully, hillside. Many voices make up the chorus-in-place that is Lewiston (and Auburn). And that great array of voices, along with the silences of past and present, is still speaking and being heard.

Nancy Lecompte, who has labored for years to assemble stories of the Wabanki in western Maine, once responded to a question I sent her about whether there were native middens in Auburn: "There is no question the banks of the Androscoggin above and below the Great Falls and on both sides is the site of an ancient Abenaki Community. It has likely been an important location for thousands of years [...] But the area is just too industrialized in modern times and everything has already been too disturbed to be of value or interest. I participated in a dig on the Lewiston side many years ago. It seems like we dug to China in many locations and only found industrial era fill".

Underneath the voices of all who have named the Androscoggin lies the silence of those who were here first, who were here for so long. But we still keep digging, even in "industrial fill," and many people keep speaking and working to allow new (and old) voices to speak—whether those are poets, or people's plan participants, or film makers, or kids with cameras. The best way to know a place, Lucy Lippard argues, is *from the inside*.

To Susann Pelletier (1989), a contemporary Lewiston poet, Lewiston is a place of makers: it is not a landscape to be contemplated, but a place that people have come to and made home. She remembers the Lewiston of her childhood as a place that "gave little comfort/It shook me with the clatter of looms/And night machines/Blinded me with that immigrant dream/burning…" (p. 5). What Pelletier sees is not a conventionally beautiful city, but a city filled with workers who have traded a world of beauty (rural Quebec, France) for "the weight of a dream" (p. 5), men and women streaming into factories to mass produce bedspreads. To Pelletier, francophone Lewistonians ("LaMontagne, DeBlois, Thibault") were from a "people who built cathedrals" (p. 5), heirs of those who had woven great tapestries. Her poem concludes with an encomium to her father:

> […] my father is a maker of whole things
> (Houses, fences and gates,
> Tables and chairs
> Cupboards and counters)
> And when his saw sang through the board
> And his hammer drove the nail

> The din of those mill machines was stilled
> I heard the sweetest strains of labor
> I saw how a world is crafted
> By two steadfast hands. (p. 6)

This encomium celebrates the way in which the city was a place of *making*—often mass-produced goods that offered immigrants a modest way of life, but little chance for larger shaping of the world. Still the city is a place that holds the possibility of creativity—Pelletier's vision of "how a world is crafted" (p. 7), Chute's hybrid beauty—mill and river—that "is its own excuse." People continue to come to this city of immigrants not for its conventional beauty, but because it is a place they can make a life. They speak languages that no one ever imagined speaking here. Hartley said of the Canadians that they had given Lewiston "new/life, new fervors, new charms, new vivacities" (Hartley, 1987b, p. 251). The same could be said of Somali Bantu and Congolese, who re-shape the hybrid place that is Lewiston. The place itself responds, re-made by new vision and voices. For all these newcomers, too, perhaps Lewiston will be "part of the secret sacred rite/of love of place" (p.251).

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ESSAY

Borth Waters and the Coastal Dreaming of a Midlander

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ABSTRACT

After a critique of top-down colonizing attributes of water projects in the Arts and Humanities, the essay dwells on the communitarian, environmental, and aesthetic value of a short creative documentary about the raised marshland mire behind the ancient seaside village of Borth on the Mid-West Welsh coast. In a mode of theorized autobiography, it then divagates upon the metaphor of water in the author's recurring dreams about this childhood holiday resort and its complex relations with his home in the English Midlands, an area supplied by Welsh water and that supplies many of Borth's holiday-makers.

KEYWORDS

Borth, Wolverhampton, wetlands, sea defence, place, space, creative documentary, aesthetic philosophy, environmentalism, hydrology, myth, dreams

In North Fremantle, the port city of Perth in Western Australia where I live, I watched a seagull swoop to the top of a streetlight where it alighted, settled, and froze for a while. Full and complete, like a painting in a gallery before another one draws us forward, that movement seemed to stand for a universal transition between place and space, for when it shuffled a little on its temporary perch my attention spread to the banal setting of the coastal suburb where I live and, as emotion morphed into thought, its relation to the rest of the world. If a place is a space with a distinct character, had I not just experienced a visceral and transition from space to place and back again?

Place and Space

The seagull's trajectory from some unknown space to the lamp post had given way to an awareness of the seaboard region on the Indian Ocean within the wider world where we both have our being. But because I was also *doing* something to what I saw, perhaps that is putting it too passively. Yes, it "caught" my attention, but I also invested its arrested journey with feeling and meaning and that localized its landing into a place. When the seagull shuffled in readiness for its next flight, I lost interest, the observed was detached from the observer, who switched to another "frame of mind" where conceptually constructed, personal, local, national, and supranational scales of space subliminally, mixed within individual consciousness, were "serially disaggregated and pondered" (Saar & Palang, 2009, p. 7). I could then move on to related topics of thought, such as the less portentous realization that I had just been editing video lectures that might have prompted me to divide my experience and endow it with significance in this way. But then a transition took place to a larger frame of memory in which I considered the fact that I had always wanted to live near the ocean but having grown up in the Midlands of another country, I had discovered an unexpected downside to living on the coast if you were not, as I was not, a mariner. The possible directions of exploration are cut down by one hundred and eighty degrees F if you live on the coast, whereas in the Midlands of England you could roam in any direction on the compass.

Not that we did. My hometown of Wolverhampton was on the Western edge of the West Midlands industrial conurbation that extends forty miles East towards Coventry and encompasses Birmingham, Britain's second largest city. Our journeys in this placeless direction were largely practical, such as keeping my father company on deliveries of car components to factories in the area—Jaguar, Daimler, Reliant—in his role as sales manager of a light engineering company. But for holidays we always drove west to the ancient village and seaside resort of Borth, built on a long shingle bank which divides the sea from a saltwater marsh. The 2011 census (Nomis, n.d.) recorded a population of 1,399. It was where my parents met and where, along with many Midlanders after the Cambrian railway was opened in 1862 and the roads tarmacked, my grandparents escaped to its "Nine Miles of Golden Sand," as used to be advertised, now advertised as five for some reason. "He promised me the world and showed me Borth," my mother quipped of my father. We spent almost every holiday there, except winter, and many, many weekends from when I was two or three, when my father towed the 22 foot, green and white "Penarth Typhoon" caravan—its over-tall chimney knocked off by the first railway bridge out of Wolverhampton—and installed it at the top of the hill of Y-Fron Caravan Park at upper Borth, which afforded a magnificent view down the one mile village built on a pebble spit stretching due North towards the estuary of Ynyslas, bounded by the Irish Sea on one side and hills a vast bog on the other. The hills on the other side of the Dovey (Welsh: *Dyfi*) Estuary and to the South around this vast plain served as a funnel for "bad" weather, as sun-seekers saw it, including days of interminable rain spent trapped inside the van with elder siblings. After Newtown succeeded Welshpool and Shrewsbury on the typical

three and a quarter hour journey (there were other routes), the road began to follow bounding streams and rivers down mountainous valleys before the estuary began at Machynlleth. When motorcycle patrol men travelling in the opposite direction saluted us while keeping one hand on their handlebars if the insignia affixed to your bumper bars matched their company (we were AA, the other was RAC), the romance of car journeys in the 1950s was subliminally connected with the movement of water, and the golden summers spent six weeks at a time with our mother were punctuated on Friday nights by the excitement of watching out for—and finding—my father's headlights slowly crawling along the horizontal Dovey estuary miles away, then turning sharply with the railway line towards us, and gradually looming larger and brighter as they lit the straight beach road through the golf course and lost themselves for a few minutes of suspense—could it be someone else?—amongst the houses of Borth High Street, before pulling up triumphantly beside the caravan for the weekend. There was not much traffic on the roads in those days. Though the stasis and flow, containment and escape of water is a primary metaphor of the axis between place and space, in my mind at least, it is impossible to disentangle it entirely from the mechanical realm. I fancy it is different for Anthony Morris, native resident and sometimes "philosopher of Borth," who wrote to me at the beginning of the pandemic:

> It is strange how significant physical transformations of one's daily life create different modes of conscious apprehension. One of the over-riding features of the last two to three weeks has been how silent the world has become, to the point where the lone car travelling through the village becomes an oddly intrusive and unwelcome event. I have been hearing things of late that I haven't heard for decades—the ticking of the quietest clocks, the distant hiss of the calmest sea. Memory is a powerful force; it quickly slides in to help fill any present-tense void. Hence my involuntary trip back to winter afternoons in carless Borth. (A. Morris, personal communication, April 10, 2020)

I wish to thank him here for writing like an angel, friendship over decades, much information, and allowing me to quote from his emails in what follows. Indeed, I can barely resist holding him responsible for the many errors he may find I have made.

"A Language-Transformer with an Obvious Intonation of Sarcasm"

If any citizens of Borth read what I am about to write, they might call it "science," not in its usual lofty sense, but in the sense of a nickname given to a Borth mariner who walked in an exaggerated manner: "the term 'science' was used when describing an over-elaboration of manner or behaviour" (Davies, 2004, p. 81).

Before I reminisce, and despite my dislike of negative demonstrations, I think it may be salutary for students of hydrology to discover themselves as "unconscious instruments for values they would strenuously reject on a conscious level" (Didion, 1969, p. 113) if they treat the citizens of remote waterfronts as indigenes in need of civilizing instruction from cosmopolitan Culture HQ. We do not like to think that our

philanthropic attention to the dire consequences of the Anthropocene might oppress those most threatened by it. In the case of Borth it could amount to an othering, a Welsh Orientalism, in which an outreach programme alienates some of its intended beneficiaries, even if they are sympathetic towards young people trying to establish a living in the Arts and Humanities.

From 2014 to 2017, the British Arts and Humanities Research Council funded "Towards hydrocitizenship. Connecting communities with and through responses to interdependent, multiple water issues", a project that investigated and contributed to ways in which communities live with each other and their environment in relation to water in a range of UK neighbourhoods. One such neighbourhood was Borth and the nearby town of Taly-y-bont in Mid-Wales. Under *Community*, the online vision statement declared:

> In relation to communities we ask, what does it do to the ways in which we imagine communities, and to the ways in which they imagine themselves, if local water-related environmental issues (both assets and conflicts) are brought more fully into local public consciousness [...] Can narratives of past and current relationships between people, and people and water, help generate new narratives—new relationships? (Connected Communities, 2014)

This quickly brought the tags "patronizing, entitlement, colonialism, condescension, incomprehension" to Anthony's mind.

In the second of three events in autumn 2015, arranged by a group of artists from nearby universities, a series of films on the theme of flooding, migration, cultural heritage, and the future were projected onto the facades of the terraced houses that line the straight main street of Borth village. The films included ice melting in Greenland, inverted footage of the construction of the new sea defences designed to protect Borth from the waves over the estimated fifty years of its remaining lifetime, and footage from an earlier event at which people were questioned on the lugubrious topic of "how they imagine Borth to be different from now in 100 years' time when the sea defences have stopped working" (Tew, 2015). At a True Tales evening in the Friendship Inn within Hydrocitizenship's span of years, Anthony imputed a faux-naive attitude of witless gullibility to his role at that event:

> Some years ago, I had occasion to walk a gauntlet of an influx of people from Machynlleth, peppered here and there with local faces, who were milling around on the east side of the road between the butcher's shop and the Victoria Inn. I had seen a couple of flyers advertising "Dwr Ymhobman Tafluniad fideo nos ar hyd Stryd Fawr Borth, Water Everywhere Night-time video projection along Borth High Street 10th October 8–9.30 pm to be followed by story gathering in The Friendship Inn." It was sponsored by Bath Spa University, Bangor University, Arts and Humanities Research Council, Hydrocitizenship and Cymerau. The millers were now concentrating on images of melting ice sheets projected on to some of the elevations of the buildings opposite, these being accompanied by

a deafening soundtrack urging us to be aware of imminent catastrophe. As I was already familiar with this bleak scenario, I sought sanctuary in the Vic[1] whereupon I was immediately accosted by 3 or 4 locals, the foremost of whom fixed me with his eye and arrowed me with his tongue—"Right Morris, you know most things about this village—What the fuck's going on out there?" "Do you want the long or the short answer?" I replied, with such vague intonation as to be simultaneously suggestive of an all-embracing familiarity with or complete ignorance of events outside. The follow-up from my interlocutor implied that no evasion was acceptable so I had to explain how Water Everywhere was representative of a much wider project, the vision of which, in part, was to understand how we imagine communities and the ways in which communities imagine themselves if water-related environmental issues (both assets and conflicts) are brought more fully into local public consciousness and can we help generate new narratives, based on past and current relationships between people and people and water. My answer required such intense mental effort that my eyes were quite screwed up, but on opening them I came out with what I thought to be a fitting, concluding remark—"What's going on out there is for you, for me, for this community!" By the time the sentence ended I noticed that my audience had moved on and were speaking to others in friendly and engaged conversation. (A. Morris, personal communication, 27 March, 2022)

If that applied to narratives of aqueous "conflicts," then for narratives of continuity with the past ("assets"), Anthony obliged by lapsing into eroticized nostalgia:

Do you remember those long hot summers when the sun dried the sand above high water until it had the consistency of gritty wholemeal flour? And the sound of distant children's voices floating on the murmur of a mirror sea with maybe a hint of a breeze teasing the sunburnt flesh on your back? Or the times when we used to hold our breath under water to impress the girls staying in Arfor? Do you? Do you remember those times when our world was fishing, swimming, sailing, paddling, sitting, standing, walking, running, playing by, under, in and on water? On it goes—day by day, month by month, year by year, generation by generation. (A. Morris, personal communication, 27 March, 2022)

There is something of Macbeth's weariness in the second paragraph. As a matter of fact, I remember something like that myself, as does Anthony in another mood, but to dispel my naivety he explained that it "needs to be read out loud to a language-transformer with an obvious intonation of sarcasm thereby (hopefully) demonstrating the existence of a linguistic structure that demonstrates a relationship with water that is organic, historic, adequate, aesthetic, relevant and self-sustaining. But it nonetheless remains a deeply reminiscent substrate" (A. Morris, personal communication, 27 March, 2022).

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[1] The Victoria Inn, Borth High Street.

What he most objects to is the way in which the transformation Hydrocitizenship wants from narratives about the role the interface of land and water plays in all local lives is conducted in an imperious bureaucratese that sidesteps the experience and expectations enshrined in the shared language of their community. It's hectoring, incurious and alienating. This could well apply to the promotion of a dance performance that accompanied the immersion of a sculpture called *Urchin* on the beach behind the Victoria Inn on 10 October 2015. Billed as "bodies in the water with the extended corporeality of the biosphere, drifting in tune with the primordial elements" (as cited in Payne et al., 2017, p. 122), one supporter's response to the many possible meanings of the performance was written up in an academic article by Tom Payne, one of the organizers and participants in the West-Wales project:

> They may be refugee citizens of a post-apocalyptic world displaced by people or a climate not allowed settlers anymore. They may be on a migratory route. They are intrinsically involved with the revolving lament of the tide—to be forever passing, dwelling in nothing other than a succession of movements that complement the landscape, sharpening its contrast, deepening it contours. Are they a herald call to adventure, coming from nowhere and—here now? (p. 122)

This in turn drew breathless acclamation from yet another supporter: "'amazing evocative description. Beautiful writing…" (p. 122).

Payne begins his essay by claiming to be "weaving together the voices of artists, academics, and community partners with my own, as a way of [...] revealing some of the water-related concerns in Borth," but exonerates as "productive failure" (p. 103) a later shift "away from collaborative writing, towards exploring the ways in which various contributions of members of *Hydrocitizens* might act as a resource for my own thinking and writing about the Cymerau launch" (p. 125), which plausibly would earn him academic brownie points. Borth's patchy Wi-Fi reception was apparently a greater threat to community participation than any defects in the entertainment level of the performance or indeed rising sea levels. Due to the wonky internet, "discussions such as those from which this writing has been composed are potentially inaccessible to many, counter to the intentions of this participatory exercise and transdisciplinary research more broadly" (p. 125).

For Borth locals, by comparison, "water issues" are more likely to be voiced in urgent late-night emergency emails as colossal waves from the Irish Sea pound the backs of houses, spilling obstructive rubble through alleys between them onto the road. These are snippets from exchanges with neighbours when Anthony was coordinating the flood wardens in his block of houses during Storms Barra and Eunice respectively in December 2021 and January 2022:

> "Ben, give Fred a ring and tell him to be available from 8.00 pm onwards. His stretch is from Bel-Air to the Vic. Get him to call in on Diane—I think we're all in for a hard night."

"John! Get back. GET BACK FOR FUCK'S SAKE!! Let it go! It's not worth saving!"[2]

"LOOK OUT! -----Christ! None of us saw that coming! Jac, Ray. Let's move as much rubble off the road as we can before the next one hits!"

"Were you out last night?" "No, I stayed in and hoped for the best. I hear Hafan was badly hit—punched a hole through the back—the ground floor's a write-off they say."[3]

"The County Council must shoulder some of the blame for this. They haven't reprofiled the shingle for a few years and now look what's happened. It's going to affect our premiums if they claim on the insurance."

"Yeah, but what's the point [of] insuring anyway. They say we shouldn't be here in the first place, and we've only got fifty years left."

Well, some say twenty-five. Fairbourne's a goner. (A. Morris, personal communication, March 27, 2022)

Many of the Hydrocitizenship performances at Borth in 2015 ended with the provision of drawing and painting materials for locals to express the emotions raised by the day's attempts to transform their relationship with water. Given the urgency of the environmental perils confronting the community, this struck Anthony as a bit late: "Please say that the time for felt-pens and blank sheets of A4, many of which drifted like giant drunken butterflies along the shingle, has long gone" (A. Morris, personal communication, 24 April, 2022). Anthony's criticisms are a salient example of the difficulty that Owain Jones, a chief instigator of the entire Hydocitizenship project, had anticipated: "We readily admit to something of a tension in the approach between top-down intellectual ambitions about developing senses of ecological citizenship, and more bottom up, emergent themes which arise from local conversations" (as cited in Hydrocitizenship, 2015).

Y Gors/The Bog (2016)

A happier outcome for the Borth local community was another project funded by Hydrocitizenship. This was the experimental documentary *Y Gors/The Bog* (2016) by Anne Marie Carty, Dafydd Sills-Jones and Nick Jones, which I shall discuss in some detail and which readers can watch in full[4]. Jones is an internationally recognized composer and the choir master of Borth village choir, Côr y Gors ("Choir of the Bog"), who are heard and seen throughout the film and who live on the edge of Cors Fochno,

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[2]   This refers to heavy-duty pub furniture and a canoe that was being ripped from backyards, smashed to smithereens and flung as detritus along the storm-tide strand line.

[3]   Hafan is a house of that name.

[4]   See Carty et al. (2018), duration: 17' 45". Numbers in brackets in main text indicate the number of minutes into the film a scene or sound is located at. The film was also funded by Coleg Cenedlaethol Cymru (National College of Wales) strategic development fund.

the largest raised peat bog in Western Europe, located on the landward side of the shale spit on which Borth enjoys its precarious existence. The subject of the film is the conservation and history of the bog as presented through a variety of community views and opinions. The research question it addressed in its grant application was this: in consideration of "the impact of farming activities and land drainage on an ancient, raised peat bog, to what extent can processes of music composition enable narrative structures to explore and reflect on the connections between communities and their environments" (Carty et al., 2018). Though the film is informational, it takes the evocative form of a self-sufficient work of art.

Take the unbroken opening sequence, the longest in the film. A long slow pan swivels over the marshland for a full minute and a half from Borth hills on the South over to St. Michael's Anglican church on Otter's Island (Welsh: *Ynys Fergi*), a rocky knoll hard by the Leri River on the edge of the bog. At one point the camera's leftward sweep is challenged by the swifter passage of a bird to the right and underscored by continuous telephone or power lines towards the base of the screen. This grand, encompassing panorama is not 360-degree, but it nevertheless generates an impression of completeness that is both complemented and contradicted by the polyphonic soundtrack, comprising Zen chimes, metal clinking, electronic warbling and conversational hubbub from which overlapping recollections of the bog are kept just on the edge of intelligibility before introducing the gently resigned, female voice of the personified bog, who speaks in Welsh with English subtitles: "I wasn't always this way, and I won't stay this way, but for the time being this is what I am" (Carty et al., 2018). She repeats this sentence at the end of the film, encircling it in a mesmerizing present, despite many narrative excursions into the long history of these fens. This accentuates our sensuous awareness of local waters, their natural relations, and human associations.

I have suggested that these two bids for completeness, the panorama, and the polyphonic soundtrack, complement and contradict each other. The camera establishes a tenor of observational realism, while the overtly confected soundscape releases the imagination into memory and myth in a hypnogogic, dream-like fashion. At a metalevel, the discrepancy between the two is mimetic of the bog's dynamic structure by producing a split consciousness akin to the sphagnum moss floating on the waters, moss forming the matrix of the bog as levels of it die to form layers of peat that reach a depth of twenty feet or so above the clay base. Later, the waters of the bog are defined as a place-made centre, independent of human usage and isolated from the water systems that flow around and through it, since its waters are not fed by rivers or ocean but only by rain that makes it swell instead of breaking its normal boundaries as the nearby rivers, estuary and sea do (Carty et al., 2018, 9:32). Swelling and sinking, reinforced by the voices of the choir rising and falling in roundels of male and female sound that alternate and merge is another mimetic feature of the film. They emphasize stress localizing vertical dimension of pluvial accumulation and loss within the horizontal dimension of marshland extent, and this is reinforced again at various points in the film when human bipeds bob like meerkats (02:50, 02:51) or jump up and down on the spongey, elasticated surface (10:00), and when a close-up segment of the salt marsh hypnotically undulates on its own undulates (12:25).

The sense of how the marshland is cut off from surrounding space both by its own homeostatic structure and by the camera is demonstrated when the opening pan comes to a halt on St. Matthews's Church. This succeeds to still footage of the church and its cemetery shot from a higher, transcendental angle (Carty et al., 2018, 2:07), which endows a node of religious community embedded in the deep past of its cemetery with a universal significance that at the same time is independent of the nation at large[5]. Such effects reflect the benign spiritual idealism that the German polymath Alexander von Humboldt (1849) saw in nineteenth-century panoramic displays, which he approved of because he thought they fostered the public's "conception of the natural unity and the feeling of the harmonious accord pervading the universe" (p. 457).

Yet, it also stirs associations of a secular history in which panoramic drawing was taught as a potent instrument of colonial control in military academies from the eighteenth-century onwards.

> Stimulated by the needs of British forces for topographic information and strategic assessments of landscape during a century of intermittent wars with France, panoramic drawing was introduced into naval and military academies to increase the technical proficiency of officers. In particular, between 1768 and 1796 the well-known watercolourist Paul Sandby was drawing master at the Military Academy at Woolwich, where he established a tradition of field sketch that enabled soldiers to delineate coastal features, battlefields, artillery sites and other strategic landscape features. In the same way that military mapping helped to "neutralize the dangers of the terrain and eventually assure mastery over it." Landscape sketching provided a key to understanding and asserting authority over the scene. Unlike a detailed military map, the panoramic sketch did not require special skills to interpret and was therefore a highly useful complementary tool. (Gooding, 2007, p. 69)

This hardly reflects the film's conscious intentions, yet inadvertently applies to the distinctive, black-topped white tower seen in the middle of the opening sweep (Carty et al., 2018, 1:05) filmed from the cliffs below the war memorial at the summit of cliffs, whose prominent position overlooking Borth is certainly pervaded by sentiments of national security and achievement[6]. Locals and visitors would recognize this tower as the Nisa local convenience store for everyday groceries, a monument to consumerism whose circular frontage defines an important turn off to Aberystwyth, the capital of Ceredigion. As currently the only postmodernist building in Borth, it is a cause of pride to some who like Anthony see in its overall bulk a reference to a nesting gull and of distaste to those who stigmatize it as "the

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[5]   In bygone times, however, it was not independent of its Anglican congregation's benign contempt for the non-Conformist congregations in chapels in the village and vice-versa. All the chapels have gone, but it may be that the villagers' choice of congregation reflected social divisions between seafarers, land workers, and business owners, with the rest identifying with Annibynwyr, the Union of Welsh Independents (A. Morris, personal communication, 12 May, 2022).

[6]   Somewhere I have seen a photograph of Concorde flying over it.

toilet roll" as suggested by one of its commodities. Since the tower top is circular as well as central, it subliminally, and no doubt inadvertently, echoes the pivot on which the camera turns. As such it suggests the circulation between Borth and the far-flung commercial networks that supply it. Later, the film will show industrially packed hay bales in black plastic wrappings awaiting collection from fields that encroach the bog[7]. We will hear the voices of the farmers who own these fields extolling the practical ideology of commercial land improvement and land reclamation—dry against wet—that puts them in opposition to the conservationist policies that the local authorities have implemented to preserve the bog. Yet these reclaimed fields are supplying raw materials to the circulating food chains that feed the choir, the villagers, and national markets.

Meanwhile, the camera tracks telephone or power lines at the base of the screen. They are like the base lines of a musical score for the sounds heard on the soundtrack. The electronic components of that soundtrack, together with inaudible human hubbub, hint at collective voices or electrical hum along those wires as they reach beyond local place into the infinite space of international communications or power grids, just as, in its different way, does the bird flying along them in the opposite direction into unbounded natural space outside the frame. These features are merely foreground to the unspoilt marshlands in the middle distance, which are arguably the central subject of a different, colonizing scopic regime.

Voice-overs throughout the film stress the raised mire's age-old resistance to human usage or affect. You can't go there. It doesn't look dramatic or precious. It doesn't impinge on humans. Its salt waters cannot be used to drink from or swim, wash or grow things in. It owes its very survival to human indifference. Perceived from on high as by David Caspar Friedrich's painting of *The Wanderer*, the marshlands are prime subjects for the Kantian aesthetic attitude: the distantiated and disinterested appreciation of strictly purposeless objects and vistas.

But after the pan and the higher view, we are arrested by multiple close-ups of the sphagnum moss that forms the substratum of the bog (Carty et al., 2018, 02:05). A closer framing of reality is neither more nor less artificial than a wider or more distant one (Minha-Ha, 1993, p. 100), but these effects invite interpretations from a very different kind of aesthetic theory. We are no longer distant observers but are in and of the bog. Impersonal distance is further shattered when in close-hand footage of choir members carrying equipment into the bog, one of their number briefly waves at the camera. We are amongst friends. Throughout the rest of the film, camera work keeps us in the bog, which consequently expands into a world. Everything is partial, transient, and surprising: little shocks to the system more familiar to us from urban life were it not for their natural content. Though one can never escape the rectangular boundaries of screen images cutting place from space at every frame, the virtuoso medley of different shots at different focal ranges, angles, directions, movements, stops and durations on static and moving subjects of every scale and texture under all weather conditions creates an illusion of freedom from frames and fixed points of view

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[7]   These are likely to be the farms of Carreg Trannau, Ynys Capel, Llwyn glas and maybe Pen y wern at the foot of the Southern hills (A. Morris, personal communication, 12 May, 2022).

that Ronald Hepburn (1966), in a ground-breaking essay of ecological aesthetics well known in Borth, associates with the enjoyment of nature rather than art. The plethora of jump cuts creates such an unmasterable superfluity of framings that it evokes our freedom to move through unframed nature itself, unanchored from a pictorial viewing point. Instead of standing over and against nature like a painting on a wall, this apparent repudiation of artistic control (for it is only apparent) lets nature envelop and involve us on all sides to enhance spectacles that seem all the more wondrous for the lack of human intentionality to explain them. Apparent framelessness stimulates interpretative creativity, expands the imagination, alerts us to restlessness and change and a wider range of deeper emotions than art does: loneliness, enlargement of the soul, delicacy, frailty, flexibility and resilience, and, according to the qualities peculiar to water, containment and escape within a special litany of movements and sounds beyond the poetic negations of the sound track: "Not a drop, not a drip, not a drip, not a ripple, not a ripple, not a trickle, nor a trickle, no flow" (Carty et al., 2018, 12:34).

And although its	(single voice)
Damp,	(collective voice)
Although it's	(single)
Sodden	(collective)
And utterly	(Single voice with double voices answering)
Drenched,	
And completely	
Soaked,	
There's no	
Trickling	
There's no	
Running,	
and there's no	
Cascading. (Carty et al., 2018, 12:52)	

Later we do see and hear sensuous trickling, running, and cascading from pipes, weirs and rivers immediately bordering the bog.

If these chants sound partly educational, then so do the alternating single or collective voices of adults and children in Welsh and English reciting the species of plants and wildflowers that grow in the waters of the bog (Carty et al., 2018, 09:09, 12:08). They enact a mnemonic ritual of teaching and learning that potentially spans the generations. For just as serious appreciation of art requires knowledge of art history and theory, so aesthetic appreciation of nature requires knowledge of natural history. This "natural environmental model" of aesthetic philosophy especially applies to relatively featureless tracts of wetlands that are not accommodated in the traditional aesthetic categories of the Sublime, the Beautiful and the Picturesque (Carlson, 2020). Thus, we hear an expert's articulate comprehensive scientific narrative about the geological formation of the bog (Carty et al., 2018, 03:23), and a sympathetic history of the economic reasons why struggling farmers on its edge would want to reclaim it

(06:12)[8]. Even the mythical voice of the personified bog is given scientific vocabulary such as "greenhouse gasses" (08:53) to explain the environmental benefits of her capacity to absorb carbon dioxide and contain water.

At one point, however, the film seems to enact a parting of the ways between lay people's appreciation of natural beauty and their tolerance of boring scientific facts. The voices of scientists standing beside a Perspex pod of scientific implements in the middle of the bog suddenly descend into overlapping snatches of gobbledygook, which seems to mimic our failing attention: "Heating it passively [. . .] water table […] temperatures at different depths […] composition rates […] methane production […] lack of transpiration" (Carty et al., 2018, 10:43). But from these esoteric snippets there soon arises a coherent voice offering the general explanation that measurements help to determine the long history of climate change. In this way natural history unites us in a shared sense of natural origins preceding our existence[9]. Conceptually, meanwhile, these scientific narratives pull the film away from its central focus on place to enlist larger scales of geographical and administrative space. We learn that the bog is "important nationally and internationally" due to its status as a RAMSAR site, a special area of conservation within Europe[10].

However scientifically informed, the films procedures are quite different from those used in Simon Reeve's TV series on the English Lake District (Bagnall, 2021), which makes similar points about the value of conserving Britain's rapidly deteriorating wetlands. Reeve employs cogent visual argument in which a drone-mounted camera rises above talking heads entering the marsh as they speak of returning species of plants (close-ups) and birds (soaring shots) leading to generalizations about progress in rewilding the Lake District as a whole (higher shots of the surroundings). The camerawork carves out a lucid path for the argument. As a creative rather than an informational documentary, by contrast, the oneiric effects *Y Gors/The Bog* make it harder to remember but encourage second viewings. Constant reflexive effects never allow us to forget how nature is mediated by film. Twinkling refractions in the lens, glimpses of sound and camera equipment within the frame, the unrolling of a hose like

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8   In 1689, John Locke anticipated these views in his conception of wilderness as waste in the Second Treatise on Government (Locke, 2005): "For I ask, whether in the wild wood and uncultivated waste of America, left to nature, without any improvement, tillage, or husbandry, a thousand acres yield the needy and wretched inhabitants as many conveniencies [sic] of life as ten acres equally fertile land do in Devonshire, where they are well cultivated" (p. 14). It is echoed in the verdict on the Borth reclamation project in 1878 offered by an English schoolmaster when his school was exiled to the village during the scarlet fever epidemic in the East Midlands when he writes: "You may listen to the puff of a farmer's steam-engine planted in the swamp, and see the glitter of the steel ropes, with which it draws its ploughshares, resistless as fate, through the oozy fallows. Well, it is come to this, the farmers and their engines will soon civilize away the beauty of this romantic wild. But shall we complain? If they have begun to drain these intractable marshes, there is a chance for other places, where the interest on the cost of drainage will be less problematical than here" (Skrine, 1878, p. 77). The phrase "resistless fate" espouses the doctrine of Manifest Destiny wherein barbarism inevitably cedes to civilization.

9   The film does not mention that evidence of ancient copper and lead mining has been discovered in the soil beneath the bog before its formation 7,000 years ago (Mighall et al., 2009).

10   I understand, however, that the Dyfi Biosphere of which Cors Forchno is a part gets no funding apart from small local authority grants to maintain a basic secretariat.

a reel of film, and occasional punctuations by black screens and sudden silences all remind us of the camera, the soundtrack and intensive editing.

Paradoxically, the suturing of the natural and the technological only amplifies water's vitalism. Far from estranging us from the illusions, the pairing of electrical and natural sounds, including birds, insects, the distant clatter of trains, electronic warbling, plucked strings, piano notes and chords, orchestral music, and choral voices—sometimes departing from, sometimes merging with the visuals—turns the film into a hybrid organism that carries the spirit of the bog into the lenses and microphones of those who have built its registrations in our mind.

Measured outcomes of screenings at academic venues across Europe drew a mixed reception. British academic voices were less convinced by its vagueness and ambiguity than European commentators (Carty et al., 2018). An American friend harshly dismissed it when I sent him a link: **"**I watched *The Bog* and thought it a very twee jumble that made me think of Monty Python, which is its antidote" (A. Michelson, personal communication, 17 May, 2020)[11]. This is Alan Michelson, a Mohawk film-maker resident in New York. Though his work is capable of generous diplomacy when the context requires it, the polemical nature of his opposition to the exploitation of native Americans and their land rights more often requires polarising stridency in which "jumble" would be catastrophic[12]. The Welsh filmmakers faced quite different political problems. Some form of "jumble" was necessary to avoid polarised political attitudes towards the Anthropocene. Through close attention to the semiotic structure of several contemporary documentaries[13], they sought to avoid "problem moment narrative structures" whose disadvantage is the production of binary oppositions between the "good" and "bad'" voices of divided groups—in our case farmers and environmentalists—whose independent agencies would otherwise be subordinated to authorial intentions. The alternative was a creative documentary that employed "semiotic 'suspension', where the music refused to let any specific voice dominate the 'choir' of perspectives in the whole film" (Carty et al., 2018). Specifically, this entailed the placement of music over the voice of the farmer complaining about the preservation of the bog "so his views are drawn into the texture of the film and act as an introduction to the next scene" (Carty et al., 2018). I do not think this balm on troubled waters would convince many viewers that the film is free from bias. While eliding dissonant points of view (such as the farmers'), the makers are almost certainly aware of their film's overall approval of conservationist, scientific, aesthetic,

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[11]   *Monty Python and the Flying Circus* was a wildly popular British surreal comedy series that ran on BBC 1 television from 1969 to 1973.

[12]   In his 13:05-minute video installation, TwoRow II (Michelson, 2005), for example, he juxtaposed panoramas of each bank of the Grand River dividing the Six Nations Reserve from non-native townships in Ontario and set the tour guide's narrative against an indigenous commentary on contending soundtracks to call out the devastating pollution of once pristine waterfronts rested from native American protection by broken treatise. The approach is necessarily polarised and adversarial.

[13]   For example: The End of the Line (Murray, 2009), The Cove (Psihoyos, 2009), Suite Habana (Perez, 2003), Blackfish (Cowperthwaite, 2013), Leviathan (Castaing-Taylor, 2015), Kotona Kylässä (Luostarinen, 2012) and Into Eternity: A Film for the Future (Madsen, 2013).

and multi-culturalist points of view. Overall, I share these biases, so would hardly object to them, however aware I am of my dependency on industrial farming.

That the filmic representation of the bog is a man-made unity containing different frames of reference within itself, and not simply a tract of untouched nature, is already evident from the Welsh/English split in the title *Y Gors/The Bog.* Alternating languages, genders and ages are carried into the soundtrack and into the English subtitles translated from the Welsh. The cultural positions of all the recorded voices are mostly in harmony but sometimes in tension. The biases I have mentioned are most subtly reinforced by gendering, however. The exclusively elderly, male, Welsh farmers speak of the need to control nature (Carty et al., 2018, 11:40). According to George Lackoff's linguistic theories about the way language frames our ideas, both conservative and progressive thought about the environment is informed by metaphors of family structure. Conservatives tend to idealize a traditionally strict father organized by clear hierarchy, obedience, and discipline—the ascendancy of the dry over the wet in our case. Progressives, including environmentalists, tend to value an egalitarian, nurturant parent, stressing empathy, cooperation, and a sense of interconnectedness (Lackoff, 2001). It is therefore not surprising that the bog is personified in the film as a timeless, gentle female, and equally significant that the film downplays more misogynist personifications of the bog available from Borth folklore. One such is Yr Hen Wrach, "The Old Hag of Borth Bog" that haunted villagers up to the early 1900s when land reclamation had sufficiently reduced the area of the bog to rid the area of malarial miasmas that came at night to afflict local victim with "the shakes" (Stevenson, 2014). For the film this was an inconvenient case of land reclamation *improving* the lives of villagers! Only in the very earliest voices of the film is the bog dimly remembered as a site of old-fashioned superstition, a fearful place with something of the aura of Grimpen Mire in Conan Doyle's *The Hounds of the Baskervilles* (1902), where one false step led man or beast to death: "'The bog has a lot of secrets, and I don't want to be one of them…' 'Scary. I've always heard stories as a kid of animals being lost'" (Carty et al., 2018, 01:33).

In the final segment of the film, we are awoken from the hallucinogenic objectivity of solitary nature, already shorn of malignant superstition. I find it the most puzzling and perhaps the least satisfactory sequence—perhaps. Just before it we are given a sequence of intensely hypnogogic distraction in which the lens is turned so far out of focus that the myriad reflections of light on rippling water are distended into abstract blobs shimmering on the screen whose flattening the modernist art critic Clement Greenberg would have approved of (Carty et al., 2018, 15:07). Day-dreaming trumps observation. Then reality cuts in as a Naiad is personalized. We see a close-up of a handsome woman spinning her hair around as she looks around next to a man in a white shirt (15:26). For the first time the choir is individuated as a group of unselfconscious friends enjoying the bog in slanting, evening light. Their co-presence is real enough, after the choir meeting (if this is not a separate occasion), yet there is still a ritual quality about their sometimes-unaccountable actions, which seem to contradict prior claims about the bog's uselessness. We have been told you cannot wash in it, but the man undoes his shirt to do so; that you cannot grow anything

in it, but plants and bushes are inserted, watered, and measured. As Anthony writes inscrutable notes on a clipboard, it is difficult to know why others pour water through a funnel into moss already saturated in its own waters. The erection of a folding table to celebrate a toast is probably more convivial than sacramental, despite the Christian pairing of wine and water, but it risks appropriating the bog as a recreational area when its mystique formerly depended on human inaccessibility: "It's foreign to us […] There's just places where you can't go" (03:04)[14]. The diversity of these activities is clearly designed to defeat a single interpretation. They might equally symbolize a return to a primordial Eden or a premonition of future invasion. On enquiry I discovered that the film's conclusion was not supposed to resolve tensions but was intended as a lightly theatrical counterpart to natural scenes of a world that should remain uncorrupted (A. Morris, personal communication, 24 April, 2022). But I prefer to think of it also as a consummation of the film's well-established reflexive consciousness. It admits that for the whole film to attend to nature is already to impinge upon it. Henry Thoreau explained the wisdom of such admissions in that founding text of environmentalism, *Walden* (1854): "It may be that even to think of nature, let alone act on it, is to make it a joint product of human and natural activity, so that to come to the pond is already to profane it. But profanation is simply the condition of the world, which is redeemed, if at all, by our deeper apprehension of that condition" (as cited in Purdy, 2015, p. 151).

Water between Wales and England

My focus broadens. It is perhaps ironic that the preservation of nature on one side of Borth is matched by the massive mechanical transformation of its seaward side in millions of pounds worth of new sea defences and artificial islands to combat that other man-made phenomenon: rising sea-levels. It is obviously beyond the remit of a single film focused on Cors Fochno to do justice to the multiplicity of relations between land and water that shape a coastal community over centuries: its distant origins as a seasonal haven for heron fishing, the daily walks of twenty miles or so by cockle ladies from Ynyslas sands to Aberystwyth and back to exchange their wares for bread, its disproportionate number of cosmopolitan sea captains whose vessels give their names to many of the houses, and the tensions as well as financial interactions between mariners and farmers, who generally enjoyed lower wealth and status but could still invest in local shipping opportunities. These stories are told in the invaluable *Borth: A Seaborn Village* by Terry Davies (2004), from which most of my social history is taken. Davies illustrates the social divide between seafarers and farming families with a telling anecdote about Will Scissors, so called because of his sharp tongue. One report from the 1890s has it that this sea captain

> was in chapel on a warm Sunday, totally relaxed, with his eyes closed. A popular young firebrand of a preacher was pontificating about being close to God. Seeing an apparently sleeping member of the congregation, he decided to bridge the

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[14]   These are views that do not reflect its former uses as peat for home fires before coal arrived in the village, for bee-keeping and other practical activities.

recalcitrant by denouncing those who, even in the house of the Lord, were not paying attention or knowing the nearness of Him. As the congregation followed the preacher's stern gaze, Will suddenly opened his eyes. He looked around and instantly understood the situation and, staring straight back into the preacher's eyes, he said "Pah! I have been nearer the Lord than you will ever be in your pulpit. I have seen his great works and how he manifests himself in the wilds of the vast Atlantic. He has always been with me, guiding me through storms you couldn't imagine in your worst nightmares. Whilst I have felt his great comforting presence, you and your ilk hereabouts have merely sheltered under a hedge". (p. 77)

But since technology changes places, the viability of the shipping industry from the ports of Aberdovey (Welsh: *Aberdyfi*) and Aberystwyth from which Borth mariners sailed was ultimately destroyed by the arrival of the railways that shifted Borth's economy towards tourism, so that by comparison with other coastal towns it is now untypically anglicized, serving also as a dormer suburb for students at Aberystwyth University. Still, in the 2011 census (Nomis, n.d.), 43% of the residents of Borth were largely Welsh speaking, and locals of all kinds harbour dislike of thoughtless Midlanders making nuisances of themselves through inconsiderate use of noisy jet skis on Borth waters. Because of their Midlands accents, they are sometimes known as "Yow-Yows", as when on first arrival one says to another: "Yow unload the jet ski and oy'll boy an oyce cream!" ("you unload the jet ski and I'll buy an ice-cream"). Wulfrunians (natives of Wolverhampton) can even laugh at themselves on holiday at Borth. "If you talk to anyone local, tell them your great grandma was born in Caernarvon. I'm not having anyone overcharged for Curly Wurlys"[15]. "This is going to be awesome, like a nature documentary." "'It's nice here, isn't it?' 'Yes, if you like midges, Costcutters [the Nisa store again], and not being able to pronounce place names." These are lines from the episode "Dead Man's Caravan" in the British television sitcom *Raised by Wolves* (Moran et al., 2016) inspired by Caitlin and Caroline Moran's memories of their childhood on a Wolverhampton Council Estate. It stars a dysfunctional family whose heavy accents are the medium of improbable eloquence that doesn't save them from the breadline. In this episode they stay in a caravan at Ynyslas inherited from their grandfather. Rainclouds loom, but do not break and the family blissfully reunites over a campfire on the beach.

It was not just shipping but farming that gave ground to tourism. We were one of the first caravans on Y-Fron. I have a dim memory of a scene when it was still predominantly a farm run by Mr. Morris, a wiry man with a kindly attitude of slight uncertainty and mild retreat, standing in tall gumboots near a barbed-wired fence and an ancient, rusty trough. He was ever the farmer, ministering to sheep rather than holiday-makers. My compassion for his departing way of life took no account of my family's presence as caravan owners, and we, as much as anyone, abhorred the garish, polychrome blight of vans that spread across the contours of *other* rolling green fields in coastal Wales.

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[15]   This refers to a two-tier price system for tourists and locals, which my mother used sometimes to dodge by shopping in Aberystwyth supermarkets.

Despite our contribution to the local economy, I was always reminded on visits in the 1950s and 60s of my status as an outsider due to the gloom of what I now know realize were older and more serious tensions between England and Wales weighing on Borth from afar. At about the age of ten, near the railway crossing on the road that ties the church to the village, I plucked up courage to ask the time of a very tall, erect, slow-moving, elderly man dressed from head to toe in black, including a curiously rounded, wide-brimmed hat and a flash of white from a dog collar. I think he was a Methodist minister. With sombre dignity, he unbuttoned a pocket in his waistcoat and slowly withdrew a gold watch on a chain from which he read the time—in Welsh! He certainly knew I was English, for after a suitably agonising interval he reluctantly recited it in English. I felt he was making a point. He probably grew up at a time when nineteenth century children were still made to wear the "Welsh Not," a wooden or slate board, as a punishment for speaking the native language at school. I well remember the strangeness of overhearing the son of the headmaster of the school on Borth hill talking to his mother in perfect English and receiving replies in fluent Welsh as I passed the gate of the high-walled playground on my way up to the caravan. Yet my shock at Alan Michelson's analogy between *Y Gors/The Bog* and Monty Python is that my social barriers with Borth locals of my age were most fully dissolved as I was watching the shipwrecked mariner staggering up the beach in the very first episode of that series sitting with Anthony and his father Aran in Bel-Air, his parents' house, and grocery store. I thought it must be an odd kind of religious programme before the penny dropped, and Anthony and I began roaring with laughter at the same instant, while Aran looked on in an indignant state of bewildered disapproval[16]. A cosmopolitan bond was sweeping the younger generations together across the whole country. Around this time pink dinosaur prints appeared on Borth pavements, leading to some houses but not others. It's likely that the perpetrators, whose identities have never been discovered, thought the chosen owners were dinosaurs of one kind or another, and worthy of a shock. There are rumours of an 8 mm film in an Aberystwyth bank vault of Jimmy Hendrix, the supremo of American rock guitarists, walking barefoot on Borth beach, carrying his Fender Stratocaster. I possess a fake poster of the concert dated 22 October that he certainly did not give in the Cabin Bar of the Friendship Inn, the pulsating heart of Borth counterculture, where those with dandruff on their jacket collars or white bras beneath their tops lived in fear of exposure from its flashing ultra-violet lights. But Hendrix did tour mid-Wales in 1967, allegedly driven by Johnny Morris, a musical promoter and son of the proprietors of our very own caravan site (Shrubsole, 2011). Fame by association! In a fantasy appended to this account, Hendrix, who did compose tracks inspired by elemental waters[17], is listening to the waves on his way back to Borth, and imagines he hears the bells of Aberdovey that are described in a popular song based on the legend of the bells of a sunken lost kingdom called Cantre'r Gwaelod (The Hendrix hundreds, 2012),

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[16]   Aran's own showmanship was more practically demonstrated as captain of Borth lifeboat when, in preparation for sending up a flare to bring in the crew from whatever they were doing in the village for the next sea- or cliff-rescue, he would dramatically hold back a gaggle of onlookers, including myself, with a theatrical sweep of his arm and cry: "stand back! STAND BACK!!" in the richest and most vibrant of voices, then "woosh," up and off it went, "BANG!"

[17]   For example, "Castles Made of Sand" (1967) and "1983 (A Merman Should I Turn To Be)" (1968).

the "Welsh Atlantis", that can sometimes be heard ringing beneath the waves near the actual remains of a petrified forest that regularly surfaces on Borth beach. What a clash with that earlier invasion of beach missionaries, the Children's Special Service Mission, an evangelical Christian group who sacrificed their holidays to teach us hymns we bellowed out against the wind to the accompaniment of a peddle organ. We made suitable hand gestures:

> Do you want a pilot? (point)
> Signal unto Jesus (beckon)
> Do you want a pilot (point)
> Bid him come on board (beckon)
> For He will safely guide (steer)
> Across the ocean wide (sweep)
> Until at last we reach the heavenly harbour (crook elbow)

Why should the devil have all the good tunes? This was before Borth became one of many places in Mid Wales subject to an influx of English hippies in the 1970s, where they were generally warmly welcomed (Danks, 2015). Yet the weight of older grievances persisted.

Conquered by England in the thirteenth century, Wales has sometimes been called England's first colony. Deprived of legal rights and subject to summary dispossession for aeons, its citizens mounted many rebellions that were brutally suppressed by English overlords (Davies, 2007, pp. 158–217). After the cultural recalibration of a distinctive Welsh national identity in the nineteenth century, abiding resentment of this fractious past in the twentieth was focused on the obligatory supply of plentiful Welsh water to the densely populated cities of Northern England and the Midlands. To this day an average of 300 million litres a day is extracted from the Caban Cock Reservoir along the Elam Valley aqueduct to supply the city of Birmingham with domestic water after an Act of Parliament passed the Birmingham Corporation Water Act of 1892 for the compulsory purchase of the total catchment area of the Elam and Claerwen Valleys. A hundred people lost their homes as a result. Leaving cultural sensitivities out of account, it made perfect engineering sense for a country with a sparse population, high rainfall, and a mountainous topography of deep valleys to supply high volumes of clean water for domestic use in the growing industrial cities of a generally flatter, more densely populated country.

I was dimly aware of these issues as a child, and on one occasion was implicated personally. My mother was an inveterate bargain-hunter because of having lived through two world wars. By now she had her own car. One day I set off with her on an interminable car journey from Borth in a direction we had never ventured on before in search of a cheap Welsh dresser which was to proudly adorn the kitchen of our Wolverhampton home for ever more. At that time the second-hand dealers of Brighton—a city said at the time to be collectively "helping the police with their enquiries"—were buying up a glut of cheap dressers from Wales and on-selling them at huge profit. Cutting out the middleman, mother took me on a long drive to an isolated

rural Welsh hamlet where furniture was going cheap because its valley was about to be flooded to supply England with water. I remember the eeriness of observing a cluster of houses around a church whose spire would soon be underwater, and the poverty of a community where a smiling young farm worker with an abnormally large head had already sold his brains to the medical department of the University of Aberystwyth for £20.00. Could this really have been Capel Celyn, the community in the Tryweryn valley, where 48 people were displaced in 1965 to flood a valley that would supply water to heavy industry in Liverpool and the Wirral? Not only was the private bill sponsored by Liverpool City Council designed to overrule Welsh local authorities, it was vehemently opposed by all but one of the thirty-six Welsh Members of Parliament (the other one abstained). According to contemporary photographs the chapel did not have a spire, but both the year of the flooding and the length of the journey from Borth seem right. How the precious, honey-coloured dresser was delivered to Wolverhampton I do not know, but it would not have fitted in my mother's Morris Minor 1000.

This flooding was the catalyst for the growth of the Welsh nationalist party, Plaid Cymru, and for various attempts at sabotage around the reservoir. It eventually spread to the terrorist use of another of the four elements: fire, for between 1979 and 1994, over a similar period to the Troubles in Ireland, Meibon Glyndŵr (Sons of Glyndŵr) and other Welsh militant groups firebombed three hundred English-owned holiday homes in Wales, fortunately without loss of life. The fires lent savage irony to a contemporary coal market campaign spoofed in a BBC TV comedy sketch: "Come Home to a Real Fire: Buy a Cottage in Wales" (Welsh not British, 2015). In 1977 the Welsh rugby player Phil Bennet raised the hackles of his team before a cup-tie with England with a speech in which he urged: "Look what these bastards have done to Wales. They've taken our coal, our water, our steel. They buy our homes and only live in them for a fortnight every year. What have they given us? Absolutely nothing. We've been exploited, raped, controlled, and punished by the English—and that's who you are playing this afternoon," though in later accounts he put a comical slant on his motives (Bennett, 1977). Disregard for the hydrological, social, cultural, and linguistic impacts of English domination of Wales contributed to pressures for the devolution of the legislature and the establishment of the Welsh parliament in 1999, for which support has only strengthened during the pandemic.

Coastal Dreaming of a Midlander

I confess to shameful pride in an imaginary pecking order amongst Midlanders who spent childhood holidays in Borth. I smile when I think of them waxing lyrical about old Borth as a timeless idyll, asking myself if they are old enough to remember all that had gone before their time? The ferry station at Ynyslas for crossing the estuary to Aberdovey? The lumpy tar on the beach from passing ships that stuck to your clothes and skin? The Pantyfedwen Hotel, that stuccoed white elephant adorned the skyline near the station, whose demolition in 1976 rid Borth of its most prominent landmark? Pairs of cartwheels on the beach whose spokes were used to manhandle heavy wooden fishing boats in and out of the sea? The guns stationed at Towyn (Welsh:

Tywyn) firing shells at targets towed by military aircraft out at sea? The concrete railway bridge over the tracks at the station with its lonely view of the Fors Cochno at the top where I would grip the railings as the Cambrian Coast Express approached to see if I was brave enough to stand my ground when it enveloped me in acrid-smelling clouds of steam before it thundered to a halt?

Steam. Steam power and the chemical composition of H_2O were discovered in my neck of the woods during the so-called Midlands Renaissance in the late eighteenth century. They went along with the canalization of Britain (Uglow, 2002) and the mindset that straightened the Leri River from its former winding course into a gash across the bog that emptied into Dovey estuary instead of formerly at Borth beach (Carty et al., 2018, 08:12). The kinds of hydrological relations imposed on Wales by England evolved from the scientific conception of water that Ivan Illich (1986) contended has transformed it from the material basis of myth, poetry, and dreams into a utilitarian commodity of metered and recycled cleaning fluid that deprives our dreams of "a stable, dense, slow, and fertile water stuff that obscurely vegetates within us" (p. 7)[18]. In all pre-modern societies:

> What the rivers or beaches wash from those who cross them [in death] is not destroyed. All mythic sources feed a source that is not destroyed. All mythic water feed a source that is located on the other side. The streams carry the memories that Lethe has washed from the feet of the dead [...] This well of remembrance the Greeks called "Mnemosyne." In her clear waters, the residue of lived-out lives float like the specks of fine sand at the bottom of a bubbling spirit [...] In this way the world of the living is constantly nourished by the flow from Mnemosyne's lap through which dream water ferries to the living those deeds that the shadows no longer need. (Illich, 1986, p. 31)

Fear not, Reader: I am not about to claim to be in communication with the dead! But I do claim that the waters of Borth sustain me because of the peculiarities of my dream life. If I hesitate to explain this, it is not because of squeamish concerns about personal privacy, but because I fear erasing an invaluable psychic resource by drawing it too far into the light of consciousness and writing about something of slender public significance or interest.

It is very common to have recurring dreams about certain feelings, actions, or themes, but apparently much rarer to dream for decade after decade about a particular place[19]. I dream about Borth much more often than my hometown of Wolverhampton—the real cauldron of my family dynamic—or of Australia where

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[18]   Of course, Borth itself is now supplied from a dammed reservoir at Craigypistyll abstracted from a water treatment works at Bont-goch. The whole village was plumbed into a mainline sewage system the late '60s or early '70s, of which the treatment system is at the eastern side of Otter's Island, whereas before all the houses on the seafront had their waste drain into the shingle (A. Morris, personal communication, 15 May, 2022).

[19]   Andrew Relph, Perth psychotherapist, whom I would like to thank for long friendship and fascinating discussions of typical dream patterns.

I have lived for more than thirty years, while a run of dreams about New Zealand abruptly sank into the dark swamp of the undreamable as soon as I had visited it!

Since childhood, Borth has served my psyche as a pliable, archaeological layer of living dreamscape in which any real or imaginary point within a roughly triangular area bounded by the estuary, the coast, and the hills behind our caravan site, may suddenly be activated as a "magic spot" for dreaming, even if I've never physically visited it. Neither does it include momentously memorable places just outside that area, such as family cliff walks from Aberystwyth or down the lovely valley to Wallog for picnics near the mysterious lime kilns and distinctive spit on the beach. Undoubtedly, this privileged dream region is distinct from a "bro" (short for *brogarwch*), the Welsh term for the physical area to which you and your community belong. Anthony defines his bro as what he can see in all directions from the church cemetery on the rocky knoll near the Leri, unless it is too far away to be physically accessible, like hills in the distance (A. Morris, personal communication, 27 April, 2022). Terry Davies' bro is the twenty square miles of hinterland "between the Dyfi estuary and through the village of Borth southwards to the Clarach estuary" (Terry Davies Ceramics, n.d.), far beyond my own limit of Aberwhenal, the next bay up from Borth cliffs. I can hardly match these citizens' depth of emotional attachment to these places, nor do I imagine that their dreaming is any less robust. I speak no Welsh and am not immersed in Welsh culture nearly as much as I would like to be, but then my dreamscape is not a place in the same way. It is a moving feast in a double sense. It moves with me to whichever country I go to and is itself in movement as a living creature, throwing up what seems an inexhaustible wealth of real or imaginary locations for its quixotic enterprises within its precinct, though it may occasionally form a *capriccio* that incorporates somewhere else such as the plumb pudding mound of Castle Hill from my Cambridge days, as if it had always risen next to the amusement arcade at the North end of the village. And except for our caravan, that predictable scenario of Family Romance, where dream flowers have grown through holes in the floor since its destruction many years ago and the deaths one by one of all the immediate members of my family who stayed in it (Figure 1)—all my dream locations are new. One of them places its focus on an unreachable spot twenty yards or so into the bog from the road beyond the station, or in a damp and unalluring field enclosed by hedges on the crown of a hill behind Y-Fron: places I've never been to in waking life but mean to! Or they may be expansively apocalyptic.

I was on the beach under a slate grey sky. Suddenly, out of the water, there rose to a height of fifty feet a gigantic rectangular gantry about two hundred feet long by thirty feet high, festooned with sets of twin lamps and other, more obscure apparatus. It shed shining water as it rose under no visible source of propulsion. The suddenness of its rise and arrest in the sky were striking.

The next moment it leapt the roofs of Borth High Street and through a paradox of scale installed itself within the dilapidated shell of the long-gone Lerry Garage, where a vintage, 16-cylinder Isotta Fraschini luxury saloon, "big enough to raise a family in," had stood rotting for many years. How the metal framework got over the roof and shrank its proportions to fit within the walls, I don't know, but there it was, visible

enough through the broad, wooden doors, shedding its remaining water, pregnant with menace, and possessively guarded by smartly dressed, unfazed soldiers in boots and gaiters. They looked British, but the apparatus had the feeling of an alien invasion, though not in any faddish way. It was *intrinsically* mysterious. What would it do, apart from turn its lights on? No one knew, but the attention it was receiving made it certain that another, potentially catastrophic event would soon follow.

Figure 1
Author's Family Caravan and Father's Car at Borth, Wales

Note. School drawing, crayon. Late 1950s. Source: In possession of the author.

Not every dream combines industrial equipment, automobiles, and water[20]. I chose this dream rather than another one about enthusiastically swimming down the High Street where the waves of Cardigan Bay had reached the rooftops, because although my psychical "gift" attracts me to the oneiric qualities of *Y Gors/The Bog*, I do not think they reflect any of the film's environmental and social messages. I have heard what seems to me the trivial interpretations that recurrent dreams of single places reflect either buried traumas or sanctuaries from them. Rather, I think, mine represents the structure of my subconscious, but not my adult subconscious. So far, they have shunned recent developments such as the multi-Purpose Reefs or the anglicization of the village and, like children, do not take much responsibility for anything. I think this is because the dreamscape represents the structure of my childhood subconscious. Perhaps one can only know a place by living there, though another view is that it is only in the interval between first arrival, when nothing is

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[20]   For the classic text on the mutual entanglements of technology and the pastoral ideal since Shakespeare, see Leo Marx (1964).

clear, and settling in, when everything becomes habitual, that you really start to see, if not to know, a place (Anderson, 2016). As a holiday-making child I started this process over and again. Borth became always both familiar and newly strange. Thus, although my dreams of Borth are often frightening, and sometimes reassuring, if I were to nominate a dominant feeling-tone in which these feelings of terror or safety are couched, I would say it is one of jubilant, exploratory wonder at Borth and its waters, and for that I'm really grateful.

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ARTICLE

Coastal Bodies and Childhood Memories: Exploring Baby Boomers' Gendered Memories of the Waterfront in Virac, Catanduanes

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ABSTRACT

This work examines childhood memories of baby boomers in the municipality of Virac, Catanduanes Island (Philippines) to examine gender dynamics in Virac's seascapes. Through drawing together Donna Haraway's (1988) notion of partial perspectives and Frigga Haug's (1987) memory-work, this article shows the entanglement between the fragmented memories of boomers and the gendered waterfront of Virac. Employing unstructured interviews, this work presents the meanings and imaginations of the waterfront beyond being economic and industrial spaces. Three relevant discussions emerged from this interest: *first,* the boomers' narratives demonstrate how coastal femininities and masculinities are constructed in relation to bodies; *second,* in contrast to the masculine dismissal of emotions and desires, women's emotion-bound memories show potentials in navigating the symbolic meanings of bodies in relation to Virac's waterfront spaces; and *third*, memories recognise the past as a plurality of subjective meanings, with the waterfront as a relational space. These observations suggest that the waterfront and its contours work together to create remembered narratives that animate and shape Virac's waterscapes. This work is an invitation to provoke further thoughts and engage in alternative methods in making visible hidden gendered processes in hidden spaces.

KEYWORDS

waterfront, memory-work, feminist geography, gender

Introduction

The Bicol region of the Philippines is surrounded by waterscapes—the Lamon Bay in the north, Visayan Sea in the south, the Pacific Ocean in the east, and Sibuyan Sea in the west. Bicol's history is saturated by century-long maritime disputes and boat wars since the eighteenth century due to Malay maritime raiding and piracy in Southeast Asia (Mallari, 1986; Warren, 2007). These events have been understood through masculine discourses down to the contemporary maritime industry and port traffic flows (see Blair & Robertson, 1906/1973; Mallari, 1989; Non, 1993). Commerce has flourished through trade interaction *via* waters, whether it is along riversides and the near-by coasts in pre-colonial Philippines or further across the seas and oceans as the route of galleon ships during Spanish colonisation (Gumba, 2015). Of particular interest is Virac, a municipality in the island-province of Catanduanes in Bicol, because of its maritime history. For a long time, Virac had the only port in the island of Catanduanes, making it the centre of trade and travel point in the island. During World War II, the waterfront in Virac was filled by passenger-cargo ships. Right after World War II, the former ships of the US military dominated the Philippine shipping industry (Baños, 2021), followed by the emergence of newly constructed railways and roads for trains and buses, respectively (The Trucks, 2016).

The narratives that couch Virac and its region suggest a distinct privileging of masculine constructs of strength and rationalism to represent waterfronts, in which the ideas of global market capitalism "are a masculine fiction that presumes that all individuals are self-reliant, thereby disregarding the critical importance of care" (Kumagai, 2020, p. 57). To this end, this work interrogates whether the masculine constructs of Virac's waterfront history resonate with lived realities. It shifts the focus from seeing the waterfront of Virac as a mere economic site to spaces invested with meaning to different people. Focusing on the childhood memories of Viracnon[1] women who spent their childhood along bodies of water, this work asks: How are waterfronts remembered and (re)constructed as gendered spaces? The aim is to have a retrospective visit on how Viracnons make sense of the waterfront areas in Catanduanes as a way to have an alternative understanding of Virac's historical transformation beyond an economic lens (Nora, 1989). Waterfront, in this paper, particularly refers to the coast of Virac, Catanduanes Island, Philippines.

Geographies of Memory

This article uses memory as an important tool to engage with the spatial sketches of Virac's waterfront history (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004; Nora, 1989). As Shotter (1984) argues, the capacity to remember enables human agency to reinterpret because memory is where ''past specificatory activities are linked to current specifiability— which makes for intentionality, and gives a 'directionality' to mental activities'' (p. 208). Personal experiences generate narratives that are products of both memory and

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[1]   People of Virac call themselves Viracnons.

imagination as they are entangled with each other in telling personal stories. Randall (2013) refers to this as a process of "narrative reflection" (p. 9) or looking back as a way to imagine the future, embracing perpetual change, and thinking that the ending of our narratives remains open. In view of memory as a reconstructive process (Legg, 2007), the past is inevitably reinvented and reimagined, thereby not the exact replica of what happened (Schacter, 1996). Autobiographical recollections bring about recreated past events which "enable us to bring to the present that which is past (memoria), but never the thing itself, only its reconstructed image in personal terms (fantasia), and always in the context of our continuously evolving systems of self-constructions" (Neimeyer & Metzler, 1994, p. 130).

The seascapes of Virac make a vibrant case for examining memories of places because of their liminal character within the human-nature interface (Preston-Whyte, 2004). Being an "anomalous category", the sea is an open slate that is "overloaded with potential meanings" (Fiske et al., 1987, as cited in Azaryahu, 2005, p. 120). The non-fixity of seascapes challenges the notion of stability and permanence not only in terms of human's relations to places but also in memory, alluding to the question on what kinds of memories are created in such "fluid" environments. Such liminal qualities of the sea are even evident in the uncertainties found in applying legal measures in international waters and property issues in maritime territories (Mallari, 1986; Warren, 2007). This paper regards waterfront areas as "primal landscapes"[2] or "meaning-laden places where we explored, played, and tried to make sense of the world around us-form a primal landscape from which we compare and interpret future landscapes" (Measham, 2006, p. 433). Instead of landscapes, however, the waterfront becomes the centre of analysis as a memory-laden place where individuals create experiences and meanings to eventually remember, recreate, and reinvent. Moreover, the focus on seascape memories contributes to the uneven literature that mostly discusses narratives related to landscapes and specific in-land geographical sites such as monuments, buildings, cultural landscapes, and historical figures (see Alderman, 2010; Hayden, 1995; Hoskins, 2007; Johnson, 2012). Studies on memories and waterscapes usually hinge on the discourse of temporariness related to tourists' site visits and beach vacations (see Baerenholdt et al., 2004; Finlay et al., 2015; Hein, 2016). This escapist lens frames the seaside as "a departure from normality" (Elborough, 2010, p. 227), in which visitors experience the seaside only as a temporary place where "the stress of normal working lives is temporarily suspended, cultures merge, egalitarianism flourishes, and bonds of friendship are forged" (Preston-Whyte, 2004, p. 349). This work diverges from such memory-work of the seaside by shifting away from tourist experience and capturing the meaning-making and memories of those whose lives are daily intertwined with the sea. The memories of seascapes can be instructive in understanding how the sea is beyond a mere body of water and instead comprises waterbound spaces linked to life, history, and memory.

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[2]   The term "primal landscape" was first coined by D. Gayton (1996) in *Landscapes of the Interior: Re-Explorations of Nature and Human Spirit.*.

Gender and Memory Work

An important focus of this work is the memories of women who grew up in Virac. Guided by *feminist geographies,* this work builds on placing emphasis on the "voices and perspectives of women so that we might begin to hear the unheard and unimagined'' (Reinharz, 1992, p. 19). Specifically, this work echoes feminist geographers who use emotion and affect as orientations to destabilise the gendered assumptions in knowledge production—masculine as rational and scientific and feminine as "biased, subjective or, worse, political" (McDowell, 1992, p. 404; see also Davidson et al., 2005; Davidson & Milligan, 2004; Longhurst, 2001; McDowell, 1999; Smith et al., 2009). As Deborah Thien (2005) argues, emotions and affect have been devalued in favour of "reasonable scholarship" (p. 450). Deviating from masculine rhetorics of logic and structure in Virac, this work "document[s] transgressions" (Boyer, 2004, p. 170) that open up a space for the discontinuity of the institutionalised historicisation of Virac through letting women to "speak-for-themselves" (Bornat & Diamond, 2007, p. 21). This approach also resonates with the feminist criticism against positivism in the 1980s and the recognition of subjectivity as an analytical approach to advance research (Stanley & Wise, 1983; Stephens, 2010). The memories of women thus serve as a way to provide "critiques and methods for examining the functions and effects of any structure or grid of regularity that we put into place" (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 6).

In analysing memories, this work adopts two different yet mutually reinforcing approaches: Donna Haraway's (1988) notions of partial perspectives and Frigga Haug's (1987) concept of memory-work. Drawing from the experiences of women's situated memories, this paper shows the link between the embodied self and Virac's waterfront, thus presenting the complicated entanglement of gendered bodies and seas. Partial perspectives through memories are celebrated as a "privilege" rather than a "deficit" (Haraway, 1988), which opens an opportunity to reveal silences and tensions that universal knowledge glosses over (Haug, 1992). Applying the wisdom of partial perspectives to a memory-work approach, this paper highlights the active processes through which women's memories are informed by their past lived experiences in Virac's waterfront. Aside from mere collection of personal and cultural meanings from women's recollections, such an approach also "enables the connecting of personal narratives and experiences with social structures bringing to the fore relations of power and how they impact on body and place" (Bryant & Livholts, 2015, p. 193). Although memory-work has been criticised for being "coloured by subjectivity" (Reinharz, 1992), it is precisely the aim of memory-work to take into account subjectivities and sensitivities of individuals and their sense of being-in-the-world (Farrar, 2001). As Crawford et al. (1992) puts it, ''the underlying theory is that subjectively significant events, events which are remembered, and the way they are subsequently constructed, play an important part in the construction of self'' (p. 37). Such an approach bolsters a meaningful access to the past of Virac's women. To be clear, this paper takes memory-work in its broadest sense, which is analysing memories as a way to reimagine events of the past. This paper does not engage in a collaborative reworking of personal

memories of both the participants and researcher (see Crawford et al., 1992). Finally, late childhood recollections are at the centre of discussion in examining waterfront memories since the exploration of past childhoods from auto-ethnographic and oral history approaches offers resources for reimagining how history can be differently conceived, how relationships between the sea and Virac's people can be understood in more complex terms, and how childhood memories can interact with waterfront spaces.

Participants: Women Baby Boomers

Baby boomers represent the generation born after World War II (1946–1964). Public discourse about baby boomers often describes them to have benefited "from educational and welfare systems which they now seem intent to deny future generations" (Phillipson et al., 2008, para. 4.9). However, such characterisations of baby boomers overlook their intra-generational heterogeneity. For instance, while baby boomers from middle class households had been well-served by a flourishing economy and education, others grew up facing struggles of poverty and low levels of education, ending up in casualised jobs and precarious work that resembles what is now considered a "gig economy" (France et al., 2018; Morgan & Nelligan, 2018). The case of boomers in Virac provides an interesting case as they had spent their childhoods in a context far from the mainstream childhoods of boomers, that is, in a postwar transition of an island. Today, this generation is entering their older years, carrying memories of their childhood in Virac. This raises the importance of accounting for boomers' memories as they carry unique substance, which are not to be reduced in a homogenised generational narrative. In this regard, the childhood memories of women from Virac challenge the veracity of claims made around the legacies of the baby boomer generation.

Through semi-structured interviews with 12 women baby boomers who grew up in Virac, Catanduanes, this work presents an oral history of the attributes of childhood meanings of waterfronts in a context of changing island spaces after WWII. All participants identify as a woman, former girl (younger self at 8–12 years old) and female, and such terms are used throughout the article. The statements originally expressed in the participant's local language were translated by the author. Childhood memories serve as points of analysis to articulate unheard narratives and alternative histories (Neimeyer & Metzler, 1994) of Virac's postwar waterfront, to find paths toward understanding the present differently and to map out possible future imaginations of the Virac waterfront. Since memory is a reconstructive process (Schacter, 1996), baby boomers' recollections of Virac waterfront areas render reinterpretations and recreations of prose narratives that reflect truthful accounts of what they held important in their remote past of the waterfront. The interviews not only provide retrospective narratives of the waterfront but also share a specific generational perspective. Such an approach offers a way for reimagining how waterfront experiences during the postwar era can be differently conceived, how relationships between participants in the island can be understood in more complex terms, or how childhood memories can interact with blue spaces.

Memories of the Waterfront: Coastal Femininities and Masculinities

Feminine Gaze and the Macho Port

In the participants' memories, the body serves as a relevant aspect of gendered inclusions and exclusions in seaports. The gendered space of the maritime industry has always been visible to the boomers growing up. According to the participants, the port community—port labourers, retailers, ship crew—embraced the narrative of the port as a "masculine" space due to the physically demanding nature of port activities. For example, big bodies are associated with power because of their ability to carry huge and heavy shipping equipment. Based on the bodily structures and voice presence of muscled men in the port, the boomers as girls were able to construct their version of what they call "macho men". The dominance of muscular male bodies saturated the sightscapes of the port, playing the central roles in the port's imagery. These men were either ship manual workers or *kargador,* referring to those whose primary role was to carry ship items. Men in uniform, however, receive a different attention. The ship captain and his uniformed crew received more reverence and respect from the women islanders as their constant subjects of admiration. As one boomer says, "Boys would love to be captains and girls would like to marry captains" (66 years old). Young boys would dream about being a ship captain and girls would fantasise getting married to a captain. Some participants remember their "puberty crush" being a ship crew. As young girls, the boomers also looked up to their teenage sisters, who have influenced how the participants look at men's bodies. Since masculine bodies in the port were a regular visuality going to school, their older sisters developed attraction to these frequently idealised bodies, thereby also shaping the participants' views of men's bodies as subjects of desire. At the same time, however, the boomers remember mocking some men without a "macho" body. One participant even admitted:

> I fantasised about muscular bodies in my early puberty, especially when I see sea crews. I compared them to "skeleton" [very thin] boys in school. I have to admit, I judged them [skeleton boys] and thought they rose from the dead. I was drawn to older men because of my sea crew crushes (63 years old).

Not only did the girls witness teen girls' desires unfold before their eyes, these "role model" teens have also shaped their standards of women's femininity and beauty. For instance, the way they place gravity to the term "responsible" meant balancing between independence and maintaining the demeanour of a fragile body since physically strong women are viewed as "un-feminine".

> If you're hopelessly in love with a man, you should not grow your armpit hair or present traditionally masculine activities but you should not be a damsel in distress and carry your own weight too (64 years old).

The teenage girls whom boomers look up to enjoyed being fashionable, which reinforced the idea that being a woman has strict standards to follow whilst also being

intelligent, curious, and strong. As such, they kept on the beauty ideals of fair skin and straight hair. The boomers had the idea of spatialising hair and skin colour.

> *When I see a woman in a darker shade of skin, I can tell from her background that she's poor, probably works in a farm, street vendor, or just exposed to the heat of the sun every single day. I did not want to have darker skin because I did not want to look poor* (61 years old).

Feminine performance also required that men's bodies be gazed at in public space but adored privately. The boomers had to shape their views of men's bodies secretly, alone or with a small group of friends. Girls were not expected to objectify, even compliment, men or boys as this would appear off-putting as they were only allowed certain forms of public display of attraction.

> *Girls and women were to suppress anger and frustration, and just smile and take it when men disrespect them to down to the core of their souls* (68 years old).

> *I wanted to be safely perceived as not "wild" but I understand the feeling of having to keep my thoughts and emotions hidden. I felt overlooked, and I indeed was. Still am, I guess. I sometimes feel like I should warn others* [women] (66 years old).

Macho Women in the Seaside Market

The femininity assumed in female bodies might seem imperceptible to the glamorised hugeness of the ocean and ships in ports. However, while the female body can be a subject of weakness, it can also be a position of power. The participants themselves recognise the roles of women in the seaside markets, which are integral parts of the everyday transactions and survival of the market. Specifically, women were the leaders in market informalities in the seaside, which is a terrain of intellectual sources. Six participants have mothers who work in the port, including food retail, micro-credit, and marine-based craftworks. As one participant mentioned:

> *Men have macho bodies but my mother has a "macho brain" in seafood retail. I guess, many people did not realise that being in the seaside market requires not only physical strength but also intelligence and strategy development, and at times compassion* (68 years old).

The participants remember the seaside markets as a territory of women's intellect. Whereas the coastal market's narrative operates in logic of business deals and transactions, the feminine informal economy in Virac were sources of emotional support, knowledge, and sound advice in the market. For example, one big role women played in the seaside market was having informal micro-credit businesses. Instead of turning to big loan sharks for borrowing money, local people in Virac preferred informal credit businesses run by women not only for lower interest rates but also for financial literacy. Big credit businesses had been predatory, exploitative, and never lenient in

deadlines for borrowers. In contrast, women micro-creditors provided an opportunity for people to access small loans with reasonable interests.

> *As a loaner, my mother never profited from others' hardships and miseries. As a loaning woman, she could have easily milked out cash from them but she chose not to* (63 years old).

Not only did local people benefit from access to alternative loaning schemes, but they also accessed financial knowledge, albeit informal, through women loan providers. Although small-scale, women in informal microcredit businesses gave free financial advice and information to local people in Virac. Women loaners shared necessary tips to save money, prepare for children's education, and be financially stable in old age. Moreover, women in the seaside market were skilled bargainers and negotiators— skills that overshadow physical abilities. The participants recall that as young girls, they have seen and felt how trusted women were by fishermen in terms of monetary dialogues in seafood retail. Women seafood retailers were dependable in having fair pricing as they did not haggle for lower prices compared to bigger businesses that push local fishermen to sell their catches for cheaper amounts.

> *My father was a fisherman and Manay* [general term for an older woman] *has always helped him in finding other buyers. She has never taken advantage of my father, especially when his catches were not the best* (65 years old).

Most women in fish retail also prioritised small fishermen as suppliers over big companies. They even helped fishermen to contact local diners/eateries so that they can compete against big fishing companies in supplying catches to diners. Through "word of mouth", women retailers gave positive testimonies to hook up local fishermen with diners and even restaurants as suppliers of fish. However, some women were sometimes impolite negotiators, especially when they thought that the situation was unfair. One boomer recalls:

> *But they do explode too! I remember a woman in the market who expressed her resistance to give some drunk men who want to get inihaw na isda* [grilled fish] *from her street food stall in the market* (63 years old).

A "Soft" Port?

On the flip side of seeing subversions of masculine powers, the boomers remember their interest in men who show transgressions against gendered expectations, which they described as "macho men with soft spots". For the boomers, "soft spots" mean showing vulnerability and fragility, departing from the narrative of strength and control, and instead shapes a space for compassion and emotions. This takes place in two specific scenarios—leaving and arriving at the port. The waterfront and ships became symbols of both connection and obstacles that unify and break families apart. When overseas male workers such as seafarers or soldiers arrive, the port becomes a space

of happiness as families rejoice and celebrate for the momentary reunion. Yet, when the seafarers need to leave, the port transforms into a space of loss, fear, sadness, and insecurity. In both situations, men show emotions—bittersweet smiles, fear of uncertainty, parting tears—demonstrating "caring masculinities" (Tarrant, 2020, p. 347). This veers away from the hegemonic masculinities of domination and emotional suppression (hooks, 2004[3]).

> *My father was a seaman and we just see him twice a year. When I look at the port, I remember my mother crying. It was sad. Until now, the port reminds me of fearing that my father won't be back* (63 years old).

Men showing vulnerability also manifested among those whose families were separated by labour migration. A small number of men and children were left by women in the household to work in the city as domestic helpers. Overseas employment for women has changed the meaning of motherhood among families. Women's physical bodies and strength have been relegated to bodies-that-provide while men's bodies became bodies-that-care. And while hegemonic masculinities entail the image of men surrounded by women at their disposal, there are men abandoned by their female partners. In being separated by the sea, the bodies of men and women acquired new meanings—bravery, sacrifice, and sometimes, betrayal. The waterfront has served as a dividing line between family members, which eventually shifted the dynamics within families' roles.

> *When my mother left us to work, my father actually encouraged me to be as equal as him, even to take responsibility in the family. He took my opinions very seriously. He told me that when we get money or tasty food, it's through my mother's earnings* (62 years old).

Confusion on the Forbidden Coastlines

In their childhood, the participants remember the port as a place for adults. Some waterfront spaces were off-limits to children such as the so-called *inuman* [drinking pubs] and pimp spaces. Alcohol houses are places where men go to have an alcoholic drink called "tuba" or fermented coconut sap. Inuman in Virac located near the ports, open at night and can accommodate up to 15 people. As the participants remember:

> *My father and his friends usually go to inuman* [drinking pubs] *to relax before going home. However, sometimes, they could not get in because it is full* (65 years old).

> *One time, my mother went to the inuman angrily because my father spent his money on drinks while we did not have enough for food* (62 years old).

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[3]   Feminist, political activist bell hooks refusing to capitalise the letters of her name to subvert grammar prescriptivism.

The pimp spaces are informal areas near the bay where pimps wait to match male clients with female sex workers. As brokers for sex work services offered by female sex workers, pimps usually talk to men tourists or shipping crew arriving from ports. While there are also local clients in Virac, they pay less and sex workers get into more trouble if they entertain local men. As many of the participants recall, pimp spaces are considered sinful but practical. None of the participants have directly met a pimp but one of them was friends with a sex worker's sister, and she recalls:

> *My friend's sister got into trouble for hanging out with a man whose wife was a war-freak. At that time, she was not very skilled in dealing with people. She was, maybe, 18 and she could have got skilled in sensing which clients are worth going for but she had no idea. They didn't pay her enough, but she needed money. It's not easy being poor* (65 years old).

Such forbidden coastlines were where the participants came to understand female bodies as sexualised. The process of remembering about the waterfront usually leads to a condemnation of threats to safety. As some boomers explained, they were surprised at the number of times they recalled about their fear of sexual harassment. The participants felt conflicted over the feeling of disapproving the choice to be a sex worker on the one hand, and frustration that women on their island are being exploited due to their economically difficult situation, on the other. Such situations influenced their identity and therefore their actions and strategies to be protective of themselves and their younger female siblings. Interestingly, some participants initially hesitated to retell the stories of forbidden coastal spaces because they do not want to portray themselves, and generally girls in Virac, as transgressors of restricted spaces. However, they said that there is no point in hiding such memories because it is worth remembering every part of Virac—the beautiful, the ugly, and the in-betweens. The participants' memories of the unfamiliar spaces of alcohol houses and pimp spaces provide an interesting retrospective account to the times they did not know about these places. But at the same time the participants appreciate the eye-opening realities of their seascapes as they associate forbidden spaces with growing up, "real world", and even as a necessity. The participants mostly remembered gradually learning why some spaces were forbidden. This gives glimpses of changes in their constructs of the waterfront, from the mystery of "adult only" spaces transitioning to these spaces as unfortunate and sinful.

Faith, Fantasies, and Fears at the Beach

The water serves as an important part of religious celebrations and *fiestas* in Virac. For instance, the fluvial procession of the Penafrancia feast to celebrate the life of Virgin Mary is a shared memory among the boomers. This ritual involves making boats and placing Virgin Mary's icon for a floating procession. This kind of feminine celebration is not uncommon in the history of pre-colonial Bicol, in which femininity has played a big role in ancient practices. Spiritual rituals involved feminine roles in worshipping a god called *Gugurang* who lived in *Kamurawayan* [heaven] is worshipped (Roces, 1980).

To worship *Gugurang,* an effeminate priestess, *asog,* together with a female assistant, *baliana,* leads a ritual called *atang,* in which people offer best harvests from the land and sea to *Gugurang* in order to have their petitions granted or to demonstrate gratitude for answered prayers (San Antonio, 1977; as cited in Mintz, 1971/2019).

Another important dimension of the boomers' childhood in Virac's waterfront is linked to how strongly they integrate their lived and fantasised childhoods with water. The participants expressed their desire to relive the interruption of reality through water-related myths like local sea mermaids and other sea monsters. While they did not have actual sensory experiences with such mythical creatures, these fantasies are real in their memories. Since the water was part of their everyday sight, it is not surprising to expect the loss of mystery surrounding the sea. However, the water has remained partly bewildering because of the myths about it. For instance, the boomers remember believing that sea fairies attempt to reclaim the sacred parts of the waters against trespassing humans. While these fantasies were privately imagined in their minds, the boomers have experienced understanding and appreciating their culture's folklore, bringing back the mystery of water. Meanwhile, the participants also remember the feeling of fear of mythological creatures. For instance, in Virac, the *Aswang* is usually described as a shape-shifting creature who eats human flesh and has the power to change itself into animals or other forms. This mythical creature is a common object of fear in Philippine folklore. Another example is the notion of *Engkanto,* which refers to any mythical creature with supernatural powers such as fairies or elves. However, the participants also expressed their frustrations over their fear of "evil" mythical creatures tagged as females such as the *Aswang*. This image contradicts the charm they have seen growing up in the port, seaside market, or along the shores. This created a tension between the myths and realities for the boomers, underpinning the clashes in beliefs and expectations about women's roles in society. Finally, the participants also expressed their concern that such myths are not only part of their childhood but also of Virac's history and heritage. However, they are concerned that such existing myths and folktales are not officially recorded and will finally fade in time.

Discussion: Bodies, Subjectivities, and Messy Memories

This section articulates the situatedness of the waterfront as necessarily gendered. The memories of women baby boomers presented hitherto are departures from the conventional approaches in understanding the waterfront as mere shipping route and economic zone. The location of the waterfront and its contours—built environments, moving bodies, and all cultural exigencies and conditions—work together to create remembered narratives that animate and shape Virac's waterscapes.

Bodies

The boomers' narratives demonstrate how coastal women creatively imagine and re-imagine their coastal femininities and masculinities and understand their social space in relation to their bodies. Taking Haraway's critique of "disembodied scientific objectivity" (1988, p. 576), the memories of boomers are body-specific within a given

site, engaging in the exploration of body, sexuality, and subjectivity. The boomers themselves were able to identify the importance of exploring gendered bodies in the everyday coastal spaces, and the ways in which they were involved in constructing their understanding of their own bodies and of others'. Such memories also illustrate transgressions of bodily binaries and meanings, revealing the complexity of bodies beyond feminine-masculine dichotomy. The participants were also able to witness different contexts of both reinforcing and challenging traditional gender roles through bodies. For instance, there was the presence of feminine bodies in ports but at the same time sex workers continued to be exploited in the same space. In folktales, women's bodies are sources of both fear (imaginaries of *Aswang*) and reverence (graven image of Virgin Mary). In addition, the boomers described how they used masculine bodies as objects of interest. All these point to an exploration of the irregularities in femininity-masculinity dynamics through bodies. Their memories, based on an influx of experiences, demonstrate that femininity and masculinity oscillate from one space to another. For instance, the boomers' narratives demonstrated resistance to the limited masculine constructions that foster domination and exclusions. Rather, their memories elucidate masculinities that form a space of "care". Also, the term "macho" has gained new meaning through women-led informalities in the seaside market.

Through their recollections of the waterfront, the boomers have made sense of the meanings given to gendered bodies. The female body's identity in the waterfront revealed the multiple and often conflicting gendered roles of women such as gazers of male bodies, sources of wisdom, sexualised beings, family providers among others. Such multiple roles show the ties between the waterfront and gender as fragments of broader contexts captured in moments of memories—the port, seaside market, and beach made them recall their gendered past. For instance, the narratives highlight the importance of overseas rural–urban migration for that shift coastal women's labour identities. As Haug (1987) puts it, "everything remembered constitutes a relevant trace—precisely because it is remembered for the formation of identity" (p. 50). The boomers, as embodied subjects, remember the integrated flow of gendered identities through their own bodies and bodies of others. Moreover, the waterfront offers an alternative space to articulate the link between bodies, spaces, and gender by challenging the literature in which gendered spaces are typically observed at home or workplace. These narratives in this work demonstrated homemaking in Virac as both feminine and masculine through the memories of leaving and arriving at the port; the waterfront has been shown to inflect home, identity, and belonging in Virac. This suggests a complicated dialogue between women's bodily mobility and immobility. Thus, the sea becomes the entrance to where bodies navigate different gender dynamics as demonstrated in the contrast between the sea and home, rendering a deeper understanding of domestic life in Virac.

Subjectivities

The memories shared by participants have made salient the role of the subjectivities and emotions they attach to the waterfront in shaping their identities, thereby showing the affective dimensions of the waterfront in women's lives. This resonates with Haraway's (1988) critique of the scientific ideals in favour of partial perspectives not

as a weakness to be overcome, but as an advantage to be celebrated. In contrast to the masculine dismissal of emotions and desires, women's emotion-bound memories have shown the potential of navigating the symbolic meanings of bodies moving through the Virac's waterfront spaces.

Emotion-oriented geographies of memory offer insights into the ways the boomers remember the waterfront as a matrix of interaction between the self and gendered spaces, instead of being mere transportation and trading routes. This approach counterpoises the neoliberal logics that normalise waterfronts as mainly economic zones. The boomers used their personal desire, pride, curiosity, confusion, faith, fear, and fantasies to access their memories of the waterfront. The most remembered memories are informed by a strong sense of joy, excitement, disgust, regret, surprise associated with the waterfront, enabling the participants to embark on a backward journey across the waterscapes that influenced their worldviews. The tensions and contradictions in the boomers' memories about gendered bodies in the waterfront are indicative of their personal relationships with multiple layers of the waterfront in the past. For example, through remembering emotions, the actions of going and returning to the port suggests more than tangible movements of people and ships. Rather, such actions underpin intimacy that goes out and returns when loved ones leave or go back to Virac. Likewise, the role of women micro-creditors as financial advisers goes beyond professional relationships. This is also instructive to understanding the notion of intimacy as having a plurality and varied meanings in their domestic relationships. As a participant stressed out:

> You may have read in history books about Virac, about our population, fishing economy, and all those typhoons. But the views of Viracnons' about their own place is an emotional experience you can't read in books or newspapers (68 years old).

Multiple, Messy Pasts

Finally, the memories shared in this work challenge the often-dichotomised categories of gender practices as traditional or defiant. Rather, the memories shared in work recast gender and gendered spaces as fragmented lived experiences—both demonstrating disruptions of dominant gender narratives (e.g., vulnerable masculinities) to a continuity of traditional gendered practices (e.g., feminine beauty standards). On the one hand, the memories shared by boomers challenged the universalist and urban-centric constructions of feminism and homogenous representations of rural women (Pini et al., 2020). Whereas in Western feminist geography, home can be a vilified location that is associated with restrictions (Espino et al., 2012), the boomers' homes were spaces of desire as opposed to the sea as a space of separation. But on the other hand, it is important to understand the uni-dimensionality of the waterfront spaces as working concomitantly to locate male agency and privilege throughout the cultural waterscapes, simultaneously downplaying women's diverse experiences. Although the port, seaside market, and beach reveal layers of femininities and masculinities, these spaces also show the emphasis on men's visibility and women's hidden roles in these places. More

than the materiality of the waterfront, it is the messy spatial tensions between the memory-holder and space that are remembered (see Hetherington, 1997). As such, in contrast to historicism's official recording of the past, memories' partial perspective lay bare "hidden dimensions" (Hughes & Lury, 2013, p. 797) that impart another perspective, one that lends an ear away from the intentions of linear history.

The patchworks of memories in this article recognise the past as a plurality of subjective meanings, treating memories of the waterfront as an interactive web of relations. Notably, this captures Haug's vision for memory work as "the process whereby individuals construct themselves into existing social relations" (1987, p. 33). The memories shared here are fluid, in which instability is ever present behind the narratives of the waterfront. The idea of moving through space with memories is one that engages more directly with questions of perpetual interpretations and reinterpretations. That relationality extends to inquiries about the past as much as it does to current social practices. Not only do the details in the boomers' memories change per individual, but so do the reasons why such memories are remembered. The boomers have conveyed their memories in a way that the past appeared in their trivial experiences, which shaped their relationship with the waterfront.

This calls for the willingness to be comfortable with ambivalence in retelling histories. There is no one coherent narrative that the boomers' memories follow in their stories. As a collection of fragmented memories with sediment patterns of practices embedded in the fabric of the waterfront, Virac lends itself to being seen as an "archive" of patchworks documented over time to be a collection of memories that remain fragmented but nonetheless resonate at present. Showing the traces of the Virac waterfront from a framework of partiality reveals that while memories are reinforced by historical processes such as economic development and urbanisation, these memories are nonetheless constructed through the constellations of partial memories. Not only did the port, the coast layout, and the seaside market become a part of the parietal perspectives in Virac, but so did the more hidden and restricted places. This allows for new perspectives on the waterfront to surface, which can challenge or disrupt conventional narratives and representations of Virac. A participant has even expressed the same sentiment in saying:

> *Imagine telling these stories to researchers only to end up narrating my story bound to be "repackaged" or twisted to align in favour of what they have previously read or believed about Virac's history* (65 years old).

Conclusion

The memories shared in this work are more than time capsules of the boomers' childhoods. Memories can unfold many ignored realities, some of which even challenge dominant public historicism. The boomers' memories of the waterfront remain relevant because they offer an alternative way of seeing Virac's history. The memories concerning the gendered spaces of Virac's waterfront show the potential of partial perspectives to guide historical knowledge. Memories shared in this work

are not only linked to specific geographic spaces along the waterfront but are rather extended to the tensions of feminine and masculine identities, reflecting the range of gendered practices for further exploration. The women boomers of Virac serve as enablers to turn our gaze to the waterfront's gendered spatiality. Dismissing the multiplicity of women's views runs the risk of flattening and oversimplifying a rather entangled waterscape. As Reinharz (1992) puts it, there are "women's *ways* [emphasis added] of knowing'' (p. 4). Subjectivities and emotions are specifically relevant to how the boomers' memories cement in particular spaces, which extend through time. By ignoring gender dynamics, what remains is only a decontextualised understanding of the waterfront's reality in Virac. To this end, the potential of research on marginal areas, in particular islands will require acknowledgements of partial perspectives as legitimate epistemological stances. It seems daring to navigate knowledge generation from hidden voices, perhaps even rebellious. Such concerns generate messy and painful dialogues but are nonetheless necessary to understand deeper the intricate link between gendered spaces and memories. Such ideas have already been raised by the forerunners of feminist geographies. It is the task of contemporary scholars to engage with the previous works, be it in terms of continuing or challenging the legacy set forth to them. The findings of this paper only cover a space within an entire web of narratives about marginal islands. With these considerations, this work is an invitation to those who consider themselves scholars of spaces and gender to provoke further thoughts and engage in alternative methods in making visible hidden gendered processes in hidden spaces.

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ARTICLE

The Centre and Periphery: The Role of City Embankments and Youth Practices

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on city embankments as social and spatial developments, which are an essential attribute of the city and an integral element in the lifestyle of citizens. As a contact point between the city and the water, embankments act as public spaces that exercise a wide range of functions. They also become points of attraction for various social groups, including young people. In the study conducted in autumn of 2021, we focused on the embankments of a large industrial city (Yekaterinburg, Russia). The "centre-periphery" vector was used as the basis for the typology of embankments, and the value young people attach to embankments has been determined. Using the methods of observation and interviews (n = 16), it was found that the leading functions of the central embankments in the views of city youth are communicative, aesthetic, integrative, leisure, including *flânerie*, cognitive, transit, self-awareness, security, and identity assertion. Peripheral embankments structure the city space, develop neighbourhood identity and support the function of spending free time. At the same time, undeveloped areas of the periphery are being marginalised and become dangerous. The article argues for the need to develop peripheral embankments through well-maintained footpaths, access to water, leisure and recreational infrastructure, creating comfortable living conditions for the "appropriation" of embankments and their social production through the actions and interactions of different groups of citizens, including young people.

KEYWORDS

city, city embankment, centre and periphery, youth, social practices

Introduction

In urban planning, there has been a transition to the "city for people" model, the foundation of which can be sought in the works of the American researcher Jane Jacobs (1961), who formulated the tenets in defence of urban planning based on the daily life of citizens. Public spaces play one of the critical roles in the urban environment. Their multitude of functions is reflected in their use by citizens: for walking, travelling for work, doing sports, enjoying street entertainment, playing games also with children, and others. According to Ray Oldenburg (2000), these spaces become "the third place" where individuals and groups spend their time between work, study and home. The "third place" becomes a key factor in developing urban identity, a condition for emotional attachment to the city and a sense of belonging to the community of citizens. As urban infrastructure objects, river embankments are public spaces with frontiers. On the one hand, there is a river line, and on the other, there is an area where residential and industrial facilities, parks, squares and other green zones are located. Everyday use of public spaces has changed; there has been a transformation in the perceptions of public spaces from an integral part of the city to a recreational space (Gehl & Matan, 2009).

For young people, open and accessible public spaces offer ample opportunities for constructing social and communicative experiences in contrast to rigid institutional places—structures (Emmenegger, 1995).

Our research focused on the functional content of central and peripheral city embankments as public spaces and the analysis of practices of young people who "appropriate" city embankments by performing a variety of activities.

Theoretical Framework

As a complex polyfunctional formation, the city consists of such subsystems as demographic, technical and environmental. The latter includes the natural environment—green areas (parks, gardens, and squares) and water space (reservoirs) (Zelenov, 2000, p. 94). Embankments are an essential attribute of the city and historically fit into the lifestyle of citizens by "responding" to the challenges of economic restructuring and political will. According to Brian Hoyle (2001), waterfronts, being a contact point between city and water, is a public space that connects the old historical heritage of the settlement with a new vision of functionality and significance for the city as a whole.

Since the middle of the XX century, the interest of authorities and urban researchers in embankments has been growing. It is associated with their new perception of embankments as the leading spaces which attract people and capital (Smith & Garcia Ferrari, 2012). As a result, embankments began to turn into recognisable public spaces. Examples include the waterfronts in Sydney, Toronto, Cape Town, London and Barcelona. According to Porfyriou and Sepe (2017), transformations in the perception of

embankments are due to the transition to a post-industrial economy, which has changed the types and forms of production and employment. According to Robert F. Goodwin (1999), efficient embankment design enhances the city's image, modernises infrastructure, increases economic revenues and enhances tourism opportunities. However, the complexity of the structure and fragmentation of river lines and the clash of interests of different social groups become barriers to the design and planning of embankments (Wrenn, 1983); decades can pass from an idea to its implementation.

The city waterfront gives the city individuality. Betsy Otto et al. (2004) stress the value of physical and visual access to water in developing a sense of community with nature. Observation corridors allow people to "embrace" the city and provide an opportunity to see the city from different angles and areas. Embankments and water aestheticise urban space; people should be able to touch the water and interact with it (Wood & Handley, 1999).

Paumier (2004) posits that city embankments, or rather the proximity of water, are a natural magnet for city residents and visitors and act as a valuable recreational resource. The development of retail, entertainment and cultural events attract people of different ages and status groups to the embankments (Brown et al., 2009). Various individual and collective practices are developing on the embankments: from group walks to protest behaviour. Attracting people to embankments can reproduce the connection between the city as a social and architectural development and the water as the basis for developing the city shape.

Researchers of urban space frame their ideas and observations in the concept of "centre-periphery", in which the periphery is, first of all, the area remote from the centre (Sawyer et al., 2021). This geographical division should also be complemented by social attributes. Zhelnina (2019) argues that peripherality may also be characterised by limited incoming resources such as financial, administrative, and a resource of attention (media, political, and public). The author concludes that peripherality is characterised by social characteristics and specific temporality.

In line with the "centre-periphery" concept, we draw attention to the nature and intensity of social practices implemented on the city's embankments and the level of emotional appropriation of embankments by citizens and visitors of the city. However, the research also looks at the periphery as a marginalised area, and peripherality (Danson & De Souza, 2012) can be viewed as a result of impotence since peripheral actors are excluded from decision-making networks (Kühn et al., 2017). Thus, the social and spatial polarisation of the city (Badyina & Golubchikov, 2005) reinforces inequality and exaggerates the dependence of the periphery from the centre. In this case, inconsistent integration of peripheral embankments into the structure of the city is suggested; unlike the central embankments, they are stigmatised; it creates conditions for the replication of informal practices and the reproduction of deviant behaviour. In addition, based on the ideas of Chernysheva (2019), we suggest that the description of peripheral embankments in the terminology of marginalisation entails the risks of creating marginal (alienated from the citizens) areas since this category changes reality.

However, Friedmann (1966) argues that the development of the periphery both depends on the centre and supports the centre's development. At the same time,

in the context of the Gutnov's (1984) "framework-fabric" model, the development of peripheral embankments (refurbishment of the area, development of infrastructure with the involvement of businesses, and transport accessibility) has the potential of becoming a factor that blurs the boundaries between the centre and the periphery. Moreover, the increase in "fabric" may contribute to the "appropriation" of the area not only by residents of nearby houses but also by other citizens and visitors.

Van Aalst and Brands (2021) argue that being together with other people, particularly in city parks, even without extensive communication, is an essential element of the attractiveness of public space. Social groups and communities participate in the production of central and peripheral embankments by appropriating and consuming public areas through social actions and interactions, transforming their functions, and endowing them with specific values and emotional load.

Flânerie as a social practice is worth special attention. French verb *flâner* is the root of the words *flâneur* and *flânerie* and has a meaning "to take a stroll, to wander around". Initially, this verb described wasteful "doing nothing" and had a negative connotation (Ferguson, 1994). The transformation of ideas about the *flâneur* as a lazy wanderer through the city streets occurred after the appearance of Baudelaire's essay *The Poet of Modern Life* (1965). In the essay, the author speaks of the *flâneur* as an artist—an "ideal flaneur"—a connoisseur of the details of the daily life of the city, who is able to interpret through art his observations about the life of the city and its residents. The concept of *flânerie* thus became a significant tool for theorising city observations. Negative associations faded into the background and placed *flânerie* in a positive context that is "walking around the city for the purpose of research and observation" (Barker, 2014).

With the growth of cities, the diversification of life within the city, and the expansion of the palette of social and cultural practices, the discussion of the phenomenon of *flânerie* again became relevant in the 1990s. According to K. Kramer and J. R. Short (2011), the revival of discussions about *flânerie* as a social phenomenon was mainly due to the increase in the number of translations and, thus, the dissemination of the texts of Simmel, de Certo and Lefebvre in the late 1980s. *Flânerie* becomes a focus of study for historians (T. McDonough, 2002), anthropologists (J. S. Kahn, 2003), and sociologists (M. Featherstone, 1998; K. Keohane, 2002) (as cited in Kramer & Short, 2011). The result of attention to *flânerie* from various sciences is the allocation of two approaches to understanding the very figure of *flâneur*. The first approach considers the *flâneur* as a methodological actor for explaining research methods, while the second approach sees the *flâneur* as a social category (Coates, 2017). It is essential to draw a distinction between *flânerie* and walking around the city. According to several studies, *flânerie* is a way of exploring the city, which brings to the fore the sensory abilities of the individual (Coates, 2017). According to Barker (2014), *flânerie* is distinguished by its cosmopolitan and global nature; *flânerie* implies not only a balance between observation and reflection but also an understanding of the diversity of social reality and the intention for heterogeneity. Chaudhury and Lundberg (2018) note the increased attention to the phenomenon of *flânerie* and its revival in the 21st century due to the transition of cities to creative economies and industries.

Methods

Our empirical sociological study was conducted in September–November 2021. The main focus of the research was to analyse the functions of city embankments and study youth practices in these public spaces. To achieve the goal, we put forward the following research tasks: first, to determine perceptions of young people about the functions of the city embankments in Yekaterinburg; second, to characterise the types of youth practices on the embankments of Yekaterinburg and highlight the fears and concerns of young people associated with the city embankments.

The embankments located within Yekaterinburg, which we designated as central and peripheral, were selected as cases for our analysis. We selected two central and two peripheral city embankments. We excluded embankments adjoined with industrial areas from the analysis since this restriction has become a barrier to observation.

Central embankments:

1. The Working Youth Embankment [Naberezhnaia Rabochei Molodezhi] is located along the bank of the city pond from Lenina Prospect to Cheliuskintsev Street (Figure 1);

Figure 1

The Working Youth Embankment [Naberezhnaia Rabochei Molodezhi]
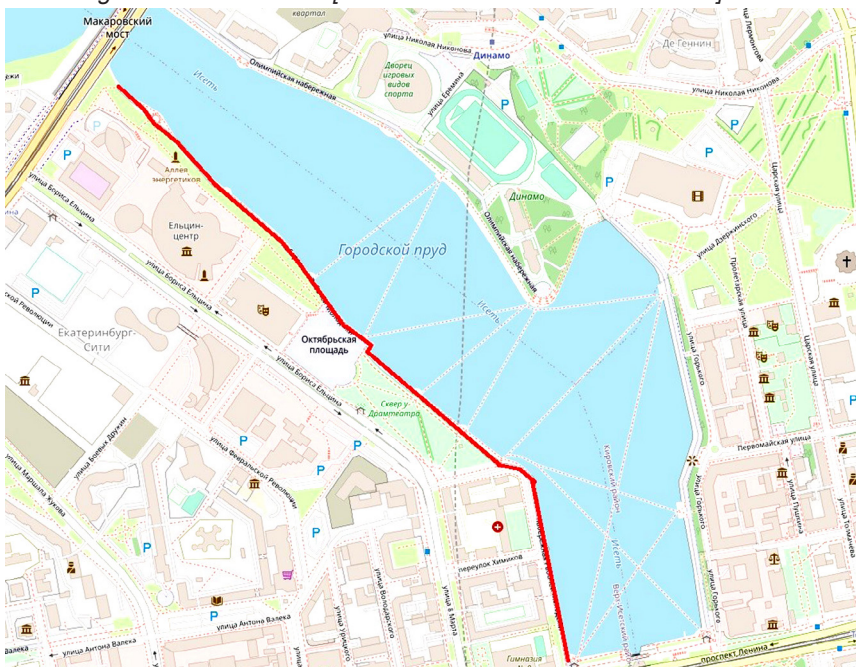
Note. Source: www.openstreetmap.org

2. The Plotinka [Dam] Embankment is located in the Historical Public Garden and runs along the banks of the Iset River (Figure 2).

Figure 2

The Plotinka Embankment
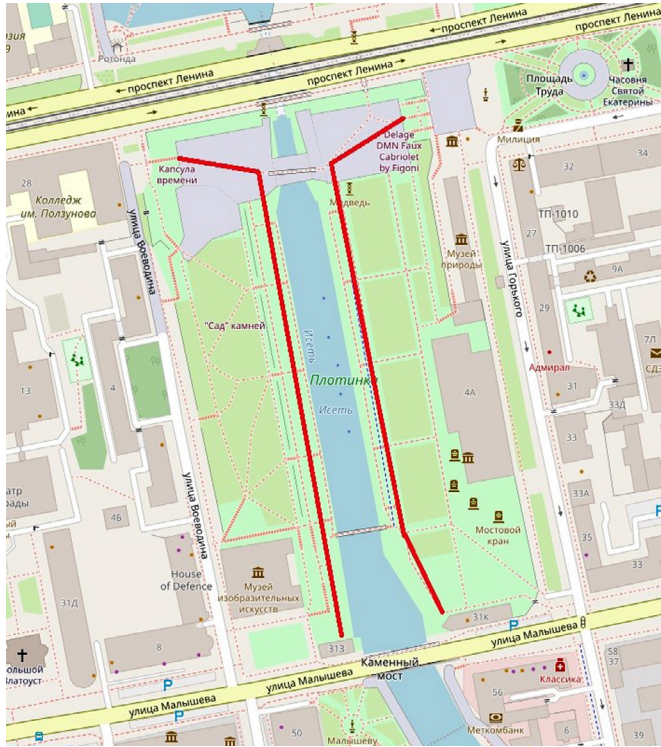
Note. Source: www.openstreetmap.org

Peripheral embankments:

1. The Verkh-Isetskii Pond Embankment is located in the Verkh-Isetskii district stretching from the Malyi Konnyi Peninsula to the Yacht Club (Figure 3);

Figure 3

The Verkh-Isetskii Pond Embankment
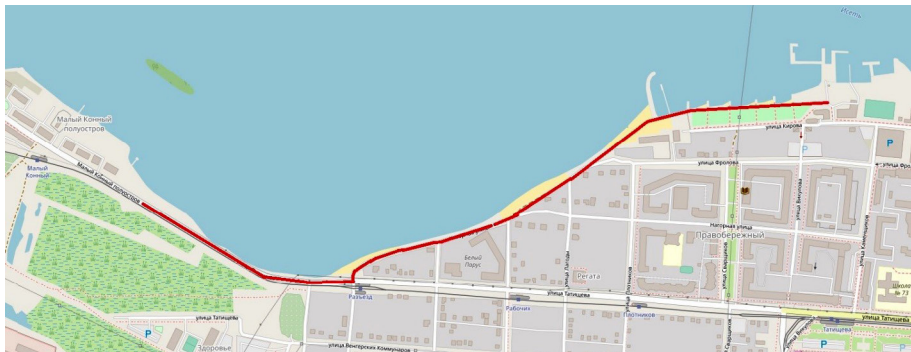
Note. Source: www.openstreetmap.org

2. The Nizhne-Isetskii Pond Embankment is located in the Chkalovskii district of the city and runs along Roshchinskaia Street and Ordenonostsev Street (Figures 4 and 5).
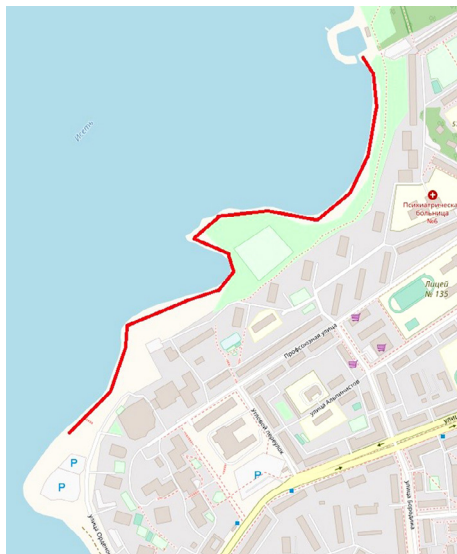
Figure 4

Embankment along Roshchinskaia Street

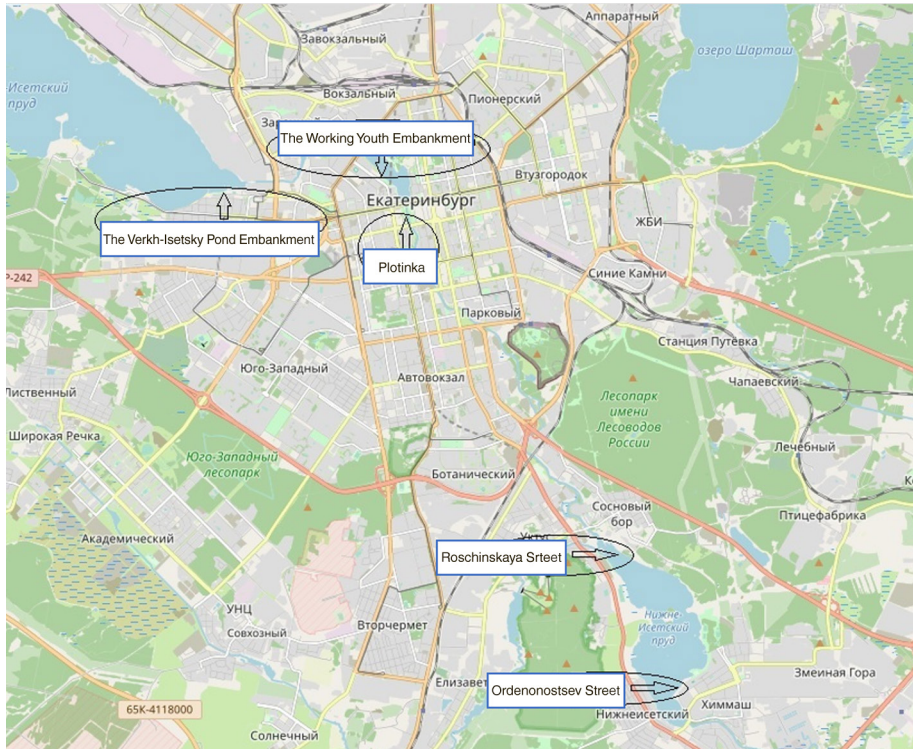*Note.* Source: www.openstreetmap.org

Figure 5

Embankment along Ordenonostsev Street

Note. Source: www.openstreetmap.org

An overall view of the studied embankments is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6

An Overall View of the Studied Embankments

Note. Source: www.openstreetmap.org

The main methods for collecting information were a series of unstructured observations and semi-structured interviews with young residents of the city. Observations were carried out on working days from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. In total, we conducted eight observations: two observations for each selected case. The observation was carried out by two researchers using a video camera. In addition, 16 respondents, eight males and eight females, aged from 18 to 25, took part in the interviews. All respondents are residents of the city of Yekaterinburg. The respondents were interviewed during the observation on the city's embankments; four interviews were conducted on each embankment. The distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1.

The interview guide consisted of 10 open-ended questions. The average duration of the interview was 25 minutes. The interviews were transcribed and analysed following the research objectives. We also used some methodological principles of theory to identify the structural elements of the phenomenon under study based on the empirical data.

Table 1

The Main Characteristics of the Respondents (n = 16)

Embankments	Characteristics
Working Youth Embankment	female, 23 years old, student female, 25 years old, working male, 21 years old, student male, 24 years old, working
Plotinka	female, 20 years old, student female, 22 years old, student male, 20 years old, student male, 23 years old, working
Verkh-Isetskii Pond	female, 18 years old, student female, 19 years old, student male, 18 years old, student male, 25 years old, working
Nizhne-Isetskii Pond	female, 24 years old, working male, 19 years old, student female, 21 years old, student male, 22 years old, student

The results are not representative and cannot be generalised to all Russian city youth and may also not coincide with the experience of studying embankments in other types of cities. Our study is exploratory and demonstrates the social and functional orientation of a large industrial city's central and peripheral embankments.

Results and Discussion

The study findings show that young people follow an extensive array of urban embankment practices. All respondents noted primarily the communicative function of the central city embankments as public spaces. The ability to freely communicate "face to face" for the central city embankments was emphasised by young people during the interviews:

I meet with my school friends at Plotinka to chat and exchange information (female, 20 years old).

Of particular importance is the emotional aspect of interpersonal interaction:

We always hug, laugh and rejoice at the meeting (female, 20 years old).

This testifies to the emotional and sensual "appropriation" of the embankment, which becomes a semantic point in the respondents' communication. In addition, public places are viewed as public spaces for "familiar strangers" to communicate with each other and to expand the circle of acquaintances, "a place where strangers meet" (Lofland, 1989; Sennett, 1977):

Plotinka is where I constantly communicate with friends, classmates, and new people. I am often approached on the Plotinka and asked how to get to some place in the centre. Sometimes people want to introduce themselves (female, 22 years old).

According to Erving Goffman (1963), respondents follow situational etiquette, typical for youth communication in conditions of direct co-presence. Our study shows that the central city embankments act as a place for the reproduction of ritual behavioural scenarios that confirm the identity of the respondents and their belonging to the youth as a socio-demographic group and prevent conflict situations. During observation, we witnessed a meeting of teenagers on the Working Youth Embankment, who greeted each other with friendly claps on their shoulders, performed certain rituals using their hands, and demonstrated the symbolic significance of the meeting as an event in everyday life.

As for the peripheral city embankments, it should be noted that these places can be characterised as areas that are not included in the zone of interests of young people to meet their need for communication:

I live on Roshchinskaya Street, and I never meet friends on the embankment. It is unkempt, I would say even dirty. However, in the centre, everything is beautiful, light, and clean. It's nice to meet friends and hang out there (female, 21 years old).

Therefore, unlike the peripheral ones, the central city embankments perform an aesthetic function. Landscape design, well-kept area, historic buildings adjacent to modern architecture—all this, according to respondents, *creates beauty and harmony, gives positive energy, creates a good mood* (male, 24 years old); *allows enjoying the charm of the river, its fluidity, and, at the same time, the aesthetics of the embankment, its clear and distinct shapes* (female, 25 years old); *allows to relieve fatigue and see how beautiful and powerful our city is* (male, 23 years old).

The aesthetic function of the city central embankments serves as a driver for the assertion and development of urban identity. Young respondents show their engagement with the city through symbolic markers such as the central embankments as a whole:

Plotinka is my favourite place in the city, it is very beautiful there (female, 19 years old).

And architectural structures located nearby:

I consider The Yeltsin Centre a symbolic place, it is located on the embankment (male, 21 years old).
Of course, The Sevastyanov's House, no one will pass by it, it is on the Plotinka (female, 21 years old).

By developing urban identity, the embankments also fulfil an integrative function:

You can meet just about anyone on the Plotinka: men and women, children and the elderly, Russians and other nationals; there are also non-mainstream people, a wide variety of them (male, 21 years old).

The central embankments are open to different social groups and unite them into the community of citizens. As the Russian researcher Glazychev (2017) rightly notes, the creation and development of the city belong to the urban community. Each city has its variations of urban communities (Park, 1952), but the foundation is the possibility of equal use of embankments by each citizen. The respondents specified that the city embankments in the centre are *the areas for everyone* (female, 20 years old); however, as the observation showed, both central and peripheral embankments are not adapted for people with disabilities. They cannot go down the stairs to the Plotinka embankment, and unequipped peripheral embankments make it difficult for them to move. Perhaps the only exception is a small section of the Verkh-Isetskii Pond Embankment, which has access to water and has been renovated by city activists with the support of local businesses. One of the respondents pointed out the limited accessibility of the embankments:

It is a pity that there are elements on the embankments, such as staircases, that impede the movement of wheelchair users; it turns out that they cannot enjoy a walk near the water (female, 24 years old).

Unlike the central ones, peripheral embankments can be viewed as a tool for developing neighbourhood identity. During observation, we found that these embankments are "appropriated" by children for active games. Children use the water space since access to water is not limited by barriers. Without adult control, peripheral embankments unsuitable for children's play activities may become a source of danger.

The respondents posed the question of free time through the prism of *flânerie*. Following the ideas of Benjamin (2009, as cited in Trubina, 2011), Trubina (2011) notes that *flânerie* assumed such a form of contemplation of urban life, in which detachment and immersion in the rhythms of the city were inseparable. Furthermore, the respondents note that the central embankments act as semantic points in the leisure travel of young people:

I am going to the centre for Plotinka: to see people and show myself. I dress appropriately, and make-up is a must (female, 18 years old).

I can just come to the centre, take a walk along Plotinka, sit on a bench, look at people (female, 24 years old).

Sometimes I go for a walk with a friend to the Plotinka, we chat and watch others (female, 20 years old).

The respondents noted that the central embankments are suitable for *flânerie*: comfortable sidewalks, the presence of benches and parklets, the opportunity to buy coffee and tea both at fixed and mobile catering booths. In motivation for including the central embankments in the semantic map of mobility, the young people noted the opportunity to get new experiences that can be included in their narratives and demonstrated to their subscribers via social networks. Through self-presentation in the information space, young people tell us about themselves and demand recognition. The peripheral embankments (except for a small section on the banks of the Verkh-Isetskii Pond, but it is too small for *flânerie*) are deprived of infrastructure. *Flânerie* as a phenomenon of urban life is an exclusive characteristic of the centre.

Flânerie is a way of exploring the city (Coates, 2017). According to Barker (2014), *flânerie* is distinguished by cosmopolitanism and globality; it implies not only a balance between observation and reflection but also an understanding of the diversity of social reality, the intention for heterogeneity. Free time—*flânerie*—becomes a condition for the implementation of a cognitive function that cannot be fully implemented in the public space of peripheral embankments:

When I walk along Plotinka, I relax and look around at people and buildings (female, 22 years old).

At the same time, not only *flânerie* as a leisure pastime and cognitive function is woven into the functional field of the city's embankments. Embankments also perform a transit function. Castells (1998) rightly raises the question about the space of flows. Thinking about definitions of "placeless", "other-directed places", and "non-places", Pachenkov (2012) concludes that the latter is not only classical transit zones (airport, train station), "it is also the streets and squares of cities, wastelands, transit areas and global shopping places, these are spaces, whose number and role in the life of city residents has been steadily growing over the past five to six decades" (p. 425; our translation—N. A., A. G.).

Our findings show that city embankments are also becoming transit areas that connect points in the coordinate system of everyday mobility of urban youth:

Before the pandemic, I walked along Plotinka every day: from the subway to the university; it is faster than using public transport during rush hour (female, 23 years old).

Subway-Plotinka-University: this is my route in the centre (male, 19 years old).

The central embankments are places of movement and flows; young people "include" them as meaningful points in everyday movements. At the same time, when planning routes, young people often on purpose "sew" embankments into their schedule:

Sometimes I go near the Drama Theater along the embankment on purpose. The road takes 15 minutes longer, but I want to look at the city, the water, the people (male, 21 years old).

However, the extent of exercising the transit function of peripheral embankments is not certain. For instance, the Verkh-Isetskii Pond Embankment has a beach and a path not equipped for pedestrian traffic that runs along the coast. Therefore, transit cannot be a primary function of this embankment. We observed the same situation on the embankment located along Roshchinskaia Street (Nizhne-Isetskii Pond). A different situation was observed on the embankment stretching along Ordenonostsev Street. A distinctive feature of this embankment is its landscaping, namely, an asphalted pedestrian road that runs along the embankment:

> *We rent an apartment in Khimmash; the windows look out to the pond. When the weather is good, I go out to the embankment and walk along it to the bus stop. It takes longer, but I like it. I walk, dream about something, and immerse myself in my thoughts* (female, 24 years old).

The question of self-awareness during *flânerie* and transit movements was raised by 2/3 of the respondents. At the same time, the attention of young citizens is focused on the water area:

> *I like to look at the water; it pacifies, different thoughts arise: Who am I? What am I?* (male, 20 years old)

> *The water surface calms me and makes me think. Am I doing everything right? Can I change something? How to build relationships with my parents and my loved ones?* (female, 23 years old).

The interview findings show that the water becomes a trigger for reflection: self-awareness as awareness and awareness of oneself (Leont'ev, 1975), as the ability to understand one's attitude to oneself and the world (Rubinshtein, 1957). During observations, we also recorded that some young people are "immersed in their inner world".

Our findings show that embankments are not only a place for self-discovery but are also "filled" with various youth activities. The central embankments are the stage of urban activism and subcultural practices. Omel'chenko and Poliakov (2017) argue that the distinctive feature of the stage is "the presence of common meanings of cultural practices shared by all participants" (p. 126). In this sense, the central embankments of the city have become the "third place" in which youth subcultural identities are reproduced. For example, in our study, the central embankments, both the Plotinka and the Working Youth, became a place of attraction for skaters.

The central embankments also serve as venues for significant public events: the City Day, the Music Night, and others. On the one hand, such city events are designed to unite citizens and contribute to developing urban identity. However, on the other hand, as a third of the respondents noted, they reflect the deviational heterotopia of the central embankments:

There are too many people at Plotinka on the City Day; people bring alcohol, they are swearing, and after the celebration, there is rubbish all around; it's unpleasant (female, 24 years old).

Unlike the central embankments, the peripheral ones can be a place for local collective practices of celebrating both personal events and those of social significance. According to the respondents, such practices are used by young people who *cannot afford going to cafes* (female, 20 years old). These practices are distinguished by drinking alcoholic beverages, loud laughter and talking, as well as *garbage after gatherings, plastic bottles floating in the water and dirty bushes around* (female, 20 years old). The respondents believe that such groups destroy the natural landscape and can be a source of environmental degradation:

On Verkh-Isetskii Pond, a site with a beach was recently renovated, but if you go further, there is garbage. People are not used to cleaning up after themselves: they eat, rest and leave everything behind (male, 25 years old).

Therefore, unequipped embankments on the periphery become points of attraction for such practices. The lack of public control due to the small number of people, insecurity and unattractiveness of the place determine the nature of such practices.

The findings from the interviews and observations show that the city embankments are used to meet the needs of young people for physical activity:

You can meet runners on Plotinka, but I do not know if they come to run on purpose or live nearby (female, 20 years old).

The proximity of residential buildings to places that can satisfy the need for physical activity on the peripheral embankments becomes a factor in their attractiveness:

I often watch old women with Nordic walking sticks and young runners on the embankment of the Nizhne-Isetskii Pond (female, 24 years old).

In addition to keeping the body in a healthy physical condition, the respondents also pointed to such individual actions implemented on the peripheral embankments as:
(a) young women walking with their children—*mothers with strollers walk, sometimes in pairs* (female, 24 years old);
(b) fishing—*I watched fishermen on the Verkh-Isetskii Pond, these were not young people, but older men, it seems that this is their hobby* (female, 19 years old);
(c) waterfowl feeding (ducks)—*ducks are fed with bread, families with children bring it from home, I would also feed them, but I forget* (female, 21 years old);
(d) pet walking—*I think that on the periphery, on the commuter belt, it is very convenient to walk dogs, there is a place where a dog can run* (male, 20 years old).

In general, the research findings show that the collective types of youth activities are typical for the central city embankments, and individual activities aimed at meeting a wide range of needs are replicated both in the city centre and on the periphery.

The importance of embankments in the everyday practices of citizens of different ages is also confirmed by the willingness to "defend" their preservation in the urban space. Thus, in May 2019, active citizens of Yekaterinburg, including young people, came out to defend their "right to the city". The construction of the Church of St. Catherine was planned on the embankment near the Drama Theatre. The result of the protest behaviour was a mass survey and, as an outcome, a change in the location of the construction site. One of the respondents noted:

The embankment should belong to everyone (male, 22 years old).

To what extent do city embankments become a source of fear and anxiety for young citizens? The interview findings show that, unlike, for example, abandoned houses, garages, tunnels and underground passages, city embankments look safe. However, almost half of the respondents noted that the peripheral embankments cause anxiety:

I would not go for a walk late in the evening along the non-central embankment: the lighting is bad, and the water is too close (female, 20 years old).

At the same time, respondents point to the causelessness and diffuseness of their fears:

I cannot explain it, but I do not want to be on the embankment next to the water on a dark night (male, 22 years old).

The respondents also fear marginalised citizens:

Homeless people are taken care of in the centre, which makes it clean and pleasant to walk along the Plotinka. In contrast, on other embankments, you can meet drunk and homeless people and groups of swearing teenagers (female, 22 years old).

In young people's statements, four interrelated reasons for anxiety about peripheral city embankments are observed: darkness, water, lack or a small number of other people, and the threat of violence and illegal actions. In addition, young people place more emphasis on the issue of personal safety while on the peripheral embankments. It should be noted that in this aspect, the security function inherent in public places is transformed into a dysfunction.

Jacobs (1961) rightly raises the question of safety of the city streets, or rather, the probability of committing crimes. Concerning peripheral city embankments, this issue remains unresolved. The observation has shown that the unorganised space

of embankments, including the natural environment (trees, bushes, and stones), develop a sense of anxiety. This anxiety is associated with a sense of danger of illegal actions on the part of third parties and the fear of possible injuries that can be received during travelling.

Conclusion

The study findings allowed us to come to the following conclusions. First, city embankments are polyfunctional formations with, as the empirical data show, distinct differences between the functions of central and peripheral embankments. Young people attribute the following functions to the central embankments: communicative, aesthetic, integrative, leisure, including flanking, cognitive, transit, self-awareness, security and identity affirmation. Peripheral embankments structure the city space, contribute to developing a neighbourhood identity, and support the function of spending free time. At the same time, other functions typical for the central embankments are implemented poorly, and the safety function is transformed into a risky one. This is connected, in our opinion, both with the improvement of embankments as public spaces and with the basic direction of movement of young people in the city space: from the periphery to the centre.

Regardless of the location, young people use embankments to maintain physical fitness. Young people "appropriate" central embankments through collective social practices and the peripheral embankments through individual consumption practices, including marginal ones. Central embankments are included in young people's narratives, which indicates the need to saturate their own lives with events and impressions. Standardised activities such as transit, walking pets, fishing, and bird feeding are routinised on peripheral embankments.

In general, the study findings indicate the need for the development of peripheral embankments and their harmonious integration in everyday life of young people. Developing well-maintained footpaths, organising access to water, developing leisure and recreational infrastructure, creating comfortable living conditions for the "appropriation" of embankments (toilets, trash cans, benches, shelters from rain and wind) can determine the future of peripheral embankments as centres of attraction for young people and reduce the marginal nature of the area.

In our opinion, a promising direction for further research on city embankments is to determine their role for different social groups of citizens (children, adolescents, middle-aged people, the elderly) and to study the practices of interaction between citizens, government and businesses aimed at creating comfortable public spaces, where a wide repertoire of needs and interests can be met.

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ARTICLE

Tyumen Embankment: Urban Hubris as a Trigger for the Transformation of Urban Identity

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the problem of place affecting urban identity formation. The granite-lined embankment of the Tura River becomes a factor in reassembling urban identity and forming new urban sensuousness for the residents of Tyumen. The identity of Tyumen has long oscillated between the provinciality of the "village capital" and the nomadism of the "hub city", serving as a transit point to service the oil and gas industry. Nowadays, city residents perceive the embankment not only as a sign of Tyumen's integration into a modern urban context, but also as a metaphor for the escape from the boggy swamp of uncertainty to the *terra firma* of solid granite. The technological characteristics of the four-tier embankment (its height and length) mark it as an outstanding engineering structure. The visual excessiveness of the embankment, framing the banks of a small river, makes it a source of pride for the citizens. To clarify the process of urban identity formation, the authors introduce the term "urban hubris". There are multiple connotations of the hubris concept, ranging from "pride" to "transgression of one's own destiny". In this article, urban hubris refers not only to specific traits of people initiating megaprojects but to transgressive change in urban identity. This change can be triggered by fundamentally new strategies in city design or, as in this case, by a large-scale urban development project, conveying new city images, creating new public spaces, changing citizens' daily practices, and, ultimately, transforming their urban identity.

Over the last few decades, the problem of urban identity has drawn considerable attention due to increased interest of researchers to urbanism. A multitude of factors, such as social, cultural, historical, territorial, and others, affect citizens' identity formation. One of them is "place", a part of the city space which carries specific meanings. A place's identity establishes the link between its connotations, its significance for citizens, and their self-concept. The concept of place can be addressed not only as individual but also as collective identity, because this identity inspires the formation of urban communities. Normally, this role is attributed to some public space, equally available for all. When a "place" grows emblematic for citizens, it is perceived as a landmark, the symbol of the city where it is located, and it becomes associated with it. In some cases, such places are not just aesthetically attractive. Citizens look at them with pride.

The article discusses the Tyumen embankment's function as a local landmark and how it affects the urban identity of its citizens. For a long time, Tyumen developed apart from modern urban trends. Its embankment can be regarded, on the one hand, as an attempt to measure up, by means of creating an up-to-date public space. On the other hand, it is a megaproject, which is unique and so disproportionate both in size, human scale, and in regard to the small river it frames, that it is associated with hubris. By developing the idea of hubris in connection with urban megaprojects, the authors introduce the term "urban hubris", which is later utilised to examine the transformation of urban identity. Hubris, in this respect, is seen not so much as arrogance and conceit, but as creative boldness, enabling authors to design and complete megaprojects in the urban environment. The conceptual framework of the study is supported by the theories of place identity, social identity, and new urbanism in public space design. The results of an opinion poll on the citizens' attitude to the embankment, conducted in social media, were used as empirical material.

Embankment: The Ambiguous Landmark of Tyumen

Historically, building cities on riverbanks offered a number of decisive advantages, mainly practical ones. Grigory Revzin (2021) identifies the following ones: firstly, fortification, which complicated any attempt to conquer the city. Secondly, logistics, as the river provided the cheapest way to transport freight. And finally, "hygiene": the river was often used as a reservoir for waste dumping (p. 112). Tyumen is no exception in this regard: since the time of its founding, the Tura River has served similar functions. The city was founded on the high river bank for safety reasons. In the second half of

the 19th century, the river became a crucial component of the city economy. All goods exchange between the European part of the country and Siberia was affected by means of the Tura transport hub with harbour facilities linked to the railway station. The first embankment was constructed there in 1893. It was narrow, made of wood but equipped with electric street lights. In time, this part of the city fell into disrepair and its revitalisation was linked to a major large-scale city project, embankment construction.

The construction of embankments as complex architectural infrastructure dates back to the XVIII–XIX centuries, at a point when the aesthetic function of the river joined the utilitarian one. Water became an object of contemplation. A stroll along the waterfront was one of the favourite pastimes at the time, especially in metropolises. The granite-clad embankment in St. Petersburg is viewed as one of the symbols of the capital and the empire. Moreover, it became one of the first European embankments. Thereafter, city planners start viewing the waterfront as public space.

The omnipresent integration of water into the city environment is a crucial element of contemporary urban planning. Without the benefit of this opportunity, a city can create an impression of "urban understatement", failing to fulfil its potential. Until recently, Tyumen was a city of this kind. Despite the fact that the Tura River, flowing through the entire city, divides it into two parts—its right and left banks— post-revolutionary Tyumen lacked an embankment.

The idea to build an embankment was first discussed back in the 1980s, but for various reasons (mostly financial ones) the execution of the project was constantly postponed. Construction work on the riverfront started in 2008. Several contractors have worked on the project over the years. LLC IST *Architecture and Engineering Group* (LLC IST) accomplished a major part of the project (Naberezhnaia reki Tury, n.d.). The Tura embankment is a remarkable hydraulic engineering structure not only because of its length but more so due to its height. Challenging terrain is its distinctive feature: the elevation difference between the apex point of the right bank and the water level reaches 22 metres. The right bank, where construction began, is steep and rugged at some stretches and had been eroded by the river, especially in spring flood. High flood marks were an additional hindrance to choosing easy solutions. Water rises by 4 or 5 metres on average, reaching over 9 metres at peak levels. The right bank was embedded in concrete and secured with reinforced concrete piles to prevent further erosion.

The embankment in Tyumen, unique in Russia, comprises 4 tiers. The two lower levels are covered by water until June, when the river's flow subsides. This was a decisive factor in choosing cladding material. Granite was selected to cover the embankment for its entire length. On the one hand, it is a practical decision; on the other, it evokes pleasant associations with metropolitan waterfronts. The completed embankment has a stretch of 3.1 km but it has been decided to extend it along the entire riverfront.

Even though the current length of the embankment is quite modest, it appears massive and seems obviously exaggerated for such a small river. In recent years the Tura has grown shallow, while in some places water has receded from the bank by several metres. A tall and imposing construction clad in granite does nothing but exacerbate this imbalance. The situation is similar in terms of the human scale. The

embankment does look excessive in this respect. The monotonous, granite-clad embankment stretching for several kilometres appears almost gargantuan.

According to the architect and urbanist Jan Gehl (2012), city design should consider the human scale and use it as its core concept. Urban planning should be done in the following order: life, space, buildings (p. 198). In the case of the Tyumen embankment, it happens to be exactly the opposite. The buildings became established priorities, and technical problems were solved first, leaving other objectives behind. This error is quite frequent in modernist urban planning, where buildings are prioritized. However, it appears out-of-date by the logic of modern urban development.

The paradox of the Tyumen embankment is that on the one hand, it is much liked by city dwellers and is perceived as a landmark and the heart of the city (Naberezhnaia reki Tura, Tiumen', n.d.), one of the key sights and an essential feature of the city brand. On the other hand, even its proponents agree that the riverfront has a long way to go before contextually and functionally it meets our expectations for a modern recreational space (Oldenburg, 1989). This turns the embankment into an object of criticism, no less than an object of admiration. That said, most people are of the same mind that presently this imposing and ambitious construction is an important symbol of Tyumen.

The embankment's construction has taken over a decade but it has failed to feature a variety of leisure opportunities or comfortable recreational zones. There are no cosy benches or playgrounds on the waterfront, yet there is an abundance of bronze images in bas-relief, and sculptures representing Tyumen's milestones and its heroes. In its central part historical context prevails over the contemporary reality. Available activities lack variety. These are jogging, Nordic walking, roller skating, cycling, strolling, or sitting on the benches.

The part of the waterfront adjoining Maslovsky Vzvoz is more up-to-date. It is a historic road which in the 19th century connected the railway station and the wharves, integrating it into a transport hub. The renovated building of the Steam Navigation Office hosts a multifunctional centre bearing the same name, which is aimed at a host of creative initiatives. It offers more opportunities to spend leisure time by holding street festivals, flash mobs, organising dancing parties, or gymnastics classes; there is an outdoor cinema. The building features exhibition rooms, a coffeeshop, and a lecture hall.

A serious drawback in landscaping on the riverfront is the disregard for climatic conditions in Tyumen. The designers seem to have made allowances only for the spring flood. It is very windy by the river in winter but no windshield or sunshade has been implemented. There is no shade for the whole stretch of the riverfront, which means that most benches on a hot summer day are in full sun. The only artificial source of refreshing coolness is a fountain. Further, there is little chance of spontaneous communication here due to the lack of infrastructure, mainly street furniture. Originally benches without backrest were sited here, making it difficult to sit on them for long. They were later replaced with more comfortable ones, equipped with backrests. Even so, they are stationary, equidistant, and fixed in their places. Greenery is restricted to lawns, where no walking on the grass is allowed.

The borderline zone of the riverfront is a bit of an eyesore, at least at its very beginning, next to the Bridge of Lovers. It neighbours a parking lot, a pavilion with

a *Police* sign and several kiosks with loud generators. Points of descent to the water are located far away from each other and are equipped with "inhospitably" long stairs (142 steps) and ramps. A panoramic lift planned here has not been constructed so far. There are no cycling lanes and no zoning available. The main drawback is that there is no access to the water's edge along the entire waterfront. The city dwellers are sympathetic and even explain the reasons for this, with river pollution being the first, and safety (so that no one falls into the water) coming second. A prospective city beach is yet to be designed, while at present the water is simply out of reach.

The embankment is conceived, among other things, as a place to contemplate the opposite river bank. By and large, that left bank does not look so presentable in Tyumen, which prompted the city authorities to start its redevelopment by means of gentrification and new housing styled on the merchant mansions of the early 20th century. In 2019, efforts to landscape the left bank of the Tura were initiated. The bank was also stabilised, and provided with a skating park, cafeteria, playground, several hardscape elements of unknown function, and a promenade. It was open to public in the spring of 2021 and immediately attracted much criticism. The designers tried to squeeze a host of amenities into a relatively small area, as if making up for their lack of them on the right bank. This resulted in congested space. What is more, a tall solid railing blocks the river view and people are unable to see the water, basically what they come to the waterfront for. Sitting next to the railing, all one can see is grey concrete, and only by coming close to it is the water visible.

The authors of the project seem to have ignored all the principles of embankment renovation (or construction, in our case) listed by Soviet architect Grigory Golts (1936) in his article referring to Moscow embankments *The architecture of embankments*:

(a) The overall architectural image of Moscow is conceived as a city complex constructed according to the picturesque principle, based on active articulation and elements' lightness;
(b) The second principle is respecting the scale of the Moskva River and its embankments;
(c) The third principle is specific thematic differentiation of embankments on the basis of district division. (Golts, 1936; our translation—V. B., & M. Ch.)

In Tyumen's embankment there are neither light details nor zoning, and the river is disproportionately small in comparison to the grand embankment. The authors of the project focused not so much on the variety of opportunities to utilise public space, but on its design, markedly grandiose and imposing. This decision was supposed to give the city a new status, having instantly upgraded it on the urban design scale.

As any urban space much exceeding the human scale, the embankment aims to create an image that would impress viewers not by its attractiveness, but rather by its imposing size. It comes as no surprise that the public has come up with the initiative to give the embankment a name. The most frequent proposal is to name it after the Romanov dynasty, who stayed in Tyumen in 1917 on the way to Tobolsk as they had to change from a train to a ship. The imperial theme arises in the media

with predictable regularity. Such allusions derive not only from historical context, but from the archaic, imperial, and imposing image that the embankment creates, and its disproportionate size compared to the river and an individual. What is the reason for this inordinate image? Perhaps such a design solution should symbolize the new status of the city, which, thanks to the embankment, suddenly moved several steps at once on the "scale of urbanism" (Petrova, 2021; our translation—V. B., & M. Ch.). We believe the reason lies in hubris.

Urban Hubris

The Tyumen embankment has managed to revolutionise its urban identity. It has now become part of the city sightseeing list, a "must-visit". This is the main tourist attraction which is proudly presented by residents to city guests. The very fact of the embankment's appearance enhances the city's "urban status", its standard of life, and ultimately, citizens' self-esteem. While the embankment is among the most complex, unrivalled and visually inordinate projects of its kind (at least among those constructed in Russia), Tyumen's urban identity gains new growth potential, namely pride. The notion of "hubris" is here utilised in order to conceptualise urban identity transformation in the context of megaprojects.

The term *"hubris"* (origin: ancient Greek ὕβρις—audaciousness) had a multitude of connotations in Ancient Greece. It was consonant with the name of Hybris, the goddess personifying excessive, reckless pride and associated with such human features as pride, haughtiness, insolence, arrogance, overconfidence, and inflated ego. Aristotle (trans. 1998) links hubris primarily to verbal insult. A person inflicting it on the other shows disrespect and asserts their own superiority. However, even in ancient tradition, hubris is not only interpreted as a morally reprehensible trait of character. It has a much broader meaning, for instance, referring to a human striving to transgress the boundaries of his destiny, as a challenge to the gods. Homer and Hesiod define hubris as the insolent behaviour of humans willing to surpass themselves. Pindar regards hubris as a desire to push the boundaries of the human lot, to confront mortality (Shevtsov, 2014, p. 412). Gods do not leave the arrogant thoughts of men without notice. It is not surprising that hubris can be defined as one of the central components of ancient tragedy. The action of a character provoked by hubris resulted in folly (Até), inevitably followed by divine retribution (nemesis). At all events, by its extreme nature, hubris challenged conventional assumptions of norms in several contexts: religious, ethical, and legal.

Even if Aristotle first regarded hubris as arrogance, cheek, insolence, and rudeness, he considerably broadened the word's definition over time. Hence, hubris refers not only to human traits, but actions often linked to pride and superciliousness, illogical by nature, unpredictable, aimed at transgression. Arnold Toynbee wrote about the hubris of civilisations, whose golden age is followed by reckoning and collapse (nemesis), linking this circumstance to the fate of dominant military powers. Michel Foucault examines the unbridled sexuality of man, reflecting his nature, through the prism of hubris, which can be restrained by means of various practices in self-

discipline (Mamonova, 2020, pp. 13–16). In modern philosophy hubris is perceived primarily as a refusal of extrinsic determination in favour of a spontaneous intrinsic impulse. Hubris implies an alteration of the normal state of consciousness, a loss of stability and control. It is associated with intemperance and transgression. Hubris does not match the virtues of social frugality. Consequently, we are unable to predict all the implications of a performed action characterised by immanent creativity.

Nowadays the term "hubris" is used in a variety of fields: from business to politics, and from ecology to information technology. Hubris can be used in both negative and positive meanings. For instance, the term "Hubris Syndrome" (Sadler-Smith et al., 2018) was coined to refer to the negative implications of professional deformation for political leaders, and leaders in general. This syndrome may manifest itself in people holding leading positions in any sphere: military, economic, academic, etc. (Owen, 2008). Hubris is present in research on geoengineering (Meyer & Uhle, 2015), as well as on the anthropogenic impact on the environment and ways to combat it, including by way of architecture (Nugent, 2020).

Currently the term "hubris" is seen more and more frequently in the context of architecture and urbanism. Hubris can be traced to both individual architectural works and urban development projects alike, completed in different cultures at different points in history. One common criterion uniting them all is a defiant transgression of the human scale. It is the case of global projects and of excessive buildings, primarily in terms of dimensions. As a rule, they are of gigantic size, surpassing the boundaries of all common sense. The basis of urban hubris is, in our view, not pride as such but the audaciousness of the author, transgressing banality.

Architect Rem Koolhaas (1995) links the problem of gigantism to American architecture of the previous century. According to R. Koolhaas, gigantism was inspired by an avalanche of technical innovations (the elevator, electricity, steel, etc.). It needs no manifestos—the size of the building can play the role of an ideological programme *per se*, irrespective of the architect's intentions (p. 4). The above-mentioned statement appears quite convincing in terms of contemporary large-scale buildings. They are obviously self-sufficient and rarely carry symbolic meaning. They are what they are: gigantic structures, badly fitted into the urban space, while each of them is a kind of a city within the city (Koolhaas, 1978).

Nevertheless, historically, a predominant majority of mega-buildings were erected not so much for people in order to meet their daily needs, but with the intent to manifest a certain idea, either a religious or a political one. This undoubtedly indicates an intent to demonstrate superiority, either in terms of a religious confession or a corporate identity. The idea to embody the sublime in quantitative form is far from being novel—it has been long used to establish power. Most megaprojects of the past, such as the Wonders of the World and the Colosseum in antiquity, medieval temple architecture, and the Eiffel Tower—all fall into the same category. The work of their creators is quite logically associated with hubris. The term is also used to analyse the architecture of totalitarian Germany (Tewari, 2021) and the concrete architecture of Boston (Pasnik et al., 2015), along with politicians of resurgent cities (Cheshire, 2006, p. 1231). Every kind of megalomania is linked to hubris, as it always confronts existing aesthetic,

ethical, technological and other norms. Even though only a handful out of a plethora of similar projects have been completed, their ambition still impresses us today. It is sufficient to address the projects of the French megalomaniacs of Enlightenment, for instance, Isaac Newton's cenotaph (by Etienne-Louis Boullée), or post-revolutionary constructivist and post-constructivist projects, conceived for completion in our country: the Monument to the Third International (by Vladimir Tatlin), the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry (by Ivan Leonidov), and many others.

Hubris may inspire grand projects of urban development linked both to the founding of new cities and their redevelopment, bringing radical change for their residents (for instance, Haussmann's Paris renovation in 1853–1870). The results of such activity often arouse controversy. Indeed, Baron Haussmann is criticised to this day for the drastic measures he employed by destroying entire districts as part of his renovation process. Yet, the intensity of criticism gradually diminished as Parisians got accustomed to the new image of the capital; and today it is impossible to imagine the city without the parks and gardens, boulevards and avenues laid out by Haussmann.

Contemporary megaprojects can be exemplified by "smart cities". Take Songdo, the first smart city in South Korea, designated for research and business, or the "green" Masdar City in Abu Dhabi designed by Foster and Partners. Contemporary megaprojects comprise skyscrapers, bridges, tunnels, airports, artificial rivers, etc. Even though their cost reaches dozens of billions of dollars, contenders for the tallest, the longest, the most expensive, the most spacious projects continue to come and go. That said, architectural megalomania does not mean that the affected place instantly becomes a source of pride for the citizens. More often than not, it is the citizens who criticise the authors of the projects for huge budgets, aesthetic inconsistency and mindless gigantism.

The governments supporting such projects have passed into history, while their architects, ever since the construction of the Tower of Babel, have made a name for themselves. The architect and urbanist Dhiru A. Thadani (2021) developed a formula for the author's renown based on hubris. It can be presented as a sum of Hubris and Form minus Common Sense. In terms of architecture and urbanism, hubris identifies primarily the creative ambition of the project's author and their team, comprising engineers, contractors, politicians and others. It is hubris that characterises John Rockefeller's engagement in New York development (Bleecker, 1981). The buildings constructed in the city due to the ideas and investment of this renowned philanthropist and patron are "hubristic", that is, they are associated with hubris as a bold impetus to find new urbanist solutions. "Hubristicity" is the hallmark of the author's hubris in its creation, a feature which makes the author's hubris evident for all.

A project's hubristic nature is bound to provoke recipients' response. A grand edifice to be erected elicits intense emotions, and as mentioned earlier, these emotions are often far from positive. The project may be shocking or irritating, but it cannot go unnoticed. As the scope of work to construct such an object is quite impressive, its hubristic nature is undeniable even for its detractors. In this case, if the construction is positively evaluated, the author's hubris in the minds of recipients receives a positive connotation—it becomes pride, not conceit. While conceit implies

excessive and overblown arrogance connected to recklessness and haughtiness, pride can be perceived in a positive way as it is associated with the sense of self-worth and self-respect.

With reference to hubristic projects, it is the sense of pride that becomes a basis for the sense of community shared by people living in the same city. By transforming identity, pride forms a new attitude both to the particular place, and to the city itself.

Hubris and Pride in the Context of Place Identity

One of the sources of urban identity formation is place. Elizabeth Halpenny (2010), a researcher in environmental psychology, defines "place" as a spatial location that appropriates meanings and values held by society and individuals. "Place identity", "place attachment" and "sense of place" are all terms describing the impact of environment on identity and self-concept, regarding relations between an individual and a place as primarily affective. However, they do not only comprise emotions and affects. Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford (2010) also include cognitive (knowledge, meaning, memory, schemas) and behavioural factors (proximity-maintaining, reconstruction of place).

There are no strict definitions of these terms and their meaning is often vague. Having analysed three identity theories (place identity theory, social identity theory, and identity process theory) Åshild Hauge (2007) concludes that the term "place identity" may be seen as a part of other identity categories. Identity manifests itself on many levels, one of which is place.

Bruce Hull et al. (1994) regard place identity as the contribution of place to one's identity through the meanings and values symbolised by place features. The term is linked to a particular place and refers to it as a distinct space fragment. The uniqueness of a place is a result of the interaction between its physical features and its users (Kaymaz, 2013). Place identity refers to an essential component of both personal and urban identity. Living in the same space creates a communal feeling of belonging (Blackshaw, 2010).

"Place attachment" is often viewed as part of "place identity". Place attachment stems from the positive experience a person acquires in the process of interacting with a particular place. Place identity, for its part, is derived from the assumptions, meanings, emotions, ideas and attitudes attributed to a place (Hauge, 2007). It can be formed both on the individual and group level. A sense of place and place attachment can strengthen not only personal identity but also the bonds within a community (Anguelovski, 2014). In this regard, sense of place and place identity form an important social phenomenon that structures and develops social space and forms communities (Kyle & Chick, 2007). We consider the identity of a place in the context of the interaction of its personal, social and physical components (Raymond et al., 2010, p. 434).

A distinctive feature of hubris-inspired places is their scale. This property, firstly, does not let places stay unnoticed, and secondly, is a factor enabling residents to express their attitude towards megaprojects. For a variety of reasons, these projects do not earn unanimous approval. More often than not, they are criticised

because they do not fit in the urban fabric. For instance, they can drastically change the familiar cityscape, affecting the entire city or one of its districts. However, in spite of a broad range of opinions, the problem of a negative attitude to a controversial construction is easily resolved. If the place is frequently visited, despite the controversy, it becomes a landmark, and joins the list of key local sights. As a result, not only do city dwellers still take pride in this particular place, but it also spills over into their attitude to the city itself.

The reasons for feeling affection towards a place are as diverse as those triggering criticism of it. It is essential that people feel the desire to linger, and later keep returning to this place. In time, citizens develop the sense of place attachment. The longer a large number of people spend their time there, the more successful the place is in terms of public space. In this respect, public spaces have much better chances of turning into a landmark in comparison with constructed objects with limited access (hotel, business centre, residential high-rises).

Therefore, when creating a "place" conceived as public space, it is crucial to do research and conduct public polls. If the project initiators are planning to create a popular, much-frequented place, they need to collaborate with local communities and discuss the project together. This form of planning has been termed "placemaking". The concept of placemaking as a vehicle to improve urban environment refers to the idea of turning city spaces into places. The process of placemaking implies advisory planning, where not only professionals but ordinary city dwellers participate. Thus, placemaking aims to create a popular place, which would not only evoke positive emotions but also create the sense of attachment. It starts to be associated with this specific city, thus becoming a landmark.

The very fact of introducing the principle of urban space transformation, where professionals collaborate with local residents, brings to the foreground the concept of place not only for the urban environment but also for city dwellers. According to Jan Gehl (2010), first we create cities, then they create us (p. 13). While designing the embankment in Tyumen, attempts to use placemaking were made, but obviously they were insufficient. A competition to design the embankment was held and the winning project was selected with regard to citizens' preferences. In addition, designers held multiple meetings with the public. But judging by the results, the preliminary work required by placemaking was not consistent. In any case, even now the public continues to negotiate over the faults of the riverfront with designers and officials, suggesting ways to further improve the amenities. On the other hand, the construction is ongoing and there is a chance that citizens' requirements will be taken into consideration. Meanwhile, contrary to one of the key principles of placemaking which reads: "a place should be created, not designed", the imposing image of the embankment dominates the interests of city dwellers.

Nevertheless, despite all its shortcomings, the citizens of Tyumen perceive the embankment as an iconic place, their pride and joy. It has boosted the self-esteem of a considerable number of residents, thus affecting new urban identity formation. How exactly can the sense of pride trigger identity transformation, both on the personal and urban levels?

To answer this question, let us address David Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Hume, 1998). One part of the book is devoted to pride, which Hume analyses in regard to identity. Pride for him is a passion whose object is the self. "In order to excite pride, there are always two objects we must contemplate, viz. the cause or that object which produces pleasure; and self, which is the real object of the passion" (Hume, p. 344). He distinguishes between pride stemming from extrinsic factors, and pride as a sense of self, a source of affirming oneself as a worthy subject. According to Olga Zubets (2012), who researches pride in Hume's interpretation, the philosopher's reasoning "starts with the analysis of pride as an extrinsic object but later comes to relevance of the self as a condition and requisite of the former" (p. 186 ; our translation—V. B., & M. Ch.). Being a passion, pride in something is evoked by an agreeable object by means of associations between ideas and impressions. This statement needs to be clarified. Hume formulates several limitations in its connection. Not every agreeable object results in the sense of pride. Firstly, it has to be associated with us, be close to us—in other words, not be casual. Secondly, it has to be peculiar and unique; and if it is shared with somebody else, it has to belong to just a few people. Thirdly, the object has to be discernible and obvious but not just to ourselves, but to others too. Fourthly, as the cause of these passions is casual, inconstant, and brief, they give us little pride, which means the cause of pride should be durable. Finally, one has to consider the influence of general rules upon pride.

Hume's key point is that a genuine source of pride is not so much an external source, but it is within the individual. Even if pride has an external cause, it should be relevant to self. By the same token, an extrinsic evaluation, how we are judged by other people, is determined by the significance of these people for the self and how relevant their evaluation is to my own. Pride then is determined by the immediacy of self over the world's impact on the individual, and it is pride that represents a form of self-discovery and self-constitution (Zubets, 2012, p. 187). In this regard, pride becomes a source of identity for an individual. If the same object or the same place is a source of pride for many people, it refers to collective identity.

The embankment in Tyumen, viewed in this context, presents an object agreeable for many people since it provides new sensuous experiences. In this respect, the riverfront evokes pleasant associations for the majority. At the same time, it is a unique construction. It is one of a kind—not only because it is part of the cityscape of this specific city, but also due to its technical features. It cannot go unnoticed either on the part of citizens or visitors, as evidenced by broad coverage of the topic on Tyumen local sites and social media. Thus, pride becomes a source of place identity, resulting in urban identity.

How Exactly Does the Embankment Affect Urban Identity?

Urbanists who have visited Tyumen have been ambivalent in their evaluation of its urban identity. For instance, Svyat Murunov, founder of the Centre for Applied Urbanism, remarks that "in terms of macro processes, such as population growth, ambition, numerous focal projects and densely scheduled city events, Tyumen is perceived as a capital, but regarding its residents' self-concept, it is still a provincial town" (Neradovskaia, 2017).

The background of Tyumen's contradictory identity comprises real cultural and historical events, as well as urban myths and legends, some of which are derogatory. According to one of them, the thriving merchant town was so muddy that, quoting the *Siberian Merchant Newspaper*, on April 14, 1826 a horse drowned in its central street. In the Soviet era the town was pejoratively nicknamed the *village capital Tyumen.* The annexation of some areas from Omsk district to Tyumen municipality in 1944 can probably account for the name. Another likely reason is the incorporation of nearby villages. On similar grounds, even London could not escape the *Big Village* sobriquet in its day.

The discovery of rich oil and gas deposits in Tyumen district earned it another nickname—*Tyuxas* (prompted by Texas). Tyumen, previously a provincial city-garden, was transformed into a city-hub, a transfer junction and a transport centre to cater for the oil and gas sector, which resulted in "nomadic" identity development in some citizens. All this time, urban environment demonstrated no concern for its residents but rather reflected a set of statist attitudes. Hence, a convenient city with all the desirable urban features was a long-held dream for Tyumen residents. The situation has changed now and the public, supported by the authorities, not only actively discusses urban problems with experts from Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Kazan, and other cities, but plays an active part in public space planning. That said, Tyumen still remains a city prioritizing automobiles, not pedestrians. The city has high-quality roads and interchanges, but it obviously lacks public spaces.

The riverfront development has become a major project capable of making a breakthrough in this field. According to urbanist and blogger Ilya Varlamov (2018), a co-founder of *Urban Projects* fund,

> the only human place in Tyumen now is its new embankment, but it was made in a way that's "costly and inexpert". Currently, there is no strategy to exploit either the river (which is the greatest natural asset), or the embankment. They seem like a burden, and the authors of the project are trying to distance themselves as much as they can. When you walk along the bank, you don't even realise there's water somewhere. Overall, the embankment resembles a gigantic memorial complex. (Varlamov, 2018; our translation—V. B., & M. Ch.)

The riverfront is also criticised by Svyat Murunov:

> When they were making the embankment, most likely it was the city authorities who commissioned work. There was a large budget and they wanted to do everything in a massively expensive way. But it is much more complicated to do it in relation to people because that would require formulating an idea if what kind of people live in their city—with their emotions, social connections, dreams and objectives [...] You have to understand this person, but our cities certainly cannot do it yet. They are trying to produce wealth instead—see, we have a luxurious embankment! Good for you, but the embankment could be more functional. (Gut & Gaisina, 2016; our translation—V. B., & M. Ch.)

Most city dwellers agree with this criticism but at the same time, it does not negate their attitude to the embankment. They perceive the latter as a project that brings an air of "metropolis" to the city's identity. In any case, "it used to be worse". One of the authors come to this conclusion after analyzing the interviews of the townspeople about their attitude to the embankment. In the opinion poll asking respondents "What is your attitude to the embankment?" a more critical attitude was held by the cohort of city dwellers with higher educational qualifications, professionally linked to creative arts, journalism, or education. Nevertheless, the riverfront has become one of the favourite spots for taking selfies; there are groups on different sites where people write enthusiastic reviews, with visitors to the city among them (Naberezhnaya reki Tura, n.d.).

Figuratively speaking, the embankment refers to an escape by city dwellers from the swamp of uncertainty to the *terra firma* of granite. The metaphor of the swamp in culture has many negative connotations: it is something stagnant, unsteady, rigid, boggy, sleepy, like quicksand, etc. (Leontyeva & Mokienko, 2021), while stone is associated with stability, solidity and reliability.

Conclusion

Urban space is made up of specific places. Citizens develop emotional bonds with them, which can be termed place attachment or a sense of place (Low, 2000). Such places become part of a person's biography and a factor in identity formation—both on individual and collective levels.

The concepts of new urbanism prescribe the creation of public spaces and places based on the principle of human scale. At the same time, a persistent stereotype has it that the extravagance of a project's in size can secure its role as a local landmark, later to be associated with this specific place and perceived as its emblem or symbol. A mega place, unlike smaller and human-scaled places, affects urban identity in a particular way, hence the term "urban hubris". Urban hubris refers to various aspects of megaproject creation and perception, linked by transgression of the norm. Both the developers' boldness and the intensity of citizens' reaction affect urban identity, leading to its transgressive transformation.

Residents perceive the project authors' hubris in a milder form and interpret it not as conceit but pride, which is inspired by the mega place and spills over into the city itself. This article has studied the link between pride and identity within the frameworks of David Hume's theory, who examined this problem in one of the parts of *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Thus, if city dwellers approve of the new place, it is regarded as a source of pride for the city, and a new dimension is added to their identity. If the place is rejected, their identity is also transformed. Residents who harbour doubts and irritation about the project get involved in discussions and public debates; they start reflecting on what an ideal modern city should be like, and what the project should have achieved. Their attitude towards the city also changes: it loses its indifference and passivity. The city dwellers gain agency. Consequently, urban hubris triggers urban identity transformation.

Urban hubris has been explored in the article with the Tyumen embankment presented as a case study. It is a controversial structure, imposing in terms of its technical features, but disproportionate in regard to the river, or to the human scale, and yet popularly accepted as the symbol of the city. Despite its ambivalence, this example has demonstrated the identity transformation of Tyumen residents as a transgressive breakthrough to blend the city with the contemporary urban context. For some city dwellers it is an accomplished fact, while the others regard it rather as a process, not the result.

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Seeking Ecology and Equity Along the Boise Greenbelt

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ABSTRACT

As a pedestrian-friendly green landscape that has become popular in the US and around the world in the past fifty years, the Boise Greenbelt seems to present an ideal example of how to create a waterfront that can promote economic growth along with high recreational use. However, there are two aspects to interrogate as we ponder an effective model for such landscapes going into a future affected by climate change: first, like many such landscapes which focus on an esthetic leisure experience for the user, the Boise Greenbelt does not fully attend to the ecology of the river along which it lies; second, also as a feature of esthetic leisure experience, the Boise Greenbelt falls into a category of "park, café, riverwalk" which potentially reduces equity in use of urban space. Analysis of this landscape and its successes can help to shape a model that will be responsive to future climate conditions and enhance social equity.

KEYWORDS

waterfront, greenbelt, ecology, green gentrification, rivers, access, displacement

The contemporary popularity of landscapes along water is undeniable. In Boise, Idaho, the linear park along the Boise River that includes a biking/walking path is termed the Boise Greenbelt. In its focus on placing a pedestrian route along a river, the Boise Greenbelt is like similar landscapes in many other cities around the US and the world. In this essay, the term "greenbelt" will be used to indicate this kind of landscape, even though in urban planning "Green Belt" more often refers to a band of open or green space around a city to limit or manage its growth, and some sources prefer the term "greenway" for a linear park.

The chief assertion of this essay will be that a renewed conception of riverfront greenbelts is necessary under the changing conditions of climate change and increased residential pressure on remaining water-rich landscapes. Along the Boise Greenbelt, conventional environmental conservation has struggled with development impulses, both shaping aspects of public sentiment. As Bishop (2020) asserts about traditional Green Belts in the UK, "perhaps the most important legacy of [such landscapes] is that a legacy of open land has been passed down to us from previous generations" (p. 157). It remains important to figure out how this concept of public open space should interact with pressure for increased housing units, development profit, wildlife habitat, and recreation. Above all, it is important to remember that a river, even an urban river, is not just a backdrop to human activities: it has its own set of functions that connect to a broader system of hydrology. How to build greater education about biosphere processes into a managed urban and periurban environment remains a challenge for planners, practitioners, and advocates.

Everyone loves a greenbelt. A specific type of waterfront amenity that aims to provide pleasant public space and more ecologically sensitive riparian landscaping, greenbelts have been executed in some form in many cities where a river flows through developed areas, often the downtown area of a city. A more urban, less ecological model called a "Riverwalk" transformed the confined waterways in downtown San Antonio, Texas, several decades ago. Taking advantage of the growing interest in and time for outdoor recreation, especially walking, running, and biking, many other cities have turned their attention to formerly neglected waterways and made them into attractive amenities right in the downtown core. An example of this is the transformation in Denver, Colorado, of Cherry Creek and other tributaries of the South Platte from polluted wasteways to clear(er) streams with miles of running trails; as the old textile mills have been increasingly reclaimed for pubs, upscale boutiques, and housing, the history of the factory effluent has been erased. A city with a similar bent to outdoor recreation but a different economic history, Eugene, Oregon, has the Willamette River dividing its older developed area from the newer area to the north; created enough decades before more growth, the Eugene greenbelt features a band of green riparian area with large stretches of public park, including a bike/running path, as in Denver, but also hosting playgrounds and wide sweeps of turfgrass lawns. On temperate days in any season, all of these greenbelts are crowded with users, proving that greenbelts are indeed a popular type of urban landscape and typically worth a city's investment. Greenbelts provide public space that is green and accessible, favoring healthy outdoor recreation.

In the United States, greenbelts reflect the coincidence of two developments that complemented each other. First, a growing desire arose for a cleaner environment in the late 1960s and early 1970s. After the publication of *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson and the growing movement for environment-oriented legislation, urban waterways could benefit from a new, more attentive environmental vision and the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1970. While an accurate understanding

of water in the hydrologic system is still a horizon in many places (witness the misunderstanding of surface-groundwater interaction that persists in California), residents began to pay more attention to the water in their immediate environments and clamored for reform.

Second, this closer attention to the environment and interest in hygiene also built on the economic trend towards deindustrialization that accelerated in the same period. Off-shoring of polluting industries (such as steel from Pittsburgh to cities in South Korea) or the failure of such industries to compete with newer ones in countries with newer equipment, cheaper labor, or fewer environmental regulations (as with textiles) meant that urban managers did not feel pressured to defend the waste that accompanied industrial processes. Along with an interest in hygiene, the onset of less-materials-based post-industrial economic activity brought a new kind of white-collar leisure time which could be spent outdoors.

The coincidence in this vision of cleaner water and more leisure time leading to certain kinds of evening and weekend recreation leads to the need for green space which a "greenbelt" along a river can provide. This may be related to the increased interest in "nature" connected to both developments described above; as some scholars of the 1964 United States Wilderness Act point out, for example, the reduced need to depend on "natural resources" made people feel more affectionate towards "nature" and more interested in spending time in it (Nash, 1967/2001); bringing "nature" back into cities follows this interest. Indeed, the impetus to increase urban health by adding open green space goes back to the late nineteenth century and found expression in urban movements such as the Garden City and public housing initiatives in cities like New York and Chicago (Zipp, 2010). The greenbelt, as a public space for leisure and new kinds of recreation, can be seen as following along from movements that created central parks (such as New York's famous one or Portland's Park Blocks, courtesy of the Olmsteds) but encompassing waterways more actively.

The final criterion which emerges from examining these factors together is how ecological a greenbelt is. Simply cleaning up the banks of a waterway with a path on either side does not make a greenbelt into a true riparian zone. Indeed, part of the misunderstanding of hydrology that developed in the period of active industrial and agriculture use of United States waterways was a failure to understand the need for stabilizing and filtering vegetation in a buffer strip along the edge of streams, especially those around which humans typically build their settlements. Along with failing to understand groundwater and other processes, most settlers along the Euro-American model were committed to using all available space, including up to the edge of a riverbank. Understanding those riverbanks as malleable and fragile has come with sometimes bitter experience. Even when a greenbelt focuses on providing a "natural" or parklike space for the public, the resulting landscape may not be recognizably riparian in most ways except for the presence of the water. For example, San Antonio's Riverwalk has trees, but its development arguably did not include any kind of restoration of the riparian zone. Many rivers have also been channelized (i.e., straightened) through the urban areas which now treat them as an

amenity, producing challenges for nearby humans and not bringing all of the benefits of a natural riparian zone.

A final preliminary example that highlights an important aim of greenbelts is the Caldwell Indian Creek walkway, just about thirty miles away from Boise in a smaller city. The shorter length of this greenbelt (so far) reduces its usefulness for vigorous outdoor recreation through the Caldwell downtown, but it brings many strollers in all seasons, including in the winter when the city hangs an elaborate array of lights for the Christmas and New Year holidays. Since the extreme pollution by industry and livestock agriculture had prompted city fathers to pave it over, the creek had to be "daylighted" in 2006; the resulting open water flow is definitely an attractive addition to the downtown landscape. Above all, though, examination of the documents prepared by the city for the daylighting of the creek show that—more than a healthy riparian zone or even the promotion of public outdoors activity—the Caldwell greenbelt was intended to reinvigorate the downtown economy, using the visual attraction of the waterway and the economic assumptions of that greenbelt model to bring new businesses to further promote the economy of leisure such as restaurants and shops. City residents genuinely enjoy the open space, green lawns, festival events, and flowing water, but importantly all these are associated with a successful model of economic activity which has definitely benefited the formerly farm town of Caldwell.

Considering these examples, we can see that the relative mix of ecology, economy, and health in the greenbelt model can be evaluated. As will become clear, in Boise as elsewhere, it is clear that the economic motivator can trump the ecological one and can have unexpected implications for social equity in public space. Popular and successful as greenbelts are, it is important to assess the model and consider whether it is time to retool it for the sake of future use and coexistence with climatic trends.

Among other possible reframings, in spite of all the positive effects of greenbelts and their popularity with urban users, it has long been clear that the "greenbelt model" is not necessarily an environmental one; continuous human use of spaces that are cleared for trails and picnic space often contradict the conditions that wildlife need for habitat or the conditions that water needs for filtration, spring flow, and promoting ecological disturbance for vegetation health. Greenbelts were an important step beyond the landscapes of industrialization, but now urban planners have the opportunity to develop something more specific than the generalized greenbelt model which (below) can also bring gentrification processes that are destructive to social equity and true public access. This might bring greater public education about the need to accommodate biosphere processes in the form of seasonal patterns of permitted use rather than an abstracted use of generalized "greenbelt space" for physical exercise and purely visual enjoyment.

Boise, Idaho, is a city with a well-used and extensive greenbelt along the Boise River. It illustrates these points and, as a city in the high desert which depends heavily on snowmelt-fed runoff for both groundwater and surface water in the river, provides an opportunity to consider the greenbelt model as a mode of coexistence with that river water in a warming and drying climate.

Boise Greenbelt History

This section of the essay will consider the history of the Boise Greenbelt's development related to hygiene, deindustrialization, green space, and ecology. For the details before 1990, I have drawn heavily from Susan Stacy's book *When the River Rises: Flood Control on the Boise River, 1943–1985* (1993).

The Greenbelt came to be, Stacy (1993) notes, because Boise residents began to find the river attractive after a series of events made it look less dirty; we can note that changes in the river's flow and appearance came at a time when general awareness of "nature" was on the rise. Before the Lucky Peak Dam was installed and began operating in 1955, the river's natural flow regime—its yearly fluctuation in flow level dependent on melting snow and rain—caused annual pulses in water volume every spring, which scoured the river bed and did not allow vegetation to accumulate. Stacy notes that the river became more visually attractive to human eyes after the dam began to control that flow volume. She quotes an observer who mentioned that the river acquired "significant heavily wooded sandbars" which made it more "scenic" (1993, p. 68). This change in appearance, along with a generally higher average water level, made the river more attractive for favored recreational activities: floating on small craft or walking along its banks.

However, the water in the river at this point in time was not yet clean enough for humans to swim in. By the 1960s, while the Boise River seemed to meander freely through its flood plain, with considerable open space around it, it received many kinds of industrial and agricultural effluent, just as other US rivers had long done. Agricultural runoff entered the river mostly downstream, where drains re-entered the river after flowing over farm fields. In and near the city of Boise, as Stacy records, a sewage treatment plant discharged warm and chlorine-laced water while food processing plants and dairy operators released "grease, potato peelings, beet pulp, paunch manure [offal], blood, dissolved sugars" (1993, p. 70). The late industrial impulse towards hygiene had not yet affected the quality of the water itself.

Residents' desire to be near the river and engage in recreation pressured the city to conduct cleanup, moving the riparian areas further from a more industrial type of use to an amenity for a post-industrial economy with leisure time. Indeed, the 1963 report to the city by a planning firm noted that since "Boise was the capital city of the state with an economy based on trade and commerce, it 'has more than the usual need and opportunity for parks and green areas'" (Stacy, 1993, p. 73). Deindustrialization and desire for hygiene here combine to produce a desire for green space in which to exercise the accompanying leisure. It is worth providing a longer version of this passage:

> […] because the economy of the area is based largely on trade and commerce attracted from a wide area, and its economic future is partially dependent upon tourist travel and retirement living, Boise City's physical enhancement is a particularly worthwhile community goal. (As cited in Tuck, 2014, p. 4)

Ecology itself, while it definitely animated some advocates, was not necessarily the primary goal. The fundamentally healthful impulses involved in this river cleanup must not obscure the fact that planning of such parks initially set out to create visually generalized green spaces for human use—not native habitat for a functioning river. Of landscaping in Ann Morrison Park, dedicated in 1959 as interest in the river was growing, Stacy notes that "most of the natural vegetation was cleared and replaced with turf and new trees" (1993, p. 73); it was perceived as problematic that "the park lands were overgrown with willows and cottonwoods, laced with sloughs and other soggy places" (p. 71).

Still, initially there was little competition from other uses for the land along the river and it was possible to envision a wide greenbelt that would allow for both riparian areas and human recreation, primarily in the form of the bike/walking path. In 1971, the Greenbelt Committee established "a minimum setback from the river of 70 feet for all structures and parking areas" (Tuck, 2014, p. 5), something which sounds extravagant now. Recreation and hygiene considerations were uppermost, but ecology found a de facto place in the absence of other pressures.

Meanwhile, while ecological concerns might not always have been uppermost, a certain kind of concern for social equity remained key. An extremely important element in the early plan for the Boise Greenbelt were statements in early documents that "the public would have 'in perpetuity unrestricted access to the river'" (Stacy, 1993, p. 74). Even though the initial design might have lacked some ecological sensitivity, the focus on public access is arguably key to the long-term survival of the greenbelt. Along with expectations of public access, the role of public investment, in the form of funds committed and time spent, is critical.

The desire for public space with "natural" features along with the political will to commit public funds created the conditions for attractiveness to private investors. After setting the goal of a usable greenbelt along an attractive, clean river, the city of Boise was for several years able to acquire land parcels which allowed extension of the greenbelt's length. Then, pressure for development began to increase. As Stacy notes,

> once the river cleanup and public investment in the Greenbelt had transformed the river into a sparking urban amenity, property owners who had been content with agricultural or industrial uses of their riverfront acreages took another look. If so many people wanted to be along the river, then surely they would enjoy having offices and homes along the river. […] [Still] developers could not always get their buildings as close to the river as they would have liked, but had to compete with the public for access. (1993, p. 80)

Developers, of course, rely on stable spaces with minimal ecological variation (including outright damage but also simply rising and falling water levels) in order to construct buildings and create income. Development might not have been so willing to move forward had there not been a federal program in place to reduce their financial risks and, in effect, redefine or reshape flood plain area as not floodable or not

vulnerable. Stacy notes the introduction of the National Flood Insurance Program as the catalyst for developers to propose projects and urban infrastructure in what had been a fairly open flood plain. The federal program, which had been passed by the US Congress in 1968, began to affect Boise in 1975 (Stacy, 1993, p. 81); its system of assessing the vulnerability of land to flooding, specifying mitigation approaches to avoid paying flood insurance, and its provision of post-disaster payments gave would-be developers and city boosters a way to rationalize building in the flood plain, making ecologically variable space into reliably open geometry. This shift made acquisition of land parcels more competitive and set the stage for conflicts between recreational use, development, and any notion of healthy river function.

Private developer projects sought to minimize both the public and the ecological aspects of the greenbelt model by changing the calculations of floodable area and edging construction as close as possible to the riverbank. In a notable project proposal from 1982–83 that was denied, we can see the conflicts between the notion of the public, ecology, and private financial interest in reducing the size of the flood plain and capitalizing on the amenity of the riverfront greenbelt. After years of watching the city accommodate developers' projects based on questionable measurements of the flood plain, a group of stakeholders combined forces to oppose the so-called Crandlemire project and to "promote the protection of natural and wildlife values on the river" (Stacy, 1993, p. 96). In Stacy's description of the reaction of the Greenbelt Committee, we can see these tensions between multiple values:

> Alarmed at an upsurge of sentiment that seemed to endow wildlife habitat with such a high priority, the Greenbelt Committee began to feel that the most basic principle of the Greenbelt—public access to the river—might be compromised. [...] The riverbank should not be removed from the public domain on the premise of designating it as a wildlife preserve. (1993, p. 96)

Somewhat ironically in light of this concern, it was not wildlife values but private development values which tended to reduce public access outright. Plans for the River Run residential area southeast of Boise on the south shore of the river went forward in 1978; calculations were made to redefine the area, previously assessed in the flood plain, as acceptable for construction. Notably, while the publicly accessible Greenbelt had played a significant role in making riverside living attractive, the River Run developers did their best to limit public access to the riverbank (Stacy, 1993, pp. 89–91); in the end, the city was able to keep a public portion along the river for pedestrians while bikes were detoured around the complex on a major arterial road (City of Boise, 2019). Similarly, but with even more dramatic consequences for public access, the Riverside Village residential development in the urban jurisdiction of Garden City went forward in 1980; these developers saw public access as a detriment to property values for the "estate homes" it aimed to market. For a period of time, in spite of negotiations, the Riverside Village posted signs at either end of the greenbelt stretch which declared it to be "private property." At a minimum, the Homeowners Association insisted that bicyclists must get off their bikes and walk through this stretch of path.

Private development also took little account of the natural river function on and around sites of planned development, dispensing with a holistic vision for the sake of delineated parcels. Adjustments were made to suit the construction needs at a site, not the broader needs of water or wildlife. For example, Riverside Village builders "haul[ed] fill onto all of the flood fringe up to the edge of the greenbelt path […] Custom homes were built next to the river on lots for sale at premium prices" (Stacy, 1993, p. 102). The Plantation project near Eagle suffered a setback in the dramatic 1983 flood because the clearing of shoreline for building and the dredging of a side stream permitted extreme erosion by the scouring floodwaters, reducing the size of the riverbank in that spot (p. 101). Building levees, the typical approach to avoid flood insurance, calculated how to protect a single building or project but did not factor in the effect of river flow on the opposite shore or surrounding buildings. During planning for the River Run project, it became clear that "calculations done earlier by the Corps [for an earlier project] had indicated that the levee along River Run and a controlled Loggers Creek would shift part of the flood to the other side of the river" (p. 89). Development, given its parameters and goals, always aimed to expand buildable area and reduce the friction of ecological variability; it also sought to reduce public access as a negative effect on privacy and profit.

While the word "gentrification" does not appear in discussions of the greenbelt's history, it is clear that the combination of hygiene, visually attractive green space, and leisure options created by the greenbelt tended to raise property values and decrease equitable access unless the urban jurisdiction chose to resist this force. The value of stable, buildable space along a waterway derives in part from the now globally attractive "park, café, riverwalk" model, which tends to attract an affluent urban class without taking account of ecological variability or, in this case, the needs of healthy river function.

A Brief Foray into River Function

Rivers have different flow regimes and different morphology in different topographies. The shape of a river and its topography determines how the water which flows in it will interact with the surrounding landscapes. For example, a river that has a wide, level flood plain will naturally meander, changing course from year to year depending on the volume of spring runoff; the height and angle of riverbanks will affect whether the land along the banks will experience flood. Generally, rivers in valleys where humans prefer to settle will flood in spring when the melting of snow produces a higher level of water; the water with its load of sediment tends to overflow existing banks to spread that sediment around the plain, redistributing nutrients that promote plant growth. Vegetation in such landscapes must adapt to these cycles, and sometimes require these "disturbances" to sustain healthy growth.

Many rivers which flow through urban areas have been modified either along their course or upstream of the cities in order to control the annual spring flows which produce flooding in human settlements. In the case of the Boise River, a dam system upstream (particularly Lucky Peak Dam) as well as channelization through the city

stabilize the river's flow; the shape of the river and infrastructure around it aim to prevent or reduce the flooding caused by spring runoff.

As a first part of an answer about the ecological qualifications of the Boise Greenbelt, then, we can see that by minimizing flooding, a greenbelt tends to deny this fundamental dynamic aspect of a river's natural existence. The Boise Greenbelt does not entirely avoid flooding. In recent years, for example in spring 2017 after a very deep snowpack year or even in spring 2021 when rapid warming caused earlier runoff, the Boise River has run high in March and April and sometimes has flooded parts of the surrounding banks, including lower-lying portions of the greenbelt, damaging stretches of the bike/walk path or making them impassable. If a greenbelt were to take the natural life of a river completely seriously, humans would accept the cost and trouble of rebuilding the bike/walk path each year after partial flooding; humans would agree to leave the riparian areas to the river for the time during spring flood and regard it as "theirs" only during the months of lower water flow. The very act of stabilizing the banks for human use—including making sure that spaces "owned" will reliably remain in existence and not erode away—means a drastic step away from ecology in many cases.

A second, related part of this answer concerns appropriate vegetation. Turfgrass has drawbacks but has become familiar and common as the most resilient ground cover for heavy use by human activities in parks. Arguably, city residents associate grass with a park's self-respecting appearance and would be troubled by alternatives. Natural riparian vegetation might offer far less space for picnic blankets and would not look as fitting. For most of its length the Boise Greenbelt has at least a strip of more native riparian vegetation; in some places it is very narrow, perhaps ten or a dozen yards; in other places, the formation of small near-shore islands has occurred and remains undisturbed. If the nearby land is publicly owned, these strips or buffers are likely to be wider; in one area further east of the city, called Barber Park, a vegetated area from 150–300 yards wide lies on the south bank of the river between its edge and the nearest development or parking lot. Yet native vegetation, such as cottonwood trees, has been found to respond and regenerate thanks to flood disturbance and will not germinate new individuals without such disturbance; thus, stabilized paths and vegetation at this level, too, are a step away from strict ecology.

The Boise Greenbelt Today

In 2016, the Boise Greenbelt was considered complete when a final short portion of path was built just southwest of downtown (KBOI, 2016).It stretches for over 25 miles, east to a park at the dam that made it possible and west into neighboring urban settlements; towns further west, downriver, have plans eventually to link up with the Boise Greenbelt and are preserving riparian area accordingly. As the Visit Idaho webpage states (Boise River Greenbelt, n.d.), the greenbelt "links over 850 acres of parks and natural areas along the Boise River," including a few large city parks and a county park where recreationalists typically start their "float" of the river in rafts or tubes (large tires). A walk along the greenbelt south of downtown could take you

past a nature center, the zoo, office buildings, park space, and small apartments with patios facing the path and the nearby river. Along some stretches, a fully vegetated riparian buffer separates the path from the water, while in some others or at access points, the river is fully visible and within several feet of the path. By plan, the Warm Springs Golf Course occupies an area north of the river, east of Boise; the Boise State University campus occupies a large area south of the river, opposite Julia Davis Park. Further east, you pass more homes and even come to the Idaho Shakespeare Festival, an outdoor theater facility. The greenbelt truly incorporates many uses and has managed to keep something of a pathway open along its entire length, in spite of occasional efforts to reduce public access. Having marked its 50-year anniversary in 2019, it has become "one of the most widely used amenities in the Treasure Valley" (Boise River Greenbelt, n.d.).

Interestingly, the issue of public access increasingly is tied to mobility between urban destinations. There is heavy use of the greenbelt as a bikeway for commuters or bicyclists seeking exercise. A 2014 Boise State University study of data from a survey of greenbelt users in September 2012 found that respondents were 44% pedestrians and 56% bicyclists, but "[ITD] traffic counts show that the actual numbers are probably closer to 35 percent pedestrians and 65 percent bicycles" (Tuck, 2014, p. 7; see also Boise River Resource, 2014, pp.26–27). In this situation we see a further stage of post-industrial development, where environmental concerns about fossil fuel use in cars prompt cities to develop systems of bike lanes (as Boise has done) and inspire individuals to travel by bicycle. While laudable environmentally, this value is not strictly ecological in terms of river function; separately, it can also come into conflict with viewing the greenbelt through the lens of property values. Thus, bicycle use, while technically less expensive than car ownership and technically "environmentalist," also may be a sign of gentrification rather than sustained affordability. There are groups in the city which actively seek to make the urban experience more equitable, such as the Boise Bicycle Project, but their heroic work is a sign of the difficulty and need for investment in creating social equity in space: assuring bicycle ownership cannot ensure access to housing for a wider "public" or assure healthy river function.

Even as genuine incorporation of ecology remains elusive, market pressures remain. Today, as tensions may have decreased in development inside the City of Boise's portion of the greenbelt, contradictions in philosophy are seen more between Boise, which pursues a more conservationist, ecology-oriented approach, and Garden City, a small city with a heretofore smaller tax base just to Boise's west, which has taken a much more pro-development and less ecologically sensitive approach to developing its own stretches of the greenbelt.

What happens along the greenbelt on that few-mile stretch is determined in some ways by overall trends in the district. The trend in Garden City, along the south shore of the Boise River to the west of Boise's downtown, has been to increase the tax base and gentrify previously more affordable areas, which typically include older housing, mobile home parks, and warehouse areas. The type of development which replaces it tends to value the river and its banks as an attractive visual backdrop to the

accumulation of financial equity; river function is not primary and public access may be acknowledged but not always embraced. Already in the late 1970s,

> the town had more than its share of transients and poor residents; most of the housing consisted of mobile homes, and the property tax yield was too low to do very much about the town's problems. In the 1970s new municipal leaders determined… to annex new land and let developers build high-quality residential developments. Garden City would be able to improve its tax revenues. (Stacy, 1993, p. 100)

Garden City remained relatively low-cost well into the 2010s until facing more gentrification pressure. In the early 2020s, caught in the rise in housing costs that has affected the Treasure Valley as well as the entire US, Garden City has seen the pressure on previously affordable areas produce more development projects that upgrade residential options but also increase rents. Assessing the difference in approach of the Boise greenbelt, a *BoiseDev* journalist wrote that

> Boise's Greenbelt is a more natural, secluded experience. There are occasional buildings and residences backing up to the pathway, but the city has left the dense vegetation between the Greenbelt and the river largely untouched. It feels nothing like a riverside boardwalk and there's very little commerce right on the Greenbelt. With a few exceptions, you must venture hundreds of feet off the walkway to grab a beer or find a place to eat. (Carmel, 2021)

While the phrase "dense vegetation" exaggerates the quality of some of the riparian area within the city limits of Boise, this passage signals the contrast.

The Boardwalk project located on the Garden City stretch of greenbelt is a good example of the way that this smaller municipality is seeking to bring the more standard "park, café, riverwalk" model to bear, leaning away from ecology and towards gentrification. The developer Michael Talbott set out to replicate in some way the beach boardwalk in Laguna Beach, CA, that he says his mother reminisced about when he was growing up. News coverage in 2019 stated that Talbott hoped to provide assistance to displaced tenants in finding new locations for mobile trailers or new residences, but the reporter noted that "to make the project a reality, about a dozen cottage homes and 16 mobile homes on the property will have to be torn down or moved" (Day, 2019). We can see that local ecology is neglected for an attractive vision derived from another place (in a different climatic regime) and that displacement is necessary in order to create this new residential space: that is, gentrification here generates a process of generalization, producing a differently hygienic, cleaned-out space of commonly attractive amenities. Based on sketches and plans, the project will surely produce a pleasant landscape that many people will enjoy if they can afford it and gain access to it (Day, 2021), but another population will find itself displaced along with the native ecology. The developer states laudable motives, but the project functions within a set of values that may or may not produce a project which will adapt to future climate changes or serve the river's needs. It would be wrong to generalize that such projects will occupy the river's length, and this

one seems to accept the premise of public access in the generic sense (that is, without considering financial ability to enter that "public space"), but it still participates in a model that allows the individual developer to consider isolated plans above the needs of the river.

Advocacy at some locations along the river do reflect awareness of the needs of the river and wildlife habitat, which is a good sign for the ecology but presages further struggle over a vision for the greenbelt. The 2014 Boise State study cites an unpublished history of Boise's development which noted that

> Downstream from Garden City, the Greenbelt ran into a snag—the protection of wildlife habitat. As the river approaches Eagle Island, it runs through lush wildlife habitat supporting eagles, foxes, deer and more. Greenbelt advocates tended to dismiss concerns as wealthy property owners wishing to bar the public from their land. But wildlife advocates pushed for a plan to relocate the path next to the State Street bypass to avoid disturbing wildlife. (J.M. Neil, City Limits [Unpublished manuscript], as cited in Tuck, p. 8)

Leaving spaces where biosphere processes are prioritized over human activity at some level contradicts the idea of unfettered "public" access; "additional amenities, including more restrooms, drinking fountains and trash cans" (Tuck, 2014, p. 8) reduce rather than support the ecology. If a greenbelt is to truly favor ecological processes and reflect education about and awareness of the needs of the river under changing conditions, human activity has to give way to reserved ecological space; certainly, this may be more acceptable to some than private homeowners forbidding entry to stretches of the riverbank, but it might be hard to accept for many. This inflection point reveals that, while post-industrial economies may be, at least at a local level, less materials-based than their industrial predecessors, they are not necessarily any more ecological unless they prioritize ecological function.

Piecemeal jurisdiction along the banks of any river can make holistic approaches difficult, but there are definitely stretches of the river where groups plan efforts to prioritize ecology and healthy river function. In July, the Boise City Open Space and Clean Water Advisory Committee approved a proposal by the Golden Eagle Audubon Society to spend $48,000 along the Boise River east of the city, primarily through removal of invasive species and planting of native vegetation that would support processes which conserve water quality, particularly by reducing erosion (Charan, 2021). Some aspects of the project would also divert human traffic away from vulnerable riparian areas. According to the meeting of the Boise City Open Space and Clean Water Advisory Committee, "the improvement project would conduct habitat restoration, create focused river access points, and provide educational opportunities throughout 1,028 acres of the Boise River riparian area extending from the Boise River Diversion Dam to the East Parkcenter Bridge" (Boise City Open Space, n.d.). Implying the need for greater awareness of how human activities affect biosphere processes, a spokesman for the Golden Eagle project noted that "a lot of the citizens of Boise don't recognize that they may be damaging [the river] […] As the Treasure Valley's population grows, 'the potential for the river quality to decline is quite high'" (Charan, 2021).

This type of project, incorporating education about river function into an existing, popular space that was initially catalyzed by desire for green space recreation, seems like the horizon for urban amenities like the Boise Greenbelt. The river is not a static visual backdrop for human relaxation; for sustainment of its capacity to offer clean water and a restorative setting, humans will need to understand its needs and adjust their expectations.

An intriguing and critical parallel to this notion of compromise with wildlife habitat and biosphere processes lies in analyses of the displacement caused by more affluent users and projects taking over space along any new green space amenity, particularly one including water such as riverbanks. The Garden City cases illustrate starkly that the process of land turnover for more affluent uses presumes that more hygienic, green, post-industrial spaces are intended for a certain class of people and will always end up that way. Another horizon for urban development in the coming decades is making clean, green spaces for lower class people that do not automatically gentrify. Along these lines, several scholars criticize the "park, café, riverwalk" model as a culprit and advise making spaces "just green enough" for ecological function and benefits, but not so green and gentrified that these spaces become financially unavailable to less affluent residents (Wolch et al., 2014). As Curran and Hamilton (2012) note, "environmental remediation in older neighborhoods and the creation of new green spaces can … literally 'naturalize' the disappearance of working-class communities, as such improved neighborhoods became targets for new and more upscale development" (p. 1028). Along these lines, an imaginative horizon might be to reconceptualize more "industrial" spaces as also allowing the presence of healthy biosphere processes, so that such landscapes do not necessarily require upscale post-industrial inhabitants (and thus unaffordability).

A greenbelt that supports a variety of class imaginations of landscape while also prioritizing the healthy function of the river in its ecosystem could provide a new and more climatically flexible model of the sort that cities need as they sustain their waterfronts.

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Follow the River: City Regeneration in Tension as Works of Water

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ABSTRACT

The article looks at some examples of the urban regeneration strategies and initiatives in Medellín, Colombia. Being part of the process of regeneration of the country after the decades of the armed conflict the initiatives transform the city at least by creating the discourse that facilitates the social change in the city. The ontological proposal of feminist more-than-humanism focusing on materiality of water, particularly its rhizomatic connectivity, allows rethinking the concept of the city and its regeneration as generation of the inclusive space that provides habitat and life for anyone who wants to live in, around, through, and with the city. The revised initiatives are symbolically divided into two groups: *water plans* of connection-fragmentation policy and *traces of water*—mostly grassroots connectivity in response to the dominating power structures. They are not uniform groups and are the products/processes of tension between opposite tendencies. Creative tension is *works of water*. Water looks at limitations as at the opportunity to create the new. Its regeneration is not re- but generation of the inclusive habitat that provides life for anyone who wants to live in, around, through, and with the city.

KEYWORDS

feminist more-than-humanism, Medellín, rhizome, civil disobedience, molecular revolution

The year of 2021 became the year of mass insurrection in Colombia against the oppressive system of violence, racism, and classism. The level of mass consciousness, courage, and decisiveness was impressive. The processes, thoughts, ideas that were covered or suppressed for decades were revealed, the alliances got stronger. The government applied the violent *dissipated* strategy of

reaction to the mass protests heavily based on the doctrine by Chilean politician and journalist López Tapia (Blanco, 2021). The doctrine misuses the Guattari's concept of the molecular revolution (1984), which he develops as an individual and social resistance to fetishism and reductionism imposed by capitalist system, as the implicit vitality of the society that ensures the resilience of the body under the necropolitics. Guattari unfolds the concept in appraisal of the social transformation in Brazil in 1982 (Guattari & Rolnik, 2008). The context of the contemporary social movement in Colombia reconfirms the importance and productive potentiality of the analytical lenses that the article presents.

The article revisits the water as a theoretical lens and discusses its applicability to understand the urban regeneration dynamics. I would like to start with looking at the materiality of water before I can unpack aquatic logic or thinking with water as an inspired in water onto-epistemology that shapes different branches of feminist more-than-humanism.

Water

In TV series *Longstreet*, Bruce Lee's character summarized the potential of water: "Be formless, shapeless, like water... Now, water can flow, or creep, or drip, or crash. Be water, my friend" (Silliphant et al., 1971). This stance, first, indicates the possibility of acting like water, and, second, elaborates on its meaning: it emphasizes the adaptability and plasticity yet resistance of water, its dynamic and ever-changing nature yet its ability to maintain its own structure. In other words, this passage teaches that one can reach one's goals even more surely and strongly when working together with something or someone, maybe despite but not against them.

Water metaphor can be developed further. Its molecular structure makes it the substance that sustains life on this planet thanks to its quality of cohesion, or its bonding ability. Its molecular electric asymmetry enables adaptive temperature balancing for organisms and transmission of the nutrients. Roughly speaking, drinking is breathing and eating. Translating the chemistry to social language, water suggests the crucial importance of asymmetry or decentralization for better understanding, of diversity for true sustainability (Kagan, 2011), of deconstruction as creation (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005). Its adaptability stresses the idea of universality of locality or situatedness, relationality principle over the principle of relativity that informs the processual thought such as feminist more-than-humanist approach (Ulmer, 2017).

As larger bodies of water, lakes, rivers, and oceans introduce the concept of the active, constructive, unpredictable, and diversifying diffraction in addition to rather one-dimensional, linear, passive, and representational reflection (Barad, 2007; van der Tuin, 2014; Geerts & van der Tuin, 2021). While the concept of diffraction comes from optics, one can observe the phenomenon in the water bodies, both in the diffraction of the light waves and the actual water waves: the phenomenon of waves' response to appearance or disappearance of an obstacle. The process of the creation of waves in the ocean as an ever-going process of energy movement between objects and forces is inspirational. So is the ocean's power to shape weather, climate, landscapes miles away from the shore.

Both the fact that life on the Earth appears in water and the ability of water to transform and magnify the forms of the objects makes water a real and metaphorical laboratory. Diversity of the forms of life in the water bodies and its ecosystems is an endless source and inspiration for studies in many disciplines.

To sum up, water questions the instrumental and teleological—destination oriented, Western imaginary and refocuses attention from the goal to the dynamism of process and relations that emerge in it. This focus brings at first sight spontaneous, but in actuality knowledge more grounded in the reality's diversity (Guattari & Negri, 1990) and its intra-active performativity (Barad, 2007). As a universal solvent, water dissolves and reassembles the existing structures; in the terms of the social theory, water as a theoretical framework deconstructs the imposed conventionality of the norms and reassembles them in the new more vivid manner.

Is water a metaphor though? Fiction, speculative, experiment, and statistics-based literature speak of the "principle of similarity" (Bakhtigaraeva, 2017) in the world and compare the vein structure of the leaves with that of the river's networks (Figure 1), roots, bronchial and cardiovascular systems (Bakhtigaraeva, 2017; Bredinina, 2020; Deleuze & Guattari, 2005; Pelletier & Turcotte, 2000; Sánchez et al., 2003; Thoreau, 1854/2019).

Figure 1
Leaf's Vein Structure as the River's Network

Note. Source: The Author.

Biological studies (e.g., Pelletier & Turcotte, 2000; Sánchez et al., 2003) based on the statistical similarity of such networks argue that they are most optimal for transporting nutrients. Constituting 60–65% of our body and 71% of the Earth's surface, water shapes the logic of life and our thought and enables our mutual understanding and relatedness with other creatures in the planet, making us an integral part of the planetary processes instead of being outside or above them (Neimanis, 2016; Marzec, 2019). As Thoreau (1854/2019) poetically elaborates: "No wonder that the Earth expresses itself outwardly in leaves, it so labors with the idea inwardly. The atoms have already learned this law, and are pregnant by it. The overhanging leaf sees here its prototype" (p. 179).

Thoreau (1854/2019) sees the whole world organization impregnant with the river logic; he traces it in the human vocabulary, compares bodies with frozen drops and wonders "what the human body would expand and flow out to under a more genial heaven" (p. 180). In her influential for feminist more-than-humanism theorization, Barad (2003) expresses a similar idea when she explains the world as an "ongoing flow of agency through which 'part' of the world makes itself differentially intelligible to another 'part' of the world" (p. 817).

The influence of water on our everyday life, bodies and minds is well documented in the myths all around the world, as well as in the contemporary world literature, plastic arts, music, media (Chen et al., 2013; Golovátina-Mora & Golovatina, 2014; Jue, 2020; Helmreich, 2011; Strang, 2004). The co-authored volume *Liquid Antiquity* (Holmes & Marta, 2017), for example, develops the argument of how the thought of water defined not only the plot but also the forms of ancient art and through that at least the Western contemporary art.

Considering this, water is not a mere participant of social, economic, political or cultural life, but it shapes the aquatic or amphibian thought itself, framework, logic of thought, intuition (Roca-Servat & Golovátina-Mora, 2020). Water builds or encourages, indicated the alliances and clues to understand the course of the event. All one needs to do is look for the river and follow it.

Aquatic Lenses

An image of a woman washing dishes and clothes in the river is probably familiar to many cultures and can be often seen even nowadays. The river takes away the dirt with or without an improvised or real detergent. The long and fast river takes it miles away from a small settlement without any immediate consequences—out of sight, out of mind. As a universal solvent, water can both nourish the body when clean and poison it when contaminated. Materiality of water defines rhizomatic bonding or interconnectedness of the world and reminds about it. From the perspective of processual thinking, direct cause-affect relations are always locally defined or situated and should not be perceived as universal (Barad, 2007; Deleuze & Guattari, 2005; Latour, 1996). What is universal, though, is the complexity and deterritorialization or constant deconstruction and renewal of the rhizomatic structures.

Analyzing the networks of the gorgonian corals, Sánchez et al. (2003) propose that the nature of their branching is tributary, "the product of a complex interaction between an intrinsic self-organized process and environmental effects that could vary from the physical properties of the habitat to the changing environment of the colony itself" (p. 137). These findings resonate with Barad's elaboration of the world's "ongoing open process of mattering through which 'mattering' itself acquires meaning and form in the realization of different agential possibilities" (Barad, 2003, p. 817). Focusing on the local causal relations may explain a local spatial-temporal condition but inhibits larger understanding of things or foreseeing their further development. Artificial blinding is both counterproductive and unethical as it silences the rich variety of forms of knowing, impedes the constructive creativity of this diversity, and intentionally ignores the already existing processes

The structural social and ecological crisis is civilizational because it is stipulated by the dominating and excluding Western patriarchal anthropo-, logocentric form of thinking. It produces an urgent need for the mindset that would be inclusive, equitable, and responsive (Neimanis, 2016) and would enable honest understanding of the actual origins and consequences of the crisis. Colombian sociologist Fals-Borda (1987) argued that without a holistic view, which connects theory with everyday practices in all their diversity and totality, it is impossible to achieve a more versatile understanding of the reality and even more impossible to actually transform it. Such praxis-oriented approach, where praxis means continuous and mutually enriching-enhancing interaction of theory and practice, informs different branches of the critical thought, including postcolonial, feminist, indigenous, and more-than-humanist thought and constitutes the aquatic lenses of thinking with water.

Materiality of water does not offer a new paradigm as such but rather re-channels our thinking towards equity, inclusion, and plasticity. In fact, its plasticity challenges the idea of the necessity of paradigm understood as a totalizing or directing ideology. It rather offers "the prospect of an ethico-political choice of diversity" (Guattari, 2015, p. 98). Water calls for recognition and coheres different seemingly unrelated components—people, phenomena, events, texts or happenings—in a "unified disunity" or "fluidarity"—"a pragmatic solidarity without solidity" (Guattari, 2000, p. 15), "in absolute respect of their own times" (Guattari & Negri, 1990, p. 120). If water offers any paradigm, it is intuitive, spontaneous and self-renewal rather than imposing, which is only possible in open free movement that is not anarchic or chaotic, but rather self-governing or performative (Barad, 2007), liberated of the imposed order (Feyerabend, 1975; Thoreau, 1849/2007).

The very nature of water, its materiality suggests the approach. Hybrid, unifying and connecting, adaptable, at the same resilient and resistant, water becomes a central element for the development of the critical thought and an eloquent framework to contest the existing methodologies starting with their ontological principles and the ontological dimension of the relations with the otherness: water-nature-society. Water is a mediator, a background, and a form, epistemological (knowledge), ontological (worlds), and methodological (ways to look at it) for the social-environmental relations. Aquatic logic implies emergent (Somerville, 2013)

thinking in relations with the multiple others, which includes social relations, practices, and processes. It cannot be applied to analysis of something as an external method but emerges out of and in the process of analysis. It is there. It is not thinking instead or like water, but rather with it, in connection to it, recognizing that we are part of it (Roca-Servat & Golovátina-Mora, 2020, p. 15; Chen et al., 2013, Introduction).

The City-Water Relations in Medellín: An Overview

As a conceptual category, water calls for rethinking social dynamics, relations of power and politics of othering and reveals the systemic violence against any other—water itself, weather, hills, mountains, forests, animals or marginalized human groups. If we see the city as a human habitat within and in coexistence with the broader environment, it becomes clear that the city as a human-centered space cannot provide conditions for dignified human life and development without mutually enriching interaction between not only human but also between human and non-human, living and non-living beings. While such interaction is inevitable, it has to be conscious and cherished in order to be mutually enriching.

In the heatwave of summer 2019 in London, the posters in metro reminded its visitors to carry water with them at all times. The informational materials on COVID-19 in 2020 recommend washing hands regularly to avoid propagation of the disease. Taken for granted and unquestioned access to water is the sign of privilege. Paraphrasing Cox's statement that "theory is always for someone and some purpose" (Cox, 1981, p. 128), water as a political body: it is never neutral, it is always for someone and some purpose.

Environmental and water justice sees water-society relations as hydro-social cycle, the on-going process of hydro-social metabolism, a social-natural process of mutual co-creation between water and society (Swyngedouw, 2009). From this perspective, the meaning of water differs across groups and territories. These multiple waters challenge, deconstruct or reconfirm the existing normative system regulating water-society relations, and create the sites for emergence of the new systems through everyday practices (Botero-Mesa & Roca-Servat, 2019; Botero-Mesa & Roca-Servat, 2020; Roca-Servat & Botero-Mesa, 2020) whether directly related to water or not.

Water in all its forms, rivers and precipitation or its absence, is the subject of constant debates in Medellín, the second largest city of Colombia. The Medellín River and its multiple tributaries define the relief of the valley and the infrastructure of the city of Medellín. Shaping the landscape and so the city itself, the river Medellín was rather opposed by the city than cooperated with. The city river and its multiple tributaries have been often seen as a nuisance, a monster that contests the existing social-political and economic order (Golovátina-Mora & Mora, 2013; Roca-Servat & Golovátina-Mora, 2020). The most common solution has been to make the river, and water generally speaking, invisible by channeling it, preferably under the surface, silencing or ignoring it. Stratification of the city organization defines the water landscapes, but not the relations with water. There is a common failure to connect

multiple waters of the city. The same district can paradoxically suffer from flooding and from the absence of the regular water supply.

Multiple waters define and are defined by the multiple cities within the city (Figure 2). While their relations are rather asymmetrical, they do exist as parts of one metabolic process, and the strength or existence of one force or movement incites the challenge, paraphrasing Vision (Russo & Russo, 2014). The restrictive policies are reproduced in other spheres of city organization and contributes to the further alienation of the city itself. Alienation results in the regular air contamination orange alert, increasing dominance of the gated communities, restricted public space, and recurrent violence (e.g., Valdés, 2017). At the same time, within last ten years urban movements, groups, and organizations that offer, employ, and appropriate ecological thinking became significantly active. Ecological thinking implies environmentally conscious behavior but goes beyond it towards looking at oneself not as at a detached organism but as a part of the organism-environment-circumstances system.

Figure 2

Image of the Channeled Marginalized Creek and the Homeless Person on Its Bank. Medellín, Barrio Laureles

Note. Source: The Author

The urban regeneration movement sees the city as a complex system that includes nature, traffic, streets, human and non-human inhabitants. It aims at visualizing the opportunities for interaction with the urban environment for the sake of city regeneration they are part of. The discourse of the city regeneration, however, is often framed within the popular and accepted discursive lines. The articulation of the goals is repetitive and often aligned with the official national and local urban development plans: developing citizen culture, building community, creating conditions for better together living of all the inhabitants of the city including the nature. This could be the mere use

of the buzz words but also the only possible tactics of the holistic development within and with the city. Being part of the country regeneration and peace process, they also create a certain discourse that facilitates more inclusive regeneration.

Environmentally conscious actions become an integral part of the ecological and holistic effort in the context of the recently signed peace, debates about forgiveness, inclusion of the members of FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) in the political process, recognition of homosexual marriages, granting legal rights to the Atrato river even if within certain limits (Mount, 2017; Vargas-Chaves et al., 2020). Progressive laws are especially impressive in a generally conservative and rather right-wing prone country, such as Colombia. The weak state that became the reason of the long-lasting domestic armed conflict and violence at the same time is the possible reason for the progressive civil achievements. Yet again, the weakness of the state does not guarantee the implementation of the laws. So, "strength incites challenge. Challenge incites conflict" (Russo & Russo, 2014).

Tension within and in connection to these progressive forces, rather than the achievements themselves, is the works of water. Its deployment in the city can be generalized in two tendencies of water in the city: *water plans* of connection-fragmentation policy and *traces of water*—mostly grassroots connectivity in response to the dominating power structures.

water plans

This section revises the officially accepted often private initiatives of the city regeneration by means of regeneration of the public space. Quite a few of them use water or rather a river in their names. The river, however, appears rather as a memory than the actual material being; as an imitation that is easier to keep under control.

The River City (*Ciudad del Rio*) is an open public place actively used for picnics, dog training, outdoor sports, skateboarding, and public artistic workshops. It is a place for crafts and arts fairs and farm markets. The remodeling of the Modern Art Museum of Antioquia, which offers its space to free talks and discussions among other events, made this area even more popular among younger and bohemian public. The area is surrounded by spectacular graffiti murals. The space was extended over the road to the River Market—a more sophisticated food court that became popular soon after it was opened. It regenerated the area around turning it into an attractive both indoors and outdoors place of encounter.

The park was built on the site of the demolished old steel factory. The use of the word river in the name is rather symbolic. As the web site presenting the project states:

> Medellín prospered in the long and deep valley. Like those plants that grow in the ruins demonstrating certain stubbornness and the adventurous spirit determined to find a loophole for the life to sprout. […] Ciudad Del Río is an urban project that gave life back to an area that used to be polluted by industrial activity. Where before there were only chimneys, ovens, and machines, today we see nature, color, art, and life sprout. (Botero & Botero Villegas, 2016, ch. 3; my translation—P. G.-M.)

The project continued to grow and is embedded in the overall urban strategy "to enjoy the river". The river became a metaphor for life, and urban life is conceptualized as public space and friendly atmosphere even if still stratified (Golovátina-Mora & Mora, 2013). By its nature water inescapably corrected the discourse: organized in chapters that reflect the phases of the project, the project website shows the green past of the Medellín River and its present encaged in concrete (Botero & Botero Villegas, ch. 1). With the time public and private tendencies were getting more mixed in the space that continued demonstrating the diverse forces sprouting and interacting in it.

Days of the Beach (*Días de Playa*) was an event that was held the first weekend of every month with the support of city administration and executed by different official and private organizations, collectives, and individuals in the city center that from the actual center of city life turned to a precarious and dangerous place with dusty buildings and polluted air. The Santa Elena creek that gave the name to the area suffered pollution with the further urbanization until it was perceived as a health hazard and a nuisance and put underground. Days of the Beach were part of the general effort of public space recovery: "A pilot project of building the city and the citizenship. We change the planning paradigm of our cities from the closed scheme towards the collaborative, open and free" (Dias de Playa, 2018a; my translation—P. G.-M.). The place was chosen both symbolically and strategically: "The Beach Avenue is a place where we can dream together to create the future of the Centre and of the City", said the slogan of the event (Dias de Playa, 2018b; my translation—P. G.-M.).

The symbol of the event pictured a yellow round sand beach (or the sun?) framed by the blue river and green leaves of the plants. The event commemorated the river and recognized the victims of the progress and urbanization that was mirrored by The House of Memory Museum constructed at the end of the avenue in 2006 as part of the Program of Recognition of the Victims by the City of Medellín. Its goal, according to the official web page of the Museum, was to

> understand and resolve the armed conflict as well as different violent acts and scenarios by exercising memory in the form of open, multiple, critical and reflexive dialogues… live the cultural transformation that Colombia is longing to [...] to see in order not to repeat [...] meet new hope and think other possible futures. (Quienes Somos, n.d.; my translation—P. G.-M.)

The web page of the event Day of the Beach complemented its vision. It was teaching about the past, the present, and the future of the place—the river, the city, and the society. The past was telling the story of the river-city relations showing the pictures of the organized walking tours along the river. It was emphasized with the reference to the indigenous tradition that walking is an important tool of learning and knowing. The *Días de Playa* web page (Dias de Playa, 2018c) indicated where the remnants of the river could be found: hidden underground bridges, people, and "permanent inhabitants of the area"—the trees and animals (my translation—P. G.-M.). The page did not make the distinction between plants, constructions, and people, they were all called inhabitants. The future of the river-beach-area-city-society was part

of the initiative: fishing for dreams and ideas—a fishnet with pieces of papers where anybody can write its vision of the city. The web page revealed that some proposals made a direct reference to the river reflecting the need of being in touch with water.

The final for this section example is the River Park (*Parque del Río*)—"an integral strategic project for the urban transformation, transformation of the public space and mobility, which will convert the River Medellín in the environmental corridor of the city as well as a public space of the city and the region" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2014, p. 18; my translation—P. G.-M.). Its overall goal was to "return life to the river and the river to the city and its inhabitants" (p. 2; my translation—P. G.-M.). The plan was to visually emphasize the river by making its embankments an encounter space and put the yet increasing, almost double according to the plan presentation, traffic underground. It also included the regeneration of the city hills that would contribute to this environmental corridor for all the city dwellers—humans, plants, and animals.

The projection images showed happy young people playing, walking among tall trees through which you can see diffused sun light. The river, however, was not seen anywhere there. The general plan image presented trees but no actual access to water. The river remained visually separated from the human inhabitants and domesticated animals. However, the project has been developing and may overcome the formal institutional fear of the waters. By now the project has been not just an engineering exercise and construction but included educational and creative workshops, community-based activities, sport events aimed at drawing attention to the project but also at raising general awareness about the state of water in the city and establishing closer emotional relations with it.

These three but not the only projects were grouped as one conflicting tendency that evidence the tension. The dominating idea, yet, is to allow creativity sprout in an organized and controlled "good clean fun" (Ramis, 1993) way.

traces of water

traces of water symbolically bring together ecological community-based and grassroots often scattered movements and initiatives that are not directly connected to water but form the overall discourse of the holistic social transformation and like water drops eventually reach the critical mass that becomes recognized and institutionalized.

The Pet Friendly movement is one of the examples. The number of pet friendly cafes, restaurants, and malls is growing in Medellín. They do not have special playgrounds for pets but allow the pet owners enjoy the service together with their pets. There are countryside day-care services, occasionally run by trained animal psychologists, that offer training, hotel, and transportation services for pets. This service is, however, limited to dogs and cats.

When the data analyzed in this paper was collected in 2017–2018, there was a strong tendency in the public discourse: the company EcoPoop offered an alternative to plastic dogs' excrement bags and process excrements to plant fertilizers, thus, "creating citizen culture for improvement of health, cooperation, and well-being of the community and the environment" (Nosotros, n.d.). "With us your pet enters the natural

process of the cycle of life and returning to earth", summarizes the advertisement of then local pet burying service company Animal Compost (Despedida Natural para tu mascota, n.d.). Signs educating dog owners portrayed a happy but busy looking puppy with a dust pin. Volunteer rescue organizations scattered all over the city, actively used social media to publish announcements for adoption, fundraising, and updates on the lost pets. The direct result of such campaigns was that pet stores in Medellín stopped selling animals and restricted their offer to pet products and services.

All together this created a certain civil culture, more open, sensitive, and conscious. People in the streets, although mostly in the richer neighborhoods, are more likely to stop and talk to a dog and by extension to a dog owner. The overall language both among pet owners and general public includes such words as "my pet is my family", "pet parents", "fluffy children", "my love", "my prince" or "my queen". A few dog owners prefer to use the word *perronalidad* (dog's personality) to emphasize that dogs have their own way of being and their own character as a person could have. There are still, however, very few dog parks, and the streets are not designed to walk a dog; there are almost no playgrounds for children either.

These practices, often spontaneous and individual initiatives, became part of the official process of the construction of peace and overcoming violence and prepared background for the bill 1774 passed in January 2016 that recognizes the animal rights and makes the subjects of protection by Penal Law instead of the Civil Law as it was before. Since then, no building or apartment owner can officially ban presence of a pet.

Now a popular touristic destination—Salento, Quindío—a little town that used to be the armed conflict zone territory, embodies this process: plants, land, people, dogs, cats that roam freely the town streets and are taken care of collectively, altogether form an alliance of peace reconstruction. "United with social meaning", says every street sign of the town.

Usage of the recycled materials in the craftworks and designs together with the campaigns for recycling and garbage processing, second hand and clothing swaps, anti-disposable utensils and face masks movement raise awareness of the overuse of plastic and disposable materials in our everyday life. The institutionalized policies work hand in hand with grassroots initiatives and new business opportunities.

There is a strong movement towards a healthier lifestyle that also aims at increasing knowledge of the local communities, territory, agriculture, and rural areas. Some examples are promotion of the organic, slow, vegetarian, and vegan food; support for small coffee and chocolate farms and the from farm to table initiatives; ecological walking tours in the city outskirts, marathons and *ciclovias* (cycling routes) that often extend their trajectories to the countryside and smaller towns; city gardening and compost making classes. Continuous cutting down trees for construction purposes coexist with the park extension strategies.

Yoga studios started as hipster urbanism tendency (Cowen, 2006; Hubbard, 2016), yet prepare the society for inclusion of alternative practices and ways of thinking. They act as a community building centers, even though they become the centers rather for expats and Colombians who lived abroad. Sessions in both Spanish and English are common. They organize potluck meetings, seminars, and activities to

bring people together, exchange experience and ideas and promote integral thinking. Co-working areas in a form of renting office spaces and coffee place as a community building space have become within last few years a new business opportunity among designers, artists, and intellectuals in Medellín.

Many of the above-mentioned groups and initiatives cooperate with each other based on the common values and goals. Not working explicitly with water, they are the secret works of water or traces of water. Limitations of these initiatives imposed by the urban segregation, differences in the access to the resources and the dominating economic model generate criticism and new spaces for discussion, merge initiatives and include new initially marginalized groups. All this slowly but steadily transforms the city towards recognition of the importance of the public space as urban regeneration that also implies greener, bluer, and more breathable city.

Water can be traced further towards the off grid urban, peri- and semiurban and rural communities contesting the dominating structures and power relations in tension and unfortunately as part of the continuous conflict (Roca-Servat & Perdomo-Sánchez, 2020).

Conclusion

Regeneration of multiple waterfronts in the city can create more sensibility towards water together with more-than-human inhabitants of the city, however, it can also—even if temporarily—reconfirm the oppressive system and its structure. At the same time, water reveals structural incoherencies on the molecular and intuitive level, social injustices in all its complexity and the profound nature of the problem by bringing to the surface or magnifying the oppressive structures, conditions, and practices that people are not always aware of. Without this awareness, any action aimed at social and environmental change will be more difficult or even fruitless. Water is present in the social discourse as a memory, nostalgia, and the public motivator. It indicates the sites for possible solutions that have always been there. Social longing for water evidences the role of water as a social solvent which yet coexists with fear of water and the desire to control it. Recognizing and supporting *traces of water* can facilitate and strengthen critical progression in the society, based on more-than-humanist justice and care.

Aquatic logic, as water itself, has an enormous regenerating power of self and the other in the city and beyond it. It is always the same and never the same all together. It does not work within cause-and-effect paradigm but operates with non-linear unpredictable and multidimensional affects. It does not destroy the limitations of the imposed structures but just goes over, around, through or with them to produce what better fits the momentous circumstances. It looks at limitations as at the opportunity to create the new. Its regeneration is not re- but generation of the inclusive habitat that provides life for anyone who wants to live in, around, through and with the city.

"In order to control myself, wrote Bruce Lee, I must first accept myself by going with and not against my nature" (as cited in Popova, 2013). What the city of Medellín, and possibly any other city, needs, is naive honesty in its relations with water.

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ARTICLE

The Transformation of Tobacco Factories and Depots in İstanbul Waterfront

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ABSTRACT

Since the 17th century, tobacco has been an important economic resource and a source of employment for hundreds of thousands of people both in the Ottoman Empire and throughout the Republic period. It has been an important source of employment, especially for the low-income female population. Tobacco control and management were given to the French *Régie* Company within the framework of the capitulations given to the French in the Ottoman Period, and subsequently the *Tekel* (*İnhisarlar*) administration in the Republic Period, also caused many social events. Tobacco, which entered the Ottoman lands in the 17th century, was banned several times over time for various reasons, as in many societies, and many people were punished. Monopoly management of tobacco as *Tekel* (*İnhisar*) was accepted for the first time in 1862, to centralize its production in 1861 and control tobacco smuggling and production. Since the 19th century, tobacco factories and warehouses have been built in districts of İstanbul such as Cibali, Üsküdar, and Kabataş, and sometimes they have been temporarily in existing historical buildings. With the development of tobacco production and factories, these buildings, which served different purposes until the 1980s, were later abandoned, some of them were demolished due to urban growth and development, and some of them have survived to the present day by transformation through restoration and renovation. Therefore, this article focuses on the transformation of tobacco factories and warehouses in the coastal areas of İstanbul as an industrial heritage.

KEYWORDS

tobacco factory, tobacco depot, İstanbul waterfront, architectural heritage, renovation

Introduction

In the history of İstanbul, there has been a close relationship between the coastal regions and the history of industrial buildings, especially the tobacco industry. Since the 17th century, tobacco has been an important economic resource and a source of employment for hundreds of thousands of people both in the Ottoman Empire and throughout the Republic period (Georgeon, 2000, p. 179). Tobacco factories also played an important role in the economic development and employment of the Ottoman Period and the Republic. Besides this, tobacco has been an important source of income for women, especially in families with financial difficulties (Özemre, 2007a, p. 41). Tobacco factories and depots take an important place in the industrial heritage of Turkey and especially İstanbul, since they were economically viable until the 1980s. They were also included in the olfactory memory of İstanbul. As A. Y. Özemre (2007a) points out, for those who passed by the factory and warehouses of the *Tekel (İnhisarlar)* administration on the waterfront in Üsküdar, which produced tobacco from 1935 to 1985, the building became important as a memory of the pure smell of tobacco leaves that burned the throat and the workers' siren was heard (Özemre, 2007b, p. 66; Özemre, 2007a, p. 151).

In his *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* (the Istanbul Encyclopedia), Reşad Ekrem Koçu (1966) recounts the stories of İstanbul and states that the habit of smoking tobacco in the Ottoman Empire began in the early 17th century during the reign of Sultan Ahmed I. This habit spread to all parts of society, including the son of Sultan Ahmed IV. Tobacco was banned during the reign of Sultan Murad, and offenders of the law were executed as a punishment (p. 4133). It is also written that tobacco use has become widespread especially among women. Many European painters, who were interested in Harem life, depicted women lying down and smoking hookah or stick (p. 4134) (Figure 1). Sticks were used from coffeehouses to houses and hammams and were kept in cabinets called *çubukluk* (stick holder) for the use of guests or customers. These sticks, which were ceremonially removed by the stick maker, were first continued by *çubuk ağaları* (stick aghas) and subsequently by firing. These were then placed in a silver or brass *takatuka* (a kind of ashtray) and given to the guests (p. 4135) (Figure 2). In this period, the production of snuff as a pleasurable substance was under the rule of *Tekel* and it was forbidden to bring snuff from outside. Tobacco was mostly used by ordinary people, and snuff was used by literate people. There were 94 snuff shops in Galata and Üsküdar in İstanbul between 1855 and 1860 and the sale of snuff was prohibited elsewhere (Koçu, 1968, p. 5121).

In the Ottoman Empire, tobacco became an important source of income for people in the 17th century and from this century on and made the Ottoman state an important tobacco exporter (Demir, 2019, p. 420). Tobacco production and processing were governed and directed by the state until the *Tobacco Monopoly* [Tütün Tekeli] was established in 1862, and the *Tobacco Régie Company* [Tütün Reji Şirketi] was established in 1884 and started tobacco business, cigarette factories in various regions (Kurt et al., 2016, p. 272).

Figure 1

J.-B. Vanmour. (1714). Femme Turque qui Fume sur le Sopha
[Turkish Woman Smoking on the Sofa].

Note. Engraving. Source: Vanmour, J.-B. (1714, p. 45).

Figure 2

A. I. Melling et al. (1819). Interieur d'un Café Public, sur la Place de Tophane
[Interior of a Public Cafe, on Tophane Square].

Note. Engraving. Source: Melling et al., (1819, p. 50).

Since İstanbul is a coastal city and has water resources, many industrial buildings have been in these coastal areas to benefit from the water, such as transportation (Doğan, 2013, p. 515). Tobacco factories and tobacco warehouses were established in coastal areas and nearby places throughout the city from the 1880s and increased after the 1800s with the development of industrialization. This article also focuses on the transformation of tobacco factories as an industrial heritage.

Industrial Buildings in the Late Ottoman Empire and Republican Era in İstanbul Waterfront

The history of İstanbul's industrial heritage goes back to the 1450s. Three years before the conquest of İstanbul, the first paper mill established in the Byzantine period in the 1450s was chosen to benefit from the rivers in the region and to provide energy from the surrounding mills (Doğan, 2013, p. 515), as the first industrial enterprises in the Golden Horn region after the conquest in 1453. There are *Tersane-i Amire* (Imperial Arsenal) and *Tophane-i Amire* (Imperial Armory) where cannons were poured. The armory was also established in the coastal areas in order to provide a connection with the port in order to meet the raw material and fuel needs (Doğaner, 1993, p. 76).

Coastal areas, on the other hand, became one of the important workshops of İstanbul in in the 15th century, with the development of shipbuilding (Doğaner, 1993, p. 76). That the Golden Horn, which is the inland sea, is a calm and sheltered port, and that it provides access to the Marmara Sea and other seas, has been a factor in the establishment of industrial facilities in these regions. According to Eyice (1950), *Tersane-i Amire* was built on the foundations of a shipyard built on the northern shore of the Golden Horn during the Byzantine Period (as cited in Köksal, 2005, p. 28). From the 16th century, shipyards and small workshops were established on the shore of the Golden Horn, from Azapkapı towards the west (Doğan, 2013, p. 515).

In the second half of the 17th century, different branches of the industry emerged in İstanbul, and tanneries were established around Yedikule-Kazlıçeşme as factories that needed water, and these facilities supplied water from the Küçüksu Stream. In the last quarter of the 19th century, military factories that did not need water were next to barracks, or close to the palace (Köksal, 2005, p. 24). While industrial facilities were on the coast until the end of the 17th century, in the 18th century, open wide fields, gardens and fewer residential areas and especially out-of-town areas were preferred for the construction of factories. Likewise, the waterfront has been preferred both as a transportation and energy source. As the transportation network developed in urban areas between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, new industrial facilities were established in these regions (p. 28). After the industrial revolution, most of the industrial structures built by the state and private sector in the Ottoman Empire, especially in the 19th century, were located in coastal areas and other non-residential areas (p. xviii).

In the Republican era, the Golden Horn was an important place for industrialization because it was designated as an industrial zone by Henri Prost in the 1936 İstanbul plan. However, Zeynep Çelik (1998) mentions, "industrial growth

from the mid-19th century on both shores of Golden Horn transformed the traditional urban layout and social structure of the city and led to the deterioration of the historic neighborhoods" (as cited in Günay & Dökmeci, 2012, p. 215). According to Ökçün (1997), "at the beginning of the 20th century, 55% of the industrial enterprises in the territory of the Ottoman Empire were in İstanbul" (as cited in Köksal & Ahunbay, 2006, p. 126)[1].

Many buildings in the city, which have been a modern architectural heritage since the 1980s, were demolished in accordance with the growth of the city and the decision to take the industry out of the city in the 1990s. Decisions for demolition may be to move, for example, from the Vakko Merter factory built in the 1960s because of the decision of the company to move on its own or, as Günay and Dökmeci (2012) stated, the example of Sütlüce Slaughterhouse, historical industrial facilities were demolished for the reconstruction of larger complexes (p. 220). In the 2000s, industrial heritage has been understood better and, in this context, many successful applications and transformations have taken place, especially in Istanbul (Cahantimur et al., 2010, p. 243). As Cahantimur et al. (2010) stated, since the awareness of sustainable development has not been fully developed in the revitalization of old industrial sites, there are many successful examples in terms of "renewal of the physical fabric and the active economical use of the buildings together with their surroundings" (p. 243) does not include and integrate the sustainability approach as in the transformation of the old gunpowder factory in Bakırköy into a cultural center; the old Mint Buildings to the İstanbul Museum; transforms the old fez factory (*Feshane-i Amire*) into the International Fair and Congress Center and the Silahtarağa power plant into a building complex for cultural facilities such as the Energy Museum, art galleries, and Bilgi University.

Tobacco Factories and Depots in İstanbul

Tobacco Culture and Development of Tobacco Industry in the Ottoman Empire

It is stated in various sources that tobacco was brought to İstanbul for the first time in 1600–1601 by British, Italian, and Spanish sailors and merchants in the Ottoman Empire, it was spread in 1605, and tobacco was called *duhan-ı bed-bûy* (smelly smoke). İbrahim Peçevi (1574–1649?), in his book *Târih-i Peçevî* (1864), stated that the British sold tobacco because "it was good for some diseases and th[ose] people with pleasure got used to it so that even the notables of science and statesmen were addicted to tobacco" (as cited in Fulin, 2019, p. 47; see also Türkiye'de tütünün tarihçesi, n.d.). It has been recorded that tobacco cultivation was carried

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1   Industrial buildings, the number of which reached 256 in the 19th century and decreased to 43 today, are waiting to be taken under protection as architectural, historical, and technological heritage. Today, 12 of the remaining 43 industrial complexes are in the Golden Horn. The transformation of historic industrial facilities within the context of the project includes museum complexes such as Rahmi Koç Industrial Museum, Silahtarağa Energy Museum, education centers (Kadir Has University, Bilgi University), and culture centers (Sütlüce Slaughterhouse, Feshane) (Köksal & Ahunbay, 2006, p. 126).

out in Macedonia, Yenice, and Karacaali and in the Aegean Region in the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, the country gained priority as an important source of income until 1922 (Yurtoğlu, 2018, p. 105; see also Türkiye'de tütünün tarihçesi, n.d.).

In 1554, the first coffee house in Istanbul was opened in Tahtakale, and this place also became a place where people meet with tobacco as well as coffee "demolished the coffeehouses on the pretext of the fire that broke out in Cibali and imposed a tobacco ban" and "even though fires or religious debates were shown as the reason for the ban", "coffeehouses, administrations, and administrators were criticized both in Europe and in Ottoman Empire" (Türkiye'de tütünün tarihçesi, n.d.). In this context, many smokers were killed in a secret place (Fulin, 2019, p. 50). Tobacco was released in 1646. In addition to customs duties on tobacco imports in 1678 and 1686, taxes began to be collected from tobacco sales. Tobacco taxes were increased in order to cover the expenses of the military station established in 1826 and to reduce the burden on the treasury in wars. In the following period, tobacco imports were banned in 1861, and Monopoly, which held the monopoly of tobacco, was accepted for the first time in 1862 (Türkiye'de tütünün tarihçesi, n.d.).

In the 19th century, there were tobacco factories outside of İstanbul: Cibali, Izmir tobacco factory, Samsun, Adana, Damascus, and Aleppo (Gürdamar, 2019, p. 65). *Tütün* [Tobacco], an economic, agricultural, professional magazine, which was firstly published at the end of the 1930s, is an important publication that conveys the developments in tobacco in Turkish and French and abroad, as well as agricultural control methods.

In 1881, the right to operate the tobacco monopoly obtained for 10 years by the *Rüsûm-ı Sitte İdaresi* [Rüsûm-ı Sitte Administration] financed by the Ottoman Bank and Galata Bankers was left to the *Duyûn-ı Umûmiye İdaresi* [Ottoman Public Debt Administration] in order to collect the Ottoman foreign debts (Türkiye'de tütünün tarihçesi, n.d). *Régie* was tasked by the administration with collecting tobacco taxes and dividing the proceeds between itself, the administration, and the Ottoman government, and had a "monopoly of the rights to oversee tobacco cultivation, purchase tobacco, and process tobacco sold in Turkey" (Georgeon, 2000, p. 179). With a specification made in 1883, the Administration transferred the business monopoly of tobaccos to a French capital-dominated company under the name of *Memalik-i Osmaniye Duhanları Müşterekü'l Menfaa Reji Şirketi* [Société de la Régie Co-intéressée des Tabacs de l'Empire Ottoman, Memaliki Osmaniye Duhanları Joint Interest Régie Company] for 30 years (Türkiye'de tütünün tarihçesi, n.d.; Koçu & Akbay, 1965, p. 3553).

In this process, reactions to the *Régie* Administration rose and *Régie*'s Kolcu organization of 7,000 people, comprising Anatolian youth, tortured the public to prevent tobacco smuggling, and tens of thousands of people lost their lives in armed conflicts (Türkiye'de tütünün tarihçesi, n.d.). Another reason for the hostility towards the *Régie*, as quoted by F. Georgeon (2000), is that this administration is accused of "employing too many non-Muslims", condemning "the harsh (and also ineffective) methods they used to suppress tobacco smuggling", and that the dividend paid to the government was too high. It became a "symbol of European imperialism" that

did not care about the interests of the Turkish economy and state has caused many people to hold grudges (p.180).

According to A. Y. Özemre (2007b), the institutional name for the concessions made by the French to tobacco during the capitulations was *Régie* Administration. After the capitulations were abolished, the management of tobacco passed to the State Monopoly Administration, which was a national organization, and this organization would later be named *Tekel* (p. 54). With a decision taken after the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, tobacco was taken under a state monopoly within the framework of the national economy after *Milli Mücadele* [the War of Independence], and all the assets of the *Régie* were transferred to the Ottoman Empire. In 1925, all actions against the state and tobacco were initiated under the law. *Tekel* organized tobacco and other monopoly products in order to provide more economic benefits. Then, tobacco workshops and cigarette factories built and used during the *Régie* period were restructured and made more equipped and functional (Koçu & Akbay, 1965, p. 3553; Yurtoğlu, 2018, p. 105).

In the years following the Republic, many factories and depots were built permanently in the coastal areas of Istanbul; some of them used existing buildings, and some of these buildings were demolished and rebuilt. These existing buildings have been transformed into different facilities, such as educational centres, arts, and cultural venues, office buildings, or a printing house (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Tobacco Factories and Depots (Both Existing and Demolished) in İstanbul
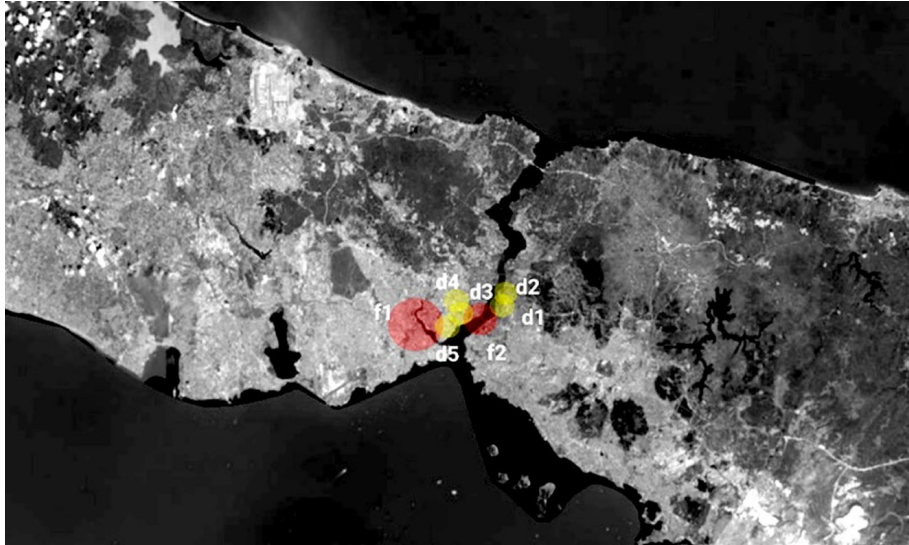
Note. Tobacco factories and depots (both existing and demolished) in İstanbul: F1 – Cibali tobacco and cigarette factory. F2 – Üsküdar Şemsipaşa tobacco factory and depot. D1 – Paşalimanı tobacco depot. D2 – Nemlizade tobacco depot. D3 – Beşiktaş Astro tobacco warehouse. D4 – Akev tobacco depot and administration building. D5 – Ekemen tobacco warehouse.
Source: İstanbul Şehir haritası [İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality city map], (2021e).

The Transformation of Tobacco Factories and Depots on İstanbul Waterfront

Cibali Tobacco and Cigarette Factory (1884)

Cibali Tobacco Factory, one of the most important factories of the Ottoman Empire and the largest tobacco factory in İstanbul was established in 1884 with the establishment of Tobacco *Régie* (Rezan Has Museum, 2021). It is one of the rare workplaces in Istanbul where workmanship is passed down from generation to generation (Cibali tütün fabrikası, 1994, p. 429). Cibali Tobacco Factory has an important role in Turkey's labor history, especially focusing on women's participation and labor force participation (Rezan Has Museum, 2021).

According to archival records, the building was designed by Hovsep Aznavur and Alexandre Vallaury on behalf of the *Régie* Administration on the foundations of a cistern that played an important role in meeting the water needs of İstanbul during the Byzantine Period. After the tobacco collected from different regions of Anatolia was stored, it was transported from the warehouse to the factory in bales, and the leaves were sorted, mixed with different leaves to obtain a blend, then packaged or sent to the cigarette packaging (Rezan Has Museum, 2021; Asbagh, 2018, p. 205).

The location of the factory, which was chosen as Cibali[2] on the shore of the Golden Horn, provided an advantage in terms of transportation, especially since the most important and cheapest means of transportation at that time was maritime (Haliç, 1994, pp. 501–508; Balsoy, 2009, p. 56). On the other hand, as Koçu and Akbay (1965) stated, another important reason for choosing the Cibali region for the location of the factory is the low-income group. Tobacco workshops, which could employ workers in the factory at that time, were gathered in a place known as Tobacco Customs (p. 3553). According to Balsoy (2009), although Cibali had a non-Muslim population, almost all of the female workers working in the factory were Jewish or Greek. The proof that there are girls is the fact that in the cosmopolitan nature of the Ottoman population in the 1900s, Muslim, Jewish, and Greek workers all worked together, shared the same grievances, and organized protests to overcome them (p. 56).

Cibali Tobacco Factory was operated by a French company for 40 years (Koçu & Akbay, 1965, p. 3553). The factory has become an institution that has provided a significant social and economic changes in the Cibali region and the country. Most of the country's tobacco, cigarettes, pipes, cigars, and snuff needs were met by the factory (Yurtoğlu, 2018, p. 100). Besides 2,162 workers, 1,500 of whom were women and 662 men, there was a fire brigade of 16 people. The factory was defined as a small town with a population of almost 2,500, with its factories, hospital, groceries, school, fire brigades, sports organizations, syndicates, restaurants, etc., and the police force and civil servants (Koçu & Akbay, 1965, p. 3554). As of 1940, approximately 1500 employees of the factory lived near Cibali, Fener, and Fatih, but most of them were

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[2]   Cibali is the neighborhood near Haliç or the Golden Horn behind the old Byzantine walls. Cibali name derives from the commander Cebe Ali broke the fortification doors and entered the city (Koçu & Akbay, 1965, p. 3547). "The harbor of Cibali which had storerooms full of goods for Istanbul consumers was an active passageway for the goods imported from the port into the city. Cibali was an important trade center in Istanbul and it was always remembered for two issues: fire and tobacco; as there were so many fires happened in the neighborhood and it was the location of the tobacco factory (Cibali, 1994, p. 428; Haliç, 1994, pp. 501–508).

women. A kindergarten was opened for the children of women workers under the age of seven in the factory, as well as an operating room, laboratory, and pharmacy have been in the health department of the factory included in 1942 (Koçu & Akbay, 1965, p. 3553; Yurtoğlu, 2018, p. 101). It is assumed that male workers in the factory were experts, while women worked in unskilled jobs (Balsoy, 2009, p. 62). According to Besim Ömer, a medical doctor and a pioneering obstetrician in the Ottoman Empire, stating that the tobacco industry is one industry that is dangerous for pregnant women, and based on statistical data, "45 percent of women in the tobacco industry had suffered a miscarriage" because of the inhaling of the tobacco dust (Balsoy, 2009, p. 66).

Figure 4

Cibali Tobacco and Cigarette Factory after the Restoration[3]

Note. Source: İstanbul Şehir haritası [İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality city map], (2021b).

Figure 5

İmalathane Dühan Merkeziye Dersaadet [Tobacco Production Center of Dersaadet (alias İstanbul)]

Note. Source: İmalathane dühan merkeziye Dersaadet (n.d.). Courtesy of Rezan Has Museum.

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[3]   The restoration realized by Mehmet Alper. "The project won the Architectural Heritage category of the Europa Nostra Prize 2003 as the best preserved building for preserving and keeping historical and cultural heritage alive" (Günay & Dökmeci, 2012, p. 218).

Figure 6

Tobacco Bales Arrived to the Factory

Note. Source: Tobacco bales arrived to the factory (n.d.). Courtesy of Rezan Has Museum.

Figure 7

A Picture of the Establishment of the Bridge

Note. Source: A picture of the establishment of the bridge [Photograph] (n.d.). Courtesy of Rezan Has Museum.

Figure 8

The Place of Tobacco Grinding Machines Called Havan

Note. Source: The place of tobacco grinding machines called havan (n.d.). Courtesy of Rezan Has Museum.

Figure 9

The Place to Put Tobacco in Packages. Cibali Tobacco and Cigarette Factory before the Restoration

Note. Source: The place to put tobacco in packages (n.d.). Courtesy of Rezan Has Museum.

Figure 10

The Place Where Cigarettes are Made by Hand

Note. Source: The place where cigarettes are made by hand (n.d.). Courtesy of Rezan Has Museum.

Figure 11

Cibali Tobacco and Cigarette Factory after the Restoration. Street view

Note. Source: Google, (2022a).

Figure 12

Cibali Tobacco and Cigarette Factory after the Restoration. Street View

Note. Source: Google map, (2022b).

The factory, which has been processing only tobacco for a long time since its establishment, started producing cigarettes in 1900. The factory, which met almost all the needs of İstanbul comprised 3 blocks (A, B, and C) with four floors on a large area of 8,300 m^2, with "dissembling and threshing works" in block A, "cigarette making and packaging work" in block B, "the manufacturing under the Directorate maintenance and administration departments" was in block C (Koçu & Akbay, 1965, p. 3553). The factory comprised eight sections, including separating, threshing, slaughtering, cigarette making, packaging, and shipping, as a clutch, cigarette package, tobacco package, and cleaning (Koçu & Akbay, 1965, p. 3553; Yurtoğlu, 2018, p. 100). Cibali Box Factory, which was next to the factory and operated as a small printing house in 1932, is also a company that produced boxes used in cigarette packaging later "with the addition of new facilities, it was transformed into a factory producing packaging and boxes next to the cigarette factory" (Koçu & Akbay, 1965, p. 3553). The cardboards were cut

into cigarette boxes and their pictures and writings were printed (Koçu & Akbay, 1965, p. 3553; Yurtoğlu, 2018, p. 101).

In 1925, the factory was taken over by *Tekel* and modern machines were brought to the factory in 1984 (Cibali tütün fabrikası, 1994, p. 429). "The factory edifice comprised several buildings that were linked to one another via courtyards or passageways" (Balsoy, 2009, p. 57). The building, which has a neoclassical style, "using brick, iron, and glass" and Marseille roof tiling, "cast-iron columns and steel beams, the INP used in laying brought from France" (Asbagh, 2018, p. 206). The façade of the building has been preserved, but its interior has been renewed (p. 207).

The factory was registered in 1987 (Cibali tütün fabrikasi, n.d.). It was repaired in 1999–2000, was later transformed into a private university, Kadir Has University, and was re-functioned as a university between 2000–2002, with the museum called Rezan Has Museum in the building's basement. During this restoration and renovation project, the remains of the Ottoman Bath and Byzantine Cistern were preserved. Later, an additional (block D) building was built and an additional floor in the middle of the building, which was built by *Tekel* in 1950, was demolished by Alper because of the lack of originality of the additional building. The structure, materials, original walls, or the structure of the building were preserved with some additional partitions (Asbagh, 2018, p. 206).

Paşalimanı Tobacco Depot, Üsküdar, 1789

The building was originally built as a granary-depot in 1789 in Üsküdar. In 2005, the buildings were transformed into the İstanbul State Theatre Üsküdar Tekel Stage (*İstanbul Devlet Tiyatroları Üsküdar Tekel Sahnesi*), Theatre and Opera Hall.

According to historian İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı (1977), the building was constructed for "Selim III's warehouse structures built by the sea in order to keep food and grain. That there is a mill structure next to the warehouses of Konya means Paşalimanı Flour Factory with the mill structure. It shows that the flour milled here is stored in the warehouse structures. He stated that the building, which later passed under the administration of *Tekel*, was also used as a tobacco warehouse" (as cited in Kona, 2015, p. 58).

Figure 13
Paşalimanı Tobacco Depot

Note. Source: İstanbul Şehir haritası [İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality city map], (2021d).

Figure 14

Paşalimanı Tekel Building and Tobacco Warehouse in Üsküdar

Note. Source: Çalıkoğlu, (2020).
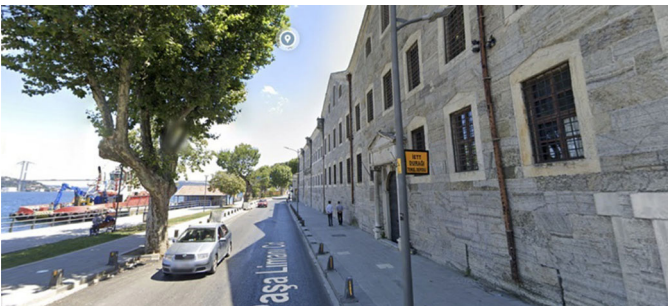
Figure 15

After the Restoration Process, Waterfront Facade

Note. Source: Yılmaz, (2019, p. 54).

Figure 16

Street View With The Waterfront, March, 2022 (Right Side)

Note. Source: Google, (2022c).

Figure 17
Street View With The Waterfront, March, 2022 (Left Side)

Note. Source: Google, (2022d).

Figure 18
After the Restoration Process, inside the Building

Note. Source: Üsküdar Tekel sahneleri, (n.d.).

The three gable-roofed buildings in the factory are used as the Headquarters of the İstanbul State Opera and Ballet and are also used as rehearsal rooms for the İstanbul State Opera and Ballet. The other warehouse building is used as the İstanbul State Theater Üsküdar Tekel Stage. Besides the theater performances, the İstanbul State Symphony Orchestra and the İstanbul State Turkish Folk Music Choir, the group rehearses in this building.

Tobacco Depot, Tophane, 1920s

The Tobacco Warehouse in Tophane was built in the 1920s to store and transfer tobacco because of its proximity to the Salıpazarı port. The building, comprising 1200 m^2 and 4 floors, continued to function as a warehouse until the 1950s, and in the following years, it was used only as a warehouse. The roof of the building was covered with wooden trusses, and the attic was used as an office (Tütün Deposu "Depo" Renovasyonu, n.d.). "Renovated by *Plan A Architecture*, facade walls are made of masonry bricks, floor carriers are reinforced concrete columns, beams, and all floor floors are built with wood. Additional steel beams were laid due to the scaling of the floors over time" (Tütün Deposu "Depo" Renovasyonu, n.d.). Since the İstanbul Biennial in 2005, the building was used for art exhibitions, and the building was renovated in 2008. In this reconstruction,

the "masonry walls of the building were reinforced with glass fiber bands", the wooden solid floors were overhauled, and the comfort of use in the building was ensured with heating, ventilation and cooling systems. Since 2009, it has been transformed into a center where cultural events, exhibitions, and workshops are held and there is an art gallery on the ground floor (Tütün Deposu "Depo" Renovasyonu, n.d.).

Figure 19
Tobacco Depot in Tophane,
Built in the 1920s

Figure 20
Tobacco Depot in Tophane,
Built in the 1920s

Note. Source: The Author, (2020).

Note. Source: The Author, (2020).

Figure 21
Tobacco Depot in Tophane

Note. Source: The Author, (2010).

Other Tobacco Depots

As Sayar (1955) mentioned, tobacco warehouses are places where "processed and unprocessed tobacco equivalents are subjected to permanent operations such as stacking in warehouses, transferring them at fermentation times according to the seasons, blending in processing halls and making them into equivalents" (p. 99).

In different periods, many other buildings in the coastal area of İstanbul were used as tobacco depots. An example of this is the Salt Repository (Tuz Ambarı) warehouse built in Kasımpaşa to serve a flour factory built in the 19th century. In the Ottoman Period, the gunpowder factory was used with different functions in different periods, along with the functions of the tobacco warehouse in the Republic Period. The building was registered in 2007 and later transformed into an advertising agency by the architects Erginoğlu and Çalışlar in 2008 (Büyükarslan & Güney, 2013).

On 1927 Pervititch maps, tobacco warehouses can be seen next to the Bezmialem Valide Sultan Mosque in Kabataş and across the highway. The *Régie* building is located next to the Ford Factory, which is located next to Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (Cangül, 2014).

Another building used as a tobacco warehouse is the Esma Sultan Mansion (1875), designed by the famous Ottoman architect Sarkis Balyan in Ortaköy and built as a wedding gift to Princess Esma Sultan, the daughter of the Ottoman ruler Sultan Abdulaziz (Kona, 2015, p. 31). The building changed hands several times after the death of the princess. It served as a Greek school since 1918, and after the fire in the 1920s, the three-store brick mansion was used as a tobacco warehouse between 1926–1933 and then as a coal depot. After the dynasty was taken abroad with the proclamation of the Republic, the mansion was sold and purchased by the deputy in 1952. Later, the building was destroyed in a fire in 1977 and was restored and renovated in 2001 to function as a multi-purpose event venue.

Nemlizade Tobacco Depot Paşalimanı, Üsküdar, 1923–1925

Nemlizade Tobacco Depot, which was built between 1922 and 1923 and completed in 1925, is the highest and most historical structure of the Bosphorus and is also known as the Şark Tobacco Depot. The 705 m² warehouse was built at the beginning of the 20th century as Şark Tobacco Warehouse, a reinforced concrete structure, designed by Architect Vedad Bey (Tek) in the First National Architectural style in 1923 for Tütüncü Kazım Emin Bey in the area that made a nose towards the sea where the mansion of Mehmed Mollazâde, one of the old sheikhs. As M. S. Genim (2012) mentions, "the building, which was re-sold in 1955, was restored ad transformed into an office building, and used as the headquarters of a private holding in 2004 after it was used by various institutions for different purposes" (as cited in Kona, 2015, p. 59; Nemlizade Tütün Deposu, 2021).

The building comprises a south-facing hall/workshop with a "U" plan scheme and a wellhole and elevator that provide vertical circulation on the middle axis of the plan. It is one of the first examples of reinforced concrete use and comprises the main carrier shell comprising reinforced concrete columns and beams, and an independent carcass system built with carrier beams and poles inside, in order

to provide the ventilation system required in tobacco warehouses for ventilation in tobacco storage. Each floor has workshops with a repeating plan scheme that serves to sort the tobacco and classify them according to its quality. The sheltered area obtained with a central courtyard in the south enabled tobacco to be stored without being affected by the winds from the sea. The elevator in which the load and the passenger are transported together was determined as one of the first applications of the period (Nemlizade Tütün Deposu, 2021).

Figure 22
Nemlizade Tobacco Depot (1923–1925)

Note. Source: Cangül, (2014).

Figure 23
Nemlizade Tobacco Depot building on the left side. On the right side, Paşalimanı Tekel Building and Tobacco Warehouse is Visible. A Street View. July 2020

Note. Source: Google, (2020).

Figure 24

View from the Sea, 2019, October 9

Note. Source: İstanbul Şehir haritası [İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality city map], (2021f).

Figure 25

View from the Sea, Panorama View, 2019, October 9

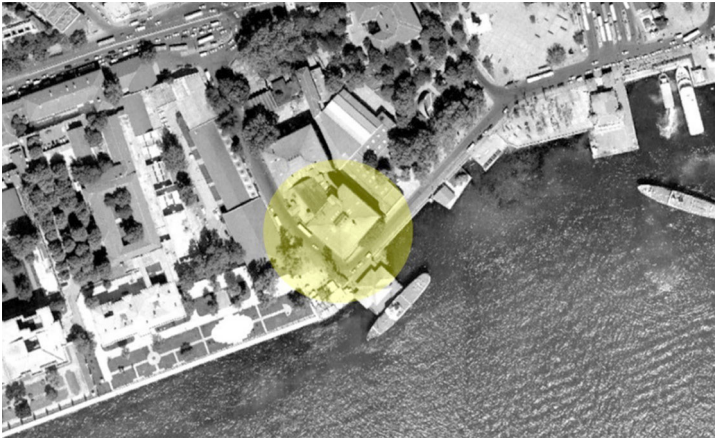*Note*. Source: İstanbul Şehir haritası [İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality city map], (2021g).

The building was evaluated as Vedad Tek's attempt at a new structure. The "main structure" of the building was constructed as a carcass shell woven by reinforced concrete columns and beams consisting of a hollow brick/concrete combination similar to the *Siegwart* system. "A large reinforced concrete shell was made, like a hollow box in which the tobacco can be freely placed inside the wooden grill system that provides ventilation" (Batur, 2009, p. 43).

Beşiktaş Astro Tobacco Warehouse, 1929

Beşiktaş Astro Tobacco Factory, built for tobacco production and storage on the Beşiktaş coast, was built by the Austrian firm *Austro-Turc Tobacco* in 1929 by Victor Adaman (1880–1948). As seen in Pervitich, the existing wooden mansion in this area was burned down and this tobacco shop was built. The architect of the building, V. Adaman, built a tobacco warehouse in Beşiktaş and Şemsipaşa tobacco warehouse in Üsküdar (Balmumcu, 1948, p. 47). Later, the building was demolished, rebuilt, with its facades preserved, and converted into a hotel in 2013.

Figure 26

Beşiktaş Astro Tobacco Warehouse, Map of 2006, Just Before the Demolition

Note. Source: İstanbul Şehir haritası [İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality city map], (2021a).

Figure 27

Beşiktaş Astro tütün deposu [Beşiktaş Astro Tobacco Warehouse]

Note. Source: Beşiktaş Astro tütün deposu [Beşiktaş Astro tobacco warehouse], (n.d.).

Figure 28
The Building in the 1950s

Note. Source: Yusufoğlu & Pilehvarian, (2017, p. 258).

Figure 29
View from the Sea, 02.10.2019

Note. Source: İstanbul Şehir haritası [İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality city map], (2022b).

It is known that V. Adaman worked as an apprentice of the French Levantine architect, Alexandre Vallaury, for many important buildings in İstanbul. He worked on the project and construction of the Tobacco Warehouse in Beşiktaş. The building was used as a warehouse and later transformed into a TV factory, which continued until 1985. The building, which was abandoned between 1985 and 2005, was about to be demolished before it was bought by a holding which signed an agreement with a private hotel (Shangri-La Bosphorus, n.d.).

The immovable cultural property was accepted and registered as another with the decision of the Warehouse, Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board in 2005. The building was registered as an industrial heritage with its layout, "including the number of floors, floor levels, interior and exterior spatial organization, floor

heights that differ from the lower floor to the upper floor, together with all these features of the exterior facades" but the exterior of the building was destroyed overnight while it was converted into a hotel.

In 1936, Beşiktaş Aircraft Factory was turned into an aircraft factory/workshop and hangars as a facility established by businessman and entrepreneur Nuri Demirağ, following Henri Prost's 1936 plan, on the land next to the Astro Tobacco Depot. The first single-engine aircraft in Turkey and a twin-engine 6-seater passenger plane were built in 1938 (Yusufoğlu & Pilehvarian, 2017, pp. 255, 258, 259). These workshops, built in the international style, have later been turned into a maritime museum. The tobacco warehouse was used by a television company for a while.

Üsküdar Şemsipaşa Tobacco Factory and Depot, Üsküdar, 1935

Üsküdar Şemsipaşa Tobacco Factory was built in 1935 by Victor Adaman. The location of the building is the mansion of Mehmed Ali Pasha (1813–1868), one of the *Kapudan Pashas* [Captain-i-Derya] during the reign of Sultan Abdulmecid Han. It consisted of three buildings: the tobacco warehouse, the tobacco processing building on the waterfront, and the lodging. A.Y. Özemre (2007b) mentioned in his book, *Hasretini çektiğim Üsküdar* [Üsküdar, which I miss], that "the public always referred to tobacco warehouses and tobacco processing places as *Régie* for a long time" (p. 54). The buildings, which were used as a monopoly tobacco processing and warehouse for many years, were demolished in 1985 due to the opening of the coastal road (Üsküdar'in Kaybolmuş Kültür Eserleri, 2020).

Figure 30
Üsküdar Şemsipaşa Tütün Fabrikası
[Üsküdar Şemsipaşa Tobacco Factory and Depot]

Note. Source: Üsküdar, (n.d.).

Figure 31
Üsküdar Şemsipaşa Tütün Fabrikası
[Üsküdar Şemsipaşa Tobacco Factory and Depot]

Note. (İnce, M. Ç., & Yurdaçaliş, N. E., 2013).

Akev Tobacco Depot and Administration Building, Beşiktaş, 1950

The warehouse of Akev Company in Beşiktaş is one of the largest warehouses built by private capital (Sayar, 1955, p. 99). Designed by the architect Zeki Sayar in 1950, the building is in a 3600m^2 area in the Beşiktaş coastal area (Sayar, 1955, p. 99). As a tobacco and processing house, "the building is more of a public building than a factory or warehouse building in terms of its location in the city, its relations with its surroundings, and the architectural order of its exterior" (İnan, 2015, p. 58). It comprises 3 warehouses, A, B, and C blocks, and an administration building.
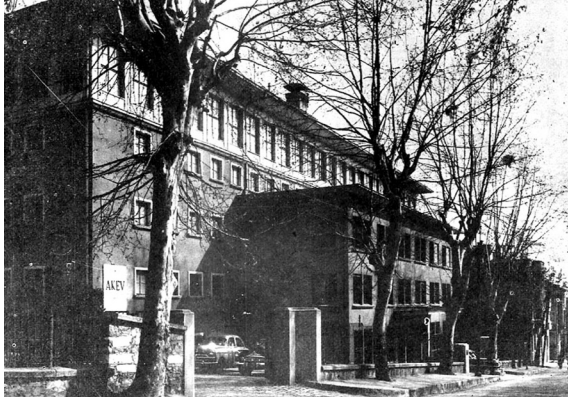
Figure 32
Akev tütün deposu ve idare binası [Akev Tobacco Depot and Administration Building]

Note. Source: İstanbul Şehir haritası [İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality city map], (2022a).
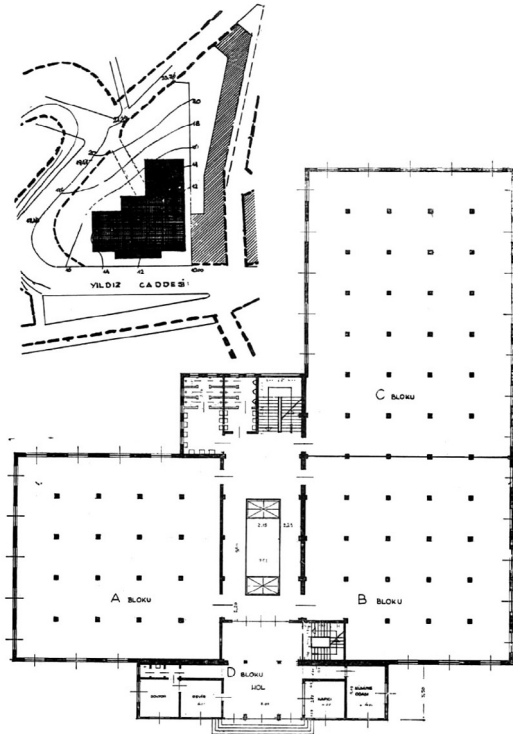
Figure 33

Akev tütün deposu ve idare binası [Akev Tobacco Depot and Administration Building][4]

Note. Source: Sayar, (1955, p. 99).

Figure 34

Site Plan and Ground Floor Plan

Note. Source: Sayar, (1955, pp. 100, 102).

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[4] The height of the ground floor is 3.60 meters, the height of the other warehouse floors is 2.70 meters, and the height of the 4th floor, where the processing halls are located, is 4.00 meters.

The repository is currently being used as a Nobel publishing house (Sayar, 1955, p. 100). Later, during the construction of Barbaros Boulevard, the building remained at the lower level of the road level because of the rise in the road elevation, which caused the building to reduce its architectural effect to a certain extent.

Figure 35
A Street View

Note. Source: Google, (2021a).

Figure 36
The Building from Later Periods

Note. Source: İnan & Cengizkan, (2015, p. 304).

Figure 37
A Street View

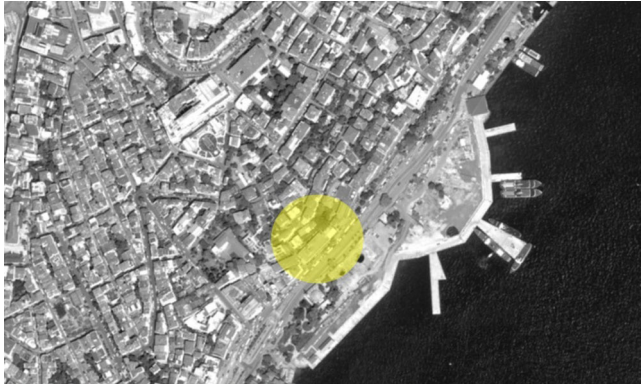*Note*. Source: İnan & Cengizkan, (2015, p. 303).

Ekemen Tobacco Warehouse and Tobacco Inn, Kabataş, 1952
The Ekemen Tobacco Warehouse and Tobacco Han were designed by Zeki Sayar in 1952 in the Fındıklı region.

> These buildings, which are located close to each other on the coastline starting from Beşiktaş and extending to Fındıklı, are still standing today and used for different functions. Ekemen Tobacco Warehouse, located right next to *Tütün Han* (Tobacco Inn), has also been transformed into an office building, but it has lost its original architectural character to a large extent due to its exterior coating and additions. Since the plans and projects of these two structures are not published anywhere, it is very difficult to trace the changes they have undergone. (İnan, 2015, p. 58; İnan & Cengizkan, 2015, p. 305)

Figure 38
Ekemen Tobacco Warehouse and Tütün Inn

Note. Source: İstanbul Şehir haritası [İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality city map], (2021c).

Figure 39
Ekemen Tobacco Warehouse and Tütün Inn, 1952

Note. Source: İnan & Cengizkan, (2015, p. 306).

Figure 40
Ekemen Tobacco Warehouse after Transformation

Note. Source: İnan & Cengizkan, (2015, p. 307).

Figure 41
Ekemen Tobacco Inn
after Transformation

Figure 42
Ekemen Tobacco Inn
after Transformation

Note. Source: İnan & Cengizkan, (2015, p. 305).

Note. Source: İnan & Cengizkan, (2015, p. 305).

In summary, the transformation of these factories and warehouses began in the 1960s and 1970s with the relocation of industrial areas of large cities to sub-centers in the region or less developed countries. The reason for the decrease in profits because of the increase in production costs is the basis of these urban approaches. As T. Erbil mentions, the reflections of these processes and practices were observed as collapsed areas in the old locations of the industrial zones in the old city centers. Rehabilitation works on some elements of old industrial facilities and old industrial zones, "transforming elements of physical, economic and social environment by building new affluent housing and business projects for the new users and in some rare cases, social projects for the workers of former industrial areas" (Erbil, 2017, p. 45). Since the 1980s, industrial production in metropolises has shifted to the sector in urban planning projects. With this period, "the sub-urbanization tendency of middle-upper class residential areas has gradually decreased and new residential areas have been concentrated vertically towards in the old urban centers where especially the services and cultural activities are concentrated" (p. 45).

Final Words

Since the establishment of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic, tobacco factories and warehouses, which played an important role in the economic development of Turkey, could not establish many relationships in terms of their function, like many industrial facilities of the period, in the coastal areas where they are usually located. They have a predominantly deaf façade in order not to be affected by the light, and it is seen that they are mysterious, few people can enter, and they are more disadvantageous compared to the transformation of other industrial facilities, except for the Cibali Tobacco Factory.

In this context, tobacco factories have become important buildings in the sense of providing economic employment, among other industrial structures; their relationship with the coastal areas and the transportation they have established, and the smell of society. These industrial facilities, which witnessed and are a part of regime changes such as social changes and the transition to the Republic, are gradually decreasing today or may be destroyed for various reasons, such as other cultural heritage examples. Today, when the access to coastal areas is decreasing, it becomes a more important issue for these structures to be transformed into cultural, artistic, and educational structures where they can use the interaction with the coast more efficiently in order for the structures to survive.

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ARTICLE

Who Plans What for Whom Under the "Iron Law" of Megaprojects? The Discourse Analysis of the Belgrade Waterfront Project

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ABSTRACT

Urban megaprojects exhibit various distortions: special regulations, budget overrun, additional funding sources, long-term timeframes, and ad-hoc actor networks. Coping with such challenges seems to be demanding even for the welfare states and advanced democracies built upon the governmental control of megaproject development. Therefore, it is interesting to observe the nature of urban governance of megaproject development in a transitional society facing immature institutional and regulatory frameworks. Against such background, this article examines the main forces behind the flagship project of contemporary Serbia—the Belgrade Waterfront megaproject. By collecting 38 articles from the daily press, the paper identifies relevant stakeholders and present their statements to depict their positions, interests, and specific value frameworks. Using the discourse analysis to interpret the statements, the paper offers the following results: *first*, recognition of conflicts and coalitions; *second*, elucidation of the decision-making flows, and *third*, identification

of power structures in the mentioned project. In addition, valuable insights into the problematic contextual features, e.g., tycoon-initiated urban development, the politics-led planning process, and weak civil engagement mechanisms, are elucidated. Concluding lessons on how to curb the extra-nature of urban megaprojects appear relevant for similar socio-spatial settings.

KEYWORDS
Belgrade, Belgrade Waterfront, discourse analysis, Serbia, transitional societies, urban megaprojects

Introduction

Observed through the lens of the physical structure and the built environment as an outcome of a planning process, megaprojects are not a new issue on the historical route of city development. Almost all the countries, and particularly those in Europe, faced the need for a massive urban redevelopment after World War II. However, a distinctive point should be noted here for understanding the specificities of the contemporary megaproject developments around the globe. Namely, up to the mid-1970s, all the massive urban developments were coordinated by the state—the state was the main funding source, coordinator of the developmental activities, and executor of the final implementation steps (Diaz Orueta & Fainstein, 2008). With the decline of public support in such projects and a substantial need for private finances, the public-private partnerships flourished as an adequate mechanism for managing large urban regeneration projects in the 1990s. The shift from a traditional industry towards a more creative one directly affected the vast parts of urban land, usually in the central city areas. The role of the state changed, too: first to the managerial, and afterwards to the entrepreneurial mode (Fainstein, 2001; Brenner, 2004, 2019).

Contemporary megaproject development frequently happens on abandoned industrial sites or deprived urban areas—brownfields—usually situated within the inner-city centre, well-connected to the transport nodes, equipped with diverse infrastructural networks, and close to the built urban patterns. However, new development demands the change of the previous land use and a significant improvement or new construction of both infrastructural grids and the building stock. Against such a background, urban megaprojects are a point of interest to various stakeholders: developers chasing for profit through revitalising the site, citizens tending to protect their local urban identity, and planners and public officials stretched between the ethical norms to protect the public interest and pressure imposed by financially powerful actors. Flyvbjerg (2017) further illustratively defines

the "iron-law" as an operating mode of megaproject development. Accordingly, the "iron-law" of megaprojects relies upon the logic of exception and includes extra budget, special regulations, non-standard organisational structure, questioning of public accountability, and the central role of developers at the expense of the city leaders, planners, and citizens. In recognising the potential negative externalities invoked by megaprojects, some authors claim the role of the public sector, the extent of governmental control and commitment to the social equity as a remedy towards an exceptional nature of megaproject development (Fainstein, 2001, 2008).

The management mode of megaprojects—based on strong developers, quite frequently including the international financial powerholders (Flyvbjerg, 2014), seems to be similar regardless of the context—developed Global North or developing Global South (del Cerro Santamaria, 2013; Lee, 2012; Flyvbjerg, 2009). However, particular attention should be devoted to differentiating the role of the public sector in developed and developing societies. Regarding the first, the success of the public intervention in the megaproject development depends on the specific social model the megaproject is embedded in (Fainstein, 2008; Perić & Hoch, 2017). For example, in liberal democracies with a strong capitalist outlook (e.g., United States), the extent of government support would be marginalised. On the other hand, weakened, but still persevering welfare democracies (e.g., Scandinavia) would provide much more room for public deliberation and negotiation of the initially posed interests by the private sector. Interestingly, in both cases, the local authorities (e.g., city mayor) play a crucial role as they want to leave a mark on their cities (Fainstein, 2008). However, what is happening in the transitional societies (e.g., post-socialist European countries) stretched between the need to catch up with the global competitiveness and the immature institutional and regulatory frameworks incapable of protecting the public interest amidst the run for developer's attraction? The governmental efficacy in pursuing its control mechanisms lacks in the societies faced with political, institutional and market transition (Cook, 2010; Keresztély & Scott, 2012; Perić & Maruna, 2012; Cope, 2015; Djurasović, 2016; Zdunić, 2017; Perić & D'hondt, 2020). But is the state and the city a weak side-lined party dominated by the developers' commitment to private benefits?

Transitional societies face a paradox: though the public sector is not a key player in the megaproject game according to the previously described role of providing governmental control, it is not marginalised. The politics embedded into the highest governmental tiers becomes the key partner and enabler of the developers' visions. This is known as authoritarian neoliberalism (Bruff, 2014, 2016; Di Giovanni, 2016) In contrast to the previously mentioned strong local administrative scale as a prerequisite for successful megaproject development, transitional countries are dominated by the so-called "top-top" approach, i.e., a regulationist state-led process of urban development (Zeković & Maričić, 2022).

Lined up with the previous approach, Serbia offers a typical example of the nation-state politics playing a significant role in pursuing megaproject development (Zeković et al., 2018; Grubbauer & Čamprag, 2018; Machala & Koelemaij, 2019; Perić, 2020b; Piletić, 2022). State-led management of urban development appears

due to a specific nature of the Serbian government, which can be described as "hybrid", i.e., between democracy and autocracy (Nations in Transit 2020. Serbia, 2020)[1], or as Vujošević (2010) puts it: a "proto-democracy". Under such circumstances, urban megaprojects are seen as a tool of the ruling political regime in strengthening its power and influence no matter the side effects on the entire society. Consequently, high-level politicians' nationalist narrative dominates the advertising of urban megaprojects seen as a source of income and new jobs for the residents, strengthening the national economy, boosting the overall prosperity, and positioning a city on the map of the world cities (Grubbauer & Čamprag, 2018). Nevertheless, the reality is different—populist language usually serves only to hide corruption and political patronage under a veil of authoritarian entrepreneurialism (Perić, 2020b; Perić & D'hondt, 2020; Zeković & Maričić, 2022).

In the next sections, we illuminate such narrative used in the megaproject development of the Belgrade Waterfront (BW) project. More specifically, we look at the planning phase of the BW project—from the project inception during the political campaign in 2012 till the start of the construction in 2015. Observing the front-end phase is crucial, as we intend to reveal the narrative that triggers the exclusive position of megaprojects as a tool for urban development, and to illuminate different communication styles that settle the ground for megaproject development in the country facing transformation towards the liberal economy and political pluralism.

The paper is structured as follows. After a brief overview of the specificities of urban megaproject development in different societies with a particular emphasis on the transitional countries, we present the methodological apparatus used in the research revolving around the discourse analysis as a relevant tool to discover not only given but also hidden factors shaping the story behind the BW project. The central part firstly presents the statements of the relevant stakeholders (units of analysis) to be then critically interpreted. The concluding remarks draw explicitly on the parameters that not only elucidate the narrative but also explain a larger social and institutional setting: actors' coalitions and conflicts, decision-making flows, and power structures. Recommendations on how to increase the level of governmental support and, thus, strengthen the commitment to social equity are briefly provided in the end.

Methodological Approach

The selected case for the analysis—Belgrade Waterfront, is referred to as the best practice example of urban development according to the political structures in power since 2012. To elucidate the narrative behind this project, i.e., to reveal major driving forces that have shaped its process and outcomes—all ingrained in different

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[1]   According to the Freedom House's Nations in Transit 2020. Serbia (2020) Report on the fluctuation of the democracy level among the Central European and the Western Balkans states over ten years (2010–2020), in the period between 2010 and 2018, Serbia was considered a semi-consolidated democracy, while in 2019 and 2020 Serbia held the status of a "competitive authoritarian" or "hybrid" (between democracy and autocracy) regime.

stakeholders' positions, interests, and value frameworks as the main variables—newspaper articles were chosen as the source of information. More precisely, these were 38 selected articles published in three renowned daily papers—*Politika*, *Blic*, and *Danas*, between 2012 and 2015. These papers provide objective information based on research journalism, analyse the relevant topics from different angles (urban planning, economy, social justice), and treat equally all the relevant stakeholders to comprehensively show various viewpoints on the topic. For brevity, the following sections provide and analyse 17 key stakeholders' statements as the units of analysis.

A discourse analysis was used to analyse the statements to get an insight into the way the stakeholders speak about the megaprojects, what they highlight as their advantages, and how they perceive its shortcomings. From the perspective of discourse analysis, political conflict is not a simple consequence of a conflict of interest but involves different meanings that people incorporate into the problem. Therefore, if urban development stems from the decision-making process, the methodology to understand planning changes should not be normative, but descriptive, explanatory, interpretative, and hermeneutical (Getimis, 2012). How actions are represented in the language is, thus, of crucial interest (Jacobs, 2006). The discourse analysis does not start from a fixed theoretical and methodological stance; it is the process during which the topic is further refined to construct the object of research (Fairclough, 2003). According to Hajer (2006), the discourse analysis "opens up methodologically sound ways to combine the analysis of the discursive production of meaning with the analysis of the socio-political practices from which social constructs emerge, and in which the actors that make these statements engage" (p. 67).

In brief, the methodological assumption of the discourse analysis is that different stakeholders tend to establish a specific narrative or the version of an event to pursue their own goals (Jacobs, 2006; Fairclough et al., 2004). Hence, this analysis not only helps to understand what the main tone of the general narrative is but also identify what has been not said in the announcements and what that further reveals about the projects. In other words, the discourse analysis elucidates the ideological, political, and economic contexts that shape powerful stakeholders aimed at creating a hegemony of their interests (Lees, 2004).

In practical terms, the steps of discursive analysis start from data collection and description, followed by interpretation and, finally, the analysis ends with an explanation. As the key milestone in the entire process of the BW urban development was the adoption of the amended Belgrade Master Plan in 2014 (The Amendments, 2014), the analytical units were collected two years before and one year after the plan adoption to depict the most intense narrative on the BW pros and cons. Provided original statements are analysed by the coding technique with the stated preferences further grouped according to their mutual similarities. Such data interpretation aims at identifying the dominant discourses, i.e., various viewpoints of stakeholders and their interests based on the specific value system. More precisely, discourse analysis elucidates the stakeholders' conflicts and coalitions, decision-making flows, and power structures.

The Discourse of Urban Megaproject Development: The Case of Belgrade Waterfront

The BW project has been the paradigmatic example of contemporary Belgrade urban development. Since the beginning of the new millennium, the 90-ha area on the right bank of the River Sava has been continuously deteriorating to, finally, transform into a huge brownfield area occupied mainly by an obsolete shunting yard as part of the Belgrade main railway station and some dilapidated housing (Figure 1). Embedded in the central city core, the area has been always attracting the greatest attention, not only of national but also of international parties. BW was announced as the priority project during the 2012 political campaign of the then largest opposition party—the Serbian Progressive Party (SPP), which after winning the elections fulfilled its promise. The preliminary design project by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (Figures 2, 3) served as a base for the final project design by the local planning and architectural offices, and amendments to the Belgrade Master Plan in 2014 (The Amendments, 2014). The construction of a grand political project financed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) investor, Eagle Hills (represented by sheikh Mohamed Alabbar), with considerable subsidies by the Serbian government, commenced in September 2015.

Figure 1

The Position of the Belgrade Waterfront Project
within the Belgrade City Pattern
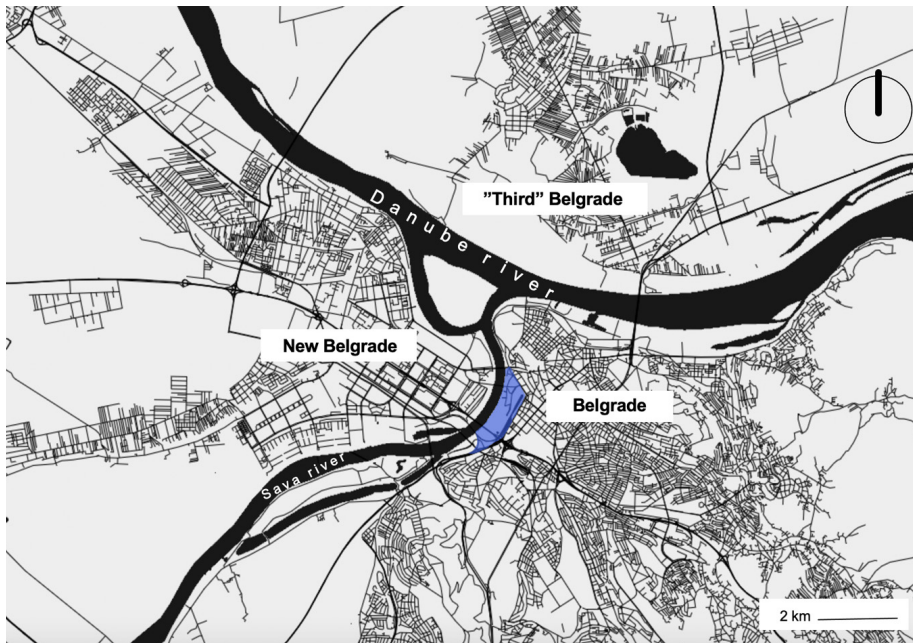
Note. Source: Authors.

Figure 2

The Model of the Belgrade Waterfront Project

Note. Source: https://www.belgradewaterfront.com; copyright: Eagle Hills.

Figure 3

The Rendering of the Belgrade Waterfront Project

Note. Source: https://www.belgradewaterfront.com; copyright: Eagle Hills.

Overview of the Units of Analysis

In total, 17 statements as the analytical units are collected for the period between 2012 and 2015, as given in Table 1 below. The table indicates the name of the daily press, the date and the title of the article, the stakeholder providing the statement, and the statement itself. The key wording within the statement relevant for the data analysis (i.e., the part of the statement depicting specific position, interest, and value framework) has been additionally underlined.

Table 1

Overview of the Stakeholders' Statements

Daily press, date The news article title	Stakeholder in the Belgrade Waterfront project Stakeholder's statement
Politika, 20.04.2012 Rudolf Giuliani in Belgrade at the invitation of the Progressives	**Candidate for Mayor of Belgrade, A. Vučić** "I think that this is one of the absolutely greatest projects that Belgrade and Serbia can have. [...] We have secured investors, I tell you, of course, there will be tenders for everything" (Politika, 2012; our translation—authors).
Blic, 01.08.2013 Djilas: 'Belgrade Waterfront'and the metro will change the image of the city	**Mayor of Belgrade, D. Djilas** "I believe that with the cooperation of the republic government and city authorities on the subway project and this project, we can do what is really good for all Belgraders" (Blic, 2013; our translation—authors).
Politika, 24.12.2013 Emirates finances Belgrade Waterfront shopping center	**Coordinator of the BW project/the SPP board member, A. Karlovčan** "We will try to get money from the UEA not only for the construction of facilities in the Sava amphitheater, whose value is estimated at around 3.1 billion dollars, but also for clearing that location. [...] The competition will not be announced. [...] Planning documentation will be flexible" (Politika, 2013; our translation—authors).
Blic, 09.01.2014 Vučić: Alabbar invests $ 3.1 billion in Belgrade Waterfront	**First Deputy Prime Minister, A. Vučić** "His [Alabbar's] conceptual plan is to clean everything up from there, and to make it the only task for Serbia" (Blic, 2014a; our translation—authors).
Blic, 19.01.2014 Stefanović: Belgrade Waterfront is the future for the city and the people of Belgrade	**Speaker of Serbian Parliament/Vice President of the SPP, N. Stefanović** "We have shown that we know how to think strategically and that we know how to attract investors who will bring money, and not just expect something to drip from the budget and someone to give you something" (Blic, 2014b; our translation—authors).
Danas, 20.01.2014 Announce a competition for the project Belgrade Waterfront	**First Deputy Prime Minister, A. Vučić** "I know that nothing is good enough for us Serbs. Whatever we do, there will always be someone who will find something wrong with it, even if it was the most beautiful project for our country ever" (Danas, 2014a; our translation—authors).
Danas, 20.01.2014 Announce a competition for the project Belgrade Waterfront	**President of the Association of Architects of Serbia, I. Marić** "Why such a rush as if they were races? I guess in this troubled Serbia of ours, when such plans are in question, a wide circle of citizens, architects, engineers, economists should be asked" (Danas, 2014; our translation—authors).

Table 1 Continued

Daily press, date The news article title	Stakeholder in the Belgrade Waterfront project Stakeholder's statement
Blic, 20.01.2014 Vučić on "Belgrade Waterfront": Work will be completed	**First Deputy Prime Minister, A. Vučić** "We will respect the legal procedures and we will bring everything in accordance with the law, but other people's money must be respected. [...] If you think we're going to Europe and making fun of other people's money, that our minds are much more important than someone's three billion dollars, I have to ask you where you think we live" (Blic, 2014c; our translation—authors).
Blic, 20.01.2014 Transparency Serbia': Is competition excluded for Belgrade Waterfront?	**NGO Transparency Serbia** "Will such an offer be accepted in the future when a potential investor presents a project that envisages the formation of a joint venture, in which the state or city offers land, and the investor money, or will we act selectively towards investors? [...] What is the legal basis for forming a joint venture—is it a public-private partnership project, has the PPP Commission voted on it, as provided by the Law from 2011?" (Blic, 2014d; our translation—authors).
Blic, 01.03.2014 Presentation in Dubai, premiere of Belgrade Waterfront in Cannes	**Economic Advisor to the First Deputy Prime Minister, S. Mali** "Tomorrow is the most important day in the development of Belgrade Waterfront so far. This is the key day, because after that we can start preparing urbanism and all other planning documents in order to realise that project. [...] The final presentation of the master plan of the entire project will be led by Mohamed Alabbar, who is the author of the project" (Blic, 2014e; our translation—authors).
Blic, 27.06.2014 Model discovered: This is "Belgrade Waterfront"	**Prime Minister, A. Vučić** "Our plan is to change this part of the city and the face of Serbia, which should look as beautiful and clean as this building" (Blic, 2014f).
Politika, 05.10.2014 "Belgrade Waterfront" will not be a jungle of skyscrapers	**Director of the Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade, N. Stefanović** "The competition was absent because politicians and the investor agreed. This is a project of national importance" (Politika, 2014a; our translation—authors).
Politika, 06.11.2014 SANU presented 22 pages of remarks on "Belgrade Waterfront"	**SANU (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts), Architecture and Urban Planning Committee** "If the draft spatial plan is not changed, 'Belgrade Waterfront' will remain an iisolated island in the center of the capital, difficult to access and barely passable, which will cause traffic problems in other parts of the city as well" (Politika, 2014b; our translation—authors).
Danas, 15.11.2014 With swim rings and a song against "Belgrade Waterfront"	**Activists "Don't let Belgrade d(r)own"** "We will not allow public finances to be spent on private projects that only bring spatial segregation and traffic collapse to the city. [...] The development, functioning of the city and its identity cannot be a product of investor desires, but exclusively of the needs of the society itself" (Danas, 2014b; our translation—authors).

Table 1 Continued

Daily press, date The news article title	Stakeholder in the Belgrade Waterfront project Stakeholder's statement
Blic, 06.03.2015 Architects: Urgently suspend the Belgrade Waterfront project	**Academy of Architecture of Serbia** "The project itself and the manner of its implementation abound in a number of legal violations, all in the interest of a supposedly profitable economic idea, in cooperation with a private investor. [...] The Spatial Plan for the Area for Specific Use that was adopted, actually <u>legalises the largest illegal construction in the world. The plan was the subject of a fake, farcical public inspection</u>" (Blic, 2015; our translation—authors).
Danas, 10.03.2015 Mali: Everything we do is transparent	**President of the Academy of Architecture of Serbia, M. Mitrović** "<u>Everything new is met with such a reaction from the public</u>. A huge and fantastic issue is that the space of the Sava amphitheater has been cleared. <u>We know that all major projects are being built gradually</u>, so the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona has been built for 200 years" (Danas, 2015a; our translation—authors)..
Danas, 29.03.2015 Lawyers: "Belgrade Waterfront" project is unconstitutional	**Group of 15 Belgrade lawyers** "<u>Whether it is legal and legitimate to sign an agreement with a foreign partner, and then change the legal regulations and adopt a special law that enables a non-transparent agreement, is a question for everyone who participates in the process of adopting this special law</u>. [...] If the investor himself is not ready to solve property-legal relations by buying buildings and land from the current owners, why would it be done from the funds of all citizens, given to the budget of the Republic of Serbia?" (Danas, 2015b; our translation—authors).

Note. Source: Authors.

Discourse Analysis of the Belgrade Waterfront Project

The first idea on the Belgrade Waterfront project was coined in spring 2012 by Aleksandar Vučić, the then vice-president of the Serbian Progressive Party (SPP)—the largest opposition party in the political campaign for election bids at all levels (presidential, parliamentary, and local). The use of superlatives in describing the project was expected from Vučić running for the position of the mayor of Belgrade. Additionally, his statements discover two distinctiveness: firstly, he uses direct language in addressing the general public ("I tell you"), and secondly, he highlights the need for transparency when referring to the BW project. Such compelling and convincing language directed to the public intends to gain public support through diminishing negative project externalities, mainly concerning the endangered social justice and the public interest.

In July 2012, the SPP became the ruling one, with the newly elected president and the national parliament. However, the local authorities in Belgrade kept the previous structure composed of most of the Democratic Party representatives. However, the dominance of the Progressives invoked the soon replacement of the city authorities. Hence, the vague statement from the mayor of Belgrade in the summer of 2013 revolving around the benefit "for all" reads as Djilas's last attempt to create a tight relationship with the national government. As expected, he failed.

With placing the SPP political comrades in the Belgrade city authorities, the parliament, and the government, the BW story started to heat up to reveal the details deemed contradictory to Vučić's pre-election promises. The newly elected coordinators of the BW project (at the same time high-level SPP members) unveiled the specific nature of the new megaproject—the absence of tenders, and the flexibility in creating planning documentation, as backed up by the recently adopted legislation[2]. Soon the UAE Eagle Hills officer presented the project to the Serbian government, and Vučić decided to become the main spokesperson for the BW project, with the sporadic support of his political fellows. However, their narrative was a grievance towards the general public. Namely, they directly accused people ("nothing is good enough for us Serbs", "I have to ask you where you think we live"), disregarded the public comments ("someone who will find something wrong"), and overtly supported private developers ("other people's money must be respected"), instead of providing the direct answers to the concrete remarks, posed by the president of the Association of Architects of Serbia, among others. What lay behind such accusing rhetoric was not only safeguarding the developer's interests but more the need to hide their mutual relationship open for various inconsistencies and malversations due to the lack of institutional control of the feedback between high-level politicians and developers.

The public feedback to such a narrative was scarce. The non-governmental organisation Transparency Serbia emphasised the legal basis of the liaison between the government (providing land) and developers (securing money for urban development), and asked for a path-dependency in terms of respecting the existing regulations on public-private partnership and consulting the bodies which could offer useful advice. The Progressives stayed deaf to such demands and continued glorifying "Alabbar's project" ready to prepare all the planning documents to accommodate it. As this was not a standard procedure, i.e., usually project follows a plan and not vice versa, the Serbian politicians demonstrated they understood well the specificity of a megaproject development, as well as the readiness for its implementation.

In June 2014, after the early parliamentary elections, Vučić became the prime minister, and the determination to succeed in the BW project became more structured, followed by the narrative full of superlatives and transferring the image of BW to the entire country of Serbia[3]. Expert bodies close to the political regime (e.g., the Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade) were engaged to prepare the necessary planning documentation to proceed with the project. However, they were not asked for any expert advice; rather, they were seen as a means to translate "the politicians' and the investor's agreements" into the planning instruments that will ease the project

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[2]   The Act Confirming the Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Government of United Arab Emirates (Zakon o potvrđivanju sporazuma, 2013) legitimises the joint venture agreements to be made without an open tender procedure, while Serbia was obliged to adopt any changes to other laws and regulations in a way they are desirable for the foreign investor. Based on this law and the modified planning law (Zakon o planiranju i izgradnji, 2014), the Joint Venture Agreement was established in April 2015 (Perić, 2020a).

[3]   This reflected the governmental decision (May 2014) to declare Belgrade Waterfront as an "area of national importance" for the economic development of the country.

implementation[4]. The proactivity of the politicians was proven once again, as they undertook all the necessary procedural steps towards the project implementation—amended the master plan and changed the planning law to enable the production of a spatial plan, thus scaling up the entire procedure resulting in a "top-top" approach of governance and land use.

The independent experts not familiar with the political regime, such as the SANU board, presented their arguments against the draft Spatial Plan of Belgrade Waterfront, however, they did not tackle the core of the problem concerning the project. SANU referred only to the negative consequences on the city in terms of its functional organisation ("isolated island", "traffic problems"). However, the activists brought the essence of the problematics highlighting opaque and opportunistic decision-making process instead of focusing on "the needs of the society". The other group of independent experts (Academy of Architecture of Serbia) raised its voice against the project depicting it as "the largest illegal construction in the world". However, such a tone was redundant as the Spatial Plan of Belgrade Waterfront (Uredba o utvrđivanju prostornog plana, 2015) was adopted in January 2015, i.e., two months earlier. To make this entire situation more complex, the president of the mentioned academy supported the project at the same time inducing some irrelevant conclusions ("everything new is met with such a [negative] reaction") aimed to create public confusion. Such a discrepancy in the positions between the head of an organisation and its board, questions the independence and reliability of an expert body in fighting for the public interest. As the issue of legitimacy always coloured the narrative on BW, finally it was the group of Belgrade lawyers who questioned the decision-making process, the preparation and adoption of the planning documents, and even an announced enactment of the Lex Specialis[5]—the law that should define the public interest in the BW project. The law was adopted in a fast-track decision-making procedure in April 2015, hence intrinsically providing fruitful ground for managing all future megaprojects in Serbia.

Concluding Remarks

The discourse analysis of the daily press on the BW project elucidated not only the facts but also the general context within which a certain narrative is formed. It is the latter that requires greater attending, as "misinformation about costs, schedules, benefits, and risks is the norm throughout [mega]project development and decision-making" (Flyvbjerg, 2017, p. 8). More precisely, the facts, sometimes purposefully, stay hidden or become revealed rather late during the process, e.g., when some key

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[4]   The Amendments on the Master Plan of Belgrade (The Amendments, 2014) were adopted by the City Assembly in September 2014. However, as this plan was not legally backed up (as it dismissed the procedure of international competition for the waterfront area and the change of the land-use and arrangements rules) the planning law was updated in December 2014 (Zakon o planiranju i izgradnji, 2014), to include new categories—areas with tourism potential, and areas of national importance—in the description of the coverage by the Spatial Plan for the Area of Specific Use (usually made for areas with natural and environmental values, mining areas, and areas with hydro potential) (Perić, 2020a).

[5]   Lex Specialis—The Law on Establishing the Public Interest and Special Procedures of Expropriation and the Issuance of Building Permit for the Project "Belgrade Waterfront" (Zakon o utvrđivanju javnog interesa, 2015).

decisions had been already taken. Hence, the discourse analysis proved to be a useful tool in addressing the project features and illuminating neglected contextual factors. These are elucidated in the following lines through the lens of conflicts and coalitions, decision-making flows, and power structures.

Conflicts and coalitions. Since the very first idea on the BW project development, its initiators excessively used the justifying and euphoric narrative on the "project of national importance" and incorporated this phrase in all the necessary legislation to secure the project implementation. The high-level politicians, depicted primarily in Vučić first as the prime minister and since 2017 as the president of Serbia, in the symbiosis with the Eagle Hills, was determined to push the private interest above national priorities. Interestingly, such close feedback between politics and money did not cause a huge negative reaction among the public. Oppositional political parties sporadically interrupted the glorifying discourse, professionals in the public institutions became the tool in the visible hand of politics, while independent experts were lacking consistency and clear argumentation, with usually late reactions. As expected, such a response did not put the experts in the spotlight and left the public with little or no beliefs in the validity of their remarks. The only actor showing a fierce and constant revolt against the dominant political panegyric was the civil sector. The fact that they appear in the newspapers just at the end of 2014 confirms that public to-the-point comments on the irregularities on numerous procedural steps were seriously taken by the politicians who purposefully limited their public visibility, framed within a broader context of non-transparent media coverage[6].

Decision-making flows. Fuelled by the foreign developer's investment, the Serbian political bodies fulfilled the necessary prerequisites to timely legitimate all the decisions that secured the project implementation. In other words, the required planning and legal documents were amended to embrace the changes that enable a smooth realisation of the BW project. For example, the Planning Law (Zakon o planiranju i izgradnji, 2014) was updated to accommodate modification of the categorisation of the spatial plans. This enabled assigning the BW project to the Spatial Plan of the Area of Specific Use (Uredba o utvrđivanju prostornog plana, 2015). In practical terms, a city master plan became a national spatial plan. The higher instance attribution served to simplify and accelerate the decision-making process, leaving the crucial decisions about the future project development to be made by the highest political bodies. In addition, the law that equals private interest of the Eagle Hills with the public interest of Serbia—Lex Specialis (Zakon o utvrđivanju javnog interesa, 2015) was urgently prepared and adopted (for three months), to legitimate the financial profit for the developer under the veil of public benefit. Such ad-hoc decision-making proves the role of politicians as quick learners eager to secure the required conditions for an exceptional, special, non-standard megaproject development at the expense of public accountability.

[6]   According to Freedom House (Freedom in the World 2022. Serbia, 2022), since its newly elected regime in 2012, Serbia has been continuously suffering from various "forms of political pressure on independent media and civil society organisations". In 2022, Serbia's status declined from "free" to "partly free" due to continued attempts by the government and allied media outlets to undermine independent journalists through legal harassment and smear campaigns, keeping the same status today (July 2022).

Power structures. In terms of power structures and their representation in public, the BW case shows a distorted version of megaproject development compared to liberal democracies, where developers have a leading role. Instead of the noticeable investors with quiet politicians, BW embraced the strong spokesperson of Vučić, while Alabbar's name was mentioned on rare occasions. However, this is not a sign of a strong state and a high level of governmental control. In contrast, as the BW is implemented in Serbia, a country with a high level of corruption and political patronage, i.e., the absence of control over the work of public bodies, Vučić's show-off in public hides the real power holders: Eagle Hills is silent and keeps its power far from the public eye. In addition, purposefully adopted autocratic role in decision-making power excludes all other parties but foreign developers. The illusion that the city mayor Mali has been heard in the entire process comes from the fact that he is a high SPP member and, hence, under the direct control of the key national figure as the president of the party. The absence of civil institutions and only the civil sector as a counterpart to the political hegemony illustrates a collapse of institutions, legal regulations, and society. Expert power is undermined: as the experts' statements designate that they are lost in the whirlpool of conflicting interests, without the necessary skills how to curb the private interests in a rudimentary market-economy, they have been left aside, serving only as the puppets needed to prepare the technical documentation under the reins of the national leader. Strategic thinking and strategic planning do not exist.

Urban megaprojects lead to deregulation and question the role and purpose of urban planning, which is additionally undermined by political favouritism. Strongly polarised national politics devoted to supporting private interests weakens the financial and institutional capacity of local authorities, erodes professional competences, and suppresses public opinions. As a result, a "top-top" approach in planning, governance and implementation of megaprojects in Serbia relies upon the series of legitimation procedures supported by the state to protect the false public interest. The transformation of these conditions requires diverse social, political, and economic changes that go far beyond what "good planning" can achieve. Nevertheless, the change starts with strengthening the role of the public institutions and a greater extent of governmental control of a megaproject development. Accordingly, basic recommendations for reducing the negative externalities of megaproject developments are as follows (Perić, 2020b; Grubbauer & Čamprag, 2018; Zeković & Maričić, 2022):

- Boost the autonomy of planners in making innovative procedures to create trust, mutual respect, and cooperation among numerous stakeholders
- Establish a synergy between experts and citizens to improve public dialogue and facilitate participation
- Strengthen the institutional capacity (both knowledge and finance) of local authorities to face the top-down decision-making
- Define the public interest through regulatory mechanisms to establish legitimacy
- Critically assess the discourse used in promoting megaprojects to dismiss the politicians' nationalist narrative

Only when Serbia paves the way towards democratic accountability will the populist political discourse vanish to enable transparent and collaborative mechanisms for protecting the public interest, overcoming polarisation, and boosting social equity as a counterflow to the "iron law" of megaproject development.

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ARTICLE

From Systemic Underdevelopment to Basic Urban Maintenance: National Priority Projects in the Russian Periphery

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ABSTRACT

The case of urban development in the Russian periphery is often overlooked in the scholarly efforts to theorize the center-periphery dynamics characteristic of the post-socialist contexts, not least in the case of Russia. Consequently, the analysis of urban development initiatives in the regions and provinces defies the logic of large-scale urban projects with characteristic subdominant relations between the state and the private sector, since the latter and the former are tied in competition for limited federal resources. We delve into the particularities of the center-periphery dynamics through the case of the Vologda River embankment renovation project, paying particular attention to the decision-making processes, lack of transparency, and bureaucratic hustle in response to the civil protest—all characteristic of a distinctive, though common across Russia's peripheral towns, dilemma of systemic underdevelopment *vs* basic urban maintenance. We rely on discourse analysis of legal and regulatory documents, project plans, meetings proceedings and official correspondence between departmental agencies, and media posts created by the local protest groups during the period of 2018–2019. Through this analysis, we showcase not only the asymmetries of power relations in the post-socialist periphery, but also bureaucratic constraints and uncertainties that often amount to a standstill situation with uncertain prospects for future improvement.

Introduction

The nature of the post-socialist transition left urban planners wondering about how to explain its dramatically divergent regional outcomes. Much has been written on the logic of post-socialist urban planning in large cities across Central and Eastern Europe, contributing greatly to the global debates in comparative urban studies (Hirt et al, 2016; Müller & Trubina, 2020; Tuvikene, 2016). While focusing on the neoliberal nature of post-Soviet urban governance, local stories from the peripheries were often left behind the scenes. As common urban development trajectories tend to result in the mass privatization of public resources, extraction and concentration of the wealth in the hands of the few, the commodification of urban space within the major urban centers, or prevalence of urban mega-projects and mega-events that prioritize large-scale private investments over democratic processes (Büdenbender & Zupan, 2017; Grubbauer & Čamprag, 2019; Kinossian & Morgan, 2014; Müller & Pickles, 2015), peripheral regions and smaller towns are seen to lag behind, without the prospect of even reaching such "high developmental" outcomes (Zubarevich, 2013). This contrast between the center and periphery is particularly characteristic of contemporary Russia. Regions and municipalities lose some authority over decision making in urban development due to a lack of an independent budget base as a result of the centralized taxation system. The setting of priority tasks and agendas, within such a scheme, is formed centrally and remotely, which inevitably leads to the overinflation of design objectives and puts regions in front of the choice between "volume" or "quality".

Driven by the need to fulfill social demands within the context of economic and political constraints, the dependence of regions on the center is deepening (Zubarevich, 2018). Due to a lack of independent resource revenues and erosion of the political mechanisms for self-governance, they are left with a dilemma—to fall into the path of systemic underdevelopment or to seek minimal resources for basic urban maintenance, instead of undertaking long-term and forward-looking developmental trajectories. This dilemma illustrates some of the typical cases outside of the country's capital and large metropolitan areas (Trubina, 2015), often characteristic of the

systematic drying out of local budgets, reliance on the federal programs for acquiring financial and political support, inability to recast corrupt market mechanisms for the implementation of the programs, and erosion of public support throughout this process (Chirikova, 2015).

In this situation, federal target initiatives, national priority projects, and other country-wide schemes emerge as the unproven panacea to both, crumbling infrastructure in the regions and weathering political support and allegiance towards the center. Competing in the federal programs to obtain means for basic urban services highlights a partial return to the somewhat modernized Soviet methods of management (Gun'ko & Batunova, 2019a; Gun'ko & Batunova, 2019b; Zupan & Gunko, 2019). With the looming economic crisis, inflation, and political instabilities, financial benefits from these programs become insufficient, hence requiring symbolic resources for maintaining the established power relations (Zupan et al., 2021). In such constrained conditions, urban initiatives have to adapt to the situation. Hence, they often form a set of tight-knit governance networks made of local politicians, administrators, professionals, business, and civil society, ready to maintain and deliver urban projects with federal support. This creates a situation, where participation in federal programs is not necessarily mandatory, but unavoidable. It is this setting of political processes surrounding national priority projects that we review in the paper.

We study the particularities of the center-periphery dynamics through the case of the Vologda River embankment renovation project, paying particular attention to the bureaucratic procedures that created a distinctive, though common across Russia's regions, situation. The analyzed case illuminates a complex dynamic— between the lack of local resource revenues and the inability to manage federal funding, between the authority of the country's capital in the decision making, and yet a lack of oversight and regulation from both sides. The project and its implementation show not only the asymmetries of power relations in urban development of the post-socialist periphery but also bureaucratic constraints and uncertainties that mounted to a standstill situation today. We turn to qualitative analysis from a situated position, since both authors took part in mediating the urban conflict that emerged around the project. This involves discourse analysis of legal and regulatory documents, project plans, meetings proceedings, and official correspondence between departmental agencies, media posts created by the local protest groups, and participant observation during the period of 2018–2019. We explore the federal and municipal legislative mechanisms, project oversight, and local and federal decision-making strategies related to the issues with the project's objectification and delivery. This leaves us with two insights. First, though the national government plays a key role in the proposal of the federal programs, it presents no flexibility in accommodating the contingency issues around the delivery of the project, leaving local governments with a dilemma of "deliver the project or perish." Second, it shows how the local coalitions of state and private actors engage in non-transparent and contradictory measures required to tap into the multiple national funding schema, meanwhile presenting a lack of cooperation and oversight in the delivery of the project, not counting the erosion of civic democratic institutions through the process.

Navigating Bureaucratic Uncertainty Between the Center and the Periphery

The nature of uneven resource redistribution between the center of policy making (Moscow) and the receiving peripheries is also a result of the long legacy of political centralization that took place in Russia since the 2000s (Gel'man, 2015). With Vladimir Putin taking the first term as the president, gubernatorial elections, introduced by Russia's first president Boris Yeltsin as part of the democratization in 1996, were successfully eliminated in 2004 in exchange for the new model of selective appointments (Gel'man & Ryzhenkov, 2011). In this scenario the center started to rely on various stimuli to engage the regions, while the latter were offered minimal space for political maneuver in decision making if their place in the power vertical was secured (Sel'tser, 2014). In addition to the reformation of the Federal Council, local governors lost not only the membership at the Council, but also immunity from criminal persecution, which, though at a first glance a democratic measure, resulted in a reinforcement of the mutually beneficial relations between the center and the periphery. All in all, the new centralization of regional and municipal powers in the hands of the federal state was chosen as a Russian path.

Within the constraints of the system, "the centre's goals included the preservation of a stable economic and social order, in which the ruling group was unchallenged", while "subordinated local actors could pursue a broad range of their self-interests, especially given the poor protection of property rights in Russian regions and cities" (Gel'man & Ryzhenkov, 2011, p. 454). With the recentralization of regional funding structures and taxation systems, which also reinforced verticality in economic relations (Zubarevich, 2018), regions are now in need to compete for financial resources in order to fulfill basic provisioning of public services such as housing, infrastructure, ecosystem management, and the rest. This leaves no room for the emergence of alternative mechanisms of self-governance, instead turning to the top-down systems of "manual control" and "hole patching" (Zubarevich, 2018). Moreover, recent uncertainty in Russia's political and economic trajectory, coupled with the continuous change and reshuffling of cadres in managerial systems resulted in a situation, where regions are compelled to seek federal funding on a short-term basis (Chirikova, 2015). Hence, focus on "short aims," rather than long term modernization trajectories becomes the goal of this power structure. Hence, the motivation to take on risks and find new prospects is weaker than the motivation of political survival, which remains a powerful internal incentive for the daily managerial activities of regional elites (Chirikova, 2015).

Since the early 2000s, various national projects of strategic development have become one of the mechanisms for centralized decision making. The so-called "Federal target programs" were proposed as the first tool for the integrated solution to the centralized tasks, adopted and developed in 1995, followed by their reorganization again in 2002 (Panikarova, 2007). The center started gradually gaining back its leverage over the regions, since the "share of federal funds in the overall budget of the country increased from just over 40 percent in 1998 to 66 percent in 2006, where the proceeds from the most significant tax revenues were [...] only partially

returned to the municipalities" (Gel'man, 2007, p. 9; our translation—V. S., & E. A.). While the Federal target programs focused on social politics in a fragmented and targeted manner, recent iteration of the strategic development goals produced a so-called "National priority project"—a temporary fix to the imbalances between central and municipal budgets (Government of the Russian Federation, 2019).

The National priority projects often emphasized "oversized prestige" initiatives with their top-down oversight and often a lack of established mechanisms for project delivery (Wengle, 2015). The idea first appeared in the period of 2005–2009, but its recent iteration in the Presidential Decree of 2018 (Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 2018) has gained a greater scope, more specific, detailed goal-setting, and more attention to the management and control over the implementation (Ivanov & Bukhvald, 2019). National priority projects immediately became the darling of Russia's presidential administration, as they were first reformulated in a new form in the presidential address to the federal government, parliament, and regional leaders to denote their strategic national character (Sharafutdinova & Turovsky, 2017; Wengle, 2015). Yet, the absence of a clear legal definition of this instrument of public administration, horizontal and vertical correlations between different programs, and the lack of methodology over the implementation and oversight left room for error and maneuver, despite massive scale of federal spending of up to 70% of the country's federal budget expenditures (Azhluni & Sharygina, 2019; Ivanov & Bukhvald, 2019).

A new project-oriented governance approach, often characteristic of business management practices, was introduced at the federal level to develop key parameters, step by step directions, and a system of checks and balances to ensure that the goals of the federal programs were achieved and the federal resources were spent rationally (Charkina, 2017; Kozhevnikov, 2016). Supported through the newly established Department for strategic management of state programs and investment projects and a set of regional project management offices, project-oriented approach is applied to improve and regulate everyday spheres of social politics, from health, education, and housing, to agrarian development and the environment. Moreover, new project-oriented management tools are proposed to further political persuasion and accountability.

The KPI of regional governors is one such technology tied primarily to the implementation of the federal priority programs. All fifteen indicators of the KPI are directly correlated with the last presidential decree of 2018 (the series of the so-called "May decrees") and are a reflection of the national development goals set by the president himself. Under the conditions of dysfunctional democratic institutions, when governors are viewed as managers who are assigned certain tasks, the introduction of a mechanism for evaluating their effectiveness is not devoid of objectivity (Butrin, 2019). However, the list of these criteria changes practically every two years, depending on the specific priority projects being implemented and the indicators of these criteria are difficult to calculate (Butrin, 2019). Rather it is the political manageability, accomplishment of the major infrastructure projects, and steady relations with federal agencies that tacitly serve as a decisive factor for evaluation of gubernatorial productivity. This is supported by a fact that the list of criteria starts with one political measure framed as the "confidence in the government" (or *doverie k vlasti*), implying

the confidence in the President of the Russian Federation, the highest officials of the subjects of the Russian Federation, the level of which is determined, inter alia, by assessing public opinion regarding the achievement in the subjects of the Russian Federation of national development goals (Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 2021). This political indicator is intended to verify the other fourteen, since if the quality of education, the environment, the quality of healthcare, and quality of the labor market is improving, then the political indicator is also expected to improve; but if their dynamics are at odds, it means that something is not right (Butrin, 2019). In accordance with the KPI based evaluations, the state prepares proposals for the distribution of grants, financially incentivizing the work of governors (Gatinsky, 2019; Trunina, 2019).

The trajectory of project-oriented governance, via which specific resources are allocated on a competitive basis, not only balances the relations of power on multiple scales, but adversely affects the development of the long-term trajectories for self-management in the regions. Horizontal connections between the regions are therefore eroded as they compete against one another prioritising federal transfers (Golubchikov et al., 2014; Kinossian, 2013). In fact, in 2011 merely six of Russia's 83 regions received 40 percent of the federal investment (Golubchikov & Makhrova, 2013). The system of checks and balances is also left on the regional shoulders to create visibility of decentralization, hence opening room for corruption and deceit. This leads to an unsustainable situation, where regional actors have no choice but to take part in the process for the sake of their own career, federal support, and delivery of public works in the regions (Lazareva, 2018).

Our case of the Vologda River embankment renovation project lies in the middle of this entanglement over decision making. With the reliance on a number of different federal schemas, the large-scale urban redevelopment initiative found itself in a standstill situation resulting from the inconsistency of objectives between the programs and their structural inflexibility in the course of project delivery. This led to the inability of actors to navigate the system, subsequent violations of laws, spread of undemocratic procedures, and unfortunate outcomes—all of which we review in the following sections.

The Vologda Embankment Project

Vologda is a provincial city with economic and cultural functions, its input in the development of the surrounding territories is indisputable. The city claims an unspoken role as the "capital of the Russian North", due to the ancient history of its foundation and an array of events related to the development of the region and the history of the Russian state as a whole (Shul'gin, 2011). Occupying an advantageous geographical position, Vologda was one of the main actors in mastering the wealth of Zavoloch'e—a historical region formed in the basin of the Northern Dvina River and Onega Lake in 10th–14th centuries. The first mention of the city is associated with the year of 1147 as the fortified Detinets-Kremlin was formed on the site of a previously existing settlement named after the Vologda River. In the pre-industrial period, the river primarily carried a defensive and trade function, being the main transportation

artery of the city. Natural green banks grew alongside it, with five churches, eleven merchant and tenement houses, doss-house and the building of the former diocesan women's school (turned into a military hospital in the Soviet period) built on top. Unique views of the river banks became a key feature of the city for generations of Vologda residents and tourists. The central location of the river made it the main urban artery and determined the early Soviet and even pre-revolutionary planning structure. Historically and today the river serves as the main public space, with lindens, maples and birches planted along the entire embankment, creating a peculiar and inimitable look. Until recently, green shores with architectural monuments and ensembles of the 17th–19th centuries were the cultural hallmark of the entire region.

The prehistory of the Vologda River renovation project begins with the proposal for the tourist and recreational cluster "Nason City" developed and delivered within the framework of the Federal target program *Razvitie vnutrennego i v"ezdnogo turizma v Rossiiskoi Federatsii (2011–2018)* [Development of Domestic and Inbound Tourism in the Russian Federation in 2011–2018] supervised by the Federal Agency for Tourism (Vologda State Duma, 2014). The purpose of the project was to combine the sights, monuments of stone and wooden architecture, parks, and embankments located along the Vologda River in the historical part of the city, into a convenient network of tourist routes and create a major recreational area in the center of Vologda for its residents and visitors. The initiative served as the basis for the development of a new strategy for tourism on the territory of the municipality of the City of Vologda for the period of up to 2025, adopted at that time by the former city mayor (Vologda State Duma, 2014). This first step served as the official prerequisite for the proposal of a large-scale river bank protection project first initiated in 2011.The 2.8-kilometer-long section of the left river bank was originally announced under the same federal program, but after completing bank protection procedures on a small fragment of the embankment on the right side of the river, the funding for the continuation of the full project was refused, resulting in the need to search for alternatives. The authorities explained the necessity of transforming the banks of the river in its frequent flooding, as well as the systemic neglect of the banks' greenery overgrown with shrubby vegetation that has attracted "homeless people, ticks, and trash" (Kruglikov, 2019; our translation—V. S., & E. A.). The project of the embankment renovation developed by a local organization specializing in the design of road infrastructure facilities without architects, landscape designers, and restorers in their staff received a positive conclusion from the State Expertise Commitee on September 16, 2013.

The project entered into the implementation stage through participation in a different Federal target program *Razvitie vodokhoziaistvennogo kompleksa Rossiiskoi Federatsii v 2012–2020 godakh* [Development of the Water Management Complex of the Russian Federation in 2012–2020] run by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, with state contractors in the Ministry of Agriculture, Federal Agency for Water Resources, Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring, and the Federal Agency for Fishery. The activities carried out within the framework of this program were subject to co-financing from the regional and federal budgets. The total amount of the contract required 265,181,410 rubles, of

which the municipality received 62 million rubles from the regional budget, while the rest came from federal transfers. The work, launched earlier in the spring of 2017, was to be completed by November 2019, with the full allocation of funds after the contract was signed. After the successful entrance into the Federal target program, an auction was announced on the State procurement portal to determine the general contractor for the construction work. The winner of the auction became a local company that is the largest executor of governmental contracts related to road infrastructure in the region. It is worth noting that the company has never performed the work on the protection of river banks and the project itself was initially designed through another company affiliated with the contractor, which contradicts the state anti-monopoly legislation.

Initially proposed under one federal program, and launched under another, the targets of which were significantly different, the project went into the implementation unannounced to the public. As Vologda residents soon discovered, the project intended the complete elimination of natural landscaping covering the banks with a concrete slab reaching its width of up to 30 meters and the length of 2.8 kilometers in total (Figure 1). With the help of the community of architects, city rights activists, and historical heritage preservation movements that rallied on the basis of the unfolding construction project, many citizens soon learned about the planned changes. As a result of the correspondence with federal officials and a number of meetings between the activists and the city mayor with representatives of the municipal departments, the authorities agreed with the erroneousness of the project and stated the need for a compromise solution to the situation. However, soon after the local administration closed the doors for further discussion, not intending any changes in the project and beginning an aggressive and manipulative communication with the activists in the information space, which caused a strong resentment among local residents and leading federal experts.

Figure 1
Vologda River Embankment Before the Renovation Process

Note. Source: (Sazonov, 2019).

Figure 2

Vologda River Embankment During the Renovation Process

Note. Source: Varlamov, I. (2019).

The urban conflict in Vologda acquired the scale of a national precedent, where representatives of the Russian professional communities spoke publicly about the project. Leaders of the Russian urban protection and heritage preservation societies, renowned restorers, historians, the director of the Moscow architectural schools and their employees, architects and artists working with different regions of Russia, hydrogeologists, and popular urban bloggers—all contributed to the nation-wide outcry about the sudden elimination of Vologda's cultural heritage with an easy approval or a blunt oversight from the federal authorities (Blagoustroennaia naberezhnaia, 2018; Kazankina, 2019; Kruglikov, 2019; Tarabarina, 2019; Zhiteli Vologdy, 2019).

Undemocratic Decision Making, Violations, and Public Outcry

In the course of a year since the city began decisively clearing out the river bank from trees and shrubs, several urban communities discussed and condemned the process based on guesswork. There was no objective basis for the discussion, since no information about the plans of work on the embankment were available either on the official website of the city administration or in other information outlets. Criticism of the design solution began from the moment when in the fall of 2018 one of the

Vologda architects discovered design plans and legal documentation on the Public Procurement portal in a format only accessible to professionals using specialized architectural programs (Edinaia informatsionnaia sistema v sfere zakupok, 2017). Turning this information into an accessible and visual format for the general public, with an explanation of the design decisions contained in the document, gave the public reasons to worry. The public became aware of the project when it was already in the first stage of the implementation—after acquiring a positive conclusion from the State Expertise, the first tranche of funding from the federal target program was received, a tender for the implementation of the project was drawn, and a contract with the main contractor was already signed. The reasons for the public outrage and the causes of thorough investigation on the state and municipal levels can be divided into several groupings that highlight discrepancies between the objectives of the national funding schemes and their delivery in the regions.

Inconsistency in the Project and Programs Objectives
The technology of a monolithic concrete slab with a cobblestone coating was chosen as the bank fortification method—for many, the decision was unexpected and unreasonable, since there were no data from hydrological and hydrogeological studies substantiating the need for bank protection, as well as the chosen technology itself. First, there was no apparent bank destruction on site, as there were practically no natural landslide processes within the city, which confirms the absence of changes in the configuration of the river bed over the past 200 years, according to an independent analysis conducted by the licensed hydrogeologist, which also concluded that isolation of large areas by concrete and asphalting can lead to the accumulation of groundwater that will increase the threat of flooding of nearby buildings and the destruction of cultural heritage sites (Adrianova, 2019). Secondly, the complete inconsistency of the ongoing project with the objectives of the originally declared federal program aimed at developing tourist attractiveness of the city were in plain sight. According to the city administration, the "strengthening" of the banks was supposed to facilitate their maintenance, since there were basically no budgetary funds for regular maintenance of the vegetation along the river banks. Zelenstroy municipal agency that used to maintain urban landscapes in the city was abolished due to the replacement of the mayor and, hence, the redistribution of power in 2016. Yet, the real difference in the cost of maintaining the natural banks and the price for building a continuous concrete slab was never calculated. Despite this, experts from the State Expertise issued a positive conclusion for the project.

At the same time, the City Administration, represented by the Head of the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning tried to assure the public that the work on the embankment renovation will be carried out in two stages: first, reinforcing the natural banks with concrete, and second, creating a multi-functional public space on top. Discourse about the two-stage process was picked up by the regional media, but was, however, misleading, since the project entered the federal target program in line with the "protection and reinforcement of the banks" and not landscaping or improvement of the tourist potential of the place, which was the goal of the previous

program that municipality used for project proposal. The complete inconsistency with the objectives of the federal initiatives, caused by the necessity to enter multiple programs at once in order to accomplish a full spectrum of works, shows that regions are not able to deliver comprehensive development trajectories, but rather are forced to look for piecemeal solutions.

Legislative Violations

Violations of the law were detected at all stages of the process, from the incompleteness of the design documentation, lack of compliance with the officially adopted project plan, the organization of the construction work, to the acceptance of works with violations by the representatives of the responsible departments. For completeness of argumentation, we reveal in more detail the essence of violations, each carrying different measures of responsibility. First of all, the project documentation did not take into account and did not assess the possible negative consequences for the safety of the objects of architectural heritage of regional and federal significance: from vibration loads from pile driving or traffic and from changes in the hydrogeological regime of the groundwater. The activists submitted an application for the recognition of the embankment ensemble as an object of cultural heritage to the regional Committee for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in order to assign a single protection status to this section of the river and the architectural monuments located on it. According to the law, construction work should have been suspended during the term of the consideration of the application, but this did not happen. Moreover, the project violated the urban regulation in accordance with *Ob"ekt okhrany istoricheskogo poseleniia regional'nogo znacheniia, gorod Vologda* [Subject of Protection of the Historical Settlement of Regional Significance, the City of Vologda], distorting the most valuable panoramas of the central part of the historical settlement. The subject of the protection of the historical settlement, as mentioned in the document, was exactly "the space of the river" and "natural terrain of the banks," meaning that it was "prohibited to cut down the greenery, except for the sanitary cuttings, to construct new buildings or permanent structures, to disturb the river banks, and to organize the garbage and soil dumps or other land works without accompanying archaeological support and the later reclamation of the soil" (Official website of the Government of the Vologda Region, 2018; our translation—V. S., & E. A.).

Secondly, the implementation of the project deviated from the approved plan. In fact, the work performed did not comply with the design decisions and the conclusion of the State Expertise. Where the project provided for landscaping fragments, it turned out that the solution implied a monolithic concrete slab. The actual elevations of the supporting structures also turned out to be higher than designed. The working group with a geodesic engineer carried out instrumental measurements showing that the height of the structural grillage was exceeded, significantly changing the contour of the banks and reducing the area of landscaping provided for by the project. This significant and unreasonable increase in the volume of work exceeded the maximum permissible by the public procurement legislation. Also, in the course of the work, environmental legislation was seriously violated, which, among other things,

came into conflict with certain target indicators of the federal program itself, since soil was removed from the river bed in order to build a monolithic grillage with mortars discharged directly into the ground in the middle of the winter affecting soils and their dynamics already in the spring.

Last but not least, when studying the paper documentation, it was found that some lines were smeared and corrected by hand in the consolidated estimate, which is considered a gross violation of law and is under the control of the State Prosecutor's Office[1]. At the same time, there were two positive conclusions from the State Expertise, received separately for the estimate and for the project itself. As a result of the identified deviations from the original project, the city administration had to re-pass the State Expertise. However, the State Expertise refused to accept the updated project plans for consideration, which indicates the deliberate arbitrariness of decisions taken during construction. Despite the obvious violations during the implementation and the refusal of changes by the State Expertise, the acceptance certificates for several start-up complexes of the embankment renovation were signed by the Head of the Department of City Services. In the public sphere, this was broadcast as the absence of the need to repeat the procedure of the State Expertise hence the legality of deviations from the project, which, in fact, was a free interpretation of the Section 3.8 of the Article 49 of *Gradostroitel'nyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Town Planning Code of the Russian Federation].

Undemocratic Decision-Making Procedures

The fact of the "behind the wall" decision-making process regarding the key public space of the city was no less important and caused great resentment within the community. The residents became aware of the plans when the contract with the general contractor had already been signed. As one of the local professors of architecture concluded,

> the issue of designing the embankment, like any other urban planning issue, is, first of all, the issue of power and distribution of very expensive and scarce resources, [...] therefore, if the community does not make special efforts, including those that often require energy, and even a conflict, in defending the interests of the city as a whole, we won't accomplish anything". (Kiyanenko, 2019; our translation—V. S., & E. A.)

The closed and non-transparent decision-making processes were not limited to the stage of the development of the project. Already during the full course of construction and the unfolding urban protest, the regional and municipal authorities demonstrated exclusivity in the choice of the public opinion related to the issue. The wave of critical statements by the expert society representing various professional communities was provoked by the refusal of the regional administration to modify the project, calling the representatives of the public and the experts who had spoken earlier "couch

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[1]   Available at request from the Department of City Services (http://vologda-portal.ru/oficialnaya_vologda/adm_structure/index_v.php?SECTION_ID=5277)

critics" (Kruglikov, 2019). The problem around the embankment renovation project was highlighted not only at the federal round tables and conferences, but also in the regional and national media. Strong contradictions sparked when representatives of the city administration, trying to create the appearance of the involvement of interested parties after the fact, turned to the help of mock-up social media accounts and loyal civil servants to control the situation, as well as using other forms of soft power to undermine the protest movement (Smoleva, 2020). It is worth noting that the situation was unfolding against the backdrop of another powerful and popular national priority project on the *Formirovanie komfortnoi gorodskoi sredy* [Formation of the *C*omfortable Urban Environment] (Ministry of Urban Development of the Moscow Region, 2021), actively implemented throughout the country, promoting the values of democratic and participatory planning and involving the citizens in the process of urban redevelopment, so that the share of the active population was at least 30%. Despite this, the recent turn towards participatory urban planning in Russia is gaining traction, not without help of being included in the measures of governor's productivity, since many are starting to realize that "the environment works better if the people who depend on its change are actively involved in its creation and management, rather than perceived as passive consumers" (Sanoff, 2000, p. 306). The case of Vologda is paradoxical in its own nature, where due to the presence of mature and historically developed bottom-up activist communities, any forms of participatory planning, in the eyes of the local government, looks like a marginal protest movement (Smoleva, 2020).

Systemic Underdevelopment vs Basic Urban Maintenance

The project-oriented management of national initiatives in the regions allowed for anchoring the main priorities of strategic development of the Russian Federation through a system of singular and target-oriented programs, but also resulted in straightening of the vertical logics of power. On the one hand, it reinforced already established relations between the federal authorities, regional and municipal actors, incentivising their work with symbolic resources and measures of productivity derived from the business community, thus creating a situation of constant reappointments and political precariousness (Sel'tser, 2014). While on the other, it engineered and reinforced a strict system of rules oriented on an end product, unable to adapt to regional challenges throughout the long process of planning (Glaz'yev, 2007; Panikarova, 2007). This leaves regions in a situation of uncertainty—delivery of the final project "as is" primarily affects regional political stability and strengthens future prospects to secure more funding for other initiatives, disincentivizing any motivation or interest in the long-term development trajectories. The case of the Vologda River embankment appeared at the crossroads of this situation. Drawing from a number of federal programs to patch up a piecemeal solution to the problem of neglected river banks, which resulted from the erosion of the municipal self-governance systems in the first place, the city found itself in a messy situation. Vologda, here, is not a unique case but rather a norm. Recently, the cities of Ufa, Penza, and Ioshkar-Ola also faced a similar situation during the reconstruction of the respective river embankments, while

the city of Velikii Ustiug became a precedent in itself after covering a four kilometer stretch of the historical Sukhona River, carrying the wealth of cultural heritage on its banks, with perforated concrete panels (Kruglikov, 2019).

First of all, the misalignment of the activities of specialized agencies that form and oversee federal programs and the lack of vertical and horizontal interaction between the federal programs themselves, and, more so, between the federal and regional initiatives, is one such caveat. A vast array of specific initiatives that target specific issues have not provided for the co-positioning of goals and objectives, often leading to the duplication of program activities and confusion in accountability and oversight (Batievskaia, 2007). Moreover, federal initiatives are deliberately poorly coordinated with regional programs of socio-economic development, they do not take into account the specifics and priorities of the formation of the regional economy, based on the advantages of a particular region, hence resulting in the disagreements between the program host agencies and regional actors (Panikarova, 2007). The first iterations of the federal programs in the early 2000's particularly resembled a "grouping of ordinary, routine budgetary measures masterfully arranged with the help of administrative resources" instead of a programmatic approach where federal and regional initiatives would become parts of the whole (Glaz'yev, 2007, p. 32; our translation—V. S., & E. A.). Though much improvement has been made since national projects' iteration in 2018, they are still to integrate into a unified system synched with local networks of decision-making. Instigated and promoted as a holistic approach, federal projects address piecemeal issues compelling regional and municipal actors to tap into multiple federal schemes in order to implement more comprehensive plans and complete a full spectrum of projects.

Secondly, federal priority programs are unidirectional, that is, the funding is distributed from above, without particular checks and balances related to the compliance of the project with the goals and the criteria of the programs. Moreover, mechanisms for reversal and adaptation of the project to changing local conditions are also lacking (Panikarova, 2007). Changing the terms of the contract during its execution is allowed only in exceptional cases, but the exceptions given in the law are not uncommon. The range of possible changes falls under a narrow margin of error, as the Article 95 of the Federal Law No. 44 *O kontraktnoi sisteme v sfere zakupok tovarov, rabot, uslug dlia obespecheniia gosudarstvennykh i munitsipal'nykh nuzhd* [On the contract system in the field of procurement of goods, works and services for state and municipal needs]states that the project can be modified only if the contract price is reduced without changing the contracted scope of work, or if the contracted scope of work is increased or decreased by no more than 10% (Federal Law No. 44-FZ, 2013). At the same time, the authorities do not want to take too much risk, especially when the money is received and withdrawn from the specialized account of the Central Bank. The letter received by the Vologda activists from the Federal Agency for Water Resources, in which it was reported that at that time no requests for project adjustment were made by the regional government, is a clear confirmation. As a result, regions have no interest and motivation to redo and revise project objectives and solutions "as they go" since this would question earlier approved decision, which

can lead to political consequences and possibly criminal trials. These and other rules are laid out in the Federal Law No. 44 *O kontraktnoi sisteme v sfere zakupok tovarov, rabot, uslug dlia obespecheniia gosudarstvennykh i munitsipal'nykh nuzhd* [On the contract system in the field of procurement of goods, works and services for state and municipal needs], which regulates the process of the execution of state contracts, from tendering procedures, selection of contractor, to control over the implementation and acceptance of works. The law is intended to regulate relations aimed at preventing corruption and other abuses, but in fact it often ensures the maintenance of monopoly within different types of public procurement (Maraev, 2020). Despite the fact that some of the indicators of the procurement efficiency written into the Law are the final contract price and the transparency of the bidding process, there are still ways to circumvent them through the collusion between the customer and the contractor and participation of their shell companies in the auction (Nevzorov, 2014).

Lastly, the search for federal funds for the regions becomes an end in itself, since the very algorithm of such a search does not imply a solution to real problems. With drying out of local budgets and an unprecedented lack of local revenues, municipalities enter federal programs to fulfill basic obligations to their constituents. Since federal programs are initiated from above, the regions, in the hope of obtaining funding from the federal budget, pull their problems to those already identified at the federal level. This leads to various mishaps. Or, as an example of Vologda shows through a different case, entering competitive national priority project of the *Formation of the Comfortable Urban Environment* to merely pave the parking lot in the urban courtyards, instead of the comprehensive improvement of urban life in public space as the program implies, becomes a norm (Varlamov, 2019).

Discussion: Prospects for the Peripheries?

Up to this point, the Vologda embankment project has not been completed and, as a result, the contractor and the Department of City Services "amicably" terminated the contract almost two years from the date on which it was supposed to be closed. Meanwhile, the regional Department of Construction has filed a lawsuit over an "unauthorized" departure from the planning documentation and, three court hearings resulted in three orders to the contractor to correct the violations at their own expense. As the civil protest didn't settle down, the authorities came up with a new "calming maneuver" and entered another National priority project of the *Formation of the Comfortable Urban Environment* in order to "beautify" the concrete river banks. As a result, a new institution, the Urban Environment Lab, was created at the city level to seemingly serve as a connecting channel between the regional needs and the federal programs and to undertake new projects for the renovation of urban space initiated by the city administration. Analogous urban laboratories sprang up around the country and became one example of the mass influence of the capital on regional policy-making. Borrowed from Moscow through the broad educational programs for architects and public officials, specialists from all over the country learn and practice capital's developmental agenda, initiating cross-regional competition over

federal resources (Zupan et al., 2021). The issue of the embankment renovation has disappeared from most discussions to date, as the established urban institution has calmed down the descent. Although as became known now, it was possible to make changes in the design and planning documentation, and hence improve the original river embankment with more sensitive methods. The city authorities deliberately delayed negotiations through ordinances by the regional government until the moment when making changes could have had consequences with criminal liability for those responsible.

Learning from a narrow, although emblematic case of the Vologda embankment renovation would allow us to tap into the whole complexity of the center-periphery relations in the field of resource provisioning in Russia today. First of all, the vertical centralization of power, often seen in Russia as a stable mechanism for effective and efficient delivery of centralized control, obstructs the development of the institutions of self-management by the curtailing the autonomy of local government in exchange for the loyalty of governors and regional elites (Nechaev, 2005). This leads to an unsustainable situation where servicing and appeasing the center becomes an end in itself, as well as a method for attracting minimal resources for basic urban maintenance. Secondly, it becomes questionable whether allocating certain priorities at the federal level, to which the regions have to fit and adapt, solves the problem of equalizing regional inequalities and delivering quality of the environment according to the needs of each place (Glaz'yev, 2007; Panikarova, 2007).

Vologda became a prisoner of circumstances, trapped between the systemic degrading of local institutions for urban maintenance and hence the necessity to enter federal programs, between the ability to acquire federal help and yet the inability to apply it for more progressive ends. This dilemma has been characteristic of Russia's center-periphery disparities in a long post-Soviet period, but we see it potentially informing other theorizations of urban development in the post-socialist world and beyond its borders, where authoritarian policies and systemic distrust of democratic mechanisms for resolving public issues are pulling the whole spectrum of similar problems, seemingly without prospects for future improvement.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Past Bursts into the Present

Review of Ivan I. Kurilla (2022). Bitva za proshloe. Kak politika meniaet istoriiu [Battle for the Past: How Politics Changes History]. Alpina Publisher.

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The research boom in the field of memory studies, which began about thirty years ago, eventually reached Russia and, in some ways, absorbed the minds of Russian social scientists. Today in Russia, memory studies is one of the most fashionable areas of humanities. Every year, dozens of conferences are held, and hundreds of books and articles are published, in which the memory of the past is the main focus of attention. Curiously, historians are not the leaders in this field. Anthropologists, sociologists, and experts in other fields have taken up the lead, for it has become clear that historical science is only one of many forms of knowledge about the past and is more of an intellectual exercise whose goal is to recreate a consistent and comprehensive picture of the past. Memory, on the other hand, if we discuss it not just as a psychological process but as a social phenomenon, is a sociocultural practice with its own—sometimes highly selective, inconsistent, or even controversial—ways of perceiving the past. Simply put, the watershed between historical studies and memory of the past is not *how*, *when*, and *why* events occurred or how they were connected, but *what*, *how* and *why* we remember them, retain some of them in our collective memory and forget others.

The book *Battle for the Past: How Politics Changes History* by Ivan Kurilla, a professor at the European University at St. Petersburg, was published by Alpina Publisher in 2022, and immediately attracted attention of the Russian memory studies community. This is a very unusual book; truth be told, it is nothing like I have ever read before. To begin with, it is not so easy to define its genre. Written

by an academic, the book is not a traditional scientific research, filled with hard-to-understand paragraphs and whole chapters dedicated to nuances of terminology, reading which you catch yourself thinking that the author wants to show off his erudition rather than tackle the essence of the problem. Conversely, Ivan Kurilla's book is a true scientific page-turner. The author provides no methodological framework for the research but, instead, from page one he sweeps you away into an intricate maze of "cultural wars" and "memory wars" that have erupted all around the world. This makes the book somewhat eclectic, but such a "non-academic" approach works fine. Using lots of examples, Dr. Kurilla shows how in different countries—in different ways, but invariably—the past intrudes into the present because people need the past to rely on and do not accept the history that has been created without their participation (p. 6). The essence of conflicts over memory is exposed immediately and in its entirety, and therefore the usual argument about the accuracy of definitions simply becomes redundant. At the same time, the book does not fall into the category of popular science. Unlike popular science literature, the book does not simplify complex issues. Ivan Kurilla just tells stories—and tells them masterfully and with ease. A kaleidoscope of stories, and the author's outstanding erudition and impeccable style capture and hold the reader's attention to the last page.

The structure of the book is also somewhat unusual. The book consists of an introduction (called *Prehistory*), a conclusion (*The End of Stories*), and four large parts, each of which, in turn, includes a prologue as an independent narrative, three "memory wars" stories, and an epilogue—again as a separate story. In total, there are twenty-two independent stories. The research extends from Japan and Korea to South Africa, and from Russia and Ukraine to France and the USA. There are especially many American stories, which is not surprising since Ivan Kurilla is a well-known in Russia specialist in American history. Apparently, the author wanted to convey the idea that the Russia is not unique in terms of how it handles "memory wars" and that many other countries have gone through or are going through similar processes.

The book has one important feature that distinguishes it from similar researches—an "enlightenment dimension." The past has long ceased to be the domain of historians and is now a tool of politics. History is becoming a testing ground for the struggle for the minds of people, but the forces are not equal here. As a rule, the power elites and the government have the upper hand. To solve the urgent problems of the day, politicians exploit history in their own interests, dissecting it, experimenting with it, offering society the "only correct interpretation," and making it the basis for decisions that are binding on everyone. This is where the ideas of a single school history textbook, the fight against "falsification of history," imposed commemorative practices, and many other things that make up government historical policy are born. However, the government does not and cannot have a monopoly on historical memory, and therefore dealing with our past is not so much the task of the government, but the task of the entire society, of all the people and groups that make it up. Ivan Kurilla's book is just about that. On more than two hundred pages, he shows how this happens in other countries, what contributes and what does not contribute to the reconciliation of the parties in the "wars of memory," and what lessons we can and should learn from other countries'

experience. Civic education through the prism of memory politics seems to be the overarching goal of the book.

It is no surprise that Ivan Kurilla begins his research with discussions about teaching history in school, for historical education serves as the most important socializing force, establishing an interpretation of the past that makes children real citizens (p. 28). The seemingly simple question of *What kind of history should be taught in school?* is, in fact, incredibly difficult but fundamentally important. Many countries have gone through battles over school textbooks. Kurilla discusses the experience of Chile, Great Britain, and the USA, and recalls the plans to create a unified textbook for Russian schools. Any government will have an interest here, which is quite understandable: it seeks to present history and explain the past from the perspective of the ruling political class. Civil society, by contrast, believes that if we accept that society is heterogeneous and that there are different groups with their own interests and value systems, we must also accept that each of these groups has the right to its own interpretation of the past. Therefore, the question of the content of the school history course should be a matter of public discussion and consensus reached, where representatives of the government, historical science, teachers, and the parent community should participate on an equal footing.

Naturally, for the vast majority of people, acquaintance with history is not limited to reading a school textbook. No less important for the preservation of collective memory are museums and historical exhibitions, which always offer their own interpretation of events, and therefore become the subject of political attention and are often used as a tool of manipulation (p. 39). The author provides examples of how identity politics influence the narrative of the past in the United States, where the Museum of Native American History, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the National Museum of the American Latino offer their own narratives. In other words, we see fragmentation of narratives about the past based on identity of origin. In Russia, the perception of the past is split along ideological lines and the opposition of the government narrative to the narrative of freedom is most pronounced (p. 41). The government overtly dominates: numerous conservative exhibitions like "Russia. My History" are opposed by few alternative projects such as the St. Petersburg Museum of the Political History of Russia or the Yeltsin Center in Yekaterinburg.

The situation is similar in Russian cinematography, except that the dictate of the state is almost absolute here. Back in 2009, the Cinema Fund was created in Russia to finance the films that the government wanted, the films which were devoted mostly to historical or "military-patriotic" narratives. Kurilla points out that in the historical films produced before that year, Russia's past was viewed quite critically, and the government was often seen as a source of violence. The films released after 2009 are more focused on the government's struggle with internal and external enemies. According to Kurilla, Many will agree that contemporary Russian cinema uses the past to assert the narrative about the strong power of the government and weakness of society" (p. 58). After all, cinematography is an art and does not necessarily need or care about historical authenticity. A historical movie is always a kind of fiction, a man-made myth, which could be used to tell an unsophisticated audience in simple

language about the past, to explain the present, and to plant ideological seeds for the future. Powers-that-be are well aware of this and therefore use cinema for propaganda purposes.

Kurilla is particularly concerned with the memorial landscape of cities and, above all, with monuments. By erecting monuments and other memorial objects, the ruling elite enshrines in society the historical narrative it needs and shapes public perception of the heroes and heroic events of the past. If interpretations do not change over the course of several generations, Kurilla writes, then a large part of the monuments begins to serve as a reminder of people and events whose significance society no longer feels (p. 77). They become a kind of "imposed memory," and the ruling elite determines what society should or should not remember. In this case, memorial objects to a certain extent stabilize the dominant historical narrative and the value system associated with it. However, with a change of regime, and even more so during the years of social upheavals (wars, revolutions), a reassessment of the past inevitably takes place in society, followed by a change in value orientations. A new historical narrative begins to dominate, which materializes in a new symbolic politics and a new memorial landscape. We need not go far to find examples: the mass toppling of Lenin statues in Ukraine known as *Leninopad* (Lininfall), the dismantling of the monument to Dzerzhinsky at Moscow's Lubyanka Square in 1991 and the heated discussion of its restoration thirty years later, in 2021. Depending on the degree of radicalism, the new elite either tears down monuments and erects new ones— alternatively, it may restore monuments demolished by the previous regime—or erects new monuments right next to the old ones (p. 78), Ivan Kurilla concludes.

Similar things happened with proper names of places (how can we forget renaming of streets, squares, and cities) and, especially, with the holiday dates of the national calendar. Before the early modern period, the church had a monopoly on space and time, establishing a religious picture of the world in proper names of places (toponyms) and the calendar. Later, politicians began to use power to put space and time at their service, and for this they reform the calendar and the calculation of time, introduce new secular holidays, change names of cities and streets, and erect monuments to the heroes in the central squares of cities (p. 105). This is especially evident in the examples of, say, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution of 1917, and partly in Russia in the 2000s, when politicians introduced new public holidays, changed the time zones, and first introduced and then abolished daylight saving time.

Public holidays play a special role in commemorative practices. First, they are celebrated every year, and such an annual cycle not only reminds us of past events, but also reinforces cultural traditions. Celebration of public holidays is a crucial element of commemoration. Second, every holiday should be markedly different from an ordinary day. To attain this goal, each public holiday must have its own festive rituals, festive rhetoric, visual symbols, and special values. It is important that the values be understood and accepted by people. Ivan Kurilla gives examples of attempts to add new holidays in Russia, such as Russia Day on June 12 and National Unity Day on November 4, which turned out to be unsuccessful because no common

rituals have been developed (p. 110). Society did not accept the new holidays created by the authorities, and Russians still do not understand what they are supposed to be celebrating on these days.

However, there are also opposite examples, when a significant part of society would not mind celebrating a historical date, but the ruling elite, for one reason or another, refrains from any celebrations. This is what happened with November 7, the day of the Bolshevik Revolution, the centenary of which in 2017 the authorities simply ignored. Ivan Kurilla explains it this way: on the one hand, for the current Russian government, any revolution is an obvious evil (p. 113); on the other hand, the present-day Russia inherited a lot from the USSR, the brainchild of the Bolshevik Revolution, and therefore sees in the events of a century ago a positive start. As for Russian society, it is split over the issue of the Bolshevik Revolution and its legacy. As a result of the controversy, the Russian authorities could not solemnly celebrate the anniversary of the revolution, nor could they publicly condemn those events. It was the inability to say anything unambiguous about the revolution of 1917 that led the government and politicians to remain remarkably silent throughout the centenary year (p. 112). In a situation of ambiguity, silence was the best way out for them.

Ivan Kurilla devoted a significant part of the book to the "wars of memory" surrounding World War II. These "wars" over that war are particularly painful, since not much time has passed since its end, and its eyewitnesses, the bearers of memories, are still alive. The matter is exacerbated by the fact that each country, affected by WW II, in recent decades has formed its own historical narrative about the causes, the course of the war, and its results, and most importantly, the role and responsibility of this or that nation in the war. And here we see amazing transformations: the generally recognized aggressor country is trying to appear as a victim. According to Ivan Kurilla, in China and South Korea, many believe that Japan is using the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to portray the Japanese as victims of World War II rather than the aggressors responsible for war crimes (p. 125). Conversely, a country that was attacked by Hitler and then defeated Nazism is suddenly referred to as an aggressor. The concept of "two totalitarianisms" emerges, which holds not only Nazi Germany responsible for starting the war, but the Soviet Union too. This reassessment of WW II spread to virtually all of Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union and caused, among other things, the Russian-Polish conflict, which had serious political consequences and led to cooling in relations between the two countries. The Russian government made statements about the "falsification of history" and about "belittling the role of the USSR in the defeat of fascism." However, according to Kurilla, in this dispute, talking about the past is a manifestation of the contemporary conflict in which Russia found itself by the end of the second decade of the 21st century (p. 135). Having lost political control over Eastern Europe, Russia faced the threat of withdrawing from Europe and the crisis of Russia's European identity. The former socialist allies no longer share the historical version of the outcome of WW II, asserted by the USSR and retained by Russia, but, on the contrary, while building their new non-socialist identity, they oppose it in every possible way, shutting themselves off from Russia. They feel that they are part of a European home, in which Russia has no place.

In Russia, WW II—we prefer to call it the "Great Patriotic War"—occupies a special place in the collective memory. No other event in the recent past of Russian history has had such a striking effect on contemporary Russian identity as the Great Patriotic War. The ruling political elite of Russia is aware of this and uses it to its advantage. Since 2000," Kurilla writes, "the Kremlin has used the memory of the Great Patriotic War as the major resource for 'gluing' society together and for maintaining its own legitimacy as the main custodian of that memory (p. 156). Moreover, with the departure of a generation of war participants, the Russian government becomes not only the main custodian, but also the main "manager" of the memory of the war, suppressing any attempts at undesirable interpretations of military events. Since the political and moral assessments of WW II are shared by the majority of the population, and since for many generations the war still remains an emotional part of personal and family history, the Russians easily accepted the leading role of the government in keeping the memory of the war, even though the government has exploited this memory in foreign policy and propaganda, or has used it against domestic political opponents. As a result, a peculiar "governmentalized canon" of memory about the Great Patriotic War has developed in contemporary Russia, which is mandatory for all.

In those cases, when public initiatives give rise to new commemorative practices pertaining to WW II, the Russian government rather quickly takes them under its control, making them an almost obligatory official ritual. Ivan Kurilla demonstrates this, using the Immortal Regiment campaign as an example. The movement of military reenactors, Immortal Regiment was started in the Siberian city of Tomsk by local journalists. At first, the initiative was opposed by the authorities of various levels, but was quickly picked up by civil activists throughout Russia and became extremely popular. Kurilla sees it as an attempt by people to express themselves in the only language left to them by the authorities, the language of conversation about the Great Patriotic War (p. 207). In turn, the Kremlin simply could not suppress a mass initiative that used the same language and appealed to the same legacy as the country's leadership (p. 208). Since the movement could not be stopped, it was logical for the government to lead it. Therefore, the authorities chose to seize the popular initiative, effectively removing its activists, and made the Immortal Regiment one of the most important and spectacular official rituals of the V-day celebration. It is worth recalling here, although the author himself does not write about it, that exactly the same story happened with the "St. George Ribbon" movement. Produced by a group of enthusiasts, the movement quickly gained popularity, but was soon taken over by the authorities and placed under government patronage, while the St. George Ribbon was used almost on a par with the official state symbols. However, the "nationalization" of commemorative public initiatives led to a twofold result. On the one hand, officials managed to channel the energy of the masses into the official discourse of festive events and use it to strengthen the legitimacy of power. On the other hand, this partly has led to the emasculation of the original meaning of the people's initiative and official profanation of historical memory.

Kurilla's book ends with an afterword called *The End of Stories*. This is a clear allusion to Francis Fukuyama's viral article *The End of History*, the conclusions of

which the American philosopher himself later rejected, for history does not end, just as wars for history never end. Ivan Kurilla ends his book with these words: Disputes about the past will not disappear because their cause is in the present moment. History merely provides the material and language for current political conflicts. It is possible, however, to negotiate the boundaries of 'historical' conflicts We must accept the fact that the multiplicity of the past is now with us forever and learn to live with it (pp. 230–231).

However, the question *Who shapes the memory of the past?* is still with us. Throughout the book, Kurilla repeatedly shows that national, religious, and ideological claims to 'own' the correct interpretation of history have long roots (p. 225). The author does not add historians to the list of those who want to "own history", although that seems to be within their professional domain. Only twice in the text do we encounter references to the role of professional historians in the unfolding "wars of memory", and then only in the context of their relationship with the authorities. The first mention pertains to the *Freedom of History* manifesto of French historians, who demanded the abolition of all restrictions on the freedom of scientific research. The second mention pertains to the memorial laws adopted in Russia, which made studying WW II extremely difficult for Russian historians. However, unfortunately, Ivan Kurilla does not provide an answer to the following question: What should the professional historical community do in a situation where the Russian government has unambiguously asserted the right to control the historical narrative (p. 166)? The answer, it seems, lies on the surface: we should focus on civic education on the basis of historical knowledge. Actually, the stories told by Ivan Kurilla in his book serve this task—civic education through the prism of the politics of memory.

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Section headings should be concise.

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Correspondence details:	Please provide an institutional email address for the corresponding author. Full postal details are also needed by the publisher, but will not necessarily be published.
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Keywords:	Please provide five to ten keywords to help readers find your article.
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APA (American Psychological Association) references are widely used in the social sciences, education, engineering and business. For detailed information, please see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition, https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines and https://apastyle. apa.org/blog

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Two authors	Benjamin, L. T., Jr., & VandenBos, G. R. (2006). The window on psychology's literature: A history of psychological abstracts. *American Psychologist*, *61*(9), 941–954. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.61.9.941
Three authors	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (1987). Title of the article. *Title of the Journal*, 22, 123–231. https://doi.org/xx.xxxxxxxxxx
More authors	Include all names up to twenty. If there are more than twenty authors, list the first nineteen authors, followed by an ellipsis and the last author's name.
Organization as author	American Psychological Association. (2003). Title of the article: Subtitle of the article. *Title of the Journal*, *22*(1), 12–23. https://doi.org/xx.xxxxxxxxxx
No author	Editorial: Title of editorial. [Editorial]. (2012). *Title of the Journal*, 14, 1–2.
Not in English	If the original version is used as the source, cite the original version. Use diacritical marks and capital letters for the original language if needed. If the English translation is used as the source, cite the English translation. Give the English title without brackets. Titles not in English must be translated into English and put in square brackets. Author, M. (2000). Title in German: Subtitle of the article [Title in English: c article]. *Journal in German*, 21, 208–217. https://doi.org/xx.xxxxxxxxxx Author, P. (2000). Title in French [Title in English]. *Journal in French*, 21, 208–217. https://doi.org/xx.xxxxxxxxxx For transliteration of Cyrillic letters please use the links: ALA-LC Romanization Tables at the web-site of The Library of Congress http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/roman.html
Peer-reviewed article published online ahead of the issue	Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (2012). Title of the article. *Title of the Journal*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/xx.xxxxxxxxxx If you can update the reference before publication, do so.
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Other article types	Editorial: Title of editorial. [Editorial]. (2012). *Title of the Journal*, 14, 1–2. Author, A. A. (2010). Title of review. [Review of the book Title of the book, by B. Book Author]. *Title of the Journal*, *22*(1), 123–231. https://doi.org/xx.xxxxxxxxxx
Article in journal supplement	Author, A. A. (2004). Title of the article. *Title of the Journal*, 42(Suppl. 2), p–pp. https://doi.org/xx.xxxxxxxxxx
Conference	
Proceedings	To cite published proceedings from a book, use book format or chapter format. To cite regularly published proceedings, use journal format.
Paper	Presenter, A. A. (2012, February). Title of the paper. *Paper presented at the meeting of Organization Name*, Location.
Poster	Presenter, A. A. (2012, February). Title of the poster. *Poster session presented at the meeting of Organization Name*, Location
Thesis	Author, A. A. (2012). *Title of thesis* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation or master's thesis). Name of the Institution, Location.
Unpublished work	
Manuscript	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (2008). *Title of the manuscript*. Unpublished manuscript. Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (2012). *Title of the manuscript*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
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Web page	If the format is out of the ordinary (e.g., lecture notes), add a description in brackets. Author, A. (2011). Title of document [Format description]. (The website name) https://URL
Newspaper or magazine	Author, A. (2012, January 12). Title of the article. *The Sunday Times*, p. 1. Author, A. (2012, January 12). Title of the article. *The Sunday Times*. http://www.sundaytimes.com/xxxx.html Title of the article. (2012, January 12). *The Sunday Times*. http://www.sundaytimes.com/xxxx.html
Reports	
May or may not be peer-reviewed; may or may not be published. Format as a book reference	Author, A. A. (2012). *Title of work* (Report No. 123). Location: Publisher. Author, A. A. (2012). *Title of work* (Report No. 123). (The website name) https://www.w3.org

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Discussion paper	Author, A. A. (2012). *Title of work* (Discussion Paper No. 123). Location: Publisher. Author, A. A. (2012). *Title of work* (Discussion Paper No. 123). (The website name) https://www.w3.org
Personal communication	Personal communication includes letters, emails, memos, messages from discussion groups and electronic bulletin boards, personal interviews. Cite these only in the text. Include references for archived material only.
Other reference types	
Patent	Cho, S. T. (2005). U.S. Patent No. 6,980,855. Washington, DC: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.
Map	London Mapping Co. (Cartographer). (1960). Street map. [Map]. (*The website name*) https://www.londonmapping.co.uk/maps/xxxxx
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Audio and visual media	Taupin, B. (1975). Someone saved my life tonight [Recorded by Elton John]. On Captain fantastic and the brown dirt cowboy [CD]. London: Big Pig Music Limited (place of publication is optional). Author, A. (Producer). (2009, December 2). *Title of podcast* [Audio podcast]. (The website name) https://www.w3.org Producer, P. P. (Producer), & Director, D. D. (Director). (Date of publication). *Title of motion picture* [Motion picture]. Country of origin: Studio or distributor. Smith, A. (Writer), & Miller, R. (Director). (1989). Title of episode [Television series episode]. In A. Green (Executive Producer), Series. New York, NY: WNET. Miller, R. (Producer). (1989). The mind [Television series]. New York, NY: WNET.
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Dataset	Author. (2011). *National Statistics Office monthly means and other derived variables* [Data set]. Retrieved March 6, 2011, (*The website name*) https://www.w3.org If the dataset is updated regularly, use the year of retrieval in the reference, and using the retrieval date is also recommended.
Computer program	Rightsholder, A. A. (2010). *Title of program* (Version number) [Description of form]. Location: Name of producer. Name of software (Version Number) [Computer software]. Location: Publisher. If the program can be downloaded or ordered from a website, give this information in place of the publication information.

Social media	
Facebook citation (post)	News From Science. (2019, June 21). *Are you a fan of astronomy? Enjoy reading about what scientists have discovered in our solar system—and beyond?* This [Image attached] [Status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/ScienceNOW/photos/a.1175321 85107/10156268057260108/?type=3&theater Parenthetical citation: (News from Science, 2019) Narrative citation: News from Science (2019)
Facebook citation (page)	Community of Multiculturalism. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from https://www.facebook.com/communityofmulticulturalism/ Parenthetical citation: (Community of Multiculturalism, n.d.) Narrative citation: Community of Multiculturalism (n.d.)

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