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Urban People
Lidé města

Jennifer Long — Racialization of City Spaces through Moral Monitoring in Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Matt Wickens — The Precarious Lives of Homeless Scavengers in Tokyo Before and After the 2008 Crisis

Veronika Seidlová — The Social Life of Jewish Music Records from 1948 Czechoslovakia by *Hazzan* Josef Weiss

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Anastasiia Krasnozhon — Fieldnotes from a Ukrainian Culture and Gastronomy Festival, 5 May 2022, Prague

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jsou nadnárodním recenzovaným časopisem v oblasti sociální a kulturní antropologie se specifickým zaměřením na témata spojená s urbánní antropologií. Cílem časopisu je podpořit vysoce kvalitní a eticky odpovědný akademický výzkum, šíření jeho výsledků a poznání v nejširším slova smyslu, a mezinárodní akademické diskuse. Vychází třikrát ročně, dvakrát v českém či slovenském jazyce a jednou v angličtině.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

This year, we modestly celebrate 15 years of English editions of the *Urban People / Lidé města* journal. The content of this issue is more than appropriate to mark this event, as it represents our past experiences and our current achievements built on them, as well as our vision of the journal's future. In this way, the new issue offers a culmination of our efforts and ideas toward creating a truly multimodal, inclusive, and border-defying urban anthropology journal that spans a multiplicity of countries, topics, disciplines, methodological approaches, and genres of academic exploration (i.e., academic articles, creative ethnographies, a photo essay, fieldnotes, and a book review).

The nine authors contributing to this issue come from the US, Canada, Japan, Northern Ireland, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Belarus, and Ukraine. They address a range of both social and cultural issues that deal with diverse local, national, and transnational phenomena, many of them related to various past and contemporary crises, but also to art, music, and popular entertainment. The issue's main articles examine racialized policing in Rotterdam (Long), homelessness and precarious work in Japan (Wickens), and the social lives and historical and transnational trajectories of Jewish music records from 1948 Czechoslovakia (Seidlová). In the journal's new rubric, we present two creative ethnographies, a short story on the topic of European traveling circuses (Offen), and a play script that creatively interrogates the interrelation between performance art, politics, state-socialism, and the improvisational and ethical dimensions of fieldwork (Svašek). Our journal also aims to be inclusive in terms of each scholar's ranking; therefore, we also tend to present exemplary works by early-career scholars and students. In regard to the latter, in the rubric for the works of students, we include an article that discusses students' and professors' senses of place, i.e., the educational and art-historical place of Križanke in Ljubljana (Babuder), and a photo essay that analyses a photographic visualization of the emotions and experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and family quarantine isolation in Belarus (Zhuk). This section concludes with ethnographic fieldnotes from a Ukrainian food and music festival in Prague, which highlight the impact of the war in Ukraine on cultural representation and participation at the festival (Krasnozhon).

We think that the manifold multimodality of our journal equips us well for the exhaustive investigation of a multiplicity and multidimensionality of urban and human life, which, as is also evidenced in our journal's new issue, can traverse vast social territories between festivalization and isolation; can productively engage in modes of art, education, and memorialization; and is affected by our time's predicaments of war, pandemic, racism, nationalism, and economic destitution. We thus take seriously our commitment to both celebrate and critique diverse formations of urban and human life, which often takes us from the anthropology of "good" life to "dark" anthropology and back (Ortner 2016), not only within the same issue, but often within the same texts.

David Verbuč
Editor-in-Chief of the English editions
of *Urban People / Lidé města* journal

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Ortner, Sherry B. 2016. "Dark Anthropology and Its Others". *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6 (1): 47–73.

RACIALIZATION OF CITY SPACES THROUGH MORAL MONITORING IN ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

Jennifer Long
(MacEwan University)

Abstract: *The city of Rotterdam has had some of the strictest policing and security policies in the Netherlands. In public spaces, enforcement tactics have included such practices as preventative searches, as well as fines for individuals for hanging around in groups of three or more. This article explores the tactics used to enforce certain behaviours in public spaces that racialize city spaces. Further the author examines how other local urban occupants reinforce the ethnic and racial hierarchy of belonging in the Netherlands. The author uses situational analysis and in-situ ethnographic interviews as methods to engage difficult-to-access populations in situations of policing and security.*

Keywords: *policing of public spaces; sense of belonging; governmentality; hang-around youth; the Netherlands*

Introduction

> The neighbourhood had changed so much since I've grown up here. I appreciate the diversity but there are some things that really irk me. Sometimes, I think, the Turkish and Moroccan people who have moved to this country aren't doing their best to integrate. And we don't need that! Of course, this isn't all of them that do this, but it only takes a few bad eggs to make the entire group seem like a problem. For example, my neighbour, she has had some trouble from the foreign youth who hang around in the playground here. The other day, she was walking

> down the sidewalk with her shopping when they started yelling and harassing her, calling her names like "old, fat woman". She was very upset about it. But I wouldn't say that it's all *allochthones*, just some of them (interview with Sabine, a white, ethnically Dutch woman, April 2010).

Sabine's experience is like that of other majority community members in the Netherlands who feel unmoored by the changing demographic shifts to her neighbourhood. Her point that a few bad eggs create a problem for the whole group connects to what Dutch sociologist Willem Schinkel (2018) argued as the framing of immigrant integration as an individualized practice rather than a state-sponsored process. This framing blames the "misfits" for failing to integrate (Schinkel 2018, 2–3), and through the troublesome neocolonial practice of moral monitoring by ordinary citizens, results in the increased "visibility of [their] otherness" (ibid., 12).

Muslim immigrants from Turkey and Morocco, and importantly their children (often born and raised in the Netherlands), have become the focus of much of the moral monitoring due to the belief that these ethnic groups are insufficiently integrated (Schinkel 2018, 12), for example, lacking Dutch language proficiency and inter-ethnic social contact (Duyvendak et al. 2009, 15; see Schinkel 2018 for contrary evidence). However, Marguerite van den Berg and Willem Schinkel (2009) have argued that it is religious identity – specifically Muslim identity – that is seen as the main barrier to integration. In this discourse, the secularized (formerly Christian) and progressive Dutch nation is pitted against a close-minded Muslim interloper (Allievi 2005; Sunier 2010). Many in the media and in society-at-large tend to focus on outlier examples to represent Islam in the Netherlands, for example, on those imams who denounce homosexuality, the tolerance of which has come to be de rigueur in the Netherlands (Mepschen et al. 2010), or on the perceived oppression of Dutch Muslim women, signified by their wearing of headscarves in the free and open public spaces in the city (Herrera and Moors 2003). Islam, in the Netherlands, has been characterized as fanatical and intolerant, and Muslims (particularly Muslim male youths) as potentially violent. In the name of tolerance, then, the Dutch have become intolerant of certain ethnic and religious populations.

Wayne Modest and Anouk de Koning (2016) coined the term *anxious politics* to describe the "affectively charged narratives" which build cultural frames of reference about who belongs (and who does not) to the national imaginary (ibid., 100–101). Peddled by politicians seeking votes and media

seeking audiences, these anxieties "conjure up a restrictive and exclusionary model of national identity and belonging, which refutes and disciplines the presence of those defined as Other" (ibid., 99–100). Policymakers have codified this otherness into policies around "non-Western" immigrants[1] concerning first- and second-generation Dutch Muslims with heritage from Turkey and Morocco. Saskia Bonjour and Jan Willem Duyvendak (2018) identified the discourse associated with "non-Western" immigrants from 2009 to 2012 as "the heydays of the immigrants with poor prospects" (ibid., 890). This discourse suggested "non-Western" immigrants had poor prospects because they were ultimately unassimilable and a burden to the social system due to their innate laziness, their lack of the education or skills to effectively participate in the economy, or their unwillingness to engender "a positive attitude toward Dutch society" (ibid., 890). Jan Willem Duyvendak, Menno Hurenkamp, and Evelien Tonkens (2010) coined the term *the culturalization of citizenship* to identify the increasing pressure placed on certain immigrants to culturally integrate into the majority community culture. Citizenship in the Netherlands today, then, is no longer just a matter of getting a job or acquiring legal status as a citizen. Instead, and as Dutch anthropologists have argued, becoming a Dutch citizen is now about following prescribed Dutch cultural norms and values while in the public and private spaces (see Duyvendak et al. 2016 for example).

Anthropologist Anouk de Koning (2015) argued that the result of such panic-driven politicking is an exceptional application of local policies that result in the over-policing of racialized individuals, particular "non-Western" immigrant and/or Muslim populations (see also Kaulingfreks 2015; Koch 2018). This article therefore provides insight into individuals' experiences of policing in the Netherlands, focusing on the study of the securitization of public spaces in Rotterdam through ethnographic data collection. Specifically, I explore the

1 As I have argued elsewhere (Long 2022), the category of "non-Western" immigrant is deeply problematic because of the racist and Orientalist connotations (Said 1978) associated with this term. My use of this term throughout the article is meant to highlight its importance as an immigration category (this "non-Western" category is still used by the national Statistics Bureau in the Netherlands, although it is under review, CBS, 2021) and where participants explicitly used it as an identity marker, in my field site. I acknowledge the limitations of this approach – using this term perpetuates the very ideologies that I am committed to addressing as a critical scholar. And yet, the use of this term highlights the connection made to the racist ideologies at work that features both national identity and immigrant otherness – with a particular focus on the othering of some immigrants ("non-Western") over others. I have chosen to use "non-Western" immigrants as a category rather than even more problematic terms like *allochthonous* (see Yanow and van der Haar 2013) and used quotation marks as a designation to question its validity.

racialization of city spaces, and ways that other local occupants reinforce the ethnic and racial hierarchy of belonging.

The data for this work comes from ethnographic research I conducted in the Netherlands in 2009–2010 for my doctoral work. My goal was to better understand how populist politicians and the "constellation of social control professionals" (O'Neill and Loftus 2013, as cited in Mutsaers 2014, 842) sharpened their focus on Muslim belonging in the Netherlands and how these actors influenced everyday experiences among residents at the neighbourhood level. The bulk of my doctoral work focused on the exclusion of Dutch Muslims and Muslim immigrants from neighbourhood spaces through gentrification projects and interventionist government-support local programming in Rotterdam North (Long 2015, 2016, 2022). To gain a comparative perspective, I also conducted ethnographic walkabouts with a colleague in one of Rotterdam's "notoriously" delinquent neighbourhoods (see de Koning 2015, 2016, 2017 for a similar methodological approach in Amsterdam's infamous Diamantbuurt neighbourhood; or Kaulingfreks 2015 for the Kanaleneiland district of Utrecht). From our efforts, it became apparent that the policing of public space and the targeting of certain behaviours was used as a strategy to make non-conforming individuals more noticeable and more "governable". The use of public space by racialized youth tended to be governed by an array of professionals in various capacities, including municipal police officers, local social workers, a patrol group made of youth hired from the local community to assuage nuisance for local residents.

In the next section, I describe the theoretical underpinnings of this article and provide a condensed immigration and security history of Rotterdam as it pertains to larger understandings of public space use in city designated "hot spots" for crime. Further, I explore situational analysis as a method to investigate topics of security and policing and follow this with a discussion and analysis of ethnographic material.

Policing Racialized Bodies in Public Spaces

Sinan Çankaya's ethnography (2018) among police officers explores the convergence of racial, gendered, and class identity in policing practices in Amsterdam's public spaces. Çankaya coined two important terms relative to this study. The first is *urban allochthone*, which he defines as "the urban poor: men from ethnicized and racialized minority groups, not-quite-white Central and Eastern

Europeans as well as some parts of the "white" working class, homeless people, and beggars" (2020, 703). The second is *geopolicing*, which he refers to as "the interconnections between geographic imaginations, representations, and practices of, in [his] case, police officers as to who, what, and where to police, and of course, why" (2018, 704). In his 2018 article, Çankaya documents the ways in which *urban allochthones* are racially profiled by police in public spaces, where they are seen to be out of place, namely, being in or moving through affluent white neighbourhoods. Even the means by which these *urban allochthones* are moving through space (e.g., in expensive cars) instigates a carding stop (asking these individuals for identification). In layering class and gender (males are stopped more often) profiling on top of racial identities, Çankaya's approach enriches analyses exploring the racialization of urban spaces (for analyses of spatial segregation that prioritizes class identity, see Slater 2010; Wacquant 2010). As will be further described below, police and community officials use preconceived notions about racial, gender, and class identities when monitoring and regulating public spaces in my own field site. My own case study presents individuals' experiences of policing in public space and the targeting of specific behaviours by certain racialized individuals (perceived "non-Western" youth) as a strategy for making non-conforming individuals more noticeable and more governable.

Dutch scholars Schinkel and van den Berg (2011) use Rotterdam's Intervention Teams working in so-called "hotspots"[2] as a case study to explore the "mix of prevention and repression, of assistance and control that amounts to an ensemble of techniques of governmentality targeting specific urban subpopulations" (1932; cf. Foucault 1979). This practice leads members from various social and government services to collaboratively intervene on behaviours, individuals, or households that are identified as "deviant" for the purpose of "increasing liveability" in the city through state-led gentrification (ibid.). The authors conclude that these interventions are made possible through the classification of an exceptional or emergency state – thus requiring intervention – that targets a "largely immigrant poor subpopulation". These everyday practices result in government overreach and the potential suspension of rights for this subpopulation (Schinkel and van den Berg 2011, 1933).

2 Citing the Rotterdam City Council (2005), Schinkel and van den Berg (2011) define hotspots as "one or more streets characterized by a cumulation of problems relating to physical environment, houses, and public space. In the social environment, social structures and healthy potential for individual and group development are lacking and, moreover, crime and nuisance are present" (ibid., 1918).

Schinkel and van den Berg's (2011) case of Rotterdam's Intervention Teams[3] are a clear example of "plural policing", which links various policing and/or security bodies with government officials (1920). These appending techniques embody "spatial governmentality", where authorities seek to manage and control people in space through "the use of special spatial zones and rules of inclusion and exclusion", and thus explore the relationship between space and power (Low 2017, 43–44). Francis Pakes (2004) has argued that the contemporary Dutch approach to crime should be understood as a "cultural-security complex" where the perceived threat is not to personal safety but to the very cultural fabric of society (ibid., 293). To address this broad goal, and as will be further discussed below, the Netherlands has taken "an integrated approach to security" where the state partners with schools, private security companies, social workers, and various local partners including cultural and religious centres (Pakes 2010; Kaulingfreks 2015, 106). Femke Kaulingfreks (2015) writes that when it comes to security mechanisms in the Netherlands, it is not just "Big Brother" but many younger siblings "who share the task of policing, monitoring, and indicating risk" (ibid., 106).

The policing and security strategies reiterate an understanding of who belongs (and who does not) to the imagined community of the Dutch nation through the securitization of perceived antisocial behaviours (enacted by the target population) in public spaces. The outcome of these practices is a "whitening" of Dutch public space (Low 2008), which emphasizes who and what behaviours represent a Dutch majority community and which disciplining practices work to create more "governable citizens" (Li 1999, 295). Specifically, I argue that "minor figures" (including social workers and various street-level security personnel) contribute to the visibility and policing of racialized ("non-Western" and/or Muslim) youth, as a technique of governmentality in which "citizens are taught to govern themselves and each other" (Koch 2018, 168). Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose (2008) describe "minor figures" as everyday workers (e.g., psychologists, medics, accountants, social workers, managers, town planners) whose "mundane knowledges, techniques, and procedures" are concerned with delineating "the norm and deviations from it" (ibid., 5, 6). As Miller and Rose

[3] Intervention teams include six to seven city officials (including police, social service workers, etc.) who enter residents' homes to look around and determine the safety of the home, the legality of the residents, whether the residents are known to the city, who is entitled to public supports or should be fined for tax fraud, etc. (Schinkel and van den Berg 2011, 1919). The goal of these teams is to enhance the liveability of the city.

(2008) state: "It was only through these means that the 'cold monster' of the state could actually seek to shape the ways in which people conducted their daily lives, their interactions with themselves and others, and their relations with the various manifestations of social authority" (ibid., 6).

Unfortunately, such participatory policing has been shown to increase feelings of anxiety (instead of building feelings of safety) and acts of interpersonal surveillance among local residents (Pridmore et al. 2019). Indeed, as communal policing efforts grow, and policing practices diversify and proliferate among non-police personnel controlled by local governments (van Sluis et al. 2010), one can see evidence of Loïc Wacquant's *penal panopticism* or, the constant and faceless approach to policing that identifies people and behaviours out of place (as cited in Kaulingfreks 2015, 112).

Miller and Rose's work on "minor figures" informs this article, as the activities of the everyday workers help us "discern the web of relations and practices that result in particular ways of governing, particular ways of seeking to shape the conduct of individuals and groups" (2008, 7). In this way, we can see how state-led interventions are reinscribed and personalized, in everyday securing practices that reflect a moral monitoring of racialized ("non-Western" and/or Muslim) young men and their use of public spaces. Insa Lee Koch (2018) has persuasively argued that classism, racism, and ethnic prejudices play a role in these judgements and everyday policing practices that aligns with Çankaya's (2018) and de Koning's (2015) findings.

As will be described below in this case study, the categorization of behaviours such as hanging around on city sidewalks or parks is deemed problematic, resulting in the targeting of a largely immigrant, poor, subpopulation, which leads to heavy-handed policing and social interventions, the effect of which feeds into a hierarchy of belonging in Dutch society. In what follows, I provide a historical overview of certain security policies in Rotterdam to show how the focus on particular behaviours has become a conscious focus on specific groups.

Policing Rotterdam's Hotspot Neighbourhoods

In the 1980s and 1990s, public safety policies in Rotterdam were like those of other Dutch cities and other large European cities. Crime did not feature prominently in Rotterdam politics until the mid-nineties, when drug-related crime, prostitution, and related practices became an issue in the neighbourhoods around the city centre (van Ostaaijen 2010). Crime prevention and public

safety policies during this period were a mixture of prevention and action determined on a case-by-case basis, in addition to increased surveillance in selected locations (van Sluis et al. 2010).

According to Dutch criminologist Rene van Swaaningen (2007), during this time Rotterdam's officials followed an "integral" (or integrative) approach to safety, using an ad hoc, multi-agency approach to address specific urban problems as they arose (ibid., 245). This approach supplemented repressive measures by the police, for example, with preventative measures delivered through other civil society stakeholders, such as government officials, local businesses, or neighbourhood groups (van Ostaaijen 2010, 75–77; ibid., 211–214). This integrative approach to public safety policy also sought to address fear of crime and feelings of insecurity among Rotterdam inhabitants as a way of encouraging community support for urban and social renewal programs in Rotterdam (van Swaaningen 2005, 291). Thus, local participation in the security processes was an apparatus of security.

Starting in the early 2000s, attention began to focus increasingly on Rotterdam's "non-Western" immigrant populations following the release of a report by the Statistics Netherlands (CBS) predicting that so-called problematic neighbourhoods ("hotspots") in Rotterdam would have majority populations of such residents by 2017 (Kerkstra 2006). This projection caused public concern (see Modest and de Koning 2016 for "anxious politics" above) because members of this group had a higher presence in crime statistics, were more likely on average to be on welfare than their white ethnically Dutch peers, and as mentioned above, were thought to be poorly integrated into Dutch society. The idea that the city had reached its tipping point (in certain neighbourhoods) gained acceptance, and the city council released the report *Rotterdam Presses On: The Way to a Balanced City* in 2003 (as cited in van Ostaaijen 2010, 122). This official report called for some controversial policies, such as requiring "non-Western" immigrants to earn 120% of the minimum wage to settle in certain neighbourhoods that already had a high concentration of "non-Western" immigrant inhabitants and allowing police and government officials to close buildings with frequent disturbances (ibid., 122).

Targeting those communities that were considered "problematic" remained an important theme with the initiation of a series of youth programs that focused on addressing the problem of *hangjongeren* ("hang-around", or loitering, male youths) (van Lieshout and Aarts 2008). Youth tended to hang around in city parks or on street corners, and the police and municipal

authorities saw their behaviour as creating social nuisance (Rotterdam 2009a). Those who loiter on sidewalks and on street corners are in general seen to be associated with drug trafficking and criminality (Baillergeau and Hoijtink 2010; Lindo 2010).

The act of hanging around in public spaces also goes against the behaviours set out for "good citizens". In the Dutch context, anthropologist Martijn Koster defines a "good citizen" as someone who is actively engaged in their neighbourhood for the good of larger society; a bad citizen is passive or irresponsible (2012). Thus, loitering youth are seen as irresponsible bad citizens in the eyes of the Dutch "majority". To address youth identified as the typical perpetrators of such activities, the city developed action programs, including the so-called Antillean Approach,[4] which involved hiring a city marine to deal exclusively with Antillean youth. All youths signed up for this program were required to be either employed, in school, or in a judiciary program (van Ostaaijen 2010, 123). A Moroccan Approach was later developed with a purpose to slow the rate of habitual criminal behaviour by providing family coaches, homework assistants, and case managers to help Moroccan youth find work, internships, or housing (van Ostaaijen 2010, 172).

One policy that some considered controversial[5] was the institution of "preventative searches" (*preventief fouilleren*) of individuals or automobiles for concealed weapons. The searches, carried out at the discretion of police officers, were introduced into law in 2002 in reaction to an increase in violent crimes with a weapon (Rotterdam 2009b). There were three official objectives for these searches: (1) securing firearms and initiating criminal prosecution against illegal handling of such weapons, (2) increasing the perceived safety and security of citizens and trust in the police and government, and (3) making illegal gun ownership less attractive (Rotterdam 2009b).

These searches, however, could only be conducted in "high-risk neighbourhoods" (*veiligheidsrisicogebieden*) so designated by the mayor for a specific length of time (van Swaaningen 2007, 242; Rotterdam 2010). The mayor's decision was based on data and police experiences perceived as suggesting

4 Antillean immigrants and their descendants are also classified as "non-Western" immigrants, but while Antillean youth have and continue to be associated with crime (van Ostaaijen 2010), their identity is seen to be less at odds with greater Dutch society (Slootman 2018).

5 There is evidence of police profiling Muslims, minorities, and lower-income youths (the majority of whom in Rotterdam are categorized as "non-Western" immigrants) during security enforcement (ECRI 2008; Eijkman 2010).

increased risk. Announcements in the local newspapers and in the neighbourhood informed residents of the impending period of permitted searches. Security officers (police or other designated groups) were permitted to open packages and conduct vehicle and bodily searches for weapons or ammunition. In 2010, the year in which I conducted research on these searches, there were four main designated security risk areas: Delfshaven, the city-centre (Centrum), Vloemhof/Hillesluis, and Rotterdam-Zuid, in which there were seven search periods in 2009–2011 (Rotterdam 2009b). In total, since 2004, there has been a 33% decrease in the recovery of firearms and 2,700 weapons (firearms and otherwise) have been seized (Rotterdam 2009b).

Although theses searches were a source of controversy throughout the country, they became increasingly frequent. By the end of 2005, more than 40,000 people had been preventatively frisked and 10,000 cars had been searched (van Ostaaijen 2010, 118). Yet, according to the municipal government's website, preventative searches are fully accepted by the majority of the population and there is "a lot" of willingness to participate in such actions (Rotterdam 2009b). According to the report, 88% of the population believes that preventative searches improve feelings of safety and 76% of those searched are satisfied with their treatment by the police during these procedures (Rotterdam 2009b). The report attributes the positive nature of these experiences to the precise and professional manner in which searches are carried out.

The searching of bodies and governance of behaviours in public spaces are tactics used to discipline the body and govern actions for the purpose of reproducing a particular kind of behaviour. Yet this apparatus of security does more than just physically police public places; it also creates a specific kind of perception about who is considered dangerous and feeds into a discourse about belonging. Although Erin Martineau (2006) suggests that white Dutch youths hanging around in public places draw an equally negative reaction from the authorities as do racialized youths ("non-Western" immigrant, second generation, and/or Muslim) engaging in the same behaviour, this same research confirms that hanging around and being a nuisance is generally linked to ethnic diversity and is frequently perceived as an "allochthonous behaviour". Martineau explains, "when I told people that I was studying the problems with *hangjongeren* ("hang-around youth"), many, if not most, first assumed that I was studying ethnic minority youth, partly because problems with those youth

are so much the object of academics, journalists, policymakers, and the various organs of the social welfare state" (2006, 276). Martineau goes on to write that the abstract image of who was a hang-around youth was most often identified as problematic "ethnic minority youth", always in public places, and represented larger issues of lack of integration and failures of failed immigration policies (2006, 276). Martineau's work aligns with Çankaya's (2018) broader description of *urban allochthones* (see above).

This image is supported by the language of politicians, who have used such terms as "Moroccan scum" (*straattuig*) and "street terrorists" (*straat-terroristen*) (Koemans 2010a, 208) to describe Moroccan teenagers who hang around on street corners and commit petty crimes. In this way, politicians – from both left and right-wing parties – have associated antisocial behaviour on the streets as being a problem of minorities and, in particular, a problem of Moroccan youth; the cause of this antisocial behaviour is believed to have resulted from (Dutch) Moroccans' low level of social integration into society (Koemans 2010b, 485). Politicians have also argued that there is a need to address all antisocial behaviour with strong policing measures to "break the cycle of isolation and alienation" that are thought to plague these "young immigrants" so that they understand that "this kind of behaviour is not accepted in the Netherlands" (Koemans 2010b, 485–486). Implicit in these comments is the understanding that Moroccan youth, who are described as "immigrants" despite most being born and raised in the Netherlands (but who have a parent who has immigrated to the Netherlands from Morocco), are outsiders to the imagined community of the Netherlands or at the very least, not acting in a Dutch way.

Such discourses contribute to the wider understanding of Moroccan male youths as dangerous individuals who do not positively contribute to, or are a part of, Dutch society. The association of the behaviour of hanging around in public places with Dutch Moroccan and Turkish youths reframes these individuals as dangerous and peripheral members in Dutch society contributing negatively to an already problematic identity category. To show how this process works – how individuals experience these disciplining tactics and how they in turn facilitate or contest such governance by the police and political officials – I now turn to ethnographic examples of preventative searches carried out in a "high-risk" area of Rotterdam, followed by several ethnographic interviews with local police and community officials.

Situational Analysis as a Method to Explore Disciplinary Tactics in High-Risk Neighbourhoods

I conducted research on security measures in Rotterdam by walking around "hot spots" in highly policed neighbourhoods in Rotterdam's city centre in the spring of 2010. I walked and approached individuals to discuss their experiences of policing in public spaces, with a friend and colleague, C. B., who was living locally, in her twenties, who spoke fluent Dutch, and helped facilitate our discussions. C. B. was also interested in learning more about ideas of safety and security measures in these neighbourhoods, as a local resident. We both presented as young white women and I was most likely identified as ethnically Dutch until I spoke, when my own immigrant identity was revealed. Over a period of 4 months, C. B. and I would walk around Nieuwe Westen (New West), a neighbourhood close to the city centre in the borough of Delfshaven, approximately once a week in the late afternoon or early evening (spanning 2–4 hours). We chose different paths to walk through the neighbourhood, but always visited the same large open spaces (*plein*), typically found in the centre of condensed (social) housing (e.g., Tideman Square). We would hang out in local neighbourhood spaces designed for congregation (e.g., on benches, tables, seating areas), and while there, ask individuals about their experiences of security and policing in that space. We conducted approximately 12 ethnographic in-situ interviews[6] over this period.

Collecting ethnographic insights within significant spaces has growing support among anthropologists and social scientists who are interested in understanding "people's historical and contemporary relationships with local environments" (Strang 2010, 132; for a discussion on ethnographic walking and sensory memories, see Alda 2017). This approach allows individuals to

[6] I define ethnographic interviews using Elizabeth Munz's definition: "An ethnographic interview is an informal interview that takes place in a naturalistic setting and is often the result of participant observation" (2017, 455). During, these informal interviews and conversations that occurred during our walkabouts, we placed an importance on asking individuals to describe their experiences of security and being governed or policed in public places, in the spaces themselves to evoke feedback. Often, participants would gesture to spaces in their immediate vicinity to discuss past events, and allowed us, for example, to catch reflections and thoughts on policing events as they occurred in real-time. This methodological approach was taken due to the nature of the events we were investigating and the securitization surrounding them. This approach provides an opportunity to gain important information that is often difficult to get a hold of. C. B. and I began each interview with a short synopsis of who we were and our individual interests in this research.

reflect on the space, its cultural beliefs and values, as a repository and mnemonic of information (Strang 2010, 132). It was during one of these evenings on the square that my colleague and I saw the arrest of two hang-around youth and subsequently gathered insights from local residents present at the time. This arrest event will be analysed as a "social situation" (as per Gluckman 1940) to gain a sense of how policing of public spaces in Rotterdam are experienced (and policed) from multiple perspectives.

Karen Sykes (2014) describes the anthropological "case study method" as a part of situational analysis of the ways in which events may shed light on how "different conflictive perspectives on them are enjoined in the same social system" (ibid., par. 2). The case study reflected below would be identified as one of Max Gluckman's social situations which is "a collocation of events which the analyst is able to construe as connected with one another and which take place in a relatively restricted time span" (Mitchell 2009, 171). The use of situational analysis provided unique insight into the practice of policing and perceptions of youth deviance in public spaces. As two white, female-presenting individuals with non-native accents, asking questions and walking and hanging around in public space (the latter act being the behaviour we had come to explore further) allowed us to become a part of the context we explored, as participant observers. To provide greater context to the policing and community perspectives of such events, this event analysis is followed by an overview of in-situ ethnographic interviews with ten local policing and community officials. To support the improvized and in-situ nature of this data collection, I complement my data and analysis with materials from scholars who conducted similar research, i.e., neighbourhood policing of racialized youth in the Netherlands (see Martineau 2006; Bonnet and Caillault 2015; de Koning 2015, 2016, 2017).

At the time of my fieldwork project, in 2010, there were approximately 18,962 persons living in Nieuwe Westen, 72% of who were identified as "non-Western" Muslim migrants and their families. Twenty-three percent of the housing in this neighbourhood was subsidized housing, the percentage of lower income residents was approximately 60%, and the rate of unemployment was 10% (well above the city average) (Centrum voor Onderzoek en Statistiek 2010). According to the Safety Index of 2010 (which measures the level of safety from the previous year, 2009), Nieuwe Westen is in the "threatened category", meaning it was a neighbourhood that would receive special attention under the 2010–2014 safety action plan.

Experiencing Disciplinary Tactics and Governance in High-Risk Neighbourhoods

The field note entry below concerns an evening in May 2010 on Tideman Square, when C. B. and I witnessed an arrest that included a preventative search:

Two policemen on bikes had stopped and were searching the bags and pockets of two male youths. The police began radioing to colleagues and arrested the young men. At this point, other youths from the area became interested in the situation and a group of about ten youths began approaching the scene. As one police officer stayed with the two alleged offenders, the other police officer barred the approaching group from the scene. One of the youths tried to get closer; however, the police officer (a man) appeared angry, and while saying something to the youth, put a hand against the youth's chest to stop his advancement. Another approaching youth stepped out onto the street and started filming the scene with a mobile phone.

The two youths were then handcuffed, and the officers made them kneel down on the ground. The two young girls sitting next to us and also watching the scene exclaimed, "Why do the police do that? It is not necessary. They are already handcuffed! You do not have to have them kneel down". An unmarked car arrived at the scene and three men (one with a badge around his neck but in plain clothes) got out and stepped aggressively between the two police and the surrounding group of young men on the sidewalk. At this point the two youths were kneeling on the sidewalk with the two arresting officers in front of them. The three security men stood between this foursome and the growing group of youths on the street corner. Two police buses arrived next, and the original arresting officers (who were on bicycles) placed the two youths in one of the buses, which then drove them away. The youths in the back of the bus smiled and waved, with handcuffed hands, to the group of teenagers at the corner.

Following their departure, many individuals on this side of the square (an open square intended for public use) had come to the corner to watch what was happening. While the group of young men walked around the street corner where the event had taken place, most of the women and young girls remained on the square, which was slightly raised from the sidewalk and enclosed by a waist-high fence. This vantage point, as C. B. and I were also on the square, allowed for a clear view of the events unfolding below.

After witnessing this arrest, C. B. and I took the opportunity to speak to some of the other women on the playground area, who were speaking Arabic

and wearing headscarves. I asked the women "Does that happen often?" One woman answered, "No, not all the time but often enough". We introduced ourselves and asked the ladies whether it was safe in the area. "No", the women said collectively. Then one woman, who looked to be in her early forties and who was wearing a headscarf, took the lead and answered the rest of our questions while the others followed our conversation:

> Woman: There is not enough police presence here to combat the youth problem.
> […]
> C. B.: Do they conduct preventative searches here?
> Woman: Yes, the police do preventative searches. They stand on either side of the sidewalk of one of the streets and stop everybody that wants to walk through, including women and older people. It's never happened to me. When I see them, I take a different street. When we meet here on the square, we often talk about safety. […] Before, everything [in the neighbourhood] was safer. [But now] more police presence is needed to improve the situation. It is not safe for women to walk outside here at night. It is not possible. We just stay inside.

This group of women reiterated the idea that youths were a threat to neighbourhood safety. In this woman's opinion, problematic behaviour can be attributed to insufficient police presence. It also seems that these women approve police searching tactics to combat the "youth problem", even though preventative measures, such as searches, affect them as well. The idea that these youths commit crimes is propagated not only by policing or government officials but also by residents of the neighbourhood.

My colleague and I then approached another group, on the same square, who were speaking Turkish. We began by asking the group if it was safe in this neighbourhood, to which one woman who looked to be in her fifties responded that it was generally safe except for a few problems, namely teenage boys hanging out, smoking cigarettes or marijuana, showing their attitude to others, and intimidating the younger boys.

Although we had just witnessed a search at the other end of the square, this woman also stated that she had never witnessed a search herself. Instead, she spoke of the importance of increasing the presence of "policing authorities" (*toezicht van de gemeente*) and went on to state that "the problem is that they [motioning to the group of women that we had just come from] have 14 kids and then abandon them on [the] street without watching over them. I don't want to

point at certain people, but they have too many kids to keep them all at home". This response incorporates perceptions around lower socioeconomic status (lack of adequate housing) and inadequate parenting. As noted above, the group of women she was referring to would typically be identified as Muslims because they were wearing headscarves. They would likely be identified as Moroccans because their clothing would be popularly associated with someone who had emigrated from rural Morocco, i.e., long dresses and dark overcoats.

Notably, these respondents agreed that the threats to security came from a lack of police presence and from youths' behaviour of hanging about (while smoking, yelling, making messes, and loitering) on street corners. It is noteworthy that the views of the speaker from the second group are again in line with the official discourses that youths are the source of trouble due to their hanging around in public spaces. It is also significant that speakers from both groups attribute a lack of economic integration or suitable social activity, as a lack of responsibility as proper and/or working citizen (see Koster 2012).

Speakers from these two groups disagreed on certain points, however, when discussing the night's events and the general level of safety of the area. First, among the women in the neighbourhood, there seemed to be disagreement on whether it was a safe place. The speakers also disagreed on whether there were enough things for youths to do and what sorts of services were available for them. The speaker from the second group seemed to imply that criminal or bad behaviour was a choice on the part of the youth because, according to her, there were ample opportunities in the neighbourhood. Secondly, while the speaker from one group spoke more generally in assigning fault to the parents for their sons' behaviour, the speaker from the second group pointed to Moroccan women, or possibly those perceived as Muslim women, when assigning blame for children's upbringing.

The material from this case study aligns with other work in this area, particularly the work of anthropologist Anouk de Koning, who explores the role of collective responsibility of the community and in particular, the family, in intervening in antisocial or criminal behaviour of male youth in the Netherlands (2016). For example, de Koning interviews Nadia, a mother in her thirties, about a highly publicized and violent event featuring two Moroccan youth from the local community. Nadia describes her shock to learn of the event because "they have real good parents [...] As I just said, parents can no longer control a boy of 18, 19. Mothers don't know everything that happens in the streets, what kind of stuff their children get up to" (de Koning 2016, 120). Importantly,

local residents in both cases identify "the street" as a dangerous space, and a place that is out of reach for parents, whose responsibility it is to intervene in antisocial or criminal behaviour. If the space is considered dangerous, this might lead locals (and beyond) to support the policing of targeted individuals, in these spaces. Indeed, Koch's work acknowledges this paradox, that those most affected by increased police presence, also want more police presence (2018). This last discourse aligns with the official narratives of the kinds of mothers and sons who need social and civic support (see Martineau 2006, 71; van den Berg and Schinkel 2009, 173).

Finally, the two speakers disagreed on the matter of preventative searches with the speaker from the second group denying having witnessed any. Although a search had been conducted not 30 minutes earlier on the north side of the square, this group was seated on the southern side and perhaps did not witness the event. These divergences of opinion are notable because they illustrate how lived experiences of safety and security on the square are as unique as the individuals who experience them. And it should also be overtly stated that the identities of the researchers – white, middle-class women, speaking Dutch – certainly affected the responses we received from those witnessing the event. As individuals most likely outside the purview of police scrutiny and most likely aligning with the image of community or state officials, it is important to acknowledge the potential limitations of collecting responses in this manner.

Who's to blame?

From our walkabouts over several months, it became apparent that this square had significance for local youth despite it being a policed space. For example, on another night (June 2010) on the same square (Tideman Square), C. B. and I had the chance to speak with a larger group of male youths who identified themselves as "Moroccans". I asked them if they had any encounters with the police and if so, why they occurred. "The problem", one youth said, "seemed to be the act of hanging out in public spaces but we're not doing anything other than hanging out and being bored". The youth went on to describe a preventative search that happened on the square about one year earlier. When describing it, the youth used words such as *inval* ("invasion" or "intrusion"). "The police came at us from all sides, blocking the ways out and cordoning off the square. When the square was secured, the police began an extensive body search of all the young males there". The youths went on to say that the police do identity

checks more often than searches and that they drive by the square in cars, taking pictures of those who are hanging around. They also spoke about being fined 90 euros for hanging out in groups of more than three people in public places. According to them, the fine had been introduced only a few months earlier. We asked them if they felt safe in this area, one youth replied, "Why should we not feel safe? We're the ones that are supposed to be the problem!" to which another youth answered, "It was only people like them [motioning to the rest of the group] who are policed" and then hesitantly he added the word *allochthon* (he emphasised this word). A third youth spoke up: "[We] are actually Dutch but *they* don't see us as Dutch. They don't treat us that way". When we asked them how they felt about these security controls, one youth answered, "They [the police] should not do any of it [...]. They make things worse and make us feel unwelcome".

The youths we spoke with were conscious of being singled out by police measures, as well as by the reactions of others to them when in public spaces. It is evident that they recognized that they were not believed to belong to the majority community, as per their self-identification as "the problematic group", who are often checked by the police. It is notable that these youth felt comfortable identifying with Rotterdam as their city rather than with the Netherlands as their country. Throughout my research, this narrative ran through many of my conversations with racialized youth. Further, a connection between "not doing anything" runs counter to discourses of productivity and/or active citizenry in the neoliberal economy. In Çankaya's terms, the act of these supposedly hypermasculine men hanging around in public is experienced as "hijacking or disrupting the city's spaces" where pro-active policing interventions (requests to see identification without resulting in arrest) result in collecting data on these individuals and making them "known to the police" and of reinforcing the power hierarchy between wielders of state power and citizens (2018, 715–716).

From the above experiences, it is notable that despite the repeated governance, this square (Tideman Square) was interpreted as an "allochthonous space" by both the users (when, for example, the youth described it as a space that their white Dutch friends from school would not come to) and by the authorities (who attempted to control that space). That is, despite the police and security presence and despite knowing that hanging around in public places was an undesirable behaviour that brought penalties (searches or fines, for example), these youth continued to hang around in this public place. None of the youth described this behaviour as an act of resistance; they explained it as just hanging

around. To them, this was an innocent act resulting from their circumstances (having nothing to do), yet one that was policed. The governing actions of police did not deter them from using public space as far as we could tell, because for these youths, it was a matter of having nothing else to do.

Again, there is a connection from these findings that have been found in Anouk de Koning's (2016) work. For example, her interview with a young woman in her twenties, corroborates the youths' experiences of racial profiling. Miriyam "blamed the overzealous policing for young men's criminal activities" stating "I don't blame these guys if they start breaking and entering in protest" (2016, 120). Miriyam's explanation of events – as a protest to racial profiling – opens the possibility to consider these spatial practices as a means to contest space. Setha Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003) define contested space as "those sites where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and resistance engage actors often with differential access to power and resources" (ibid., 18). The youths' repeated (so-called) *mis*-use of local spaces, then – what de Certeau (1984) would describe as spatial "tactics" to exercise their agency – could be understood as an effort to fight for alternative ways of using local spaces. However, when Miriyam was reminded that the youths were being charged for more serious crimes than breaking and entering, she quickly excluded them from the community: "I don't know whether that really has anything to do with the neighbourhood. Those guys simply go for the big money, and they happen to live here and then this neighbourhood gets the stigma" (de Koning 2016, 120). This practice of policing youth "in place" highlights Wacquant's "territorial stigmatization of the poor" where "stigmatization is part and parcel of the 'problematization' that allows for the construction of an object of intervention" (as cited in Schinkel and van den Berg 2011, 1927). These narratives of non-belonging, immigrant identities, and racially profiled youth "having nothing to do" also surfaced in our in-situ ethnographic interviews with policing and community officials from the same neighbourhood.

"Minor Figures" and the Policing of City Spaces

In late May 2010, C. B. and I came across two Rotterdam-Rijmond police, one older and one younger, who were walking along Vierambachtstraat, one of the main streets in the Delfshaven district. After asking if we could speak with them about safety in the area, we asked them how long they had been working in this district. The older officer, who had been working there for 20 years, replied that

things had gotten better in terms of drugs, prostitution, and violence, as these were "no longer big security issues" in the area. He emphasized the importance of preventative searches, which in his view "got the weapons off the street", a narrative that aligns to Rotterdam's official policies. The officer also identified "waves of immigration" as the prominent source of neighbourhood problems, in particular the arrival of the Moluccans in the 1970s and the Surinamese who followed. In response to the contemporary, local Moluccan and Surinamese population, the officer stated: "They adapted well and they're no longer having any troubles". He continued by identifying local Moroccan and Turkish youths as the current immigrant population (it should be noted that most youth are second generation – see demographic information above) having trouble finding their place in Dutch society. He added that this "current trouble" would likely give way to the next wave of immigrants, which he identified as "probably being the Polish and Afghanis".

The police officer's statements are interesting in that he identified security issues as a symptom of newly arrived immigrants who have not yet adapted or learned the proper behaviour in public spaces. Such problematic behaviour would be quelled following a period of integration and socialization – "finding one's place" in society. For him, the need for integration was not permanent, but rather a phase one that would be passed onto the next wave of immigrants. It would appear that, at least from the perspective of this seasoned policeman, particular groups of male youths were not innately criminal; they needed governing for a limited period.

In a cross-country comparison of how police talk about minorities, François Bonnet and Clotilde Caillault interviewed 55 police officers from the Netherlands, France, and Italy (2015). They argue that unlike the French police officers in their study, Dutch officers overtly associated trouble in neighbourhoods with Moroccan youth, stating: "Not every allochthon is bad, but the most troubles on the street, when you talk about theft, robbery.... most of the time, it's an 'allochthon'" (Dutch police officer 8, as cited in Bonnet and Caillault 2015, 1,190). Or when Dutch police office 10 stated: "It's like a disease, I guess the whole community of that people, 90% is wrong, 10% is okay, people that want to work, the same who want to be the same as the Dutch people" (as cited in Bonnet and Caillault 2015, 1191). This pathologizing of criminality among Moroccan youth is contrary to the structural explanation of the overrepresentation of ethnic groups in crime, where – as described in our own encounter – police officers associated crime as a social rather than

cultural (innate) problem. French officers in Bonnet and Caillault's study describe the role of poverty, spatial relegation, and the resulting discontent as reasons why racialized youth are overrepresented in crime statistics (2015, 1195). Importantly, none of the officers interviewed mentioned racial profiling as a reason for overrepresentation.

Local policing efforts also include other safety officers such as the StadsWacht (City Guards). In June 2010, C. B. and I spoke with City Guard officers on Heemraadsplein, which is an open expanse on the edge of Delfshaven. These guards are not police officers but provide extra security presence on the streets of "high-risk" areas. Their powers include holding and searching individuals, imposing fines for infractions, using handcuffs if individuals are found in violation of the law, and making arrests on behalf of the police. These officers respond not only to threats to public safety but also to tax and environmental infractions. The two officers we spoke with again mentioned that their ethnic background as second-generation Dutch Muslim youth was an important factor in their recruitment for the position. One of the City Guard officers stated that although he considered himself to be an "allochthon" (his phrasing), he had grown up as a "Dutch youth" (*Nederlandse jongere*) in a stereotypically Dutch neighbourhood. Now that he had moved to the area where he worked, however, he knew the area and the other youths better. When asked what things they typically dealt with, when out on patrol, both officers mentioned *hangjongeren* in public spaces, particularly in front of convenience and food stores. According to one of the City Guard officers, they considered themselves to be "easier-going on the youths' infractions" than other enforcement officers, a factor which, according to them, garnered them more respect in the eyes of the youth. Although they were already working as law enforcement officers, these young men said that their motivations for taking on this position were to get a future job in law enforcement, and in the meantime, to make a little money.

It is interesting that these young men upheld security measures targeting youths who were perceived to have similar social and cultural identities as themselves. Notably, despite identifying themselves as "allochthonous", these City Guard officers used the same discourse and rhetoric to describe nuisances and problematic behaviour in public spaces (namely nuisances from the *hangjongeren*), as those found in official policing and media narratives.

On another occasion, C. B. and I spoke with a youth worker in his early thirties, named Shibal in June 2010. Shibal was walking around on Mathenesserplein, which is an open plane surrounded by three busy streets

and includes a sitting area with benches. There was frequent police presence in this space, and it had a busy feel (i.e., it is more heavily populated, and noise from traffic and music from businesses can be heard). He was trying to get the youth hanging around the square to come inside to his centre so that "they could stay out of trouble". Although Shibal was able to organize one activity a month, there were typically few other organized opportunities for the youth in between these times. He said, "people are bored, and it's a problem that they have nothing to do". He spoke about trying to encourage the youth to try and use the neighbourhood centres, but that their location was not advantageous, being far for some of the youth, and that youth (in general) preferred to be outside. "Even so", he said, "these activities are still more than they had before because there was absolutely nothing about five to ten years ago".

Shibal was a self-proclaimed one-time *hangjongere* himself until he became involved with this local Moroccan foundation for youth. His job was to be a resource for the local youths, organize activities, and get the youths more involved with the Centre. Shibal told us that his brother was also a youth worker, and our conversation turned to Shibal's Moroccan background and how it affected his decision to become a youth worker. "I was born and raised in Delfshaven and this helps me connect to the youth here. It also makes my work important because I am able to connect with many of the youth who also have Moroccan heritage".

The cases of Shibal and the City Guard officers illustrate how members of the community "in this case not only residents of the neighbourhood but members of the racialized ["non-Western" immigrant and/or Muslim community] are recruited to participate in official roles to stop racialized youth from hanging around in public spaces, as part of Rotterdam's approach to addressing youth crime. It is notable that in the latter two cases, all the workers believed that their heritage worked to their advantage when enforcing security and safety measures in public spaces in the eyes of the youth. Despite these individuals' empathetic approach to policing and community safety for racialized youth, their answers to our questions integrated dominant, negative discourses about the public behaviour of hang-around youth. Again, it is worth noting here that these responses could be shaped by the white-presenting identities of the researchers.

These examples also demonstrate that governance of public spaces takes various forms and is conducted by a diversity of individuals. Despite its diversity, all forms of securing this space (the police with preventative searches, the City

Guard officers and their ability to impose fines, and even social workers like Shibal, who seek to get youths involved in more “appropriate behaviours”), work to move racialized/targeted youth inside and away from public viewing/space. With respect to the use of public spaces, there is a consistent understanding that hanging around on sidewalks and street corners is discouraged. In response, such policing and community efforts to identify “offending bodies” and demarcate their difference as being “out of place” reinforces the “visibility of otherness” through their racial, classed, and gendered beliefs about who and what actions are appropriate in local public squares. The fact that this act of “reinforcing otherness” is happening in what would typically be identified as a racialized space (due to demographics of the neighbourhood) is important, and adds to the literature showcasing the process of racializing otherness within and on the boundaries of affluent, white neighbourhoods (see Çankaya, 2020). These policing actions work to “whiten public space” by dictating appropriate behaviours that align with majority community understandings of the proper use of public spaces, and by removing (from view or through arrest) racialized bodies (Hill 2008; Low 2008; Anderson 2015). Consequently, these securitizing actions are supposed to make these spaces safer.

Miller and Rose’s (2008) take on governmentality focuses on “the engineering of conduct and the normalizing of behaviour [...] which demonstrated the important normalizing role played by a vast array of petty managers of social and subjective existence” (ibid., 5). Such an approach moves the frame of investigation from governing projects to governing processes, which allows the powers that be to govern at all (Miller and Rose 2008, 5). As demonstrated in the above ethnographic interviews of policing officials, policing tactics directed toward typically immigrant, impoverished subpopulations in public places are some of the everyday acts by “minor” figures to discipline deviant behaviour and recalibrate public spaces according to dominant perceptions of the social norm (see also, Koch 2018).

By using in-situ ethnographic interviews and participating in hanging around in the public spaces that were officially governed, it became apparent that only certain bodies were noticed and policed. Importantly, neither my colleague nor I were ever stopped and asked for identification, despite demonstrating the same sort of behaviour as these youth (i.e., hanging around). This fact most likely has racialized and gendered implications in Dutch public spaces. The experiences described in this article brought together two threads of discussion. First, individuals make active choices of how to use space regardless of

normative conceptions of how public spaces should be used. This is evident in the youths' continued hanging around in public places despite the repercussions. Second, in the context of the Netherlands, to understand how space is governed, one must also understand officials' efforts to integrate targeted racialized Dutch Muslim and/or "non-Western" immigrant populations into Dutch society. Kaulingfreks' work (2015) supports such an analysis; he argued that Foucault's panopticon has moved into Dutch public places to carefully monitor racialized male youth, who are "singled out, dragged from the shadows and made accountable" (2015, 112). Yet, it is not just the state-enforced authorities to whom they are being held accountable, but also the constellation of social control professionals and other local inhabitants.

This article explored the tactics used to enforce certain behaviours in public spaces that racialize city spaces. Çankaya's work around the *geopolicing* of *urban allochthones* who are racialized, classed, and gendered as out of place in white, upper-class spaces, lends an important insight into the intersections of racial, class, and gender identities in the monitoring and imagining of the proper uses of public spaces. In the context of "hot spots" and the policing of young, racialized, male youths, it became apparent from this situational analysis that it was not only the police or "minor figures" (such as community workers or non-police security personnel controlled by local governments), but also local residents who reinforced the "visibility of otherness" through their racial, classed, and gendered beliefs about who and what was appropriate in local public squares.

Conclusion

In this article, I explored how certain security and safety programs in Rotterdam, like preventative searches or the fining of individuals for gathering in groups of three or more people, can work to reinforce a sense of belonging in public spaces that predominantly discriminates against young racialized male teenagers. These policing programs also work to reiterate and maintain dominant conceptions of how public spaces should be used in everyday life. Security and accompanying civilizing programs (e.g., the Moroccan Approach) while aiming to reduce fear among the general populace, result in Moroccan male youths being made to feel as if they do not belong on Rotterdam's streets or in their neighbourhoods.

Through an exploration of the use of public squares, the above ethnographic material helped illuminate the web of relations and practices that resulted from

particular ways of governing and shaping of conduct. As was made apparent, it was not only policing tactics by law enforcement officials, but also the actions of ordinary inhabitants living in hotspot neighbourhoods who helped reproduce discourses concerning problematic behaviour associated with racialized male youths. Also visible in the discourse of disciplining the behaviour of hanging around in public places is the idea that these youth should become active, employed citizens and thus show their loyalty to the Dutch nation. Because they had nothing else to do, these individuals, purposefully or not, were seen to be misusing space and possibly avoiding their responsibilities as productive citizens. More research on the economic factors associated with "hang-around youth" (*hangjongeren*) would help to shed light on these perceptions.

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THE PRECARIOUS LIVES OF HOMELESS SCAVENGERS IN TOKYO BEFORE AND AFTER THE 2008 CRISIS

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Abstract: *Awareness of poverty in Japan significantly increased after the bubble economy ended in 1991. The presence of older men, approaching or past retirement age, living in blue tents and on park benches, was one of the first to challenge the assumption of a classless Japan. One strategy for men experiencing homelessness to alleviate their hardships and survive is to gather and sell aluminium cans. This paper ethnographically explores their precarious work and documents the various patterns of gathering and selling cans, while also looking at the impact of both local and global forces (neoliberalism) on their work. Based on fieldwork that included the economic recession of 2008–2009, I observed six months of the work of the homeless during economic stability and six months during a severe recession. My research shows how homeless men used the work of gathering and selling cans to survive during a stagnant economy and then adapted to a brutal recession, which resulted in much lower income for their labour as the price of aluminium significantly decreased. I argue that their work was affected by the global economy and that collecting cans and earning money helped homeless men survive through the crisis. Finally, I conclude that earning money via selling cans allowed the men to maintain their self-respect and pride, have a sense of purpose, buy daily necessities, and occasionally splurge on entertainment.*

Keywords: *Japan; homelessness; recycling; precarity; globalization*

Introduction

Yamada wakes up in Tokyo at 5:00 a.m. to go to work. He commutes for an hour to a nearby neighbourhood, works for four hours, breaks for lunch, and then works two more hours before going home. What makes Yamada different from a retired *sarari-man* ("white-collar worker") is that he works scavenging for aluminium cans for several hours before the trash pick-up. Then he crushes them after eating his first meal of the day around 10:00 a.m. Yamada[1] is homeless.

For many men who are homeless, collecting and selling recyclables is a crucial income-generating survival strategy. The lives of men like Yamada are similar to scavengers in China (Li 2003), Nigeria (Nzeadibe 2009), and the Middle East and Latin and South America (Medina 2007), as well as to *catadores* ("pickers who collect and sell recyclables") in Rio de Janeiro (Millar 2018, 2). Building on these works and responding to scholarly theories of precarity, this paper aims to ethnographically examine the role that collecting recyclables plays in the lives of Japanese men, and it seeks to show how their lives, particularly their informal work of collecting and selling aluminium cans during my research in Tokyo in 2008 and 2009, helped them maintain their sense of independence and shows how that same work connected them via their informal work to both local and global forces. Moving beyond questions of work as a survival mechanism, this paper asks: How did the work of homeless men in Japan help them maintain their autonomy and create and sustain their identity, specifically their independence and pride? To what extent were their lives precarious, and how did their work nevertheless help them to live less precarious lives? Finally, it explores how local forces (local safety nets and local conditions of labour), as well as the global economy, impacted their lives via the informal work they did, and it observes the connection between their income and the price of aluminium, which was set on the global market.

To understand how these Japanese men experiencing homelessness earned money in 2008–2009, because "most of the men work in some way" (Slater and Ikeba 2020, 3), I conducted participant observation and in-depth interviews among men who had or were experiencing homelessness in Tokyo's northeast areas, specifically Ueno Park and its surrounding localities, San'ya, and Asakusa. Of course, not all homeless men collected cans, but most did, and

[1] Even though many men in my study do not use their real names, I anonymize all names, including Yamada's.

a second smaller group worked in the city workfare program, and only a small minority did not work at all and were dependent on the various soup lines to survive.

For more than a year, I participated in a variety of activities in the lives of homeless men collecting cans, including sitting on park benches, walking to soup lines, assisting a non-profit organization with their soup lines twice a week, helping men gather and crush aluminium cans, and participating in a variety of exchanges. A typical day might include talking to men selling aluminium cans or helping them crush cans, chatting with them while they waited in a soup line, talking to men after they had eaten lunch about the church's soup line, and helping them clean up before bed. In addition to these work activities, I participated in leisure activities such as doing puzzle books like Sudoku, gambling (both at the local OTB[2] and pachinko, a type of arcade game) and drinking with friends and neighbours. Of course, these activities decreased as the homeless men lost some of their autonomy as their income dropped with the recession. Both men who scavenged for cans and those who did not would go to soup lines, but not all men who collected cans used them. Since they earned money, they could choose not to use the soup lines, but some went anyway to help stretch their money. I took fieldnotes throughout the day in small notebooks, but especially after hearing or seeing something seemingly important for my research, and at the end of the day would type them out.

After seven months of fieldwork, the Lehman Shock[3] sent the global economy into a recession, so my research questions expanded to include how the homeless men in Tokyo adapted to significant income loss. I continued my fieldwork for another six months, exploring how they managed to survive with less income for the same amount of work. The serendipity of conducting fieldwork with a severe recession beginning in the middle is rare, so some of the ethnographic data is written in the present tense to emphasize the lived experience of homeless men in Tokyo, while others are not, so the reader is not misled about the historicity of events.

Conducting fieldwork with these men, I faced an obstacle: they relentlessly guarded their privacy, especially regarding their lives prior to becoming homeless, so I worked to build rapport and trust and to verify the information they

[2] OTB stands for off-track betting or off course betting.

[3] The Lehman Shock refers to the 2008 bankruptcy of the investment bank Lehman Brothers which was the climax of the subprime mortgage crisis.

shared with me. Otani-san, a grandfather, became a great source of information and openly shared information about his life. Still, when possible, I verified what he told me. For example, he described how he collected cans from a couple of nearby hotels, and I later made a point of following him as he began collecting their cans to verify his claim.

In addition to the obstacle of men guarding their privacy, they questioned my presence. Being a foreigner seemed to be the main aspect of my identity to the men, and they did not hesitate to ask why I was hanging out in the park. However, the various non-profit agencies that hold soup lines have volunteers from international schools and companies, so the men were accustomed to seeing foreigners. As a 34-year-old white American cisgender male, they did not seem to care about my presence as a researcher interested in their lives except to stress half-jokingly that I should get a "real" job. They became more incredulous about my life choice to conduct research when they learned I was married and later when my son was born. Still, these personal revelations presented an opportunity to learn about their personal lives, and I learned they were separated from their families (unlike the workers in Rio de Janeiro that Kathleen Millar describes; see 2014, 2018).

The cultural context of recycling in Japan has importance for the public's perception of recycling and resources. Their views impact how Japanese society understands the men scavenging for aluminium cans. Documenting waste from a historical perspective, Eiko Maruko Siniawer shows that Japan began recycling in earnest after the Oil Shock of the 1970s to maintain the current levels of consumption, but the main impetus was "saving resources" (2018, 174). She explains that "the idea of a resource-poor Japan made objectionable the disregard for anything from metal and glass to oil that was considered a resource, and reinforced initiatives to save valuable resources from ending up in the garbage" (2018, 175). Siniawer traces Japan's recycling laws and their impact on keeping recycling in the thoughts of citizens, and of particular note is that in 1998 "92.8% of respondents expressed some degree of interest in creating a 'recycling society'" (2018, 232). Interestingly, she found that in the 1980s there was an explosive rise in the number of recycling groups focusing on aluminium cans (2018).

Siniawer (2018) notes that Japanese society missed an opportunity to reflect on the more complex issues of waste besides recycling, as the social approval of recycling remains quite high. Given her description of the development of recycling in Japan, it is unsurprising that some people are sometimes

hostile to scavengers taking cans out of community bins (see below). Their view of the men experiencing homelessness can be understood by examining Miki Hasegawa's ethnography, which documents how in the late 1990s the Tokyo city government evicted homeless men from Shinjuku Station in Tokyo (2012). The homeless and their allies held demonstrations in which they protested the Tokyo government forcing the homeless residents to leave the station and the indoor corridor connecting the station to office buildings. During the protest, the homeless and their allies held posters arguing correctly that they were not "garbage" (2012). The protesters were highlighting how the government sees and treats homeless people. So, the public may see men scavenging for cans as taking or even stealing from the community that benefits from the money the recycling provides to the city, and given how the government treats them, the public sees them as less than human.

The scavengers who gathered aluminium cans had a complex relationship with the public. Staying off welfare and not being a burden to the government was a source of pride to them, even though "proper citizens", as Akihiko Nishizawa points out, "often criticize the homeless people as feckless and unintelligent" (2011, 209). Perhaps "proper" citizens did not see these men working as they were active before most people came out, while they were inactive (either napping or resting around lunchtime or late afternoon) when tourists, evening commuters, or school groups passed by then. Many of these homeless men would appear to them idle at best, and lazy at worst.

These ordinary people may have misjudged them, since the homeless men did work, although outside of the formal economy and outside standard work schedules. Given the local options available to the men I researched (e.g., attending soup lines, working occasionally for the city, applying for welfare, not working at all), making a living by collecting and selling cans was probably one of their best choices.

While the work of the homeless men falls outside of what Japanese society normally recognizes as "work", the justification I heard the most for their choice to scavenge for cans was simply, "If I don't work [gathering cans], I can't eat". While Tom Gill described can collections as "an improvised survival aid" (2012), many of the men I interviewed described it as *taihen* ("hard work"). Many Japanese homeless men took pride in that they have *not* applied for welfare and were maintaining their independence and dignity through work (Marr 1997; Margolis 2008). The men considered scavenging for cans work. One evening in the park, after chatting with Suzuki while he was preparing to go search for

cans, he said goodbye to me with the traditional expression *ittekimasu* ("I'm off to work"). This is standard Japanese used for everyone leaving home, but especially for school and work in the mornings. Thus, by using that expression Suzuki was indicating he saw his work as a regular job.

Turning to the basics of recycling, in Tokyo, like in most Japanese cities, each neighbourhood has a recyclables trash collection once a week, and residents put their recyclables in large boxes located at collection spots throughout the neighbourhood. There are several boxes including one for glass, one for cans (both steel and aluminium), and one for plastic bottles. Some people put their recyclables in the boxes in the evening before a trash collection, and recyclers take only the aluminium cans and sell them (during my research, scrap metal buyers paid much less for steel). While Japanese society values steel cans and other forms of steel, the men making a living selling scrap metals considered steel a waste of their time. Some men whom I observed during my research carried magnets with them to see if other scrap metals (e.g., the inside of a rice cooker) were aluminium or steel. Before further examining their work, however, it is necessary to understand poverty and homelessness in Japan. When and how did modern homelessness develop in Japan? How is poverty understood and explained?

Contemporary Homelessness in Japan

Homelessness first became a visible problem and was categorized as *hōmuresu* ("homeless") in the early 1990s, with the end of the bubble economy (Kasai 2008), and people experiencing homelessness were almost exclusively male, with few homeless women (Gill 2015). Roughly half were in their fifties, and over half were junior high school graduates (high school is not compulsory in Japan) who never married (Iwata 2003). Although many men were in their fifties, numerous men had ailments from their hard life as day labourers, resulting in their life expectancy being 20 years below the national average (Gill 2001). While scholars and the public had previously associated homelessness with unemployed day labourers, that was no longer the case in the 1990s / early 2000s. Carolyn Stevens describes how "by the mid-1990s, a variety of men – day labourers and other unemployed people, both Japanese and non-Japanese – began claiming as their homes train stations, public parks, and other public areas [...] bringing the plight of the homeless into many mainstream places in Japan" (2013, 163).

The understanding of poverty and homelessness shifted again during the end of the year holidays in 2008 with the sudden appearance of a large encampment of tents and soup lines in Hibiya Park (a large park in central Tokyo) becoming the top news story for several days. One researcher described the event as "a turning of the tide in Japanese labour politics" (Shinoda 2009, 1). Others highlighted that the camp was not a response to natural disaster as one might expect, but rather "a consequence of the global financial crisis that had suddenly made hundreds of thousands of able-bodied Japanese men both jobless and homeless", because they had been living in company dormitories, so without their job, they did not have a home (Kojima 2010, 23). Many of the men in the camp lost their jobs as dispatch workers due to the severe financial recession because "demand for exports collapsed in the final quarter of 2008, the Japanese economy contracted at its fastest pace in nearly 35 years" (Shinoda 2009, 3). Toru Shinoda is describing the recession and its impact on dispatch workers after the Lehman Shock, but how did it affect men already experiencing homelessness?

This paper connects the consequences of the recession to how homeless men in Tokyo used the work of recycling aluminium cans to maintain their dignity and pride. Then it turns to show how their actions nevertheless kept them from living even more precariously during the crisis. Men experiencing homelessness slept in public places such as parks, train stations, and riverbanks, and while the official count at the time of the research was 14,707 people (over 95% men) for the entire country, and 3,436 for central Tokyo (e-Stat 2021), the number of people experiencing homelessness has decreased significantly to 800 in 2021 (TMG 2022). Tom Gill explains that the substantial decrease is due to ward officials, city officials, and bureaucrats accepting many more "applicants for welfare" (*seikatsu hogo*) (personal communication, 5 January 2018). Matthew Marr also points out that based on estimates of the increase in welfare recipients, "there is a sizeable precariously housed population across Japan that would fit a broader definition of homelessness" (2015, 33).

Work, Identity, and Independence among the Homeless

Research in Japan has shown that workers often experience episodes of homelessness, especially when they cannot find work (Gill 2001). Matthew Marr's study focuses on day labourers in Nagoya, and provides insightful analysis and description of their values, including "self-pride", not wanting to "limit their

freedom", and a strong desire for "privacy and autonomy" (1997, 238–239). He finds that

> The day labourers' preference for work instead of public handouts is evident in the demands made on the public administration by day labour unions […] In the vast majority of protests made to city governments, the leading demand is to increase the amount of jobs through public works projects (ibid., 237).

Demanding work and not a handout shows that homeless men value their independence, pride, and hard work. Similar values can be found among the homeless in Tokyo according to Abby Margolis's research (2003, 2008) with men experiencing homelessness in and around Ueno Park. She documented slightly different values but noted that the homeless men "prided themselves in their self-sufficiency, honour, and perseverance" (2008, 355) and observed the thoroughness and seriousness with which they carried out their work and their social role. Margolis describes "doing homeless" as doing the acts of living in the park, collecting aluminium cans, and attending *takidashi* ("soup kitchens") in a way that reflects the traditional samurai spirit (ibid., 353).

Outside of Japan, Teresa Gowan finds a similar attitude among homeless men in San Francisco who also work as recyclers (2000, 2010). For example, she quotes Anthony, a homeless recycler who comments on the stigma of being homeless: "When I'm working hard, right before their eyes, no one can say I'm just a smelly drain on the public purse" (2000, 74). Gowan highlights the role recycling plays in helping homeless men survive by providing "an essential economic floor, the bare bones of survival", and that the act of work helps to reconnect with their roots as members of the working class (ibid., 78). She expands on these themes in more detail in her ethnography (2010) documenting the experiences of scavengers in San Francisco and the various ways the men work to survive.

Given the desire for work among Japanese men, what happens when this strategy is challenged by a crippling recession? Before the recession, the concept of the working poor had firmly developed in Japan (Obinger 2009). The informal work of scavenging fits clearly into the current political-economic theories of neoliberalism, particularly regarding the global move, since the late 20th century, from a Fordist to a post-Fordist economy, whereby flexibility and precarity are the main qualities of labour. At the time of the 2008 recession, scholars began using precarity also as a theoretical framework to understand modern

Japanese society (Obinger 2009; Allison 2013) and described the homeless as "possibly living under the most precarious conditions" (Obinger 2009, 7).

Julia Obinger defines precarious work as "poorly paid non-standard employment, which is highly insecure, unprotected and offers no benefits" (2009, 3; see also Allison 2013). The work of scavenging for cans clearly meets this definition, and I would add that this work also lacks a safety net. There are no paid days off, sick leave, healthcare, retirement savings, safety standard, or anything else to provide any security. Obinger further argues that the emergence of a sizeable class of working poor, or "precariat", in Japan is by no means a marginal phenomenon. Anne Allison also sees homelessness as a symptom of precarity in Japanese society, and she highlights that poverty is back after a long absence (the recovery from World War II) and is increasing (2013, 5). The increase is seen in the rise of precarious work, and she notes that "one-third of all workers today are only irregularly employed. Holding jobs that are part-time, temporary, or contract labour, irregular workers lack job security, benefits, or decent wages" (ibid.). This research, however, will show that the work the homeless men in Japan do and the solidarity they have with neighbours and friends helps them survive while living precariously, and that they are connected through their work with aluminium cans to the global community (and economy).

Furthermore, Kathleen Millar also studies informal, precarious work and expands on and clarifies the issue of precarity by introducing the concept of "relational autonomy" (2014, 35), which she defines as "a relative degree of control over work activities and time [which] enables *catadores* to sustain relationships, fulfil social obligations, pursue life projects in an uncertain everyday" (ibid., 35–36). Her work on *catadores* and their notion of autonomy emphasizes "sociality", "relations of care", "community", and "social belonging" (ibid.), and thus stands in contrast to the neoliberal model of autonomy, which relates to "individual empowerment, entrepreneurialism, and self-help" (ibid., 47). However, if we compare Japanese homeless men to Brazilian *catadores* (and their notion of relational autonomy), during my fieldwork, two themes emerged. First, although most homeless men in Japan fostered some degree of community, their emphasis was on their work. Their community ranged from men who kept to themselves but would still participate occasionally in exchanges with other men, and at the other end of the spectrum, some men developed solid friendships with other homeless men and would look out for each other, share meals, and essentially live together. I will discuss their community in more detail

later. Second, few Japanese scavengers had relationships with family members or "life projects" outside of their current circumstances. This stands in contrast to a *hikkikomori* ("socially withdrawn individual"), whom Allison identified in her work as someone who literally stayed home, but also reflects her argument that family relationships are breaking down and that Japan is becoming a *meun shakai* ("relationless society") (2018, 41). Scavengers in Tokyo would therefore come closer to neoliberal notions of individual empowerment and self-help than to relational autonomy, which emphasizes solidarity and community since they empowered themselves individually with work and did not want to be a burden on society.

However, they also helped each other to varying degrees and created moments of solidarity, although this depended on each particular group. The closer the group, the more support a homeless scavenger could count on. For example, when Fukuda burned his foot boiling water to cook noodles, his homeless neighbours bought him bandages and burn cream. For others, the solidarity among them was occasional and unreliable, and only occurred when a neighbour had extra food or goods to share. Their solidarity and acts of support and harmony stood in contrast to the frequency with which men complained about other scavengers. Some men bitterly complained that there were *warui hito* ("bad people") and *dorobou* ("thieves") among the homeless, and that sometimes cans and other goods get stolen.

While Millar uses the notion of relational autonomy to stress that "the desire for mobility among *catadores* is tightly woven into other desires for sociality, intimacy, and relations of care" (2014, 16), homeless men in Tokyo valued their privacy more than relationships. For these men, their desires were twofold, maintaining their privacy (selling cans never required giving any personal information beyond a name to the buyer, and some men even used pseudonyms) and earning money to help them eat and maintain some degree of independence. The other way men earned money was through a government-run work program, but this required them to register with the program, and some men did not want to give away their personal information.

While the scavengers in Tokyo earned money through a piece wage system, this leads to a question as to whether the canners would work collectively to improve their lives. Millar's research includes an insightful analysis of collective action among *catadores* and raises the question: would such relationships of solidarity form among homeless scavengers in Tokyo (2018)? While the group in Rio had episodes of success, they were also in everyday relationship with

ordinary people around them, who could be called into action when *catadores* needed them (ibid.). Among the Japanese homeless men, however, two different approaches to community materialized, with one showing clear examples of solidarity among the various groups of homeless men and the other evidencing social tension and frequent complaints about *ningen kankei* ("getting along with others") and lamenting that dealing with other homeless men is the worst part about being homeless. Given the difficulties of getting along with others, they often worked individually or sometimes with partners to collect cans and functioned as neoliberal individualists with some level of support from each other.

Many scholars have recognized scavenging for aluminium cans and plastic bottles as a form of work among the homeless (Fortuna and Prates 1989; Dordick 1997; Hopper 2003; Aoki 2006; Ashenmiller 2009; Gowan 2010; Marr 2015). Hideo Aoki's research is most pertinent for this article, as it documents work among the homeless in Osaka. Among them, 87.3% are "collecting recyclable resources" (2006, 100). Aluminium cans made up 79.5% of the items the homeless collected and over half of the men made less than 30,000 yen[4] ($320) per month (2006). Aoki also found that 74% of homeless men are dissatisfied with their work because it provides for an "insecure income, and in which the competition is fierce and the work is heavy" (2006, 101). Considering these conditions, Aoki finds the dissatisfaction of Osaka's homeless men with their work understandable. However, for men in Tokyo, their dissatisfaction can easily be understood within the precarious conditions of their work (insecure income and lack of benefits) and those same conditions of hard work, autonomy, and independence allow them to maintain their pride and anonymity as some are hiding from debt collectors and family members. While there was no guaranteed constant supply of cans for their work, their experience showed them that there would always be some cans that they could find.

The Work Gathering and Selling Aluminium Cans

Early in my research, I saw Yamada, whom I had met during preliminary fieldwork a couple of years earlier in Ueno Park in Tokyo. In the mornings, I looked for him in his usual place, but could not find him. Yamada was already busy with his work gathering and selling aluminium cans, which requires knowing the city's trash collection schedule. In the morning households and businesses

[4] The exchange rate for 2008 was 103.39 yen to the dollar.

put their trash out before 8:30 a.m., after which the city collected it. Yamada gathered cans from the neighbourhood bins and kept a busy schedule visiting six different neighbourhoods a week.

His work of collecting, crushing, and selling aluminium cans was not easy. While a few men gathered cans in the evening, most men started work early, waking up as early as 5:00 a.m. and collecting cans until nine-thirty or ten o'clock. Many men walked and a few rode bicycles to the nearby neighbourhood with the recycling pickup. Those who walked left earlier since it took them longer to get to the neighbourhood. Some neighbourhoods were adjacent to the park where they lived, but others were quite far away. When I went to meet Takayama and Yamada to accompany them, they had already started walking at 5:30 a.m. I took the train two stops to the neighbourhood to catch up to them. Some neighbourhoods were three to five train stations away, so they walked a considerable distance to each neighbourhood and once there, continued walking around the neighbourhood to the various recycling bins to collect cans.

While Yamada's pattern of gathering cans was the most common, a few men collected cans at night and crushed them the following morning. These men collected cans either directly from trashcans along the street, in parks, and the trashcans in front of convenience stores, or they took whatever cans residents placed in the recycling bins in the evening. The men who gathered aluminium cans at night also did so during the day and crushed them whenever they could. Working at night made getting decent sleep difficult. Otani, who harvested his cans, often compared himself to Napoleon. His comparison was that like Napoleon, he only sleeps three hours a night. His schedule often had him returning to his base area near the park around 3:00 a.m., and he would wake up at 5:00 a.m. because morning commuters were beginning to arrive. He joked that he was better than Napoleon because he only slept for two hours. His sleeping habits and knowledge of Napoleon were not unique, since other men also compared themselves to Napoleon, especially when they woke up from a nap or a short night's sleep, so this seemed to be a common reference.

Men who collected cans from *manshons* ("large condominium buildings") could sleep more, as they did not have to compete for the cans due to their agreements with owners and managers of these buildings (cf. Hill and Stamey 1990). These places were like hitting the jackpot because they were one-stop and usually had many cans (they also exemplify some of the local labour conditions). Typically, a man approached the building supervisor and asked to make an agreement to collect their recyclables, and some men had made

several such agreements with building managers so they could collect large amounts. Another advantage of these agreements was that they eliminated competition. For example, when looking for cans, homeless men sometimes approached a recycling box just a minute or two apart. When this happened, only one of them would get the cans. Having an agreement with supervisors guaranteed a certain number of recyclables, which meant both additional money and a secure source of it. Nishi had several agreements, which led to him pushing a flatbed cart overflowing with large plastic bags filled with cans. Teresa Gowan (2010) found a similar pattern where restaurants will save their bottles and boxes for homeless men.

Another advantage of apartment buildings and condominiums was that their recycling bins were larger and therefore usually had more cans. Even a small apartment building would likely have many cans, from six to as many as 30, especially just after the building manager put out the recycling boxes. Often a residential recycling bin would have just a few. Finding more than two or even a small plastic bag full of cans was a real treasure. When collecting recyclables with Takayama, he came across a bag, smiled broadly, and exclaimed, *"Kekkou aru!"* ("There are more than I thought!").

After the work of collecting their harvest, men crushed the aluminium cans, which took several hours, depending on their number. The bags cost money, so the more cans they could squeeze in the bag, the better. Yamada-san, who has been homeless for at least four years and was in his forties, relatively young for Japan's homeless population, explained, "Because the bags cost money, we all try to crush the cans as much as we can. That's why we try so hard to crush them" (i.e., to save money). The men used the bags repeatedly and added duct tape to make the bags last longer.

Many men crushed them by stomping on them, and unsurprisingly, they often complained that their feet were tired. Typically, a man reached into his clear plastic bag full of uncrushed cans, drained any remaining liquid, lined up three or four cans in a row, and then stomped each can several times. Experienced recyclers knew that heavier aluminium cans, often containing coffee, required three to four stomps while the lighter aluminium cans, which usually were soda or beer cans, needed just one or perhaps two. Crushing cans was especially tiring for men who walked to collect recyclables. The canners refrained from crushing cans in cases when they were planning to throw away their worn-out bags, because the weight of too many crushed cans would rip the bags. In these cases, they were usually hoping to receive new bags from the buyer.

The other method used to crush cans involved using a *jakkibeisu* (a heavy tool similar to a sledgehammer, see Figure 1). A *jakkibeisu* weighs 3.3 kg and lifting it is tiring. Before Otani-san and Saito-san let me use it, they warned me that my shoulder and arm would hurt, and as I used it, I could feel blisters forming on my hand. Like stomping, the heaviest cans required three or four hits with a *jakkibeisu*, but with this method, they became as flat as a tack, so the men could get more cans in the bag and save money.

Figure 1. *Jakkibeisu*, a tool used by homeless men in Tokyo to crush cans.

The advantage to the *jakkibeisu* was also that a garbage bag full of cans crushed by a *jakkibeisu* weighed significantly more because more cans could fit in the bag. Some of the men who used this tool have experienced shoulder aches, and others have developed a hunched back and neck. One man, Otani-san, who often sits on the curb and crushed his haul with a *jakkibeisu*, compounded his repetitive work injuries by often sleeping while sitting on the curb with his head and shoulders slumped.

Regardless of how the men gathered cans and crushed them, it was work and thus it provided a way for them to maintain their independence and freedom and earn enough income to get by. Their lives were precarious, because the men lacked formal work, healthcare, and housing, and the work they did depended

on other people drinking and disposing of valuable materials. In contrast, regularly employed workers could count on a regular salary, healthcare, and in Japan, company-provided housing. The lives of these homeless men were more precarious, as they refused to apply for welfare and state-sponsored health insurance and lacked any certainty of a minimum amount of cans and therefore a wage, but their work and the income it generated prevented them from being absolutely destitute and live even more precariously. Their work prevented them from being totally dependent on the various soup lines and the nearby free clinic. In addition to their work enabling them to live less precarious lives, the relationships with other homeless men also helped them to some degree as they could depend on them to share food, information, and safety.

Selling Cans and Getting Paid

Once the men collected and crushed their recyclables, they sold them. There were two main buyers, greatly influencing local conditions of scavenging labour among homeless men. The most popular buyer, a young man in his twenties, paid a little more and always came on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The other buyer, much older, parked in a different area, came every day, except Sunday, and paid about 5 to 10 yen less. This buyer, the older one, had the sellers sign their names next to the amount on a receipt. Men experiencing homelessness often used pseudonyms, so the accuracy of these receipts is questionable, and the receipts seemed to be for show.

Some men developed a relationship with the buyers, especially the younger one, often having friendly conversations. The more popular buyer, the younger one, paid the most and was sociable, talkative, and smoked cigarettes with the men while buying cans. The recyclers would often come in waves and in between these busy times, a few men and the buyer would chat. Having a good relationship with him had benefits for sellers, as he might give them cigarettes, canned coffee or tea, and plastic bags. Although the buyer would not always give away plastic bags, when he did, the more cans a man sold, the more plastic bags he would receive. For example, Oba-san sold around 50 kg, so he received an entire pack of bags. The buyer sometimes needed help and would ask one of the men selling recyclables to throw away the trash that had gathered from the various sellers, typically an empty plastic bottle or two and discarded plastic trash bags and would give the man who helped him a can of coffee or another non-alcoholic beverage.

These gifts were not the only Japanese business practice the younger buyer replicated and, in some respects, he treated the men like clients. For instance, on 6 January 2009, the first day of work after the New Year's holiday, the buyer brought paper cups and a large bottle of sake, and some cans of beer for the men to drink as a New Year's gift. Men who did not normally socialize stayed to enjoy the sake, and those who usually socialized hung out, drank, and talked much longer than usual. The relationship the men established with this can buyer, however, did have limits. For example, when the price of aluminium dropped and some men learned of a new place paying 5 yen more per kg, they would go there when it was convenient, about once a week, but as Yamada said, "We still have to show our face [maintain the relationship] at the can buyer by the park, so he will keep buying our cans".

Maintaining a relationship seemed less of a concern for men who sold their cans to the older can buyer. He was probably in his fifties and was all business. He usually came around three o'clock and stayed for less than ten minutes, leaving after he bought all the cans. His schedule put pressure on the men to be on time, so most men lined up before three o'clock, although occasionally one recycler would be seen rushing to sell his loot before the buyer left. Sometimes the buyer needed a hand tying a tarp over the back of his truck, and whoever helped him usually received a can of coffee and a thank-you, but this transaction felt much more like a business transaction than a friendly gesture. This buyer usually had about ten men and one woman waiting for him. A woman selling cans was unusual, but the men would point to her as evidence that collecting recyclables is something that "normal" people do, reflecting the strong belief in Japanese society of the benefits of being ordinary (Ohashi and Yamaguchi 2019).

Both buyers had the same straightforward process to sell the cans. First, the scrap metal buyers weighed the bags. Since many men sold several bags, the buyer, each time a seller put a bag on the scale, wrote down the weight, totalled it, and paid in cash. The older can buyer, who was more business-like, rounded off the payment and the younger paid the exact amount, and if there was any change in the rate, they announced it before starting.

An unusual event I witnessed shows both that the scavenger took pride in their work and that their independence and income were dependent on the can buyer to buy their cans. With the weight of the bags determining how much money they made, it was unsurprising that several men waiting to sell their haul gasped when they were putting a plastic bag full of cans in the truck and some

trash came out. Two men picked out the trash, but not the man who sold the bag. The trash included four steel cans, two empty plastic bottles, and a couple of empty plastic bags. Putting anything that was not aluminium in the bag was considered cheating, and the men took their work seriously. Because they depended on the buyer's goodwill, many men were reluctant to put anything in their bags of cans other than aluminium because they were afraid the can buyer would not accept their recyclables. Another time, a frail-looking older man was selling a bag of cans, and as some other men placed his bag into the truck, the bag ripped, and a heavy comic book fell out of the bag. Seeing this, another homeless man exclaimed *"Yabai!"* ("Oh no!"). Subsequently, the younger can buyer subtracted the weight of the comic book from the older man's bag. Later, the can buyer explained that he has had men trying to sneak plastic bottles filled with water, books, and steel cans into their bags of aluminium cans.

Hardship and the Relationality of Scavenging Work

Being a recycler was not easy work, and it had several drawbacks. Most men usually did not wear gloves, so they would get cuts and blisters on their hands from picking up and crushing cans. Another downside was that the entire process was unsanitary, because the cans often contained liquid – usually remaining beer – so their hands smelled of alcohol, and the excess liquid caused the men to often have wet feet, leading to Athlete's foot. The work felt miserable. With sweat pouring off their foreheads in the summer heat and humidity, rain falling on them during the rainy season, and the repetitive, dull simple act of stomping a can required efforts that were far from enjoyable. Unlike in the past, when recycling was uncommon, most of the cans the men gathered during my fieldwork were already destined to be recycled, as they were almost always taken from a neighbourhood collection box to be picked up and recycled, so the community service element of their work was absent. The few cans they took from unmarked trashcans or cans that were littered in the park, however, did have a community service element.

Furthermore, if the men gathered recyclables in the morning, the neighbourhood residents, who put their cans in the recycling box, would see them, and maybe stare at them. Pushing a cart full of cans during rush hour meant that not just a few homemakers, but many people, would see them. When I collected with them, some people stared, some people looked disapprovingly, and others paid no attention.

That homeless men wanted to maintain their anonymity became obvious to me as I spent time with them. Crushing cans, a somewhat noisy process, could attract the eyes of tourists or locals. A tourist or anyone walking through the park staring at a homeless man could annoy or even anger them. If someone tried to take their picture when they were crushing cans, they may become angry. For example, Yamaguchi-san once yelled at a tourist who tried to take his picture, *"Shashin dame!"* ("No pictures!"). Saito-san used a less confrontational approach by working behind a park bench and covering his face with his hat when he saw someone and thought they were going to take his picture. While they had to crush cans, the unwanted attention brought on by the sound of the *jakkibeisu* smacking the aluminium reminded them of their need to protect their identity, since some men were hiding from debt collectors or from their families. Many men would not and did not discuss their families, even when asked directly, clearly indicating that their families were a taboo topic.

The intense competition to gather cans was another drawback. Homeless men would often describe neighbourhoods as *kondeiru* ("crowded"), with many men gathering cans. I repeatedly heard from them about how too many people were gathering cans. Their description gave the impression of many men walking the neighbourhood, but the notion of crowdedness with competitors can be relative, and just seeing another scavenger in the vicinity could signify crowdedness for them, and they would subsequently think it was hard to get cans. For example, when I was out with Takayama and Yamada on a hot and humid Friday morning in July, seeing another collector approach the recycling bin a minute or two before was disappointing for all of us because we knew the bin would be empty.

The relationship between Takayama and Yamada shows some of the solidarity, care, and community between the homeless men. While they worked as partners, as did a few others, most men worked alone but sometimes would receive help from friends. Examples include helping push extra carts of cans to the buyer, watching over each other's belongings, and sharing goods and information. Sharing food was quite common, even among men who did not always get along. For example, I observed Suzuki tell me to share some drinks I had brought with me with his neighbours, whom he often bitterly criticized and had the occasional conflict with. Perhaps the strongest illustration of camaraderie occurred when Yamada became ill and later passed away. I visited him in the hospital as both a friend and researcher, and when I told his friends who lived in a small encampment consisting of a little more than ten people behind

the baseball field, they were quite appreciative, and Miki-san thanked me as he pointed out that they could not go visit him. When Yamada was in the hospital for several months the year before my fieldwork, a friend watched his stuff so that the park management would not throw it away.

However, encounters with residents while gathering cans were mixed. Some exchanges might have been embarrassing, such as when an older Japanese woman asked me, *"Kan iru no?"* ("Do you need cans?") when I was waiting for her to put them in the recycling bin. While I appreciated her kindness to offer me the cans, I also felt ashamed to be offered help in this context. Other contacts might be confrontational. Yamada, in his sixties and from the Tohoku region in northern Japan, told a group of us that he was gathering cans one morning when a man confronted him, saying *"Toccha dame desuyo"* ("You can't take the cans"). Yamada apologized, waited a minute, and after the man left, took the cans anyway. He laughed at the end of recounting the story. His need for money overshadowed the threat of the confrontation, and as he claimed, the man confronting him as an ordinary resident had no authority over him. Gaining the public's support and understanding could make a significant difference in the lives of homeless men. With more public backing, ward officials might also change their attitudes toward homeless people and could help them better when applying for welfare.

Discussion

No matter how many cans the men gathered, they were dependent on the price of aluminium, which is connected to the global economy. Based on my fieldnotes documenting what the can buyers would pay per kilogram, the price of aluminium did not fluctuate much from March to September 2008. It hovered around 160 yen ($1.55) per kg, although it increased briefly to 165 yen per kg in August, shortly before the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Many homeless men I interviewed explained the high price as China needing aluminium for construction projects for the Olympics, and most of the recyclers believed this idea and accepted it as fact. After the Olympics ended in August, the price did not drop. However, the price of cans started falling at the end of September and bottomed out in January, which corresponded to the Lehman Shock and the ensuing recession. The price dropped from 160 to 50 yen ($1.55–$0.49) per kg and then increased to 60 yen ($0.58) per kg, and some men stopped selling cans since they decided it was not worth the effort at this price.

Unsurprisingly, some men attributed the drop in price to the end of the Olympics, but others who kept abreast of world events by reading newspapers at the library or discarded ones blamed the US economy. In their minds, their connection and dependence on the global economy were obvious. Several men – at least one or two in each group – referred to the Lehman Brothers collapse and the burst of the US housing market as prime examples of the connection and were aware that these global events impacted their livelihoods, as they were connected and impacted by these events. Others around them echoed their point about the US impact on their work.

With the drop in price, men had to make cutbacks. One homeless man, Kawano, reflected on the days of selling cans for 165 yen per kg, and called that time *natsukashii* ("nostalgic", "missed", or "fondly looking back"). The good times that he remembered included the long walks to gather cans, crushing them in the hot sun for more than an hour, and making just enough money to place some cheap bets on a Sunday afternoon. Now, men spend a little more time gathering cans, but even before the drop in price, they would bemoan, "If only I could get a few more cans, life would be better". The drop in price due to forces beyond their control severely challenged their ability to maintain their independence and dignity as workers, but they still made some money anddid not have to rely on soup lines.

The men who gathered and sold recyclables suffered more than a 60% decrease in their earnings – a demoralizing situation. People who were normally friendly and cheerful felt despondent. Usually, men were the happiest right after they sold their cans; however, as the price dropped over a month, no one was content with the significant decrease in their earnings. Given their position in society, they could do little to adjust to their new income. Some men stopped gambling or significantly decreased their betting, and the number of men attending soup lines increased because many needed to stretch their limited incomes. Considering their anger and frustration, surprisingly they rarely complained vigorously or grumbled to the scrap metal buyer, but men who knew I was an American would often blame me, half teasingly, although their anger was authentic. Without a "real job", perhaps I symbolized the greed that had led to the Lehman Shock and the recession that had made their lives worse, so it was no surprise that their comments and questions about when I would get a real job increased.

The work of recycling is critical to the survival of homeless men and provides them with an identity and sense of worth. It encompasses a few key elements of their identity: pride, independence, and agency. Many men demonstrated

their pride by self-identifying as a *shokunin* ("craftsman"). Like day labourers in Yokohama who had a strong desire to work (Gill 2001), some homeless men in Tokyo looked down on those who did not work and attended soup lines. For example, Tomita, while looking at a group of men sitting and participating in the Tuesday church service and soup line, complained, "These men should be working, especially the younger ones. It is disgraceful". Many men, like Tomita, grew up in poor or working-class families, learned the importance of work, and reflected the belief that able-bodied men should not receive a hand-out from the state or a soup line. Matthew Marr (1997) and Abby Margolis (2002, 2008) found similar attitudes among homeless men in Nagoya and Tokyo.

When asked if they could leave homelessness with the money they make from selling aluminium, many men dismissed the idea. What they did not explain, because it was understood, is that the initial cost of renting an apartment in Japan is quite expensive and includes a security deposit (1–2 months' rent), key money (a gift to the landlord equal to 1–2 months' rent) and the rent itself. Even though it is natural to think that the men would prefer to work stable jobs or receive support from the state via a stable social safety net, when one considers that "in Japan, poverty additionally means living with the stigma of personal failure" (Obinger 2009, 4), it is understandable that some men elect not to contact their family for help. This stigma works to keep men from applying for welfare out of fear that government social workers will contact their families (Gill 2015). Tomita, who worked in a car factory for several years before having a falling-out with his family and quitting his job, was waiting until he turned 65 to receive his pension. He was eligible for welfare, but a mix of pride and shame kept him from applying.

While the number of cans the public recycles influences the scavengers' work, the most important variable to succeed in their work and maintain their sense of worth is the price of aluminium. Although the lives of homeless men were precarious before the recession, the recession quickly and clearly showed the limits of their survival strategies and their dependence on the global market that sets the price of aluminium. The Lehman Shock caused the Great Recession, which led to the price of aluminium dropping significantly, so the can buyers paid less to the homeless man for cans. While the men could bear the hard life of recycling cans because they still earned a little money to buy an *obentō*[5] for lunch, or to spend it on gambling on horseraces, playing pachinko

5 A boxed lunch usually divided into sections including rice, fish or meat, vegetables, and pickles.

or buying sake or beer, the recession demonstrated clearly how their work and income is dependent on larger economic conditions.

While they were dependent on these conditions before the recession, the pain caused by the price drop exacerbated and illuminated this dependency. Wanting to maintain their autonomy and pride, some men responded by changing from aluminium cans to experimenting with cardboard or newspaper recycling, but others continued to do the same work. There were no buyers for cardboard and newspaper, so men had to haul them to the recycling centre about a 15-minute walk from the park where many men lived.

Most men embraced their work, continued to toil hard and lamented their victimization due to the recession and blamed the US economy. This contrasts with scavengers in San Francisco, who relied on their values from the past to stand up against globalization (Gowan 2000). While the scavengers in Tokyo would not label themselves as victims of neoliberalism, they did blame the US economy and the Lehman Shock for their lack of income and the decrease in their standard of living, while they also struggled to maintain some autonomy. While the forces of globalization did not change significantly after the crash, the crash revealed for the homeless men the role the global economy plays in their everyday lives, most poignantly for those struggling to make a living.

While some men might have worked in pairs or lent each other money, most worked individually and did not borrow or lend money; however, other goods were often readily exchanged. For example, after sweeping the area where a church had a soup line in the park, a church member gave Takayama a bunch of bananas, which he promptly shared with his friends, who had also helped sweep the area. Similarly, when a former homeless man came to visit Yamada, he brought beer and sake, which they shared with all the homeless guys around them. Finally, at one point in the fall everyone I talked to offered to give me canned peaches. For almost a week, several times a day, someone would offer them to me, but I did not manage to track down how so many peaches had become available.

Considering a comparison between the canners in Tokyo and the *catadores* in Brazil, one main difference between them is that the Tokyo scavengers lacked family relationships. Other scholars (Margolis 2002; Aoki 2006) have documented that day labourers and homeless men in Japan are not in contact with their families. For example, Gill's long-term friendship with a day labourer in Yokohama who had experienced episodes of homelessness confirmed the lack of a family relationship (2015). In my experience, some men lived in small groups

of four or five, and they worked as fictive kin groups (Stack 1975; Nelson 2014; Webb and Gazso 2017). These groups of homeless men would share resources and look out for each other, but these social relations were not emotionally deep because men guarded their privacy, limiting what they shared with others. With their desire to protect their privacy, life events and celebrations did not occur. Since they did not tell their neighbours and friends when their birthday or anniversary was, they could not celebrate it.

Although they lacked personal and community celebrations and contact with family, the homeless men did maintain their pride, and by doing so they worked to live less precarious lives. Scholars (Obinger 2009; Allison 2014) rightfully label these men as examples of precarious lives, but for them their work, while informal, and the various soup lines – which some men rejected, while others did not – kept their lives from being worse. These local resources of food provided meals almost daily, with at least four soup lines in Ueno Park, and most of them also gave food to homeless men to take with them. There were also soup lines twice a week along the river, about a 40-minute walk from Ueno Park. The soup lines not only functioned as safety nets for food, but also as social and work networking sites. Men greeted friends and acquaintances at the soup lines and could thus learn about other resources, including other food and work opportunities. Even those men who rejected attending soup lines would come to socialize but might not actually take the food.

Homeless men whom I have researched worked hard and took pride in their work, but this was exhausting for them, as Yamada once commented about how his two neighbours, who were sound asleep on the next bench, "worked hard and are probably tired". Finally, Nishizawa points out that the scavengers "try to sustain their self-image of being independent by continuing to make a negligible amount of money collecting and selling aluminium cans while vowing never to scavenge rubbish outside restaurants and convenience stores" (2010, 209). While some men in my study did see their work as a way to maintain their independence, for many others, earning money from selling cans was simply about providing for themselves.

Conclusion

While documenting the precarious work of the scavengers in Tokyo, I learned – and my research shows – that they were connected to the larger global economy and that oftentimes they were aware of this connection. Early in my fieldwork,

they attributed the high price of aluminium to the upcoming Olympics and later blamed the US for the rapid and painful fall in the price. They also thought that Japanese automotive companies needed aluminium to manufacture cars. In Brazil, Millar (2014, 2018) found that the scavengers had significant family relationships, but most men in Tokyo would not discuss their kin, and only once did I see a family member visit a homeless man: a daughter visiting her father, giving him cash. As I was wondering why she did not help him more, Okamoto praised her for coming several times a year and remarked that she was to be commended for helping her father.

There are several larger themes beyond the men simply gathering and selling cans to survive. Their work, in combination with a few local resources that supported their lives (e.g., a free health clinic, soup kitchens, and friends), demonstrated that their lives and work were not as precarious as they could be. However, the health clinic, which has been operating for years, had rather limited hours and days of operation, and while the soup kitchens were dependable, since some of the churches came to offer food even in thunderstorms or typhoons, they provided only one meal per day. Nevertheless, in addition to the nontangible resources, homeless men could count on aluminium cans being available most days of the week, and although the number varied, there were always some cans and therefore always some money. However, the unpredictability of the number of cans they could collect exposed and added to the precarity of their work.

Collecting cans was vital to the livelihood and desired independence of homeless men, but their work was also dependent on other, more local forces (conditions of work). Allison quotes in this relation the well-known feminist scholar, Judith Butler, who argues that "precariousness implies living socially, that is the fact that one's life is always in some sense in the hands of another [...] It implies [...] a dependency on people we know, and to those we do not know" (2013, 14). The homeless men from my study understood this dependency well. Suzuki, in his fifties, knew this dependency when he remarked, "People aren't drinking tonight because of the weather. It will be a bad night", implying that he would not make much money from empty alcohol cans. To put it succinctly, if people do not drink, the men will not eat.

In sum, many factors – some individual and local; others larger, systemic, and global – influenced the success of their work. The men experiencing homelessness adopted strategies to maintain their work ethic and achieve their goals, earning money to survive and in some cases, to live a better life. It is difficult to

overstate the importance of aluminium cans and other recyclables that the men sold for cash. Simply put, selling cans helped them make a living, as they often concluded, "If I do not collect and sell cans, I cannot eat". Their work provided a lifeline in an otherwise precarious life and connected them to both local and global economic forces.

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THE SOCIAL LIFE OF JEWISH MUSIC RECORDS FROM 1948 CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY *HAZZAN* JOSEF WEISS[1]

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Abstract: *This article traces transnational "life" trajectories of two rare Jewish religious music records from 1948 Communist Czechoslovakia and of their main performer Josef Weiss (ca. 1912, Veľké Kapušany – 1985 Netanya), who was a hazzan (cantor) in synagogues in Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Jerusalem, Ramat Gan, Manchester, and New York, but has remained mostly unknown to music history. It shows how these two 78-rpm records stand at the core of Weiss's grandson's family / music / memory project, which has revealed and prepared to reissue 52 audio recordings to preserve his grandfather's legacy. While following these and other digitized and technologically modified recordings of Weiss on their recent path between the Czech Republic, Israel, Hungary, and the US, the article sheds light on how this case fits into the broader framework of the social life of things and the context of musical remembrance. Already put to use during the life-cycle rituals of Weiss's children and grandchildren, as well as in a museum exhibition – this family project constructs a fragment of a Jewish sonic past for the present needs of its actors, while being entangled with*

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the current practice of Jewish memory institutions, as well as with the activities of private record collectors and of one ethnomusicologist (myself).

Keywords: *Cantorial records; ethnomusicology; hazzan; multi-sited ethnography; social life of things*

Scene I. Efrat, 2022. Waiting for a Pesach Carwash and Remembering the Family Surprise

"To preserve and even to make his legacy", said Avraham Ben-Tzvi (phone call, 4 April 2022) when I asked him about his motivation behind the synthesized orchestration added to some of the newly rescued, digitized, and sound-restored *hazzanuth*[2] *(Jewish cantorial music) recordings, originally recorded on reel-to-reel tapes in Ramat Gan, Manchester, and New York in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. They will be part of a "a commemorative set" (Ben-Tzvi, text message, 18 June 2020) – a forthcoming triple-CD music album comprised of 52 audio tracks of his late grandfather, hazzan* Josef Weiss (ca. 1912, Veľké Kapušany – 1985 Netanya; see Figure 1). Fifty-two-year-old Avraham, born in the USA, is an attorney in Jerusalem representing corporations and individuals in a variety of corporate and civil practice areas. He was sitting in his car, waiting in a long line for a carwash before shopping for the Pesach holidays, which he will celebrate with his family in Israel, when, in a call to Prague, he was explaining to me the incentives for this music project, which he has self-financed and self-produced in his free time.

Since 2015, Avraham has been on a quest to find and digitize sound records of his grandfather, who was *hazzan* (cantor) in synagogues in Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Jerusalem, Ramat Gan, Manchester, and New York. It all began when

[2] Worship in the synagogue is the initial spatio-temporal framework for Jewish religious music. "Synagogue music" is the means of expressing the sacred texts. Therefore it is primarily a vocal practice, connected with the liturgical language, biblical Hebrew. Jewish practice of the performance of sacred texts is not the property of a religious elite. In the 8th to 10th centuries, however, the role of the *hazzan*, a liturgical specialist who leads the community with his sung recitation, was formalized. The *hazzan* has also been called "cantor" in Central Europe since the middle of the 19th century. The *hazzanuth* is the repertoire of cantorial songs and recitatives and the characteristic method of improvisation and ornamentation. For more, see Summit 2000, Slobin 2002, or Kligman 2015; for Ashkenazi liturgical music, see Schleifer 1995; for music of the Jewish service in Central and Eastern Europe, specifically in Communist Hungary, see Frigyesi 2018.

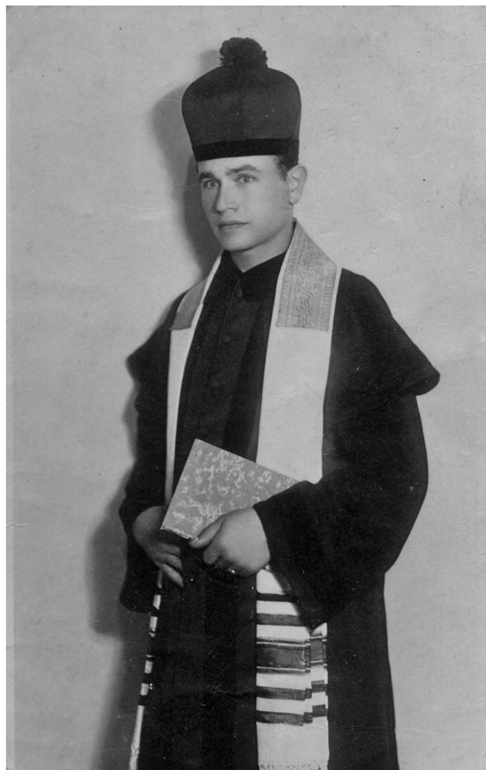

Figure 1. Josef Weiss in cantorial attire (Vienna or Budapest, c. 1936). Private archive of A. Ben-Tzvi. Used with permission.

his partner in his Israeli law firm, attorney and *hazzan* Daniel B. Schwartz, got involved in an internet discussion with *aficionados* and *cognoscenti* of historical cantorial records. They were wondering about two 78-rpm Supraphon records from Czechoslovakia (Weiss n.d. a, b; see Figure 2), with one of them having a gramophone record vignette stating "Josef Weiss, cantor of Jerusalem":

> Daniel asked me if it wasn't my grandfather. He knew from me he was a hazz'n in Prague before he came to Jerusalem. I didn't know that he had ever made some recordings. Nobody in my family had ever talked about it. So, I wrote to Supraphon. And it turned out that the Jewish Museum in Prague has reissued his Supraphon recordings a few years ago. I ordered it online [...] And when it arrived, when I listened to it, I was stunned [...] I couldn't believe it. So, I sent it to New York, to my mum and her older sister, my aunt Elka *]*born in Prague*[*, and they immediately recognized his voice as well (Ben-Tzvi, phone call, 4 April 2022).

Figure 2. Photograph of one of the Josef Weiss's 1948 Prague record. Private archive of A. Ben-Tzvi. Used with permission.

While listening to the two records – four tracks in total, recorded on 17 September 1948, in Rokoska Studio, Prague, published presumably between the years 1948–1950[3] in at least four different pressings, and republished six decades later by the Jewish Museum in Prague (Gössel and Bloch 2008) – Avraham, a modern-Orthodox[4] Israeli Jew, born and raised in the USA, who, according to his words, had only had a moderate interest in cantorial music before, experienced an intensely transformative moment. The voice of the dead *hazzan*, his ancestor, moved him profoundly (Ben-Tzvi, phone call, 17 March 2018).

Following the scholarly discourse of ethnomusicology, this article attempts to show, how Avraham's listening to the sound recordings from Prague triggered an act of "musical remembrance" (Jurková 2017), which took a form of a family / music / memory project to preserve his grandfather's legacy. Inspired also by material culture studies in anthropology, especially the concept of the "social

3 Contrary to the documented recording's date and place, the years of publication are not given – neither on the records, nor in the original recording protocols (scanned copy shared by Gössel, e-mail, 4 May 2017), nor in the inner database system of the Supraphon company (Rulf, e-mail, 16 November 2015). As the company was privatized in 1992, its archive is not accessible to public. The years of original publication have been estimated by the author according to the period Supraphon vignettes in Müller and Prajzler 2017.

4 For the term Jewish "Orthodox", see Caplan 2016 and Brink-Danan 2008.

life of things" (Appadurai 1986) and the perspective of multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995), I trace the transnational trajectories of rare Jewish religious music records from 1948 Communist Czechoslovakia as a core of Avraham's seven-year (and continuing) engagement done during his free time, when these and other digitized sound tracks of the late *hazzan* Josef Weiss travelled between Prague, Jerusalem, Budapest, Brooklyn, Efrat, and Ra'anana. While also situating myself in the story and reflecting on my (rather engaged) role as ethnomusicologist in the memory production process, I follow (in physical or mediated ways) the recordings of Josef Weiss to diverse social and cultural contexts: from the Prague homes of non-Jewish record collectors to the National Library in Israel and the permanent exhibition of the Jewish Museum in Prague, as well as to the bed of a hazzan's dying daughter in New York and a *Hassidic* wedding in Israel.

During this process, the biography of the performer is also constructed, as well as the original cultural and social context of the recordings. I therefore show how Weiss's Prague records circulated in different "regimes of value" (Appadurai 1986, 4) in different spaces and times. Rooted in the soundscape of the cantorial "Golden Age" era (roughly 1901–1950), during which the recording industry transvalued the sounds of Jewish ritual into economically exchangeable physical artefacts – the mentioned records were made as a commodity for export from Communist Czechoslovakia. This is rather paradoxical, as this state's anti-religious and anti-Semitic policy, erasing memories of the ethnic minorities, severely affected its Jewish minority and its music. Belonging to the few cantorial recordings published in Czechoslovakia, Josef Weiss's records became a historical rarity, mostly unknown, like Weiss himself.

Further, I focus on two additional historical moments: firstly when these records were discovered by a private collector in Prague and returned to the commodity phase as a publication by the Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP) in 2008 (nevertheless with the performer's biography obscured). And secondly, when they were rediscovered by the cantor's family in 2015 in Israel, and found their way to family ritual events as well as to the permanent exhibition of the JMP, while also being prepared to be part of a cantor's family commemorative music album focusing on "cantorial revivalists" (Lockwood 2021). Thus, I not only demonstrate how in the case of Josef Weiss's sound records, the values ascribed to the same audio object change, depending on their context, but also how music memory production is entangled with materiality and the commoditization process in complex ways.

Sound Recordings and Musical Remembrance

Situating Avraham ethnographically as a key actor could have been just one of the many possible openings of this story, in which music, as part of cultural production, is seen as a situated practice (e.g., Berger and Stone 2019: 54). Musical practices, being part of various current global soundscapes, are often inextricably connected with collective memory practices. Ethnomusicologists have systematically explored the relationship between music and Jewish memory at least since the late 1990s (e.g., by Kay Kaufman Shelemay in her 1998 work on Syrian Jews in the diaspora and their performances of liturgical hymns; or by Edwin Seroussi in 2014 on nostalgic Zionist soundscapes). I have been inspired by Zuzana Jurková's (2017) concept of "musical remembrance" – the idea that musical practices can become both the object and the means of both individual and collective memory constructed for the needs of the present. I applied Jurková's conceptualization in my previous work on the negotiation of musical remembrance within Jewish ritual performance in Prague's Old-New Synagogue in the case of particular music tunes (Seidlová 2018), as well as in my study of the social life of musical instruments as sites of cultural meaning and memory production in the case of a newly revived synagogue organ in the Czech Republic (Seidlová 2020a). I examined the story of this music instrument from the anthropological and material culture studies perspective of "social life of things" (Appadurai 1986), which I utilize in this article as well.

Social Life of Things

Appadurai's theoretical perspective, published in the collective monograph *Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, "explores the conditions under which economic objects circulate in different regimes of value in space and time" (1986, 4; this also relates to the concept of "cultural biography of things" by Igor Kopytoff, see Appadurai 1986, 64). Appadurai claims in it that a commodity is often just one phase in a social life of things, which are otherwise moving in and out of the commodity state. This movement can be terminal or reversible, and considered normative or deviant. A particular object moving through these contexts and states becomes in this way culturally defined and redefined in meaning and value by its owners or users. Therefore, Appadurai speaks of "regimes of value", which account for the constant transcendence of cultural boundaries by the flow of commodities. This line of thought, supported

by Appadurai's subsequent work on the cultural dimensions of globalization (2003), resonates both in literature on memory and materiality in art and popular culture (Muntean et al. 2016) and in ethnomusicological discussions of the social life of musical instruments, e.g., world music instruments caught up in the transnational movement of consumer goods as sites of meaning production, their value and meaning being negotiated and contested in the process (Dawe 2003, 274; Bates 2012). I previously used this approach in the mapping of Prague's Jeruzalémská synagogue organ's "movement" across different cultural value domains (Seidlová 2020a), and Clara Wenz (2020), for example, incorporated it into her study of a biography of a Hebrew Baidaphon record. The material culture studies perspective, which is critical of the idea that objects only symbolize or represent aspects of one pre-existing culture or identity, therefore becomes attentive to the ways in which objects can produce particular social effects or enable certain cultural practices (Woodward 2013). This perspective is therefore helpful in examining the obvious yet complicated relationship between sound recordings, social, and individual history, and memory, which also became the current axis of interest in my research of religious soundscapes[5] of Jews from/in the Czech lands. I use the main theoretical framework explained above, but enriched by the current literature on the relation between Jewish music and media of sound reproduction as well as by the theoretical and methodological perspective of multi-sited ethnography.

Transnational Flow of Cantorial Records

It would be naïve to suppose that the hazzan's art, even in the most traditional liturgical context, was free from any aspect that could be, and indeed was, paid for and traded. The establishment of the "choral-synagogues" in 19th-century Central Europe enhanced the function of the bigger Ashkenazi synagogues as centres of music-making, combining ritual and entertainment, when the singing of cantor and his choir developed into virtuoso art performances, which attracted crowds of listeners (Schleifer 1995, 65). The period's re-conceptualization of *hazzanuth* also as an art further enhanced the process of professionalizing the cantorate, with side effects such as a demand for famous performers,

[5] In soundscapes theory (Appadurai 2003; Jurková et al. 2014; Shelemay 2015), soundscapes are understood as various music cultures, examined in relation to their setting, sound, and significance (see Shelemay 2015, xxxiv–v).

competition for the best-paid jobs in central synagogues, or the emergence of cantorial concerts in a non-ritual context. However, the 20th-century recording industry, which established a "paradigm in which the music, the performer, and its material manifestation [the recording] were inextricably bound" together (Meizel and Daughtry 2019, 182), influenced the transformation of multiple genres of (not only) Jewish music into physical commodities.[6]

At the start of the 20th century, recording studios in Central Europe, and later in the USA, began producing records of cantors, allowing their music – *hazzanuth* in Hebrew, *khazones* in Yiddish – to be purchased and collected for private listening, removing the previously necessary context of collective worshipping in the synagogue. The three- to four-minute capacity of each side of a recorded disc resulted in the division of the cantorial repertoire into short repeatable "hits". After listening to them repeatedly in privacy, one could assign to memory not only the music's text or its melodies and harmonies, but the particular cantor's interpretive cadences as well (Walden 2015, 59–60). The secular setting of the recording studio allowed the musical accompaniment of singing cantors by organ or ensembles of instruments (still forbidden in many synagogues during religious rituals),[7] and even enabled the emergence of a music figure banned in synagogue ritual by rabbinic law: the female professional singer of cantorial repertoire, or *khaznte* (ibid., 60). For the listeners of cantorial records, the commercial availability of these records emphasized that *hazzanuth* was also an art form, and it was also listened to as such. For some cantors, nevertheless, entering into the commercial world of making and selling sound recordings created friction with their religious values (Walden 2015, 59), especially with their conceptualization of the appropriate role of a ritual leader as a spiritual messenger.

The cantors' engagement in the recording industry also broadened their interest in secular repertoires, especially opera, with its "conception of transcendent beauty derived from 19th-century Romantic aesthetics, which represented vocal performers as heroic artists" (Lockwood 2021, 5). The recorded cantorial style typically featured a style of non-metered "recitative" singing

[6] Actually, ethnomusicologist Joshua Walden claims that the technologies of sound reproduction were the "central force in the development of definitions and genres of Jewish music, and in initiating modern modes of performing, listening to, and talking about Jewish repertories" (Walden 2015, 57).

[7] Some Orthodox communities have accepted the organ and other musical instrument accompaniment for worship on weekdays, weddings, commemorations, filming, and concerts. Shabbat and holidays are characterized by male or full communal singing without instrumental accompaniment.

associated with Eastern European Jewish styles of prayer leading, influenced by the model of European art vocal music. While drawing on discourses of the nation-building and the construction of ethnic identity that were part of the shared culture of European musicians in the early 20th century, Golden Age *hazzanim* cultivated a new stylized version of Jewish sacred music (ibid.) as a core of their music revival movement. They nostalgically sought an imagined sonic past by reanimating ancestors' ways characterized by the vocal practice of "small town *bal tefiles* (prayer leaders), Chassidic [*sic*] devotional music, and the noisy heterophony of *davenen* (chanting prayer texts [see Frigyesi 2018]), reconfigured as an art music influenced by opera and performed by hyper-dramatic singers" (Lockwood 2020, 1–2). While this repertoire became detached from some of its liturgical meanings, Joshua Walden shows how it also took on new cultural associations – for example immigrant nostalgia, ethnic solidarity, and the musical demonstration of Jewish identity for non-Jewish listeners (2015, 59). The records also brought an interest in "concert-services" (Schleifer 1995, 65–66), when Jews who listened to their favourite cantors on records wanted to hear and see them in live worship performance. As Eliyahu Schleifer remarks, entering the synagogue service led by the recording celebrities "was by tickets only and the congregation became an audience that demanded its money's worth of singing" (ibid.). After World War II, this kind of concert-service gradually declined, along with the demand for *hazzanuth* as art in Orthodox worship.[8]

In sum, the old cantorial records offer "an aestheticized version of prayer as it was practiced by star Jewish performers of synagogue music on record (1901–c.1950)" (Lockwood 2021, 5). Called a Golden Age of Jewish sacred music by its fans, these records have been reissued on anthology albums since the 1960s and are now globally available as free content on the internet (ibid.) As such, they have become the key component of a current soundscape of cantorial revivalists, i.e. historical cantorial records *aficionados* overlapping with a cohort of young, often *Hassidic* performers, animating these archival records during their performances, whom Jeremiah Lockwood calls "cantorial revivalists" (2021).

The transnational flow of the so-called Golden era of cantorial records, which started in Europe and culminated in the USA in the interwar period, being created mainly by Orthodox cantors migrating from Eastern Europe with their Eastern-Ashkenazic vocal-virtuoso and emotionally urgent music

8 For reasons and consequences, see Schleifer 1995, 66.

style, also manifested itself on the territory of the then newly emergent state in Central Europe: the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938). In interwar Czechoslovakia, records of star cantors from abroad were manufactured (see Rosenblatt 1927; Kwartin n.d.). Nevertheless, it is still rather surprising that we know so far[9] of only one Czechoslovak cantor who appears on a commercial record during the interwar period: Igno Mann (1932), the chief-cantor of Brno (Seidlová 2020b).

In Czechoslovakia after the World War II, the market for gramophone records was not only decimated by the war; it also became regulated by the state, as the two largest music publishing houses, Ultraphon and Esta, were nationalized in 1946 by president Edvard Beneš's decrees, becoming part of the national company Gramofonové závody (GZ). In 1946, Supraphon, originally an export trademark registered by Ultraphon, became an export sub-label of the GZ (Müller and Prajzler 2017). The February coup in 1948 started the second wave of massive nationalization, through which the ruling Communist Party gradually destroyed private business in Czechoslovakia.

The story of cantorial recordings from the former Czechoslovakia from 1945 to 1989 is a puzzle that I have been putting together since 2002. In this article, I draw on my previous research data on the cultural history of cantorial recordings which were either made in Communist Czechoslovakia or were featured or owned by Czechoslovak Jews who stayed in or escaped from Communist Czechoslovakia and which appeared on various media, i.e., on gramophone discs, reel-to-reel tapes, or audiocassettes (Seidlová 2007, 2009, 2020a, b; Seidlová and Knapp 2008). The Communist Czechoslovak state, oppressive to its citizens of Jewish origin and their culture, controlled the local music production through censorship. So far, my research data has shown that the few discs of Jewish religious music published during the Communist Era (1948–1989) in Czechoslovakia were mostly aimed as commodities for export, mainly beyond the Iron Curtain. The timings of their publication coincide with political circumstances: since 1971, the early years of Normalization era, no recordings with Jewish music in general were published on the local, state-controlled market. Furthermore, out of those few cantorial records published in Czechoslovakia from 1945 to 1971, only three featured Czechoslovak cantors-performers (Josef Weiss, ca. 1912–1985; Salomon Weisz, 1911–1992;

[9] This statement is based on Gössel's and my own finding. Copies of Rosenblatt (1927) and Mann (1932) are part of the small audio collection of the JMP, mostly acquired from Gössel's donation.

and Alexandr Singer, ca. 1916–2007), singing on only seven music tracks in total (Weiss n. d. a, b, four tracks; Weisz in Weisz, Katz and Katz 1965, two tracks; Singer 1971, one track). The rest were cantors from Romania (Shalom Katz) and Hungary (Eugen Katz, and Marcel Loránd[10] and his trio). Following the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, even the already scarce appearance of local cantors on radio stopped. (The last one seems to be Neufeld, Neufeld and Neufeld 1967; see Fousková 2010, Seidlová 2020b.) Nevertheless, there existed other categories of cantorial recordings in Czechoslovakia: those made unofficially or even secretly by the local Jewish people themselves,[11] with a few of them circulating as gifts; or those "smuggled" into Czechoslovakia as gifts from beyond the Iron Curtain.[12] Field recordings from the Old-New Synagogue in Prague made by Judit Frigyesi in 1980 (1980; see also 2018) then represent the only case of ethnomusicological research of Jewish religious music on the territory of Communist Czechoslovakia. These data offer not only a counter-narrative to the usually-taken-for-granted story that the rich musical culture of Czechoslovak Jews was completely decimated after the holocaust, but also offer a platform for tracing some of these historical recordings of Czechoslovak cantors on their current transnational (and rather unexpected) "life" trajectories, such as in the case of records by Josef Weiss.

The Constitution of Multi-Sited Ethnography

The aim of tracing these trajectories calls for the employment of the approach of multi-sited ethnography, which examines the circulation of people, things, and ideas, flowing across national boundaries (Marcus 1995; Appadurai 2003).[13] "Following a thing" represented a suitable strategy for my current topic as well. In this way, I could trace Josef Weiss's records along their path, describe their trajectory, and construct their cultural biography, while analysing the regimes

[10] See Stellmacher 2014.

[11] Discovered by the author (Seidlová and Knapp 2008), as well as in the case of the unpublished recordings of cantor Samuel Landerer made in Prague in 1960s, discovered by the same researcher only in 2018.

[12] As shown from the estate of cantor Ladislav Blum (see Seidlová 2009).

[13] This type of ethnography suggested by Marcus (1995) stems from Appadurai's work on social life of things (1986) as well as from his well-known concept of –scapes (2003), or five specific global flows (*ethnoscape, mediascape, technoscape, financescape, ideoscape*). The researcher follows, maps, or "tracks" the object along its path. The object being either a specific community, thing (physical object, commodity, works of art, or intellectual property), metaphor, story, or conflict.

of value, through which they have been defined and redefined on this way. This framework then enables me to gain a deeper understanding of how music memory production is entangled with materiality and the commoditization process.

In accordance with George E. Marcus (1995, 100), and his explication of multi-sited ethnography, however, not all fieldwork sites are treated by a uniform set of fieldwork practices of the same intensity. While I am based in Prague, which constitutes one site of this strategically situated fieldwork, Jerusalem became the main destination of my intense one-week field trips in June 2018 and October 2019, with a preliminary stay in November 2017.[14] Due to the subsequent Covid-19 pandemics, the other interconnected sites of the trajectory were treated only via internet-based communication. Nevertheless, as my story of tracing cantor Weiss's records begins back in 2007, I first offer a recollection of my own encounter with them in a manner of autobiographical ethnographic writing (inspired by e.g., Frigyesi 2018). The aim is not only to position myself but also to reflect on how the multi-sited ethnography is in this case conditioned by circumstances surrounding different research methods, for example, a research of documents from mostly private archives, and oral history interviews and informal communication. The fieldworker in this way becomes part of a broader network of actors, ranging from historians, ethnomusicologists, private collectors, cantors and cantorial aficionados to cantors' family members.

Scene II. Prague, 2007–2008. The Weiss and Weisz "Mystery"

I could have been one of the first people in the Czech Republic in 2007 who heard those four freshly digitized sound tracks of the two original shellac records (Weiss n.d. a, b), unavailable to the public for decades. Now burned on a compact disc with a handwritten sleeve note, the legendary gramophone record collector Gabriel Gössel (1943–2020) gifted me the copies in front of his apartment on the picturesque Kampa, an island on the Vltava river in central Prague. "This is so far the only thing I have got, apart from those three or four records by other Jewish cantors we talked about" (see Rosenblatt 1927; Mann

[14] If data from Prague are based mostly on (auto-)ethnographic field notes, the data from Jerusalem are constructed mainly from formal and informal in-situ interviews preceded and followed by e-mails, messages, and phone calls.

1932; Katz n.d.; Weisz n.d.), said the kind owner of probably the most extensive private collection of old music media from Czechoslovakia, while shrugging his shoulders.

I rushed home to play it. There were four liturgical pieces in Hebrew (Eastern-Ashkenazi pronunciation): "Ano Awdoh", "Birchos kohanim", "Ribon ho-olomin", and "Weseorew lefonecho", accompanied by an orchestra. Later, we listened to it together with my field consultant at that time, Michal Foršt, a local cantor and professional singer of Western art music. He was excited:

> The sobs and general phrasing is the East-Ashkenazi way [...] it is a spinto tenor, his coloraturas are great, absolutely confident, large range usable from b2, to sounding c5 ["high c"]. [...] He concentrates on middle and high positions, [...] high vocal intelligence, the tone is set in the mask, as in the Italian bel canto, no technical problems, knows *messa di voce*, in a higher position from g above, I hear *voix mixte*, it sounds to me like classical opera training. I hear Fritz Wunderlich, maybe Beno Blachút with his softness and warmth in the background... Very beautiful... (interview, 15 February 2007).

We both admired Weiss's mesmerizing, powerful tenor voice of a timbre between lyric and dramatic, with an extensive range and exceptional vocal control, handling large musical climaxes with self-confidence, with a bit of narrow, Eastern-Ashkenazi nasal tone in some Hebrew phrases, and rapid melismas and ornaments of the "recitative" compositions.

As I have known that Gabriel Gössel had access to the archive of the Supraphon company, otherwise unavailable to the public, I, the eager student, troubled the collector with questions and he replied patiently: "Who was the singer? Is there anything more written about the records?" "I have told you already, in the protocol of the recording session on 17 September 1948, as well as on the vignettes, there is just 'cantor Josef Weiss'. Nothing else", he replied. "Rare gems, but painfully without any other context. A disaster for ethnomusicological research!", I dramatically scribbled in my notes, while also pondering about the date of the recording session: September 1948, half a year after the Czechoslovak coup d'état in which the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, with Soviet backing, assumed undisputed control over the government. After that year, all Czechoslovak citizens, including Jews, became objects of arbitrary policies of the Communist state. The authoritarian model severely restricted

political initiative or agency on the part of its citizens. Starting in the 1950s, the state policy was anti-Semitic, although this attitude was covered under the term *anti-Zionism*.[15] This state policy severely impacted the remaining few local cantors, all of them holocaust survivors, in performing and publishing their music, and importantly contributed to the fact that very few sound recordings of cantors who officiated in (or were from) the former Czechoslovakia are known in general (cf. Seidlová 2007).

I contacted Gabriel Gössel as a graduate student, desperately searching for more context of precious personal audio recordings made by cantor and opera singer Ladislav Moše Blum (1911 Veľké Kapušany – 1994 Prague), which I discovered during my undergraduate research in Prague in 2002, from interviews with his wife, vocal teacher Terezie Blumová (1909 Budapest – 2008 Prague). Ladislav Blum recorded himself in the 1970s and 1980s semi-secretly and secretly in the Jeruzalémská Synagogue in Prague. In Communist Czechoslovakia during this period, no cantorial music records (and no Jewish music per se) were published (because of the ideological censorship of the government). Therefore, cantor Blum recorded himself in essence secretly, even during services. His audiocassettes thus document a little-known part of religious life during the Communist era (Seidlová and Knapp 2008). His personae also got to play an important part in uncovering the story of cantor Josef Weiss and his recordings.

In 2008, I was collaborating on the digitization of Blum's audiocassette collection with the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, and with the Phonogrammarchiv's support also on a publication of a selection from Blum's collection published by the Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP). This became in 2008 the first published anthology of a Jewish cantor from the former Czechoslovakia (Seidlová and Knapp 2008). Leo Pavlát, director of the JMP, brought to my attention that in 2004, the JMP published a reissue of historical records of a number of interwar dance ensembles of the legendary Jewish bandmaster, violinist, arranger, and composer Dol Dauber (1894 Vyžnycja – 1950 Prague) from Gössel's private collection (Gössel 2004). Pavlát had been in further touch with Gössel as Gössel made an offer to the JMP to digitize and donate other Jewish music sound recordings from his collection. Pavlát suggested I contact Gössel, as he heard from him that Dol Dauber's orchestra recorded a few cantorial pieces too. He was right, and

15 For more, see Heitlinger 2017.

I became the proud owner of a homemade copy of records by unknown "cantor Josef Weiss". Neither of my field consultants from the Jewish Community in Prague at that time had ever heard of Josef Weiss, nor the sources to which I had access.

In 2008, Gössel, together with musicologist David Bloch (founder of the Terezin Music Memorial Project), prepared those four sound tracks of Josef Weiss – "Ano awdoh", "Birchos kohanim", "Weseorew Lefonecho", and "Ribon Ho-Olomim" – arranged and accompanied by Dol Dauber's orchestra, as part of a music album *Dol Dauber: Musical Fantasies and Jewish Liturgical Songs* (Gössel and Bloch 2008).[16] This CD contained pieces for violin and piano, fantasias and arrangements of arias from famous operas, "high popular" music, arrangements of Jewish melodies, and original compositions by Dol Dauber. The sleeve notes of the album mention Josef Weiss:

> The next four liturgical songs, arranged and played by Dol Dauber and his reconstructed orchestra after the Second World War, are unique not just for their beautiful melodies, but also as an example of supreme cantorial art. Josef Weiss was a cantor at the Old-New Synagogue in the postwar period until the 1960s, when he immigrated to Germany. He was one of several *hazzanim* (cantors) whose singing allegedly was admired even by several high-ranking Nazis. Many concentration camp prisoners also heard his calming voice as they were being marched to their deaths (Gössel and Bloch 2008).

The problem was that Josef Weiss was not "a cantor at the Old-New Synagogue until the 1960s", never "immigrated to Germany" and was never "imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp". (I found these biographical details only ten years later.) The authors unintentionally confused Josef Weiss with another Prague cantor from that time named Salomon Weisz.

I am afraid I partially contributed to that confusion, as I had been in touch with Gössel in 2008, discussing with him another record in his collection: Supraphon 15218, recorded one year later, in 1949, with a vignette stating that the two cantorial pieces "Jehi rozoun milfonecho" and "Weshomru", were performed by "Shalom [*sic*] Weisz, Principal Cantor of Prague, Organ Max Berkovič" (Weisz n.d.). The same two tracks appeared as a re-edition in a compilation by Supraphon in 1965 (SUA 12605), released during the period

[16] Gössel later donated some of the Jewish cantorial records from his collection to the JMP.

of political liberalization, stating "Salomon Weisz, from Moravia, first cantor of Prague" (Weisz, Katz and Katz 1965).

I shared my doubts with Gössel that perhaps Salomon Weisz and Josef Weiss could actually be one person with a civic name Josef and a Jewish name Shlomo (Salomon/Šalamoun in Czech), confused with similarly sounding name Shalom. This idea arose from conversations with my field consultants of the parallel music-ethnography research (Seidlová 2009), cantor Daniel Vaněk and rabbi Michael Dushinsky, with whom we listened to the recordings together. They suggested that the Hebrew pronunciation of both of the cantors is Hungarian and that their way of music interpretation is very similar, as well as their tenor voices: am I actually certain that these are two different people? On the other hand, ethnomusicologist Zuzana Jurková strongly opposed this idea, stating that the colour of these two voices is different. I also shared with Gössel, what I found from various sources (e.g., Věstník ŽNO 1964): that there was indeed a person named Salomon (Šalamoun) Weisz, who was a chief-cantor of the Old-New synagogue in Prague since late 1940s until he emigrated to Wiesbaden in 1960s. Gössel commented:

> For a long time now, I had a suspicion that (S.) Weisz and (J.) Weiss would be one and the same person. [...] unfortunately, everything was still obscured by incomplete record sheets and then also by the legends of [anonymized person] who remembers some LP of Supraphon, where in the text on the cover there was supposed to be a story about the popular cantors of the Nazis. I did not find anything myself, because the institutions are very unfriendly to me - a private individual (Gössel, e-mail, 24 November 2008, translated by author).

Later, thanks to Martin Šmok, researcher and the author of the first historical exhibition about the post-WWII history of the Jewish Community of Prague (2013), and Weisz's great-nephew Mordechai Pelta, I could finally put together some further details about Salomon (Šalamoun) Weisz (11 June 1911 [Petrova, Maramureș region, Austria-Hungary] – circa 1992 [B'nei Brak, Israel]) (Pelta, phone call, 15 July 2021). While working on his exhibition, Šmok accidentally found the Jewish Community of Prague's correspondence related to Weisz, and in 2013 was contacted from San Francisco by Pelta, who was searching for documents of his great-uncle's cantorial career. Drawing on that correspondence and on my subsequent communication with Pelta since 2020, Weisz's biography

became clearer (and is also a subject of another article currently prepared by me). In relation to Gössel and Bloch 2008, it is important to acknowledge that Salomon Weisz did immigrate to West Germany in 1965 (also see Frühauf 2021, 142), but (according to his relatives) was never imprisoned by the Nazis (Pelta, phone call, 15 July 2021). Notes on Josef Weiss in Gössel and Bloch 2008 thus confuse Weiss with Weisz, and draw from a claim from sleeve notes by Weisz, Katz, and Katz (1965), which state that "all [three vocalists] miraculously escaped death in Nazi extermination camps".

Martin Šmok's role has been crucial in helping me find family members of another important cantor from the Communist Czechoslovakia: Samuel Landerer (1898 [Bardejov, Hungary; today Slovakia] – 1972 [B'nei B'rak, Israel]; see Seidlová 2020a, b). Šmok's extensive knowledge of private family archives is essential to his research activities, because (as he comments, while also resonating with my own research experience): "Postwar history was not really preserved by the community itself, for reasons quite obvious: most of the active members emigrated, sooner or later, and the Communist regime was not interested in preserving any Jewish continuity or memory of shared identity whatsoever" (Šmok, e-mail, 8 January 2013).

Although since 1989, the interest in the postwar history of the Jewish minority has been revived in the Prague Jewish community as well as in local Jewish memory institutions such as the JMP; the change took its time. Therefore, the act of reissuing Josef Weiss's recordings six decades later by the JMP (Gössel and Bloch 2008) is important in this regard. The album, as well as the recordings of cantor Blum, published by the JMP in the same year of 2008, have been the very first two music albums with sound recordings of Czechoslovak cantors ever published in the post-Communist Czech Republic. From the perspective of Appadurai's theory, Weiss's recordings re-entered the commodity phase. However, as they were published by a Jewish memory institution, the primary goal was not commercial profit, but rather the institutional memorialization of the music of the Jewish minority in interwar and postwar Czechoslovakia. Interestingly enough, but symptomatic of the situation described by Šmok above, even the museum could not find any sources about the personality of the vocalist, who became confused with another person. Concerning Josef Weiss's biography, I had to wait for ten years since my first listening encounter with him to find more than just the name and the recording date.

Scene III. Prague, 2017–2018. Unexpected Encounters on YouTube

In 2017, I met cantor Yehuda Marx, who is from Manchester, at the European Cantors Convention in Prague. In an informal talk, he shared with me a brief yet accurate memory that there used to be cantor Josef Weiss from Prague who officiated in Prestwich, Manchester, in the 1950s. In 2018, when I started working on the music part for "Jews in the Bohemian Lands, 19th–20th Centuries", the new permanent exhibition of the JMP at the Spanish Synagogue (Seidlová 2020b), I asked Alex Klein, the director of the European Cantors Convention (ECA), also from Manchester, for his help tracing Josef Weiss. Soon, he forwarded me a reply from another member of the ECA, David Prager:

> The Jewish Chronicle archive has a 43 [*sic*] years old Hungarian Yoseph Weiss appointed as Chazan alongside Rabbi Mendel Gurdus in 1958 at Prestwich in Manchester. He previously lived at Ramat Gan and had held posts in Vienna and Prague. No mention after '62 as to where he went. It says he had four children. Our email contacts a few years ago showed he'd gone to the USA. There are a few recordings of Weiss made in 1940s Prague (e-mail, 25 February 2018; see *Jewish Chronicle*, 1958).

Excited from the new precious information, I happened to type Josef's name into YouTube – an unlikely platform for such a research. To my surprise, I found all four of his 1948 recordings accompanying homemade music videos featuring photos of the original record vignettes. The video "Cantor Josef Weiss – Ribon Ho – Omim [*sic*] – Hebrew liturgical Song" (Doležal 2017b) even included a scan of a historical photo of an unknown cantor. What surprised me even more was the dominant musical and historical discourse of that specific YouTube channel. The sound tracks were uploaded in 2017 by Ivo Doležal, son of Ilja Doležal (2027–2007), a soloist of the Armádní Umělecký Soubor Víta Nejedlého (Czechoslovak "Army Art Choir of Vít Nejedlý") from 1949–1961. Ivo inherited Ilja's collection of gramophone records mostly from the 1950s, started digitizing them at home while uploading them on his YouTube channel "Fousadlo" (Doležal 2008). The dominant videos in Ivo's channel – centred around Ilja's solos in AUS VN's performances of arranged Slovak and Russian folk songs, Soviet army songs, and Czech Communist songs, with the choir wearing army uniforms – convey the period's authoritarian state discourse,

which legitimized political trials, and harsh anti-religious and anti-Semitic state policy (among other things). Nevertheless, other videos also show Ilja's remarkable (for that time and place) interest in the representations of ethnically "other" music, and mainly in the few Jewish cantorial records made by Supraphon.

Apart from Weiss's recordings (n.d. a, b), there are videos with Suprahon records by star cantor Shalom Katz, and by Eugen Katz, as well as two records with Ladislav Blum (1950, 1954) by Supraphon, though they are not of his cantorial performances – as Supraphon has not published any. Instead, we can hear Blum's solo voice in a secular music context – one Slovak and two Chinese folk songs arranged for the AUS VN. Not being a member of the Communist party, Blum was civic employee of the AUS VN (1950–1957). In 2003, I had the chance to interview Ilja Doležal, as he had been a close friend of Blum since their time together in the AUS VN and the choir's tour of China (in 1952, to perform for Mao Zedong). In 2003, Ilja Doležal, although being very kind and helpful, didn't share with me the information that Blum had gifted him his cantorial records collection – I learned this only from Ivo, whom I contacted instantly, asking him about the photo of the unknown cantor in his video of Josef Weiss's rendition of "Ribon ho-Olamim".

Ivo explained that he was contacted, via his YouTube channel comments in 2017, by a person called Avraham Ben-Tzvi: "Hi! That is my grandfather singing. If you know how I can purchase an original 45-rpm record, please contact me" (Ben-Tzvi, in Doležal 2017a). Avraham and Ivo exchanged emails about the fact that both the records are 78-rpm and that both the cantors, Ladislav Blum and Josef Weiss, must have known each other personally, as they were born in the same small town Veľké Kapušany and were peers by age. Ivo Doležal also was kind enough to sell his original copies of the two Joseph Weiss's 78-rpm records to Avraham (similarly, Gabriel Gössel sold his copies to Avraham too), so that the family of the *hazzan* now has a few copies of their ancestor in its possession.

These two particular 78-rpm discs were originally either bought by cantor Blum or given to him by Weiss, whom he likely knew personally, and were later passed further (likely) as a gift to Ilja Doležal, inherited by his son Ivo, digitized, and uploaded to YouTube, and as a result of this digital diversion sold to Weiss's grandson in Israel. The cultural biography of these discs offers several possible interpretations. This case of two related material objects circulating from a commodity state through a gift, to inheritance, and back to commodity

in the span of seven decades points to the network of professional musicians and music collecting aficionados in Communist Czechoslovakia. This network was constructed through personal friendships and gift-giving in an important way, and often *across* political affiliations or other collective identifications of its actors (as we see in the case of Ilja Doležal and Ladislav Blum).

This was also the case of the partially overlapping small network around Jewish minority music, which was not in favour of the political regime and was therefore pushed out into niches of the state-security monitored activities behind the closed doors of synagogues, community buildings and apartments, and later, personal collections. These exchanges were based on gift-giving rather than on the black market activities (as was the case of music subcultures which were also not in the favour of the regime, such as rock and punk; see Hagen and DeNora 2011). My previous research of Blum's estate (Seidlová and Knapp 2008; Seidlová 2009) revealed that he collected cantorial music recordings (mainly through gifts from behind the Iron Curtain, as these were unavailable for purchase in the Czechoslovakia of the 1970s and 1980s) not only for the purpose of appreciation and musical inspiration, but also as an important source of learning of cantorial practice to which he returned later in his life in Prague at a moment when almost nobody was left to learn from. In this context, Weiss's records in Blum's collection had a considerably different function and value than in the countries where cantorial music and education has been freely available. Finally, the lastly observed commodity phase in the social life of these two copies of the 78-rpm records points to personal memorialization realized through the global technoscape.

Scene IV. Jerusalem and New York, 2018. Aunt is Guarding the Suitcase

As Ivo Doležal kindly shared Avraham's contact info with me, I got in an e-mail and managed a phone call conversation with Avraham in 2018. After explaining my aim of collecting data for the upcoming exhibition in the JMP, I checked the biographic details of his grandfather, which confirmed that Salomon and Josef were two different people. After another piece of the puzzle found in Hungary, when I bought a CD compilation *Hungarian Cantors: Archiv Recordings* (2009), which happened to contain digitizations of two of Josef Weiss's prewar sound tracks from Budapest (Weissz n.d.), I met Avraham the same year in Jerusalem for an interview.

Avraham, who saw his grandfather Josef Weiss for the last time at around 15 years old, has already recollected the silence in his family concerning his grandfather's recordings when we met for the first time: "They really didn't know he has ever published anything. But when I started asking more, it turned out that my aunt [Elke] has his reel-to-reel tapes, which he made at home during the years... but she is hesitant about giving them to me. I hope I'll convince her one day" (Ben-Tzvi, interview, 5 June 2018). Thus, the professional, band-accompanied, studio-made records from postwar Prague were at the core of Avraham's project, which started taking shape in his head due to subsequent events, after I met Avraham for another interview at the Sound archives of the National Library in Israel (NLI). Avraham had mentioned that his aunt – who is in possession of the tapes, but is afraid to give them to anybody for digitization – also insisted that Josef recorded for Voice of Israel broadcasting service (and Avraham had indeed by then found four of Weiss's recordings from 1950s Israeli broadcasting service which had been digitized and placed on the NLI website). So I introduced him to Gila Flam, the director of the Sound Archives and the Music Department of the NLI. Gila Flam offered to digitize the home reel-to-reel tapes, if he would bring them.

This set of events "unleashed a storm" in Avraham's family: only two months afterwards, Avraham brought a heavy suitcase from New York to Jerusalem that was full of reel-to-reel tapes recorded by cantor Weiss in his various homes and had been lying for almost four decades in his aunt's basement at her home in Brooklyn, intact and well guarded, although degraded by time.

Scene V. Prague, 2020. Grandfather's Voice and the Story on the Museum Exhibition

While the NLI was helping with the first round of digitization, Avraham and I were preparing his grandfather's biographical entry for the permanent exhibition of the JMP. This goal has triggered even more intense remembering in Avraham's broader family and finally has brought much more biographical data than we could use at that moment. My role as an ethnomusicologist became entangled with my active role in the field consultant's private remembrance project, as well as in the institutional production of collective memory.

For the new permanent exhibition of the JMP at the Spanish Synagogue in Prague, "Jews in the Bohemian Lands, 19th–20th Centuries", I was given free rein to create biographical entries of local Jewish musicians, supported

with photographs and audio recordings (Seidlová 2020b). Therefore, I decided to introduce mainly the so-far underrepresented synagogue soundscapes.[17] The soundscape around the postwar cantorial recordings produced in Czechoslovakia, which drew on the production of the Golden Age celebrity cantors, became the most audible one in the exhibition visitors' headphones, while only partially reflecting the actual religious practice of the surviving cantors, who took on the important role of renewing local Jewish communities. What follows is an extended version, commented on and supported by references, of the exhibition's short biographical entry on cantor Josef Weiss, which I constructed together with Avraham and which exhibit contained Josef's photographs and his recordings published by Supraphon.

Josef Elchanan Weiss was born around 1912.[18] He came from Veľké Kapušany, where the graves of his father Zvi Weiss ben Nathanel (d. 1940) and his grandfather Nathanel ben Zvi Weiss (d. 1904) are located (Ben-Tzvi, e-mail, 3 March 2018). At that time, the town was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was better known by its Hungarian name Nagykapos. In 1918, it became part of the newly established state of Czechoslovakia (and then Slovakia, in 1993). This border-town, multicultural, multilingual transit place seemed to have helped form Josef's restless nature. According to his relatives, he never liked to stay in one place for too long, was cosmopolitan, and although he came from a very observant Orthodox Jewish family, he was very curious and open to the "outside" world. Apart from the music cultures of traditional Eastern-Ashkenazi *hazzanuth* and the "Golden Age" cantors, Josef was also interested in secular and non-Jewish music cultures. He loved to sing arias from Italian opera, and he liked to cross borders – not only of nation-states. He left Veľké

[17] Most of the entries covered the 19th and early 20th century synagogue soundscape from the Czech lands, with a number of local composers (e.g., Moritz Pereles, David Rubin, Max Löwenstamm, Samuel Welsch, etc.), who embraced – at that time – a new modern style of Jewish choral music, which dominated the Jewish religious soundscapes of the Czech lands until World War II (for more on this topic, see Seidlová 2020a). Yet, it was almost impossible to introduce traditional Orthodox soundscape from the Czech lands by means of an exhibition. This soundscape, based on orally transmitted, typically heterophonic male vocal practice without any instrumental accompaniment (Frigyesi 2018), usually performed behind the closed doors of small family shuls, scattered in private houses, has generally not been (and resisted to be) fixated in scores (for one partial exception, see Stellmacher 2019) as well as in technology of sound recording (except for Frigyesi 1980).

[18] In the Israeli birth certificate of A. Ben Tzvi's mother, Bruria (orig. Breyndel) Weiss (b. 1950, Jerusalem), the stated age of the father is 38. (Issued on 30 August 1950, copy in the private archive of A. Ben-Tzvi.) Weiss's exact date of birth could not be specified, neither by his family nor by my requests in various Czech and Slovak archives, both local and national.

Figure 3. Josef Weiss as a soldier in the Czechoslovak Army from early 1930s. Stamp of a photo salon in Pardubice. Private archive of A. Ben-Tzvi. Used with permission.

Kapušany in late 1920s, when he studied at a *yeshiva* in Bratislava (probably the famous Pressburg Yeshiva). Unfortunately, we don't know any further details about Josef's stay in Bratislava, or with whom and where he studied *hazzanut*. We find him again in early 1930s, farther west in Bohemia, as he joined the compulsory service in the Czechoslovak army (see Figure 3).

According to Josef's children's memories, he had been cantor in Vienna and Budapest before the war (see Figure 1). His stay in Budapest is evidenced by Josef's photo from 1937, stored in the private archive of Avraham Ben-Tzvi (as all

the other photos mentioned below), and by the above-mentioned Darling Super record company's gramophone record of "kantor Jozsef Weissz" from late 1937 or early 1938 (Weissz n.d.). In 1941, along with his brother, Josef was forced to join the Hungarian Army Jewish Work Force. Following their surrender to the Soviet Army, Josef was transferred to a prisoner-of-war camp in Siberia, and later fought with the Soviet Army in Ukraine (Avraham Ben-Tzvi is in possession of Weiss's photo in a Soviet uniform, with the inscription "March 1945").

After the war, we find Josef Weiss in Prague, where he married Zisl Klein. They are captured together on photos from inside and in front of the Old-New Synagogue (the photo, from Ben-Tzvi's private collection, was made by the Prague photo atelier Mráz, with an inscription "3 November 1946"). In Czechoslovakia, their first two children were born. If Josef held an official post as a cantor after the war in the Old-New Synagogue, or in those other Prague synagogues, renewed for religious rituals after the war (High Synagogue, Jeruzalémská synagogue, as well as Meisel's for a very short period), could not yet be verified.[19] He might have been a deputy chief cantor of Eduard Fried (1911 Oradea – 1992 Copenhagen), the first postwar cantor of the Old-New Synagogue. However, in the fall of 1948, Weiss's namesake, Šalamoun/Solomon Weisz, cantor of Bánská Bystrica, was accepted as chief cantor of the Old-New, instead of Fried, who emigrated and accepted the post of cantor in Copenhagen (Mink Rossen and Sharvit 2006).

At that time, Josef Weiss recorded those four liturgical compositions in Prague on 17 September 1948, accompanied by a record company orchestra under the baton of bandleader Adolf "Dol" Dauber (for more on Dauber, see Seidlová 2020b). Apart from the cantorial repertoire, Weiss, accompanied by the same orchestra, recorded two popular dance music pieces in Hebrew during the same session in Prague's Rokoska studio: a tango, "Artzeinu HaKtantonet" ("Our little country"), composed by Henryk Gold, known as Tzvi Zehavi, in 1943 in Tel Aviv (lyrics by Shmuel Fisher); and "Im Hupalnu Lo Nivhalnu" ("Though defeated, not terrified were we" – composition by Menashe Baharaff, lyrics by Yaakov Orland) – about the wartime disasters of the sinking of two ships, Patria and Struma, set to the *hora* rhythm. However, the record (Weiss n.d. c) remained an unpublished sample record in the archives and was never

19 The work contracts from this period are stored in the Center of Pre-Archive Care of the Jewish Community of Prague, which is not accessible to the public. My research request was treated, but without success, in 2018.

Figure 4. Josef Weiss sings into a microphone during a recording session (?) accompanied by harmonium (c. 1956, in Israel). Behind him is David Koussevitzky. Private archive of A.-Ben-Tzvi. Used with permission.

commercially distributed. On the other hand, the four liturgical pieces were put on two records published in at least four different pressings. All of them were meant for export abroad, as all the vignettes were in English.

In 1949, Josef Weiss immigrated to Israel with his wife and two children. They lived first in Jerusalem in the German Colony / Baka neighborhood, then in Ramat Gan. Another two children were born. Josef served in the Israeli army reserves (he is seen on a photo from Ben-Tzvi's private collection in the uniform of an Israeli soldier, c. 1957)[20] and also earned his living as a handyman and a plumber, but – as shown on the family photos – he further performed musically. During the Ramat Gan period, as his daughter Elke remembers, Weiss recorded with star cantor David Koussevitsky (1911–1985) from Smorgon in Belarus, since 1948 the cantor of Temple Emanu-El in Boro Park, Brooklyn, one of New York's major Conservative movement synagogues at that time, where he served until his death. The family photos show them together in both professional and informal situations in Israel (see Figure 4). We know for sure

[20] For an ethnomusicological account on Hassidic music in the US, see Summit 2000.

that from 1952–1954, Weiss recorded cantorial pieces for Voice of Israel radio (Kol Israel) for its weekly *Kabbalat Shabbat* Friday shows (Weiss 1953a, b; 1954). Avraham Ben-Tzvi enquired about Josef's cantorial activities in Israel from star cantor Moshe Stern (1935–) from Budapest, who immigrated to Israel in 1950. Stern replied to Ben-Tzvi: "I remember well your grandfather [...] I was a young boy at that time. We lived [...] in Jerusalem. I heard him on different occasions. He had a sensational lyric tenor [...] My father, Chazzan Yisroel Stern [...] spoke always very highly of him" (Stern, text message to Ben-Tzvi, 3 September 2018). In 1957, the Israeli newspaper *HaTzofe* mentions Josef Weiss's name amongst a group of *hazzanim* who left Israel as they were unable to find permanent appointments as *hazzanim* (*HaTzofe* 1957).

In 1958, the Weiss family moved to Manchester, England, where Josef won the post of chief cantor in Prestwich. The *Jewish Chronicle* stated that "The Prestwich Hebrew Congregation, Bury New Road, has appointed the Rev. Yoseph Weiss [...] of Ramat Gan, Israel, as their new First Reader. He [...] has been a chazan in Budapest, Prague, and Vienna" (*Jewish Chronicle*, 1958). The *Manchester Jewish Telegraph* (*Manchester Jewish Telegraph* 1958; see also *Manchester Jewish Telegraph* 1960) claimed that Weiss had a beautiful voice and a global reputation. During that year, his last child, Nathanel, was born.

In 1962, already with five children, Josef Weiss and his wife moved to New York. Until 1964 he worked as a cantor at the Hollis Hills Jewish Center in Queens. In the 1960s and early 1970s, he was also an occasional cantor at the monumental First Romanian-American Synagogue (Roumanishe Shul) on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, later at the Tenth Avenue Synagogue in Brooklyn. An advertisement in *Forverts* (Yiddish newspaper) for high holiday services at the Roumanishe Shul, known as "the Cantor's Carnegie Hall", captures "*hazzan* Josef Weiss" (with photo) as the star of the event (*Forverts* 1972). Later, as Avraham remembers: "My grandparents lived in Boro Park, Brooklyn, on 43rd Street near 9th Avenue, and I occasionally heard my grandfather lead services at the large nearby Tenth Avenue Synagogue" (Ben-Tzvi, e-mail, 3 March 2018). According to Avraham, as heard from his Aunt Elke, Josef left the paid cantorial job in Queens and moved to Brooklyn, because the Hollis Hills community was not as Orthodox as he would have liked, and lacked the Orthodox educational facilities he wished for his five children. While living in Brooklyn, Josef earned his living mainly as a jewelry maker, and worked from home as well as at a booth in Manhattan's Diamond District.

Apart from occasional leading at the mentioned synagogues, he also sang many cantorial pieces at home, recording it on reel-to-reel tapes. Avraham remembers how his grandfather sang in his basement into a microphone connected to his reel-to-reel tape recorder. Indeed, Josef recorded his grandson's very first words. Although the digitization process revealed the bad condition of the tapes, more than 25 liturgical pieces sung by Josef Weiss were rescued. Including two Voice of Israel recordings which to date have not been located in the *Kol Yisrael* archive. Furthermore, the home recordings also contained one Yiddish folk song about a cantorial audition on Shabbat ("A Chazendl Oyf Shabbes"), a Hebrew folk song about Jerusalem ("Me'Al Pisgat Har HaTzofim"), and three opera arias recorded during an unknown recital performance ("Spirto Gentil" from *La Favorita* by Gaetano Donizetti; "La donna e mobile" from *Rigoletto* by Giuseppe Verdi; and "E lucevan le stelle" from *Tosca* by Giacomo Puccini). On some of the home recordings, Josef accompanies himself on piano. It is not completely clear which of the sound tracks were recorded before his stay in New York, but it seems most probable that the radio performances, the opera pieces, the Yiddish piece, as well as the Hebrew folk song were recorded in Ramat Gan. Those liturgical pieces with piano were most likely recorded in Manchester, and all the a cappella pieces in New York. Josef's family remembers how he "*shleppt*" ("dragged" in Yiddish) his suitcase with his recordings from Ramat Gan to Manchester and later to Brooklyn, where it stayed in the basement for almost four decades.

At the end of his life, Josef Weiss practiced the Hassidic concept of Judaism.[21] The last photo in the family archive shows Josef, sporting Hassidic clothing with a long white beard, surrounded by his many children, grandsons, and other relatives at the Bar Mitzvah of his grandson Avraham Ben-Tzvi in October 1983 in Brooklyn (Figure 5). In 1984, Weiss returned to Israel and lived in Kiryat Sanz, Netanya, where he passed away on 10 October 1985 (the photo of his tombstone was shared with me by Avraham Ben-Tzvi. The inscription was translated by rabbi Michael Dushinsky).

Josef Weiss's biography sheds light on his music recording practice as situated in the soundscape of the Golden Age cantors. In agreement with Lockwood, I understand this soundscape as a revival of the sounds that were considered to be the roots of sonic Jewishness (Lockwood 2020, 1). The case of the exceptionally vocally gifted and manually skilled Josef Weiss, who embraced

21 For an ethnomusicological account on Hassidic music in the US, see Summit 2000.

Figure 5. Josef Weiss, his children, grandsons, and other relatives at the Bar Mitzvah of his grandson Avraham Ben-Tzvi (1983, in Brooklyn). Private archive of A.-Ben-Tzvi. Used with permission.

the tools of technological innovation – both passively in a recording studio and actively in his own home recording activity – in order to co-create a musical world that would fuse the sounds of the past with period art, fits very well with Lockwood's argument about Golden Age cantors as using technology (seen as threatening the stability of pre-modern cultural continuity) to stage a musical uprising that would paradoxically preserve the sounds of the imagined past.

Unfortunately, I couldn't work with any ego-documents, which would throw light on the meanings Josef Weiss gave to his music activity. From today's perspective, it is possible to say that concerning the recording process, Josef Weiss had been lucky to record before WWII as a very young cantor in Budapest, which was full of talented *hazzanim* from all corners of Hungary. Later, as a *shoah* survivor, he paradoxically happened to be at the right moment in Czechoslovakia in 1948: firstly, he met Dol Dauber, who nostalgically longed for the old Jewish world (and therefore turned to recording cantorial music two years before his death), as well as supported new life in Israel (as heard

in the two popular pieces). Secondly, a short "window of opportunity" was opened: the recovering and newly "nationalized" music recording industry of the Czechoslovak state (still partially built on prewar ties such as in the proven case of Dauber and his orchestra) sought commodities for export, while the ideological barriers set by the Communist policy have not yet been established. However, in this part of Europe, severely decimated by the *shoah*, the prospect of a paid stable cantorial job, needed in order to provide for his growing family, was scarce, as well as being "too early" for the same in the newly established state of Israel. Indeed, Israeli newspaper archives indicate that 1958, the year Weiss left Israel for Manchester, also saw an "exodus" from Israel of several other highly trained cantors who found paid positions abroad (*HaTzofe* 1957). And paradoxically again, as much as the Voice of Israel recordings could have meant a new start, they are his last-known, studio, sound-recorded performances for the public.

The following four years of cantorial service in Prestwich Hebrew Congregation provided much-needed stability for a family with four little children and one new-born, but it didn't bring enough professional satisfaction. As Avraham told me, "He probably didn't have much patience with the bar mitzvah boys", whom he had to teach as part of his job, and he also likely felt limited by the United Synagogue mandated repertoire and limits on recording and concert performing, similar to his friend, David Koussevitsky (who for these same reasons left his position in the Hendon Synagogue, London, after WWII; cf. Slobin 2002, 85–86).

On the other hand, in New York in the 1960s, Josef came rather "late": not necessarily because of his age (as tenor vocalist) but rather in the sense that the New York's cantorial golden age had already been far behind its zenith. There were far fewer opportunities for public performances and paid cantorial jobs then for Orthodox cantors than in the 1930s through the early 1950s. As Avraham commented: "When he came to the US, the best times for hazzanim were probably already over. The sixties up to the eighties were kind of 'dry' times for them, mainly the Orthodox ones, such as him" (Ben-Tzvi, phone call, 14 April 2022). Moreover, according to his family, Josef didn't want to compromise on those religious values, which he understood as important to pass onto his children, so he left his paid job in a modern synagogue in Queens in order to move to Brooklyn, and his lifestyle shifted increasingly towards Hassidism. It is my understanding that this move perhaps secluded him from the period cantorial mainstream in the US. At the same time, his Golden Age

cantorial performing art did not fit into the period of Hassidic normative music practice either, and was pushed back to the niches of occasional service leading in Orthodox synagogues and home recordings. We don't know what he aimed to do with those tapes, but deducing from their amount and contents – a result of long-term activity – it is possible to imagine how these private moments of singing his favourite cantorial pieces induced a sense of his "old" self. The "new" self as a Hassidic patriarch of a large family is captured on the last family photos. In this sense, Josef's large family – seen by them as Josef's ultimate triumph of survival – was also on Avraham's mind when he started thinking about the CD music album as a project which would tie these two strings together.

Scene VI. Jerusalem and New York, 2019–2022. Blessing from the Past and the Post-Mortal Gift

In May 2019, after the NLI helped with the first round of digitizing the New York tapes, Avraham texted me: "I do want to put together a collection for my family – maybe a small print CD set [...] I am speaking to a professional sound engineer to see if we can work on the sound of some of the songs" (Ben-Tzvi, text message, 28 May 2019). He explained:

> I played one of the Supraphon recordings at my youngest cousin's wedding two months ago (I'm the oldest grandchild and he's the youngest – 30 years apart). Everyone was very moved by this. [...] I spoke about how not only was my uncle "closing" his house by marrying his youngest, but we were closing a generation and after what my grandparents went through and now have almost 40 grandchildren married with children of their own, it's very special [...] I played [his] Birchos kohanim. It's the priestly blessing but also a blessing that parents say to children. [...] I did say it was recorded in Prague. They were very intrigued by this – especially the younger cousins, who had never heard him sing (ibid.).

It was a Hassidic wedding in Israel. The groom studied in the yeshiva of Modzitzer Rebbe, who personally participated in the event. In a "very ultra-Orthodox" environment, as Avraham pointed out, it was surprising for him, how much the Prague recording was appreciated. In October 2019, Avraham set up his "Cantor Joseph Weiss" YouTube channel, where he uploaded some of the newly digitized recordings. In 2020, he also hired the Danish-Israeli cantor Ralph Levitan, who is a sound producer in Ra'anana, in order to:

> just clean [up] the sound. But it turned out, he salvaged some of the beautiful pieces, which were almost damaged. And then, he orchestrated the first one, "Shir Hamaalos", which doesn't appear anywhere in the synagogue liturgy and is a known "concert piece". He then orchestrated a horribly damaged (cantorial) piece with a piano: "Hashem Malach", to save it. I loved these and was really excited about it. So, we got inspired by the sound of the orchestra in the Prague records, and we made a few more, ultimately orchestrating 10 pieces... (Ben-Tzvi, phone call, 4 April 2022).

After commenting on the sound restoration process as a compromise between eliminating unwanted sounds and maintaining the original qualities of performance, while respecting the value of historic documentation, cantor Levitan explained his own technical perspective on how he created synthesized musical arrangements to a capella recordings of Josef Weiss, using the sampled sounds of genuine musical instruments, played within the computer from a MIDI musical keyboard:

> Having uploaded the vocal recording, a piano track is created, representing the musical arrangement. Firstly, a musical intro is created. Then, [the] start of [the] vocal is placed – easily done thanks to full track visibility on [the] monitor screen. Piano accompaniment is created, [filling] empty spaces within vocal track, whenever musical interludes are appropriate. Upon completion of [the] piano track, the various orchestral sections are added, typically strings, brass, woodwinds, percussion, organ. Finally, the mixdown balance of all tracks is crucial [...] for creating the proper and most natural acoustic balance between the old vocal track and the added orchestration (Levitan, text message, 16 October 2021).

Thus, using the latest technological innovations, those ten tracks of cantorial pieces with added synthesized orchestration show how the actors of this commemorative family project partially "invent" the sonic past in order to save it. A sonic past, which was already partially invented by the Golden Age recording cantors themselves in order to save their ancestors' sonic past. If the digitized and cleaned recording of "Birchos kohanim" is played and reinterpreted as a blessing from the late ancestor, then the upcoming music album is understood as a post-mortal gift to him from his grandson:

> So, you asked why I did it… You know, to preserve, and even to some extent to make, a legacy of an excellent hazzan, who was also regarded as such by his famous [hazzanim] peers […] I know from [cantor] Moshe Stern, who knew him, and [cantor] Naftali Hershtik, they both said how their fathers knew him and regarded him highly […] I wanted to make something for him, what he could have done himself, had he had that chance in his life, the opportunity, the money […] Yes, mainly the funding to record an album. Today, it is much easier, but in his time in the US, to record an album, to book a studio, to hire an orchestra and everything, you needed a producer and funding (Ben-Tzvi, phone call, 14 April 2022).

During the production process, Avraham's "labour of love" (Ben-Tzvi, voice message, 18 June 2020) was put to use in another exceptionally important family event. In May 2021, cantor Weiss's eldest daughter Elke, who was born in Czechoslovakia and was in possession of his home-recorded tapes in New York, passed away. Her body was brought to be buried in Israel. Avraham describes:

> Yesterday, we had a funeral service in Israel […] All of my cousins, all of her five children, flew in [from New York…], through Covid and the (Hamas) rockets, the whole situation was just […] surreal, but at the gravesite, I actually played one or two songs of my grandfather, and they were very grateful […] It turns out that during the last few days when she had been in hospital, my cousins played a few of the songs from the files I sent them, [and also] from the YouTube channel, where I posted some of the songs, and one of her youngest daughters asked her if she wanted some more of [her father's] singing, and she said yes, and then she basically slipped into unconsciousness. And […] probably the last thing she took with her from the world were the sounds of these recordings […] (Ben-Tzvi, voice message, 12 May 2021).

Thus, we can see how Avraham's listening experience of his grandfather's sound records from 1948 Czechoslovakia was at the core of a memory production process which brought deeply meaningful listening experiences also to his broader family, when the discovered and technologically treated recordings were put to use even during the life-cycle rituals (e.g., wedding and funeral) of the family members. This case reveals not only how the sound tracks became a functional tool of trans-generational memorialization, but also how music pieces which originated in ritual practice but were extracted from it for the sake of recording and commoditization have been reapplied back to family ritual events in the form of collective listening to recordings.

Returning to the beginning of our story, Avraham's initial listening experience also resembles a "revelatory event" which brought a lawyer "who was never too much into cantorial music" into the middle of a cantorial music album production. This is a term used by Lockwood, quoting a scholar of music revival Peter Narvaez: "an initiatory moment when one ecstatically experiences a cultural alternative" (Narvaez 1993, 245, in Lockwood 2021, 2). Recorded cantorial music differs from the cantorial practice in the synagogues, which as such is largely no longer normative practice in modern Orthodox worship (Schleifer 1995, 66; Lockwood 2021, 3). On the other hand, since the turn of the 21st century, we can speak of a soundscape of "cantorial revivalists": historical cantorial records aficionados sharing and discussing digital files across continents, uploading them to YouTube, and reissuing them on compilation sets (such as Avraham, his colleague Daniel B. Schwartz, and Ralph Levitan, or the above-mentioned members of the ECA), and these groups are overlapping with a cohort of performers, animating those archival records in mainly secular performance contexts. Lockwood focuses on the young performers from the Hassidic communities in the US. The revelatory listening event seems to be a typical entrance into this scene, which is by its insiders perceived as somewhat countercultural (Lockwood 2021, 2), especially due to the non-conformity of the young Hassidic performers stepping out of their ultra-orthodox communities. And precisely they are on Avraham's mind when thinking about the target group of his project: "These young Hassidim from Brooklyn, what they are doing now, even singing 'secular' popular tunes, their communities would have 'stoned' them for it some 40 years ago [...] and so, yes, I do think that they will be some of the main aficionados, who would purchase and listen to my grandfather's collection, and maybe even learn and perform some of his compositions" (Ben-Tzvi, phone call, 14 April 2022).

In conclusion, the described family / music / memory project, produced, negotiated, and put to use across continents, fits in the broader frame of musical remembrance: Avraham's and other related Jewish actors' memory production is shaped by their present needs ("to make his legacy", to preserve a Jewish sonic past) and is entangled with the current practice of Jewish memory institutions (NLI, JMP), as well as with the practice of non-Jewish collectors and of an ethnomusicologist, with Avraham also hoping for the music anthology album to be purchased by actors who would not only appreciate but actually animate those recorded sounds in their music practice – the cantorial revival performers. The cultural biography of Josef Weiss's Prague recordings suggests how

these material objects have moved through different contexts and regimes of value: the initial commoditization of recordings of postwar Jewish minority's ritual music as a remembering of a particular sonic past; the making of private recordings and private collecting of a minority's music not in favour of the dominant political regime in the Communist Czechoslovakia; and finally as tools of minority's institutional memorialization in the post-Communist setting, as well as individual and family trans-generational memorialization (and even "ritualization") in transnational settings. The lastly mentioned regimes of value have been intertwined with the recurring commoditization, although not with the primary goal of economic gain but rather with the purpose of enabling a new social life of the music captured on them.

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THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY

Julia L. Offen
(independent scholar)

Abstract: *This is a short work of creative ethnographic prose that relies solely upon crafted narrative to show rather than explain its message. In the mid 1990s, I spent two years doing ethnographic fieldwork with European traveling circuses. One troupe I worked in for a considerable amount of time included members of 16 different nationalities. They had a posted rule banning the display of national flags or symbols within their circus community, and – other than some fleeting heated moments during World Cup soccer – seemed to keep conflicts by nationality group to a minimum. Nonetheless, historical tensions rested barely under the surface. Although none of the people portrayed here were alive for the events of WWII, that conflict still echoed down into everyday life in the circus over 50 years later. This story is based upon actual characters and events the author experienced, although all individuals' names and some identifying characteristics have been changed.*

Keywords: *creative ethnography; narrative; Europe; nationality; war; circus; history*

1.

"They shot them all". Polish Piotr spat into the sawdust at his feet. He raised his voice as the artists for the Cossack act arrived in the back of the Swiss circus tent. "The Katyn massacre, look it up", he said, and spat again. It wasn't the first time the European history classes I took back in the U.S. had failed me.

The tempo of the orchestra increased as the clown performance reached its climax in the ring. I settled my pair of horses beside Piotr's where we waited for the next act. The younger one's sleek shoulder vibrated under my hand, but other than a quick toss of his head, he stood quietly for me.

Piotr clipped the fixed reins onto the snaffle rings of his two charges, expertly avoiding the lead stallion's teeth with a rough palm. We all knew the horse's temper. Only the veteran stable hands handled four-year-old Benito.

The artists beside us leaned into each other's shoulders to stretch their hamstrings, just out of reach of the horses.

"My grandfather was an officer", Piotr continued. "We were on the same side, fighting Nazis". He turned his back to the two artists. "Fucking Russians".

The orchestra trilled a shift and the dark-haired Tajik rider stepped up beside me. He gave me a quick half-smile as I handed him the loose lead lines of my two young stallions, clipped together.

But Piotr ignored the blonde lead rider who stepped up to him.

"*Proszę*, please", the man tried, almost the same word in Polish and Russian.

Piotr bent down to readjust the horse's leg wraps. "You have to be careful with these", he told me. "Benito will kick himself bloody". The horse took the opportunity to snap forward, but the reins stopped him from reaching any target.

The Russian artist looked at me sideways, one eyebrow raised in entreaty. He was running out of time. I moved closer as Piotr stood up.

The stable hand finally grunted as he handed off the rough leather lead lines to me and stepped away.

I immediately passed the paired horses on to their waiting rider. Benito flattened his ears and snorted.

"Achtung!" the Ringmaster called. Piotr and I stood back as the blackout curtains were pulled aside, and men and horses pressed their way past us into the lighted ring.

2.

"You sure you're safe with me?" Chevalier teased as I set my voice recorder on the table between us in his worn but tidy camper. He raised his glass in mock toast – I'd already declined the proffered beer twice. It was too early for me.

"Konterbier". He laughed. "But I like your American expression better. Hair of the dog".

Everyone told me stories of the wild partier, but the man I'd come to know over the past months was the most dedicated circus person I knew. The uncredited head trainer for most of the signature animal acts, and an expert jack-of-all-trades all around the circus lot.

A visit by the senior owner somehow meant Chevalier had a rare morning off from practice with the horses. That *"alter österreichischer Bastard",* Chevy had called him before: the old Austrian bastard. I could imagine he'd been a hard man to grown up under.

"So I don't quite understand". I opened my small notebook. "Your family is French, you said. But people keep saying you're German" – I hesitated – "or English".

Chevy snorted. His oldest daughter was born in England, he explained. The ex-wife I'd heard about was English too. He launched into a long description of raising his daughter in the circus. She started performing before she was two, Chevy said with a mix of pride and apology. Maybe I'd heard of her in America? She was famous with big cats now.

A breeze ruffled the lace curtains on the trailer window beside us, bringing in the musk of the elephants.

"My family is six-generation circus". With quick hand chops across the table, Chevalier indicated a succession of European countries. A sibling born in Sweden, a cousin in Denmark, himself in Germany. He quirked his lips. "No problem with the taxes".

His grin faded. "The war came and we were all stuck in Paris". He continued to look down at his imaginary map. "The Americans walked through and they ruined us. We were in the Grand Palais".

He looked up and shook his head slowly. "They bombed it. Everything went in flames. The money, the costumes, we lost everything. The clown lost all his costumes".

A thump and a neigh came from outside.

I paused my pen.

"The only thing they saved was the horses".

Chevy swallowed the last of his beer and set the glass back onto its thick paper coaster advertising a local bar we'd passed maybe five or six towns ago. He tilted his head toward the circus lot outside. "*Schaffe, schaffe*, time for work".

I reached out to turn off my recorder.

"That was 1945", he said, "I wasn't born yet".

3.

"So ..." Piotr let the word draw out over the sweating draft horse in the tent stables as we unbuckled the harness with practiced tandem steps – he on the right, me on the left. I expected him to fish another scrap of paper from his coverall pocket and ask me how to conjugate or pronounce an irregular English verb. He wanted a higher-paying job in America. But he was silent.

He must have had the morning off, since I hadn't seen him since introducing him to my visiting parents the night before.

The heavy gelding towed me impatiently into his stall, headed straight for his water bucket. I slipped off the bridle before I noticed we'd somehow forgotten the leg wraps.

Piotr stood in the doorway, weight awkwardly on his back leg. He reached out and automatically took the bridle I handed him. "Your father", he finally said. "He is German? Lutheran?"

I bent to the horse's feathered legs and agreed.

"He came to America when?" Piotr persisted behind me.

He stepped back for me to exit the stall, but didn't walk away as I latched the door.

"After the war; he was a child".

"So, so". Piotr nodded, smiling with what looked like apology. Maybe confusion. He stopped, bridle still hanging from his hand. "But your mother". He paused. "She is Jewish?"

I sighed. Tucked the leg wraps into the tack chest, and turned back to give him my full attention. "Yes".

Piotr vehemently dunked the bit into the cleaning bucket and jiggled it once, twice, a third time, rinsing off the horse's generous spit.

He hung the dripping headstall on its hook, carefully straightening the leather. He absently pressed his thumb to the label where the adhesive had come loose. I waited.

"No". Piotr finally burst out with a shake of his head, still facing the tack wall. "But No. This is not possible!" He slapped his hand against the wall, startling the horses.

"America!" He snorted.

He grinned at me, and we moved off together to tack up the pinto ponies for the Wild West act.

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UNDER THE SKIN: A THEATRICAL EXPLORATION OF ART, POLITICS, AND FIELDWORK DYNAMICS[1]

Maruška Svašek
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Abstract: Under the Skin *is a play that explores art production in state-socialist Czechoslovakia during the normalization period. It investigates the slippery meaning of the word* politics *in relation to totalitarianism and performance art, and discusses how internalized taken-for-granted social rules can be made evident through artistic inquiry. The script offers insights into the improvisational nature of fieldwork, and invites producers and consumers of ethnographies to reflect on the ethical and affective dimensions of anthropological labour and knowledge production.*

Keywords: *ethnographic drama; Czechoslovakia; performance art; state-socialism; censorship; Jiří Kovanda*

Pre-script

Under the Skin is a play for two actors that explores the dynamics of visual art production and politics in state-socialist Czechoslovakia, a theme that has interested me for over thirty years (Svašek 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2001, 2022, 2020a, 2020b, 2012, 2018, 2022). The script investigates the

[1] A different version of this text has been published as the article "Invasive Writing: Exploring Subjectivity, Performativity and Politics in the Art of Jiří Kovanda" in the journal *Liminalities* in the special issue "Performance and Politics, Power and Protest", editors Kayla Rush and Sonja Kleij (see Svašek 2022).

slippery meaning of the word *politics* in relation to 20th century totalitarianism and performance art, and explores how internalized taken-for-granted social rules can be made evident through artistic inquiry.[2]

The script also offers insights into the improvisational nature of fieldwork, confronting the reader with an embodied sense of the anxieties, hesitations, and negotiations that commonly shape ethnographic knowledge production. This methodological meta-perspective urges the co-producers (researchers and research participants) and consumers (readers and instructors) of ethnographies to reflect on the ethics and affective relationality of anthropological labour.

The two characters central to the play enact a walking interview that I carried out in 2017 in Prague with the Czech artist Jiří Kovanda.[3] During the encounter, he showed me some of the locations where he had performed non-conformist art in the 1970s and 1980s. The script is a logical extension of an experiment in "invasive writing", in which I presented my own *and* Kovanda's voice from a first-person perspective (Svašek 2022). The stylistic departure from mainstream ethnography allowed me to intimately explore the enfolding interaction through spoken and inner dialogue. For obvious reasons, this invasive act needed the artist's approval, which he kindly granted.

Eager to experiment further, I decided to turn the text into a play to be performed at the 7th PACSA[4] conference in 2019.[5] Familiar with early theatre experiments by the anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner, I was unaware of

2 The questions raised by the play about the dynamics of in/visibility, knowledge production, politics and public space continue to be topical today. Numerous governments employ oppressive surveillance techniques to silence their citizens and remove unwanted individuals from the public realm. Digital media afford the circulation of biased information across the globe. Algorithms create feedback loops that produce and perpetuate preconceptions and lies. Apart from providing insights into life under State Socialism, Under the Skin intends to stimulate critical reflection on these 21st century processes.

3 The interview took place on the June 24, 2017. The script also draws on a second interview with the artist earlier that month in the garden of the Academy of Fine Arts (*Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze*), and relies on fieldnotes written after several informal meetings. It incorporates quotes by a number of Czech art historians from their writings on Kovanda's work (Ševčík and Schöllhammer 2006; Jeřábková 2010; Humhal 2019; Morganová 2019, 2020) and refers to the artist's own published reflections (David and Kovanda 1991; Havránek and Kovanda 2004).

4 PACSA was established as a network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) in 2005. It draws together scholars from all over Europe and beyond to facilitate co-operation and collaboration in the fields of peace and conflict studies in anthropology.

5 I also experimented at the time with representational and performative styles to discuss a game of visual exploration, played in 2018. Using two screens, I presented "Between Facts, Fictions and Fun: Spatiality, Temporarily and Multi-Sensorial Improvisation" at the Sharing Space II Conference, organized at Queen's University Belfast in the Brian Friel Theatre in 2019 (see also Svašek 2020).

more recent examples of ethnographic drama.[6] Invited by Richard Schechner[7] in the late 1970s, the Turners had collaborated with anthropology and drama students, creating a play based on Victor Turner's fieldwork among the Ndembu in Northern Rhodesia (Turner 1957, 1968). According to Turner (1979, 85), "An actor who enacts ethnography has to learn the cultural rules behind the roles played by the character he is representing".[8] In the case of my own play, I provided historical information to encourage the two young non-Czech actors to identify with their roles. I explained how the Prague Spring, a period of relative freedom in Communist Czechoslovakia, had suddenly ended when the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact army invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968.[9] The invasion had a devastating impact on public life and culture, and a system of strict censorship was reintroduced as the authoritarian wing of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia took control over the country. This was the context in which Kovanda had created his works.

To produce a play, I had to rewrite the text in a script format and add stage instructions. The need for these emerged when I rehearsed with two drama students who experimented with different bodily movements, gestures, facial expressions, and intonations.[10] This introduced an element of collaboration and performance normally absent in standard ethnography. Polly Iakovleva took on the role of the artist, and Ash Jones played the anthropologist. The fact that both actors were female was unproblematic, as gender was not central to the play. We

6 See, for example Saldaña 2005 and 2011; Moretti 2008; Kaur 2017; Garbovan 2019; Mazzetti 2019; Skilton 2020; and see for more information about Raminder Kaur's collaborative projects https://www.sussex.ac.uk/research/projects/co-power/theatre/; www.sohayavisions.com www.placesforall.co.uk www.aldaterra.com/

7 Professor of drama who worked at the time at New York University, see also Schechner 2002.

8 See also Turner 1980.

9 See for basic details McDermott 2015, Rychlík and Penčev 2018. Prague House of Photography (2008) published a book of photographs taken during the invasion.

10 The students did not co-write the script with me, and we did not have the luxury of working with an experienced director as in the case of the Turners. Victor Turner (1979, 91) commented on the collaborative nature of the process, writing that "[t]he playscript, of course, would be subject to continuous modification during the rehearsal process, which would lead up to an actual performance. At this stage, we would need an experienced director, preferably one familiar with anthropology and with non-Western theater (like Schechner or Peter Brook), and certainly familiar with the social structure and the rules and themes underlying the surface structures of the culture being enacted. There would be a constant back-and-forth movement from anthropological analysis of the ethnography, which provides the details for enactment, to the synthesizing and integrating activity of dramatic composition, which would include sequencing scenes, relating the words and actions of the characters to previous and future events, and rendering actions in appropriate stage settings".

Figure 1. Polly Iakovleva (on the left) and Ash Jones (on the right) performing *Under the Skin*. Photograph by Fiona Murphy, 2019. Used with permission.

were limited by financial constraints, as I could not pay them enough to learn their lines, so they read them out, holding the script in their hands (Figure 1). To heighten dramatic tension, I decided to shorten the “invasive writing” text and create a new ending.

I also had to think about costumes, stage design, sound, and lighting. We decided on simple black outfits and a shirt for Polly that resembled Kovanda’s on the photographs projected on the back of the stage. A few stage props helped bring to life the scene of the walking interview: a camera around the anthropologist’s neck, a catalogue placed on a coffee table with chairs placed around it as part of the “café” (Figure 2). In addition, various research materials gained temporary stage presence as screen projections, including photographs of Kovanda taken during our walk, and a few pictures taken at the time of his actions. I also included various quotes to emphasize the theme of the play, and instructed the actors to interact with the projections in particular ways (see script below).

The spatial setting of the conference limited the theatricality of the performance. The organisers had assigned a room with large curtain-less windows and unsuitable features such as a huge painting, large radiators, a wall-to-wall

Figure 2. The actors looking at Kovanda's catalogue. Photograph by Fiona Murphy, 2019. Used with permission.

carpet, a banner advertising the university, and a projection screen too small to serve as a proper backdrop. The projections intended to evoke the Prague setting and Kovanda's presence, but they were hardly visible to have the intended visual impact (Figures 1, 3). While a proper theatre would have been the ideal performance space, the conference theme of "Creativity, Resistance, and Hope: Towards an Anthropology of Peace",[11] contextualized the play very well. Post-performance comments and questions from the audience revealed that we had managed to communicate the main gist of the play. The experiment demonstrated that the theatre format was an appropriate genre for posing anthropologically relevant questions, presenting ethnographic findings and investigating practices of fieldwork.

11 See https://pacsa-web.eu/pacsa-conference-2019-belfast/.

Figure 3. Polly Iakovleva stretches her arms out. She is copying a photograph of Kovanda's pose in 1976, projected behind her on the slide. Photograph by Fiona Murphy, 2019. Used with permission.

Figure 4. Kovanda stretches his arms out wide in one of the photographs projected as Polly Iakovleva stretched her arms out on stage. Photograph by Maruška Svašek, 2017.

Figure 5. Photograph of Kovanda's performance on November 19 1976. Copyright by Jiří Kovanda. Used with permission. This is one of three photographs projected when Polly Iakovleva stretched her arms out on stage.

Script

[Backdrop 1: projection of a photograph of Wenceslas Square]
[SVAŠEK stands on the left, waiting; KOVANDA walks onto the stage from the right]

KOVANDA: When I appear aboveground at the Museum metro entrance, I see her standing by "the horse" between some Chinese tourists. She rang me a few days ago, asking if I could help her with her research ... She is writing a book on Czech art and politics ... Good luck with that! How old would she be? About ten years younger than me? She told me in March that her father had left our joyous Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in 1948 when he was in his early twenties. That's a plus, by the way. Her dad couldn't stand the situation anymore, and ran before the all-seeing eye of Big Brother Stalin had fully opened. She's been here numerous times, visiting her grandma, having at least some knowledge of life under Communism. Awareness beyond the simplistic Cold War rhetoric that reduces everything and everyone to politics, and imagines "The Communist East" as a place and time of pure terror and oppression ... There was more to us than just that! She wants to "walk the walk", the one I have done on at least two occasions: once with my friend, the art historian Pavlína Morganová; and once with some of my students ... It's almost a pilgrimage ... A "sacred" walk that connects locations in Prague, where I made my small interventions many years ago. Unnoticed disruptions ... Performances ... Call it "Art"! I remember so vividly feelings of shock and wonder, when I first saw that toilet by Duchamp.

[Backdrop 2: projection of a photograph of Duchamp's toilet]
[KOVANDA turns for a moment to look at the toilet. Then turns back to the audience]

KOVANDA: The shock that anything could be art. How liberating! But wait, let me concentrate, here she comes, a camera around her neck. Well, well, she turns her head to kiss me on my cheek.

[Backdrop 3: projection of a photograph of Wenceslas Square]
[SVAŠEK walks to Kovanda, and presses her lips to his cheek. They freeze for a moment]

SVAŠEK: Jirka Kovanda asked me to meet him at 10:00 am near "the horse" on Wenceslas Square. I knew from several publications and the interview

last week that this was where he had performed his first actions. I walk up the street, quickly get a cappuccino for the ridiculous price of 90 crowns, and approach the monument. As usual these days, lots of tourists – what a difference to when I came here as a child in the sixties and seventies. When I walk past the monument, I see the artist coming out of the metro. I wave, and we kiss each other, Dutch style.

[SVAŠEK turns around and kisses KOVANDA three times on his cheeks, starting on the left cheek. KOVANDA turns to the audience]

KOVANDA: I am not fully sure what she wants … When I ask, she laughs nervously and jokes that "this is a joint performance". I take her to the fence behind the monument … Here we go again, but why not? The sun is shining and she is genuinely interested. And of course I don't really mind being the centre of attention. Who would have known, 32 years ago, that I would return to this spot, reenacting myself? Now teaching at the Academy of Arts, no longer working in the dark depositary of the National Museum. It's still weird … Let's concentrate. She's turning on the recorder.

[Backdrop 4: projection of a photograph of Kovanda standing on the spot of his first action]

[KOVANDA takes on the pose of backdrop 4]

SVAŠEK: He smiles and says, "This is where I stood. I acted as if I was waiting for someone. I created a script beforehand that described the movements I was supposed to make, so what I did was in fact theatre. It was like … I behaved according to the script. But of course, it was not obvious because my movements were completely normal. I was the only one who knew, and my friend, of course, who took the pictures".

[Backdrop 5: projection of a photograph of Kovanda sitting at a table looking at the catalogue]

[KOVANDA and SVAŠEK sit down on the chairs and KOVANDA points at pages in the catalogue]

SVAŠEK: Later that day, when we sit in a café, we look at photographs of his performances, printed in his catalogue. There he stands in 1976, a younger version of himself. The accompanying text says …

[Backdrop 6: projection of the text "I follow a previously written script to the letter. Gestures and movements have been selected so that passers-by will not suspect that they are watching a 'performance'" (Kovanda quoted by Jeřábková 2010,7)]

KOVANDA: I follow a previously written script to the letter. Gestures and movements have been selected so that passers-by will not suspect that they are watching a "performance".

SVAŠEK: I wondered about his assertion, the other day, that his art is "not political". He stressed that several times. In fact, it reminded me of the numerous times artists complained to me in 1991 that they were getting fed up with Western journalists who were not really interested in their work but just wanted to hear an adventurous story of "political dissent" ... Yet I cannot help reading the political into his work. This has everything to do with my interest in the emergence of an official art world that was more or less controlled by the Party, a political regime that also controlled public space. As I see it, Kovanda appropriated public space to create art that disagreed with the official Party line. Does that not make it a gesture of resistance?

[SVAŠEK and KOVANDA stand up from their chairs and walk to the middle of the stage]

[Backdrop 7: projection of a photograph of Kovanda standing on the spot of his first action]

[SVAŠEK and KOVANDA walk until SVAŠEK says the words "we stop" and they stop]

SVAŠEK: Back to 2017, to the fence. After taking a few pictures, we cross the road, turn our backs to the museum and start walking down the street. After about 50 meters, we stop.

[KOVANDA looks around, frowning]

KOVANDA: I don't remember the *exact* spot ... I think it was a bit further down, where those people are standing.

SVAŠEK: I suggest he takes on *The Pose* ... It's the one that has been engraved in my mind since I first saw the photograph.

[Backdrop 8: projection of the photograph of Kovanda performing his action in 1976] (see Figure 5)

[SVAŠEK pauses to look at the image on the screen]

SVAŠEK: A crucified Jesus! In this case, my association with political dissent was even more immediate: surely this was a physical statement of suffering and defiance ... or do I misunderstand?

[KOVANDA spreads his arms, his face turned to the audience]

KOVANDA: *[in a serious, dramatic tone]* I stretch my arms out wide.
[KOVANDA stays in that pose, looking far into the distance; SVAŠEK looks at him intensely]
SVAŠEK: With anticipation and the photograph in my mind's eye, I see him spreading his arms wide. Here it comes, I somehow expect a magical moment, a crossover into the past.
[SVAŠEK freezes]

[Backdrop 9: projection of a photograph of Kovanda reenacting the pose] (Figure 4)
[KOVANDA paces]
KOVANDA: I am reminded of those days, when I deeply felt the urge for human contact, and when I designed actions to reflect on the ways in which people ... are ... always ... formed ... by ... society. I thought that by acting out an everyday situation in a scripted – and thus extraordinary – manner, I could pose universal questions about human nature. People keep misinterpreting my interventions as critical commentary on the oppressive workings of the Communist regime.
[KOVANDA pauses and looks at the audience]
KOVANDA: But it is more complicated than that! The art historian Georg Schöllhammer explained this very well in 2006, writing that:

[Backdrop 10: projection of text: "One of the biggest misunderstandings about conceptual work in socialist Eastern Europe is that it is immediately seen as anti-Communist, as a direct criticism of the regime" (Ševčík and Schöllhammer 2006, 110)].
[KOVANDA turns his face to the screen]
KOVANDA: One of the biggest misunderstandings about conceptual work in socialist Eastern Europe is that it is immediately seen as anti-Communist, as a direct criticism of the regime.
[KOVANDA turns to SVAŠEK, who unfreezes]
KOVANDA: He stressed that, if there is a political aim in my work, "the political" is not simply a direct reaction to the political system, but rather a reflection on the way in which the individual is always shaped by societal norms. He understood that well. It has never been my direct aim to take a political position through my work.
[KOVANDA stretches his arms again, looking once more into the distance; SVAŠEK takes a few pictures of KOVANDA then stops with an unsure expression in her eyes]

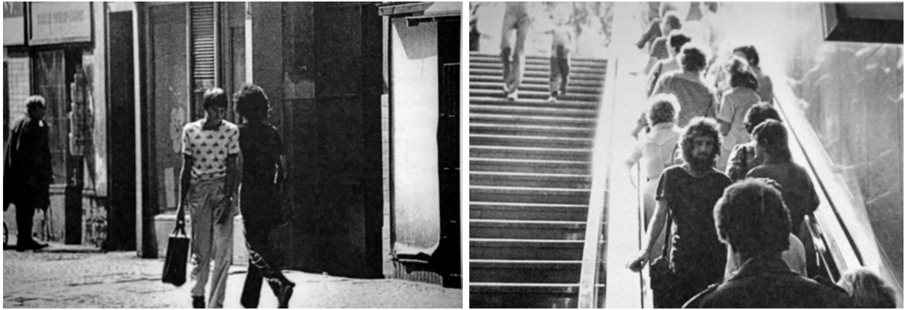

Figure 6. Two actions by Kovanda. On the left, *Contact*, September 3 1977. On the right, *Untitled*, September 3 1977. Copyright by Jiří Kovanda. Used by permission.

SVAŠEK: I look through the lens, take a few shots ... But then, the magical moment doesn't arrive. What is it? I'm not sure. Something is wrong ... In the original performance, was he not standing with his body turned in the other direction?

[KOVANDA puts his arms down and addresses the audience]

KOVANDA: I also performed everydayness in other performances, for example in the one where I softly bumped into passers-by, and the one where I turned around on an escalator and stared into people's eyes.

[Backdrop 11: projection of two photographs of Kovanda's actions] (Figure 6)

[KOVANDA turns around and looks at himself on the screen]

[KOVANDA turns again to the audience]

KOVANDA: I am quite a shy person, so that felt really awkward ... But that was intentional, putting myself in a awkward position ... Hang on, what is she saying now? Did I *not* face this way in 1976? ... But I *did!*

[KOVANDA spreads his arms again]

SVAŠEK: I saw the photograph in the catalogue a few days ago ...

KOVANDA: Might she be right? Wait a minute, I remember it now, she *is* right!

[KOVANDA turns around, his back to the audience]

[Backdrop 12: photograph of the action in 1976] (Figure 5)

SVAŠEK: He looks puzzled, then laughs and says: Yes, you *are* right, it *was* like that! You remember it even better than me!

Figure 7. Photograph of Kovanda, facing the right direction.
Photograph by Maruška Svašek, 2017.

Figure 8. Kovanda on and by the escalator in 1977 and 2017 respectively. Photograph on the left, 1977. Copyright Jiří Kovanda. Used by permission. Photograph on the right by Maruška Svašek, 2017.

[Backdrop 13: photograph of Kovanda who has turned around] (Figure 7)
[KOVANDA turns around; SVAŠEK takes a few more photographs of KOVANDA]
SVAŠEK: We cross the road and walk on, downhill, until we reach the escalator where he performed another scripted action.
[KOVANDA and SVAŠEK walk a few steps and stop]

[Backdrop 14: photographs of Kovanda standing on and by the escalator] (Figure 8)
SVAŠEK: He tells me that while going down, he turned around to stare into the eyes of people behind him. It was the exact same escalator, but in the 1970s, many more people used it because there was no crossing above ground. When I ask him whether people laughed at him when he turned around, he says:
(pause)
KOVANDA: No!
(pause)
SVAŠEK: And that –
(pause)
KOVANDA: It wasn't funny!
(pause)
SVAŠEK: I try to picture the action, back then, and remember how people used to be suspicious of unfamiliar others, careful because anybody could be an informer. During one of my visits in the mid-seventies, my relatives became very worried because one of them, who had had too much to drink during a dinner party, had sung an anti-Communist song when we returned home by tram. Their fear did not surprise but still shocked me as it made the everyday effect of repression so real. I was 14 years old, it was 1975 … But still … might the action on the escalator not have been perceived as a comic moment? "Why not funny?" I ask. He frowns.
KOVANDA: It created a terribly uncomfortable moment … It was as uncomfortable for me as for them.
SVAŠEK: So why put yourself in that position?
KOVANDA: Why did I …? It is hard to explain … "Well", I try, "I think it's good, sometimes, to put yourself in an *awkward* position, to overcome barriers, overcome shyness and embarrassment. It was *really* a bit embarrassing, but that was good".
SVAŠEK: So does that mean that it made you acutely aware of your physical presence? Like self-harmers … people who cut themselves?

[pause, Kovanda thinks]
KOVANDA: "You mean like Štembera?" I reply.

[Backdrop 15: photograph of Štembera's action Grafting]
[KOVANDA points at the artist in the slide]
KOVANDA: I refer to Petr, a Czech artist whose action art meant inflicting pain on his own body. He called one of his works "Grafting" – inserting a small branch into a cut in his arm. If I remember it correctly, he did that performance in 1975. I look at her. Would she find that horrifying?
[SVAŠEK talks to the audience]
SVAŠEK: Luckily, Jirka does not seem to be taken aback when I bring up the theme of self-harm. In the role of the anthropologist, you always have to walk a fine line, gauging what is an acceptable question and pulling back when you have crossed a line. But he is OK. He starts talking about the body artist Petr Štembera.
[SVAŠEK turning to KOVANDA]
SVAŠEK: I heard about his work.
[SVAŠEK looks at the photograph, then turns back facing the audience]
SVAŠEK: A black-and-white photograph comes to mind of Štembera with his left sleeve rolled up, holding a small branch against a cut in his skin while another person is about to tie the branch to the artist's arm. Didn't he strive for self-empowerment and self-experience through these kinds of actions?

[Backdrop 16: the text: "Based on post-war existentialist thought. In an uncertain world, man could only confirm his existence through acting in the here and now. Performance was a personal act demonstrating free will in an unfree world. It was a method of liberation as well as an expression of anxiety" (Morganová 2019)]
[KOVANDA reads from the slide]
KOVANDA: Štembera's events were, "based on post-war existentialist thought. In an uncertain world, man could only confirm his existence through acting in the here and now. Performance was a personal act demonstrating free will in an unfree world. It was a method of liberation as well as an expression of anxiety".
SVAŠEK: Existentialist thought was not specifically related to Communist oppression, but linked to a broader sense of uncertainty in Europe and the U.S. The question remains, however, whether Czech performances were not *also* shaped by the specific kind of non-freedom during Normalisation.

[Backdrop 17: the letters 'p' and 'P']

SVAŠEK: Not the more general politics of the human condition, but state repression: Politics with a capital P.

[SVAŠEK looks back at the audience]

SVAŠEK: To the wider theme of existentialism. If Štembera's action art enacted self-autonomy, how can I relate Jirka's actions to Štembera's approach? Jirka did not use physical pain to feed a sense of independent self, but instead produced a moment of self-inflicted awkwardness. Directing a staged activity, he *purposely* disturbed everyday routines. The key, it seemed to me, was taking control through self-scripted action. I think I have gained some insights.

[KOVANDA looks at the audience]

KOVANDA: As we move down the escalator, I explain that the experience of awkwardness made me realize how unspoken rules always regulate everyday behaviour.

[KOVANDA looks directly at SVAŠEK]

KOVANDA: Through that action, I became conscious of unconscious psychological barriers with regard to private space.

SVAŠEK: So you created the extraordinary to make the ordinary visible?

KOVANDA: This is turning out to be a pleasant walk. I think she gets me! *"Exactly!* I used the same principle in my installations, which, as I'll explain later, were rather minimal interventions. You don't need large, aggressive statements. A small change is enough to create awareness of the everyday".

SVAŠEK: As we walk in the direction of Old Town Square, we speak about his clandestine get-togethers in the 1970s with Petr Štembera, Karel Miler, and others in the Museum of Decorative Arts. Štembera worked as a night guard in that museum. Non-conformist artists and intellectuals who did not want to tow the Party line frequently worked as stokers and night guards, away from the public eye. Their spatial marginality created possibilities for involvement in alternative underground culture. Jirka says that they would invite a small group of trusted friends and perform action art, using the back entrance to get in.

[Backdrop 18: photograph of Kovanda pointing at the building projected as backdrop]

[SVAŠEK and KOVANDA turn to look at the slide, KOVANDA points at the building]

x X X

23. ledna 1978
Praha, Staroměstské náměstí

Dal jsem si sraz s několika přáteli... stáli jsme v hloučku na náměstí a hovořili... náhle jsem se rozběhl, utíkal jsem přes náměstí a zmizel v nejbližší ulici...

Figure 9. Action at Old Town Square, January 23 1978. The text says, "I had a meet-up with several of my friends … We were standing in the square talking … Suddenly, I started to run … I was running over the square and got lost in one of the streets …" Copyright by Jiří Kovanda. Used with permission.

[SVAŠEK and KOVANDA start walking]
[Backdrop 19: photograph of the action in 1978 on Old Town Square] (Figure 9)
KOVANDA: When we arrive at Old Town Square, I describe my last action to which I invited eight friends.
[KOVANDA points at the friends on the slide]
KOVANDA: I asked them to gather here, and as they stood around chatting, waiting for me to start, I suddenly ran away. When I did not return, they eventually understood that the disappearance was the actual performance.
[KOVANDA smiles a broad smile; SVAŠEK speaks to the audience]
SVAŠEK: So he purposely acted *against* the audience's expectations to witness an action. This would be in line with his earlier work, wanting to create an awareness of normality. While abnormal for most people, to the small circle of people around Jirka and other underground artists, the actions and performances were, if not normal, at least familiar. His vanishing act reminds me of a more recently staged absence, when he hid behind a pillar during the opening of one of his exhibitions in Berlin. He told me about it during our last interview.

[Backdrop 19: Photograph of the action Hiding in Berlin]
[SVAŠEK and KOVANDA walk to opposite sides of the stage, looking at each other]
SVAŠEK: As I see it, in both cases, there was a tension between presence and absence.
KOVANDA: Presence and absence ... You mean the idea that a person is physically there, but at the same time isn't? That seems an interesting way of framing it. I like that.
[SVAŠEK smiles and looks at the audience]
KOVANDA: I did not understand her earlier when, at the start of our walk, she already mentioned the idea of presence and absence, suggesting that this may be something I am working with. I thought she referred to presence as the opposite of an absent *past*, which is not my theme. But presence as *being-there* as opposed to absence as *not-being-in-the-same-space*, yes, that does resonate with my work.
SVAŠEK: He looks at me with a focused expression, and says that this certainly resonates with his fascination with hiding. I want to push him further.
[SVAŠEK looks at KOVANDA]
SVAŠEK: Why do you do that? Where does it come from? Do you simply not

want to be there? Or is it a game? Or an ironic statement? Is there a psychological reason for hiding? Or is it all these things at the same time?

KOVANDA: I'm not sure. Certainly during a recent exhibition opening in Berlin there was a clear expectation that I should be there. I told you before that I purposely hid behind a pillar. My absence signalled a deflection from the usual, the normal, the ingrained ... and then, I don't know ... if ...

[SVAŠEK looks at the audience]

SVAŠEK: He is searching for words. Perhaps another question helps.

[SVAŠEK looks at KOVANDA]

SVAŠEK: Or do you want to surprise people by doing something unexpected?

KOVANDA: Psychological reasons might be relevant because I use the idea of hiding quite often. When I think of my childhood, one of my most favourite games was hiding. Whenever I managed to hide myself so well that nobody could find me I would feel complete victory! And in the 1970s, I created a few actions where I hid in street corners. The act had no function outside the action ... Perhaps hiding was a game where I secretly observed or followed something. Like an animal photographer who wants to see without being seen. When I was very young I found that a romantic idea, to be a nature photographer who needs to hide ... Perhaps that is why hiding has appeared in my art.

[SVAŠEK walks around, deep in thought]

SVAŠEK: As he is speaking, I reflect on our unfolding dialogue. Ethnography is so often a mutual search for interpretation, a negotiation of perspectives. My questions have led him to speak about his childhood. It seems we are getting further away from the idea that his art had anything to do with politics – the political situation of the time ... I think about the difference between hiding *through* physical absence and hiding *despite* physical presence. He has done both in different actions. Standing behind a pillar is a clear example of staged physical absence. By contrast, the act of inconspicuous performance in public, hiding artistic and documentary aims, exemplifies the latter. In both cases, he used his body to reveal the workings of social "normality". Phrased like that, there is an obvious comparison to the work of the nature photographer. Is that the link to his childhood?

[SVAŠEK ends her walk next to KOVANDA and looks at him, puzzled. Then the pair walks together across the stage as Kovanda talks]

KOVANDA: We have almost reached the Municipal Library. I think more about the theme of hiding and tell her that an art critic once wrote that I often place

things in the corners of larger spaces in my installations. The works won't be completely hidden, but they won't be directly noticeable either. "Maybe this has indeed a psychological dimension", I say. "The wish to be present while not being noticed!" She is right. The theme appears in both actions and installations.

[KOVANDA smiles and looks at SVAŠEK. They stop walking]

KOVANDA: A psychoanalyst should analyse this!

[Backdrop 20: photograph of the Municipal library]

[SVAŠEK looks at the audience]

SVAŠEK: As we stop in front of the Municipal Library, he jokes about needing a psychoanalyst to analyse his fascination with inconspicuous presence. I make an instant association. Could I say it? Is it too risqué? I take the chance.

[SVAŠEK turns to KOVANDA]

SVAŠEK: So did you ever want to be a secret agent?

[SVAŠEK looks at the audience]

SVAŠEK: I use the word *estébák*, referring to the Communist secret police force in Czechoslovakia that served as repressive intelligence agency. With the help of a widespread network of informers, the organisation's aim was to suppress activities considered to be anti-Communist.

KOVANDA: No.

SVAŠEK: He says in a neutral voice.

KOVANDA: *[quiet voice]* I never wanted to be that.

SVAŠEK: Perhaps I have gone too far? I try to lighten the conversation, making a more obvious connection to his artistic approach. "It seems interesting, the idea of secret observation. You know, you are there, but nobody knows you are there, it resonates with your work". His face lights up.

KOVANDA: That is interesting. It never occurred to me. You mean a spy?

[KOVANDA looks at the audience and SVAŠEK laughs nervously]

KOVANDA: She surprised me there. She laughs, perhaps relieved?

SVAŠEK: Yes, a spy. It does sound more romantic, and less morally charged, than "estébák"!

KOVANDA: No, I did not want to be that. The idea of a spy is of course adventurous, full of drama ... But I don't like dramatic things ... Perhaps I am not so interested in following someone, but rather in being unseen!

[SVAŠEK and KOVANDA turn to the building behind them]

[Backdrop 21: photograph of a poster advertising the exhibition Free Assembly by Richard Deacon in the Municipal Library]

SVAŠEK: "So", he says, "this is the Municipal Library". There is obviously a gallery on the first floor, the Gallery of the Capital of Prague. There is an exhibition on of Richard Deacon's work. From a longer-term historical perspective, this has strong political significance. There is no way that his work would have been presented in an officially funded Czech gallery during the Normalisation period. Its presence indexes the transformation from state-socialism to democracy, from a politically censored art world to an art world that, while not completely unconnected to state politics, is rather shaped by trends in global Biennales and art markets. But why has Jirka taken me here?

KOVANDA: "Well", I say, "before 1990, the building housed the depository of the National Gallery, and I worked here for 17 year. Karel Miler, also an action artist, was my superior. He was the curator of the collection. The space still exists. Under Communism, the National Gallery organized exhibitions in the building, but they looked very different to today's displays". *[KOVANDA turns to the audience]*

KOVANDA: Of course she's done enough research to realize that these would have been displays of officially accepted art, vetted by the Communist Art Union. Behind the scene, however, a lot more went on! "Between the official exhibitions", I explain, "I used the space to take pictures of my own work, and we organized *illegal* exhibitions for small groups of invited friends".

[SVAŠEK and KOVANDA walk a few steps over the stage, then stop. KOVANDA freezes, his back to the audience. SVAŠEK turns to the audience]

[Backdrop 22: photograph of Kovanda's back as he is walking]

SVAŠEK: We walk further down the street. Illegality – surely that had all to do with oppression and resistance! When I ask if he was not afraid to be found out by the secret police, he says they were careful not to attract attention. Only small groups of up to ten people would gather to attend. And they did not turn on any visible lights… Is that not politics? Absence as hidden resistance? "So somehow we again touch upon the theme of presence and absence", I suggest. While I now understand that I should not limit his interest in presence and absence to questions about politics, it can of course not be denied that the need for non-conformist artists to be invisible was directly related to oppressive politics.

Figure 10. Kovanda points at a spot where the installation happened. Photograph by Maruška Svašek, 2017.

[SVAŠEK freezes, KOVANDA turns to the audience]
KOVANDA: So where should we go now? I know, I'll show her some of the locations of my temporary installations ... As we walk in the direction of the Museum of Decorative Arts, I tell her how hard it was to find books about art beyond the officially accepted genres, especially after the invasion by the Soviets in 1968. The invasion ended the more liberal 1960s. Up to about 1973, 1974, you could find books about abstraction and performance art, but only if you knew where to go to. But that ended in 1974. After that, there was nothing. Really, nothing at all! I was 21 at the time.
SVAŠEK: 1974, that's when I was 13 years old. By then, my father had been unable to visit his homeland for 26 years. I had visited my Czech grandmother about six times. It was exciting, but also sad, to cross the Iron Curtain, having to leave him behind.
[SVAŠEK and KOVANDA walk a few paces stage left]
KOVANDA: We arrive at the Museum of Decorative Arts, and I take her to a corner. Most of my installations at the time were made of sugar cubes and other impermanent materials.

[Backdrop 23: KOVANDA pointing] (Figure 10)
[KOVANDA bends down, pointing]
KOVANDA: Look, this is where I placed my first installation. Tucked away in a corner, but visible to those who really looked.

[KOVANDA and SVAŠEK walk a few more paces stage right]
KOVANDA: Let's cross Jan Palach Square.
[KOVANDA bends down, pointing]
KOVANDA: And in that corner, I pushed three wooden wedges in the gaps between the cobblestones. The wedges were almost invisible. If someone would see them, they would appear very strange.

[Backdrop 24: photograph of the installation]
SVAŠEK: We walk on and I ask him whether his parents knew what he was up to.
KOVANDA: I tell her that they knew a bit, at least my mum. My father didn't want to know. He was afraid that I would get into trouble.
SVAŠEK: Because of the political situation? Or was he scared that you were going insane?
KOVANDA: Because of the political situation ... He worked for the army and he might have *lost his job* if they had found out what I was doing. Personally, I wasn't in any danger. I didn't go to school and I had the lowest of the lowest job.
SVAŠEK: Neither Kovanda nor his family could of course live outside the political context ... I think he won't be offended if I ask another question:
[SVAŠEK turns to KOVANDA]
SVAŠEK: I suppose your dad, if he worked in the army, was a party member?
KOVANDA: *Of course*. He *had* to be!
SVAŠEK: I feel relieved that he doesn't mind talking about it. By now he knows, I think, that I understand the pressures of the time. "And your mum?"
KOVANDA: She was, but she returned her membership in 1968.
SVAŠEK: Out of protest, because of the invasion?
KOVANDA: That's right.
[KOVANDA turns to the audience]
KOVANDA: She tells me that some of her own family members also joined the party, mostly for pragmatic reasons. And other relatives strongly opposed the regime, refusing to comply ... That's the complexity of the time period.
SVAŠEK: It starts to rain, so we decide to cross the river and have a coffee on the other side. No need to see other locations. I think I have learned enough for today.

[Backdrop 25: photograph of Svašek and Kovanda sitting at the table]
[SVAŠEK and KOVANDA sit down at the table, and leaf again through the catalogue. After a while, they look at each other and smile]
SVAŠEK: So your art is …
KOVANDA: Not political!
SVAŠEK: A staged activity?
KOVANDA: Yes, a performance.
SVAŠEK: Taking control, disturbing and unmasking routines?
KOVANDA: That's right.
SVAŠEK: Before and after 1989?
KOVANDA: Exactly!
SVAŠEK: A politics of outer and inner reflection, *perhaps*? Observing and creating awareness of the everyday? So politics after all?
[KOVANDA looks at SVAŠEK for a while before speaking]
KOVANDA: Ok, but the keyword is *perhaps!*
[They freeze]

[END OF PLAY]

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HOW SPACE SHAPES THE EVERYDAY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS AT KRIŽANKE IN LJUBLJANA

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Abstract: *This article centres on place attachment and feelings of belonging of students and professors of the Secondary School for Design and Photography, Ljubljana (SŠOF). The school's educational practice is split between two locations: Križanke, a medieval complex in the city centre; and Roška, a renovated military barrack on Ljubljana downtown's periphery, which SŠOF shares with another school. Students and professors in my research described Križanke as a "creative", "free", and "democratic" space where they felt like they belong, especially in contrast to the second location. My objective here is to understand how much of a role the actual place has in shaping the relationships between school environments and their users (students, professors).*

In the article, I present the historical context of Križanke and SŠOF's current spatial crisis (threats of eviction from Križanke), followed by a "walk through Križanke" to examine students' sensory perceptions of the building. This text analyses spatial elements like unique classroom set-ups, narrow corridors, and the labyrinthine construction of Križanke. These elements produce more informal and dynamic interactions between students and professors at SŠOF, which consequently enhance the students' feelings of belonging, acceptance, and creativity. Finally, I conclude by examining how a complex interrelatedness between a sense of place, narration of place, and attachment to place in a school context impact the everyday learning experience at SŠOF and Križanke.

Keywords: *anthropology of place; place attachment; learning environment; Križanke; sensory ethnography*

Introduction

In January 2020, a crowd of 400 people gathered in front of the Slovenian parliament in Ljubljana. Students, professors, and alumni of the Secondary School for Design and Photography, Ljubljana (SŠOF – Srednja šola za oblikovanje in fotografijo) organized a protest against a "sale" of Križanke, the building that hosts their school. SŠOF is set in a 13th-century monastery building that Jože Plečnik, a Slovenian architect who significantly shaped Ljubljana's city centre, renovated into a space for a School of Crafts and cultural events in the 1950s (Malešič 2018). The anger and dissatisfaction of students and professors around the "sale" stemmed from the fact that the Municipality of Ljubljana was giving the school two years to move out of its headquarters without providing any suitable alternative premises (*RTV Slo* 2020). SŠOF suddenly faced the genuine possibility that it would simply stop existing due to a lack of space. This spatial institutional crisis was one of the key incentives for this research.

Many of the protestors in January 2020 were also at the parliament because they believed that SŠOF – one of the only Slovenian secondary schools combining art and design programmes – belongs to a place at Križanke, i.e., that there is a strong link between the school's identity and the space itself.

This article is based on ethnographic research I conducted for my Bachelor's thesis in 2021 (Babuder 2021). As a former student of SŠOF, I was aware of the significant feelings of place attachment among some students and professors at SŠOF (also because my school friends and I felt it, observed it, and talked about it during and after our school years in SŠOF), which is why auto-ethnographic observations also inform this work. My BA thesis thus focused on the place attachment and feelings of belonging of students and professors to their school environment, particularly to Križanke and comparatively to Roška, the second building where SŠOF carries out half of its curriculum. The objective was to understand how much of a role the actual space has in shaping the relationships between people and school environments. This article is embedded in an anthropology of space and place (Persson 2007; Lawrence-Zúñiga Low 2022), with some relevant conclusions also offered for pedagogy and anthropology of learning (Eisenhart 2015; Ingold 2018). So far, there have not been many significant anthropological studies of the sense of place and place attachment in school environments, although pedagogical and design theorists have started to cover some aspects of this topic (see Hertzberger 2008; Smith Taylor 2008; Byers and Imms 2014).

I first present the historical context of Križanke and SŠOF's current spatial dilemma in the following pages. Next, I offer a spatial description of the school grounds at Križanke and its geographic embeddedness in the Ljubljana city centre to provide a sense of the school's location. Next follows a section on methodology and theoretical foundation for this research and a discussion about sensory perceptions of Križanke, which are, according to my interlocutors, one of the crucial elements of the specific atmosphere at Križanke. I continue by comparing Križanke and Roška, showing how spatial elements like unique classroom set-ups, narrow corridors, and labyrinth construction of Križanke produce specific interactions between students and professors at SŠOF. I ask why exactly Križanke offers students a feeling of freedom and creativity, while Roška is associated with different spatial perceptions. At the end of the article, I bring together all the factors that create the sense of place and place attachment at SŠOF and offer some conclusions about how space impacts the learning experience.

Križanke through History, and SŠOF Today

Križanke is an old monastery building in the southwest corner of the Ljubljana city centre. From the 13th to the 20th century, it served as a monastery, hospital, and school for the Catholic Teutonic Order. The order first built their residence in the 13th century, with the addition of the Knight's Hall and the Church of the Virgin Mary during the Gothic period. The latter was rebuilt in the 18th century and is today considered one of the most important Baroque monuments in Ljubljana (Šašel Kos 2018, 15; Klemenčič 2021). After World War II, Križanke and the church were nationalized, and the complex was left in a terrible and vacant condition (Šašel Kos 2018). In 1949, the Ljubljana municipality approved and started the construction of the extension of Križanke (Malešič 2018, 292) for the School of Craft, later renamed the Secondary School for Design and Photography, Ljubljana (SŠOF), which took up these spaces. In the following year, the municipality invited architect Jože Plečnik to lead the renovation of Križanke and transform the functionality of the whole complex. His plans led to the renovation of the complex and the creation of an outdoor amphitheatre space next to the school (see number 9 in Figure 2), which still represents a relevant music venue and event space in Ljubljana. This was Plečnik's last significant project, and his renovation placed Križanke on the map of "historical and architectural accomplishments" of Ljubljana (Malešič 2018). His renovation

of Križanke also presents a common argument today why the SŠOF school "deserves" to stay in its original location, with the implication that the art focus of the school should remain in direct contact with history (its own, and the city's art history). After the renovation, in 1952, the newly established Festival Ljubljana event organization (Festival Ljubljana 2021) and the guesthouse Plečnikov hram joined the Križanke complex as well.

The municipality initiated the renovation of the monastery with the School of Crafts in mind. Still, the school administration did not consider the building a crucial part of the school's identity until recent history and the threat of eviction (interview with prof. GM, 4 March 2020). They were aware that Križanke would soon become too small for the school's capacities, which actually happened in the 1980s with the expansion of the school's program. Part of the classes was then moved to the Secondary Economic School on Roška Street – in this text referred to as Roška (Kurtovič 2010).

Today, Križanke is partly owned by the Municipality of Ljubljana and partly by the Republic of Slovenia, while the space is managed by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport (Spatial Portal RS 2020). A professor of art history at the Faculty of Arts Ljubljana explained that in 2016, a group of art historians started advocating for the declaration of the Križanke Church as a monument of national importance (interview with prof. GC, 22 April 2020).

In 2016, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia also declared the whole of Križanke as a monument of national importance (Act on the Protection of Cultural Heritage 2016). However, SŠOF was not included in the Act on the Protection of Cultural Heritage and is barely mentioned in this document (ibid.). Therefore, the declaration of Križanke as a monument does not consider the school as a key part of Križanke's identity or Plečnik's legacy.

The announcement of the declaration itself did not have a significant impact on SŠOF. The problem, however, arose when the Municipality of Ljubljana and Festival Ljubljana began to use this announcement as an argument for the complete eviction of the SŠOF school from Križanke without providing suitable replacement premises (*RTV Slo* 2020). The school spaces at Križanke were to be taken over by the Festival Ljubljana, which, under the municipality's funding, deals exclusively with cultural events such as concerts, shows, and events that attract tourists from Slovenia and abroad (*Mladina* 2021). The eventization of "high culture" by Festival Ljubljana and the prioritization of heritage as a marketable commodity over public education reflects the process of touristification of Ljubljana and the reorganization of its public life (see Bibič 2003).

Figure 1. The Križanke courtyard and the front of SŠOF school from the main entrance. The sign "NOT FOR SALE!" had been hung up as the form of protest against the move of the school out of Križanke. Photo by Ana Kovač 2019 (Libnik 2019). Used with permission.

This brings us to the turning point in the school's history, when 400 pupils, students, and professors went to voice their disapproval at the Slovenian Parliament in January 2020 (*RTV Slo* 2020). In this public act of protest against the threat of eviction, SŠOF proclaimed Križanke as a critical element of its identity. According to the professors I spoke with, SŠOF also faced an eviction threat from Roška in spring 2021 (due to cracks in the building, which supposedly posed a danger that required the closure of half of the school premises). The school was therefore facing a considerable spatial crisis. Yet Križanke, with its central position in the city and due to its particular architecture, held a more symbolically significant value in this moment of crisis, which will be further explored below.

In summary, due to limited space at Križanke, SŠOF has been considering a relocation since its beginning. However, the government has never managed to provide new premises, so SŠOF gradually adapted Križanke for the needs of its curriculum (and later divided classes between Križanke and Roška). The school began to actively and publicly promote itself as a significant part of

Križanke's identity (as well as Križanke as part of SŠOF identity) since the threat of eviction, which can be understood as a strategy at the time of crisis. But there was more than a mere strategy in the school's public protest. As a former student of SŠOF, I understand what students and professors talked about, even before the crisis of eviction, when they described the "creative" atmosphere at Križanke and the strong connection between people and place there. As I determine through analysing my conversations with students and professors, my participant observation at Križanke, and retrograde autoethnography, standing up and protesting for Križanke was not only a protest against eviction, but also an expression of space attachment.

A Walk Through Križanke

Križanke is a cold and stony complex building. It consists of a small church (Križanke Church), a restaurant, an outdoor music venue, and a branched building with classrooms and offices surrounding a large square courtyard. The latter serves for school outdoor events and presents a hang-out space for students during breaks (see space 4 in Figure 2). This courtyard also serves as the entry point into the Križanke complex. As my interlocutors maintained, it creates a great first impression of the place, and it often gets stuck in the memory: "Križanke is different, with this wonderful court and all these hidden classrooms, you know, all these hidden possibilities… [The students] feel different from other schools" (interview with prof. MR, 21 April, 2020).

Entering the courtyard from the street, we encounter a restaurant on our left and the offices of Festival Ljubljana (the Municipality's event organizer) on the right (see number 2 in Figure 2). Further into the courtyard, on the right, is a low wall and steps where students hang out during breaks (see number 3 in Figure 2). Across from the entrance into the courtyard, we see the school's front (see Figure 1 and 5). Its large windows offer a view directly into one of the school's hallways, where SŠOF usually exhibits large prints of students' artworks. The school's presence in the complex is therefore especially visible because of students' frequenting the courtyard and the public exhibitions of students' artworks visible there. As a former graphic design student remembered: "You were always in touch with art [in Križanke], and there were always events happening around us" (interview with student, 17 April 2020).

Below the large windows at the front of the complex (see Figure 5) is a small school cafeteria, and on the lower left corner of the courtyard is the

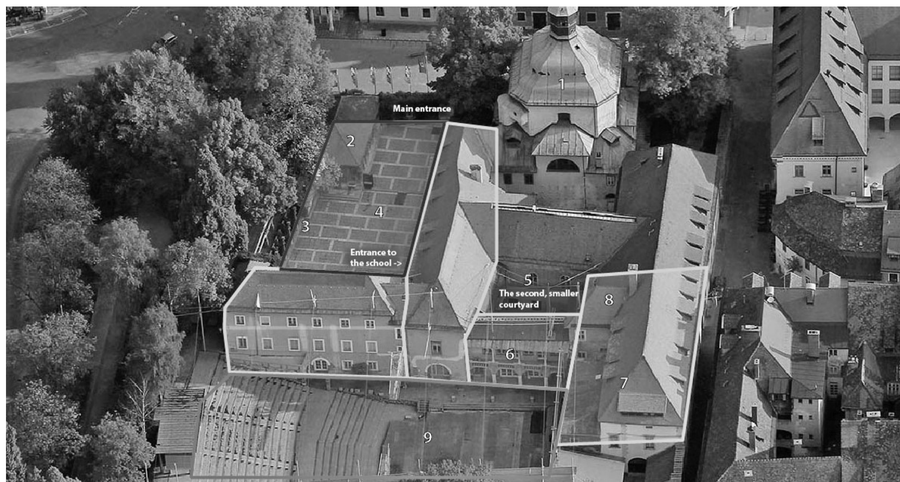

Figure 2. Križanke church (top, number 1), the central courtyard (top-left, number 4), and the outdoor music venue (bottom-left space with steps, number 9). The white line marks the parts of the building used by SŠOF. The entrance to the school's buildings is from the central courtyard. Author of mapping: Anuša Babuder, 2022. Source: Personal collection of Marko Gorenc, 2017. Used with permission.

main entrance to the school (one the right side of Figure 4). The door opens on into another small courtyard (see number 5 in Figure 2) with three entrances from there leading to different parts of the school. Another (fourth) door there functions as a special entrance reserved for professors. From this smaller courtyard, we can reach the school offices, the computer rooms for graphic and industrial design on the first floor, and fashion classrooms and studios on the second floor and in the attic (number 6 in Figure 2). Another door there takes you to an industrial workroom (number 8 in Figure 2 above), general classrooms (number 7 in Figure 2), a teachers' lounge in between (number 6 in Figure 2), and drawing ateliers and photography darkrooms on the second floor.

The most common word among interlocutors for describing the building was as a "labyrinth". There are barely any straightforward routes to any room, and the hallways are very narrow. A feeling of losing oneself in the school's passages and needing to search for directions can be present throughout all four years of study at SŠOF: "It felt like we discovered a new part of Križanke every year" (interview with former graphic design student, 26 March 2020). That is

Figure 3. Wall in the courtyard, where students spend time during school breaks. Source: Personal collection of Marko Gorenc, 2017. Used with permission.

Figure 4. Restaurant and the main entrance into the school in the courtyard (opposite to the wall on Figure 3). Source: Personal collection of Marko Gorenc, 2017. Used with permission.

due to the narrow corridors, (four) different entrances to the school premises, poor signage, and complicated classroom navigation (the school cannot afford much freedom to redecorate its interior due to a conservation protection of the Križanke complex). Thus, the Križanke/SŠOF building complex stimulated very different impressions of the place among participants, depending on which areas of the building they were moving through: "It was a completely different feeling if you entered Križanke from the courtyard or the professors' entrance [from Križevniška street]. Like it was a completely different institution" (interview with former graphic design student, 23 May 2020). Students' art works also hang on almost every wall around the school. On the ground floors, the sounds from the industrial workroom are always present, and in the summer months, it is also possible to hear the sounds of the lively city centre. As will be seen below, the building at Roška, which can be described as a model school building, is designed and decorated very differently.

Main Concepts and Methodology

This research is ethnographic, with the main approach being participant observation at Križanke and Roška, along with open-ended and narrative interviews with students and professors. Part of the research consists of retrograde autoethnography, since I have graduated from SŠOF myself, and thus I explore my memories of personal feelings of attachment to Križanke and Roška. To surpass personal observations and gain proper ethnographic insight, I interviewed eight current and former students from SŠOF, mainly women (four from the graphic design program, two from the fashion design program, and two from the art gymnasium program), as well as six teaching professors. I gathered research participants with the help of my former professors at SŠOF and through the snowball method. With research participants (both students and professors), I talked and spent time at both school locations – Križanke and Roška – and covered topics like their memories of social situations and experiences at both locations, their impressions of these locations, and their feelings of belonging and non-belonging to SŠOF and Roška. I conducted participant observation by observing and walking along the two sites during school hours, alone or with professors, in the spring of 2021. The school was operating in both locations at this time (and still does, as I am writing this article).

Before I present Križanke (and then Roška) from my interlocutors' point of view, I have to define a few concepts, such as the concept of "place" and

"sense of place". According to a definition by Miriam Kahn, which I find adequate for my study, places are "complex constructions of social histories, personal and interpersonal experiences, and selective memory" (1996, 167) that are "continually created whenever meaningful social interactions take place" (1996, 194). "Sense of place", moreover, as Matej Vranješ argues, emphasizes phenomenological, experiential, and often individual "construction" of a place (2002). What does a person feel when they come into direct or indirect contact with, for example, a building? This feeling is – at least to some degree – shaped by personal and social biography (Bergson after Feld 1996, 93), as there is no perception of the environment that is not loaded with memories, associations, and emotions (Casey 1996, 17). Both Edward S. Casey (1996) and Steven Feld (1996) argue that when we move through or live in a particular place, we constantly mark our present encounter of a place with our past and pre-established perception of it. For example, some professors and students I talked to knew Križanke before they started to study or teach there, which was enough for them to create an expectation, and in some cases, excitement and curiosity about the place:

> I've taught at many schools already […] and always, when walking past Križanke, I thought: "Wow, this is cool". Students looked different than at other schools. I always felt jealous of my colleagues working at this school, and I really thought it was something special. […] When I first arrived here [Križanke] my impression was only confirmed. […] I really feel good here because this way of [creative] work and thinking is close to me (interview with prof. IP, 14 April 2020).

However, besides personal experiences that shape a sense of place, a place (a building) itself may embody something (e.g., in its architecture) that stirs specific feelings and affects. As I show below, my interlocutors themselves have pointed at this factor.

The second central concept of my research is "place attachment", a process of affiliating to a place, which Setha M. Low defines as "the symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space" (Low 1992, 165). However, in my view, the symbolic relationship does not cover all aspects of place attachment. Jennifer Eileen Cross (2015) provides a more nuanced version of the concept. As she argues, the relationship with a place changes through time and distance. Thus, considering how these affect different modalities of place attachment,

Cross defines seven "processes" (2015, 502) of place attachment, out of which the ideological, sensory, and spiritual processes are most relevant to this research.

The ideological process dictates the comprehension of the difference between "good and bad relationships between people and places" (Cross 2015, 510). In this modality, place attachment is shaped by morally charged messages about how to live, behave or be in a particular place. The place is associated with like-minded people, a social group or a community sharing specific values. In a way, this kind of attachment is somewhat similar to Low's "symbolic relationship". My interlocutors shared strong bonds ("good" and "bad") with both SŠOF and Križanke.

The second relevant modality, the sensory process, complements Sarah Pink's (2009) sensory ethnography. As Cross emphasizes: "One of the first ways that humans relate to place is through their senses" (2015, 501). As my interlocutors speak about below, they were strongly impressed by Križanke's auditory, visual, and temperature qualities.

The third is spiritual attachment, which denotes an "ongoing feeling of deep 'oneness' with a place" (Cross 2015, 502). This strong sense of attachment does not fade with time. This relationship with Križanke was evident with many of the former students and professors I talked to, especially when we compared their first impressions of Križanke with their present feelings. A professor who has been teaching at SŠOF for almost 30 years said:

> I have always felt that I need to come here [Križanke]. I knew that I had to go to SŠOF. I remember my first impression of these labyrinths. I said to myself: "I want to be at Križanke". I have been here for almost 30 years, and I really feel that this is my place. [...] I knew this would be it (interview with prof. MR, 21 April 2020).

There is "a certain type of charm, which starts to show through time", as one of the students said. In the cases I categorize as a spiritual attachment, my interlocutors did not point at something particular about Križanke, but rather to their feelings that this building is somehow unique. For example, acknowledging the historical and cultural significance of Križanke (more on this later) was significant in their articulations of attachment to this building.

Another concept that grounds my study is that of the "built environment". I lean on Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga's and Setha M. Low's definition of "any physical alteration of the natural environment, from hearths to cities, through

construction by humans" (Lawrence-Zúñiga and Low 1990, 454). Križanke and Roška, as well as their material and architectural surroundings in the city of Ljubljana, are built environments. However, I did not pay equal attention to every part of these environments. Instead, I followed Amos Rapoport (1982) in selectively tracing meanings of the built environment and my interlocutors' bodily and practical interactions with it. In the following chapters, I present Križanke from the point of my interlocutors' bodies (see Sensory Imprints of Križanke), sociality (see Making Bonds with Križanke), and memories (see The Impact of Stories about Place).

Sensory Imprints of Križanke

The sensory experience of the old monastery building was essential in my interviews, so I first examine this modality of place attachment at SŠOF. Thus, I also present the atmosphere of the place through the impressions of students and professors (cf. Stewart 2008; Abram and Bajič 2020). Based on the interviews and fieldwork, I divide the sensory imprints into first impressions, and into visual, auditory, and temperature senses (cf. Pink 2009).

The first time most students saw the interior of Križanke was on the school's open house days (an event where high schools across Slovenia invite secondary school pupils to see and get to know their curricula). When I asked my interlocutors about their first impressions of Križanke, students and former students often described the large courtyard's impact as the first thing they noticed when they entered through the main entrance.

Another impression that persisted through each conversation was an association of Križanke with a maze or a labyrinth. As mentioned, this is due to narrow old corridors, a plethora of different entrances to the school premises, and the complicated navigation system between classrooms. This connects to the feeling that you never really know the entire building. Due to technical equipment and spatial arrangements that different classes require, many classrooms at Križanke are only used for specific classes, which students attend within a particular year of study. Consequently, a student might not know that a specific classroom exists because it is hidden in one of the attics or has a separate entrance. In the words of a former graphic design student, "every year, we discovered a new part of Križanke" (interview, 27 May 2020). Another interlocutor, also a former student, mentioned that she felt like she had never actually seen the whole school.

Figure 5. Entrance to the courtyard and the view at school windows in front.
Source: personal collection of Marko Gorenc, 2017. Used with permission.

Another former graphic design student pointed out that for her, each part of Križanke felt like it belonged to one of five curriculum modules.[1] This division influenced where each group of students spent most of the time during classes or breaks. She remembers how she visited the industrial design students during breaks at "their part" of Križanke. She also spent other breaks with her classmates on "their floor", where she had drawing lessons at the ateliers. Hence, due to different programmes, not all students were navigating this built environment the same way, leading to unequal experiential and sensory imprints.

Another matter relevant for this study is auditory perceptions. As there is an outdoor music venue at Križanke, positioned behind the school, the sounds of preparation for events are well known to students and professors. A former graphics student described this spatial-auditory phenomenon as "backstage in the classroom". My personal memories are similar. I still remember the rumble

1 These are Graphic design, Industrial design, Fashion design, Photography, and The Art Gymnasium modules (Oblikovna 2019).

during classes that the workers caused by setting up the stages for concerts. I always felt that these sounds meant that we were at the centre of social and cultural life. To attend a class in this atmosphere always seemed more relaxed as this backstage atmosphere prevailed over the occasional monotony of the school lectures we listened to in classes. While my colleagues felt similarly, I doubt the professors would agree with my interpretation of the auditory disturbance perceived as relaxing background atmosphere.

The first impressions of teaching also illustrate the sound image at Križanke by prof. IK, who recalls that "the work was not easy due to such close contact with people [due to narrow corridors and classrooms] and the distractions I was not used to, from church bells to [the] many voices" of teachers and students from hallways and other classrooms (interview, 27 May 2020). In addition, in summertime, the windows at SŠOF are open everywhere, which means that in specific classrooms, you hear women walking in high heels on the cobblestones on the street outside the complex. In some classrooms, it is possible to hear the sounds of the restaurant below and the students hanging out in the courtyard. A graphic design student further highlighted the sounds of machines coming from the industrial design workshop in the building. Some also pointed out the everyday presence of the voice of school security guard Sonja, whom all students knew.

Another prominent sensory impression is the temperature in the classrooms throughout the year. Križanke is a medieval complex that has retained most of its built structure and insulation (Malešič 2018). In the winter, thus, the hallways and classrooms are cold. In the summer, they are hot, and in the attic, where the sewing ateliers are emplaced, it can be incredibly suffocating. A first-year student of fashion design commented: "The attic [where fashion students had their workshops] felt hellishly hot in summer, that's why I don't like it [the fashion classroom] too much" (20 March 2020). Besides, navigating between classrooms through various indoor and outdoor corridors and courtyards meant exposing oneself to outside weather conditions. Diverse temperatures stayed in students' memories and marked their experiences of certain parts of the school. Therefore, not only visual and auditory perceptions play a role in shaping a sense of place, but also the temperature. Depending on the interlocutor's perspective, and the position of the room, this can either be part of the school's charm or a disadvantage.

To summarize, the presented visual, auditory, and bodily (heat vs. cold temperature) impressions of Križanke are an effect of its "dynamic" built environment: diverse areas and functions of the complex, multiple entrances

into buildings, labyrinthine connections and “hidden” areas. If we consider its embeddedness in the vibrant city centre, we can understand why all my interlocutors perceived Križanke as a dynamic, lively, and sensory-rich place (mainly in “good”, but sometimes also in “bad” ways).

Making Bonds with Križanke

Elements of sensing Križanke described above significantly shaped my interlocutors’ feelings of attachment to it. Jennifer Eileen Cross argues that sometimes people instantly develop a “deep sense of belonging” to a place (Cross 2015, 508), with spiritual characteristics of the attachment that are hard to describe and articulate. Students and professors, who I talked to, had some trouble pinpointing what specifically were the elements that produced their strong feelings of belonging to Križanke. One of the interlocutors constantly asked herself during the interview: “Where is this infatuation with Križanke coming from?” (interview, 25 May 2020). In a similar state of uncertainty, one professor speculated about the nostalgia of former SŠOF students as the “first love” and “blind infatuation” with the place (interview, 24 May 2020). I felt all of these feelings during my time at the school and after graduation. People who felt this kind of belonging to Križanke described it as an “attraction” or a “pull”, mentioning that the place “drew them in” or “called them”.

Some former students described a feeling of immediate attraction to Križanke when visiting the location for the first time on the school’s open days (see above). One student mentioned that Križanke pulled her in instantly, and another gave this vivid first impression: “My first impression was, this is a most beautiful building, with an old door, which was falling apart a little, but right after that: ‘This will be my second home!’” (interview with former graphic design student, 26 March 2020).

As Keith H. Basso argues, sense of place possesses a “marked capacity for triggering self-reflection” (Basso 1996, 55), especially when we are in the company of other people and sense the place *together* (Basso 1996, 57). School as a particular social environment is one of the most crucial places for teenagers to engage with each other and where they can express feelings about various issues, including perceptions of space. Thus, Basso’s conclusions apply to the students’ self-reflection on their “dwelling” (Ingold 2000) at Križanke.

Making a community of students and professors was crucial for students’ place attachment. Long-term presence in a place certainly plays a significant

role in developing place attachment and community affiliation. Still crucial are the pivotal life events we experience in a specific place and the relationships we form with the people around us during and after these events (Humman 1992). Making a community of students and professors was stimulated at various SŠOF's events, such as the Light Guerrilla project (see below), freshman initiation graduation ceremonies, and informal social events (like Halloween or Pust [Slovenian Carnival]), which all took place at Križanke. However, bonds between students and professors and the environment of Križanke were also constantly shaped by daily encounters and socialization between classmates and professors during classes and breaks.

Another critical factor in making strong bonds with Križanke is its location in the city centre. Government and city planners have been criticized for making urban public spaces unwelcoming and inaccessible to young people (Loebach et al. 2020, 2). Similarly, schools often separate school grounds from outside spaces, using fences and walls, and prohibit students from leaving the school premises during breaks (most often the reason is a school's legal responsibility for students' "safety"). At SŠOF, this was not the case: the Križanke complex is a public space with a courtyard open to everyone, whereas during school time SŠOF students were allowed to go out of the Križanke space to observe and engage with the city centre (see Figure 6). Two of the professors I interviewed highlighted this proximity and interaction with historical elements of Ljubljana's city centre as the key to students' education in art history, which is an excellent example of the ideological process of place attachment – being included in the wider art community sharing specific space-related values (Cross 2015; see above and below). Professors also took advantage of this proximity for frequent museum and gallery visits with their students.

The boundary between Ljubljana's (public) urban space and SŠOF's (private) premises is relative and dependent on the context (Gal 2002, 80). At Križanke, the main courtyard is where the public "spills" into the school grounds, with workers and tourists coming in and out of this area. Still, students managed to create "their own" semi-private space (cf. Kozorog 2011) at the low wall on the side of the courtyard, used as a sitting area and a meeting point before or during class (see Figure 3). At the same time, they did not feel they owned it, but rather that it had to be open to the public, to other people who enter the yard and spend their time there next to them.

Parallel to the spilling of Ljubljana's urban public space into the SŠOF's grounds, it is also important to consider the inscription of the school's presence

Figure 6. Students drawing outside of Križanke. Author: Peunik 2016. Used by permission.

in a broader urban public space (Lawrence-Zúñiga and Low 2002, 185). On sunny days, SŠOF's drawing classes are in motion in various spots in and around Križanke (see Figure 6). The Light Guerrilla project, for which students design large light installations at Križanke and across Ljubljana, is one of the better-known projects on which SŠOF and Križanke have collaborated (Svetlobna gverila 2022). Upon entering the public space of Križanke's courtyard, a visitor encounters SŠOF students' hanging installations and drawings through the large windows on the first floor of the building: "Wherever you turn, there is some artwork" (interview with former graphic design student, 23 May 2020). Some students I interviewed felt that people on the street could also notice SŠOF students' presence at Križanke:

> Anyone walking by can hear [students'] voices and chatter and know that there is something here [...] There are cigarettes on the floor, flyers and posters everywhere. You can always hear the machinery from the industrial workshop (interview with former graphic design student, 26 March 2020).

Moreover, students and professors often occupied cafes, streets, and squares around Križanke. With all this, the school left a particular mark in the public space of Ljubljana's downtown. Feeling an attachment to a place is sometimes hard to articulate for all of those involved, but it is clear that the bonds between Križanke and SŠOF students and professors are strong, with a deep sense of belonging, connectedness to the city centre and a sense of freedom and creativity being two of the main aspects of their attachment to place.

The Impact of Stories about Place

Sense of place and feelings of attachment can also emerge through or with the help of stories. "The stories we tell ourselves and others are the basis of a meaningful world of life" (Fisher in Cross 2015, 504; see also Jackson 2013), and the process of telling and listening to stories about a place is integral to creating a connection to it. Storytelling can affect sensory perception and significantly enhances the experience and sense of belonging (ibid.).

Here I would like to highlight two storytelling directions, evident in my conversations with students and professors about Križanke: the transfer of knowledge through stories about cultural heritage and art history from professors to students and the stories about Križanke told by older students to the younger ones.

One of the professors I interviewed noticed that students' attachment to Križanke is passed along through students' storytelling and professors' teaching. The latter often emphasized Plečnik's legacy and highlighted the school's location in the building, considered an essential part of Slovenian art history. I remember a school tour from my first year at SŠOF. A professor took us on a walk around Križanke, where we listened about Plečnik's work and the importance of cultural heritage surrounding the complex. Professors accompanied this with a warning that went along the lines of: "You are now students and representatives of art and design, and you need to know who Plečnik is and what Križanke represents". I also remember the professor of art history, who delicately described Križanke as "our home" in a lecture. The school emphasises its long historical continuity at Križanke, he claimed, lasting almost 70 years. Professor MR explained:

> We are influenced by the place where we feel free. But I am also convinced that this is a cultural monument, and we need to be aware of the monastery that was here

> in the Middle Ages, a baroque monastery and then Plečnik's restoration. I think we feel the past, and it affects us. Every time I come here, I remember Plečnik's wonderful idea because he always said that we should have freedom [to create], but we are also the creation of the whole past. [...] Be modern, but you can't ignore the history. [...] History gives us a soul. Today, art is also a product of this development (interview, 21 April 2020).

The history of SŠOF at the location with a considerable "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1984) is via such narratives translated into personal biographies of students, who show pride that they were part of this environment. A former graphic design student mentioned:

> I think you find it [Križanke] even more fascinating through the years since you grow up and learn more about its history. During the first year, I was amazed by these old thick walls and [modern] chairs that just didn't fit [stylistically, with the old building]. [...] I think the charm [of Križanke] comes with time (20 March 2020).

At the same time, students share stories about themselves as students of a particular school. One of the student interlocutors described that for her, the courtyard and the industrial workshop at Križanke were spaces for socializing between students of different departments and ages, which stimulated a feeling of community. In these locations, they exchanged experiences about various classes, professors, and life outside the school. While stories cannot completely alter the sensory experience of space, they can significantly impact it. Moreover, they also influence how one is supposed to act in a particular place as a student of a specific school; hence they stimulate an ideological process of place attachment (Cross 2015).

Comparing Križanke with the Second School Location – Roška

As mentioned in the introduction, SŠOF holds part of its classes at another location, at a Secondary School of Economics Ljubljana, at Roška street, which by students is colloquially called "Roška". In my conversations with students and professors, Roška turned out to be a very differently perceived built environment from Križanke, a topic which I examine in this article. Besides, Roška served my interlocutors as a comparison, or the Other (cf. Barth 1969), that helped articulate their feelings towards Križanke, mainly because the students move

Figure 7. Map of Ljubljana with Križanke (number 1), Roška (number 2), and Plečnik's floodgates (number 3). Author of labels on the map: Anuša Babuder, 2022. Source: Google Maps 2022.

from one location to the other on a weekly, sometimes daily basis. In other words, since feelings of place attachment are sometimes hard to articulate (Cross 2015), Roška significantly helped with their observations because it provided a contrast.

Significant architectural differences exist between the two schools, and what students encounter at both locations has an essential role in their formation of place attachment. Križanke is a historical landmark of Ljubljana's city centre, a cultural event venue and a unique architectural complex, which gives it the above-examined vibrancy. Roška, on the other hand, is positioned on the other side of the city, outside the city centre (see space number 2 in Figure 7). In its vicinity are a high school dorm (Dijaški dom Ivana Cankarja), a few natural science schools, and Ljubljana's main medical centre and apartment buildings. The art restoration centre of the Public Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for the Protection of Cultural Heritage is 200 meters away, yet it does not contribute much in itself to the overall atmosphere of the location, although a few SŠOF students occasionally visit it as part of their classes. A former student of art studies described her contrasting feelings between the two locations in the following way:

Figure 8. One of the computer rooms at Križanke, with tables set in groups of four. Caption from a YouTube video ("Grafično oblikovanje na SŠOF" 2018).

> This probably goes for everyone who went to this school [ŠSOF], that Križanke feels incomparable [to Roška]. You just feel better when you have class there. It's completely different to go to school when you know you're going to Križanke, than when you have to go to Roška. Even the architecture at Roška ... it's rectangular, completely ordinary. Križanke is a labyrinth. Completely different in every way. The classrooms are more spacious at Roška, but you cannot beat Križanke (interview, 20 March 2020).

Roška is a renovated military building from the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (late 19th century). It is a long rectangular building with identically shaped floors. Each floor has a long, spacious hallway running through it, with around 15 classrooms on one side and five classrooms on the other. These have high ceilings, are spacious, and nearly identical, with a typical setup of a blackboard, chairs, and tables for 30–35 students. Nevertheless, students' artworks, either hung or painted on the walls, bring some colour to these classrooms. Only two drawing ateliers stand out from the overall monotony of the school. For comparison, classrooms at Križanke are generally smaller than those at Roška. There are only three or four identical classrooms with approximately the same dimension, and similar layout of the desks and chairs. Although small, classrooms at Križanke usually hosted a minimum of 30 students, which generated a crowded space, while Roška felt "spacious" to students. Classrooms at Križanke also differ in how they are used and equipped. A former graphic design student recalled that in a computer room (see Figure 8), desks were arranged so

that students could communicate: "I liked that we could face each other there, which means we could talk a lot and be more relaxed" (interview, 26 March 2020). At Roška, which in the students' opinion is a more "typical" school environment, students found comparatively less flexibility with classrooms and layouts.

SŠOF was not the only school using the building at Roška: the Secondary School for Economics occupied the ground and the first floor, while SŠOF used the second floor. The presence of another school was a key factor in SŠOF students' experience of Roška. As far as stereotypes go, the students of these two schools could not be more opposite: art and economics. Since my task is not to deconstruct this stereotype, I rather observed it in action during my fieldwork at Roška. For example, the class breaks were scheduled differently for the two schools, and it was hinted that this was partly due to the school's efforts to avoid too much contact between the two groups of students. When the breaks did overlap, I observed that students of these schools occupied the space in front of the school differently and did not interact. Ljubljana can have pleasant weather in spring and autumn, so students at Roška often spent their lunch breaks outdoors. The area in front of the building included green surfaces with a basketball court, a few benches below trees, and a smoking area. The observations showed that the economics students mostly dwelled next to the school's entrance, whereas SŠOF students sat around the basketball court. They sometimes mixed on the benches under the trees but avoided interacting.

How to explain this relationship of avoidance? The fact that SŠOF was a "guest" at Roška, while the Secondary School for Economics had "its location" there, certainly contributed to the feeling of SŠOF students that they did not belong there: "Because we shared it [Roška] with the economics students, it felt like: 'Okay, we definitely do not belong here!'" (interview with a former graphic design student, 23 May 2022). However, this feeling of not belonging was also related to the space itself, whose stern military architecture was perceived by SŠOF students as strict and odd compared Križanke:

> At Roška, I really felt like I enrolled in a standard high school, and I had to study, a very military feel, like an institution. [...] At Križanke it was, of course, completely different. Even when you first stepped in, it was like: "wow, art, inspiration..." It was just so much better. It felt more easy-going. You didn't feel the pressure, you just enjoyed the school, as it should be (interview with a former graphic design student, 23 May 2022).

Roška sharply contrasted the unconventional and labyrinthine space at Križanke, to which students attributed feelings of freedom and creativity. In the words of a student: "There is no creativity [at Roška]" (20 March 2020). Professor IK, who spends a relatively equal amount of time at Roška and Križanke, described his impression of students' relationship to one location and the other:

> Students never really took Roška to their liking. As professors, we find this not as stimulating and inspiring as the environment of the old town centre. First, we are further away from institutions such as the galleries, which is very important. We find it harder to go to exhibitions. But we have these neighbours here [arts restoration centre – see above]. Instead of drawing the architecture of Križanke, which is very interesting, we go to the Ljubljanica River to draw the perspective of Plečnik's floodgates [see number 2 in Figure 7). You know, we adapt. But the real spirit, the real one, has never been here. Also, this combination with the economics school is entirely different [from SŠOF]. [I think] it is because of all this history [at Križanke], probably some remnant, symbolism [...] of how this building was built, how these spaces were [used in the past] (interview with prof. IK, 27 May 2020).

Unlike students who, according to the collected responses, strongly feel the difference between the learning process and the sense of place between Križanke and Roška, some professors expressed the opinion that there is no difference at one location and the other because professionally there should not be one. Prof. AB and prof. IP emphasized that the integrity of imparting quality knowledge should not depend on location but on the teaching person.

In this section, we have learned that a significantly different school environment enhanced place attachment and belonging to Križanke. While Roška has a very classical, uniform school architecture, Križanke is an old and unique building in the city centre, surrounded by historically significant spots. At Roška, moreover, students felt like "guests" of a very differently oriented high school, while at Križanke, they felt "at home" and "accepted". These also meant that as art students, they could appear a bit different in dressing and behaviour from the economics students, as doing so was more acceptable at Križanke than at Roška.

Does Space Shape the Learning Experience?

Students and professors maintained that visual, sound, and other sensory experiences as well as the stories about Križanke made it for them a unique and creative learning environment. So far, the impact of formal education spaces on the learning experience has not received much anthropological attention. Outside anthropology (with the exception of Rainbow et al. 2008), issues like the effects of classroom design on learning have been covered mainly by pedagogy experts and design researchers (Hertzberger 2008; Smith Taylor 2008; Byers and Imms 2014), whose findings I will use to make sense of what teachers and students were experiencing at Križanke.

Professor MR has been teaching at the SŠOF school for over 30 years. Her mission has been to learn and connect with students with a great love for art and life. In our conversation, prof. MR instantly emphasized that the very shape of space transforms the learning experience and the "feel" of the school. According to her, spending time in the old corridors of Križanke, drawing in a small circle of students in the atelier, and the meeting and mixing of students from different modules of study in classrooms could not have happened if Križanke had a "uniform" shape (interview, 21 April 2020). She often used the word "democratic" when describing her perspective on the way Križanke functioned, which is, according to her, the necessary feature for the education of future artists and "free people" (ibid.). As was shown above, current and former SŠOF students also expressed that Križanke allowed them to be more creative. The school is made by people, not just space (Hertzberg 2008, 69), but how SŠOF used the space at Križanke was generally perceived by students as dynamic and unique. This experience was emphasized especially in relation to the architecture of Roška:

> When you walk into Križanke, you know that this space is full of inspiration and creativity, where you can express yourself [...]. There was always a more relaxed feeling at Križanke [than at Roška], you never felt any pressure [...] (interview with a graphic design student, 17 April 2020).

According to prof. MR, the configuration of space at Križanke directly enables more open communication between professors and students, consequently creating a more relaxed learning environment. This was also an observation of prof. GC (a member of the school board who is also a former student of the

Figure 9. The computer room at Križanke is mainly used by the photography class students. Caption from a YouTube video ("Fotografija na SŠOF" 2018).

school). For him, Križanke disrupts the idea of what conventional teaching should look like, as it allows more dynamic and democratic interactions (interview, 22 April 2020).

Prof. MR gave an example of this spatial "democracy" with the ateliers (drawing rooms) where students placed their chairs and equipment in a circle, establishing a different type of communication between them and the professor. A former graphic design student offered a similar view: "I liked our ateliers because we sat in a circle, it felt freer, and I didn't feel like we were being supervised or controlled by the professors" (interview, 26 May 2020). She felt similar about the computer classroom, where students sat around desks in groups of four (see Figure 8), which permitted easier collaboration among students. According to her, that kind of spatial arrangement created the "best atmosphere" (interview, 26 May 2020). Another example is the photography classroom, which has tables for students positioned only beside the walls, with one large common table for collaboration in the middle (see Figure 9).

Ateliers were also present at Roška, but the interlocutors rarely felt as good there as at Križanke. Students often complained about Roška's long high corridor connecting the entire floor. Since it runs straight through the building, students have described it as "unpleasant" and "uncomfortable". An association could be made to the (Bentham's) panopticon discussed by Michel Foucault (1977), with the Roška hallway's shape exposing students to professors and other students at any spot across the floor. In contrast, Križanke was valued as a labyrinth with twisted and narrow corridors, and probably nobody there felt exposed. A professor of art history sees this spatial quality that can be experienced at Križanke as an alternative to standard classroom designs:

> The point is that the way schools are designed almost everywhere is a disaster to me. This [Roška school] square, uniform shape, where you enter, and already there are classrooms, has this strict order. Križanke offers something different. You need a free, playful space when you are an artist or a researcher. It is not a uniform space. And we always have a great time here, just because it's a space full of freedom, [but] it doesn't mean that we don't take things seriously here. A space like this [dynamic Križanke space] can significantly affect a person. You pleasantly cross between floors and hallways, as every one of them is entirely different. You just don't have that uniform geometry [like at Roška]. It seems to me that this would also be a task for the future, for schools to be designed a little differently (interview with prof. MR, 21 April 2020).

Comparing my ethnographic material with research focusing on the impact of space on learning, it becomes clear that SŠOF unintentionally achieved something pedagogy experts and designers have just started to experiment with. The above descriptions of Križanke fit into the definition of "studio space", a concept currently being introduced into some universities worldwide (Smith Taylor 2008). Namely, a "studio space" does not impose the hierarchy of the "front" (professor) vs. the classroom (students) but promotes a feeling of democracy and freedom (Dittoe and Porter 2007, after Smith Taylor 2008, 218), exactly like my interlocutors described SŠOF classrooms throughout our conversations. SŠOF spontaneously created such classrooms due to both Križanke's lack of space and its unique layout, both of which demanded experimentation with classroom setups.

Moreover, place attachment also contributed to the creative atmosphere students felt at Križanke. The feeling of being part of Križanke and thus connected to art history and cultural life in the city, the freedom to roam the

city centre and the embeddedness of school into the old built environment of Ljubljana – these were all factors that strengthened the students' bonds with Križanke, which positively contributed to their learning experience there. They perceived it as *their* place (especially after the risk of losing it), which increased their engagement in the school's activities.

Professors who argued that the quality of teaching should not depend on location (see above) may disagree, but in the end, it is difficult to deny the impact of the atmosphere created by Križanke space on students' learning experience (Casey 1996, 24; Miller 1998). Likewise, the latest research on the effects of space on education confirms that: "physical space is directly related to human perception and well-being" (Gregorski, Nardoni Kovač and Zaviršek Hudnik 2019, 15; cf. Ingold 2000, 2018). This is why the professors did everything they could to bring Roška closer to students, to "make them feel more at home" (interview with prof. IK, 27 May 2020), but in the end only Križanke managed to create a distinct sense of place and belonging to the built environment among students and professors alike. Students clearly expressed a desire to learn and work at one location (Križanke) over the other (Roška).

Spatial factors that I have detected with this research impacted day-to-day life at SŠOF and the students' overall learning experience. I demonstrated a complex interrelatedness between a sense of place, narration of place, and attachment to place in a school context. This allowed me to expand on the concept of place attachment, specifically through sensorial, spiritual, and ideological processes of place attachment (Cross 2015). For further research on this topic, I would explore the relationship between resistance to the powers that be and the place attachment of students and professors at SŠOF in the context of the heightened sense of threat of losing "their" place. In the future, a comparative analysis of different formal education spaces and their manifold impacts on learning outcomes and the well-being of students could be a critical anthropological contribution to the planning of education.

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PANDEMIC ISOLATION IN BELARUS THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF PHOTOGRAPHS: THE CASE OF A FAMILY'S QUARANTINE

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Abstract: *This photo essay examines the process of isolation during the first period of the COVID-19 pandemic based on the quarantine photos of a family from Belarus. It illustrates how the content and form of the collected images visualized the invisible markers of the pandemic and reflected various stages of isolation, transformations of the notion of home, and changes in family dynamics and routines. To collect the photographs, a weeklong remote participatory project was conducted. The findings of this project thus pointed to a direct correlation between photographs and changes in the social world and individuals' lives brought about by the coronavirus outbreak.*

Keywords: *COVID-19; isolation; photo-elicitation method; family; home*

Introduction

Photographs explore, document, and communicate social reality. They have been used as a tool for "examining the connection between people's lives and the social and economic structures of the larger world" (Wagner 1979, 18). With the introduction of various public health measures in response to the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, the socio-cultural changes associated with the crisis situation could not escape the photographic gaze. Numerous scholars used images captured during the pandemic to provide a glimpse into

both individual and collective lived experiences of quarantine, virus, illness, and contamination (Hossler 2021; O'Callaghan 2021; Bogumil 2022; Navazo-Ostúa and Pérez Valencia 2022). The pandemic images presented new viewpoints on the homescape and domesticity, visualizing the social distancing and its impact on people's lives (Pixley 2021).

The social isolation that came with COVID-19 also affected the way research was conducted. The pre-pandemic standards for carrying out participatory photo-based projects had to be altered to suit the new circumstances of the quarantine. The researchers were forced to devise different ways of establishing a connection with their participants. Remote participatory methods, digital ethnography, instant messaging interviews, and video-call software became the primary methods and means of conducting research amidst the pandemic (Burkholder et al. 2021; Hall et. al 2021; Polat 2022; Watson and Lupton 2022).

This essay was also produced as a result of distance-based participatory research, meaning that all interactions between the researcher and the participant took place online. In it, I examine the isolation process of a quarantined Belarusian family and the changes that COVID-19 brought into it, based on the photographs taken by one family member. More specifically, I look into how the content and form of the photographs depict various stages of isolation, the transformation of the notions of home, and changes in family relationships and routines. The collected photographs are part of a seven-day project that was conducted in May 2020, whereby the participant from Belarus took photos during their family quarantine and later presented and discussed them in an interview with the researcher (myself).[1] I build upon my conclusions with both my interpretations and the participant's perspectives on the photographs. Additionally, I aspire for this essay to become one of the very few documented personal accounts of the Belarusian pandemic context.

Contextualising the Pandemic

There is a substantial lack of reliable informational sources available for researching the Belarusian context of the pandemic. During the COVID-19 outbreak, censorship prevented local media from providing readers with

[1] The initial version of this essay (including the photographs) was produced as a part of the "7 (every) days of quarantine" project developed during the Visual Sociology course under the supervision of Prof. Ludmila Wladyniak at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague.

information critical of the authority's actions (Przetacznik and Tothova 2022). While the state media coverage of COVID-19 in Belarus did exist, the information that represented the reality circulated only on independent online platforms (SATIO 2022, 4). As a result, it is difficult to determine whether the information received by the population was accurate or how many people had access to and were influenced by independent online sources.

The official sources state that COVID-19 entered Belarusian homes as early as on 28 February 2020 (Reuters 2020). As of the start of the project in May 2020, no quarantine measures such as social distancing, public use of face masks, or remote work to limit contact among people had been implemented (Ilyushina and Hodge 2020). Belarusian authorities officially denied the seriousness of the virus (Kramer 2020). To maintain the false image of a virus-free nation, the rising COVID-19 cases were nevertheless underreported. This meant that COVID tests were rarely performed, citizens were not diagnosed or treated according to their symptoms, and the population decline at the start of the pandemic was not officially attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic (SATIO 2020, 4).

Notably, while the lack of preventive measures against the spread of the virus affected everyone in Belarus, the experience was different for lower classes and other vulnerable social groups, who were disproportionately overwhelmed by the pandemic. As such, people who lived in closed institutions, medical workers, homeless people, and disabled people were daily exposed to the virus (Human Constanta 2022). Their access to appropriate medical treatment, testing, and protective equipment (e.g., face masks) was not always guaranteed, also considering that the majority of available protective measures were not implemented until much later in the pandemic's course.

PEI Method

This research relies on interpretations of photographs that depict the intimate realities of the quarantined family, and therefore it is critical for the method to allow the family participant to be involved in both the production of data and its explanation. This way, the collected visual data could depict and reveal important family aspects of the isolation to the researcher, while being complemented by the participant's emic perspectives on the meanings behind the images.

The method that I chose for this research was the participant-driven photo elicitation method (PEI): a qualitative interview technique that uses participant-produced images as stimuli to elicit various responses from research

participants during the interviews (Copes et al. 2018, 475). The presented photographs can evoke in participants memories, feelings, and in-depth responses that may not be easily accessed by relying solely on the oral interview method (Collier 1957; Prosser 1998; Hurworth 2003; Meo 2010). This effect of the images is frequently explained in terms of how the human brain functions. When compared to exchanges in which the brain is processing word-only information, the combination of images and words is found to utilize more brain capacity (Harper 2002, 13). It means that PEI can potentially elicit a broader range of information than a standard interview.

The photographs also serve as a "medium of communication" between researcher and participant; they provide structure for the interview and bridge the differences between the two (Clark-Ibáñez 2004, 1512). The participant can use the images to communicate their reality, while the researcher can expand on their interview questions based on the presented photographs and discover new elements of the participant's story (ibid.).

In participant-driven research, the quality of the data heavily depends on the participant's input. It is thus important for the participant to be fully invested in the project, putting forth effort and devoting their time to creating images and discussing them in an interview. When developing the research design, I therefore compiled a set of criteria for selecting the participant that would be most suitable for this kind of research. To begin, the participant had to have enough time for the research and be interested in taking photographs daily for one week. Given that the COVID-19 social distancing measures were in place, the participant also had to be prepared to communicate with the researcher, submit, and discuss images exclusively online, while having the means to maintain a reliable internet connection. Additionally, to avoid any unnecessary social contact, the participant had to have access to image-capturing device(s) and know how to operate them. It was also advantageous for the participant to be artistically inclined in order to work well with the visual rhetoric of the photographs, as well as to effectively communicate personal feelings through them.

The possibility to establish trust with the participant and their family while communicating remotely was also an important factor in choosing the participant. Since social interactions outside of home were no longer safe, creating a comfortable environment for the participants to share sensitive visual information without meeting the researcher in person could prove to be the most challenging part of the study. Having considered all of the aforementioned factors, I decided on a participant whom I knew prior to conducting this research.

In our personal communications, Alina, my friend, volunteered to be the main family participant in the project and to do the photographing. She was a 19-year-old female student at that time, and the older child in a Belarusian middle-class family of four. Both parents are employed in the public sector: the father is a police officer with a teaching practice, and mother works as an emergency paramedic. At the time of the project, Alina was enrolled in an IT coding course at a private educational establishment in Minsk. Photography was one of Alina's passions. She and her family resided in a newly purchased and renovated two-bedroom apartment on the outskirts of Minsk, which also served as the project's location. No common space (e.g., living room) was present in the apartment. One bedroom was shared between two working parents, and the other belonged to Alina and her ten-year-old sister Asya, who attended primary school. Sisters slept in the same bed. Alina and I share a similar cultural and linguistic background, as we both grew up in a small town in Belarus. Our relationship could be described as a close friendship, and since 2018, we have communicated primarily online.

The research design comprised three stages. First, Alina was required to take photographs daily for a period of seven days during her family's social isolation. The second stage involved a reveal of the photographs taken by the participant and a subsequent photo-elicitation interview (PEI) discussion between the researcher (myself) and the participant (Alina), focusing on the context and meaning behind the photographs. Lastly, I analysed the family's life during their pandemic isolation based on Alina's interview comments and my interpretations of the photographs. Thus, the main method of the project was PEI. By examining Alina's insider perspective on her family's handling of the pandemic quarantine, PEI helped unveil the intimate aspects of the pandemic's effect on the family, personal emotions associated with the quarantine, and changes in family dynamics that were reflected in the collected photographs.

Methodological Considerations

Before moving forward with the main task of the project, I asked Alina to obtain permission from her family members for me to conduct the research, since it could potentially involve their personal images. All further arrangements described in this chapter were also made using online messaging platforms. I informed Alina of all stages in my research design, which also involved the recording of the interview once the first stage of the project (i.e., taking

photographs) was completed. After the project was finished and its results were put in writing, I asked Alina to obtain additional permission from her parents to publish the essay, including the photographs of their children in it. The parents responded with the permission to publish the text and the photos. As requested by the family, all names in this essay are replaced with pseudonyms.

The project lasted for one week, resulting in a total of 18 pictures taken by Alina using her phone and digital camera. The content of the photographs ranged from portraits of family members and home to various memorabilia items. The seven-day project was not designed to exceed the limit of seven photographs (one photo per day), but I decided not to omit any of them without first consulting Alina. Every image was an important part of the family's story, and removing any photograph would entail changing the original narrative, mangling and misinterpreting the context that Alina chose to present. It was also agreed to include three photographs that were taken outside of the project's timeframe in order to better illustrate the context: one had been taken a week before Alina officially agreed to participate in the research (Figure 1), and the other two Alina took one day after the end of the quarantine (Figures 16 and 18).

The photographs were revealed and discussed in a three-hour online interview conducted on 8 May 2020, on the videoconferencing platform Zoom. The program allowed us to see each other while sharing a screen on which all photographs were displayed. The interview was held in Alina's first language: Russian. The excerpts, which appear as quotations from Alina's speech in this essay, were transcribed and translated to English using the recorded version of the interview. When I processed the collected data (photographs and interview excerpts) and completed the first draft of the analysis, I gave Alina the opportunity to suggest changes to the preliminary text and my interpretations of the photographs as needed. Alina had no major disagreements with my perspective on the photographs since many of the interpretations presented in this essay came up during the interview discussion. She did, however, point to the more nuanced meaning of the photographs (e.g., the discussion of Figure 15), which I preserved in the analysis section.

Choosing Alina for this research brought a few advantages. Since I had known Alina and her family before the start of the project, the necessity to gain their trust was eliminated. The preestablished friendly relationship allowed Alina to deliver visual data that was personal and meaningful, depicting intimate family moments. Alina also had prior experience taking quality photographs with a digital camera as a hobby. Possessing high-quality devices

Figure 1. One day before the beginning of the project, and the first week of the family's unofficial isolation: Asya is looking out of the window, watching other kids playing outside.

and photography skills allowed Alina to have more creative freedom in how she wanted to portray her family life and articulate her feelings through images. Thus, the visual elements in most of the collected photographs were not accidental but well thought-out intentions of the photographer, which added a layer of meaning to the photographs' analysis.

The Beginning of Quarantine: Sorrow, Uncertainty, and a Brief Moment of Curiosity

The first photograph (Figure 1) was taken during the first week of the family's social isolation. When Alina's mother began to show early signs of the virus, it was decided that all family members would be quarantined. In the interview, Alina shared that she took a photo of her sister Asya huddled up by the window, watching the neighbourhood kids play outside because it represented the way she felt. Alina was joyless and sorrowful from passively observing rather than participating in the activities she enjoyed doing. She and her sister were

confronted with a stark reminder of what their new reality was not: "It is spring, everything is blooming and singing. [...] It is very strange, there is a dissonance between what we have in our family and how beautiful and alive it is out there", said Alina.

As we were discussing the main elements of the photo, I asked Alina to talk about the window in the photograph in greater detail, given its overpowering presence: "Our window is [a] sort of tease: you can see everything that happens outside, you want to go there but you can't do it [due to the quarantine measures]". Indeed, the window in this picture becomes a tricky barrier – the reality is not hidden, and everything that happens out there is visible through the glass; it gives a sense of involvement, yet it physically separates from the outside world. The participation, however, was illusive, and the ability to observe what was happening outside did not bring much comfort to Alina: "I only feel sad when I look through this window. [...] Everything in our life is frozen. The only reminder of the motion of life is nature, but we're trapped in this concrete, and the only way to observe it is through this plastic window". As seen in this photograph, Alina's notion of home has evolved and transformed in response to the changes brought about by the pandemic in her social environment. When isolation was introduced as a safety measure, Alina's understanding of home as a refuge and safe space was shattered (Martinez et. al 2020). The window's lines in the photographs thus resemble prison bars, which represent how Alina's home became a place of confinement, with its occupants being forced into a standby mode (ibid.).

The project formally started on 1 May, and the second photograph was taken the same day. For the family, that date was important – it was the day Alina's mother was admitted to the hospital and the rest of the family members officially entered the quarantine. This significant moment was captured in Figure 2: Alina's little sister is leaning against the window, frozen in expectation, watching her mother being taken away by the doctors dressed in alien-like protective costumes. The neighbours are peeking out of their balconies, becoming the event's witnesses and spectators. The street is filling up with neighbours' curiosity and fear for their own families. Similarly, Alina described her and her sister's feelings as a combination of fear, confusion, and curiosity:

> When the doctors came to take our mom to the hospital, we did not fully understand what was happening at that moment. There was a great interest, curiosity, and a question as to what was going on, but we also understood that our worst

Figure 2. Day one of the project, morning: Alina's mother is taken to the hospital.

> fears [of contracting the virus] could be confirmed, and no one could believe it was real, and no one knew what was going to happen next. We were scared yet curious, as it was something that had never happened to our family before.

Here, Asya is no longer a passive observer of the outside world but she is part of the persistent change. The anticipation, the on-going uncertainty, and the changing dynamics of the situation are reflected in the composition of the image. Taken from a dramatically high angle, the photograph is depicting an event in progress. The elongated shapes and lines of the window, which almost seem to be moving upwards, match the walking parents and Alina's sister watching them get closer to the ambulance. The existing distance between the mother and the doctor adds to the unpredictability of the situation: the doctors have not yet gotten a hold of the mother, and therefore her condition has yet to be determined. Due to the angle and Asya's position in the far-left corner of the photograph, she appears small and vulnerable. Her tiny figure contrasts the window view of the street, which is central in the photograph and which also points to the grand pervasive role the event played in Alina's family.

Figure 3. Day one, afternoon: Asya is showing first symptoms of the disease.

It was the same day Alina's mother was taken to the hospital when Asya started experiencing similar symptoms. In the photograph that Alina titled "In Between Two Worlds" (Figure 3), Asya is still smiling while watching cartoons, but she has lain down and covered herself with a blanket in the summer-like temperature of the apartment. The first signs of the viral infection have begun to appear, but Asya could still enjoy doing her favourite activities. The cartoon-watching helped her distract from the fever and establish a balance between normality and unpredictable sickness. The photo was taken horizontally, from an eye-level perspective, mirroring the sister's comfortable lying position affected by the disease. Both the angle and the content of the photograph represented family life at the time: the virus was already permeating all aspects of the family's routine, and even simple activities such as kids watching cartoons began to be viewed differently.

The narrative unexpectedly changed later that day, in the evening, when Asya's symptoms became progressively worse. "Everything was centred on my sister. [...] All the anxiety and panic were concentrated around her. We were worried about her health and what might happen next. [...] We were aware that children were not dying [from COVID-19], but we had no idea what to expect", Alina expressed concern for her sister. A human figure can barely be recognized

Figure 4. Day one, evening: Asya is sleeping early as her viral symptoms got worse.

in the photograph of Asya taken on that day (Figure 4). As Alina's sister was getting sicker, she turned away from the camera, blending into the dark shadows of the room. The image demonstrates that all of the family's attention was given to Asya, and the outside world no longer had its appeal. The window's presence can still be recognized in the image, but it does not serve as a glass portal to the outside social world as it did in Figure 1. Instead, the sunlight reflected on the wall exists as a mere reminder of the outside life that passes by the isolated family.

The Further Unravelling of the Virus: The Beginning of a "Dark" and Unstable Period

The next day, Asya's health deteriorated further. Their mother was already in the hospital, leaving Alina and her father alone with the responsibility for taking care of Asya. The virus cases were spiking when Asya needed to be treated in the hospital; therefore, it was a matter of luck that one of the hospitals was able to take her in. In the next picture, Alina captured the moment when Asya was getting ready to go to the hospital, accompanied by her father (Figure 5). Alina's choice to photograph her sister rather than herself reveals a lot about their family's circumstances. Alina experienced fear and loneliness, and felt isolated from most of the social facets of her pre-COVID life. Her father had to take care of the children alone for the first time. They both, however, were preoccupied with worries about Asya: "I did not take a picture of my sad face,

Figure 5. Day two: Asya is leaving for a hospital.

Figure 6. Day three: Alina's masked self-portrait taken on her way to visit Asya in the hospital.

because it would not have illustrated a truthful situation in our family", Alina explained. "Not I but Asya was the focus of our attention at the time. We were terrified for her life".

As photographs provide evidence, the camera makes what one is experiencing real (Sontag 1977, 3). A selfie (Figure 6) taken on the day Alina was delivering supplies to the hospital where her sister was receiving treatment was not an ordinary self-portrait. Taking a selfie was "a way of certifying the experience" of what her family was enduring (ibid., 6). By capturing the moment with her phone camera, at home, at the moment before she went to the hospital, Alina took control of the situation in which she felt out of place. She marked the event as significant for her. The face mask worn in the photograph came to symbolize this experience. Although masks are designed to provide safety and protection from viruses, the mask in the photograph indicated the opposite. It represented the unsafe pandemic environment where contamination and the risks of sickness were present. Paradoxically, the presence of masks and other protective items (e.g., hand sanitizers, gloves) made the environment appear dangerous, whereas the mask-free social environment would seem safe (Van Gorp 2021, 125).

Figure 7. Day four: Empty parents' room.

After Asya was taken to a hospital, and a good one at that, the situation in Alina's family slightly improved. There was a sigh of relief in the family, as Alina and her father were convinced that Asya would recover. However, since neither Alina's mother nor her sister, whom she shared her room with, were home anymore, the place soon started to feel empty. Alina took a picture of her parents' bedroom (Figure 7) to capture an intimate moment of her reflection on family relationships while her mother was still in the hospital:

> I was looking into the empty room trying to imagine what would happen if my mum never came back home. In everyday life, all these warm feelings can be easily forgotten, especially with family conflicts drawing all of the attention to them. One begins to appreciate what they have only when the situation is *na grani* ["on the verge of something terrible happening"]. When I took this picture, I was feeling a lot of things that were unsaid between me and my mother, and I remembered all the feelings that I wasn't used to sharing and all the things that I wasn't used to feeling every day. Events like this open up your eyes and allow you to take a look inside yourself.

Figure 8. Day four: Lemons gifted by Alina's family friends and delivered when the mother was away at the hospital.

The photo was taken from outside the room, at a distance. The physical barrier in the form of a door between Alina and the room represented how alienated and distant Alina felt from her mother while the latter was in the hospital. The room no longer appears cosy and inhabited in this photograph. It is dark and cold, and the only items that remind Alina of her mother are her mother's bathrobe and slippers that were left by the bed.

When Alina's mother began to exhibit early symptoms of the disease, her colleagues showed their support by sending items that could help her get better. Since the mother was already at the hospital, it was Alina and her father who received the gift. The lemons (Figure 8) became a symbol of other people's care and kindness towards the family, as Alina mentioned in the interview. Alina took the image on the same day she looked at the empty parents' room to help herself remember the brighter moments that were still present during this difficult time. In the photograph's bottom left corner, there is a plate with a smiley face (cropped) that Alina created out of citruses, which embodied the support and uplifting feelings the gifted lemons brought to Alina's family:

> I took a picture of those lemons because it was something that constantly reminded us of people who cared about our family. Because we were not alone in this situation. [...] We had lemons everywhere; we had tea with the lemons, made lemonade with them, and ate the lemons with sugar.

In the course of the project, I noticed that it is not only the content of the photographs that carries meaning, but also how frequently a certain object appears in the photographs. While two family members were staying in the hospital, Alina was still quarantined, which affected her daily routine. Since her sister, with whom she shared a room and communicated daily, was not present, Alina was now spending the majority of her time working on the computer. It had become her primary source of socialization and entertainment, and the photographs reflect this change. There was a total of seven photographs that Alina took of her table (e.g., Figures 9 and 15). Some were taken on different days and at different times of day, from different perspectives, but they all appeared nearly identical:

> These are the things I see every day. Something in the world is constantly changing, but it all looks the same to me. Same empty table without Asya's belongings, the same computer, same coffee mug. [...] Today I drink coffee at this table, tomorrow I drink tea there, but overall, everything remains the same.

Most photographs were dark, with the objects barely distinguishable from the shadowed background. Through these images, Alina was seeking to convey the tiring sameness of her surroundings, not any unusual or noteworthy objects: "It is difficult to distinguish anything in the photo because nothing distinctive was happening those days, there was nothing interesting to look at". The perspective from which the table photographs were taken, however, varied. Some images displayed the table from a distance (e.g., Figure 9), indicating Alina's tiredness or boredom as she was walking around the room trying to find a different activity with which to entertain herself. In other cases, Alina was sitting at the table and working on her course project, which was reflected in the table up close (e.g., Figure 15). The proximity of the table in the photographs, therefore, represented Alina's change of mood and activities during the quarantine, such as staying motivated and working on a project, or getting bored and losing inspiration.

Figure 9. Day five: Alina's computer table, shown in a dark room.

Feelings of Nostalgia and Melancholy

Another key component of the quarantine that was discovered during the interview was the appreciation for things previously taken for granted. Several photographs displayed what seemed to be ordinary objects: a perfume Alina's boyfriend brought from India, Alina's sneakers (Figure 10), and Alina's phone with an open chat with her boyfriend (Figure 11). All of these objects were miniatures of Alina's bygone reality, physical relics of memories that helped her recall what life had been like before the quarantine. Often, to photograph something one values is to "confer importance" to it (Sontag 1977, 28). In this case, Alina photographed a discussion with her boyfriend on her phone, as it was "the only thing left of normal existence" to her. Capturing it with another device was an act of appreciation and nostalgia that brought comfort back into the situation of uncertainty. A photograph of Alina's sneakers also revealed the melancholic features of the isolation: "These were my favourite sneakers. I adore them. And I love walking in them. I dreamed of wearing them all winter, and I ended up wearing them just once to the hospital".

Figure 10. Day six: Alina's favourite sneakers that she did not get to wear during the quarantine.

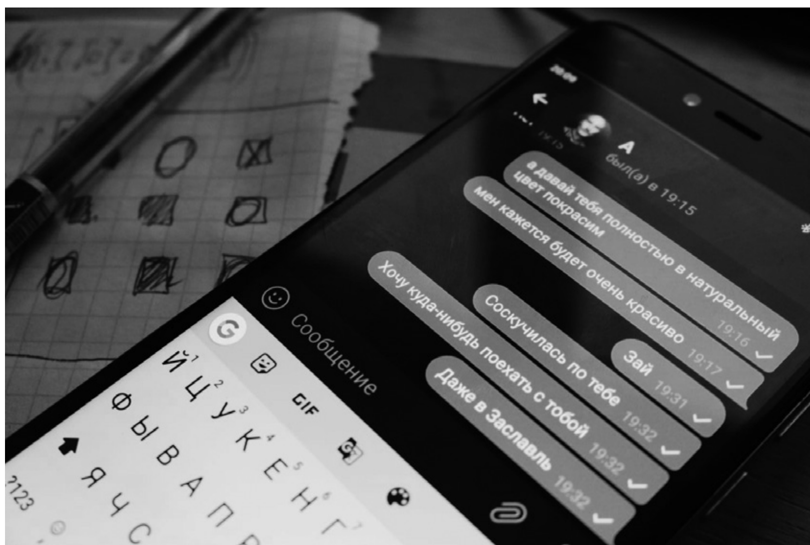

Figure 11. Day six: Alina's chat with her boyfriend.

Figure 12. Day six: Items that Alina's mother requested to bring to her to the hospital.

Finally: Better News and Gradual Improvement in the Situation

A significant change in Alina's family came with a call from her mother, who asked her to bring a few items to the hospital (Figure 12):

> My mum asked me to bring her a small mirror, face toner, eyebrow clippers, nail scissors, lip balm, and cotton swaps. These are not the things that you use if you are not feeling well. Hearing that my mom wanted me to bring all of these beauty products meant a great deal to me. The senses of taste and smell were coming back to my mom, she was trying to look pretty, and this is how I knew she was finally recovering.

This photograph signalled the start of the "lighter" period, as seen by Alina's subsequent photos. Alina's family was no longer terrified; everyone believed that the worst part was over. As the isolation continued, looking out the window was once again adapted as one of the means of staying connected to the outside

Figure 13. Day seven: Alina's neighbour on the balcony with his grandchildren.

social world. "I never really paid attention to my neighbour and his family before the quarantine. [...] I wanted to take a picture of him because it was the first time that I saw him smiling, with his grandchildren around", Alina said, referring to the photo of an old man living in the building across the street (Figure 13). He reminded Alina of life outside the room and connected her back to society. I noticed something interesting about the composition of this picture. What happens outside the window is visible, as if there was no barrier between Alina and her neighbour, but there is a portion of the plastic window in the photo that partially obstructs the view. It is there perhaps to show that Alina is still in her room, isolated from the world outside.

The interview was almost over when I realized that Alina had not mentioned her fear of the virus until the moment she displayed the next photo (Figure 14). It was shot on the day the physicians came to collect swabs from family members to confirm the virus. Alina recollected this event through the peculiar behaviour of her father:

Figure 14. Day seven: Supposedly contaminated chairs that Alina's father left in the hallway to avoid contracting the virus after the doctor's visit.

> I did not want to get sick, but I was not scared either. My dad, on the other hand, after everything that happened to our family, still believed he didn't have the virus. He was frightened of catching it from the doctors or their "dirty" equipment; therefore, he wouldn't let them come into our apartment. He even lied to the doctors by saying that they must not enter it because there is a very angry dog in our family [*laughing*].

The two chairs in the photograph are the ones that Alina's dad took to the stairwell after he persuaded the doctors to take the samples outside of their apartment. "When the act was over, my dad even left the chairs out in the hallway for 24 hours, so the bacteria and virus would die out. That was funny", Alina said, laughing at her father's denial of the family's already existing exposure to the virus. These chairs thus represented and materialized the invisible: the contamination, the virus, and the father's rising consciousness – due to the pandemic – of germs.

Figure 15. Day seven: Alina's table on a sunny day.

The images that were discussed at the end of the interview significantly differed from those shown at the beginning. The photographed objects on the table (e.g., computer, mirror) remained the same (e.g., Figure 15), but the colours of the photographs became brighter as the contrasts were subdued and the shadows were less prominent. Presented with this much lighter series of images, I concluded that the photographs reflected the family's hope for recovery and return to their pre-COVID routine. The interview discussion, however, revealed that the images were not so much about the uplifting hopeful message as they were meant to convey the acceptance of the situation and the calmness that came with it. Alina's perception of home and her room once again changed. Having perceived her home as a place of confinement at the beginning of quarantine, Alina has gradually accepted it as the new world that replaced everything outside:

> I feel calm when I look at these photographs. I accepted that I had to stay home, and it stopped being something sad like you could see in the first photographs

Figure 16. Day eight, first day after the quarantine: Alina's neighbours outside on the street.

> [Figure 1] where Asya is looking out the window with some sort of sorrow. You can still see the monotony of those days, but at the same time this monotony has stopped causing this sense of protest inside of me; it stopped "strangling" me. [...] My room is my new world now.

The second picture of Alina's neighbours presented in this essay (Figure 16) was taken one day after the end of Alina's quarantine. It is comparable to the previously discussed photograph in that it also shows her neighbours, but this image differs in one significant way. Unlike the neighbour shot discussed earlier (Figure 13), this one shows no visible barrier between Alina and the outside world, as if the photo was taken outside rather than through a window. Alina was feeling much better about the situation in her family on that day. Her quarantine had come to an end, and it showed in the way she began to capture the world beyond her room.

Slightly Positive Notes on the Quarantine Experience

Although Alina's family will not miss the quarantine experience, the last two photos (Figures 17 and 18) depict the pandemic's positive impact on Alina's daily life. During the interview, Alina mentioned that she and her family had moved to a new apartment shortly before the quarantine began. She was still getting used to her room at the time of the project. When we were discussing the photograph of the room wall and a tiny ray of sunlight on it (Figure 17), she mentioned that the quarantine had made her realize that she finally felt at home in her family's new apartment:

> I realized that I genuinely liked my new room. Regardless of whether I feel depressed or I'm in a good mood, my room's colours always reflect exactly how I feel. [...] When I am sad, the blue colour of my walls matches what I am feeling, and when the day is nice and sunny, as at the time the picture was taken, the walls look bright and nice too.

The second positive impact that quarantine had on Alina's family was that it allowed her family to rearrange, although temporarily, how each member of the family was integrated into the household routine. For the first time in the family's life, Alina's father was compelled to do the majority of the housework that had previously been done by Alina's mother. A new passion he discovered was cooking: "During quarantine, Dad discovered his new talent. He started to make pancakes for me every day. [...] Everyone now knows that Papa cooks very well" (Figure 18). While this temporary shift in responsibilities around the house will most likely not become permanent, the crisis's major impact on the organization of the social world and its individuals cannot be ignored. Given that the structure of the household in Alina's family has undergone a significant change (i.e., all childcare responsibilities fell on the father in the family), there is hope that Alina's and potentially other families' housework will continue to be more fairly divided, even after the pandemic is over. There is a chance that such a shift prompted by the pandemic will also undermine the social norms that currently lead to disparities in the hours that fathers and mothers spend on housework (Alon et al. 2020, 17). Alina, on the other hand, does not believe that years of her family's uneven distribution of household duties will be subverted by a few weeks of the temporary reversal of roles due to rather unusual circumstances. She admits, however, that she did enjoy her

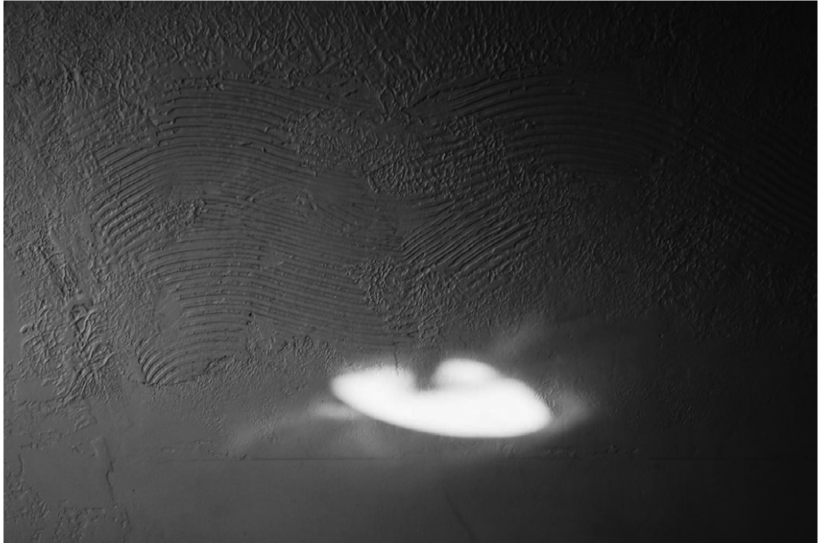

Figure 17. Day seven: Photograph of the wall in Alina's room with a ray of sunlight on it.

Figure 18. Day eight, first day after the quarantine: Breakfast syrniky ("cottage cheese pancakes") that Alina's father cooked for her.

father being more proactive with the family cooking, even though this change is most likely to end with the quarantine and her family will return to its usual order of things.

Discussion

This essay presents empirical evidence of a direct correlation between photographs and the changes in the social world and individual people's lives. The analysis of the form and content of the photographs taken by a quarantined participant (Alina) demonstrates that the changes in the family's perception of home, family relationships, routines, and personal emotions of the family members were a response to the changes brought about by the isolation process. Additionally, the photographs revealed five different stages of isolation.

The first stage, or the beginning of quarantine (Figure 1), was characterized by an intense feeling of sorrow when the family was confined in the apartment. The second (Figures 2 and 3) displayed the unpredictability of the pandemic situation and fear, but also unusual excitement associated with the novelty of the quarantine events. The third stage (Figures 4–5) was marked by concerns for the family members' well-being, fear, and care. The fourth period (Figures 7–11) was unstable and tense. It encompassed family worries as well as nostalgic feelings over objects, spaces, and memories that brought familiar comfort and security to the unpredictable and frightening situation. The fifth stage (Figures 12–18) showed the acceptance of quarantine, comfort at home, and the elevated mood that came with the lifting of the quarantine measures. It is worth mentioning, however, that the real-life situation did not necessarily mirror the linear progression of the events and changes in the family's sentiments that the essay's analysis presents (i.e., the photographs' colour scheme seemingly going from a "dark" period into the "light", matching the photos' content and, presumably, a life situation). The participant could often feel uneasy, frustrated, or sad even when the period's brighter photographs were taken.

When looking at the photographs from various stages, it becomes visible that the home setting was displayed differently during each period of isolation. It went from being seen as a safe space prior to quarantine to a place of confinement amid the isolation, to a replacement for the outside world. Several invisible markers of the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., isolation, virus, contamination, fear of bacteria) were visualized by the photographs as symbolic aspects of objects and spaces from the participant's pandemic home – masks, closed prison-like plastic

windows, empty parents' room, and supposedly contaminated furniture. With family members away at the hospital, Alina established a new daily routine that prioritized computer time as the only source of entertainment and social life. Family dynamics were also affected by the changes. The family household routine and childcare became the responsibility of the father. After the participant's mother was admitted to the hospital, Alina began to give more appreciation to her relationship with the mother. This family's home and household thus became the extension and the evidence of the relations altered by the pandemic social environment.

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FIELDNOTES FROM A UKRAINIAN CULTURE AND GASTRONOMY FESTIVAL, 5 MAY 2022, PRAGUE

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Abstract: *These ethnographic fieldnotes focus on the place, sounds, and people of the Festival of Ukrainian Culture and Gastronomy at Prague Market (Pražská tržnice), in Prague, Czech Republic, on 5 May 2022, during the full-scale war in Ukraine. The observation reveals how the topic of war impacts the cultural representation and self-identification of Ukrainians abroad, and how it affects social interactions inside and outside the group. The fieldnotes provide a panorama of multiple interpretations and productions of the Prague Market space and provides an opportunity to observe the ongoing process of the collective memory being generated through music.*

Keywords: *Ukraine; war; memory; refugees; music festival; ethnographic fieldnotes*

The Festival of Ukrainian Culture and Gastronomy, UKAUKRAJINU!, which was held on 5 May 2022, in Prague at the Prague Market (Pražská Tržnice), is the main focus of my ethnographic fieldnotes. The festival was organized, for the first time, in response to the full-blown Russian invasion of Ukraine. I found it randomly on Facebook (under the "Local events" tab). As a Ukrainian, originally from Kharkiv, I lived and worked in the communication field in Kyiv for six years before moving to Prague, where, since October 2021, I have been a student of the master's program in social and cultural anthropology at the

Faculty of Humanities, Charles University. Before starting my studies in Prague, I received a degree in Journalism in Kharkiv. I chose to study this festival for an ethnographic fieldwork assignment, as a part of the course Music and Place/ Space: Music Venues, Geographies, and Imaginary Spaces at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague.

While I exit the tram on the street outside the Prague Market, I can easily identify passengers, who are likely going to the same event as me. Two women are standing at the tram stop – an older mother, around 65 years old, with a daughter, around 40. The first woman has a shopping bag with a logo of a Ukrainian bank. Another has a handbag with two ribbons, blue and yellow, which symbolize the Ukrainian flag.

Since the beginning of the military escalation in Ukraine, this is how people mark, identify themselves among others. They bring to the forefront the place of their birth, residence, and home, which they had to leave forcibly, signalling their social role as a citizen of Ukraine, or as a citizen of another state in solidarity with Ukraine. The former citizens seem to say: "I am not at home, but my home is with me, I represent my home". And the second one: "Ukraine is not my home, but I sympathize with Ukraine"; they address Ukrainians on the streets: "You are not at home, but we support you here, in your temporary home".

I arrive at the festival on Thursday, 5 May, around 15:45, 15 minutes before the official start of the program. A crowd of about 20 passengers gets off at the Prague Market tram stop. One person is waiting for the passing tram, another starts to cross the road – the street is still under construction.

> "Where are we going? I want to eat!" a boy asks his mother.
> "Somewhere, let's see what will happen". (They both speak Russian)

According to the Facebook event description in Czech, the purpose of the event is to introduce Ukrainians to Czechs:

> Hundreds of thousands of fellow citizens of Ukrainian nationality have lived with us in the Czech Republic for a long time and form one of the largest national minorities in our country. But we're not very knowledgeable about their culture, food, singing, dancing. We want to change that.[1]

1 See UKAUKRAJINU! 2022.

In the Ukrainian translation of the event description, I read about a second reason for the festival, which refers to another large group of Ukrainians who were forced to leave Ukraine because of the war: "Let's help our neighbours forget about worries for a while, get to know them, and bring them joy" (ibid.).

A procession forms from the tram stop to the festival, as a crowd starts moving and following the people who speak in Ukrainian and Russian, or who wear some Ukrainian national emblems. They enter through the gates of Prague Market. Above the main entrance hang several banners with announcements, including the one representing UKAUKRAJINU! festival. This sign is rather visible from the opposite side of the road, from the river embankment next to the tram stop.

The next festival sign appears at the festival spot, which is positioned at the main square of the Prague Market. Usually, this place is used as a car park. On their way from the gate to the square (around 50 m distance), guests pass by white and orange buildings hosting a Vietnamese cafe, a business centre, a coffee shop, and a bar. At the entrance to one of the restaurants with Southeast Asian cuisine, there is a large grey statue in the form of a Buddha head. The Prague Market as a place demonstrates its expansiveness and multidimensionality through numerous economic, cultural, and leisure activities happening there every day.

Ukrainian festivalgoers are greeted at the main square by a small blue stand painted with a yellow sun and two white doves. On the top of the stand, there is a sign asking for a "voluntary donation" (*Dobrovolné vstupné*). In the middle of it, there is a large QR code, and underneath it, a text: "Support the Ukrainian community in the Czech Republic by giving a voluntary donation of any amount" (Figure 1). On the bottom, there are logos of the sponsors of the festival: Prague Market, and Organizace pro pomoc uprhlikum (Organization for Aid to Refugees).

Ukrainian cultural events have begun to appear more often on posters in Prague since the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine at the end of February 2022. Most of them share the stated goal of solidarity and support for people who are forced to leave their homes because of the war. At the beginning of June, more than 366,000 Ukrainian refugees had registered in the Czech Republic (UNHCR). Compared to the end of 2021, the number of Ukrainians in the Czech Republic almost tripled (Czech Statistical Office n.d.).

Only a few people stop near the festival stand (Figure 1) and next to a tent of the Organization for Aid to Refugees, both marking the entrance to the

Figure 1. Guests are greeted by a blue stand with a yellow sun and white doves, a large headline about the voluntary entry fee, and a QR code to support Ukrainian refugees. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

festival within the marketplace. The stage is ahead. From the entrance on the way to the stage, there is a kind of passage – with tents mostly on the left side and a bigger zone with sitting places. The tents sell street food: Bistro Vltava, Vína a destiláty z Ukrajiny (Wines and Distillates from Ukraine) (Figure 4), Pivovar Ládví Cobolis (Brewery Ládví Cobolis), and Ethnocathering. In front of these food tents, in the central area of the square, there are wooden tables with benches for families or large groups. Behind them – small black folding tables and chairs (from the #Pražskéžidle [#Praguechairs] brand), which can be found in various public places around Prague, on squares, and near fountains and libraries (Figure 2). There are also several food tents near the entrance, such as Chef Parade and mamacoffee. They are located far from the stage, on the opposite side. All seats are already taken when I arrive, even though the event starts at 16:00.

> "When I heard the word *borscht*,[2] I could not control myself!" a woman exclaims. People line up in front of the food tents, sometimes asking if food is free or for sale (Figure 3).

[2] Ukrainian dish, which is cooked from chopped beetroots, cabbage, potatoes, with the addition of meat, usually beef, or beans. The most famous variant is red borscht.

Figure 2. The main audience – women with kids, teenagers, and older people – are resting, eating, or waiting in the line to the food tent. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

"Look, there's borscht and *varenyky*[3] here! One hundred rubles[4] each, or whatever they are called – korunas!"[5] a woman says to a friend.

[3] Ukrainian dumplings, typically filled with potatoes or cherries.

[4] Russian currency.

[5] Czech currency.

Figure 3. An image of national Ukrainian dishes – *borscht* and *tvarožky* (in Czech) or *syrnyky* (in Ukrainian)[6] – which are sold at the food vendor. Most hot dishes sold out quickly during the first hours of the festival. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

Those who were born in the Soviet Union and live in the east of Ukraine often refer to rubles in casual conversation as a habit, instead using the word *hryvnia* for Ukrainian currency (or in this case, for Czech korunas). Both women are probably from eastern Ukraine, judging by their accent.

> "Come hang out at the Ukrainian festival", another woman says on the phone. "Here are *varenychky* [*stretches out sounds of the word gently and quietly*] and there's a concert. Let's hang out at least a little ... [*a sigh of sadness*]".

This is one of many conversations happening during the music festival, in which it is possible to notice among Ukrainian refugees in Prague the awkwardness of giving themselves permission to relax, enjoy the music, and steal some moments of fun against the backdrop of the war in their country. Music is often perceived as an attribute of a peaceful and safe life, and everyday leisure, all of which was for the Ukrainian people undermined by the war. Music was pushed to the background as a factor that could interfere with the mobilization of the

[6] A type of pancakes made from quark, flour, and eggs – popular in Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarussian cuisine.

Figure 4. Food vendor sellers wearing vyshyvankas (Ukrainian national embroidered shirts). They are selling Ukrainian products, cognac, wine, and candies. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

body's resources and prevent a quick switch to a mode of readiness to respond to a threat.

However, music still plays a role in the lives of Ukrainian people during the war. I was not in Ukraine when hostilities started. In media and digital space, however, I observed how music has appeared in various ways during the war. Music seems to be used to counter war and death. Musicians appear in unusual environments, music instruments and sounds contrasting the visual

background of places affected by war, juxtaposing art and creativity in response to violence and destruction. A cellist plays in front of a destroyed building at Kharkiv National University. An orchestra plays at one of Kharkiv's metro stations, which has turned into a bomb shelter for residents. Young people clear rubble after shell explosions and rebuild houses during a rave in villages in the Chernihiv region in the north of Ukraine.

Music at the festival can play a therapeutic role for guests who have survived the war. Listening to music can represent a short, relaxing break from reading stressful newsfeeds on social media about the war in Ukraine. Different styles of music help relieve stress and lower cortisol levels.[7] Music can work as a source of inspiration for resistance, or shape the collective memory of war-related events.

On the festival stage, highlighted with yellow-blue lights, musicians and technicians bustle as they set up instruments. There is no music yet. It appears odd because at any such social and cultural event, there is usually music in the background. At this festival, background music will also not be played on loudspeakers in between performances. This can be partly explained by the fact that there was no sound check before the start of the program. The musicians will be arriving at the time of their performance, and quickly setting up their musical equipment before they start playing. Moreover, food tents do not greet guests with their own music.

When I wait for the start of the festival program, there is no music; instead, I hear the sounds of children climbing the metal fences next to the stage, which are gently swaying with a screech. In the absence of background music, this creates an awkward emptiness in front of the stage. Instead of background music, there are noises from the environment. The sound of the closing of the plastic doors of toilets, which are located to the left of the stage. Water jets from an outdoor washstand. Wheels of kids' wagons and scooters riding on asphalt. Barking dogs. The sound of oil in a pan. The ringing of the microwave timer warming the borscht (Figure 3).

Closer to the tents with food, I observe more conversations and interactions between Ukrainians. They chat about life in Prague, about friends living temporarily abroad, and about the situation in Ukraine. I hear two women from the Luhansk region conversing (I find out where they are from during our small talk afterwards):

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7 See Burns 1999; Thoma 2013.

> "The house of our relatives who stayed [in Ukraine] was bombed. There is nowhere to hide. They can't leave; they don't want to leave their grandmother. We have moved. There is no end to the bombings. They are not people – [but] beasts!"
> "How many of your friends are here?"
> "Like everyone's friends – [they are] everywhere in Europe. We live in a dormitory. Friends in different countries: Germany, France, Barcelona. If it is possible to live with relatives, it is better. There is a feeling of home".
> "Would you like to return to Ukraine?"
> "Of course, when it gets quieter. A good outcome for Ukraine will happen if foreign intelligence services work well".

The telling of personal stories in conversations between Ukrainians creates a canvas of collective memories that can be reproduced easier in the future as they are transmitted into the memory of the individual's closest social group.[8]

At the beginning of the festival program, 90% of the audience are women, grandmothers, and mothers with children – the biggest group of refugees – because they often have permission to leave the country instead of men, according to Ukraine's martial law. Occasionally Czechs male adults appear; Ukrainian males are either schoolchildren, performers, or food sellers – most of them have been living in the Czech Republic since before the start of the military aggression. This festival mostly represented prewar Ukrainian migrants as performers, but there were fewer Ukrainian, prewar, working-class migrants as audiences present there. The latter are probably the biggest group of Ukrainians in the Czech Republic. The festivalgoers were therefore mostly Ukrainian war refugees.

Ukrainian women at the festival are mostly dressed in casual, comfortable clothes with hoodies, or tracksuits for walks with children. Some of them are adorned with vyshyvankas (Ukrainian national embroidered shirts). They are making photos of themselves: in front of the stage or food tents (Figure 5). I noticed around 20 people in vyshyvankas among guests and sellers of the festival. In Ukraine, a vyshyvanka is usually worn on special holidays, for example, Independence Day (24 August), Constitution Day (28 June), Vyshyvanka Day (18 May). The dress has been a symbol of pro-Ukrainian mass demonstrations since 2014.

8 See Halbwachs 2011.

Figure 5. A Ukrainian woman takes a photo in a vyshyvanka (a national embroidered shirt). On the bottom right of the photo, there is a shopping bag with a sign: "The environment worries us" – a slogan of one of the biggest supermarket chains in Ukraine. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

Among the Czechs and other attendees of the festival, I see some guests who wear clothes and accessories that demonstrate their support of Ukrainians. One woman came in a T-shirt with a print *Respekt Ukrajině* ("Respect for Ukraine"). One Czech male wears a bracelet with Ukrainian flag colours. A young girl, probably a student, sports blue and yellow socks.

It can hardly be said that this festival is comfortable for women and children. There are not enough places around to sit and rest. Most families sit at tables, with several strollers next to them. Those who did not find a space at the

Figure 6. Women sitting on a wooden platform on the side of the festival square. There are not enough chairs and tables at the festival. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

tables sit down on a wooden platform at the end of the festival square (Figure 6). Elderly women who came with their grandchildren often lean on fences.

School-age children gather in groups, dance, and run around – between the stage and their parents. Small kids sit in strollers, in the arms of their parents, or play with stones on the ground (Figure 7). By the middle of the event, around 18:30, children are given coloured crayons (Figure 8). In the space between the queue for food (about 30 m long), the sound technician's tent, and some folding tables and chairs, a "protected" triangular space has been formed as a children's playground. Asphalt here becomes a canvas for drawings.

Figure 7. The kid plays with stones. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

Figure 8. Children drawings with coloured crayons: Ukrainian flags and the national salute "Glory to Ukraine". Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

Figure 9. An elderly woman sitting in between empty baby strollers. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

The first drawings with crayons are Ukrainian flags and the patriotic phrase "Glory to Ukraine" (Слава Украине) written in Russian (Figure 8). Children in this "triangle" are left to their own creativity. Parents and grandparents are probably taking their time to relax, waiting in lines for food, occasionally observing their children from afar (Figure 9). At one moment, I notice the only interaction between adults and children in the playground space: one man from the Palestinian dancing group takes a crayon, draws a hopscotch, and starts jumping it with the children, cheering them on and applauding. Judging by the

reaction of the children, who start to laugh, jump, and clap their hands, they lack such interactions.

Before the official start of the festival, I hear the first musical instrument, a sopilka, a Ukrainian folk woodwind instrument made, for example, from viburnum or elderberry bushes, known since the time of Kievan Rus, an ancient state in modern-day Ukraine. The first band is preparing for the performance. As a Ukrainian with a philological education, I immediately come up with several associations with the sound of the sopilka.

From literature: a folk tale about a girl who turned into a viburnum bush after being murdered by her sister; what also comes to mind is the sopilka of Lukash – the character from the play *The Forest Song* (Лісова пісня*)*, by Ukrainian writer Lesya Ukrainka. Film associations: sopilka sounds included in a film *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (Тіні забутих предків) directed by Sergei Parajanov. Among modern Ukrainian musical groups, folk music, including sopilka sounds and electronic music, blend in the style of the band Onuka.

The second musical instrument I hear at the festival is a percussion instrument: a darbuka goblet drum from the Middle East. It accompanies a group of young men practicing a dance near the stage behind the fence that separates the service area and the audience area in front of the stage. Members of the band are dressed in black satin folklore costumes, with Palestinian keffiyeh scarfs over their shoulders or heads. This intrigues and arouses interest, not only in me, but also in other festivalgoers.

> "Well, let's try", an uncertain voice says in Czech into a microphone.
> "Today we will please you with Ukrainian songs. You can also try Ukrainian borscht. I haven't tried it yet", a member of the first band in the festival program addresses the audience.

The greeting of the first band in Czech is shorter than in the Ukrainian language. One of the musicians adds more details about the war. After performing several songs, musician return to the war topic, explaining – in the Czech language too – how to support Ukrainians refugees and the Ukrainian army.

The festival program begins with the group OL Capella, which consists of Ukrainians living in Prague since before February 2022. Later, during their performance, members of the collective admit that they met recently and decided to perform in this line-up right before the event. They are also looking for more

musicians. Festivalgoers hear the sopilka during this performance. As one of the members explained later, his collection of sopilka instruments from the Carpathians Mountains is supposedly one of the biggest collections in Europe.

Most of the performers of the festival program are actually immigrants from prewar Ukraine. They represent the art community of the Ukrainian minority in the Czech Republic, rather than recent Ukrainian refugees. Notably, before the war, excluding state holidays like Independence Day, the Ukrainian community had a low interest in representing their culture and in positioning themselves as Ukrainians in the Czech Republic. This unification among migrants was rather occurring around work purposes. In terms of the target audience, this festival is directed more toward the Ukrainians, unlike, for example, a rally and concert Together for Ukraine (*Společně pro Ukrajinu)*, organized in support of Ukraine on April 3, 2022, in Letná Park, in Prague, where most of the performers sang in Czech.

OL Capella's music style is pop rock, and their repertoire includes both their own original songs and covers. They are reminiscent of such Ukrainian musical rock bands from the late 1990s and early 2000s as Skai (Скай), Druha Rika (Друга ріка), and Okean Elzy (Океан Ельзи). They begin to play and, in addition to children, adults slowly come to the stage. During the performance, adults clap, some sway slightly from side to side. Children do not restrain their energy – they perform some gymnastic tricks in front of the stage. By the end of the performance, the band gathers around 50 festivalgoers around the stage. Some of them will even give up their seats at the tables to watch the band close up.

OL Capella introduces each song, mainly in Ukrainian. One of the songs they perform is "Everest", which was written by one of the band members, and which Ukrainian soldiers have been singing since 2014 – the start of the Russian invasion of the Donbas and the annexation of Crimea.

OL Capella finally earns a larger interest of the audience thanks to a cover of the song "I Have No Home" ("У мене немає дому"), originally composed by the Ukrainian indie rock band Alone in a Canoe (Один в каное).[9]

9 Translation of the song taken from lyricstranslate.com (Lyrics Translate 2011).

In all honesty,	Справа в тому,
I just don't have a home,	Що в мене немає дому
And out of my courteous manner,	І за правилом доброго тону,
Just as from the fear of the belt,	Як за правилом доброго ременя,
I will remember my tribe,	Я згадаю з якого я племені,
Remember my city,	Пригадаю з якого міста,
I am just waiting for my Grammy,	Я чекаю на своє Греммі,
I just don't have a place to sit down,	В мене просто нема де сісти
To write down my speech:	Написати свою промову:
I just don't have a home ...	У мене немає дому …

The song has been in the top ranking of Ukrainian songs since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, for example in Apple Music playlist's Top 100 Ukraine and Top 25 Kyiv. This song was written in 2019. However, it gained relevance in 2022 for Ukrainians whose houses were destroyed during military aggression or who were forced to leave their homes due to the hostilities. The lyrics have a specific significance for them, as it captures the memory of the largest migration wave of Ukrainians due to this war. At the festival, this song mainly touches Ukrainians, but for Czechs and other festival attendees, without explanation or translation, it would rather be just another sad indie rock song.

During the performance of the song, almost nobody from the audiences near the stage is checking the news on their phones – a practice that has become a habit for Ukrainians since the beginning of the war. The focus is on the band. Some eat and drink while listening, some film the performance on their phones. "I just have nowhere to sit". With these words, an old lady nods, and echoes a line from the lyrics ("I just don't have a home") – implicitly alluding to her situation, being away from home – and sits near the sound tent, almost on the ground, next to her bags of groceries (Figure 10). Young girls near the stage sing along with the band. A pregnant woman takes a deep breath and moves slowly to the music with her eyes closed.

The OL Capella band ends the performance and says goodbye to the audience with the slogan "Glory to Ukraine" (Слава Україні), an audience answer "Glory to the Heroes" (Героям слава*)* is loud. After OL Capella's performance, the square again falls into moments without music. During a break, guests leave the stage area and line up for food at the vendors. For Ukrainians, the choice for food is the tent with a longest queue, run by Olha Martynovska, one of the participants of the popular Ukrainian television program *Master Chef* – a Ukrainian

Figure 10. An elderly lady sits on the ground and listens to OL Capella performing the cover of the famous song “I Have No Home”, originally written by a Ukrainian indie band Один в каное. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

refugee herself. She and some members of her team wear vyshyvankas and cook *varenyky* for guests. Czechs and other festivalgoers are more likely to choose the queue where there are still hot dishes left, and not just desserts.

As I wait for the next performer, I am thinking that a concert presenter could more precisely announce the long breaks. As an alternative to the idle break time, a place for activities and networking for Czechs and Ukrainians could have been arranged. During the festival, Czechs and Ukrainians socialize in separate groups. According to one of the organizers, who is a responsible for

the music program of the festival, and whom I managed to interview after the event, the language barrier and shyness on the part of Czechs prevents them from interacting with Ukrainians:

> Czechs and Ukrainians who came to the event are ready to talk to each other. Czechs, with a different way of thinking, would never visit this event. They came to support Ukrainians. But they cannot talk due to the language barrier. Generally, Czechs are a bit shy in personal interactions. Our nation is a little closed. But there were some natural interactions between Czechs and Ukrainians [at the festival], for example, between moms with kids, and among people with dogs (personal communication, 16 May 2022).

The presenter announces the next band in Czech. This is Al-Sarres Dabkeh, a Palestinian folklore dance group from Israel, visiting Prague for several days, which will present the dances of the Middle East. The announcer adds additional clarification about the first dance: it will be a *dabq* (from Arabic "foot stomping"), a dance which is performed during wedding ceremonies.

Young men in black satin suits with red embroidery on their chests come to the stage one by one. They line up, hold each other's shoulders, stamp out the rhythm with their feet, step, and jump. The group leader twirls the cane. They are accompanied by instruments: a darbuka, a tabla, and a mizmar (Figure 11). The reaction of the public is excited but ambivalent: after the sad songs of the previous band, smiles appear on their faces. One person standing near the stage awkwardly giggles: "Why are Arabs at the festival of Ukrainian culture?"

Many people in the audience like this quick and joyous atmosphere that the Al-Sarres Dabkeh group creates with their music and dance. Two women in the audience comment that Ukrainian culture is *hopak*, referring to Ukrainian energetic folk dances with acrobatic jumps and spins. It seemed to me that the choreographer of the Al-Sarres Dabkeh band Omar has acknowledged this miscommunication. During the break, I overheard him talking to the concert host: "It is critical to tell the guests we are from Palestine. Palestine supports the Ukrainians; we have also suffered from war for many years".

As the organizers later told me in an interview, this band was included in the program by the band's initiative. The band members said to the organizers that they wanted to bring joy to the Ukrainian people because they love them. As a dance band, they had traveled to Ukraine several times, thanks to an exchange program. Now, they felt sorry about the current situation.

Figure 11. The performance of the Al-Sarres Dabkeh, a Palestinian folklore dance group from Israel. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

In the initial announcement, the host clarified that the Al-Sarres Dabkeh dance group was from Palestine. She spoke in Czech, so this was not thoroughly understood by many Ukrainians in the audience. By some Czechs too. “Look, son, these are Iranian dances”, one mom explained in Czech during the group’s performance.

Again a break and emptiness without sounds. Artists change. Sound engineers do a sound check for drums. Because of the echo in the square, drum sounds are unpleasant to listen to – they cause stress after the relaxed atmosphere of the previous performance. People are leaving the stage area.

Those people who continue to stand near the stage take initiative and fill the gap with singing songs by themselves. The family entertains a small boy, the youngest member of his family, and sings a song that has become a symbol of resistance during the war. The origin of the song called "Oh, In the Meadow a Red Kalyna" ("Ой у лузі червона калина") probably goes back to Cossack times, and in the 20th century, it was turned into a military march of Sich Riflemen, a military unit of the army of the Ukrainian People's Republic, a country declared in 1917.[10]

Oh, in the meadow a red kalyna has bent down low.
For some reason, our glorious Ukraine is in sorrow.
And we'll take that red kalyna and we will raise it up.
And we shall cheer up our glorious Ukraine, hey – hey.

Ой у лузі червона калина похилилася,
Чогось наша славна Україна зажурилася.
А ми тую червону калину підіймемо,
А ми нашу славну Україну, гей-гей, розвеселимо!

This song became more popular after the 2022 performance of Andriy Khlyvniuk, a soloist of Boombox (Бумбокс), a Ukrainian pop rock band. He is one of the artists who was forced to change his profession and to defend the country. In a YouTube video, published on 4 March 2022, a week after the start of the full-scale war, we see him in a military uniform, a cap with a New York Yankees baseball cap symbol ("NY"), and with a weapon around his chest. Andriy Khlyvniuk sings a cappella in the city centre of Kyiv, which is without its usual noise of the street, cars, and crowds of people. Behind the singer, we see St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery, one of the historical buildings connected to the Kievan Rus state period of Ukrainian history. The place of singing is significant, as it emphasizes the long history of Ukraine in response to the Russian authorities' narrative that Ukraine is more of a quasi-state and that Ukrainians and Russians are the same nation. We cannot see this in the video, but a monument of Ukrainian military commander and Hetman of the Zaporozhian Host Bohdan Khmelnytskyi stands on the square near the cathedral. He was a Hetman of the Ukrainian Cossacks state, so it is symbolic to hear a stanza of the Cossacks' song in this place in modern war times.

10 Translation of the song taken from lyricstranslate.com (Lyrics Translate 2022).

Figure 12. A woman in the centre of the photo was shopping at one of the Prague Market stores and has mops and shopping boxes in the pram. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

Thunder rumbles, and it starts getting cold around 18:30. The forecast app on my phone shows a high chance of rain. I am checking places where people could go to hide during the rain. A small part of them hides under large festival umbrellas, while many others scatter to the indoor market areas surrounding the festival square. Many guests already visited the market and hardware stores before the beginning of the festival: there are bags with vegetables next to them. Someone has two cleaning mops and some additional shopping boxes placed in a pram (Figure 12).

For many families, the colder weather was the reason to leave the festival. By 19:00 there are much fewer Ukrainian women with children and grandmothers with grandchildren. Younger people, students, and couples – in particular Czechs – are gradually replacing this audience.

Ukrainian musician Anna Kovtun appears on the stage with her band around 18:30. After the Middle Eastern dances, the dynamic mood changes to calmness generated by acoustic guitar sounds. As the organizer mentioned to me in an interview, the festival program dramaturgy proceeds from less known to more popular performers. It includes the understanding that the audience changes throughout the festival.

Anna performs her own original songs, mostly in Russian, as well as covers of Ukrainian pop hits. She came to the Czech Republic to study eight years ago. During her performance, one of the guests of the festival near the stage asks why she sings in Russian. She answers that it is also her native language. After the beginning of hostilities in Ukraine in February, for some Ukrainians, the language issue became the subject of heated discussions regarding Russia's influence on modern Ukraine and its culture. The Russian language began to be perceived as the language of the occupiers, even though a significant part of the Ukrainian population speaks Russian.

The program has an unannounced guest who comes on stage after Anna Kovtun's performance. A Ukrainian woman, who fled from Mykolaiv, recites her poem in Ukrainian about the war, which stole springtime from the children. At the end, the applauding audience standing by the stage approvingly encourages her.

The next performer is Birdsy, a singer, sound producer, and songwriter who calls herself an "R&B princess". Due to the beginning of the missiles attack on the morning of 24 February, Birsdy was forced to leave Kyiv at the end of February. She was born in Transnistria and later moved to Ukraine. Some Ukrainians still remember her as a participant of the television program *Holos krainy* (Голос країни), a Ukrainian version of the American reality TV program *The Voice*. Her performance starts around 19:00 and strongly resembles a performance at a television show. The green sequins of her outfit reflect the stage lights. Her repertoire includes pop and R&B songs in English.

Many performers present new original songs that they wrote during the war after 24 February and concerning this topic, for example, OL Capella band, Anna Kovtun, Birdsy. Notably, all of the festival performers are trying to make references, with their songs and stage talks, to the current situation in Ukraine.

Some phrases from a song performed by Birdsy can be interpreted as referring to the war, although the text is, in fact, about spending time with friends in a bar, as the performer explains during the stage talk: "I feel like a hostage of my illusions".

Ukrainian teenage girls take selfies with Birdsy after her performance, or their mothers take photos of them. They ask her about her YouTube and Instagram profiles. One schoolboy says he is a long-time subscriber. Many are happy to know she also lived in Odesa, like them.

Popular music changes to classical around 19:40. The Hardy Orchestra takes the stage. This project was established in 2013 in Odesa as a symphonic orchestra performing classical, rock, and film music hits. The bandmaster, Oleksiy Andriichuk, addresses the audience. In response to "Glory to Ukraine", "Glory to the Heroes" is hardly heard from the audience, compared to the beginning of the festival. The number of Ukrainians among the festival visitors has decreased, replaced partly by adult Czechs. The bandmaster announces that the program includes not only classics but also covers of contemporary pop and rock songs. He adds that there are also Czech musicians in the orchestra; this is the first time they perform in this line-up. While the orchestra is playing, a woman in the audience sways with a glass of white wine, then passes it to her friend and continues to move more freely.

Observing the festivalgoers' activities and interactions, I notice that the social creation of the festival place invites multiple interpretations. During the event, due to the allusions to the experience of Ukrainians, an imaginary space is created inside an actual space: a place geographically far from home in a Czech city creates a feeling of home and awakens memories of specific cultural events in Ukrainian cities.

A specific configuration of spatial characteristics and cultural symbols (music, food, dress, language) at the Ukrainian festival space creates a nostalgic effect for Ukrainians and activates the memory of their prewar experiences. According to conversations among Ukrainian guests that I overheard at the festival, they recall picnic activities during the May holidays or City Day (День міста) celebrated annually in different Ukrainian cities; usually this date coincides with the founding of the city or historical event. One of my interlocutors recalls the Mariupol City Day celebrations, when different ethnicities presented their national cuisines and created mobile kitchens along a crowded avenue.

For a Ukrainian woman and her teenage son whom I meet in a queue for the food tent, this festival represents a connection with home, of which they are

Figure 13. Photo from another music event held on the same day at the Prague Market. Young people sit in a beer garden playing chess, with electronic music playing in the background. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

reminded by different Ukrainian cultural attributes concentrated in the festival place, fancifully collected as in a kaleidoscope: borscht, *holubtsi*,[11] vyshyvanka, and products from Ukrainian companies such as ROSHEN candies, Shabo wine, and cognac (Figure 4). According to my conversations with Czech guests, it reminds them of events on Prague's *náplavka* ("riverbank"), where the cuisines of different cultures are presented, or cultural festivals on squares in different districts of Prague, usually supported by embassies.

In the middle of the Hardy Orchestra's performance, I decide to leave the festival place and go to explore other places inside the Prague Market area. Other

[11] The Ukrainian national dish: rolls consisting of cooked cabbage leaves wrapped around the filling in the form of meat, and either rice, buckwheat, corn, or wheat porridge, depending on the region of the country.

Figure 14. A security guard stops a Vietnamese boy and tells him not to ride a bicycle on the festival grounds. Vietnamese shops form a big part of the Prague Market. Photo by Anastasiia Krasnozhon.

music events are taking place in other areas of the marketplace simultaneously with the Ukrainian culture festival. A block behind the building separating the square from the other areas of the market space, there is a food truck with burgers and background jazz music. A block further away, young people hang out in a beer garden, where an electronic dance music is accompanying a live female vocal performer. At one of the tables, guys are playing chess (Figure 13). Both of these market sites are smaller and cosier, better suited for socializing and networking.

From the beginning of its history in 1895, the Prague Market has been transformed from a central slaughterhouse and meat market to a multifunctional public space, which it is today. The Prague Market identifies itself as a place offering an "optimal mix" of economic, cultural, and leisure activities for "residents and guests of Prague from all age groups and levels of income" (Pražská tržnice 2020). It invites people to experience cultural difference (Figure 14),

novelty, familiarity, and belonging, while also providing shopping facilities as well as humanitarian aid.[12]

In another area of the market, where some workshop studios are located on the way to a hardware store Mountfield and the electronics shop Alza, there are newly opened points for Ukrainian refugees inside these buildings. The branch of the Labour Office of the Czech Republic (Úřad Práce České Republiky) helps with job searches, job requalification, language courses, applications for humanitarian aid, and offers consultations about social services. Another charitable organization stationed there, Šatník, assists Ukrainian refugees with clothing, footwear, and household appliances. On the whole marketplace territory, copies of A4 sheet signs are distributed around, in the colours of the Ukrainian flag, with information about these points for refugees. Now the passages between the buildings are empty and quiet. Passing there, I imagine what I saw a few days ago in the afternoon hours of a weekday. Several hundred Ukrainians stand in long queues here. At the front of the line, most women huddle close together in an uncomfortable position, and behind the fence, mostly elderly relatives are waiting for them with strollers, as well as their children. At the entrance of the building after their waiting in queue, a young volunteer – with a badge round the neck, a special vest, and a list with a pen in hand – greets them.

On my way back from the festival, on the tram, I am thinking of the war in my home country. I remember when the military conflict began, in 2014, when I met dozens of refugees from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions at the Kharkiv Railway Station, while I was filming a documentary series about volunteers in my hometown. Now, in the space of the Prague Market, I see many more Ukrainians from different regions and from different social groups forced to leave their homes. Attending an event like the UKAUKRAJINU! festival and its venue at the Prague Market, I can observe cultural representation as a living process that constantly creates and re-creates familiar cultural attributes and connotations to express Ukrainian culture and identity abroad. At the same time, this process is limited by the internal cultural and political positionality of the people creating them, as well as by the external impact of place, time, and circumstance, and therefore it represents a filter upon which different people select and project a variety of broad cultural and historical sediments.

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[12] See Anderton 2022.

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Filippo Bonini-Baraldi: *Roma Music and Emotion*

Oxford University Press, 2021. 325 pages, with accompanying online video materials.

Filippo Bonini Baraldi may have graduated in 2001 as an electrical engineer in the Italian city of Padua, but after that his interest in music began to predominate. He earned his doctorate in ethnomusicology from Paris Nanterre University in 2010, the culmination of his long-term research on musicians of Roma origin in Romania, above all in the small village of Ceuaş, Transylvania. One result of that research is the documentary film *Crying for the Dead* (*Plan-séquence d'une mort criée*, 2015, 62 min), an audiovisual documentation of the emotional escalation that happens during a vigil for a deceased woman from the Roma community in Ceuaş. Now his longtime focus on musicians of Roma origin in Romania as a subject has resulted in the thorough elaboration of one of his prominent themes: the association between emotions and performance (and not just pertaining to music) in Roma life. We must immediately recall that Baraldi had a lot of academic work to draw from; musicians of Roma origin in Romania have long been the focus of study by Speranta Radulescu, Anca Giurchescu, and Margaret Beissinger, for example, while emotion as a subject has been specially studied by Baraldi's fellow-traveler (also Radulescu´s research collaborator) and earlier graduate of the same university, Victor Alexandre Stoichita, whose published dissertation refers to emotions right in its title: *Fabricants d´émotions. Musique et malice dans un village tsigane de Roumanie* [*Emotion-Makers: Music and Mischief in a Gypsy Village in Romania*] (2008).

Baraldi's monograph is based on close ethnographies of three contexts, each different from the next, in which musicians of Roma origin are engaged, and during which "tears roll down their faces" (which the author comprehends as evidence of emotions): playing music professionally at a wedding; the informal collective music-making that he calls an "after-party"; and the musical – or more precisely, audio – productions associated with death (Steven Feld, the famous American music anthropologist, who was a member of Baraldi's dissertation committee, appreciates this thorough dose of ethnography in his preface). The ethnographic sections are interlaced with analyses of phenomena important to each context. In association with music performances at weddings, Baraldi examines how musicians who are professionals create their repertoires in order to elicit emotion in the audience; when it comes to the after-parties, he considers them in relation to the emic concept of being inwardly torn apart. Baraldi then linguistically analyzes the salient Roma emic concepts that are associated with emotions in general, as well as those used when mourning the dead in particular. In addition to his linguistic analysis, he incorporates music analysis, both classic musicological analysis (when discussing the ornamentation and phrasing used to create a sense of sadness) and music analysis based on computerized processing (e.g., to detect deviations in the rhythm of the *aksak* asymmetrical meter as it is actually performed in each of these contexts).

The last two chapters (13 and 14) are theoretical (the analytical sections are

densely interwoven with references to theory as well). Chapter 13 focuses on the concept of empathy, which is de facto the emotion mentioned in the title of the book and the subject of this research; Baraldi considers it crucial to comprehending what is happening in Ceuaş among these musicians and their audiences. In this chapter, he first discusses ethnomusicological works on the subject of emotional sharing, specifically code sharing, as in Feld (1982), Pasqualino (1998), and Becker (2004). However, because no other ethnomusicological work has explicitly engaged with empathy as Baraldi comprehends it, he does not focus in depth on any of those ethnomusicological studies and turns to the findings of philosophers who have reflected on aesthetic empathy (e.g., Pinotti 1997), cognitive scientists researching mirror neurons (e.g., Gallese et al. 1996), and others. Baraldi then integrates this combination of analytical concepts and findings into an empathy model that works not on the basis of the mechanisms for perceiving art, but in accordance with approaches "emphasizing the fundamental role of simulation, imitation, embodiment, and empathic animation" (p. 295).

Baraldi then uses this model in Chapter 14, where he transforms the data he has collected and discussed in previous chapters into an answer to the book's central question of how the music performed in Ceauş by musicians of Roma origin functions with regard to the creation of emotions, or to be more exact, the creation of empathy. His basis for these interpretations is British anthropologist Alfred Gell's (1998) theory, which is not primarily about music but about art. Gell explicitly rejects an approach to "artifacts", i.e., artworks that are semiological. "Turning his back on ideas of meaning and communication", Baraldi explains, "Gell took a pragmatic approach to art, understood as a system of actions" (p. 264). Based on this approach, Baraldi finally presents the emotional effect of music as the result of "the intentionality attributed to different types of agents constituting [complex] networks" (p. 272) created by the audience, the musicians, the repertoire, etc., (the basic design of which is reminiscent of, but does not refer to, Latour's *actor network theory*, known as ANT). The entire model, therefore, shows humans to be beings who are not just entangled in the network of meanings (Geerz), but who also experience emotions only when they have the "capacity to attribute intentions and emotions to others" (p. 273).

Roma Music and Emotion is more than just an excellent book that provides deep insight into the music and social life of Roma in Ceuaş, augmented by the available online video materials (it is a pity that *Crying for the Dead* is not available for online streaming as well); it is also a book that teaches us about how to be empathetic human beings.

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- to support the development of scientific research and education in social anthropology;
- to represent Czech social anthropology in relation to the government, public and non-governmental organizations, and on international anthropological forums;
- to popularise the achievements of social anthropology among the general public;
- to create and cultivate relations among social anthropologists and specialists of related disciplines in the Czech Republic and internationally;
- to maintain contacts and establish cooperation with similar professional organizations in the Czech Republic and abroad.

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