In/Exclusive Cities: Insights From a Social Work Perspective

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Edited by Karine Duplan, Monica Battaglini, Milena Chimienti, and Marylène Lieber

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Editorial

Shaping the Inclusive City: Power Relations, Regulations, and the Role of Social Work

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Abstract
While being celebrated as the ideal of inclusiveness, cities also constitute the place of different types of discrimination, which some public policies intend to tackle. The "urban" has also been pointed out as the locus where vice and lust concentrate, leading public policies to develop regulations for public space aiming to maintain the social order of the city. This, in turn, contributes to the definition of the contours of urban moral economies, which are continuously shaped by processes of in/exclusion. Hence, crucial is the need to further explore how cities can be welcoming to their dwellers and newcomers, as well as the role public policies (have to) play in the vision of the future of an open and inclusive city. In so doing, social work is certainly called upon to play a major role based on its historical presence in cities and its know-how in accompanying transitions. How does social work contribute to the definition of an inclusive city? By presenting new and original research that draws on various case studies as well as theoretical reflections across disciplines, this thematic issue aims to provide answers to this question to better understand the role of social work in the shaping of an open and inclusive city.

Issue
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1. Introduction

Cities have long been framed as places of emancipation and possibilities; in the context of growing urbanisation and globalisation, they have been described as melting pots of diversity favouring encounters with otherness (Amin, 2006; Sennett, 2013). However, this idea of togetherness has soon been confronted with the lived experiences of those who face various forms of exclusion at the intersection of multiple power relations, among others, gender, class, and race. Urban dwellers, therefore, adapt their behaviours, uses, and practices as strategies for place-making. Indeed, while framed as places of collective rituals that can potentially strengthen social

ties and be celebrated as the ideal of inclusiveness, cities are also the place of different types of discrimination that public policies propose to tackle. The urban space has also been singled out as the locus where vice and lust concentrate, leading public policies to develop regulations for public space to maintain the social order of the city. This, in turn, contributes to the definition of the contours of urban moral economies, which are continuously shaped by processes of in/exclusion. Hence, it becomes imperative to explore how cities can be welcoming to their dwellers and newcomers, as well as the role public policies (have to) play in the vision of an "open and inclusive" city—utopia?—represented as a "good city" (Pile et al., 2023; Yazici et al., 2023). In so doing, social work

is certainly called upon to play a major role based on its historical presence in cities and its know-how in accompanying transitions. What is an inclusive city? To what extent are cities inclusive and what are their limits? How do people manage to negotiate this inclusion? How does social work contribute to the definition of an inclusive city? What role do social work professionals play in the development and eventual realization of these inclusive visions of cities?

By presenting new and original research that draws on various case studies as well as theoretical reflections across disciplines, ranging from sociology and anthropology to urban, cultural geographies and social policy, this thematic issue aims to provide answers to these questions to better understand the role of social work in the shaping of an open and inclusive city. Considering how working towards open and inclusive cities leads us to reflect on the notions of "urban space as public space," scholars have long argued on how space results from social imaginaries and representations as a process of ongoing construction shaped by social actors and imbued with power (Massey, 2005). As such, the urban becomes a place of struggles when it comes to one's own place-making, and the city is revealed as produced by tensions between institutional discourses and practices and its inhabitants' everyday practices. Far from the inclusionary ideal of democratic inclusion through the encounter of different publics, urban space is therefore rather a place of multiple forms of intersectional discrimination depending on the position of social actors within the matrix of power relations (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006). In this context, public policies act to regulate the contours of the inclusive city as the "good," "progressive," and "virtuous" city, which might lead to conflicts in uses, projects, and consequently processes of in/exclusion rather than joyful coproduction.

By investigating issues of urban inclusiveness, this collection of articles provides new insights into the notion of the in/exclusive city. It questions the dynamic forms of inclusion and exclusion at play and how they feed one another (e.g., Piñeiro et al., 2023). The articles in this issue highlight the nuanced forms of in/exclusion and question the various representations, as well as the naturalisation of what would be an in/exclusive space (e.g., Colombo et al., 2023). Contributions acknowledge the variegated practices performed by city users to negotiate their place or "right to the city" (e.g., Colombo et al., 2023; Felder et al., 2023). They allow for a better understanding of the shifting dynamics of inclusiveness given the increased neoliberalisation of modes of urban governance, including in traditional welfare regimes (e.g., Sandberg & Listerborn, 2023). The issue also offers further reflections on the scales of in/exclusion and the contradiction across scales (see Duplan, 2023; Felder et al., 2023; Peruzzi Castellani, 2023; Tissot, 2023). Finally, some contributions insightfully question the definition of in/exclusion from the point of view of different actors at the street level (see Felder et al., 2023;

Sandberg & Listerborn, 2023) and the urban policy level (see Dhananka, 2023; Frauenfelder et al., 2023; Matthey et al., 2023; Ramachandran & Di Matteo, 2023; Richter, 2023).

The rest of this editorial presents the three main themes through which this collection is organised: (a) negotiating the socio-spatial regulation of public space through everyday practices; (b) in/exclusion through the lens of power relations of gender, sexuality, culture, and ethnicity; and (c) planning the inclusive city through public policies, participation, and social answers.

2. Negotiating the Socio-Spatial Regulation of Public Space Through Everyday Practices

For some authors, the dimension of in/exclusion in cities materializes in the social and political regulation of access and use of urban public spaces and their amenities—including housing—in which paradoxes take place. They look at how people negotiate the openness of city life (see, e.g., Hall, 2015; Vertovec, 2007). On the one hand, there is a tendency to politically protect the normative ideal of inclusion; on the other, this inclusive ideal finds itself having to cohabit with practices that, in reality, exclude certain categories of users. Among the categories representing deviance in the use of these urban spaces are young people and migrants (particularly irregular ones) who are denied access to these spaces and have to negotiate their spatial rights. By participating in these contradictory movements of in/exclusion, social work faces its paradoxes, concerning most notably matters of support and empowerment. In this thematic issue, contributions that fall within this category/theme examine how city dwellers and street-level actors adjust and give meaning to their everyday practices in relation to the socio-spatial regulation of public space.

Piñeiro et al. (2023) explore the tactics performed by an emerging kind of actor in the continental European context they refer to as outreach socio-preventive municipal order services (OSPOS), which are oriented towards the soft policing of socio-spatial marginality. Their ethnographic research sheds light on how these services work through dialogue, "nudging," and cooperation to either regulate deviant individual practices or encourage a fairer shared use of public space—aiming to "protect" the ideal of inclusion of public space while shedding light on the exclusionary mechanisms of the in/exclusive city. This echoes the representation of youth as actors of public disorder in urban space that Colombo et al. (2023) seek to demolish in an ethnographic study of the various uses of public space by this (still) overlooked demographic: Highlighting how young city dwellers negotiate the normative expectations of the public, these authors show how geographical and social contexts are used by youth to assert their place in the city, in a careful and nuanced understanding of the dynamics of in/exclusion in space.

When considering how to make "a place of one's own," issues of housing become crucial: More particularly, Sandberg and Listerborn (2023) address the outcomes of the neoliberalisation of the housing market in the declining Swedish welfare regime. Analysing data from interviews conducted with social workers and other municipal officers in charge of housing demands, in a context of increasing homelessness rates, the authors show how the shifting landscape of housing demand results in social services acting as providers of emergency solutions that prevent the provision of secure housing. In so doing, the authors account for the ambiguous situation of social workers that have to (re)negotiate their role and position amid a shift in the Swedish housing market. Finally, the paradoxical nature of inclusion is addressed by Felder et al. (2023) concerning the services provided to irregular migrants in the assistance circuit at the local level of the city of Geneva. Their analysis allows us to understand in greater depth the subjective experience of support services, as well as the meaning associated with these services as recognised by those who provide them at the street level. This results in an argument for an implicit palliative social work paradigm that keeps people on the move through the daily spatio-temporal configuration of the assistance circuit, to supposedly enhance their autonomy, although exhausting any of their will.

3. In/Exclusion Through the Lens of Power Relations of Gender, Sexuality, Culture, and Ethnicity

The literature has addressed the issue of in/exclusion in cities from the angle of diversity management and minorities. Authors often point to a "deepening" of diversity, leading the literature to speak of "super-diversity" where cultural differences are both broad and intertwined (see, e.g., Hall, 2012; Keith, 2005; Neal et al., 2017). In this context, social actors can play a decisive role in city governance systems. Their relations with the authorities who implement policies in response to challenges posed by super-diversity—e.g., issues that emerge within sexual and gender minorities—represent a decisive element in the development and implementation of actions. In this thematic issue, contributions that fall within this category/theme question the opposing interests of various publics on what should constitute an open and inclusive city.

In an ethnographic study of Park Slope in New York, a formerly known lesbian neighbourhood now largely gentrified, Tissot (2023) questions the expression of acceptance of gay men and lesbians by heterosexual residents. She sheds light on the heterogeneity of progressive attitudes towards homosexuality depending on places and contexts and argues that what is framed as "progressiveness" has become part of a habitus that consolidates class position as well as whiteness. In so doing, the article highlights how this proclaimed progressiveness dissimulates the entanglements of mechanisms of in/exclusion

while contributing to the reproduction of power relations through the making of "moral profit."

Shadowing Hayden's (1980) seminal work on the inclusive city, Duplan (2023) analyses the ambiguities of the language of "inclusion," especially in relation to gender and sexual identities, as it has become increasingly prominent across policymakers and transnational institutions in times of an increasing neoliberalisation of modes of urban governance. In so doing, her theoretical contribution sheds light on the possibilities of making an inclusive city for gender and sexual minorities while accounting for the need for more queerly engaged planning practices.

Issues of planning are also central in Peruzzi Castellani's (2023) article, which presents how the city of Barcelona is building its image as an inclusive city drawing on the emergent paradigm of interculturalism. Indeed, according to this new frame of reference at the European scale, diversity has been described as "super-diversity" and includes a very wide range of interwoven particularities. Barcelone's Bones Pràctiques Socials project, based on the cooperation between municipalities and social actors, is analysed here in terms of opportunities and challenges. Finally, Ramachandran and Di Matteo (2023) propose an exploratory and comparative study of how the inclusive city is conceptualized in social work literature in Sweden and the UK in relation to migration policies developed at the municipal level, aiming at an inclusive and sustainable city. The authors propose a six-step analysis of the literature from both countries, focusing on underlining the lack of knowledge about the role played by social work in the development and practical implementation of policies aimed at various immigrant minorities.

4. Planning the Inclusive City: Public Policies, Participation, and Social Answers

Our final group of contributions address the issue of in/exclusion in cities from the point of view of urban planning stakeholders. The fundamental question here lies both in the way the city is conceived and in the methodology used to achieve it. In other words, who builds the city of the future, and how? For Sennett (2018), the inclusive city relies on an ideal of openness which depends on how to build and dwell in the "open city." Authors in this final section address this issue by questioning the inclusive or non-inclusive composition of the modalities that lead to the construction of urban planning designs. In other words, the authors hypothesize that decisions about the inclusion or exclusion of residents in the construction of planning foundations, as well as the involvement or non-involvement of social work, influence the design and realization of city evolution. These reflections invite us, as scholars, but also professionals—social workers and policymakers—to reflect further on our practices.

Matthey et al. (2023) describe their experience of "narrative research," which is characterised by the implementation of an original methodology for involving

residents in territorial planning in a neighbourhood. The article is a reflective presentation of this methodology, which consists of producing stories with citizens during writing workshops. These stories give a very different vision of the area than the results of the participatory events organised by local authorities. The fiction that emerges from this experience describes a potential city of the future in which the places that are important to the inhabitants in the present are preserved. The identification of these places could easily be incorporated into a town planning document as part of development decisions.

In the context of urban densification and the development of urban reforms, Frauenfelder et al. (2023) question the contrasting meanings given to the notion of "quality of life" and the premises that shape its moral contours. Based on an ethnographic study in Geneva, the authors shed light on the potential risks at stake when using such a term from a universal normative perspective without accounting for how social realities are embedded within local particularities. In so doing, they point to the in/exclusionary processes at play and the consequences in terms of social justice of these socially-laden choices framed in ecological and rationalistic debates.

Using the example of rapid building expansion in the peri-urban context of the Bangalore metropolis in southern India, Dhananka (2023) aims to show the consequences of urban planning dominated by speculative logics, resulting in unbridled urbanization that is rapidly and drastically reducing agricultural land. Highlighting a potential alternative model leading to inclusive urbanism, the author discusses the consequences of engaging social work in urban planning processes. Consequences that could support the emergence of the "inclusive city" because of the values linked to this profession, namely the proportion of human well-being over and above economic performance.

Finally, Richter (2023) offers a series of reflections on "post"-theories in social work research and practice understood as reconfigurations of thinking in this field. These "post"-theories often form the basis of the main demands of social work, such as social justice, empowerment, or ethical positions concerning research and practice. Among the "post"-theories, the author focuses more specifically on posthumanism, which could provide a basis for reflection on the issues of social justice and inclusion. These issues are particularly relevant to cities.

5. Conclusion

While the ideal of inclusiveness can always be questioned, especially as it is, somehow, always exclusionary, all the articles in this thematic issue tackle the question of possible actions that mitigate the power relations at stake and allow a more reflexive practice of inclusion. They question the meanings of urban citizenship and develop a critical lens to engage with the ideal of inclusiveness where social work plays a crucial role, both as a

historical agent that addresses inequalities and as a political stakeholder that participates in the shaping of urban spaces. Engaging in a dialogue with research, therefore, allows us to further develop knowledge on the pitfalls and ambivalence of the "inclusive city" and develop further paths for action.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Policing the In/Exclusion of Social Marginality: The Preventive Regulation of Public Space in Urban Switzerland

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Abstract

Urban spaces are always contested and, as such, permeated by processes of inclusion and exclusion. Since the 2000s, new types of governmental public order services have been established in Switzerland specialized in dealing with socially marginalized individuals, groups, or areas. Without having police powers, they proceed with socio-communicative methods typical in outreach social work. Based on our ethnographic research and drawing on Foucault-inspired governmentality studies we elucidate the socio-preventive risk management of two types of order services: While the welfare type aims to protect public spaces of attractive urban centers from social marginality, the neighborhood watch type is concerned with improving the coexistence of residents of marginalized housing developments. As the former wants to keep socio-spatial in/exclusion of social marginality in motion and prevent its fixation in certain places, the latter works towards the inclusive socio-spatial entrenchment of residents in segregated housing developments. Both dynamics—inclusion and exclusion—are closely intertwined and utilized for the governance of public spaces. The "inclusive city" should not be celebrated as a dull ideal and must be confronted with its own socio-spatial mechanisms of exclusion.

Keywords

governmentality; inclusive city; nudging; order service; policing; public space; social marginality; social work

Issue

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1. Introduction

Contemporary Western European societies are characterized by persistently high mobility and diversity. In light of this, the concept of an "inclusive city" is gaining importance in international urban research (Anttiroiko & de Jong, 2021; Behrens et al., 2016) and, at its core, the inclusiveness of cities is being negotiated. How can access to urban infrastructure and attractive public spaces be improved for a diverse population? The requirement is by no means new. In 1968, Henri Lefèbvre introduced the expression *le droit à la ville*, a powerful concept of protest mobilization that Harvey (2008) was to follow in order to propagate a bundling of the globally distributed struggles of urban centers

against neoliberal transformation. Ultimately, the city should become a place for everyone. Public space plays a central role in this since it is considered an important element of urban life: Simmel (1903/1995) once described it as a kind of inclusive space in which people who are strangers to each other meet and live together—physical proximity, with extensive social distance. Even today, in political and scientific discussions, squares, parks, and streets are conceived as public spaces where diverse people encounter each other, conceived as an antithesis to the private sphere and to public places such as hospitals or club rooms, which regulate access based on belonging. Private space is associated with the ideal of family, housing, and private property; following Goffman (1963), it is a backstage that offers an exclusive space for production

and reproduction, personal retreat, and civil liberties. The public space, in turn, is more of a frontstage with great general accessibility, diverse self-regulated use, and diverse behavior, allowing for extensive social inclusion (Laberge & Roy, 2001; Siebel & Wehrheim, 2003). Public spaces bring together what exists separately elsewhere. They create a co-presence of diverse actors and different activities (trade, politics, leisure, mobility) that characterizes the specificity of the urban situation.

Both private and public spaces are highly normatively charged and can by no means be understood unilaterally as spaces of freedom. They are subject to negotiation and constraint (Laberge & Roy, 2001). Public space has never fulfilled the normative ideal of inclusion (Belina, 2011). Urban spaces are characterized by different and conflicting socio-spatial interests and are therefore always contested as such, sometimes riddled with contradictory practices and processes of inclusion and exclusion (Diebäcker, 2022; Kemper & Reutlinger, 2015). Thus, public space is always also exclusive space as well (Siebel & Wehrheim, 2003). This is particularly evident when dealing with social undesirables to whom disruptive, anti-social, or even criminal behavior like drinking in public, graffiti-making, littering, making noise, inconsiderate or disorderly conduct, aggressive begging, etc., is attributed. Such regulatory matters are nowadays considered to be a normal social reality that (like crime) cannot be eradicated once and for all (Garland, 2001; Ziegler, 2019). At the same time, the idealization of public space sharpens the perception of such phenomena of disorder and incivilities (Eick, 2003), as negative potential or risk inherent in public space (Groenemeyer, 2001). In its broadly conceived accessibility, it is always open to the possibility of inappropriate or problematic use. Incivilities can affect the inclusive quality of public spaces, become spatially entrenched, and thus constitute a more persistent burden or disturbance, making public use difficult. Public space is therefore not characterized exclusively by its accessibility, inclusivity, and self-regulated use. Rather, the use of public space seems to have certain behavioral requirements and must meet social expectations, which is why it requires some control and protection. Public space, therefore, does not have a precarious relationship with state regulations and social control, which appear simultaneously as a threat to and a prerequisite of public space. It rather emerges as a product of such mechanisms (Siebel & Wehrheim, 2003; Wurtzbacher, 2008).

Ideally, according to Thacher (2014), public spaces regulate themselves via their users, as it were, with subtle glances and mild rebukes. Such informal efforts represent an important part of the maintenance of order in many public spaces. However, many modes of behavior perceived as socio-spatial disorders are institutionally regulated, often by public actors. These disturbances or incivilities are mostly not illegal per se but instead violate popular or neighborhood expectations of what constitutes appropriate or orderly behavior. The litera-

ture refers to the differentiation between police control towards marginalized populations and disruptive youth in public spaces (Beckett & Herbert, 2010; Diebäcker, 2022; Schaefer Morabito, 2014; for the specific case of Switzerland see Gasser, 2003; Litscher, 2017). Herbert et al. (2018) show that the police engage in specific policing when dealing with these marginalized target groups, using softer, more dialogic, harm-reduction-oriented approaches (cf. Innes, 2005 on "soft policing"; on the "care side of repression" see Piñeiro et al., 2021c). For the vast majority of minor offenses, interpersonal conflicts, and a range of disorderly conduct, the full authority of the police and criminal law does not seem particularly appropriate (Matthews, 1992; Skogan, 1990).

In the continental European context, non-police actors such as private security firms, NGOs, and state institutions are increasingly taking on soft policing functions (De Koning, 2017; Eick, 2003; Terpstra & Devroe, 2015). Together, they form an "extended policing family" (Crawford, 2014) and assume central functions in the maintenance of public safety and order. This extension and pluralization of non-police actors and practices has been increasingly evident since the mid-1990s and is considered the most important development in policing (De Koning, 2017). In Switzerland, since the 2000s, a new type of public order service has begun to establish itself in many larger municipalities and cities, focusing on the socio-communicative handling of social undesirables exhibiting disorderly or disruptive behavior in public spaces. Unlike the police, these public order services have no sovereign powers and thus cannot enforce socially acceptable behavior or public order by legal means such as prohibitions, formal coercion, or penalties. On patrol, they proceed with methods typically associated with low-threshold outreach social work. Accordingly, they locate themselves between social work and the police. On closer inspection, it becomes clear that their focus is not on ameliorating personal hardship, but ultimately on protecting the public space from violations of rules of use or social conflicts.

These organizations are integrated into public municipal administrations and can therefore take on very different orientations due to the federalist organization of the Swiss state (see Section 4). The concrete mandate varies in each case and depends strongly on the local context in which they are embedded. However, what they all have in common is that they monitor conspicuous social events in public spaces and the appropriateness of the use of public spaces. They carry out profiling of individuals or groups with social problems or public-spatial risk behavior that are among the diverse users of public spaces in order to be able to identify them early and thus address them preventively. These public order services come into play when the population, organizations, or municipalities raise problems regarding socio-spatial disturbances and bring them to the attention of outreach socio-preventive municipal order services (OSPOS). It often remains unclear how

such disruptive or inadequate behavior is defined since it often involves a subjective sense of order and security that is negatively affected. Even though this form of spatial regulation precedes police intervention (cf. Thacher, 2014), the findings from our perennial organizational ethnographic research project (see Section 3) show that their practice can be conceptualized as a specific form of soft policing (Wehrheim, 2012; Wurtzbacher, 2008). It encompasses a bundle of monitoring activities as well as individual or group behavioral influencing that ultimately serve to maintain public order (thus the acronym OSPOS). Their social preventive practice specializes in the specific regulation of socio-spatial in/exclusion of socially marginalized individuals and groups. As we will see, following Michel Foucault-inspired governmentality studies, this is a specific way in which certain public spaces are governed by in/exclusion (see Section 2)

With the emergence of these public non-police services, further differentiation of state control in the public sphere has taken place, which has so far remained unexplored in the Swiss context. This article illuminates the novel non-police policing tactics of these OSPOS that strengthen cooperation and compliance of socio-spatial risk carriers for self-in/exclusion, for example, by means of "nudging." The article builds on findings from our organizational ethnographic research and is organized as follows: Section 2 undertakes a power-analytical framing of the policing practices of the services studied, thereby sharpening the perspective of the analysis of selected empirical material. After some explanatory notes on the research design in Section 3, we discuss two types of order services with their specific ways of dealing with socio-spatial marginality (Section 4): the welfare and the neighborhood types. Finally, we conclude that exclusionary mechanisms are constitutive of the "inclusive city" and argue that this should, therefore, be referred to as an "in/exclusive city." All empirical data, organizations, departments, persons, and places have been anonymized. The name/acronym OSPOS was also developed in order to prevent inferences about the organizations under study.

2. The Power of Non-Police Order Services

OSPOS operate through methods of surveillance and responsibilization (Krasmann, 2003; Rund, 2015). Undesirable conduct is directly addressed on-site to influence behavior to become more socially acceptable; at most, attempts are made to move individuals into "tolerance zones" (Prepeliczay & Schmidt-Semisch, 2021) or more appropriate spaces such as emergency shelters or drug consumption rooms, or else to escort them straight home. At its core, this is a pragmatic behavioral adjustment and a (temporal) spatial invisibilization of individuals conceived of as "disruptive." This is more about zoning than correcting; it is focused on concealing or displacing disturbing activities rather than eliminating them (Merry, 2001; Ziegler, 2019) and preventing

undesirable consequences of risk subjects or a risk population (Groenemeyer, 2001) to whom negative tendencies are attributed. Rather than coercing users, suppressing actions, or punishing transgressions, OSPOS employ a socio-preventive strategy in regulating public spaces. This is not primarily designed to sanction individuals or to prohibit disfavored behavior but is characterized by a less hierarchical, proactive management of socio-spatial risks (Garland, 2001).

This inevitably brings the relationship between the individual and the state, between intervention, adaptation, and autonomy, into view. Accordingly, this article follows the research tradition of governmentality studies (Bröckling et al., 2011; Burchell et al., 1991; Foucault, 2007). The focus is on a particular form of power that, under the concept of governance, encompasses diverse tactics and techniques of planned influence on human action (Dean, 2007; Foucault, 1987) and is aimed at directing people and the population toward specific political goals (Butler, 2004). In our context, we encounter a libertarian-paternalistic mode of governance characterized by the reciprocity of security and freedom (Bröckling, 2018). Guiding this form of governance is the management of mobilities and the idea of self-regulated social spaces (Gertenbach, 2008; Opitz, 2007).

Concerning public space, it is about the promotion and control of trouble-free use. Unlike the radical demarcation or banishment of authoritarian sovereign power or the perfected network of multiple institutions of confinement of disciplinary power, OSPOS manage public space as a more or less self-regulated context, as a productive space of circulation (Foucault, 2007; Krasmann & Opitz, 2007). Operationally, they rarely pursue the strict normalization or disciplining of people who use the public space. Instead, OSPOS specialize in an ongoing adjustment of spatial inclusion and exclusion practices to support trouble-free social self-regulation of public spaces. In/exclusion presents a topological quality, insofar as governmental mechanisms of the social order refer to the spatial difference between an inside and outside (Gertenbach, 2008; Merry, 2001). OSPOS edit opportunities for access and residency in designated zones and influence the spatial distribution of conspicuous bodies or risky behavior, doing so on a continuum of inclusion and exclusion dynamics and practices (Opitz, 2007). In terms of power analysis, the socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion of individuals or collectives turn out to be both an object of governance (insofar as it emerges as a problem of governance) and a governmental technology for regulating public spaces. This *governance through inclusion and exclusion* ultimately focuses on securing public spaces of circulation against disruption or risk, but without compromising the social momentum of public spaces (Foucault, 2007; Gertenbach, 2008; Merry, 2001). Accordingly, OSPOS have a great deal of room for maneuvering to be able to intervene according to the situation. Their activities are characterized by great openness and

flexibility. In the majority of OSPOS, action processes or guidelines are only minimally formalized.

With OSPOS, the regulatory state presents itself as open and willing to negotiate (cf. Piñeiro et al., 2021a). OSPOS motivate individuals and stimulate their capacity to conduct themselves cooperatively (Rund, 2015)—a mode of governance that can aptly be summarized as the "conduct of conduct," according to Foucault (1987). OSPOS would like to strengthen the monitoring of oneself, as a continuous reflexive control, of "oneself by oneself'' (Celle, 2012). The addressees are to become co-producers of public order as far as possible, to engage in self-policing (Schlepper et al., 2011) by appropriately in/excluding themselves from the public space: The "conduct of conduct" can be understood more concretely as in/exclusion of self-in/exclusion.

As organizations of the public administration, OSPOS operate with an ensemble of soft power policing techniques through which regulatory claims and behavioral controls can be achieved in a less repressive way. They proceed with tactical calculations of friendly inducement and moral pressure to bring behaviors into line with specific governmental goals (Krasmann, 2003; Lutz, 2009). This approach operates as "design choice architecture" (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008, p. 10) and is aimed at gently influencing the behavior and intentions of addressees and can be more precisely captured by the concept of a "nudge": Although choice options are modeled and decisions are guided in a certain direction, individuals can still exercise their freedom. Their attention is directed to certain aspects, so to speak, and options for action are shown with their respective consequences.

The gentle libertarian paternalism of nudging aims to protect (short-sighted) citizens—the *homo myopicus*—from themselves and their misjudgments, without forcing or punishing them. Subjective motives or biographical experiences of the addressees play a role only insofar as they promote or counteract desirable or harmful behavior (Bröckling, 2018).

Such soft power techniques of governing intentions and behavior extend the governability of people (Celle, 2012; Dean, 2007). At the same time, this policing of nudging and (self-)in/exclusion, of activation and moral regulation of behavior is not reducible to the law (Foucault, 2007). While police actions need legitimization in legal terms and are therefore bound to the principle of legality, OSPOS proceed on a societal level where degrees of proceduralism and juridification are lowered and work is done on the basis of individual negotiation, convincing, and amicable settlement. Social skills and diplomatic aptitude are required here (Scheffer et al., 2017). OSPOS engage in socially preventive risk management that takes on the form of an administrative, quasi-extralegal power (Butler, 2004). By virtue of its status as law, it is not binding but is characterized by a high degree of social pliability with occasional appeals to authority (Scheffer et al., 2017). If the police remain committed to juridically legitimated means in the repressive use of their law-power (Foucault, 1978), OSPOS operate quasi below the threshold of the sovereign powers of a formal intervention authority (Piñeiro et al., 2021b). They suggest possibilities of good or correct behavior and weigh probabilities in order to guide behavior in a certain direction, for which softer, sometimes dialogical forms of moral regulation of behavior are suitable (Krasmann, 2003). OSPOS present themselves as friendly, helpful, and close to life, which is intended to strengthen the compliance of the addressed. This form of governance of public spaces is managed more flexibly, proceeds tactically and pragmatically, and is less bound to pre-established norms. It operates in a less formalized manner and manages a reality that is always already the effect of technologies of surveillance and intervention directed to individuals (Krasmann & Opitz, 2007). As we have shown elsewhere, this socio-spatial governance of OSPOS is also capable of expanding and strengthening sovereign exclusionary formations, such as coercive legal measures in the Swiss National Foreigners Act or police expulsion—which is why we speak here, for example, of "soft power banishment" (see Piñeiro et al., 2021b). This article focuses on the specific practices and processes of the OSPOS governance through in/exclusion in public space, which is why we cannot go into detail about the dynamic interplay of hard and soft power policing.

3. Research Design

This article draws on data from the SNSF-funded research project In Between Social Work and the Security Police: Ethnographic Perspectives on Multiple Institutional Logics in Regulatory Social Work (https://data.snf.ch/grants/grant/178898). Ethnographies are characterized by an open, object-appropriate, and field-specific approach and by methodological pluralism. Accordingly, various research methods such as participant observation, ethnographic interviews, expert interviews, and document analyses were used. A total of 16 expert interviews were conducted with leaders of OSPOS we identified throughout Switzerland and the publicly accessible web pages of all OSPOS on the internet were analyzed. The research focused on three comprehensive case studies, each of which allowed us to conduct in-depth ethnographic research on one organization. Participant observation was central to the in-depth study of the three case studies. In all three organizations, we mainly accompanied OSPOS employees on patrol in public spaces. OSPOS staff instructed us to wear the same partial uniform as they did, as had happened previously with other visitors such as journalists or staff from other public departments. These uniforms were colored, short-sleeved vests worn over clothing, each with the official logo of the city and the organization printed on it clearly. During our field visits, we were able to accompany different staff members, whom we got to know better throughout the long shifts, in different patrol constellations. While observing their work, we participated in what was happening in the

field but did not take on any tasks, instead assuming a peripheral, distanced position. Further, we participated in the organization's internal meetings, such as team and leadership meetings. We participated in a total of 21 work shifts during the day (e.g., from 12:00 to 18:00) or in the evening (e.g., from 18:00 to 02:00). We were able to observe a wide range of activities (mobile patrol, back-office work, network meetings, etc.). In total, we wrote over 400 pages of observation protocols.

We conducted numerous ethnographic interviews with employees in different positions and functions in the field and collected internal documents on dress codes, work procedures, meeting minutes, etc. The selection of the three cases followed the principles of theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1990): They were not defined in advance but were selected successively, alternating between data collection, the development of theoretical categories, and further data collection. We organized the analysis of the empirical data according to grounded theory.

Based on the results of the three case studies and the findings from the interviews and homepages of the other 12 OSPOS, three types were abstracted (Kelle & Kluge, 2010). The three contrasting case studies were each used as a prototype within the type formation. These prototypes resemble a type, but they are not identical to it, i.e., they serve as a detailed example for the type abstracted, but include further OSPOS studied as well. In the following section, we base the introductory presentation of the respective OSPOS type (welfare, neighborhood order service) on different OSPOS (on which the type is founded) and subsequently discuss selected situations from our ethnographic material on the corresponding case study.

Empirical situations from two case studies specializing in policing social marginality will be presented. Due to the thematic scope of the article, the third type (municipal law order service) will not be discussed. In the case of the OSPOS that were assigned to this type, social marginality in public space was not a relevant problem to be dealt with. The selected observation sequences are exemplary in nature and lend themselves to a power analytic discussion of socio-spatial in/exclusion dynamics.

4. Empirical Findings

4.1. Welfare Order Service: Socio-Spatial In/Exclusion of Social Marginality in Motion

The welfare order service is the most widespread type in larger Swiss cities. These agencies see themselves as "outreach social work" (organizations that were examined were assigned numbers; quotations or observation protocols are each assigned a specific numbered OSPOS). They focus on individuals or groups who are perceived as socially marginalized—target groups that affect a broad use of public space, when their behavior is considered unpleasant, disorderly, or intrusive. Welfare ser-

vices do not primarily aim to remedy a personal social predicament. Rather, they counteract the spatial perpetuation of social problems by influencing the circulation of marginalized people so that they do not settle in certain spots or they shift to tolerated zones or social institutions designated for them. They present themselves as caring and helpful. These OSPOS organizations seek contact with individuals or groups and try to establish a relationship with them in order to address undesirable behavior through dialogue, to win over the addressees for "collaboration" (head of division at OSPOS/5).

The prototype of the welfare order service (OSPOS/1 case study) had been "exclusively on the road for marginalized people and drug addicts" (team leader Leo at OSPOS/1) when it was founded. The former head of this service recalls in an interview how a resident "suffered extremely" because drugs were "actually" being consumed inside her house entrance. A "relatively weird [drug] scene" had formed in this neighborhood. In his narrative, it is not the drug users who appear as the socially disadvantaged, vulnerable groups, but the residents. According to this narrative, the addicts burden the neighborhood with their presence and affect the quality of living. OSPOS/1 also specializes in problematic target groups such as homeless, psychologically conspicuous or neglected people, as well as disruptive groups of young people—especially if they become entrenched in certain places. In the "high-gloss city" (staff at OSPOS/1), they are to be kept on the move or made less visible. This is illustrated by the following observation of a team of two who were on patrol during the day:

> The intervention was triggered by a social worker from the drug consumption room of the state (DCR) because a client was sitting in front of a closed store. At this point, he has been "denied access" to the DCR, meaning not allowed to enter the facility for a defined period of time because he is considered aggressive. In addition, he was carrying a golf club. Claudia and Andreas (OSPOS employees) walk over to the client, who is known to them. He immediately greets them with: "I'm not in the mood for a chat." Claudia takes the lead in the conversation and tries to convince the client with different arguments to go somewhere else. The client demands "good reasons" why he is not allowed to sit [t]here. Claudia brings in different reasons, none of [which] convinces him. She mentions the golf club, [how] it could scare passers-by, and that the [DCR] wants to prevent larger gatherings of people (addicts) around the facility. The client contradicts her again and insists that he is not committing a crime and that he is just sitting [t]here drinking iced tea. Claudia and Andreas try different approaches. They offer to get his colleague, who is currently in the DCR, whom [the client] said he's waiting for, or recommend that he goes to the park. The client also rejects these suggestions. Claudia looks at Andreas and mumbles: "What can

we do?" But they do not let up. Finally, the client stands up abruptly, gets on his bike, and rides away.

Claudia and Andreas actively approach the "client," although he initially refuses to talk. They want to convince him to leave the place. His presence poses a problem for the socio-medical facility: He has been "denied access" and now the neighborhood should not be additionally burdened by this. The mere presence of the "client" is perceived as a potential threat by OSPOS staff, even though he is just sitting there, is not doing illegal drugs, and does not exhibit aggressive behavior. With its preventive risk management, staff not only intervene at an early stage (before the situation escalates, i.e., before the intervention of police); it also uses informal moral pressure to move the "client" on. Claudia and Andreas remain friendly and approachable and try to coax the client into giving up his position without threatening him with the law or concrete sanctions. Strictly speaking, they convinced the "client" to exclude himself from this public zone. In this way, OSPOS encourage a double exclusion: a client's exclusion from the low-threshold facility (their "tolerance zone") preventing potential negative consequences, and a client's self-exclusion from the neighborhood, which they actively promote. This puts a great deal of social pressure on the "client."

While in the first example the "client" has to be convinced to exclude himself, the next two observed situations demonstrate *successful* self-inclusion/exclusion. Their distinct compliance points to the fruitful work of the organization:

Damir and Nicolas (OSPOS employees) are checking two public toilets around 8:30 p.m. In one of them, there is a syringe, traces of blood can be seen on the floor and on the side of the wall. Damir disposes of the syringe in the corresponding box provided. He then locks the toilet so that it is no longer accessible until it is cleaned. Meanwhile, someone else joins us, I (researcher) perceive him to be an addict. He tells me quite proudly that he has already caught someone who had left his syringe lying around, he had pointed it out to him. I affirm to him [that it's] good that he did that. He laughingly replies: "Right?" And touches my arm looking for recognition….As we continue walking, we meet a female addict. Damir and Nicolas know her and greet her by her first name. She is walking barefoot. There are bumps all over her body. Nicolas asks her: "Did you consume drugs inside the toilet?" He adopts a reproachful attitude, which contrasts somewhat with his sensitive voice. Now she looks up briefly and says "no," she consumed them elsewhere. "Really?" probes Nicolas. She denies it again. Damir asks how her wound is healing. She shows him a long scar on the side of her face and answers that she is better. Nicolas points to another scar on her arm and advises her to show it to a doctor, it is infected. She still wants to go to the

DCR now and asks whether we are also going there (in the OSPOS car). Because if so, we could give her a ride. Both [OSPOS employees] say no, but that she should hurry before the DCR closes. We say goodbye and walk on.

Both situations show how addicts align their behavior with prevailing ideas of order: The first addict wants to be praised for his conforming behavior. His sense of responsibility goes so far that he exhorts other addicts to keep order. In this way, he himself assumes the role of the OSPOS. Then the female addict emphasizes her responsible behavior by saying that she will now visit a DCR. Both cases actively reproduce the norm that illegal drugs are to be consumed in designated places. The public toilet represents an informal in-between space: Although not explicitly designated for this purpose, it is tolerated as a place of drug consumption if basic rules are followed—which is not the case with the one bloodstained toilet, which is why it is locked. Both the toilet and the DCR serve to reduce drug use in public spaces. Both addressees state that they have the necessary insight and self-responsibility and that they are acting according to the norms in this respect—that they are managing their socio-spatial self-inclusion/exclusion competently. Unlike the first "client," these two are enforcing consumption rules and desired behaviors by themselves, explicitly and immediately. They can mobilize themselves in the recognized spaces. This in/exclusion through self-management seems to be the result of a long-lasting moral responsibilization and activation work of the OSPOS. The latter case with the female addict illustrates the importance of a caring attitude and personal relationship building in this regard—soft policing techniques designed to improve compliance.

4.2. Neighborhood Order Service: Fixing Socio-Spatial In/Exclusion in Marginalized Housing Developments

This type of service operates in the public environment of housing developments in urban agglomeration municipalities with a high proportion of socially vulnerable or marginalized individuals. Politically and in the media, these residential areas are declared "sensitive zones" (OSPOS/13) or "problem neighborhoods" (OSPOS/12). The close architectural arrangement of large housing blocks (e.g., noise echoing in squares/courtyards), and the associated high population density are considered particularly problematic, leading to an accentuation of conflicts in housing development zones (noise- and graffiti-making, littering). Sometimes crime locations are also identified, where petty and violent crimes committed by housing development residents accumulate. Increasing "subjective safety" (OSPOS/16) as well as "peacemaking" (OSPOS/16) and resolving "neighborhood conflicts" (OSPOS/13) are considered key goals: "We are there for everything concerning neighbor problems: uncivil behavior, damage to property, moral

decline, brawls" (staff at OSPOS/10). In contrast to the welfare order service, which specializes in more intensive micro-social handling of marginalized individuals or disruptive groups in attractive inner-city zones, this type of "social guard in the neighborhood" (OSPOS/10) focuses on a meso-social level: It deals with tense coexistence and the lack of social cohesion in socially marginalized housing developments, which are perceived as precarious, decoupled spaces of social exclusion. What is managed here is not the self-in/exclusion of profiled marginalized individuals, but the self-in/exclusion of potentially all residents of a highly segregated zone. Policing there is ultimately based on the supra-individual regulation of the resident population as a whole, in order to prevent a sense of insecurity and a potential escalation of social conflicts in time. The visible physical presence of staff has a preventive, de-escalating effect: It signals to potential troublemakers, that the public environment is being monitored and at the same time helps calm the unsettled residents. This will be illustrated by three empirical examples that we observed in case study OSPOS/12:

> In this first situation, the researcher is out shortly after 7:30 p.m. with Adrian and Vera (OSPOS employees) in housing area 3. This is considered to be particularly socially stressed due to young adult residents whose stay and behavior is particularly problematized by the OSPOS staff:

> The area is known for "drug dealing." I ask what their mission is here. They are carrying out their "normal tasks": "We walk through the settlement." "If there are groups," they would "only greet them," depending on their mood. Adrian adds: If they are "open to dialogue," then they would chat with them. But even if they react negatively, "if they make noise," or if there is a lot of littering, they would still intervene, but as briefly as possible. Vera confirms this. I keep taking notes. Vera says it would be good now if I would stop taking notes while we visit the groups.

The staff perceives this group to be making this public housing space seem threatening, unsafe for other residents, and hardly accessible. Despite petty criminal activity, the young adults are neither evicted nor controlled by the police. The staff marks their presence through brief greetings—the space is monitored and behavior is registered. If necessary (noise, littering), intervention is brief and restrained. Policing confirms the self-inclusion of the young adults: The OSPOS staff thus inform them that they are tolerated here, as long as they adhere to basic rules of conduct. The group obviously cannot be evicted from the public housing environment—after all, they are residents who live here. The marginalized housing offers informally formed "tolerance zones" that permit the self-inclusion of these problematized residents, leading them to self-exclude from other public places—a socio-spatial arrangement favored by the soft policing of the OSPOS staff. This group is not supposed to

be mobilized and to circulate in public space. Rather, it is supposed to settle in certain places, thus limiting socio-spatial risks and making them more calculable.

The employees of OSPOS/12 are aware that their policing and uniform are noticed by the resident population. They use their visibility as a preventive presence aimed at cushioning potentially emerging coexistence tensions at an early stage. In the next observation sequence, around 7:00 p.m., the OSPOS patrol crosses a busy courtyard where many children are jumping around and riding scooters:

> Alexandra (OSPOS employee) greets the children joyfully and asks casually how they are doing. They answer briefly with "good." Further ahead, a few women (whom Alexandra later calls "mothers") are sitting on a small wall. Alexandra greets them, they greet her back in a polite but distanced manner. Later Alexandra explains to me that there were always complaints from neighbors next door because of the children. Now the children play less close to the street, which is fine because it is less noisy. They now stay in the courtyard, which is a good thing. Alexandra adds that it is important that a few mothers have seen us now, so they notice that OSPOS staff monitor the square regularly. "The blue" (of the uniform) has a strong effect, it is "a stimulus." Alexandra felt a brief tension when the mothers caught sight of her. She thinks this has a positive effect: It forces them to control the behavior of their children. Her presence, the brief passing by, is also an "appeal to order." The complaining neighborhood also sees that OSPOS staff is present, which helps to calm the waters.

In this example, OSPOS mark their physical presence. The presence of staff interrupts everyday life for a moment and draws attention to themselves. Alexandra refers to the intervention as "guarding" and "marking terrain." The mothers are reminded to pay attention to their children's behavior because they are being monitored too. The children are told to play in defined zones so that their noise is less likely to disturb other neighbors. The encounter is benevolent, friendly, and respectful. At the same time, both children and mothers demonstrate their responsible behavior, conformity to norms, and successful self-in/exclusion. This practice does not require social proximity or intense interaction; superficial contact is enough.

Depending on the situation, ad-hoc interventions occur, characterized by more intensive social interaction. In the following example, they serve to maintain relationships with known youth residents. They are frequently addressed by OSPOS staff because their behavior is blamed for social tensions:

> As we walk through housing area 1 at 10:00 p.m., a few teenagers call out to us. As they gradually join us, we greet each other with a fist bump. They seem

to feel like talking to us. Obviously, they know the OSPOS. They note that I'm new (researcher) and want to know who I am. I explain that I'm doing research on OSPOS. They ask about another staff member. Fabio explains that she is on maternity leave. Animatedly, they questioned Hugo and Fabio (OSPOS employees) about their work, training, and salary. Hugo tried to say goodbye to the group several times and finally succeeds after 20 minutes. Later, Fabio tells me that this group kept the housing area on its toes for a while. They rioted, set fire to garbage bags, and demolished windows. They also once beat up a young resident. Some of them were in a "reformatory." The staff knows their life story, they come from "problem families." But they are actually "children," all of them have conflicts with adults. Nevertheless, they like to talk to the OSPOS employees. I ask Hugo and Fabio about their mission with the teenagers today. Fabio answers [that it is about] "maintaining the relationship" and Hugo adds: "It is also important that we are perceived as confidants."

This excerpt exemplifies how soft policing functions as relationship maintenance, which can be understood as a form of inclusion work in socially marginalized housing areas: As we observed in several other situations, young people often actively seek contact with OSPOS employees, which can be understood as an effect of long-lasting relationship work. They know the OSPOS staff. Hugo and Fabio meet them openly and at eye level. Here they take on the socio-pedagogical role of youth workers. They want to be perceived as approachable, adult confidants and not as formal authorities who treat them in a repressive manner (the youths' repeatedly run away from a passing police car during this encounter, only to return to the OSPOS staff immediately after the "cop alarm"). They see the youths as part of this sociostructurally stressed housing development, appropriating the public environment as residents. Fabio's narrative demonstrates that this is an at-risk group—highlighting the scope of relationship building: It proves to be a form of socio-pedagogical control, that registers sensitivities and annoyances, disturbances, and conflicts. However, the monitoring also determines that everything is just fine and communicates this continuously in a mode appropriate for the youths—the meeting is relaxed, they joke, and there is no cause for concern. In this way, OSPOS take on a regulating bridging function between youths and other neighbors (adults) who potentially feel disturbed by them: Both parties perceive the public space as being monitored and, if necessary, intervene if the social peace is threatened.

5. Conclusions

Our empirical findings show that the non-police policing of social marginality by OSPOS essentially consists of regulating the dynamics and processes of socio-spatial in/exclusion. OSPOS deal with spatialized forms of social marginality to primarily protect public space. From their perspective, a fair use of public spaces requires everyone to exercise self-restraint in their individual forms of use and behavior. OSPOS rationalize (potential) poor self-conduct and inadequate self-control as socio-spatial risks. These are addressed preventively by influencing the in/exclusion of social marginality and incentivizing or morally demanding appropriate behavioral adjustments.

The socio-preventive risk management of OSPOS applies as a "conduct of conduct" to a corresponding self-policing of its addressees, which takes place by means of monitoring and interventions with individuals, groups, and the residential population. This governance through in/exclusion leads to less repressive state policing and the more informal exercising of power by the public administration. Instead of prohibiting actions and punishing certain behaviors, OSPOS influence the socio-spatial circulation processes with offers of (superficial) relationships and cooperation. By means of soft communicative methods such as nudging, which differs from juridical law enforcement, prohibitions, or police expulsions, the balance between self and external control or between (self-)in/exclusion is continuously adjusted.

Soft power policing varies according to OSPOS type: While the welfare type seeks to protect valuable public spaces from social marginality, the neighborhood type seeks to allow all residents to participate in the public environment of marginalized housing developments. Whereas the welfare type focuses on mobilizing self-in/exclusion practices of marginalized individuals and groups in attractive urban centers, the neighborhood type specializes in the self-in/exclusion of the whole population of segregated housing areas. In doing so, the former OSPOS work to counteract socio-spatial fixation of problematized individuals and groups, whereas the latter works toward inclusive socio-spatial entrenchment of residents in their marginalized housing developments, respectively in selected "tolerance zones." With this OSPOS mode of libertarian-paternalistic regulation, the state gains far-reaching and uncomplicated access to lifeworld arrangements in public space. The policing is gentle and the behavioral control subtle, which makes it possible to use self-conduct productively for order maintenance.

Both dynamics—socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion—are closely intertwined. This interplay appears constitutive of urban public space. With regard to the "inclusive city," the question arises as to how it relates to socio-spatial processes of exclusion. How and where individuals, groups, or whole areas are included or excluded by certain governmental practices is an eminently political question related to the official regulation of social marginality, involving vulnerable people. If the "inclusive city" is not to be celebrated as a dull ideal, we must confront it with its own exclusionary mechanisms. Studying OSPOS, we learn how the boundaries of socio-spatial

inclusion and exclusion of social marginality are negotiated and set. In the future, we should probably instead refer to an "in/exclusive city."

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Youth in Zurich's Public Spaces: Hanging Out as an In/Exclusive Way of Taking Their Place in the City

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Abstract
Based on the preliminary results of an ongoing research project focused on the social and cultural practices of young people in physical and virtual public spaces across four urban areas in Switzerland, this article explores the everyday spatial behavior of youth who hang out in Zurich's public spaces. It highlights how everyday activities provide these young people with a means of coming to terms with the inclusive and exclusive potential of the urban public spaces they appropriate and how, in turn, they adopt spatial practices that can prove more or less inclusive. Some of these practices may be provocative or even subversive; and whereas others are more discreet (sometimes involving unconscious behavior or passing unnoticed), we argue that they are no less political. The subtle ways in which young people progressively take their place in the city could best be described as "micropolitical."

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1. Introduction

Although political and scholarly attention to public space stretches back at least to Jane Jacobs' work (Jacobs, 1961), its role not only as the setting for recent social movements (the Arab Spring, the yellow vests, climate action, Iran protests, etc.) but also as the focus of new security and control measures (CCTV cameras, facial recognition systems, etc.) seems to have sparked renewed interest in the concept (Qian, 2020). But beyond instances of social protest and political control, urban public spaces are also the site of everyday forms of urban cohabitation. The diverse uses of public space by different actors, whose level of familiarity with one another varies, can produce "everyday turmoil" (*troubles ordinaires*; see Bouillon et al., 2022), responses to which range from indifference to conflict and cooperation (Margier, 2017).

In particular, the ways that youth use urban public spaces can spark tension with adults or other groups of young people. Whereas children primarily socialize in private (especially in family environments) and institutional spaces (in schools), the transition to adolescence leads to an increased exploration of public spaces. Young people assert their right to public space by gathering with peers to listen to music, play sports, or paint graffiti. In this way, they gradually familiarize themselves with "the grammars of the public sphere" (Breviglieri, 2007), which shape processes of empowerment and adult identity construction.

Building on the work of Koch and Latham (2012), Qian has noted how, in most research on public space, "publicness is theorised as an ideal type, embodying aspiration for *inclusion* in the democratic urban commons, rather than a collective ambiance or habitus invoked

contingently through inhabitation, affective atmospheres and materialities" (Qian, 2020, p. 78). Drawing on the preliminary results of an ongoing research project focused on the social and cultural practices of young people in physical and virtual public spaces across four urban areas in Switzerland (Geneva, Zurich, Fribourg, and Mendrisiotto), this article addresses issues of inclusion and exclusion surrounding "ordinary" uses of urban public space by certain youth. Based on accounts shared by young people we met in Zurich, we agree with Qian's argument that "inclusion and exclusion may be theorised as two logics of publicness that reside in mutually tensioned relationships, but can nonetheless coexist and even mutate into each other" (Qian, 2020, p. 79). Bearing in mind that "publicness" reflects an ongoing process rooted in everyday practices (De Backer et al., 2019; Göle, 2002; Low, 2000), this article looks at how such practices provide urban youth with a means of coming to terms with the inclusive and exclusive potential of the public spaces they appropriate. Some of the practices engaged in by young people can be conspicuous or even subversive; and whereas others are more discreet (sometimes involving unconscious behavior or passing unnoticed), we argue they are no less political. Rather, they correspond to what De Backer has described as the "micropolitical," insofar as "they still are an expression of a political stance and a practice of protest" (De Backer, 2019, p. 310).

The article opens with a discussion of how the existing literature largely portrays public space as an unfavorable context for the socialization of youth. We argue that this dominant perspective not only obscures the fact that spending time with peers in public spaces can support identity construction and the transition to adulthood, but also promotes an essentialist understanding of urban public spaces as either "inclusive" or "exclusive" (Massey, 2005). In the second section, we use our research data to show how, far from being inherently inclusive or exclusive, the public spaces have a potential for either inclusion or exclusion that needs to be analyzed in terms of how youth interact with them and that fluctuates according to various factors shaping this relationship. The third section looks at how, rather than reflecting aimlessness and idleness, the practices of young people who hang out in public spaces actually constitute a form of micropolitics whereby youth assert a certain right to the city. The fourth section provides an opportunity to show how young people respond to the inclusive and exclusive potential of the public spaces they appropriate by developing urban cohabitation strategies that are themselves governed by logics of inclusion and exclusion. Finally, the article closes with a discussion of how even the most discreet practices, which often pass unnoticed, can prove politically significant.

2. Do Youth Belong in Urban Public Spaces?

This article relies on data collected as part of an ongoing research project that aims to provide a better under-

standing of how youth cultures develop through peer interactions in online and offline spaces, as well as how such cultures support the socialization process. Our research efforts are supported by a theoretical framework that draws on insights from the sociology of youth and socialization (Galland, 2011; Van de Velde, 2008), urban studies and the study of spatial practices (Authier, 2012; Lévy & Lussault, 2020; Parazelli, 2021), and the sociology of audiences and digital practices (Liebes & Katz, 1990; Livingstone, 2019). Based on a participatory model, the project has involved close collaboration with youth services agencies active in each of the four cities covered, as well as with the young people concerned. This has allowed us to maintain a dialogue between different forms of knowledge—academic, professional, practical—that we consider to be complementary. Following a multisite ethnographic approach (Debonneville, 2017; Marcus, 1995), we developed an innovative methodology for collecting data on the social and cultural practices of some 20 young people in each of the four urban areas covered by the project. Specifically, this methodology combines participant observation in public spaces, walking interviews (Kusenbach, 2003; Thibaud, 2022) led by youth between the ages of 14 and 25 in offline and later online spaces, as well as online ethnography and focus groups. As a result, we have been able to analyze youth cultures across the physical–virtual continuum to understand how these contexts interact and influence each other. Ten young residents of Zurich are among the 49 research participants who have already taken part in individual or group interviews.

Below, we explore issues of inclusion and exclusion that run through the experiences of the young people we met in Zurich. The analysis focuses on their use of geographical spaces, without addressing the digital component of the larger research project. All quotations from research participants (who are identified using pseudonyms) were recorded during walking interviews conducted in different areas of Zurich. Located in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, Zurich is the country's largest city (with approximately 420,000 inhabitants, 30% of whom are foreigners) and serves as an important financial, political, tourist, artistic, and cultural hub. It is also home to a thriving alternative scene. Our fieldwork has focused on public spaces that are regularly and visibly appropriated by youth. The young people we have interviewed are among those who regularly gather in a variety of public spaces—parks, squares, streets, playgrounds, building entrances, underground parking lots, outdoor steps, etc.—where they develop social and cultural practices while interacting with peers. However, not all youth share such opportunities. As Oppenchaim (2016) has shown, young people appropriate and move through public space in very different ways, mainly depending on their gender, age, social class, and place of residence. As a result, although our sample is somewhat diverse in terms of gender and age, it is much more homogenous concerning place of

residence and socioeconomic background. The youth we met came from the same two working-class neighborhoods (which, in the interest of anonymity, we refer to as neighborhoods A and B) where we conducted the bulk of our fieldwork. Situated in the northern reaches of Zurich, both these areas primarily consist of large housing blocks and towers, in contrast to residential neighborhoods closer to the city center and along the lakefront. Virtually all our research participants came from families of modest means and most of them were from migrant backgrounds. They described appropriating public spaces to socialize with peers in neighborhoods A and B and throughout central Zurich (e.g., in downtown parks, at the central train station, in the old town, and on the lakeside).

As Terzi and Tonnelat (2017) have pointed out, the concept of public space often lacks clarity. To reduce the ambiguity associated with the French term *espace public* (more often used to refer to the Habermassian notion of a public sphere), Paquot (2009, p. 3) has proposed using "public spaces" (plural) when discussing geographic locations, that is to say, "places accessible to the public, frequented by residents who may or may not live in the immediate vicinity." We prefer Parazelli's suggestion of using "public space" (singular) as a generic term to describe such places, and "public spaces" to refer to specific "physical locations accessible to the public" (Parazelli, 2021, p. 14).

Still, scholars disagree on exactly how to define public space. Whereas Jacobs (1961) emphasized the fundamental importance of diversity, others have identified accessibility (Carr et al., 1992), the simultaneous presence of individuals unfamiliar to one another (Sennett, 1970), or even visibility (De Backer, 2019) as key characteristics. Ultimately, these various criteria tend to prove both compatible and connected. Furthermore, Terzi and Tonnelat (2017, p. 525) have cautioned against treating them as intrinsic to public space in a way that tends to reify the latter's publicness, which they propose conceiving of as "a potential or a becoming." Likewise, Qian (2020, p. 79) has argued that "publicness is not an inherent quality of space, but an oeuvre born out of labours and agencies"; in this sense, it is "fluid, amorphous and contingent.''

Adopting the definitions proposed by Terzi and Tonnelat (2017) and by Qian (2020), we contend that it is precisely the fluid and indeterminate nature of spaces located outside the domestic sphere that certain youth find attractive. This perspective reflects a relativistic and relational understanding of space (Lévy & Lussault, 2020; Löw, 2016), insofar as we emphasize how "spatialized realities organize space through relationships that may involve social actors; they define it by activating such relationships, by setting them in motion" (Lévy & Lussault, 2020, p. 355). Beyond the mere presence of young people in public spaces, we focus on how youth appropriate them, find them meaningful, and ascribe meaning to them.

Yet, both the academic literature and social representations portray public spaces—especially urban ones—as inappropriate locations for young people to spend their time. This is especially true of places with a lasting and visible youth presence (Bellot & Sylvestre, 2015; Rothé, 2018). As for the safe movement of young people within urban space, this is seen as requiring a significant degree of parental supervision (Rivière, 2017). More specifically, two approaches dominate European and North American scholarship on the use of public spaces by youth. The first characterizes young people's activities in such locations as "risky," "pathological," or even "deviant" behavior (Anderson, 1999; Desage et al., 2015), often by applying epidemiological or criminological lens (for a critical review of such studies see Colombo, 2010). Perceived as inherently dangerous and primarily associated with the consumption of goods, services, and experiences (Margier, 2017; Merrifield, 2013; Perraton & Bonenfant, 2009), urban public spaces are not considered conducive to the socialization of adolescents, who find themselves increasingly confined to private space (Poretti, 2016). In turn, the presence of young people in the streets is perceived as a danger, if not a threat to public order (Desage et al., 2015). Characterized as "disrespectful," the practices developed by youth in public spaces are a source of tension with both neighborhood residents and the authorities (Cahill, 2000; Gray & Manning, 2022; Libois & Wicht, 2004; White, 1993). For example, young people may find novel uses for street furniture—such as skateboarding (Glauser, 2016) or graffiti (Brighenti, 2010; Tadorian, 2013, 2021)—sometimes causing damage in the process. Activities like these can trigger various responses, including removal, dispersal, and even punishment (Litscher et al., 2012; Low, 2000; Mitchell, 1996; Parazelli, 2021).

The second approach adopted by scholars interested in the use of public spaces by youth treats the presence of young people in city streets as a "default" situation, which may result from a lack of housing, a process of desocialization, or an irrational wanderlust (Zeneidi, 2010). References to wandering or even just hanging out express normative injunctions regarding the mobility and spatiality of young people, especially those in precarious circumstances (Pattegay, 2001; Trainoir, 2019; Zeneidi, 2010).

To begin with, such approaches promote a view of public spaces as risky or dangerous, thereby obscuring the positive role they can play in the socialization of youth. Indeed, as numerous researchers have shown, they can serve as "transitional spaces" conducive to adult identity construction (Parazelli, 2002), provide a catalyst for action (Tadorian, 2013, 2021), offer resources to those living on the street (Low, 2000; Zeneidi, 2010), or even form the basis for negotiating the conditions under which different groups share the city (Cahill, 2000; De Backer, 2019; Gray & Manning, 2022). Furthermore, dominant representations of public spaces tend to treat them as inherently inclusive or exclusive. In fact, the

experiences described by the young people we met in Zurich suggest that urban public spaces tend to exist in an indeterminate state, sometimes even wavering between inclusion and exclusion.

3. "We Just Want to Chill Out!"

Our research participants described regularly gathering with their friends either at meaningful locations in their neighborhood (e.g., a soccer field, a playground, a building entrance) or, in the case of older youth, in the city center. These places meet the criteria for what Lévy and Lussault (2020, p. 334) have called "shared spaces" (*espaces communs*), that is to say locations whose "layout allows them to be jointly used by social actors who have exited the domestic sphere." Most of the time, the aim was to "chill out," as the young people themselves put it. In other words, they wanted to spend time together talking or listening to music, and sometimes playing sports or painting graffiti. In the evening especially, activities might include consuming cannabis or alcohol. Consider the comments made by Ashan, a 14-year-old resident of neighborhood B with roots in Sri Lanka. A public school student with a love for manga, video games, cycling, and basketball, he described how he and five or six of his school friends (mostly boys) would get together mainly to have fun and fight boredom:

> Young people like us are full of energy! We're growing up….Puberty, you know? That means we need a lot of different activities, not always the same thing. Otherwise, it gets boring. My goal when going out? I just want to have fun. It can't be boring.

Several times a week, after school or in the evening, Ashan and his friends would drop by the local community center to "chill out" by playing soccer, ping-pong, or video games. Often, they moved on to another location, usually to play basketball. When it got cold, the community center sometimes provided access to an indoor sports facility. But in good weather, they preferred to play in a courtyard between two neighborhood buildings that boasts a basketball hoop (without a net) and some trees. Although less well equipped than the indoor facility, this location appealed to Ashan and his friends because it was not associated with the community center and because the trees provided shade and a degree of privacy. Breviglieri (2007) has noted how adolescents prioritize the appropriation of what he calls "interstitial spaces" (*espaces intercalaires*), where they can gradually stake their claim to public space. Situated on the margins between the domestic and public spheres, such locations make it possible for youth to "oscillate" between childhood spaces and those characterized by publicness. Interstitial spaces that provide privacy or are hidden away prove all the more alluring. This helps explain why Ashan and his friends preferred playing at the relatively secluded outdoor basketball court, despite lamenting

the poor state of its equipment. Located in the heart of the neighborhood, close to their homes and their elementary school, this location allowed them to interact with peers in relative privacy while also maintaining contact with familiar settings from childhood.

Ashan also noted that many young people from his neighborhood, especially older ones, preferred to hang out at Zurich's downtown central station. However, he had no interest in spending time there. To begin with, assuming he succeeded in getting permission from his parents to leave the neighborhood, he would need to keep them informed of his movements. In any case, this particular destination lacked appeal because it mainly offered opportunities for consumption that were poorly aligned with Ashan's interests and out of his financial reach: "I never go there [central station]. There's no point. All you can do is buy things. But you can't do much of anything else."

Bea, a 17-year-old enrolled in a workstudy program whom we met in neighborhood A, also described meeting up with friends (especially other girls) close to home. The daughter of a Swiss father and a Colombian mother, she belonged to a supporter's group for one of Zurich's two main soccer teams. In addition to watching soccer matches, she enjoyed painting graffiti, listening to Latin music, and playing basketball:

> [When we meet up in the neighborhood], we just like to have fun, or play ping-pong. We often play a version where we switch places. We try to keep moving, even if we're smoking or whatever, drinking beer, we still try to keep moving. Yeah, just having fun, talking about what we've been up to. But sometimes we'll do nothing at all and everyone just looks at their phone. But I can't because I only have internet access at home. So, I can't surf the web, I can only listen to music or play games.

Bea also talked about how, as she had gotten older, she had increasingly been meeting up with friends (girls and boys) in a park downtown, where they sit around listening to music, drinking beer, and talking: "We normally sit down over here, because this little park isn't very big. There's other people over there. We pick up some booze and then we sit around in the park." In this way, Bea revealed how, over time, she had come to explore a growing range of spaces, branching out from neighborhood locations to ones in other parts of the city. She and her friends valued these places not only for the privacy they offered (the little park) but also for the wider diversity of people present. Although the activities she described were similar to those she had previously enjoyed with girls from the neighborhood, increased mobility had led her to reshape and broaden her circle of friends, which now included youth from other parts of the city. For instance, she explained how, by choosing centrally located meeting places, they ensured that no one would have to travel especially far. However,

she also emphasized how the potential for spontaneity and discovery drew her to locations outside her own neighborhood. Indeed, her words conveyed a longing for the harmony, freedom, and spontaneity she associated with downtown locations, in contrast to the more stifling atmosphere she associated with places closer to home. She gave the example of another downtown park—one with a lot of trees, which she called "the forest"—that she sometimes visited with her friends. According to her, the harmony of the place, which can give the impression of being in the middle of nature instead of the middle of a city, made people friendlier and more open than in neighborhood A:

> For example, the day before yesterday, we suddenly decided to go into the forest so we could sit down and enjoy the view. It was all on the spur of the moment. We didn't plan it in advance. We just went into the forest, we ran into some people, some of them were older, we said hi to them. I find it really nice when people greet each other, it's another sign of the harmony in the forest. You know, people just say "hello!" and you say "hello!" back. Anyway, they're much friendlier or whatever, I find, in comparison to here [neighborhood A], where if you say "hello," no one answers. You just keep on walking. It's annoying…

Like Bea, other young people we interviewed described gradually abandoning locations closer to home (which appeal to younger individuals, like Ashan) for ones farther afield (often downtown). Meanwhile, as reflected in the experiences of both Ashan and Bea, the movements of young people within public space (as well as their online activities) are monitored and restricted to varying degrees by parents. The level of parental control tends to vary by age and gender, with younger children (like Ashan) and girls (like Bea) enjoying less freedom. Rivière (2017) has described how parents generally allow young people to explore public space in stages, based on a gradually expanding boundary. First, children are left alone at home. Later, they can wander the neighborhood or walk to school without adult supervision. And when they reach a certain age, youth can begin visiting locations farther from home.

The age at which young people are allowed to begin exploring public spaces is often higher for daughters, who are subject to stricter rules (Clair, 2008; Oppenchaim, 2016; Rivière, 2017). Bea explained: "My mother doesn't like it much when I hang out in town." Other female research participants were more likely than their male counterparts to report restrictions on their ability to travel within the city and a need to keep parents apprised of their movements outside the family home. This was especially true for girls from families of more modest means, whose parents had grown up in a country other than Switzerland, or who lived in single-parent households. Bea, who lived with her Colombian mother and her stepfather, explained how she had to keep her mother informed of her whereabouts at all times, providing constant reassurance in the form of texts or calls from her smartphone. Ashan, whose parents came from Sri Lanka, also faced more restrictions than most of his peers. However, this was due to his age, not his gender. Based on his study of adolescents in urban France, Oppenchaim (2016) has observed that although parents consistently place constraints on youth mobility, the nature and extent of such restrictions vary according to a family's conception of public space and the dangers it could pose for young people. Socioeconomically disadvantaged, single-parent, and ethno-racial minority families tend to see public space as more of a threat, especially for daughters.

The experiences described by Bea and Ashan show how the appropriation of public spaces provides youth with an opportunity to gradually take their place in the public sphere, while continuing to draw strength from their peer group. This aligns with Parazelli's (2002) notion of "transitional spaces," insofar as public spaces promote the construction of an adult identity on the margins of traditional institutions of socialization, within a "imaginary in familialist terms" of horizontal socialization among peers (Colombo, 2021). In these spaces, young people play basketball or ping-pong, talk among themselves, listen to music, or simply "do nothing at all," as Bea explained. And yet, her descriptions suggest that something significant was going on even when she and her friends were "doing nothing at all." All on their smartphones, those with internet access were checking their social media feeds while those without it were listening to music or playing games. In other words, they were doing what they did by themselves at home, but they were doing it together in a different kind of space. This gave them the opportunity to collectively comment on what they were doing, to determine which activities or behaviors were considered acceptable, to express and compare opinions, to gain a stronger sense of belonging by openly sharing the same interests, to set themselves apart by remarking on the behavior of other youth they interacted with online or in person. In short, they were learning the codes governing what behaviors are socially acceptable outside the familiar spaces of the domestic sphere and school, while relying on the (dis)approving gaze of their peers for guidance.

At the same time, youth perceptions of the inclusive or exclusive potential of public spaces depend less on the intrinsic characteristics of such locations than on factors like age, gender, and family socialization. This was reflected in the experiences described by all the young people we met, including Ashan and Bea.

Perceptions can also vary based on young people's relationships with other users of public space. For example, Bea explained that the greater freedom she felt downtown was partly a reflection of just how much her use of public space was subject to control within her own neighborhood.

4. Hanging Out as Micropolitics

Bea told us how one day, while she and her friends were playing cards at a park in an adjacent neighborhood, a woman came up and told them that they were not allowed to be there:

> Once, I was sitting on a ping-pong table with some friends. We were just quietly playing uno, listening to some music. And then an older lady came along and told us we weren't allowed to be there….She started saying things to us, calling us names and stuff, for no reason… and we weren't behaving badly. We even tried to be polite to her….I think it's a shame….There aren't any signs that say "private" or "keep out!"

Bea's friend Berna, a 16-year-old Swiss citizen completing an apprenticeship in the education sector, participated in the same walking interview. She had also grown up in neighborhood A and supported the same soccer team as most of the young people she knew. Berna explained how she and her friends liked to sit on the steps of a local supermarket. However, they were often rudely told to move along by people who just happen to be passing by:

> There's a supermarket [in our neighborhood] with a place where we can sit around back, on a small set of stairs….While we're there, they [adults] often tell us: "Hey, get out of there!" Sometimes, they insult us and tell us we're not allowed to be there and kick us out….But it's not written anywhere that we're not allowed to be there!

Both Bea and Berna expressed resentment at this kind of treatment, emphasizing how they had "done nothing wrong" by just "hanging out" in a spot where, by all indications, they were allowed to sit down. Still, their accounts suggest that it was not so much their presence or their activities that disturbed the adults who confronted them, but the ways in which they had appropriated public space. Specifically, both girls described using street furniture or other urban amenities for purposes they were not designed for, such as by sitting down on a ping-pong table or stairs. And by "sitting around" (as they put it) in an area designed as an entryway or pathway, or for a very specific activity, the young people involved had violated the "sociospatial dictates" governing the use of such locations (Parazelli, 2021, p. 17). Hence the strong reactions of passersby, who felt the need to remind them of the official functions and appropriate uses of the spaces in question. Such interactions also reflect the fact that cities are often designed "exclusively for the dominant category of citizens, namely economically productive adults" (Tonucci, 2019, p. 57). Indeed, as multiple authors have pointed out, functionalist approaches to architecture and urban planning tend to produce public spaces designed to facilitate the uninterrupted movement of residents toward private and protected spaces (Garnier, 2010; Low, 2000; Margier, 2017; Mitchell, 1996; Perraton & Bonenfant, 2009). As a result, the static use of public space, especially by groups, can be perceived as disruptive or even threatening by other inhabitants of the city (Bellot & Sylvestre, 2015; De Backer, 2019; Young, 1999).

But it is important to recognize that in the cases described by Berna and Bea, the alternative use of public space did not reflect ignorance of social norms. Rather, the young people involved appear to have been challenging the narrow and seemingly exclusive uses imposed by adults. Not that such challenges always lead to open confrontation. In fact, youth normally seek to avoid conflict, especially with adults. For instance, Berna described how, despite being irritated by how adults reacted to her and her friends, she normally walked away without saying anything, out of a sense of both pragmatism (staying out of trouble) and decency (respecting what others think is right):

> I never talk back to older people who tell me to "get out of here!" or things like that. Sure, I get a little annoyed. But at the end of the day, it doesn't bother me. I just tell myself: "They're old. They're just doing what they think is right." I don't do anything to pointlessly provoke them. It wouldn't do any good. instead, I just leave.

This reflects the fact that Berna and the other young people we met did not object to the mere existence of rules governing the use of public space or even the fact that the uses favored by adults did not align with those favored by youth. Rather, they disagreed with how certain rules were used to exclude them specifically. Accordingly, in locations with a greater potential for inclusion, youth tend not to challenge such rules and sometimes even seek to uphold them. Consider how Bea and Berna describe their experiences in a third downtown park, which they regularly visited with their friends. They noted how the park in question was also popular with younger teens as well as highly marginalized adults, whom the girls described as drug users. Although each group tended to keep to its own section of the park, clashes sometimes occurred. The authorities had recently installed CCTV cameras in response to a higher incidence of littering and fights. During the walking interview, Bea and Berna tended to discursively and physically distance themselves from other users of the park, especially the young teens, whom they blamed for causing problems. They emphasized the need to show respect for the public spaces they visited, out of a desire to not only ensure that the area would be safe and clean when they returned but also to head off any complications associated with increased police surveillance. Like the habit of greeting passersby described by Bea in an earlier quotation, they characterized an understanding of the rules governing the use of the park and a willingness to respect

them as a sign of maturity. Accordingly, by demonstrating that they knew how to behave in a less familiar public space (i.e., one located outside their neighborhood), where they interacted with a wider variety of groups, they were able to assert adult status and distinguish themselves from younger park users.

Clearly, when they appropriate certain public spaces for their own use, youth are inclined to do more than passively adopt the prevailing social codes of behavior. In many cases, they actively negotiate such codes by variously comparing them, defying them, adopting them, and even upholding them. These findings underscore the need to look beyond the appearance of aimlessness or disregard for rules of behavior when studying how young people occupy public space, to recognize manifestations of what De Backer (2019) calls "the micropolitics of the hanging out spot." As De Backer et al. (2019) argue, the concept of micropolitcs is close to Scott's concept of infrapolitics, "which refers to a kind of politics that avoids direct confrontation but opens up to a 'subterranean world of political conflict'" (Scott, 2012, p. 244). By focusing on the microgeographies of everyday life (Low, 2000), it aims to "recognize the political beyond the antagonistic moment and beyond visibility" (De Backer et al., 2019, p. 244).

Like the young people De Backer met in Brussels, our research participants described efforts to use or redesign such spaces in ways more suited to their needs. Such efforts reflect an attempt to defend "their right to be in public—the right of presence, use, action and modification (Lynch, 1981)—and the framework of rules of their own device" (De Backer, 2019, p. 315).

Nor are the "micropolitics of the hanging out spot" solely a matter of pushing back against sociospatial dictates imposed by adults. The act of appropriating public spaces also allows youth to develop their own forms of control, whose degree of inclusion also varies.

5. In/Exclusion: Strategies for Controlling Public Spaces

Cyrill, a 20-year-old Zurich Oberland resident with roots in Switzerland and Romania, was enrolled as a food industry apprentice at the time we interviewed him. He spent a lot of time downtown and in neighborhood A, where his girlfriend lived, hanging out with her and their friends. He explained how his group was always ready and willing to defend the spaces where they gathered against incursions by other young people they perceived as a threat. Although this meant that they sometimes got into fights, they were committed to not bothering families, especially those with children. On one occasion, Cyrill went so far as to intervene to protect a father and child, leading them away from the scene of a fight he deemed potentially dangerous:

We leave [families] alone. We don't care about them. When there are children, families, we leave them alone. We don't bother them, we leave them alone.

One time, I did piss off a father. It was one in the morning when he came by. There was a big police operation because of a fight. He went back and forth three times with his stroller: "To hell with that kid! He has no business being here!"

In this instance, Cyrill went beyond a passive respect for families by going out of his way to explain the need to steer clear of a fight. Such examples illustrate how the young people we met did not merely challenge or accept ways of using public space that had been imposed by adults. In some situations, they felt confident enough to impose their own rules, even when this meant preventing others from using the spaces in question. When they targeted young children and other groups perceived as vulnerable, such exclusive strategies were justified in terms of protection, as in the example given by Cyrill. But when they involved confronting other groups of young people, they reflected a desire for dominance. It was primarily male research participants who described implementing strategies of domination. These boys felt justified in behaving aggressively toward other youth who encroached on what they considered to be "their turf," sometimes going so far as to fight off interlopers. But dominance could also be expressed through actions that appear more trivial. For example, Cyrill explained how he and his friends would play loud music to discourage others from remaining in a busy park where they often hung out. Others described fights and standoffs, as well as cases where certain young people were banned for a particular neighborhood. This happened to Diego, a 15-year-old light industry apprentice with roots in Switzerland and Ecuador who had grown up in a working-class Zurich neighborhood. He described being unable to visit neighborhood B because of a conflict with some local youth:

Over there, that's [neighborhood B]. I used to go there all the time….There's always tension….I've been in fights with three or four guys from over there. Things are a little too heated over there for me [right now]….It happens quite a bit in Zurich: One person bars another from visiting a particular place….In theory, I'm not allowed to enter [that neighborhood]….But if I'm with my buddy who's from there, they can't touch me.

But as De Backer has explained, exclusive strategies can paradoxically contribute to inclusion: "To be truly social, young people need to be *a*social: establishing a territory goes hand in hand with the erection of boundaries and the exclusion of others" (De Backer, 2019, p. 315). In this way, excluding others provides youth with a means of strengthening ties within their own peer group and claiming their own place in the public sphere.

Meanwhile, by establishing the boundaries of what they consider to be "their turf," young people also recognize the territories claimed by other groups.

The experiences described by Faust do a good job of illustrating these dynamics. The son of Portuguese immigrants, this 16-year-old who was completing a mechanical and metalworking apprenticeship had spent his childhood in neighborhood B. Although he had once been involved in drug trafficking, he claimed this was no longer the case. He had a passion for motorcycles and spent a lot of his free time playing soccer or exploring his neighborhood and downtown Zurich, either on foot or in older friends' cars. Like his friends, he was a fervent and unmistakable supporter of one of Zurich's two main soccer teams. While talking about the area around the team's stadium, where he regularly met up with other fans, Faust explained how he had "always been there to defend our territory and show that it belongs to us," even when that meant using his fists. However, he adopted a completely different tone while leading us down what he called "the long way," an especially long street in his neighborhood where he regularly hung out with his friends at night:

> [Here, we often come across other groups of young people] and things can get tense. In general, everyone keeps their distance and tries to stay out of each other's way. Well, sometimes we get into fights…but we're not the ones starting trouble by showing up at a spot someone else is already using. We do our own thing….There's no point in provoking others.

When young people seek to assert their right to use certain spaces in their own way—occasionally imposing their own codes of behavior or excluding other groups—micropolitical strategies tend to be implemented in relatively peaceful ways. In fact, our research participants generally expressed a desire to avoid conflict whenever possible. This was especially true in situations where they found themselves on unfamiliar ground or in the presence of young people they did not know well. Bea put it this way: "When, like, there are too many people in the same place and we don't know them very well, that's when we prefer to move on instead of staying. Instead of, you know, picking a fight and annoying them." Situations like these show how, instead of excluding others, young people sometimes practice a form of "self-exclusion" by simply leaving the disputed area. They may even prefer invisibility when they find themselves in public spaces.

6. Invisibility as Protection

De Backer (2019) has described how young people who hang out in Brussels rely on different "regimes of visibility" to regulate their interactions with other users of public space. Likewise, the situations described by the young people we met in Zurich provide examples of subversion, control, and sometimes even domination. And when their presence in public space produced overwhelming feelings of unease or insecurity, our research participants tended to opt for discretion, if not invisibility. Still, these moments of uncertainty were not necessarily tied to specific locations. Instead, they tended to be shaped by factors like the style of dress and ethno-racial origin of the young people involved, and above all by their gender. In addition to being more likely than their female counterparts to describe situations where they had exercised control over a public space, male interviewees were also more likely to talk about encounters with police. For example, during a walking interview, Diego led us to a part of Zurich that is home to a skate-park and a "hall of fame" (a place where graffiti artists are allowed to paint murals). The location held special significance for him since he and his friends often spent time there skateboarding, listening to music, and looking at the surrounding graffiti. He explained that, although the area was mainly used by skateboarders during the day, a more diverse range of young people arrived at night, when a more festive atmosphere took hold and those present often behaved badly. He had frequently been stopped and searched by the police, not necessarily for being involved in a fight, but simply for being with a group of young people. As a result of such experiences, Diego remained constantly on guard against the authorities, even when he felt he had done nothing wrong. He explained how, when he saw the police coming, he always ran away and alerted his friends so they could avoid any potential trouble:

> When we see the police going by, we make a run for it right away. And once we're safe, we start warning our buddies….They warn our other friends…and that's how everyone in the neighborhood stays safe, I'd say. When the police are in the neighborhood, we stay on top of what's going on. That way, nothing bad can happen.

As for our female research participants, they described feeling especially unsafe when they encountered strange men in unfamiliar locations or while out on their own. This is how Bea set the scene:

> In the street or at a park, there are certain men….They always feel the need to say something when a good-looking woman goes by. For a woman, it's a bit unpleasant. I'm not saying we're not used to it, but we need to protect ourselves as women, we need to stand up straight and say "fuck them" and go on our way instead of letting them get a rise out of us.

To avoid being bothered by male strangers, the girls we interviewed described paying heightened attention to how they moved, what they wore, and where they went. They also employed self-defence strategies like traveling in groups or with men, carrying pepper spray in their bags, or simply pretending to talk on the phone.

These examples show that young people are very conscious of being subject to gender-specific rules of behavior when in public space. The preliminary results

of our research project also highlight other factors that intersect with gender, including styles of dress as well as visible associations with a working-class neighborhood or a particular ethno-racial group. Ongoing and planned research will allow for more in-depth analysis of the connections between these different factors and how they jointly shape the inclusive or exclusive potential of the relationships young people maintain with public spaces. Nevertheless, this article has shown that, far from seeing themselves solely as victims of police surveillance or misogynistic behavior, young people actively rely on strategies of (in)visibility that are perfectly integrated into their everyday experiences. Although often less visible or dramatic than strategies of protest, domination, or spatial control, strategies of invisibility have no less micropolitical significance, given how they facilitate young people's efforts to appropriate public spaces and stake out a place in the public sphere.

7. Conclusion

Our findings show how, even though cities are rarely planned with an eye to facilitating the use and appropriation of public spaces by youth, and contrary to prevailing representations in the literature, young people's presence in such locations does not automatically reflect idleness or subversive activity. Rather, young people have a structured perception of public space and they actively negotiate the terms of cohabitation with other users. For instance, our research participants described appropriating public spaces that held significance for them. At times, they actively defended what they considered to be "their territory." In other situations, they opted for invisibility. Above all, they sought out spaces where they could meet up with friends while enjoying a degree of privacy. By diversifying their activities and progressively expanding the extent of their movements, they appropriated urban public spaces in ways that allowed them to gradually familiarize themselves with the "grammars of the public sphere" (Breviglieri, 2007). In turn, this learning process facilitated the development of an adult identity.

Although sometimes subversive or confrontational, their spatial practices generally tended toward the mundane, the peaceable, and sometimes even the invisible. As demonstrated above, this does nothing to take away from the (micro)political significance of these practices. Indeed, the young people we interviewed were well aware that some of their activities could disturb other users of public space and run counter to normative expectations regarding the intended purpose of specific locations and the behavior of those present. That is not to say they were ignorant of the rules for urban cohabitation or prone to disregarding them. In fact, they generally followed such rules, although they also actively participated in negotiating them. Ultimately, the strategies that our research participants employed for sharing public spaces varied according to the groups they interacted with, their relationship to the locations concerned, and their interest in returning.

Taking the political dimension of young people's everyday spatial practices into account makes it possible to look beyond an idealized and binary vision of public spaces (e.g., a working-class neighborhood or a city center) as inherently inclusive or exclusive. This more complex perspective allows for an understanding of publicness rooted in processes of both inclusion and exclusion that together provide youth with opportunities to gradually assert their presence in the public sphere and take their place in the city.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Article

Contradictions Within the Swedish Welfare System: Social Services' Homelessness Strategies Under Housing Inequality

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Abstract

Sweden has seen a rise in homelessness alongside its strained housing market. References are increasingly being made to structural problems with housing provision, rather than individual issues. Housing has been organized through the local social services, which are responsible for supporting homeless people. With a foundation in housing studies, this article analyzes the Swedish social services' challenges and actions in a time in which affordable housing is in shortage, and housing inequality a reality, through the lens of social services. The focus is on the intersection between the regular housing market and housing provision (primary welfare system), the social services needs-tested support (secondary welfare system), and the non-profit and for-profit organizations (tertiary welfare system), with emphasis on the first two. The article is based on interviews with people working for the City of Malmö and illustrates how the housing shortage problem is moved around within the welfare system whilst also showing that social services' support for homeless individuals appears insufficient. Social services act as a "first line" gatekeeper for those who have been excluded from the regular housing market. Moreover, recently implemented restrictions aim to make sure that the social services do not act as a "housing agency," resulting in further exclusion from the housing market. The article highlights how the policies of the two welfare systems interact with and counteract each other and finally illustrates how homeless individuals fall between them. It highlights the need to link housing and homelessness in both research and practice to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of housing markets and how homelessness is sustained.

Issue

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1. Introduction

The increase in reported homelessness in Sweden and Europe (FEANTSA, 2018; National Board of Health and Welfare, 2017) raises questions about the housing market on the whole. The latest nationwide survey on homelessness, from 2017, reported over 33,250 people (of a population of 10 million at the time) as homeless in Sweden, compared to 17,800 in 2005 (of a population of 9 million; see Knutagård, 2018; National Board of Health

and Welfare, 2017). Thus, at the time of the latest survey, Sweden had the highest share of homeless people per 1,000 inhabitants of the Nordic countries (Knutagård, 2018). In a "universal" welfare system, homelessness must be regarded as a serious failure. Since the 1990s, Swedish housing policy has increasingly become more market-oriented, with less government involvement in housing policies as a result. This has also entailed a "downgrade" of the issue of homelessness; rather than a national housing problem, it is treated as a responsib-

ility of the local social service authorities, distinct from the production and distribution of housing (Olsson & Nordfeldt, 2008; Sahlin, 2013).

International homelessness research from the 1980s onwards recognizes a complex relationship between individual circumstances and structural conditions that brings on precarious housing situations. Structural aspects include a lack of affordable housing, unemployment, and increased gaps in income and wealth, and individual circumstances include personal vulnerabilities, institutional experiences, and inadequate support (Lee et al., 2010; O'Flaherty, 2004). Homelessness rates tend to be higher in metropolitan areas where affordable units are scarce (Lee et al., 2010). Contexts like the housing market need to be addressed to further the theoretical development of homelessness research (Pleace, 2016). Quigley et al. (2001, p. 38) argue that the "tendency to downplay housing availability as an explanation for homelessness appears to be justified by the traits of the homeless population," that is, people are often described in terms of their social problems (e.g., drug abuse and mental health). While taking individual situations and misfortunes into account is certainly important for understanding potential causes of homelessness, this article focuses on the housing market to understand homelessness in Sweden. Here, homelessness is understood as a structural problem rooted in the political economy: "too many poor people competing for too few low-income housing units" (Lee et al., 2010, p. 514), adding to research pointing at homelessness as an existing housing emergency (Culhane & Metraux, 2008). The complexity of homelessness is often analyzed on an individual level (Somerville, 2013); there is thus less focus on the various structural shortcomings.

Swedish research on homelessness has increased since the 1990s. Contemporary researchers (Anderberg & Dahlberg, 2019; Knutagård, 2009; Löfstrand, 2005; Nordfeldt & Olsson, 2006; Sahlin, 1996; Samzelius, 2020; Swärd, 2021; Wirehag, 2022) have explored how homelessness is defined, how homelessness may be mapped, reasons for homelessness, consequences of homelessness (including health issues), and measures to reduce homelessness (Swärd, 2021). Homelessness scholars have also criticized that the underlying structural problem of the shortage of affordable housing has remained unaddressed (Löfstrand, 2005; Wirehag, 2022). Housing researchers focus to a larger extent than homelessness researchers on structural aspects and transformations in housing policy, such as, for example, an increased threat of displacement (Baeten et al., 2017; Pull, 2020), precarious housing conditions (Listerborn, 2021), and a lack of affordable housing (Grander, 2018). By bringing homelessness and housing research together, this article aims to illustrate the shortcomings of institutional separations of housing, particularly for people impacted negatively by the shortage of affordable housing in an unequal housing market. With a foundation in housing studies, this article analyzes the Swedish social services' challenges and actions in a time of housing inequality and a shortage of affordable housing; in such times, there is pressure on the social services (the secondary level of the welfare state) to act on the lack of response from the general housing provision (the primary level of the welfare state). This article brings new knowledge about—and understanding of—the ambiguous situation in social services concerning the negotiation of their role in the context of acute homelessness.

The article focuses on local responses to increased homelessness that are organized through social services to cope with the effects of the situation on the Swedish housing market. It presents results from a study conducted in Malmö, Sweden's third largest city, and is based on interviews with professionals from the municipal social service authorities. Homelessness policies are local and varied, and the experiences from Malmö do not apply to all Swedish municipalities; however, municipalities tend to follow each other and exhibit certain similarities (Wirehag, 2022). In 2005, 50 percent of the homeless individuals reported in Sweden were in large cities; in 2017, that number had decreased to around 30 percent (Wirehag, 2019). Housing shortages are prevalent in most Swedish cities today. 204 of 290 municipalities reported a shortage of housing in a survey from 2022 (National Board of Housing Building and Planning, 2022a).

The article's analytical framework consists of two integrated elements: (a) the different levels of the welfare system and (b) homelessness categories. The systemic and institutional levels are expressed in this article through the regular housing market and the primary welfare system. The individualization of homelessness is visible in the secondary and tertiary welfare systems. In the secondary welfare system, social services support the homeless and are, as expressed by an informant, a "first line" of sorts in confronting the housing shortage–the initial screening point beyond which support may be accessed. The tertiary welfare system allocates help for those who are most marginalized in the form of services and shelters, particularly emergency services, which are often provided by traditional charitable providers (O'Sullivan, 2010; Olsson & Nordfeldt, 2008) but are increasingly being run by for-profit organizations (Wirehag, 2022). The primary and secondary systems are the focus of this analysis. Within the municipality of Malmö, homelessness is often described as either structural (systemic housing situation) or social (individually induced; see, e.g., Malmö stad, 2020a). Categorizations in this article are used as indicators of how homelessness is understood, and they can lead to different measures and support for the homeless. There is a long tradition of distinguishing between the individual and the structural in sociology; for instance, Mills (1959, p. 8) distinguishes between "the personal troubles of milieu and the public issues of social structure." This distinction plays a crucial role in how homelessness has been researched and dealt with in practice (Cronley, 2010).

In the following sections, we further introduce the context and the connected analytic framework of housing, homelessness, and welfare, before introducing the case study method. The analysis illustrates (a) how the categorization of homeless people functions as a tool and a prerequisite for assessments and decision-making, (b) the contradictions between the primary and secondary welfare systems as housing provision issues are being pushed down to the social services, and (c) how this leads to the latest "solution" for the complex situation. The analysis aims to answer the question: How do social services handle the slightly changed profile of homelessness and the increased number of homeless individuals in relation to the social workers' professional roles and assignments?

2. Housing and Homelessness in the Swedish Welfare System

Increasing housing costs, lagging income rates, the dismantling of welfare systems, and the unequal housing market trigger specific challenges, and many households experience difficulty entering the regular housing market. Housing market inequalities are recognized internationally (James et al., 2022) as well as in Sweden (Listerborn, 2021). Inequalities create ambiguities and contradictions in welfare practices. Based on a long-term global engagement with housing issues as a UN special rapporteur, Rolnik (2019, p. 19) concludes:

In general terms, there is a move to dismantle social and public housing policies, destabilise security of tenure—including rental arrangements—and convert the home into a financial asset. However, this process is path-dependent: The institutional scenarios inherited by each country are fundamental for the construction of the emergent neoliberal strategies. Neoliberal policies must be understood as an amalgam between these two moments: it is a process of partial destruction of what exists and of trend creation of new structures.

Sweden and the Nordic countries are often described as social democratic regimes, where the welfare state has a substantial redistributive role with generous social welfare and unemployment benefits independent of market and familial reliance (Esping-Andersen, 1990; O'Sullivan, 2010). In a more recent debate, however, Baeten et al. (2015, p. 209) describe the Nordic countries as "post-welfare states" that have lost their status as distinct models:

[The] post-welfare state does not mean the end of the welfare state but decentralization of welfare provision to lower government echelons (cities and regions, placing increasing pressure and financial burden on cities which Peck 2012 has coined as "austerity urbanism") and to the private market.

The transformation of the Nordic welfare states began later than in other Western countries (Larsson et al., 2012), yet when it comes to housing, Sweden's entry into market logic was rapid. While Sweden remains a welfare society in many ways and housing is regulated with considerable rights for tenants, the neoliberal transformation of the housing market stands out in relation to other welfare sectors. Additionally, the housing market has played a crucial role in growing inequalities (Hedin et al., 2012). Normative principles of the housing regime being universal may still play a central role in authorities' understanding of welfare "needs" and influence local authorities' actions. However, the state's role has changed, and its actions align more with market principles (Baeten et al., 2015).

Every welfare system has its own boundaries and rules for inclusion and exclusion. In Sweden, the welfare system is connected to employment and earned (previous) income, and it is managed by a national insurance system organized by public and government authorities, the aim being to ensure equality between citizens. Olsson and Nordfeldt (2008) describe this as a primary, long-term, structural welfare system. The primary welfare system is universal and built on the idea of a redistributive state. Subsequently, the Swedish housing regime has aimed to be universal with a general approach, supported by market correctives from the state; ideally, everyone should be able to find housing on the same regular market (Bengtsson, 2001). Formally, municipalities are responsible for organizing housing provisions through the Municipalities' Housing Provision Act (Ministry of Finance, 2000). The Swedish Constitution contains a formulation of housing as a right (Ministry of Justice, 1974, Chapter 1, § 2), but does not imply an independent, legally enforceable right (Lind, 2009). However, some groups—disabled, elderly, asylum seekers, and newly-arrived immigrants—may be legally entitled to housing (National Board of Housing Building and Planning, 2020b). Homeless individuals may also be entitled to housing support.

In line with the principles described above, Sweden does not have a needs-tested housing sector for low-income households. Instead, public housing, organized as municipal housing companies (MHCs) that act in the same market as private rental companies, have been responsible for supplying affordable housing. However, qualifications such as a minimum income level or not being a recipient of social benefits are often a prerequisite for becoming a tenant (Grander, 2017). Allocation of dwellings is usually based on waiting time in a local queue system, which (as in Malmö) may also comprise private housing companies. New legislation from 2011 requires that the MHCs must act according to "business-like principles." This reform enabled an overall rent increase and created prospects for renovations, and MHCs became more inclined to sell their housing stock to finance housing production and renovations (Grander, 2018; Gustafsson, 2021).

The secondary welfare system deals with local, individual, and social problems, including homelessness (Olsson & Nordfeldt, 2008). The Social Services Act (Department of Social Affairs, 2001) states that individuals have the right to needs-tested support to achieve "reasonable living conditions," e.g., financial support or housing. Hence, this act does not imply a general responsibility to provide housing, either (Lind, 2009). The Supreme Administrative Court has found that "individuals have a right to support in terms of housing that fulfills the requirements for reasonable living conditions if they are *completely homeless* and have *special difficulties of organizing housing on their own*" (Holappa, 2018, p. 201, authors' translation, original italics). Until 2022, there was no national homelessness policy in Sweden, and interpretations of the law and case law, as well as the housing solutions used, varies between the municipalities (Sahlin, 2020; Wirehag, 2019, 2021). For example, housing is provided through shelters, hostels, and longer-term "special leases." The lattermost are usually apartments on the regular housing market for which the municipalities hold a first-hand lease. Municipalities sublet these to homeless households without the security of tenure and sometimes with additional regulations (National Board of Housing Building and Planning, 2022b; Wirehag, 2021). There has been a dramatic national increase in special leases (also called "social contracts") of 177 percent from 2008 until 2019, when it peaked with a total of 26,087 leases (see National Board of Housing Building and Planning, 2019a, 2019b). Today, they equal 1.7 percent of the Swedish rental market (National Board of Housing Building and Planning, 2022b).

Homelessness has quantitatively increased, and its profile has also changed (Anderberg & Dahlberg, 2019; Knutagård, 2018). Poverty and the shortage of affordable rental housing are two central factors behind homelessness today. In the 2017 homelessness survey, more than a fifth of all homeless in Sweden were declared as having no support needs other than lacking housing. Many receive income in the form of social benefits, and a few are gainfully employed (National Board of Health and Welfare, 2017). Knutagård (2018, p. 111) highlights that, in the survey from 2017, "the most common reason why parents were homeless was that they didn't have an income that would qualify them as tenants on the ordinary housing market." Further, homelessness has increased in groups like young people, children, and families with a migration background. The development corresponds with emerging trends in other European countries (FEANTSA & Foundation Abbé Pierre, 2020; Knutagård, 2018). This article primarily analyzes the relationship between the primary and the secondary welfare systems and the reworking and erosion of both the provision of affordable housing and the secondary welfare system from the perspective of social services. For individuals with urgent housing needs, the social worker within the secondary welfare system is a "first line," granting access to support. As noted, there is also a ter-

tiary welfare sector that may support those who are completely excluded.

The theoretical and empirical contributions of this article illuminate how the social services negotiate the increasingly market-oriented housing system and how their professional role is affected by the relationships between housing policies and the local social services' mandates and missions in a "post-welfare" situation. Before introducing the results from the research, the context of the case and the methodological approach will be presented.

3. Methods and the Case of Malmö

Malmö suffered both economic and population decline with the closure of the city's shipyard and textile industries in the late 1980s. Nonetheless, the population is now seeing rapid growth, with figures that far exceed former levels: In 2021 the city's population was 351,749 (Statistics Sweden, 2022). Socioeconomic segregation in the city is significant, however (Salonen et al., 2019). According to calculations by the National Board of Housing Building and Planning (2020a, p. 28, authors' translation), the share of households with a "strained housing economy" is higher in the Malmö region than in Sweden's two larger cities—Stockholm and Gothenburg—as well as in the country as a whole. Malmö stands out among the three cities when it comes to the profile of the homeless: In 2017, more women, young people, and people with children were homeless. Almost a third of the homeless population was described as having "no other problem than the lack of housing," compared to 9 and 17 percent in Stockholm and Gothenburg, respectively (Knutagård, 2018, p. 114).

When the interviews for this study were conducted in 2019, homelessness in Malmö had increased drastically according to the most recent local survey at the time, the 2018 municipal homelessness survey (Malmö stad, 2019a). Between 2009 and 2018, the number of homeless adults increased from 863 to 1,959 persons. According to the social services, the character of homelessness had also changed. Despite the population increase in Malmö, social homelessness had been relatively stable, whereas structural homelessness had increased from 329 to 1,337 adults. There were 1,347 children in homeless households in 2018, and 97 percent of the parents were structurally homeless. Moreover, 57 percent of all homeless adults were citizens of other countries than Sweden, a share that had increased. The main increase in this group was amongst people who had been in Sweden for less than three years. These statistics do not include those living in long-term housing solutions (i.e., special leases), which would have added over 1,500 adults and 500 children. The municipality had 1,460 dwellings with special leases in 2018, a doubling since 2005.

The study presented in this article comprises interviews with a total of nine persons working for the City of

Malmö in 2019. Six of them represent different positions within the Labour Market and Social Service Department (i.e., the social services); one was in the department direction and the rest worked in the social service as unit managers, officials, and social workers. Of the remaining informants, two represent the City Executive Office and one represents the Real Estate and Streets and Parks Department. Informants were asked to explain how the organization works in practice, as well as how they reason and act. In this article, we primarily draw on interviews with the social services, and only they are cited. These interviews also explored how these professionals understood the increased and slightly changed homelessness and categorizations of homelessness, as well as special leases and the increase thereof. The responsibility for structural homelessness and the growing "sub-system'' of special leases for this group were in focus in the interviews. The semi-structured interviews lasted around one hour each. The interviews were recorded with the informants' consent and subsequently transcribed, and themes were identified by reading and going back and forth in the material. The quotes used were translated from Swedish to English by the authors and the informants approved of the quotes used. To provide a high degree of anonymity, informants are described by their workplaces and roles, and the quotes are not linked to specific individuals. In addition to the interview material, documents and press articles are included to complement and add context to the recent development of the local social services' practice in relation to housing.

Housing support for the structurally homeless changed shortly after the interviews were conducted, and this article also includes the process that has taken place since the interviews. A stricter policy advocating short-term instead of long-term solutions was implemented in 2019 (Malmö stad, 2019b). According to the local homelessness survey published the following year, the total number of homeless persons decreased and the structurally homeless decreased by approximately half (Malmö stad, 2020a). The interviews thus revolve around the earlier situation of homelessness, as well as the practice of using special leases more generously for those defined as structurally homeless.

4. Social Services and Responsibilities for Structural Homelessness

As previous research has shown, the social services' practice of categorizing homeless individuals is a prerequisite for determining the support they will receive, and it is common both in the study of homelessness and when conducting social work practice (Sahlin, 2020; see also Knutagård, 2009; Löfstrand, 2005; Sahlin, 1996). Categorizations constitute one part of what Wirehag (2021) calls the "gatekeeping" function of social services, assessing who is eligible for and deserves support. In this section, we discuss the categorization of homelessness, which is understood as either social or struc-

tural, depending on its perceived cause as defined by the municipality. The distinction between these categories is closely connected to informants' discussions about the social services' role and responsibilities, as well as the relationship between the primary welfare system and the regular housing market on one hand, and the secondary welfare system and the social services on the other.

Whilst some informants found distinguishing between social and structural homelessness relatively easy, some also reflected on risks, such as difficulties finding common definitions within the organization and the possibility that they were simplifying clients' situations. Categorizing implies simplifications, and the distinction between the categories may not always be very clear in reality. Although research sometimes separates individual and structural causes, the two are rarely seen as actually unrelated (Sahlin, 2020; see also Fitzpatrick, 2005).

In the following quote, an informant explains the difference between the categories and indicates an understanding of homelessness as a housing market problem:

[If] you for instance have some kind of addiction or mental illness or hopeless debts that make you eventually unable to find a solution on the open housing market…then you are not structurally homeless. But if, for example, the only reason you are turning to social services is because there is a shortage of housing in the city or the country, then you have no other difficulties; rather, it is really because not enough [housing] is being built. (Informant 5)

Behind these categorizations there is the prevalent problem of housing inequality. A municipal report on housing provision in Malmö concludes that the "competition for housing with affordable rent levels makes it very difficult for those with the lowest incomes, on social benefits, or with records of non-payment to enter the regular housing market" (Malmö stad, 2020b, p. 2, authors' translation). Our informants underlined high rents, especially in newly built housing, and landlords' strict requirements as significant issues and explanations for (structural) homelessness. One described the situation thus:

I mean, in a way, they [the landlords] own our job and us as inhabitants of Malmö. So, they can say, "Yes, but you need to have four times the rent [in income]."…It has become more expensive and there are new, other, requirements; it has become, like, more strict. (Informant 5)

For the MHCs, Grander (2017) shows how increased market adaptation has led to stricter requirements and hence higher thresholds for new tenants. The requirements include affluent tenants whilst excluding others, who are referred to the social services and their special leases to gain access (Grander, 2017). Apart from a housing market that is inaccessible to many due to

limited economic resources, the above quote also illustrates the relationship between the regular market and the social services. Exclusion from the primary welfare system requires the secondary welfare system and social services to step in.

Furthermore, the housing queue system, which differs between cities, can be difficult to decipher, and in 2020 the average waiting time in Malmö was just over three years (Boplats Syd, 2020). In the interviews, the lack of accumulated time in the housing queue was emphasized as a problem among those seeking support from social services.

In line with previous research (Knutagård et al., 2020; Sahlin, 2020), the informants reported that refugees constitute a significant part of the structurally homeless. While this group may be heterogeneous, common factors may be a lack of accumulated time in the housing queue, a lack of social networks, and as expressed by Informant 3, insufficient knowledge of the housing system:

> So, of course, it is often they [refugees] who do not have knowledge of how the system works. Because people who have lived here their whole lives usually also know about Boplats Syd [the local housing queue] and all of that and hence have an advantage. (Informant 3)

Some informants mentioned young people, who sometimes lack a strong position in this context (see also Grander, 2023).

When the informants were asked about the situations leading up to seeking support from social services, some described what may be summarized as a housing precariat (Listerborn, 2021), including people with insecure housing conditions such as lodging or living with relatives. The informants were aware that lacking secure housing could happen to almost anyone, as such is the nature of life. One such event, or "trigger" (Anderberg & Dahlberg, 2019), is (marital) separations:

> It can also be just coincidences in life that do it, that you face a divorce or separate from your partner and only the other [person] has been on the lease, and "now here I am"—and you may have not had any problems before. (Informant 1)

The interviews with the informants from the social services indicated a discrepancy and negotiation between their understanding of their core mission (i.e., working with social problems) and the reality, which in their experience is also having to deal with the housing system's structural faults. According to some informants, the structurally homeless group should be able to have accommodation of their own. One expressed it as follows:

> So, if we had 200 apartments here tomorrow, half of our clients would have been able to move in and live there without problems. But since [the apart-

ments] do not exist, it is referred to the social services that become the ultimate, the municipality's ultimate responsibility. (Informant 5)

This highlights that the support of the utmost safety net also comprises households with (mainly) poor economies. Another informant reflected on a complex relationship between reality and the law (Social Services Act), and the role of social services:

> This is where social policy and housing policy are very much out of sync. Because our legislation is from the early 80s and is based on us helping the most socially vulnerable. And if you have an income but no housing, are you then among the most socially vulnerable? Are those the people that we shall help? Yes, everyone should have a roof over their head. That is what we lean towards when we help them. But the question is whether it is right nonetheless, because one could say that social policy bears the consequences of housing policy. (Informant 2)

The situation in the housing market today is quite different from what it was in the 1980s when the Swedish housing market was balanced and there was even a surplus of rental apartments, including in the major cities. In general, given the situation, our informants did not question that support with housing should be provided, but some reflected on how and by whom it should be organized.

Sahlin (2020, p. 39) describes how an interviewee in her research in Malmö explained that the concept of structural homelessness was initially a way for social services to "highlight that shortage of housing was a significant cause of homelessness, which must be addressed at the national level or by the city as a whole." Similarly, one of our informants explained that the epithet could be seen as a signal to the market, stressing a discrepancy between what the market supplies and the factual housing needs.

Whilst there sometimes appears to be a gap between housing and social work research, the interviews indicate that the gap also exists in practice, between housing and social policy—and the two welfare systems—that make the social services meet the consequences of housing inequalities. The coming sections will discuss the *actual* consequences of the unequal housing market and the unclear responsibilities that ultimately hit the homeless.

5. Dealing With Structural Issues at the "First Line"

Housing policy affects the homeless, and it also has an impact on social services. The effects of the primary welfare system and the regular housing market's shortcomings trickle down to the secondary and the local social service authorities. The interviews indicate that the local organization related to housing had grown and become more formalized as homelessness and special leases had increased.

The 2018 municipal homelessness survey report (Malmö stad, 2019a) states that homelessness caused by a housing shortage does not "traditionally" fall under the responsibility of social services. At the same time, the report indicates that special leases were increasingly offered to this group, especially to families with children, since short-term emergency accommodation is expensive for the municipality and the waiting time in the local housing queue was deemed "unreasonable" for children. Similarly, according to our interviews, the main arguments for using special leases for this group were that (a) long-term solutions are more humane, not least when considering children, and (b) a regular apartment is often cheaper than other options. The pursuit of sustainable solutions for the structurally homeless in situations without better options was presented as one possible explanation for the increase in leases:

> Partly from a humanistic perspective but also from an economic perspective, because nothing is as cheap as solving this [situation] with an apartment with rent. And that was probably where it began, there were special leases for a certain group; to be able to control costs, the choice was made to expand that range and thus create a more solid second-hand or secondary housing market, as they say. That was, that has really been clear to everyone all along. It is not that one thought that it was good, or like, that one feel they have had much choice. But somehow it has been physically impossible to meet needs, as long as there has been this obligation that we have to help those who are in the city. (Informant 4)

Although the special leases were also used for the structurally homeless at the time of our interviews, our informants revealed that the requirements for receiving (any) support were nonetheless high and preceded by thorough investigations with high demands on personal responsibility. Social services step in when all other possibilities, such as social networks, have been exhausted. As a first step, the structurally homeless were normally offered temporary accommodation, for example, in hostels.

As a normative reflection on the system of using special leases as a solution for the structurally homeless and the potential implications thereof, one informant said:

> I also understand why we offer apartments…but I personally do not think that this is how the social services and the municipality should work to combat homelessness. In my eyes, it gets weird. Because I think that we are the social services, we cannot, like, forget our core mission. Our core mission is not really to solve the housing market in Sweden. (Informant 1)

The quote highlights the question of responsibilities and the role of the social services, as the informant problematizes that they are put in a position to resolve a struc-

tural issue. It appears contradictory to the informant that they on the one hand push clients to apply for housing on their own, whilst at the same time removing apartments from the regular market to use for special leases.

The experiences of the social service professionals illustrate how homelessness related to "social problems" is manageable, whereas dealing with situations deriving mainly from a housing shortage are seen as more complex. Yet, everyone needs a home, and the housing market issues are being "pushed down" to the social service level and left for the social workers to handle. This sometimes entails difficult situations and assessments regarding who is eligible for support or not, and one informant zeroed in on their difficult task:

> Sometimes I can think that both [municipal] departments and politics and, like, those who make the strategic decisions regarding this [situation] have really had a hard time making up their minds. And thereby sent the issue to the first line and let the social workers take [it]. (Informant 4)

In the context of tough situations on the regular housing market, the social workers are put in the front, at the "first line" as gatekeepers on whom the homeless individuals depend. However, the social workers' competence is in supporting people with social problems; influencing the housing supply is not within their power.

How homeless households are supposed to find adequate housing appears to be under constant negotiation. Despite the previously emphasized benefits of long-term solutions, the municipality's response to the situation in 2019 was to clarify the social services' target group and (re)define who is entitled to access more long-term housing support. Due to the new policy, social services turn away the structurally homeless today, and they are referred to finding housing via the regular housing provision channels. As Sahlin (2020) indicates, the new guidelines recognize the core structural issues, but contradictorily, they also entail a "responsibilization" of the individual in the pursuit of housing. Hence, there is a "de-responsibilization" of the welfare state (Samzelius, 2020, p. 247): "As the welfare state recedes, individuals are increasingly expected to rely on primary networks or seek other options on 'the market.'" Already before the implementation of the new guidelines, homeless people were expected to try to find housing on their own. Now, however, the responsibility is placed completely on the homeless individuals themselves, despite the idea that the welfare system should provide a safety net. This strategy eases the burden on social services and possibly lowers the number of officially reported homeless people in Malmö. Sahlin (2020, p. 48) offers an explanation for the guidelines: "When homelessness and the costs for temporary accommodation grow, while the housing market remains tight, a municipality may react through narrowing its target groups for homeless accommodation.''

6. Renegotiations of the Right to Support—And a Changed Homelessness?

The interpretation of the Social Services Act (Department of Social Affairs, 2001) was a recurring theme in the interviews. The new guidelines from 2019 are meant to clarify the social services' responsibility regarding homelessness and be "an adaptation to current case law" (Malmö stad, 2020a, p. 5, authors' translation). The guidelines state that, for example, "suffering from the housing shortage" or a "poor economy which makes it difficult to meet a landlord's requirements" alone are insufficient as reasons for eligibility for support. The bottom line is that "social services are not a housing agency" (Malmö stad, 2019b, p. 1, authors' translations). This has meant a renegotiation of how support is offered. In short, the structurally homeless are no longer entitled to long-term solutions like special leases, and they are referred to emergency shelters, which offer housing for a maximum of one week at a time (Sahlin, 2020). Other Swedish municipalities also show a focus on social problems and a "reluctance within social services to become some sort of housing agency" (Wirehag, 2021, p. 100). Similar strategies can be seen in Stockholm and Gothenburg (Samzelius, 2020).

In 2020, the City of Malmö declared the new strategy successful: They could show a decrease in homelessness by almost half between 2018 and 2020 (Habul, 2020), from 1,959 to 1,112 adults or from 3,384 to 2,312 if special leases are included. Apart from the new regulations, the municipality listed other factors that contributed to this development: increased investments in housing counseling staff to support people in finding their own housing, increased access to apartments through special leases from both the municipal and private rental markets, and decreased migration (Malmö stad, 2020c).

Not everyone shares this optimism, however. In a report to the local politicians, the Union for Professionals (Akademikerförbundet SSR), which represents social workers, presented accounts of local members' experiences. The report describes the new regulations as arbitrary, legally questionable, and devastating for, for example, families with children, as "children have to pay the price for a failing housing market by repeatedly having to move and live for long periods of time under insecure conditions" (Union for Professionals, 2021, p. 1, authors' translations). The report suggests that the strategies are a way to manipulate statistics rather than to decrease homelessness. The official homelessness statistics do not include individuals who are rejected as ineligible for support or those who do not choose to seek support from social services for various reasons (see also Sahlin, 2020). The view is shared by the local City Mission in the tertiary welfare system (Skåne Stadsmission, 2020, 2021). The Union for Professionals and the City Mission both highlight that there is a risk if socially homeless persons are "re-classified" as structurally homeless if their situations improve, since it can mean that they lose their support with housing.

In the local 2022 survey, the number of homeless individuals continued to decrease, not at least among the structurally homeless, to a total of 1,381 adults (Malmö stad, 2022). The City Mission remains critical of the statistics (Skåne Stadsmission, 2022). By "adjusting" who deserves help, the social services must develop and negotiate new standards concerning the type of support that can be provided, and to whom. No other public authority is taking responsibility for the people who no longer qualify but are nevertheless homeless (Sahlin, 2020).

7. Conclusion

This article has illustrated how the welfare systems interact with and counteract each other against the backdrop of reduced access to welfare support in combination with an increasingly neoliberal housing regime. The excluding factors that contribute substantially to the current homelessness are arguably situated within the primary welfare system and the housing market, and this article highlights how the secondary welfare system manages these outcomes via social services. We describe this as a contradiction between welfare systems, where the boundaries between the three levels of welfare provision are subject to ongoing negotiation.

Moreover, the social services negotiate the increased and somewhat changed homelessness in relation to their professional roles and assignments. A conflictual and ambiguous situation emerges between "traditional" supportive social work and homelessness due primarily to difficulties finding housing. Distinguishing between social and structural homelessness based on the cause of homelessness leads to the exclusion of certain individuals in search of housing. The new guidelines established in 2019 have been criticized for leaving a large group of homeless people without support. However, the number of (officially) homeless individuals has decreased.

Social services and their individually focused housing measures cannot resolve the structural core issue of inequality. As our analysis has illustrated, on the systemic level, the different housing solutions for homeless people provided by social services are a way to handle the urgent and disruptive situation that homelessness is. Following the logic and formulation of "structural homelessness" however, these solutions do not change the housing market in terms of addressing the distributive issues that shape housing inequality. Instead, they might be described as putting out fires. On the individual level, the special leases and certainly the short-term emergency solutions do not change a household's "position" in the housing market. People in need of housing have already been side-lined or expelled from the regular housing market; at the same time, they do not qualify for support from social services. Inequality in the housing market leads to ad-hoc solutions, which affects people in search of housing.

By bridging housing and social work research, we have contributed new knowledge about the relationship

between the primary and secondary welfare systems and the connection between homelessness and housing policies. The complex relationship between the welfare systems may be obscured by the separation of the two fields of research and policy. We see a change in how homelessness is defined and the further marginalization of people who are ineligible for support from social services. How urgent cases are handled on a daily basis and the new "solutions" that emerge both define the future housing market for people in need of affordable housing. The re-working of social work in relation to the erosion of the universal welfare regime is one example of the partial destruction and trend creation, as mentioned by Rolnik (2019), that form housing inequality in Sweden.

Based on this study, examining the responsibility for housing provision for those who are currently excluded from the primary and (largely) the secondary welfare systems is an area in which valuable further research could be conducted. Including different actors on various scales—for example, from the welfare system, politics, and the private sector—could lead to deeper understandings.

Acknowledgments

Conflict of Interests

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Article

Social Workers and Irregular Migrants in the Assistance Circuit: Making Sense of Paradoxical Inclusion

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Abstract

Despite restrictive policy frameworks, cities sometimes provide support to irregular migrants. Scholars have analysed these forms of inclusion, focusing on policies and tensions between inclusionary approaches by local or urban actors and exclusionary approaches by national or supranational authorities. This article seeks to shift the focus to the street level, examining how support is delivered, how it is experienced by different categories of irregular migrants, and how frontline social workers make sense of their work and foster "paradoxical inclusion." To this end, the article first analyses the experiences of young North African irregular migrants in Geneva, Switzerland. Based on ethnographic research, we describe their everyday life in the "assistance circuit," which forces them to follow a daily routine determined by the services offered at fixed times in different places. Over time, the young men develop a sense of entrapment and alienation, as well as escape strategies. Secondly, by examining the perspective of social workers, we show that the constraints associated with the assistance circuit reflect a social work paradigm that aims to keep people on the move, limit dependency and promote autonomy. This paradigm coexists with another, conflicting one, which can be described as palliative, but which also seems paradoxical to the irregular migrants who aspire to full participation in social and economic life. Overall, our study suggests an alternative interpretation of the limitations and paradoxes surrounding irregular migrants' inclusion that complements policy-oriented approaches.

Keywords

Geneva; Harragas; inclusion; irregular migration; local level; social work; Switzerland

Issue

1. Introduction

Despite restrictive policy frameworks, some cities provide support and services to irregular migrants. While irregular migration used to be equated with exclusion, researchers have increasingly paid attention to forms of inclusion, but also to their limits. Indeed, irregular migrants are often "included" as irregular migrants, which means that while they may have access to forms of assistance, they remain excluded from most wel-

fare rights and the formal labour market (De Genova, 2013). This "subordinate inclusion" (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014, p. 423) results from a tension between the inclusionary approach of local actors (municipalities, civil society organisations), underpinned by economic, humanitarian or security motives (Spencer & Delvino, 2019), and exclusionary national and supranational policies on citizenship and migration, underpinned by economic, security or nativist logics (Jansen et al., 2015). Scholars have sought to explain this situation

by analysing the rationales of policymakers (Kaufmann et al., 2022; Spencer & Delvino, 2019), the advocacy role of NGOs and social movements (Lambert & Swerts, 2019), and the contradictions between human rights and citizenship regimes (Chimienti & Solomos, 2016). At the theoretical level, this literature contributes to debates around notions such as "urban citizenship" and the "right to the city" to make sense of the tension between local inclusion and national exclusion.

However, less attention has been paid to how this contradiction translates into the concrete structuring of support for irregular migrants. Describing *who* has access to *what* and *why* says little about *how* assistance is delivered, *how* it is experienced by different categories of migrants, and *how* frontline social workers make sense of their work and foster "paradoxical inclusion" at the street level. This article addresses these gaps by analysing, firstly, the experience of young North African irregular migrants—Harragas—in Geneva, Switzerland, and secondly, the perspective of social workers involved in the reception of these newcomers. This allows us to argue that the limits and paradoxes of irregular migrants' inclusion cannot be fully explained by the contradictions between the inclusionary approach of local actors and exclusionary national and supranational policies.

We show that while the young men we met in the course of our ethnographic study had access to shelters and soup kitchens regardless of their status, this meant following a daily routine determined by the services offered at fixed times in different and dispersed locations. Over time, the young men develop a sense of entrapment and alienation, but also strategies to escape the assistance circuit. The constraints associated with the assistance circuit reflect the fragmentation and diversity of the actors involved. However, we argue that they also reveal a social work paradigm that aims to keep beneficiaries on the move, in order to ensure that they remain autonomous. This paradigm coexists with a competing one, which we call "palliative," because it is more concerned with ensuring survival and preserving dignity. Both, however, involve a form of inclusion that may be characterised as paradoxical. Harragas aspire to more than survival, yet autonomy seems illusory. This is due largely to their lack of residence status. Nevertheless, we argue that there are many ways of living as an irregular migrant in Geneva. Compared to other categories of irregular migrants, Harragas are particularly burdened by their migration and face strong stigmatisation, which makes their prospects of integration and regularisation appear remote. Nevertheless, they have access to almost unconditional forms of support. This contradiction provides a strong case for examining the contours of inclusion "on the ground," in so-called "low-threshold" reception facilities.

In the next section, we review the literature on how cities deal with irregular migrants and with Harragas, in particular. After describing how we approached our fieldwork and the data on which we base our analyses, we will describe a typical day in the assistance circuit from the perspective of the young migrants we met. We then seek to understand why the provision of support is locationally dispersed and discontinuous over time, contrasting two perspectives on the role of social work with irregular migrants: one that "keeps them on the move" and another that "lets them rest." In the conclusion, we question the extent to which our case represents a form of inclusion and argue for an approach that takes into account the specificities of different categories of irregular migrants and the practical aspects of resource and service provision.

2. Harragas and the Differentiated Inclusion of Irregular Migrants

While irregular migrants are generally considered as being excluded, especially from the rights granted to citizens and regular migrants, scholars have highlighted forms of informal inclusion (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014). Migration and urban sociologists have long studied the role of personal networks and "arrival neighbourhoods" in facilitating the settlement of newcomers and their access to parallel labour and housing markets (for a recent example see Gerten et al., 2022). While many irregular migrants are dependent on these informal forms of support, they are not always excluded from state protection. The development of human rights organisations and forms of urban citizenship has created tension between migration policies and human rights principles (Chimienti & Solomos, 2016).

A number of studies show that many Western European cities provide basic support to irregular migrants, even when the national authorities forbid it (Leerkes, 2016; Özdemir, 2022; Van der Leun & Bouter, 2015). Spencer and Delvino (2019, p. 39) show that "one part of the state, the local tier, is providing for a level of formal inclusion of irregular migrants, not merely the informal inclusion facilitated by sympathetic service providers." These forms of support can result from "municipal activism," as exemplified by the sanctuary city movement, in which cities oppose migration policies decided at the national level (Kaufmann et al., 2022). Without declaring itself a sanctuary city, Geneva has pushed for the regularisation of thousands of long-term irregular migrant workers. Other municipalities, such as Zurich, offer non-national identity documents for access to certain municipal services (Kaufmann & Strebel, 2021). These forms of inclusion are always based on eligibility criteria.

Other forms of provision are unconditional but involve forms of control. In the Netherlands, Leerkes (2016, p. 141) observed the "rise of relatively punitive arrangements 'of last resort' to control pauperism among certain categories of unauthorised migrants who commit minor crimes and/or are believed to frustrate their departure." These measures consist of prison-like accommodation centres designed to keep

non-deportable irregular migrants off the streets and out of sight. The aim is to avoid both security and image problems while reducing the costs associated with their management. However, such infrastructure mainly concerns people whose asylum applications have been rejected and whose identities are therefore known to the authorities.

When irregular migrants remain anonymous, scholars suggest that they are assisted to the extent that they are deserving (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014) or they keep a low profile. Immigration law is therefore selectively enforced, to the detriment of categories such as that of Harragas, who are at the bottom of the "hierarchy of deservingness" (Kyriakidou, 2021). Leerkes et al. (2012) showed that, in the Netherlands, North African irregular migrant men are up to eight times more likely to be arrested than irregular migrant women. They are also more likely to be discriminated against, more likely to be targeted by the police, and more likely to be involved in crime.

North African men involved in irregular migration call themselves Harragas. The word means "those who burn" in North African dialects. They burn borders, migration regulations, and sometimes their own documents. As M'charek (2020, p. 429) puts it, Harraga is "not so much about leaving one place for another, but rather about expanding living space. It is about making movement possible rather than staying stuck, buried alive in a dead end." Young North African people have increasingly engaged in "Harraga" since the 1980s and the implementation of migration policies restricting movement from the African continent to Europe (Salzbrunn et al., 2015). Geneva is just one step on a long journey across Europe for young irregular migrants coming from North Africa. When they arrive in Switzerland, they are already drained by years of wandering and addiction to various substances. As a transportation interface at the centre of a cross-border conurbation, Geneva acts as a hub within their "circulatory territories" (Tarrius, 2015). This wealthy city also seems to be attractive because it allows vulnerable people to be housed and fed for free, irrespective of their residence status.

However, Harragas encounter considerable stigmatisation even among fellow North Africans. The local media have repeatedly reported on the role of "young North Africans" in petty crime. During the course of our research, press articles reported complaints from residents about fights and drug dealing involving young people from North Africa. In response, the Geneva police set up a special unit in the summer of 2020. In a recent study of Geneva, Clerc (2022) showed that not only are young male migrants seen by the authorities as less vulnerable than young women, but that young North African male migrants appear more like a threat. This echoes Hage's (2017) argument that racialised Muslims are increasingly identified with the figure of the wolf. In the Western imagination, he writes, "the wolf is the ultimate representative of the threatening undomesti-

cated other of nature" (Hage, 2017, p. 38). Despite the processes of criminalisation to which Harragas are subjected, deportations to North African countries are infrequent. The Algerian authorities, for example, limit implementation of the readmission agreement signed with Switzerland in 2007. As a result, in 2021, 600 undocumented Algerians were waiting to be expelled from Switzerland (Kocher, 2021).

This transient population represents a challenge to the field of social work. Indeed, being illegalised, often without training or education, not speaking the local language, and facing strong stigma, this population is considered to have a "poor prospect" of integration (Bonjour & Duyvendak, 2018). In addition, or perhaps as a consequence, they often do not adopt attitudes that would make them appear as "deserving migrants" (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014). In Geneva, however, they have access to a range of services that are provided almost unconditionally based on need. This contradiction provides a strategic case for examining the contours of inclusion, analysing not only the conditions of access to services but also how these services are delivered, received, and perceived by their beneficiaries and suppliers.

3. Methods and Data

For our research, we relied on an ethnographic study involving newcomers on the one hand and social workers on the other. This research is part of a larger investigation of the (in)hospitality of European cities towards precarious newcomers (Felder et al., 2020). "Precarious newcomers" refers to newly arrived migrants who are in a precarious situation either concerning their status (lacking regular residence status, having a temporary status, or being at risk of losing this status) or about their living conditions. We thus focused on people with various legal statuses and backgrounds yet having the common characteristic of being newcomers (this is not a clear-cut category, but we have prioritised people who have arrived within the last year) who do not have the resources to support themselves without some kind of assistance. We interviewed them a few weeks or months after their arrival in the cities of Geneva or Brussels. In doing so, we emphasise the importance of time. We suggest that not all migrants can be indiscriminately regarded as newcomers.

In this article, we focus on one particular group of newcomers and draw on fieldwork conducted in Geneva by Sahar Fneich with young irregular migrants from North Africa, between March and August 2020. On her first day of fieldwork, Sahar sat on a bench to observe a large and bustling public space in the city centre. A Moroccan man came up to her and asked if she was Moroccan. On another day, an Algerian man asked if he could sit next to her. Both helped her meet a group of young irregular migrants. In the following weeks, they would walk together, spend time by the lake, and eat

together. Then, Sahar started volunteering at a reception centre, helping to serve food and drinks. Being Lebanese, wearing a veil, speaking Arabic, and being herself a newcomer in Switzerland helped her to build trusting relationships. Her experience of getting access to this group tells us about their daily lives, their use of public spaces, and their desire to make contact with people—preferably of the opposite sex—who speak their language and share part of their culture. Despite these commonalities, Sahar speaks a different dialect, is highly educated, and comes from a middle-class background, while the participants were mostly lacking formal education and came from lower-class families. Moreover, she is Shia from a Sunni mother, while the participants were mostly Sunni. These differences generated a distance, but also a mutual curiosity, which allowed for more balanced exchanges, where the participants accepted to take part in our study while subjecting the interviewer to their own questions.

The fieldwork took place at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic was crippling much of the world. In Switzerland, people were asked to stay at home from mid-March to May, before restrictions were gradually relaxed. This period disrupted the provision of accommodation for people in vulnerable situations. Nevertheless, the daily life we describe based on interviews is more in line with the situation before the pandemic. We report in more detail on the impact of the pandemic on shelters and services in a previous article (Stavo-Debauge et al., 2022). Sixteen semi-structured interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated. The transcriptions were supplemented by informal conversations and field notes. The group studied consists of 19 men from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, without legal status, aged

between 20 and 32, who had arrived in Geneva between two years and two weeks earlier (see Table 1).

In Geneva, the places and services that young North African migrants encounter are not migrant-focused, but rather address people more broadly according to their needs. Contrary to the cases described in the literature, our research participants are not included as irregular migrants but approached as "precarious" or "vulnerable" people instead. The role of such social services in the daily lives, trajectories, and choices of migrants remains under-researched. In addition, the specific features of the form of inclusion offered by the so-called "low-threshold'' reception centres still need to be analysed. In order to address these gaps, we carried out research in reception centres and interviewed social workers. Other interviews were carried out as part of the project, but we will limit ourselves here to those in which we talked with social workers about the services frequented by young North Africans (see Table 2). We use pseudonyms for both the newcomers and the social workers to protect their anonymity. We also avoid naming the institutions in which the social workers work, as this would allow them to be identified.

4. A Typical Day on the Assistance Circuit

After leaving the shelter, Ahmed usually starts his day at Le Bateau Genève (see Figure 1), where he has breakfast. This paddle-wheel boat serves as a reception facility in the morning. Every day, 150 to 200 breakfasts are served to people in precarious situations. Guests warm up, use the toilets, chat, and charge their phones. The doors open at half past seven. At half past nine, however, the last "passengers" are asked to leave. On the upper

Table 1. Interviews with newcomers.

No.	Alias	Age	Nationality	Arrived in Geneva × months ago
1	Adnan	26	Algerian	24
2	Ayman	24	Moroccan	24
3	Omar	28	Tunisian	3
4	Mohammed	29	Tunisian	3
5	Ismail	29	Moroccan	24
6	Kamal	26	Algerian	6
7	Farid	20	Moroccan	12
8	Youssef	26	Moroccan	9
9	Abd El Rahman	32	Algerian	20
10	Hassan	25	Algerian	3
11	Ahmed	29	Algerian	9
12	Hussein	24	Algerian	2
13	Fahed	28	Algerian	6
14	Abed El Aziz	22	Algerian	5
15	Wissam	20	Algerian	5
16	Jamal	27	Algerian	10
17	Ammar	26	Algerian	7
18	Yasser	20	Algerian	7
19	Wassim	28	Algerian	8

Table 2. Interviews with social workers.

No.	Alias	Place of work
1	Sarah	Shelter A
2	Ibrahim	Day centre B
3	David	Day centre C
4	Bernard	Shelter D
5	Lena	Day centre D
6	Selim	Social service (city of Geneva)
7	Anna	CSO volunteer, support for migrants
8	Erin	CSO volunteer, shelter E
9	Ali	Social workers, shelter E
10	Salomé	Social worker

deck, there is a restaurant that welcomes "ordinary" customers for lunch. If the weather is fine, Ahmed then spends some time in a park nearby or goes to the mosque (a 50-minute walk from Le Bateau). Sometimes he also finds a place to sit, and even free toilets and internet connection in shopping centres. These spaces, although privately owned, often offer all the qualities of a public space (at least in Europe, as suggested by Chiodelli & Moroni, 2015). Several interviewees explained that they like to blend in with customers, sometimes trying on clothes or perfumes.

He cannot stay long, however, because he cannot miss lunch at Le Caré, a day centre that serves free lunch Monday to Friday (another hour's walk from the mosque). The nearby Club Social Rive Gauche is an alternative, but one needs to pick up a ticket in the morning. They are distributed from 8 AM, on a first-come-first-served basis. In the afternoon, Ahmed either goes to Plainpalais, a public square where he meets acquaintances, or to a nearby university building where he can use the Internet connection and keep warm until the night shelter opens. The wait can be long: until 7 PM for the public underground shelters, 8 PM for the Salvation Army, and as late as 9 PM for the temporary shelters.

Walking from one place to another requires a degree of alertness. Our interviewees said that they choose routes where they are less likely to meet police officers. Ahmed is often tempted to take the bus to avoid the
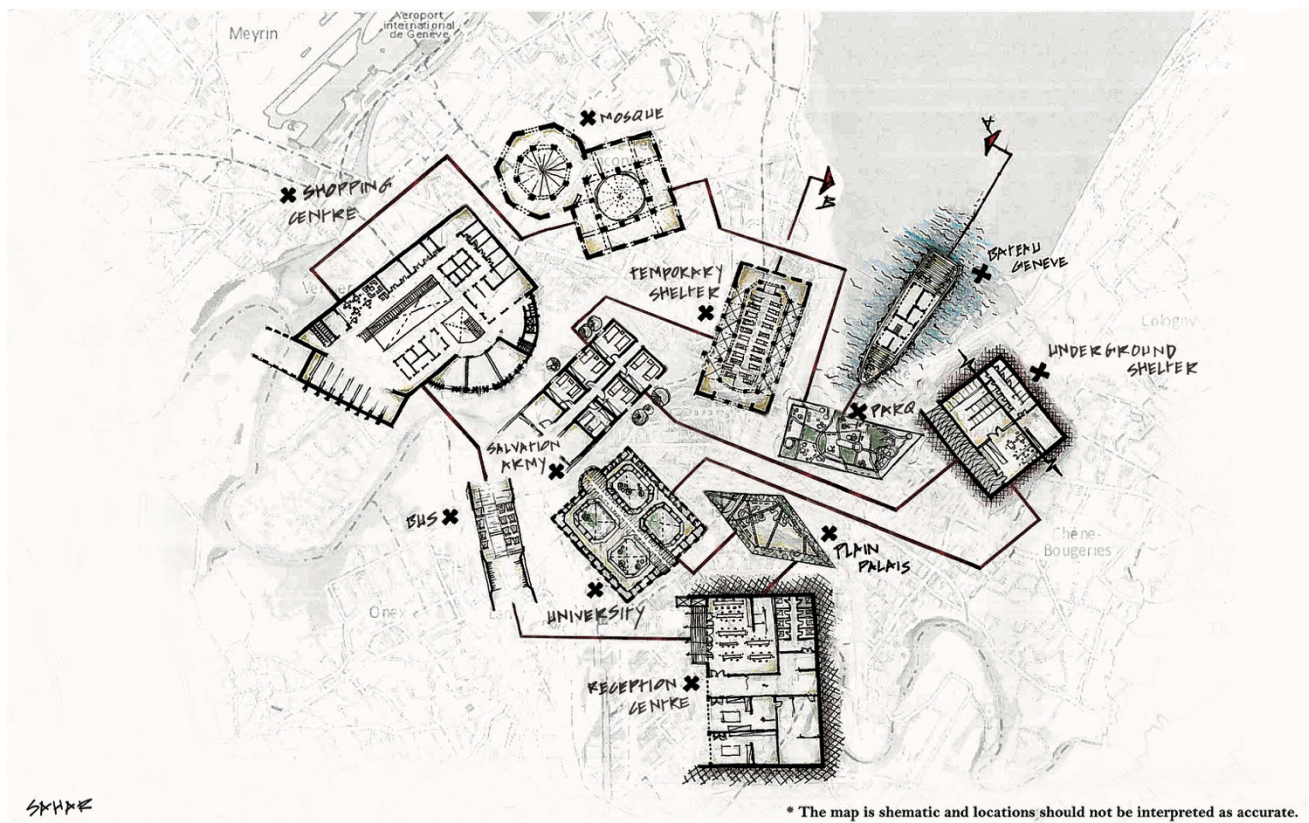

Figure 1. A typical day's journey.

long walk. Like his peers, he has developed strategies to avoid the ticket inspectors. This requires constant vigilance. Ahmed has never been caught, but Mohammed (29, Tunisian), who arrived seven months earlier, told us about one such incident: "Just once on the bus, I was tired, I fell asleep and they found me." While most people progressively disattend from the environment during their daily routine in order to concentrate on their activities, Harragas cannot let their guard down. Instead of a familiar backdrop, the city appears to irregular migrants as a collection of potentially dangerous elements that must be approached with caution (Felder, 2021, p. 188).

Inspired by Pichon's work, we call the network of reception centres and services an "assistance circuit." The notion of a circuit reflects the beneficiaries' impression of going round in circles (Fneich et al., 2023). Pichon (Pichon, 1996, p. 168, authors' translation) stresses that navigating this kind of circuit "requires a detailed knowledge of the network and its potential…of the quality of the services offered here or there, of the timetables, of the waiting times." This knowledge is acquired first-hand, generally via disappointments and setbacks, but it is also passed on between newcomers with different levels of experience. An important function of the reception centers is to disseminate this type of information, formally through the social workers themselves or through posters and leaflets, but also informally between service users attending the same facility. This information needs to be constantly updated, as some reception centers are temporary and subject to uncertain funding or seasonal fluctuations in opening times. For example, city shelters are only open in winter, when sleeping rough can be deadly. The emergence of Covid has further disrupted this constantly evolving system (Stavo-Debauge et al., 2022).

5. Alienation, Entrapment, and Escape From the Assistance Circuit

Irregular migrants' experience of the assistance circuit evolves over time. At first, the possibility of being fed and housed for free seems to be a sign that Geneva is "a city of rights"—as Abd El Rahman (32, Algerian) recounted—a welcoming city sensitive to the plight of vulnerable people. Reception centres open their doors without question, offering temporary protection from the dangers of the outside world. At this point, the newcomers imagine that this is a temporary stage while they find a source of income. Over time, however, the experience of the assistance circuit leads to a sense of entrapment and alienation. This may seem paradoxical because, unlike other migrants who endure the prison-like conditions of refugee camps and deportation centres (de Coulon, 2019; Wyss, 2019), the people we met have a certain amount of freedom. Nevertheless, they share the impression of being "stuck in motion" and having little control over their daily actions. A combination of two factors may explain this paradox.

Firstly, following the assistance circuit is a form of routine work. The young migrants thus encounter conditions that Marx saw as alienating: They lose sight of the meaning of their actions and find themselves performing routines choreographed and ultimately determined by others. Secondly, unlike many workers who encounter such alienating conditions, the young men we met are never seen as workers or producers, only as recipients. The food and shelter they receive is not a reward for their efforts, it is a gift with no possibility of reciprocity, and very little possibility to choose. Their self-esteem suffers from being constantly forced to ask without having anything to give (Honneth, 1996), and forced to take without much possibility to refuse what is given. The relationship with food illustrates this form of alienation. Our interviewees often described the feeling of never being satiated by the free meals they were given. Youssef, a 26-year-old Moroccan who had arrived in Geneva nine months before we spoke, explained:

> When you eat at the soup kitchen, the food follows you all day, you can't think of anything else. You repeat the same thing every day, you eat, you drink and that's it. All day long you just follow the food.

Some thought they could quickly find other forms of support, such as former migrants of the same origin. Mohammed met legal residents from North African countries at the mosque, but they did not show the solidarity he expected. This increased his feelings of alienation and exclusion and his desire to withdraw from an environment that humiliated him: "For them, as for the others, we will always be strangers; have you ever seen anyone help a stranger? I prefer to be a stranger among strangers like myself than to stay with them," he explained. Ahmed argued that undocumented people are set apart from the North African community in Geneva. He reported how he was turned down when he asked for free food in Arabic-speaking restaurants. He finally decided to present himself as Palestinian: "If I had said I was Algerian, she would have called me a thief," he told us. "Those who came before us have damaged our reputation," added his friend Wassim. This feeling of being excluded even by fellow North Africans reinforces the feeling of entrapment and estrangement.

Young irregular migrants thus develop escape strategies. Youssef (26, Moroccan) and Ismail (29, Moroccan) explained how they had stopped eating at the soup kitchens for some time. Having saved some money, they have rediscovered the pleasure of eating by allowing themselves to choose what they put in their mouths: "When you eat something you bought with your money, you feel different, you are no longer hungry, you feel full, you forget about the food," said Youssef.

This type of escape also involves sacrifices (spending the night out and losing one's place in the shelter) and risks (taking psychoactive drugs, for example). The young men's occasional criminal behaviour (drug dealing, theft)

could be interpreted as a way of escaping from their dreary everyday lives and regaining agency. Finding a source of income through drug dealing or theft allows them to decide for once what to eat or what to wear. This also feeds their "project": "In theory, everyone has a project," explained Ibrahim, a social worker, "they all have a story to tell us about their plans. First of all, because you need it to move forward." Marriage is a common project among our interviewees. Having a social life, especially at night, is therefore important. Ahmed told us about his experience of frequenting nightspots such as bars: "I don't drink alcohol, but I go there to meet girls. I might meet a girl and we might get married. But if I meet a good girl, I will stay with her, not just for my papers." However, the timetable of the shelters makes it difficult: "When everyone goes out and relaxes, I have to go home," he regretted.

Regaining control and a sense of self does not necessarily mean leaving the circuit. For the North African migrants we met, it also meant creating niches of intimacy away from the public eye. They sought out urban spaces that they called their "secret place." Fahed (28, Algerian) explains: "I chose my secret place, there is a shower, a toilet, everything is next door." A "good" place is hidden but close to urban amenities. Our interviewees were always vague about these locations. Youssef told us about a "secret place" in the forest; Ismaïl finds them in empty houses. These places are used to spend time alone and "clear your head," as Youssef told us. Through this, they reclaim some control over the rhythm of their lives and the timing of their public exposure.

6. Making Sense of the Fragmented Assistance Circuit

So far, based on migrants' accounts, we have highlighted the constraints associated with the dispersal and restrictive schedules of reception centres and services, with fixed entry times and limited numbers of places. Making sense of these challenges will be the focus of the next few sections.

The fragmentation of services and reception centres is linked to the diversity of actors involved: associations, charities, religious bodies, and public institutions. Support for undocumented migrants is not planned as such. In low-threshold reception centres, irregular migrants blend in with a variety of vulnerable populations who also depend on assistance. The circuit of assistance is thus (re)constructed each day by the beneficiaries, who navigate through different locations and services. A number of institutions have created partnerships, but some actors prefer to remain independent. In addition to concerns about being monitored by an umbrella organisation (Schiller et al., 2023), Bernard—a senior social worker—raises questions of trust: "I am often a confidant for the people we shelter. What if they see me afterwards at [another reception centre] or elsewhere? We prefer to remain independent….We don't want the information [about the users] to circulate too much." Other social workers value the range of options available:

> People also come to complement what is offered elsewhere. And that's really interesting….People will come to us for a reason, for reasons that are positive for them. Because they don't have to come here. Nobody is ever obliged to come here. (David)

David's comments echo those of Bernard: Working in organisational silos has the advantage of ensuring a degree of confidentiality. According to our interviewees, some beneficiaries take advantage of this lack of communication and coordination, allowing them, for example, to eat several meals in a row in different soup kitchens.

As for the spatial dispersion of services, that relates to the saturation of urban space. Organisations are forced to make use of what we call a "spatial reserve" (Felder & Pattaroni, 2023, p. 11), converting buildings earmarked for demolition into dormitories. It is difficult to imagine a place large enough, in the city centre, where all the services could be concentrated. Spatial dispersal is also an explicit strategy to avoid the spatial concentration of precarious populations, which would lead to concerns from local residents and the risk of stigmatisation. Lena, a social worker, joked about the fact that local politicians generally agree with the principle of sheltering the homeless, but think that the neighbouring municipality would be a better option. The locations that comprise the assistance circuit are discreet, or even camouflaged. The two shelters run by the city are located in underground nuclear bunkers. As their entrances are hidden—in an underground car park, for example—people are often not aware of their existence (Del Biaggio & Rey, 2017). Accordingly, social workers and activists sometimes struggle to convince people of the existence of homelessness and extreme poverty in the wealthy city of Geneva.

There are, however, more ideological underpinnings to this organisation of assistance. These are linked to different conceptions of social work. We will now focus on the social workers' point of view and examine how they perceive the assistance circuit. Rather than focusing on the fault lines between social work professionals in Geneva, we will consider how two approaches that are revealed through the particular case of undocumented migrants coexist.

7. Keep Them on the Move…

Dispersion and fragmentation are sometimes seen as a way to prevent dependency. Bernard believes that "state intervention disempowers people. There is a dependency problem. There is no longer any way out." More coordinated (state) intervention would, in his view, disempower the people being cared for. His discourse reflects the fear of the "welfare trap" that has grown since the 1970s. Throughout Europe, the standardised

interventions of the redistributive social state are leaving more room for individualised benefits (Breviglieri et al., 2003). The notion of contract replaces the notion of right, making the provision of welfare conditional. Beneficiaries are supposed to make a choice and commit themselves, choice and commitment being, in the spirit of the "liberal grammar," two of the main capacities of an autonomous and responsible individual (Pattaroni, 2002).

In the case of irregular migrants, this approach cannot be fully developed because, firstly, they already receive minimal and unconditional support; secondly, they are not treated individually; and, thirdly, employment is not an option (unless undeclared work is to be encouraged). The idea of keeping beneficiaries on the move can still lead to the persistence of uncomfortable conditions that would make them want to go elsewhere. Selim, a social worker, observed that with the 24-hour services for the homeless that were put in place during the Covid outbreak:

> Some people were getting quite comfortable. They started to complain about the food….I'm not saying you shouldn't complain about the food. But they were becoming more demanding. When we said that it was over and that the reception would be for the night only, some said that it was scandalous….For me it's a slippery slope: it had become normal when it was supposed to be an exception.

We are not suggesting that the intention to create uncomfortable living conditions informs the daily work of social workers. Even if they are convinced that the beneficiaries—such as the young North African migrants we met—have no real prospect of integration and autonomy, their professional ethics seem to compel them to provide assistance to the best of their ability. Ali, who works in a shelter, insists that providing a bed and a meal is only a part of his job. He stresses the importance of the warmth of the relationship and the importance of smiling: "When you are homeless, you see how people look at you and it dehumanises you completely." However, this desire to do one's best sometimes seems contradictory, as Sarah explained:

> My job is not to sell dreams, that would only feed their disappointment. Sometimes it's better for them to know right away. [When they ask for help with their resume] it's tricky. Sometimes I say "ok, I'll read your resume, but from my experience, it's going to be very difficult." Especially for those who don't speak French, sometimes they are motivated, they want to send their resume everywhere, but without French and without a permit, who is going to give them a job? But then I get blamed, they say, "you don't have faith yourself, how are you going to help us?" But my job is to put them up for the night, that's where it ends, unfortunately.

If constraints are not intended to discourage, they may be intended to avoid giving false hope. However, other hypotheses can also be considered. Gardella suggests that people are kept on the move as a way of ensuring a principle of justice. Creating a turnover would be a way of maintaining unconditionality: "In a situation of shortage, it is right to share the scarce good temporally, i.e., to "give everyone a chance" by rotating individuals" (Gardella, 2016, p. 249, authors' translation). He also underlines the low legitimacy of assistance: "Whether for public or private actors, whether in recent times or at the end of the 19th century, offering the poorest people shelter for an indefinite period of time appears to have little legitimacy" (Gardella, 2016, p. 250, authors' translation). While it is possible to find multiple justifications for this system, it is also contested, and its limitations are recognised even by those who see benefits.

8. …Or Let Them Rest?

The idea of making beneficiaries of social services more active is also considered by some social workers to be an illusion. Sarah told us: "You have to be at the [soup kitchen] before nine o'clock to [get a ticket for] lunch, for example. During this time [of travel] they do nothing else, neither looking for work nor looking after themselves." She also pointed out the health problems that hinder some people's mobility and the fact that people with bad shoes walk all day with wet feet. In other words, this forced daily transit is not only tiring and discriminatory; it is also unproductive and does not seem to foster a liberal subject ready to choose, commit itself to a project of its own, and engage with and realise its own free will. Ahmed reflected on his job search and shared this view:

> I am not stable enough to search for a job. If I want to shower and change, I can't come back [to the shelter], that's the problem. If you have an apartment, you can go home, take a shower, rest. I can't do that, I have to wait until 7:45 PM to be allowed to go back to the shelter, and once I'm in there I can't go out, that's the difference, it's a difference that can destroy a person's whole life. Imagine being out all day under the sun and tired.

Providing stability is a goal in itself for some social workers who seek to develop less demanding forms of assistance. This is particularly important for people for whom shelters are accessible in theory but not in practice. David highlights the case of people with drug or alcohol dependency:

> There are people who at some point, maybe in the middle of the night, need safety, either because they are in a consumption process or because they don't fit the standards of emergency accommodation. So we need places where people can stay for a few minutes or a few hours, without having to

sleep....At the moment there are people who are alcoholics, for example, who can't stay in a shelter from 9 PM to 7 AM. Or they get wasted before they go into the shelter because they know they won't get out until the morning.

This idea fits into a social work paradigm that Soulet (2008) describes as "palliative." It aims primarily at maintenance, whereas generative social work—with the idea of activation at its core—has a transformative aim. As Soulet (2008, p. 43, authors' translation) puts it: "Palliative social work, based on a vocabulary of presence and making the here and now its universe (attention, listening, concern, care, awareness) makes reception a central part of its activity." Observing the development of this approach, the author wonders, however, whether it means the end of a "teleological approach" and the departure from the idea that everyone can be fully "integrated."

This idea of reception characterised by maximal accessibility is indeed questionable. What kind of hospitality can be expected when the place that receives is merely accessible? As Stavo-Debauge (2018, p. 15) points out:

Hospitality is not always—or not only—about crossing a threshold, tearing down a wall, or opening a border. It is not only about removing physical or symbolic obstacles....Since it can require moments, procedures and mechanisms that involve closure, hospitality is difficult to describe based only on the concept of openness.

In the case of these young irregular migrants, the legal context may simply not allow for hospitality. More pointedly, by the time these young adults arrive, migration policies have already taken their toll, and survival and dignity are the only goals that social work can aim for. As Sarah told us, marriage or departure sometimes seem to be the only possible outcomes. To her, if there is a "happy" end (she acknowledges the situations of violence and dependence that marriages sometimes lead to), it will not come from social work, although that will have helped to keep them afloat.

However, the fate of the young Harragas in Geneva should not be seen only as a consequence of their lack of residence status, a situation they share with many other foreigners. In 2017, the canton of Geneva launched a regularisation programme: 3,000 people received a residence permit after proving that they had lived in Geneva for 10 years (or five years for families with children), were employed, financially independent, spoke French, and had no criminal record. There are therefore many ways of being an irregular migrant in Geneva, but the chances of avoiding an alienating everyday life on the assistance circuit seem partly determined before arrival. Harragas arrive already exhausted, sometimes ill or addicted to drugs and alcohol, and the stigma they face keeps them

away from the forms of support that others receive. The young North Africans discussed in this article are far from being a homogeneous group, but they share circumstances that make them captive of an assistance circuit whose only realistic outcome seems to be departure for another destination.

9. Conclusion

Having described the daily life of irregular North African migrants in Geneva and the ways in which they are received, the notion of inclusion must be questioned. First of all, it should be noted that providing access to resources for survival is a very limited form of inclusion, far from the idea of full participation in social, economic, cultural, and civic life (Printz, 2017). As scholars have pointed out, what limits this inclusion is first and foremost the migration policy that makes these people illegal and confines them to inclusion through exclusion (De Genova, 2013). However, our case study shows that the limitations and paradoxes of this type of inclusion cannot be fully explained by the opposition between the inclusionary approach of local actors and exclusionary national and supranational policies on citizenship and migration.

First, our study of a specific category of irregular migrants shows that differentiated inclusion is linked not only to residence status but also to other characteristics that, in the context studied, distinguish young North African men from other categories of undocumented migrants. Some migrants, despite their undocumented status, manage to avoid or escape the assistance circuit and, after a few years, are able to prove their merits and benefit from exceptional regularisation (Consoli et al., 2022). The migrants discussed in this article seem to be excluded from the outset from such a path, in particular because of the stigmatisation they face, the lack of support they receive from settled compatriots, and the criminal behaviour of some. Discussions regarding inclusion and irregular migrants should therefore pay more attention to the heterogeneity of this category.

Second, inclusion is limited not only by restrictive national and supranational migration policies but also by practical and symbolic aspects of the organisation of assistance. The first paradox of inclusion lies in the contradiction between the principle of unconditional access to resources and services and the practical demands placed on beneficiaries. The reception centres examined in this article can be considered low-threshold in the sense that, theoretically, they are accessible without prior conditions. However, in addition to the courage required to walk through the door and ask for a free meal, following the assistance circuit involves the ability to move, adhere to schedules, and maintain the pace over time. These practical and temporal aspects deserve more attention in the inclusion debate. Initially, the migrants we met found the assistance offered in Geneva to be generous compared to what they had experienced

elsewhere. Sometimes it took a few weeks for them to realise how tiring their daily routine was and how they felt like they were going round in circles.

Another paradox lies in the fact that aid, while theoretically unconditional, is never guaranteed. Irregular migrants benefit from weak coordination between actors, which allows them to receive assistance without becoming a "case" for which a "file" is compiled. An integrated reception centre—like the accommodation centres for asylum seekers—has some aspects of a total institution (Acocella & Turchi, 2020). Irregular migrants are not dependent on the decision of a single authority, as is the case with asylum seekers. However, this reliance on multiple, uncoordinated actors creates uncertainty. First, most places close at certain times of the day, week, or year. Then, when resources (including time and space) are limited, they are distributed on a first-come-first-served basis. This does not mean that the concept of merit is never relevant. Depending on their individual characteristics and the way they present themselves, people may have access to more substantial forms of support, for example from volunteers.

While such limitations have been linked to the authorities' desire to turn "migrants' endurance into exhaustion" (Wyss, 2022, p. 26), we have shown that this situation also reflects a social work paradigm that aims to keep people on the move, limit their dependency and promote their autonomy. In the case of young undocumented migrants from North Africa, autonomisation seems illusory. Assistance thus also has a "palliative" dimension, which contradicts the teleological approach of social work and the idea that everyone can be fully "included." However, this approach to assistance as maintenance rather than transformation is experienced as no less paradoxical, as suggested by a "passenger" who expressed his feelings as he left Le Bateau after breakfast:

> You say you are helping us, but it won't change anything. You say: "Did you like the breakfast?" But I don't come here to eat….You made us pancakes. It's cool, but we don't give a shit about pancakes, what are pancakes when you don't have a job, and nothing to do, because you don't have documents?

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Distinctive and Distinguished Gay-Friendliness in Park Slope, New York City

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Abstract

In this article, I argue that a new norm has emerged in former gay and now gentrified neighborhoods. Straight upper-middle-class residents claim to be gay-friendly—an attitude that has not erased hierarchies, but has both displaced and instituted boundaries. Based on fieldwork in Park Slope, a neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York City, this article highlights that gay-friendly markers signal acceptance as much as they work to establish heterosexuals' moral authority and social privileges. Sociability between neighbors and friends is characterized by exchanges and interactions that have an impact on heterosexuals, yet remain primarily checked and filtered by them. In the domestic sphere, which is still structured by heterosexual (and gender) norms, significant restrictions on homosexuality persist. By analyzing progressiveness in relation to class and race, this study brings to light persistent power relations. It thus aims to contribute to the discussion about the extent, limits, and lingering ambivalences of a growing acceptance of homosexuality, which constitutes a significant dimension of so-called inclusive cities.

Keywords

gay neighborhoods; gay-friendliness; gentrification; heterosexuality; homosexuality; tolerance

1. Introduction

"It would be uncool to be un-gay-friendly": Liz, a 40-year-old academic, who owns a brownstone in Park Slope (New York City), came up with this catchphrase to express how self-evident it is for her and her circle of white upper-middle-class residents to express their acceptance of homosexuality. "Gay-friendliness" has become a positive attitude that seems to announce a new and promising era regarding homosexuality in contemporary societies (Loftus, 2001; Seidman, 2002). But while intentionally irrevocable, Liz's statement also plunges us into the ambivalence and limits of the acceptance of homosexuality (Dean, 2014). In specific areas, homosexuality, as part of a "diverse" environment and "cool" sociability, seems attractive. However, it requires attention and even surveillance (of oneself and others). The word "uncool" indicates the mandatory dimension

of "gay-friendly" attitudes, which are part and parcel of a "good neighbor" ethos. Social distinction, to borrow Pierre Bourdieu's vocabulary, i. e., the process through which cultural tastes are displayed against other groups' tastes to uphold one's status, definitely plays out here (Bourdieu, 2010).

My hypothesis about the link between power and progressiveness in attitudes toward homosexuality draws on a rich literature that showed that the latter has been used to uphold the power of dominant groups and institutions. The discussion opened by the notion of "homonormativity" (Browne, 2009; Duggan, 2002) has been instrumental in questioning the outcome of the fight for same-sex marriage and the growing acknowledgment of gay families. By creating a respectable figure of homosexuality (Warner, 2000), integration is said to primarily benefit upper-middle-class white gay men seeking to marry and committed to monogamy,

thus delegitimizing a more subversive culture (Halperin, 2012). When promoted by dominant groups and institutions, including cities, as a way to attract wealthy newcomers, sexual progressiveness tends to draw boundaries that exclude poor people and racial minorities, deemed less tolerant.

I use the frame of social distinction to study how the rhetoric of sexual progressiveness works to reinforce the social and spatial influence of upper-middle-class heterosexuals. I argue that the issue of sexuality, and more specifically the acceptance of homosexuality, is a significant element of class culture, or habitus (Bourdieu, 2010), hence the strong ambivalence that characterizes it. Building upon the queer of color critique that emphasized the intersection of race and sexuality in building liberal modernity (Ferguson, 2004), I pay specific attention to how progressiveness regarding sexual norms consolidates whiteness as well as class. To do so, I investigate a specific form of acceptance of homosexuality based on a strong refusal of violence and discrimination, but which, like tolerance, as it is defined by Brown (2008), implies conditions about what and whom one accepts, and, as a consequence, presents itself as a combination of inclusion and exclusion. Thus, I aim to contribute to a discussion about social inclusion as both a value and a process. Because social inclusion is an increasingly accepted value, we need to take a close look at how it is appropriated and at the kind of transformations it generates. As a process, I do not define it as a shift from exclusion to acceptance, but rather as the mapping out of new boundaries.

In order to explain the mechanisms through which power and sexual progressiveness are intertwined, I drew on a fieldwork study on a gay-friendly neighborhood, seeking to bring an original contribution to the research on formerly gay neighborhoods which have experienced a massive arrival of straight residents due to gentrification (Ghaziani, 2014). The concept of "gay-friendly neighborhoods" reflects urban and socio-demographic transformations. It also emerged from discussions about the "enclave epistemology" (Ghaziani, 2019) generated by early works on the residential and commercial concentration of gay men (Castells, 1983) and later the specific appropriation of space by lesbians (Adler & Brenner, 1992; Brown-Saracino, 2019; Podmore, 2006). In the last 15 years, scholars have been increasingly vocal about the need to question the reduction of "queer space" to "gay space" and, as a consequence, more attention has been paid to bisexuals, trans and transsexuals as well as sexual minorities of color. But even though queer theories urge to "take heterosexuality seriously" (Browne et al., 2007, p. 11), heterosexuals living in those neighborhoods and how they concretely change traditional gay places have rarely been studied. Drawing on debates about fluid and complex relationships between space and sexuality, I chose to study a gay-friendly neighborhood by focusing not on minorities and their declining appropriation of spaces, but rather on a group of upper-middle-class heterosexuals, intend-ing to better understand their claim of progressiveness. What are heterosexuals' relationships toward an environment that has been formerly appropriated by a visible gay population? As explained by Gorman-Murray and Waitt (2009), in queer-friendly neighborhoods, progressive gentrifiers have not imposed a hegemonic straight culture and invisibilized queer groups. They promote social cohesion and diversity and thus welcome the visibility of their queer neighbors. Yet, Brodyn and Ghaziani's (2018) concept of "performative progressiveness" reveals that heterosexuals living in those neighborhoods manage to combine "progressive attitudes" and "homonegative actions." Because I argue that the enigmatic mix of inclusion and exclusion that lies behind the myth of social inclusion has yet to be examined, I chose to consider multiple times and spaces, thus showing that progressive attitudes toward homosexuality are not uniform. They do not convey the same degree of openness across all places and occasions. First, "gay-friendly markers" in the neighborhood signal acceptance as much as suspicion and vigilance toward gay visibility, and delineate the contours of authorized visibility. Second, sociability between neighbors and friends in a mixed context has a socializing impact on heterosexuals, yet remains primarily checked and filtered by them. Thirdly, in the private sphere, which is still structured by heterosexual (and gender) norms, significant restrictions on homosexuality persist.

2. Methodology

Once considered to be the lesbian neighborhood of New York, Park Slope is a portion of the city with a high concentration of same-sex couples, especially in the northern part of the neighborhood and in South Slope (Gates & Ost, 2004). Because lesbians have fewer resources, commercial spaces marked as homosexual have not flourished as they have in areas where gay men have historically congregated, as Rothenberg (1995) documented in her study of Park Slope. Moreover, the accelerated process of gentrification fueled an influx of wealthy straight families while many lesbians were priced out because of the rising rental prices in the 2000s. Along with the "lesbian baby boom," it led to a dramatic increase in households with children after 2000. Among the factors that significantly changed the atmosphere of this Brooklyn district, Gieseking (2020) also stresses the rise in queer activism and trans-activism and the declining association of lesbian identities with cisgender women, thus questioning the traditional lesbian-queer markers or symbols.

Park Slope appears to be a relevant place to examine the ambivalence of contemporary acceptance of homosexuality by privileged residents. First, in addition to remaining a neighborhood with a high concentration of lesbians, Park Slope is characterized by the queer-lesbian community's strong identification with it, even in the more fragmented and unstable way brought to

light by Gieseking (2020). Park Slope is also an adequate site of investigation to substantiate the claim that race and class shape gay-friendly attitudes. Formerly home to an Irish population and then to African-Americans and Puerto Ricans, Park Slope is still made up of racial minorities: This neighborhood of 67,649 residents has 67.3% of white residents, 6.4% Black/African Americans, 6.0% Asians, and 28.6% Hispanics, according to 2010 US census data and its delimitation, which includes the Gowanus area. But a comparison with the demographic percentages for the city as a whole (33.3%, 22.8%, 12.6%, and 28.6%) points to the process of gentrification in the area. Like several neighborhoods of Brooklyn with easy access to Manhattan, Park Slope has witnessed a "back to the city" movement that contrasts with the "white flight" to the suburbs after World War II (Osman, 2011). Although it has been unevenly gentrified, Park Slope stands as one of the most upscale and desirable areas of Brooklyn, and even of New York City, with a median household income of $101,784 (compared with $53,889 nationally).

I interviewed 37 self-identified straight residents between 2011 and 2016. I asked general questions about socioeconomic and matrimonial status and detailed questions about their relationships to the neighborhood and their residential trajectories. The interview guide focused on their image of homosexuality, a strong indicator of acceptance. But to avoid bias introduced by the desire to provide "good" and therefore "liberal" answers, I systematically asked them to evoke the various "contacts" they'd had with gay men and lesbians across their lives. As I listened to descriptions of gay friends, tenants, neighbors, and parents at school, I was able to gather moral judgments that are more revealing than they would have been in answers to abstract questions. I also interviewed 18 self-identified gays and lesbians, and one self-identified bisexual woman. A huge majority of my interviewees have similar characteristics that reflect the gentrification of Park Slope. All of them (but one, who is Hispanic) are white and belong to the upper-middle class, which means that they are well-paid professionals and managers with advanced educational degrees, who enjoy a high degree of autonomy in their work (Gilbert, 2003). In terms of occupation, I interviewed lawyers, judges, bankers, engineers, academics, filmmakers, journalists, and businessmen, among others.

Ethnographic work was instrumental in collecting evidence of complex attitudes toward homosexuality and, eventually, of an acceptance that combines openness and exclusion. As I observed individuals in the context of their community and leisure activities and various settings, I witnessed subtle, and more rarely open, forms of rejection. I attended events and visited places where, even as the interviewees expressed "gay-friendly" stances, the dominant presence of straight people could be observed, thus revealing situations of co-presence with enduring hierarchies. During my several visits to New York City (11 months in total between 2011 and 2016), I lived in Park Slope or nearby, joined the Food Coop, became involved with a variety of activities in the neighborhood (church services in the Park Slope United Methodist Church, yoga classes, tai chi classes, bookstore events, often taking my work for long sessions in cafés, etc.), and befriended a number of local residents. As part of the ethnographic perspective, I conducted additional interviews with a librarian, two teachers, and several lesbian mothers of the renowned Park Slope public school PS 321. I also met two members of the Park Slope Civic Council, a rabbi, a journalist for the local newspaper, a bartender, a sexologist, and two shop vendors. The combination of interviews and ethnographic immersion in the neighborhood allowed me to get a large range of indicators of acceptance. I was able to measure the degree of visibility of gays and lesbians, and how it varies according to place and time. I looked at indicators related to accepting spaces, extending my inquiry beyond affirming religious institutions (Brown-Saracino, 2018) to include accepting institutions in general. I was able to study acceptance as an attitude that entails concrete practices and sociability, in the sense that it is not limited to progressive stances but is equally defined by open condemnations of homophobia, interactions with queer people, and choice of certain schools. When it came to the domestic sphere, observations proved less easy, and even impossible because the duration of my stays in New York City prevented me from developing more personal and lasting interactions. The questions I asked straight men about their sexuality and sexual orientation sometimes raised resistance and embarrassment that would likely have been less strong with a male researcher. I rapidly inferred that studying heterosexuals who rarely define themselves as such (though they categorize gay men and lesbians by their sexual orientation) was a stimulating but possibly sensitive project. Yet, as a white tenured professor, I was able to develop relationships of trust, thanks to similar (although not equivalent in terms of income) socioeconomic characteristics, a display of class-based manners, and a shared rejection of homophobia. The racial affinity, in addition to my being a foreigner to whom one may feel freer to talk about one's country, might also explain the relatively open comments on the links between race and homophobia. I chose not to mention my own sexual orientation, if not asked specifically.

3. Gay-Friendly Markers

While doing fieldwork in Park Slope, I regularly noticed women (and sometimes men) holding hands while walking on the streets, pushing strollers, lining up in the Food Coop with openly affectionate gestures, or sitting and even kissing at Tea Lounge, the famous café on Union Street opposite the Food Coop, where one can sit casually on large cushions. Still, more than the presence of a gay population, it is the authorized visibility of that population that forms a distinctive feature of

this neighborhood. What interviews with heterosexuals and investigation in local institutions show is a generally accepting atmosphere predicated on a limited influence or a selected presence of gays and lesbians.

A significant number of interviewees feel ill at ease with gay visibility in public space, or rather a certain visibility. I heard repeated comments about lesbians' supposedly excessive visibility, often through the derogative phrase "in your face," on the part of people who explicitly stressed their commitment to LGBT rights and support for same-sex marriage. More than presence in public space, these remarks point to its sexual connotation. The fact that gays and lesbians live in the neighborhood is not considered a problem; a visible non-heterosexual identity linked to sexuality is. Lesbians, more than gay men (who are also visible in the neighborhood), are the objects of these comments. Anthony, a white retired lawyer, expressed a specific concern with women:

> Maybe with the girls, what you call butch….They are a little more hostile.
>
> Interviewer: What do you mean?
>
> They want to flout. They want to show in public, exhibit, challenge. And gay women are more…some of them want to assert it, and they want to confront it. That's my personal opinion. But that's a segment….They feel comfortable walking 7th Avenue and kissing, and hugging.
>
> Interviewer: Is there a lot of public display of affection?
>
> Yes, I think there is. But much more among women. Oh, yeah. Hugging, kissing. Maybe it's some female culture. I see it much more among the girls, the women.

When asked about public displays of affection, Kathie, a social worker who is also retired, said:

> I'm not good about it. Whether it's men and women, I prefer not to see overt stuff on the street. And two women walking along holding hands [sighs], some of them I look at and it makes me feel vaguely uncomfortable. And I'm not sure….See…my experience sometimes with homosexuals is some of their over-behavior is coming from some neurotic part of themselves, of drawing attention to themselves.

A few heterosexuals still consider homosexuality through a pathological lens, especially those who are aged 70 and older and moved to the neighborhood before the 1990s. There is a generational factor linked to the fact that these residents grew up after World War II, in an era of fierce repression and forced invisibility. But present reaction to homosexuality, especially in public space, is also shaped by residential trajectories. Anthony moved to Park Slope in 1960; Kathie in 1975. Asked about the reputation of the neighborhood when they moved in, both play down the presence of lesbians and gays. But even if they don't comment on it, they moved to Park Slope at a time when the lesbian population was visible through alternative looks as well as through activism, thus questioning straight privilege and patriarchy.

Both homeowners, Anthony and Kathie are active in various local groups, including the Food Coop. Both express liberal values and do not mention any endeavor to concretely constrain gay visibility—whether they have learned to be gay-friendly and not to express attitudes that might be considered reactionary, or limit their reservations to private thoughts. In any case, their view sheds light on the conditions that come with their touted general acceptance of homosexuality. Contrary to the pride demanded by the gay and lesbian movement, a degree of discretion in public space is required. It is especially the case for lesbians, who attract more suspicion about their sexual conduct than men, as the interview with Anthony showed.

While overt negative attitudes toward gay visibility are limited to older interviewees, the majority share a reluctance to see the neighborhood defined by the presence of gay people. Acceptance is mixed with anxiety to control. I asked my interviewees how they described their neighborhood and whether they considered it a "gay neighborhood." All of them denied this label. Some did because they were aware of the declining visibility of lesbians; others were ill at ease with a label that depreciated their environment and questioned their right and ability to imprint their own norms. Instead, they strongly emphasized the "diverse" character of the neighborhood, considered as a mix of different populations, including a gay population.

The interviewees' recurrent use of the adjective "diverse" in conversations about the acceptance of homosexuality reveals what the desired presence of gays and lesbians in their neighborhood is. Homosexuality is less an explicit sexual orientation than an element of diversity among others. This is consistent with gentrifiers' preference for a diverse environment that does not challenge power relations and even strengthens their moral authority, thus requiring surveillance to uphold (Tissot, 2015). The gay-friendly commitment to diversity thus obscures the fact that gays and lesbians might still experience domination in a mixed locality and be in need of their own space. For instance, Daniel, a white 40-year-old lawyer, did not seem to understand when I mentioned that some gay men and lesbians lamented the transformations of Park Slope along with its gentrification. "I'm not sympathetic to the ghetto choice," he exclaimed. While assuming that the arrival of straight families brought a positive element in the lesbians' life, he also expressed barely veiled class- and race-based prejudices toward people living in "ghettos." In his libertarian view, which reflects his privileged status, this experience is not only

negative, it is also the consequence of a "choice." In sum, he strongly opposes the view of Park Slope as a place where gay people would get together to find refuge and create their own culture.

Authorized visibility of homosexuality in Park Slope comes from persisting ambivalences on the part of heterosexuals, but also from the fact that gay symbols no longer work only to express the demand for pride and overt expression of homosexuality (Gorman-Murray & Waitt, 2009). Rainbow flags hang on the storefronts of shops that cater to straight customers, revealing an expansive acceptance but also the dissociation of rainbows from the queer world. These former gay markers have become gay-friendly markers, i.e., signals of acceptance, which encourage gay men and lesbians to be out and visible while emphasizing the heterosexual's progressiveness. I noticed one striking gay-friendly marker on the day of my first visit to Park Slope in April 2011 when I stopped in front of the Park Slope United Methodist Church and I saw a prominently displayed sign: "Hand in hand, we the people of Park Slope United Methodist Church—black and white, straight and gay, old and young, rich and poor—unite as a loving community in covenant with God and the Creation." As I would find out later, Park Slope United Methodist Church belongs to the Reconciling Congregation Program (Dean, 2014, pp. 157–158; Moon, 2004) created in 1984, which condemns homophobia, promotes acceptance of gay people and gay ministers, and supports same-sex marriage. Synagogues of Park Slope (two of which have lesbian rabbis) as well as associations and many local businesses cultivate a similar accepting attitude.

Private and public schools also display an accepting attitude and a strong commitment to diversity, which, however, come with stricter control of homosexuality. Acceptance of homosexuality is part of class-based strategies, as experiencing diversity is an educational norm and might be a useful skill for well-paid professionals. But the endorsement of diversity goes hand in hand with a meticulous selection of gays and lesbians who may embody diversity. A married, wealthy gay couple in their late 30s (one is a banker and the other one a therapist, with a combined income of $500,000) confirmed this point. They adopted a daughter and explained how she was accepted into preschool:

> That's when we tried to use the fact that she has same-sex parents. It's a small preschool that is highly sought-after and many parents apply and don't get in. There was a questionnaire, an application. "What is the thing that concerns you about your child?" And I said: As two fathers, a papa and a daddy, I'm worried whether she's going to relate to kids with daddy and mummy. And of course, it was complete bullshit because 30% of the people there have two daddies or two mummies.
>
> Interviewer: What was the reaction of the school?

> They want diversity. This kind of progressive….I used the two daddies thing as a trump card: "She's going to contribute to the diverse environment of your students.''

During our conversation, they explained that, as second-generation Russians, they also brought an element of ethno-racial diversity. The visible presence of such gay couples is not only acceptable but desirable for wealthy heterosexuals living in Park Slope. Their respectable homosexuality and their harmless non-white identity constitute a "diversity" that increases the value of the school, of the neighborhood, and ultimately of the real estate property. One sees here the ambiguities of the interest in gay presence, as the multiple resources of this couple reveal the strong pressure and concrete difficulties for all gays and lesbians to conform to the rules of local integration that this privileged couple benefits from. The presence of gays and lesbians is welcome, as expressed by gay-friendly markers, but it is conditioned and controlled: These are the defining characteristics of what I called authorized visibility.

4. Categorizing Neighbors, Friends, and Acquaintances

In a neighborhood like Park Slope, there are numerous opportunities for straight people to meet gay men and lesbians, who can be out in a majority of spaces. The context of gentrification generates and shapes rich but controlled interactions between heterosexuals and homosexuals. First, gentrifiers often seek interpersonal relations in their residential environment. Similar to Jane Jacobs' model, they define "diversity" not only as the presence of various groups, but as a place with strong social ties, small local businesses, and pedestrians on the street. Dog parks provide opportunities for gay and straight residents of similar socioeconomic status to meet regularly. As I was dog-sitting one summer in Park Slope in order to be able to live in the neighborhood, I witnessed the spectacle of several dozens of residents meeting early in the morning in Prospect Park when the animals can be off-leash (before 9 AM). As I had already noticed in a previous study in Boston, dog ownership, or rather ownership of certain dogs, is a class-based practice. Since it allows a subtle appropriation of public space by wealthy residents, it has become a vehicle for gentrification (Tissot, 2011). In Prospect Park, neighbors also interact informally, sometimes befriending and even flirting with each other, while their chic animals play and run. Friendships between heterosexuals and homosexuals thrive in a place that is racially homogeneous but mixed in terms of sexual orientation. The demand for "ambient communities" (Brown-Saracino, 2011) from lesbians who seek informal connections and a sense of belonging and of security more than a "lesbian enclave" reinforces this sociability.

In Park Slope, local institutions also generate personal and potentially friendly relationships between

straight and gay people. In the Food Coop known for its liberal values, members of all sexual orientations meet to do their "shift" every four weeks. This provides opportunities to chat, and it is a well-known place for newcomers to socialize. In the orientation session I attended in October 2012, I listened to a presentation that underscored the commitment to diversity several times: "Anyone who has a problem with diversity has no place here." The session is both a warning against people who are prone to expressing homophobia publicly and a message for gays and lesbians that they have "their place here." This kind of moment is also part of a broader process of socializing heterosexuals to acceptance.

The day after my first visit to the neighborhood, I returned to the Park Slope United Methodist Church to attend the service. I met a (lesbian) parishioner who later helped me circulate an email explaining my project about the acceptance of homosexuality. Ten parishioners enthusiastically replied to my request for interviews, half of them were straight. In the interviews, they expressed pride in the church and its accepting atmosphere. One of them, white, heterosexual, age 51, now a lactation consultant, had grown up in a conservative family. I asked her how and when she heard about homosexuality for the first time in her life. After mentioning a lesbian student in college, whom she "sort of accepted," she explained:

> I think when I first started to go to the church, to the PSUM [Park Slope United Methodist Church]. That was really the first time I was sharing events with people who were gay. It was also the first time I was aware of how antigay most churches are….That's why we march with our church at the Manhattan parade every year.

The theological perspective developed by the Reconciling program has played a crucial role in providing arguments to reject homophobia and accept gay people. In this view, homosexuals, like heterosexuals, are made in the image of God. They are thus respectable and have rights, such as access to marriage, seen as a factor of stability. Not only did this resident of Park Slope actually meet gay people in the Methodist church, but she also found a moral and political atmosphere, as well as a theological frame, that allowed her to make sense of homosexuality. During the interview, she expressed a strong enthusiasm for the defense of gay rights that was nevertheless tinged with pity—an attitude that reveals, as Moon (2004) suggests, that the frame of equality does not yet prevail. This member of the Methodist church defined herself as an ally and supported her gay friend when he came out, yet did so with a claim she knew his sexual orientation when he himself did not: "I threw my arms around him and I said: 'Thank god, you finally realized!'" she remembered. "Gay pain" remains central to the rhetoric of acceptance developed by numerous Christian heterosexuals, some of whom still con-

sider themselves more "normal" while lending help to the people who are considered inherently "unhappy" (Ahmed, 2010).

The characteristics of the neighborhood in terms of socio-demographics, planning, and architecture also facilitate the ambivalent process through which heterosexuals can modify their perspective and soften their attitudes. Susan, a retired straight teacher, bought a brownstone in the late 1970s. A very politicized woman, she explained that she found out about (and started supporting) the gay movement when gay tenants moved in the upper floors of her home in the 1990s. While she learned politically about the issue of gay rights, she also got accustomed to seeing gay people as familiar figures who shared her close environment. Spatial proximity can contribute to creating social familiarity, as is also the case with this couple now in their early 40s, who acquired a brownstone in Park Slope in 2001, and have since rented one of the apartments to a gay couple with a kid—a family which "live on the fourth floor and share the same entrance, they're sort of part of our house."

Here we see how the spatial characteristics of the neighborhood fuel a sociability that, in return, translates into mixed spaces (stoops and sidewalks, parks, local organizations, etc.). Yet, the outcome of contacts generated by co-presence is not automatic nor inevitable. A similar commitment to family life as well as class-based educational norms seems necessary to alleviate the suspicions that straight households may have toward gay families. A lesbian mother with two kids describes the families of the house where she and her wife lived:

> Very nice people. Very nice. With the same educational values. People in the house think it is important that their children are polite. Not yelling, quiet children, and interested in other things than just video games. These people want to offer something to their children that enrich their lives. More than things easily accessible. People who are ready to invest in their children's education.

Her strong commitment to education is expressed in opposition to behaviors that, as Lareau (2000) showed, are implicitly associated with working-class people, prone to advocate "natural growth" for their children rather than intensive parenting. Thus, we see how the decline of the boundary between heterosexuality as a desirable norm and homosexuality as a moral pitfall is predicated on consolidated class affinity. Class interests help straight people get over possible prejudices. Even more importantly, drawing boundaries through attitudes toward homosexuality can be used to establish cultural superiority, moral authority as well as racial privileges.

In fact, many straight residents of Park Slope made positive statements about homosexuality to express their rejection of poor, non-educated people and racial minorities, deemed ignorant and prone to a natural hostility toward homosexuality. Several interviewees

mentioned the "Hispanic community," "Irish neighbor-hoods," or "Italian neighborhoods." A white straight 65-year-old lawyer, a member of the Methodist church, strongly expressed accepting values concerning gay-friendliness, for instance toward her lesbian daughter, and to trans issues that she has recently become more aware of. During the same interview, she also explained that homophobia was an "ethnic issue." Other interviewees used the issue of education and good manners to express the idea that sexual progressiveness is intrinsically linked to class. In many interviewees' opinion, homophobia is absurd, irrational, or even worse, a social *faux pas*, as this 63-year-old white engineer living in a brownstone one block from Prospect Park explained: "I find homophobia unpleasant the same way I find racial bigotry and any other racial discrimination unpleasant. And inappropriate."

Local sociability is a sphere in which a particular progressiveness is shaped and performed. Exclusion and inclusion, moral openness, and strict surveillance go hand in hand, as descriptions of friendships also reveal. I interviewed a straight resident of Park Slope, a 30-year-old software interaction designer, introduced to me by two married women I met in a café on 5th Avenue in Park Slope. He and his wife live in a one-bedroom apartment that they have rented for the last seven months and dream of buying their own place. He began by emphasizing how homosexuality had become a "normal" phenomenon to him. "It just doesn't bother me. It just seems normal, I guess. I don't really think about [it]. Yes, I have a wife. I know a woman who has a wife….It's normal." Marriage is key to the sense of normalcy felt by this heterosexual.

Rapidly, however, he exposed the limits of what came to look like tolerance rather than full acceptance as he drew a distinction between what he accepted and what he didn't accept. "I'm not extremely pro-gay. I'm not very involved with it. It doesn't bother me, it's just I don't see how it affects me, really." Beyond the political avoidance he expressed (Eliasoph, 1998), the term "pro-gay" sets up a distinction between an attitude of acceptance (his) and something more committed and implicitly excessive. He then described his lesbian friends as being "not super, I guess, enthusiastic about gay rights. They are gay and just want to be left alone, not talk about it."

Thus, his "indifference," which echoes "color-blindness" (Bonilla-Silva, 2018), is far from neutral and works to brush off the issue of rights. Being political versus keeping it private intensifies other oppositions: discretion versus open behaviors (an element we have seen earlier), invisibility versus cultural particularities: "I have many friends who are gay, but I don't see them as gay. I see them as friends, I guess. If they were doing gay things, I don't think I would feel comfortable." His demand for discretion specifically targets gay men and those he described as "effeminate": "When it's a caricature, it's annoying. An effeminate man, a gay person….I have the same feeling towards them as a girl who

wears a short skirt and tries to show off." We see how the disqualification of dissension combines with strict and misogynist gender norms, thus reinforcing singular heteronormative norms. According to those, homosexuality itself is no longer a problem, or at least it is never considered or designated as such: a certain homosexuality or certain homosexuals (as well as certain heterosexuals) are. Here again, visibilizing and praising upper-middle-class white heterosexuals' openness while controlling the conduct of gays and lesbians who are part of their inner circles characterize gay-friendliness.

5. Enduring Heterosexual Norms in the Intimate Sphere

Gay men and lesbians are often aware of the existence of negative feelings toward them, even though social stigma means they will never be communicated explicitly. One lesbian mother whose son goes to PS 321 explained:

> You never really know how people are reacting or why they are [reacting]. When your kid doesn't get invited to a birthday party: Is it you, is it the kid? This is a neighborhood….Nobody would ever say something to us.

The existence of private (and hidden) reservations does not mean that homosexuality is ignored and forbidden in the private life of Park Slope straight residents. In this sphere too, gay-friendliness entails a presence of homosexuality, first of all during the ritual that is fundamental to heterosexuality (Ingraham, 1999): weddings. Asked about the ceremonies they organized, several married women talked about their bridal showers. While it traditionally brings together female friends and women of the family, gay men, often the "gay best friend," sometimes participate. A resident of Park Slope, a 46-year-old engineer, recalled his wife's bachelor party: "Her best friend is a gay man. So, he went to the bachelor party. And the bridal shower too!" While gay men can be present on the bride's side, this is not the case for the men I interviewed. Another resident, 47 years old and a successful businessman, describes his bachelor party: "With 10 guys, we went camping and play paintball in the wood." But the "dear friend" he had mentioned earlier in the interview, a gay man who was his roommate, was not present.

In addition to this, as we have noted earlier, gay-friendliness is part and parcel of the educational norms of the American progressive upper-middle class. In Park Slope schools, children from straight families are expected to learn the positive aspects of *a* diversity that includes children from same-sex parents. Like the parents described by Martin (2009, p. 202) who "prepare for the possibility of homosexuality" but nonetheless form a minority of her sample, many mothers of Park Slope buy children's books with gay characters. This is the case of Elsa, a 40-year-old filmmaker. Her son also experiences "diversity" through another element of their family life: the visits of her brother and his partner,

known to the son as "uncle Charlie and uncle Jason." Represented by gay members of families who are fully accepted (she vocally supported his brother when he came out to their parents), homosexuality is present behind the doors of houses and apartments. But limits can emerge when it comes to the possible homosexuality of children themselves. While some parents were cautious and hesitant, several interviewees expressed total acceptance when they were asked about the possibility. A journalist, mother of a five-year-old child, living in Park Slope, who donated to the gay rights organization Human Rights Campaign said:

> For me the most important thing is that my child is healthy and happy. Gay, straight….It doesn't matter to me. I want him to be accepted in society. That's one more reason that we should fight for any different form of equality.

However, even for the most accepting heterosexuals, the possible homosexuality of one's own kids appears to be an issue, not so much to be feared and prevented, but discussed and scrutinized. The same 47-year-old businessman explains: "Sometimes, July [his wife] and I talk about our kids' sexuality and whether we think they are straight or gay." This "will to know" indicates that heterosexuals still investigate homosexuality as a phenomenon that remains an "object of knowledge" (Foucault, 1988).

The departure from the Victorian era and the acknowledgment of "sex as an autonomous domain of pleasure" as well as a "sphere of love and romantic bonding" (Seidman, 1991) after World War II brought forth new attitudes toward sexuality and homosexuality. Nevertheless, while questioning the former "antinomy" between eroticism and love as Seidman explains, it also created a forceful social norm. This new norm associates the two, thus excluding a conception of "sex" that was, during the gay liberation era, "no longer merely something you did in bed, [but] served to define a mode of living, both private and public, that encompassed a wide range of activities and relationships" (D'Emilio & Freedman, 2012, p. 223). Although I interviewed a polyamorous couple (who questioned this strict association of conjugality and sexuality), heterosexuality still largely rests on a definition of sex and love that casts suspicion on "promiscuous sex" and on gay men, supposedly prone to it. A straight resident of Park Slope, a 30-year-old man and manager in the music industry, confided to me his strong dislike of the social networking application Grindr:

> We were having this conversation the other day about promiscuity, the high level of promiscuity in that community [gay community], especially this app, you're familiar with Grindr? It's crazy!

> Interviewer: What do you think about it?

> I think it's very dangerous, very risky, in terms of you just randomly meet people, so there is a higher risk of….You meet people and you're just having sex and, to my knowledge, it's less about meeting someone for a relationship, just sexual. I mean, it's not very different from prostitution in a way, except that there isn't any money. So there is just this random person you know nothing about whom you're meeting and have some sex, and you have all the risk that come with that.

Once again heteronormative norms are expressed without targeting "homosexuality" or "homosexuals" and earlier in the conversation, he expressed his support for same-sex marriage and told me how making gay friends in college changed his perspective. He also seemed to have the same opinion about heterosexual dating applications. However, he explicitly linked a behavior he condemned, and that even shocked him, to "the gay community." The reason why he condemned it reveals the norms and the characteristics of the "relations" he values. First, he considered the application as dangerous. Second, he compared the interactions between people meeting through Grindr to sex work. He thus contrasted what he saw as typical gay behaviors with romantic relationships supposedly free from any financial or safety issues. Pointing out a certain practice (recreational sex through the internet), he thus expressed a judgment that opposes an "amoral" homosexuality and a "healthy" sexuality that is probably not reserved to straight people in his mind, but that, as a straight man with a fiancée, he claims to embody.

Finally, a persistent rejection of homosexuality or what is associated with that sexuality, like anal penetration, exists in what is unanimously considered the most intimate sphere—sexuality. One sexologist working in Park Slope told me: "Straight men tend to carry around a lot of tension in their butts." This does not mean that sexual intercourse with individuals of the same sex does not exist. As Ward (2015) argues, "sex between white men" might well define, although in a specific (and heteronormative) mode, male heterosexuality. As a woman, and given the type of empirical study I conducted, I was in no position to investigate this phenomenon. Still, my data confirm Ward's argument about the invisibility of these practices. Although cultivating sexual liberalism, very few interviewees admitted to homosexual contact. One interviewee recalled a certain "confusion" that, however, dissipated as they went to college and entered their adult life. In all cases, it appeared to be a thing of the past. Thus, homosexuality can be present in the domestic sphere of straight people, but as distinct and distant from any sexual reality.

6. Conclusion

Strong although euphemized power relations persist in a neighborhood like Park Slope that combines a visible

queer presence and a distinctive heterosexual culture. Social inclusion is a value claimed by the majority of the residents, but not yet a reality if we consider that it requires the end of suspicion and an equal right to visibility. This gay-friendly or queer-friendly neighborhood provides an atmosphere of acceptance and even promotes norms that openly stigmatize homophobia. Yet, heteronormativity still plays out by way of appropriating spaces formerly occupied (if not totally controlled) by the gay population and, even more importantly, by deciding the terms and conditions of their visibility. Focusing on heterosexuals helps us outline the distinct characteristics of a social inclusion that is often unanimously claimed but is still accompanied by discrete forms of exclusion. In environments such as Park Slope, a significant number of heterosexuals take strong action to defend full acceptance of gay men and lesbians in their community. At the same time, gay-friendly markers institutionalize an acceptance that heterosexuals benefit from. The sphere of friendship in a gentrified environment is the site of a novel blend, but also of logics of distinction that create exclusionary boundaries, against heterosexuals who are considered "homophobic," and against gays and lesbians who do not comply with respectable norms. Heterosexuals have opened the doors of their homes to homosexuality: gay members of the family are accepted and the possibility of homosexuality for one's children can be openly discussed and eventually supported. But this reorganizing of the intimate sphere rests on a persisting binary between homosexuality and heterosexuality. How can we account for straight people who desperately seek close-by homosexuality to establish their moral authority, and are at the same time deeply anxious to control it? How can we grasp the willingness to accept homosexuality and even promote its acceptance while maintaining heterosexual privileges? My answer is that this particular attitude is made possible by the socioeconomic status of the heterosexuals I studied, which allows them to face, digest, and eventually promote changes. The array of resources—economic, cultural, and social—belonging to the dominant groups allow them to manage anxiety and tensions and, via a *tour de force*, to master and transform them into moral profit.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Sylvie Tissot is a professor of political science at the University of Paris 8. Her research focuses on the intersection of class analysis and urban studies. *Good Neighbors. Gentrifying Diversity in Boston's South End* (Verso, 2015) reveals the ambivalent way in which upper-middle-class newcomers have positioned themselves as champions of diversity. She has conducted another field-based research project on so-called "gay-friendly" heterosexuals in France and the United States (*Gayfriendly. Acceptance and Control of Homosexuality in New York and Paris*, Polity, 2023).

Article

What Would an Inclusive City for Gender and Sexual Minorities Be Like? You Need to Ask Queer Folx!

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Abstract
From fights against racism to women's inclusion, from access to education to integration of migrants: "Inclusion" and the "inclusive city" have been used in many ways and at different scales, running the risk of becoming a kind of catchall. Following increasing use by public authorities, media, and urban professionals, the inclusive city now serves as a normative framework for urban development. Although it is aimed at social cohesion, one nevertheless wonders whether it has not become more of a buzzword that obfuscates the reproduction of power relations. Moreover, while being somehow mainstreamed into institutional discourses, the inclusive city has been quite overlooked so far by academics, and an effort is needed to clarify its conceptualisation and democratic potential. This article provides a theoretical and critical perspective on how the concept of inclusion is used in urban public policies in relation to gender, by examining the public these policies address. Using a multiscalar analysis and drawing on Warner's framework of publics and counterpublics, I examine more specifically which public is targeted in inclusive policies, concerning gender and sexualities, and how this participates in the reshaping of (urban) citizenship and sense of belonging, as well as the implications this has for social justice. Thus, I argue that while the inclusive city has become a normative idiom imbued with the neoliberal grammar of public politics, it also offers a paradoxical framework of democratic cohesion that promotes consumption-based equality. A focus on (counter)publics serves to highlight the need for a more queerly engaged planning practice—one that draws on insurgent grassroots movements—to seek to destabilise neoliberalism's attempt at pacification in its use of inclusion and citizen participation.

Keywords
feminism; gender equality; inclusion; LGBTQ+ rights; participatory planning; public space; queer critique; social justice

1. Introduction

In her seminal piece "What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like? Speculations on Housing, Urban Design, and Human Work," Hayden (1980) points to the inequalities engendered by US architectural and urban planning, showing how the nuclear-family suburban home is promoted as the ideal governing principle of the "American dream." Hayden denounces how architecture, design, and planning foster the capitalist-patriarchal system that confines the woman to the domestic place and assigns

her to the reproductive functions that support economic production. She thus calls on society to produce a city that will be more attentive to women's needs and allow them to access the paid workforce. Despite its relatively avant-garde dimension, Hayden's proposal doesn't claim to be an inclusive city. It is with the increase of globalisation and the spread of multiple urban models of governance that the inclusive city arises. Enhanced by equality legislation aimed at social justice, the inclusive city has nevertheless suffered from its popularity. From fights against racism to women's inclusion, from access

to education to integration of migrants, "inclusion" has been used in many ways and at different scales, running the risk of becoming a kind of catchall. Following increasing use by public authorities, media, and urban professionals, the "inclusive city" now serves as a normative framework for urban development. While the idea of inclusion remains a driving force in combatting structural inequalities engendered by the capitalist-patriarchal system, one should bear in mind that "such an encompassing term…may gain width but lose depth" (Short, 2021, p.3); this raises the question of whether it has not become more of a buzzword that obfuscates the reproduction of power relations. Furthermore, although it has become mainstream in institutional discourse, the inclusive city has been quite overlooked so far by academics, and an effort is needed to clarify its conceptualisation. What stands behind the inclusive city? Who is it aimed at and how does it consider gender and sexuality? Or, to draw on Hayden's title: What would an inclusive city for gender and sexual minorities be like?

This article provides a theoretical and critical perspective on how the concept of inclusion, as it relates to gender, is used in urban public policies enacted at various scales. Gender is defined as a system of classification that separates men and women and the traits and values associated with each, which includes compulsory heterosexuality. This categorisation thus excludes all those who do not conform to the normalised binary alignment between sex, gender, and sexuality. Drawing on the literature, it examines the public that these policies both address and shape. According to Dewey (2001), a public exists as soon as a collective experience happens that is interpreted as problematic. The public is then defined as a collective concerned with a common problem, which needs to raise attention from institutions. This notion of the public is quite antagonistic to the notion of the public sphere developed by classical political theory, and which has been widely criticised. Feminist scholars have drawn attention to the androcentric and bourgeois limits of the latest. Young (1990, p. 19) argues that the universal, self-claimed dimension of the public space in its liberal meaning works as an ineluctable tool for domination and oppression: "Policies that are universally formulated and thus blind to differences of race, culture, gender, age, or disability often perpetuate rather than undermine oppression." Inclusion in the public thus goes beyond class antagonism and subalternity, as it is about practices, lifestyles, and values. Women, for instance, organise their own spaces to contest cultural masculine domination. As a democratic space of belonging and citizenship, the public space is therefore not a peaceful place of consensus. Rather, it is a site of conflicts and negotiations, imbued with power, and one that various publics use as a meeting place (Massey, 2005) to achieve social change (Young, 2000). Public space, therefore, counts as a space of struggles (Massey, 2005) and encounters with "Others" (Ahmed, 2000). The heterogeneity of pub-

lic space supposes that those who are excluded from it, such as women, Black people, and proletarians, organise themselves in alternate spaces that could lead to the emergence of oppositional public spaces (Negt, 2007; Neumann, 2016). These alternate spaces host counterpublics that help invent and circulate new narratives and worldviews (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). While publics, as well as counterpublics—both defined as relationships among strangers—"exist only in virtue of their imagining," counterpublics are mainly "constituted through a conflictual relation to the dominant public" (Warner, 2002, p. 423), although they do not require a reform programme. Counterpublics exist primarily as "mediating space[s]" (Zaslow, 2022) between the hidden oppressed and the mainstream. They are spaces where hegemonic norms infuse and contribute to the ideological, cultural, and material formation and reformation of subjectivities as a condition of belonging to a common world (Warner, 2002). Furthermore, beyond spaces belonging to discourses, counterpublics develop new performative spatialities, through embodied sociability (Warner, 2002). As such, they count as spatio-temporal dispositives from which new knowledge and practices can emerge (Halberstam, 2005) through critical engagement with rational hegemonic norms (Eleftheriadis, 2018).

In this article, I propose to examine which public— as a social space created by the circulation of discourse (Warner, 2002)—is constituted through the attention of inclusive urban policies in relation to gender and sexuality, and what this entails in terms of in/exclusion. I focus on the European context as an interesting case study to explore how the scales of governance intertwine. In so doing, this article aims to engage in discussion on urban planning, social justice, and political and cultural geographies of gender and sexuality. Its origins are twofold: First, whereas academic studies and planning policies in most cases focus on the inclusion of either gender/women or LGBTQ+ people—at best, adding the other category in the margins—it articulates gender and sexuality issues of inclusion from a conception of gender that considers the discriminatory effects produced by heteronormativity. Second, it does so by accounting for a variety of scales of action and their entanglements, highlighting local variations and possible scalar paradoxes that may result. I start by presenting a short genealogy of the concept of inclusion and how it has been used by public policies to highlight how it has become a reference framework for public action. I then address gender inclusion, in particular women's inclusion, outlining the implications of common misconceptions of gender, as well as the entanglements of gender inclusion with critiques of neoliberal governance. I continue by developing on LGBTQ+ issues in relation to urban inequalities and how this has been addressed so far by public policies, highlighting the failure of queer participatory planning. Thus, I argue that the inclusive city has become a normative idiom soaked within the neoliberal grammar of public politics—and one that offers a paradoxical framework

of democratic cohesion promoting consumption-based equality. However, a focus on (counter)publics would serve to highlight the need for a more queerly engaged planning practice: one that draws on insurgent grassroots movements and seeks to destabilise neoliberal attempts at pacification that promote inclusion and citizen participation in a way that "overly idealizes open communication and neglects the substance of debate" (Fainstein, 2010, p. 23).

2. From Inclusion to the Inclusive City: Pathways for an Ambivalent Concept

The term inclusion does not refer at first to the relationship between people and society (Luhmann, 1995) but to the material world of objects, or the theoretical world of law (see, e.g., Plaisance, 2020). The term has been used to refer to the social world since the 1990s when political leaders began to consider how to promote more egalitarian education policies. Inclusive education thus stood at the heart of various European policies that embraced the paradigm of inclusion, in contrast to the prevalent paradigm of "integration," which was derived from the medical-social field of disability (Bouquet, 2015; Jaeger, 2015; Plaisance et al., 2007). While integration supposes one to move towards the hegemonic norms that rule a society to "fit within" by giving up what are considered to be deviant patterns, inclusion aims at adapting the environment to individuals' specific needs. Hence, inclusive education requires public policies to identify and respond to the needs of people with disabilities when it comes to education. This inclusive turn then develops much further. Public policies direct their attention to issues of social precarity in a context where new forms of poverty and marginality are emerging (Paugam et al., 1996). Exclusion is not, however, the opposite of inclusion, as it refers to a fact, rather than to a goal to be achieved. Therefore, public policies mobilise the framework of social inclusion to counteract the growing dynamics of exclusion. As such, "inclusion is not only a policy but is also seen as a value, as an ethic advocating social justice and community cohesion" (Bouquet, 2015, p. 25).

Drawing on this genealogy of public policies for inclusion, the inclusive city has then become an unavoidable reference framework for urban policies. It refers, at first, more specifically to the adaptation of urban planning and design to the needs of people with (physical) disabilities, aiming at enhancing accessibility to urban amenities. Inclusion has reached the European scale to become a priority for EU social policies. Indeed, various studies have stressed the importance of cities, rather than nation-states, as " 'the place where the business of modern society gets done' and as the sites where people become citizens and mobilize politically" (Kaal, 2011, p. 545). While the Amsterdam Treaty—which went into effect in 1999—helped combat exclusion, the Lisbon Council, in 2007, clearly stated the eradication of

poverty as a new, common goal for EU members. This goal was to be achieved by combatting social exclusion through the coordination of national inclusion action plans. However—and despite a mid-term reorientation—the Lisbon Strategy has not developed well, and social inclusion will have to be incorporated in the following round of public action, that is, the Europe 2020 Strategy, which aims for "smart, sustainable, inclusive growth," with greater coordination of national and European policies. This move from social exclusion to social inclusion requires, moreover, further clarification. Daly (2008) highlights that, first, as the programme has developed, the framing of social inclusion has been merged with issues of social protection. Second, its focus has been put on "active social inclusion," as participation in the labour market. Social inclusion, therefore, constitutes the basic framework for the development of the Europe 2020 Strategy, based on what has been defined as a "Europeanisation of problems" through a common problem representation (Bacchi, 2012) of social exclusion, and a consequent ideal of inclusion.

Beyond its normalisation at the European scale, the inclusive city was constituted in the early 2000s as a central theme of the UN Habitat Programme Global Campaign on Urban Governance, to combat poverty at the global scale (UN Human Settlements Programme, 2002). Drawing on Brazilian urban experiments from the 1980s, the inclusive city promotes direct democracy for more accessible public services to all (van der Wusten, 2016). The programme defines it as "a place where everyone, regardless of wealth, gender, age, race or religion, is enabled to participate productively and positively in the opportunities cities have to offer" (UN Human Settlements Programme, 2002, p. 5). It also presents "inclusive decision-making processes" as essential to achieving this goal. Inclusion is thus strongly linked to economic equal opportunities, as well as to participatory methods, as a means of including citizens. Two dimensions of this approach are also quite popular in current neoliberal forms of urban modes of governance. Furthermore, in 2015, the UN adopted the Agenda 2030, which aims to help build an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable world through specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) united through the pledge to "leave no one behind." Here again, inclusion is economically driven, with SDG 11 referring to inclusive cities in relation to economic growth and "inclusive prosperity." In a looser application, the term inclusion is also used to label the UN platform of networked cities that promotes the fight against racism. Drawing on the new urban agenda of Habitat III, the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR), launched by UNESCO in 2004, prides itself on striving "to fight against societal ills that result from social transformations, including rapid urbanization, human mobility, and rising inequalities" (UNESCO, 2014). The European Coalition of Cities against Racism is presented as playing "a key role in facing

social issues related to the European continent, including anti-semitism, rights of LGBT communities, inclusion of persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous people and refugees inter alia; and, in ensuring that all citizens can enjoy a safe, inclusive, fair and respectful urban environment free from all forms of discrimination" (UNESCO, 2014). While gender and sexual minorities are mentioned, they appear as part of a list of vulnerable people to protect, among other publics, casting them as incommensurate subordinates, rather than people with agency of their own who are systemically marginalised. Finally, with its tagline "Everyone counts: Making the cities of tomorrow more inclusive," the World Bank also builds on the concept of the inclusive city. Focusing on developing countries where urbanisation is key, it enhances the importance of economics and consequently orients its action through three main spheres: spatial (land, housing, and services); social (safety, rights, and participation); and economic (production and consumption through education and the job market).

This overview of the concept of inclusion and its use by public policies on a variety of scales accounts for its paradoxical and ambivalent nature across scales (Bain & Podmore, 2021a). Inclusion was initially forged to replace the idea of integration, which was corrective-oriented. Inclusion still aims to combat social inequalities and support a better quality of life for selected citizens who cannot fully access the amenities of society, but it remains ambivalent about who should be included and how to reach that goal. By switching from eradicating poverty and social exclusion to promoting active inclusion, policies focus on enhanced participation in the market economy as the primary measure of inclusion. As organised top-down frameworks for action, social inclusive policies, therefore, target individuals who are expected to demonstrate autonomy, flexibility, and resilience, and to contribute to the (socio)economic growth of the society in which they live, through production and consumption, and regardless of their own characteristics. "Inclusion hence simply supposes following this 'normal' lifestyle, focused on consumption" (Printz, 2018, p. 188), through the forging of a collective sense of belonging that relies on the common ground of economic participation. As such, "those who are seen as excluded, and who therefore should be included, are those who deviate from this standard where consumption and a focus on material goods are the standard" (Printz, 2018, p. 188). Finally, despite the many other urban models that have spread around the globe in the last few decades, and the increased use of the urban project as a tool to counter the post-World War II drifts of functionalism, the inclusive city appears more as a desirable ideal for cities, than as an operational mode of governance (Clément & Valegeas, 2017). It stands as a normative framework for virtuous urban development whose aim is social justice, supporting close relations between the city and its dwellers through democratic participation, thereby promoting new forms of urban citizenship (Beall,

2000), grounded in capitalist values. Inclusion has, nevertheless, remained quite genderblind. In a context of growing claims for equal opportunities for all, one can therefore ask whether, and how, issues of gender have been addressed in relation to inclusion and the inclusive city.

3. Gender Equality and Inclusiveness in Planning: Women at the Heart of Equality Policies

Feminist scholars have long denounced the androcentric bias of urban planning, which produces cities that favour both the needs and the legitimacy of men over women. Feminist Marxist scholars have argued how the divide between the private and the public spheres supports—and is supported by—the articulation of patriarchy and capitalism (McDowell & Massey, 1984). In her seminal piece of work, McDowell (1999) historicises the spatial division of gender since the rise of the industrial city, showing how the segregation of women into the domestic sphere and the associated construction of their illegitimacy in the public area has been naturalised over time. Hence, while women are assigned to the domestic sphere as the preferential providers of care, men continue to enjoy both the mythologised freedom of the city space and the tranquillity of the home (Blidon, 2017). Feminist scholars moreover argue that men dominate both the professional and the decisional spheres in urban planning (Tummers, 2015), which leads to the design of a male-adapted built environment, rather than a universal one. Women's mobilities are thus much more constrained than that of their male counterparts because planners do not consider their specific needs related to their gender roles (Hayden, 1980). Studies also analyse the ongoing social construction of urban insecurity (Pain, 1991, 1997), which translates into a geography of women's fear (Valentine, 1989). This prevents women from circulating freely in the city, which is perceived as a place of danger. As a result, women borrow space rather than dwelling in it and are hindered in the expression of full citizenship. Despite the progressive turn in planning (Thorpe, 2017) and the development of feminist planning scholarship (see, e.g., Fainstein & Servon, 2005; Fenster, 2002; Kern, 2010, 2021; Parker, 2016, 2017; Wekerle, 2005), "the integration of gendered perspectives within professional practice remains limited [and] women continue to endure an unequal position in society" (Beebeejaun, 2017, p. 323)—and in the city, as a central space in our globalised economics-oriented societies (see, e.g., Blidon, 2017).

Feminist research has slowly become infused with public policies (Biarrotte, 2020). As such, Vienna stands out as an avant-garde city in combatting gendered inequalities in access to public space (Irschik et al., 2013). Development of gender-conscious urban planning on the European scale began in the 2000s and continues with the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty, which led to the inclusion of gender issues in all governmental policies.

In practice, public policies take up gender inequalities through the issue of harassment and concerning women's feelings of insecurity in the public space. Gender mainstreaming programmes, as a "gendered political and policy practice" (Walby, 2005, p. 321), seek to promote gender equality in all domains of public action, through the monitoring of gendered statistics and drawing on methods that prioritise the voices of female urban dwellers (Tummers, 2015; Tummers & Wankiewicz, 2020). Cities engage in drawing up lists of recommendations to be implemented at the city level and in developing shared networks of good practices to combat sexism and gender-based harassment in the city. Many of them develop guidelines for professionals and politicians that seek to improve gender inclusion. This happens through participatory methods, like walking tours for urban diagnosis, aimed at enhancing democratic participation. However, some scholars underline that, "though within planning there has been a participatory turn that emphasizes the importance of engaging with citizens, community influence within statutory planning processes remains limited" (Beebeejaun, 2017, p. 324).

Gender mainstreaming success in "captur[ing] the imagination of policy-makers" (Daly, 2005, pp. 433–434) relies on how it has become "a symbol of modernity" (Daly, 2005, p. 441) through its promotion by international bodies at various scales. While gender mainstreaming might improve (some) women's access to urban areas—the urban being embraced as a compulsory place for emancipation from traditional gender roles—it brings with it new tensions. Walby (2005) points out that while gender equality refers to a feminist goal of inclusiveness, mainstreaming refers to a mode of improvement of governance—and these two dimensions are difficult to reconcile. Moreover, and despite its feminist theoretical premises, gender mainstreaming "is very often not informed by gender analysis, rather it is oriented towards women" (Daly, 2005, p. 441). This limited orientation towards a mere public does not allow gender mainstreaming to fulfil its initial aim of attacking structural inequalities. This also has to do with its operationalisation as it focuses almost exclusively on tools and procedures, often missing an overall strategy grounded in proper theorisation, and therefore remaining at the level of policy processes. This leads to an increased "technocratisation" that prevents gender mainstreaming from achieving a more transformative potential.

While these programmes (potentially) improve gender equality statistics, and selected realities, they are criticised for their lack of consideration of other axes of inequality. Even though an intersectional perspective is slowly introduced, it mostly focuses on ethnicity and class, although "class is more often treated implicitly, embedded within concepts of poverty, social exclusion, and pay rather than as a focus of theoretical debate" (Walby, 2005, p. 330). This relates well with the specification by the Council of Europe (1998) to reach for "individuals' economic independence," while spheres other than economics, such as family and care, remain overlooked. In addition, the lack of a proper gender perspective has driven "the utilization of the category of woman (to be) criticized as problematically essentializing and homogenising" (Walby, 2005, p. 330). While the mention of intersectionality on the one hand, and of gender and sexual minorities on the other, seems to be growing in gender-planning guidelines, the main public that is addressed consists of white, middle-class, cis, heterosexual women, consequently sidestepping the specific needs of other women-identified subjects (see, e.g., Listerborn, 2007). Moreover, this reproduces a naturalised vision of gender that does not contest power relations but rather seeks to accommodate their consequences. Such a vision matches well with an inclusive perspective as it valorises difference, at the risk of reifying it. Designed and implemented from the top down, these entrepreneurial policies focus on interpersonal relations, eluding the potential of collectives, groups, and communities in the transformation of society, and consequently reproducing power relations.

Gender mainstreaming "seeks to institutionalize equality by embedding gender-sensitive practices and norms in the structures, processes, and environment of public policy" (Daly, 2005, p. 435), as a symbol of progressiveness. By doing so, it helps paint those who do not support such a vision—or who have not yet achieved this ideal—as backward and in need of education. The instrumentalisation of gender equality in some nationalist discourses (see, e.g., Hancock & Lieber, 2017) as femo-nationalist rhetoric (Farris, 2017), therefore requires attention. On a global scale, the World Bank has recently been promoting gender-inclusive urban planning (Terraza et al., 2020). Its handbook for good practices, which targets Global South countries, mentions intersectionality in line with developmental perspectives—although it limits it to age and ability. Sexual and gender minorities are nevertheless mentioned in relation to gender-specific needs. Participatory methodologies are also emphasised as part of the decision-making processes. However, an implicit bias remains with the portrayal of developing countries as archaic in terms of gender, in opposition to the "Western" developed world. Furthermore, the photographs picture traditional views of women and girls in so-called southern countries, in contexts of farm work, domestic work, and education, reproducing a very (hetero)normative and biased view of what it should be like to be a woman in the Global South—a developmentalist perspective that has been criticised (see, e.g., Peake & Rieker, 2013). Moreover, this excludes gender and sexual minorities from the main public, relegating them to the status of subalterns, while inviting women-identified subjects to conform to the conveyed representations. This is even more questionable with the increase of LGBTQ+ rights at the global scale.

4. Planning for Gender and Sexual Minorities: The (Renewed) Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces

While Doan (2016) has claimed the "need for inclusive queer spaces," it is important to emphasise this persistent need, in relation to the reconfiguration of queer spaces. By equating gender with women and remaining primarily within a binary vision of gender, as well as disregarding intersections of gender inequality with sexual orientation, gender mainstreaming approaches have been indeed rather limited when it comes to circumscribing their public. Feminist and queer scholars have raised their voices to make visible existing discriminations towards gender and sexual minorities, due to the heteronormativity of our everyday spaces (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Doan, 2010). Research has long been focused on the "gay neighbourhood" ("gaybourhood") as a place for sexual dissidents—both of refuge and of community formation and political organisation (Blidon, 2011). Scholars point to how the reterritorialisation of the heterosexist capitalist city from the margins supports a "claim for citizenship" (Bell & Binnie, 2002, p. 60). However, while the gay neighbourhood remains a crucial site of identity formation and claims of recognition, critics have emerged—most notably regarding its gendered bias. Lesbian geographies have argued over the differential modes of community and space formation for women (Browne & Ferreira, 2015; Podmore, 2001, 2006), as well as for trans and gender-non-conforming people (see, e.g., Gieseking, 2020). Moreover, in a context of urban transformation and increased gentrification (Gorman-Murray & Nash, 2017), this mythical configuration has been challenged through the diffusion of queer people throughout wider metropolitan areas (Bain & Podmore, 2021b; Doan & Higgins, 2011; Goh, 2018; Myrdahl, 2011). This mutation of queer spaces and spatialities has also been affected by the growing role of digital networks in the formation of identity and community. Scholars have highlighted the heteronormative assumptions on which all planning concepts and, more generally, all of our everyday spaces are based (Forsyth, 2001). Frisch argues that urban planning has a historic pattern of exclusion along the lines of sexual orientation, defining planning as "a technology of heteronormality" (Frisch, 2015, p. 134) that relates more to heterosexist bias than to explicit discrimination. Because of their limited rights and access to the public sphere, LGBTQ+ people have long been second-class citizens (Duplan, 2022; Hubbard, 2001; Volpp, 2017).

LGBTQ+ rights have nevertheless increased rapidly since the 2000s in most parts of the Western world which have qualified as "equalities landscapes" (Podmore, 2013). Following the Amsterdam Treaty—which officially includes protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, primarily to guarantee equal access to the job market—European institutions have introduced a normative framework that advances visibility of LGBTQ+ issues in the legal framework of their member states. LGBTQ+ rights have thus been integrated as part of the democratic values of an emerging "rainbow Europe" (Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014). EU nations are enacting and supporting laws to protect LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination through guidelines and advocacy manuals. This results in cities creating job positions dedicated to the promotion of LGBTQ+ equality and designing LGBTQ+ policies or action plans. Participatory methods are favoured to account for the voices of those multiple publics (Sandercock, 1998b) that have long been ignored. This is illustrated in communication campaigns, as well as in the growing support of Pride marches (Blidon, 2009; Browne, 2007; Rushbrook, 2002). Thanks to grassroots activism, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia was endorsed by the European Parliament in 2005. EU member states adopted it at different times, resulting in a chronologically diverse commitment on the part of Europe's major cities. All these efforts are solidified in the European Commission's adoption of an LGBTQ+ Equality Strategy for 2020–2025, which promotes that, "in a Union of equality, all citizens, in their diversity, are free to pursue their life as they choose and wish" (European Commission, 2022, p. 8). This brief overview bears witness both to the involvement of institutions in LGBTQ+ issues, in conjunction with national and transnational activist movements, and to the interweaving of scales of action and their national and city-level variations.

Contributing to cities' gay-friendly reputation, LGBTQ+ endorsement helps improve their rank as "best places" (McCann, 2004), in relation to their openness to sexual diversity and resulting attractiveness for, among others, the tourism industry (Johnston, 2007). Hence, increased LGBTQ+ visibility is paradoxical: On the one hand, it enhances rights and normalisation and helps build acceptance towards a fuller citizenship; on the other hand, it turns sexual Otherness into a commodity for enhancing capital in the city. Sexuality thus becomes a polished image or theoretical representation to be commercialised within the globalised, abstract space of capitalism (Lefèbvre, 1974). Moreover, critical scholars point to the ways such a shift in LGBTQ+ politics at various scales favours a specific demographic that has become integrated into the European narrative as exemplary citizens of neoliberal society. Through their privileged access to consumption and a (heteronormative) family lifestyle (Bell & Binnie, 2004), some predominantly educated, wealthy, white (cisgender) men manage to counter their partial exclusion from heteronormative public spaces by accessing sexual citizenship (Bell & Binnie, 2004; Richardson, 2018). Expressing an idealised vision of openness and tolerance, this "political economy of sexuality" (Goh, 2018, p. 466), refers more to assimilation—as analysed by Duggan (2002)—than inclusion. It focuses on the "aesthetics of difference" (Gillig, 2016, as cited in Printz, 2018) as closely related to the landscapes of cosmopolitanism (Sandercock, 1998a, 2000) that are promoted by global city branding

strategies (Bell & Binnie, 2004; Duplan, 2021; Leslie & Catungal, 2012; McCann & Ward, 2011; Parker, 2008). Hence, while promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion—and despite the use of participatory methods cast as the best tool to provide democratic consensus (Legacy, 2017)—such policies fail to address "any underlying mechanisms of exclusion" (Broto, 2021, p. 311). This results in the subsequent exclusion of other LGBTQ+ subjects who remain saddled with deviance. This failure is analysed as a "queer participation paradox," in that the theoretical potential of queer individuals to destabilise current norms and assumptions rarely finds its way into practice (Broto, 2021, p. 311).

At the global scale, while the UN Agenda 2030 SDG 11.2 explicitly refers to inclusive cities, gender and sexual minorities have been left behind in the attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations (https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11). Indeed, despite the creation of an LGBT core group in 2008, efforts by UN agencies to advance LGBTQ+ rights as an institutional commitment have failed due to opposition from powerful member states (Lhant, 2019). Recalling that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the basis of Agenda 2030, non-profit organisations argue for better consideration of the specific needs of LGBTQ+ people and communities when it comes to housing, work, wealth, health, or safety. And in SDG 11.2 on inclusive cities, Stonewall UK, a non-profit organisation, argues for the significance of homelessness among LGBTQ+ people, which is not considered a proper issue in Agenda 2030 (Dorey & O'Connor, 2016). The International Lesbian and Gay Association, a transnational activist collective, also plays a major role in the globalisation of LGBTQ+ rights. Other non-institutional transnational networks also organise themselves to exchange good practices towards LGBTQ+ inclusion, like the Rainbow Cities Network, which works at a transnational level to support local administration and planning towards "greater social inclusion" for LGBTQ+ people to create "liveable cities for all" (Rainbow Cities Network, n.d.).

Overall, these dynamics favour spatial market logics, in which public authorities take part through the promotion of an ethos of sexual cosmopolitanism for cities that use the gaybourhood to attract more capital—notably through global tourist flows. The whiteness and Westernness of this global sexual citizenship have been identified as serving the interest of homonormative strategies (Puar, 2007). Public authorities are criticised for instrumentalising the claiming of rights for queer people—"pinkwashing"—their modes of governance (Hartal & Sasson-Levy, 2018). This criticism comes in relation to communication strategies that simultaneously promote tolerance for, and openness towards, LGBTQ+ communities and people, and also distract from the exclusionary dimensions of existing policies (Duplan, 2021). In the European context, such policies which claim to fight LGBTQ+ discrimination also contribute to the discursive construction of Others, "paradoxically rein-

forc[ing] a distinction between the 'modern West' and the 'homophobic East' " (Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014, p. 4). Hence, (European) promotion of LGBTQ+ rights and visibility works "on the edge of urban 'equalities' " (Podmore & Bain, 2019), connecting to homonationalism issues that forge the Other as illiberal and backward (Puar, 2007, 2013). Furthermore, it is worth noting that this equality landscape has been changing in recent years with the emergence of organised heteroactivist resistance to the increasing institutionalisation of LGBTQ+ rights (Nash & Browne, 2020). When looking for a queer-inclusive planning (Frisch, 2002), it is, therefore, necessary to account for gender and sexual minorities' experiences in all their diversity and complexity (Doan, 2011, p. 2016), beyond "festivalized rainbow washing" (Bain & Podmore, 2023, p. 146), while being mindful of visible and more conspicuous backlash movements.

5. Aiming for Social Justice Through More Queerly Engaged Planning Practice

Through the joint analysis of two public policy fields that are not generally articulated together, and by considering the travel of policies at different scales and their diversified implementation, this intervention highlights some of the similarities in the drifts that occur when institutions attempt to implement gender equality—either as women's or LGBTQ+ equality—into their agenda. First, is the issue of technocratisation: By focusing on tools and policies, public action runs the risk of being disconnected, both from a broader strategy, which should be permanently re-assessed, and from the lived experiences due to its top-down implementation. Like other urban models, the inclusive city needs to be questioned in relation to the neoliberal shift in urban modes of governance (Harvey, 1989), in which an ideal of liveability (Jessop & Sum, 2000) is set to maintain competitiveness—an ideal which, nevertheless, plays as a normative framework for virtuous cities, despite evacuating lived experiences in favour of statistical indicators. Second, and related to the first, is the context in which such actions are implemented. Both gender/women's and LGBTQ+ equality policies are economically driven, and "the EU has primarily been a project of market-making and so, one argument goes, it has not only systematically prioritized different aspects of economic policy but engaged with social policy mainly to the extent that it is functional for the project of market integration" (Daly, 2006, p. 468). This orientation towards market integration works both for gender/women's and LGBTQ+ equality, and at all scales of action. Through inclusion, public policies define what an emancipated lifestyle is based on contribution to the productive economy and through consumption practices, thereby shaping a sense of self and a sense of belonging according to the liberal, individualist norms that define their public. Third, and a consequence of the previous issues, are the pitfalls of ethnocentric binary thinking. By modelling an ideal figure of

citizenship as economically independent, socially emancipated, and driven by individual self-entrepreneurship, equality policies consequently define—by contrast—a figure of Otherness, portrayed as illiberal and backwards, in the need to be educated towards progress and modernity. These elements are found in both femo- and homonationalist rhetoric, in which liberalism effectively disguises some imperialism.

Coming back to the public, the definition of gender deserves further consideration: Gender equality policies mainly reduce their public to one segment of women, despite recent efforts to integrate a more intersectional perspective as part of inclusion strategies, or to consider gender and sexuality (but see, e.g., Fenster & Misgav, 2020). However, this is not about adding to or stirring the pot of equality. How then to account for the "complex and intersectional nature of queer marginalization in urban space"? (Goh, 2018, p. 463). Thinking about gender equality requires outlining how heteronormativity is produced and maintained every day, and how it continues to intersectionally structure our frameworks of thought and actions (Doan, 2011; Frisch, 2015; Irazábal & Huerta, 2016). Heteronormative assumptions thus remain visible in how the implementation of participation reproduces sexually normative behaviours, setting the "radical democratic potential" of queerness apart from citizen participation. Hence:

> At best, participatory planning practices frame gender and sexuality as identity markers of vulnerable groups, rather than thinking of people interested in queer issues as having particular sensibilities and capacities that contribute to collective decision-making. At worst, they just disregard questions of sexuality and gender as irrelevant. (Broto, 2021, p. 313)

Gender and sexual minorities can therefore always count as counterpublics. They enable us to reconnect with the transformative potential of queerness as a counterpublic that can disorientate the linear narrative of the heteronormative order and open breaches towards uncertainties and alternative possibilities; the goal being to "rejuvenate a prefigurative politics of getting on with making new worlds in the here and now" (Kern & McLean, 2017, p. 408).

With acknowledgement in public policies, gender and sexual minorities run the risk of being dissolved into the reign of (hetero)normalcy, as the creeping power of neoliberalism continues to diffuse "through citizens' consent and perceptions of inclusion" (Miraftab, 2009, p. 33). Hence the need to move beyond the vision of a subaltern public contesting neoliberal policies from a secondary and reactive position (Kern & McLean, 2017). Queer counterpublics can help bring to life insurgent planning that will reveal the depoliticisation of joint efforts of collective action and progressive planning, by disrupting "the attempts of neoliberal governance to stabil-

ise oppressive relationships through inclusion" (Miraftab, 2009, p. 41). Thinking further in terms of coalitions would thus open up the path to more social justice by working towards "tangible citizenship (that) grows under the skin of the city" (Miraftab, 2009, p. 40). To conclude, rethinking participation for an inclusive city to overcome the drifts of neoliberal ideology and reach its democratic potential requires a reorientation of planning "towards a model of practice that not only recognizes LGBTQ+ populations, but makes them central to the process" (Doan, 2023, p. 277). This will work towards the creation of safer spaces for all marginalised communities across multiple axes of exclusion, through the building of solidarity networks (Broto, 2021; Goh, 2018; Tucker & Hassan, 2020).

6. Concluding Remarks

In unpacking the uses of the vocabulary of inclusion within public social policies, this article has paid attention to the mutation of the term since its emergence and the dynamics of homogenisation as it has spread at various scales as a tool for urban governance. While the inclusive city has become a referential framework for policies aiming at social justice, it refrains, itself, from challenging the heteronormative structures that produce inequalities. By reducing their public primarily to women, policies thus define a normative path of emancipation and equality. Gender and sexual minorities remain sidelined, and it is always through the joint work of activists and institutions (Duplan, 2023) that new perspectives for an inclusive city for gender and sexuality minorities are slowly carved out within the heteronormative mainstream. All of this highlights how the paradigm of inclusion considers gender and sexual minorities as a superficial layer to be added—a box to be ticked—when introducing gender equality and inclusiveness while relying on top-down efforts of neoliberal citizens' participation. This results in forms of "epistemic violence where…certain lives are erased or reduced, or all futures already known" (Parker, 2016, pp. 10–11).

The inclusive city and its equality policies work as a favoured narrative that shapes both the image of the institutions that frame it and the collective identity of the society in which it operates—namely, its public. By so doing, it also complies with the logic of capitalist reproduction in its neoliberal form (Harvey, 2011), adapting to local contexts of governance and serving the entangled interests of patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism. Changes in the sense of belonging and urban citizenship then need to be examined more closely to better understand the potential of inclusion in the making of a more just city for all. Yet in such a context of queer domestication (Warner, 1993), attention must be paid to the collusion between the lexicon of inclusion and neoliberal cis-heteropatriarchy. A more suspicious and informed use of this terminology by grassroots movements—and all those concerned with the

disruption of unequal power relations—is thus needed. This should be accompanied by further reflections based on lived experiences of in/exclusion to provide alternative idioms that would distance grassroots activism away from institutionalisation, while keeping a more insurgent orientation towards the opening of (queer) creative urban futures.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

The European Ideal of an Inclusive City: Interculturalism and "Good Social Practices" in Barcelona

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Abstract
Within the contemporary debate about what could be broadly called the "challenge of inclusion," three major interrelated trends can be identified: First, a growing dissatisfaction with the traditional approach known as multiculturalism, which in Europe led to the emergence of interculturalism as a new approach to managing cultural diversity; second, the shared acknowledgment that the concept of diversity must be reconsidered in terms of super-diversity and properly understood through an intersectional lens; third, the emergence of cities as pivotal new players in a multi-level framework. Notwithstanding the growing interest in the topic of inclusion, the theoretical level is still limited by strong barriers among different disciplines, and the practices of promotion of social inclusion often result in a few specific projects characterized by an episodic nature and, consequently, by very limited impact in the middle- to long-term. This article critically analyzes how Barcelona is re-conceptualizing and developing its understanding of interculturalism as the basis for building its self-image as a European model of an inclusive city. After a brief overview of the formulation of interculturalism as a contemporary approach to managing diversity at the city level, I analyze the development and implementation of interculturalism in Barcelona. Finally, by focusing on some initiatives selected in the project Bones Pràctiques Socials, I critically discuss some of the main opportunities and challenges for the promotion of social inclusion stemming from the cooperation between municipal institutions and social actors in Barcelona.

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In/Exclusive Cities: Insights From a Social Work Perspective" edited by Karine Duplan (HETS Geneva, HES-SO / University of Geneva), Monica Battaglini (HETS Geneva, HES-SO), Milena Chimienti (HETS Geneva, HES-SO), and Marylène Lieber (University of Geneva).

1. Introduction

It is widely accepted that, as a consequence of the increase in circulation of people and information, cultural diversity is by now structurally embedded in the economies and societies of most countries (Pécoud & de Guchteneire, 2007, p. 5). However, at the same time, the phenomenon of diversity carries with it a disruptive potential, driving tensions and conflicts, often related to discrimination, power imbalances, and various other forms of exclusion and inequality. Accordingly, societies are required to deal with what can be broadly called the "challenge of inclusion," that is, the challenge of finding social and political solutions enabling people with different socio-cultural backgrounds and worldviews to live together as equal members of the same community.

At least since the end of WWII, most countries—especially Western democracies—abandoned traditional assimilationist approaches, embracing what has been defined as a "differentialist turn" (Brubaker, 2001): In contrast to the ideal of a quick disappearance of minorities in the social melting pot, this perspective was grounded in the recognition of the value of cultural diversity and the implicit commitment to protect and promote it. In this context, multiculturalism progressively emerged as the new paradigm for social cohesion and inclusion in the contemporary era of diversity.

Nevertheless, although to this day it can be still regarded as the main alternative to political assimilationism, multiculturalism has been subject to an increasing deal of criticism. At the beginning of the 2000s, propelled by what can be considered a rhetorical narrative of a general "retreat from multiculturalism" (Orgad, 2015, p. 114), a new approach to cultural diversity emerged that, especially in the European context, was proposed as the solution to the various flaws of multiculturalism and the remedy to its failures—this was interculturalism, which since the early 2000s has been officially embraced by the European Union.

Interculturalism is characterized as a city-based approach grounded on a re-conceptualization of the concept of diversity and focused on the promotion of positive interactions between individuals from different cultural groups. As a result, cities have become real laboratories for the construction of the European approach to diversity management and the promotion of social inclusion. This is especially the case of the city of Barcelona, which, against the typically episodic way most cities commit themselves to promote cultural diversity, has officially embraced interculturalism, pioneering its implementation as an institutional paradigm for long-term city policies.

The present article is aimed at contributing to the discussion about the formulation and diffusion of the European ideal of the inclusive city as an intercultural city by analyzing the case of Barcelona. In particular, on the one side, I am interested in how Barcelona has been transforming the theoretical tenets of interculturalism into a basic resource in order to develop long-term policies for the governance of cultural diversity and to promote itself as a European model of an inclusive city. On the other side, by focusing on what the city's institutions have identified and promoted as Barcelona's "good practices," I critically discuss the role, challenges, and opportunities that, in this process, are played by social actors.

In the next section I trace a brief overview of how, in the context of the narrative of a general crisis of multiculturalism, interculturalism successfully emerged as the new European approach to managing diversity. Then, I move to discuss the different steps through which Barcelona progressively built its long-term and sustainable commitment to interculturalism. Finally, by focusing on the concrete case of the project Bones Pràctiques Socials (BPS, which translates to "good social practices"), I consider the concrete experiences of those social actors working for the promotion of social inclusion in Barcelona, critically discussing the role of civil society and the main opportunities and challenges emerging from the field.

As concerns the research methodology, the article is grounded both on secondary sources in English, Spanish, and Catalan, and on a five-month qualitative fieldwork carried out in Barcelona from November 2021 to March 2022. In particular, some of the information provided in Section 3 is grounded on semi-structured interviews that I conducted with some of the key people working at the formulation, development, and implementation of the two Barcelona interculturality plans, namely Dani de Torres (former Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue), Khalid Ghali (current Commissioner), and Ramon Sanahuja (municipal government official and interculturality policy expert who worked at the formulation of the first plan with de Torres and continues to be currently engaged in the promotion of interculturalism in Barcelona). Finally, Section 4 is grounded on semi-structured interviews with a representative number of coordinators (kept anonymous for privacy concerns) of Barcelona's "good social practices" and on a series of participant observations during the working routine and the implementation of such practices.

2. The Crisis of Multiculturalism and the Rise of European Interculturalism

By the 1960s, a major shift had taken place in most immigration countries. On the one side, it had become clear that contrary to what many theorists of assimilationism had been promising the dissolution of cultural diversity in a social melting pot was not something that would be achieved—if ever—in a short period. On the other hand, the general "human rights revolution" following the end of WWII progressively led to the rejection of racialist ideologies traditionally motivating illiberal relations towards given cultural groups and minorities in favor of the affirmation of an ideal of equality of races and peoples (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010, pp. 34–35).

In the context of this so-called "differentialist turn" (Brubaker, 2001), multiculturalism progressively emerged both as a normative theory and a political discourse. As concerns its theoretical foundation, multiculturalism is ultimately grounded on the following two core assumptions: (a) Each culture must be acknowledged a certain kind of value and, accordingly, be protected; and (b) members of minorities can be part of the society while maintaining their distinctive collective identities.

Since its formulation, multiculturalism has not only attracted predictable opposition from illiberal perspectives nostalgic for the old coercive assimilationism, but it has also been the target of "friendly fire" from those who agree on the recognition of the value of cultural diversity and on the need to include minorities on an equal footing. In general, criticism has focused on the "groupist tilt" intrinsic to multiculturalism (Joppke, 2017, Chapter 5). Indeed, to preserve, protect, and enhance cultural minorities, multiculturalism seems to be bound to cultural essentialism and it may foster a perilous tendency to submit the interests of individuals to those of cultural groups.

As concerns more empirical criticisms, standard anti-multiculturalism arguments claim that, by focusing on intergroup differences and enhancing the rights of

minorities against the majority, this approach (a) reinforces a dualistic discourse opposing minorities to the majority and (b) hinders intergroup interactions and the development of shared commonalities, thus (c) fostering tension, conflicts, segregation, and the creation of parallel societies; all this, in turn, (d) deepens socio-economic inequality and (e) creates fertile ground for the rise of extremism and terrorism (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010, pp. 12–13). It should be noted that, despite their intuitive and rhetorical appeal, many of these points have not been supported by sufficient research. For example, as concerns the connection between multiculturalism and segregation, it has not been proven that the latter has been the result of multicultural policies rather than, say, the failure of education, housing, or labor policies (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010).

Nevertheless, criticisms have continued to escalate both in the political and academic context, to the point that, by the turn of the millennium, many took for granted that multiculturalism had failed its promises and that we could not but accept the "death" of multiculturalism and salute the dawn of a "post-multicultural" era (Zapata-Barrero, 2017, 2019). Although the rhetorical scope of these claims has been convincingly underlined (e.g., Joppke, 2017; Kymlicka, 2010; Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010), it is undeniable that, at the rhetorical level, a general "multicultural backlash" (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010) did actually take place, in particular in the European context. Notably, the Council of Europe (2008, p. 9) declared that "what had until recently been a preferred policy approach, conveyed in shorthand as 'multiculturalism,' had been found inadequate." Similar views were expressed in a report by UNESCO (2008). A few years later, in 2011, important state leaders such as David Cameron, Angela Merkel, and Nicolas Sarkozy declared the failure of multiculturalism in their respective states (Bowen, 2011).

It was in the context of this (at least rhetorical) crisis of multiculturalism that interculturalism appeared on stage as a sort of deus ex machina. To be true, the concept of interculturalism was not new: Already since the 1970s the term was used in Quebec to oppose the multiculturalist approach of the Canadian federal government. However, while this contraposition was ultimately grounded on political reasons connected to the rise of Quebecois separatism against Anglophone Canada (Chiasson, 2012), the scope of the European understanding of interculturalism—at least in the intention of its advocates—was aimed at reaching a whole new level. Indeed, interculturalism was intended to be nothing less than a "Copernican revolution" for diversity management (Meer et al., 2016, Chapter 4), thus representing the ultimate approach to effectively promoting social inclusion.

In order to directly address and overcome the main criticisms regarding multiculturalism, interculturalism is proposed as an approach grounded on the three following core assumptions (Zapata-Barrero, 2015, 2019):

1. Diversity categories are self-ascribed, dynamic, and not ethnically based.
2. Positive intergroup and interpersonal contacts at the local level are the main way to achieve social inclusion.
3. Well-managed diversity represents an advantage for societies and can generate public benefits.

To be sure, many doubts have been raised about the actual scope of interculturalism as a revolutionary theory for diversity management. In fact, contrary to multiculturalism which can be considered a fully-fledged political theory, interculturalism suffers from some relevant flaws both at the theoretical and empirical level—as its own advocates recognize (e.g., Meer et al., 2016; Zapata-Barrero, 2015, 2019). Among other things, interculturalism still relies more on intuition than on rigorous research: For example, notwithstanding the central role that interaction has in the interculturalist account, no theory of intercultural contact has been formulated, nor have interculturalists dealt with the vast literature concerning the so-called "contact theory" (see, for example, Pettigrew, 1998; Vezzali & Stathi, 2017).

Nevertheless, despite these theoretical limitations, the European Union enthusiastically embraced interculturalism, which has become an important resource for the promotion of an approach—so to say—"made in Europe." Such an "intercultural turn" must be understood in connection with the consolidation of three crucial trends in the contemporary debate about diversity management:

1. The widespread reformulation of the concept of "diversity" in terms of "super-diversity" (Vertovec, 2007) crucially contributes to moving the focus from a "groupist perspective" to the individual level. Indeed, in this new sense, the scope of diversity is no more limited to the traditional categories of ethnicity and nationality, connected with large, identifiable, and organized groups, but is extended to include many other interconnected diversity categories (sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, etc.) which must be understood from the individual perspective.
2. A renewed focus on integration explicitly rejected assimilationism but also cultural essentialism, cultural relativism, and the general *laissez-faire* approach, which has been typical for societies after the differentialist turn (Joppke, 2017). Specifically targeting migrants, this dimension usually refers to the promotion of a shared language and some principles, requiring, in general, a commitment to the core values of liberalism.
3. Cities emerged as pivotal new players, in opposition to the traditional emphasis on the role of the national government. In particular, cities—as the actual loci where diversity is experienced— are considered the real stakeholders for diversity

management. In fact, given their concrete proximity to the phenomenon of diversity, as well as their competences over softer policy areas (such as health, housing, and social services), cities, meaning both institutions and civil society, are in a vantage point to take action.

To actively promote the diffusion of interculturalism and its implementation in the city, in 2008 the Council of Europe and the European Commission launched the Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC Programme), a platform aimed at giving "support to cities in reviewing their policies through an intercultural lens and developing comprehensive intercultural strategies" (https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities). In this framework, an index was developed, allowing—through different indicators—to measure and rank the level of interculturality of cities. Once joining the network, cities commit to the tenets of interculturalism to collect the data for getting ranked on the ICC Index and promote and implement intercultural initiatives. In this way, cities become the real laboratories for the construction of the European intercultural approach. The success of the intercultural narrative is testified by the extraordinary expansion of the network of cities taking part in the program—the number of which has increased from 11 cities in 2008 to the current 157 cities.

However, despite this success, it is difficult to disagree with criticisms remarking that all this enthusiasm often results in nothing more than empty and "do-good" rhetoric. In fact, most intercultural practices seem ultimately to consist of a few specific projects characterized by an episodic nature and by a very limited impact in the middle- to long-term.

Nevertheless, in this context, Barcelona stands out for a steady and explicit commitment to setting the challenge of inclusion at the center of its political agenda by embracing interculturalism and striving to institutionalize an intercultural model of governance on a long-term basis. Progressively emerging as a widely recognized model for inclusive policies (Bazurli, 2019; Peña-López, 2019; Triviño-Salazar, 2020), Barcelona is becoming one of the main drivers of the intercultural discourse.

3. The "Firework" of Barcelona Interculturalism

According to data from the Instituto National de Estadística (https://www.ine.es/index.htm), Barcelona is the capital of the autonomous community of Catalonia and the second-most populous municipality of Spain with a population of 1,664.182 inhabitants. The city stands out for its high levels of cultural diversity: Indeed, about 27.8% of its population is represented by foreign-born residents, coming from 183 different countries and speaking no less than 300 different languages (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2021, p. 4).

The theme of cultural diversity was explicitly set in the city's political agenda as early as 1997 when the

City Council approved the first and pioneering municipal plan for interculturality. A few years later, in 2002, due to a sudden increase in the arrival of international migrants, the first municipal immigration plan was formulated. Very interestingly, this immigration plan was approved with the unanimous consensus of all the political groups represented in the City Council: As we will see, this political legitimation is one of the most important characteristics of the Barcelona approach to diversity management, crucially contributing to its sustainability.

A turning point was marked in 2007 with the elections of the mayor Jordi Hereu (social-democratic/ federalist party). Hereu immediately set immigration and social inclusion at the center of his political agenda. In the very same year of his election, he created the political role of Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue with the mandate to develop a new immigration plan and, secondly, a plan for the promotion of cultural diversity and social inclusion.

Once again, in order to secure the sustainability of the immigration plan, Commissioner Dani de Torres negotiated the unanimous consent of all political groups. At the same time, thanks to the contribution of the philosopher and anthropologist Carlos Giménez—one of the most prominent theorists of interculturalism—the city's first theoretical framework for the implementation of intercultural practices was created. In this way, sometime before the official formulation of European interculturalism, Barcelona was already pioneering the adoption of this approach paving the way for the "intercultural turn" of European cities. Barcelona's interculturalism was grounded on the following three principles (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2010, pp. 11–12), which clearly already resembled the basic tenets of European interculturalism:

1. Principle of equality, conceived of respect for the equal rights, obligations, and social opportunities of all citizens against situations of exclusion and discrimination.
2. Principle of recognition of diversity, which refers to the need to recognize diversity "understood in a broad sense" (this principle translates the re-conceptualization of diversity in terms of superdiversity, which is at the core of European interculturalism; at the same time, it also emphasizes the opportunities represented by socio-cultural diversity "linked to cultural enrichment but also to the economic and social spheres," thus also incorporating interculturalism's core assumption of "diversity advantage").
3. The principle of positive interaction, also specified as "the one that defines the interculturalist approach and differentiates it from other philosophies such as multiculturalism" and which states that coexistence can only be achieved through day-to-day contact and dialogue among all citizens (in this case, too, one can see a clear resemblance

to the other principle of European interculturalism, i.e., "positive contact").

The formulation of these principles has been the spark that ignited the firework of Barcelona's interculturalism. In fact, these principles provided a general, uncontestable, framework able to put together the various interests of different stakeholders: On the one side, civil society was reassured about its central role both as the target and as the agent of the intercultural transition, seeing the potential for space and opportunities; on the other side, the political and institutional representatives could get a clearer idea about the directions which the ideal of the Barcelona intercultural city was aiming at, and could find motivation in engaging with it in order to strengthen their ties with the civil society. In this way, right from the outset, the intercultural narrative revealed its potential as a precious resource and driver of socio-political changes.

By sheer coincidence, the year 2008 was declared the "European year of intercultural dialogue," thus setting the theme of cultural diversity under the spotlight at both national and transnational levels and reinforcing its appeal. In this context, de Torres developed the Barcelona Intercultural Dialogue Programme, calling on civil society to cooperate in the organization of hundreds of activities and debates in the city. It was in this context that de Torres had the chance to get in touch with representatives of the ICC Programme that was about to be launched. In this way, Barcelona got involved in the program from its very beginning, actually helping to shape it.

In October 2008 the City Council unanimously approved an Immigration Working Plan 2008–2011. Among the specific measures set forth, one referred to the "drafting of a municipal plan for interculturality" that should have become the framework of reference for strategies and practices concerning cultural diversity (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2010, p. 14).

The Barcelona Interculturality Plan (Pla Barcelona Interculturalitat) 2010–2020 is the result of intense and complex work carried out from late 2008 to 2010. The strategy for the official implementation of interculturalism as a city policy was grounded on (a) a participative methodology, adopted both during the plan's formulation and implementation, and (b) transversalization, that is, the engagement of all the different areas and departments of the municipality in both the formulation and implementation of the plan. The basic idea was to make interculturalism a lens for driving a process of rethinking the city as a whole.

To implement the participative methodology, representatives from all the areas and departments of the municipality and from the civil society, as well as experts and scholars, were directly involved in the drafting process. After surveys, interviews, working groups, and data collection, the findings of this participatory process were analyzed and used for the final drafting. In 2010, the 10-year plan was finally approved, once again, with the unanimous consensus of the City Council.

Centered on the three core principles of Barcelona's interculturalism, the plan specifies a detailed interculturality decalogue consisting of 10 strategic linchpins representing guidelines for the implementation of initiatives aimed at fostering social inclusion and coexistence in diversity. Soon after the publication of the plan, a team was organized under the name of Programa Barcelona Interculturalitat, whose members were responsible for the different concrete actions to be implemented.

For the following 10 years, up to 2020, a great number of actors have been working in the framework of the plan. First, to stimulate intercultural practices and spread the intercultural perspective, a service of free intercultural training programs was established, targeting different professional and social areas of the city. Second, the City Council actively promoted a wide range of specific intercultural projects by providing financial and technical support to NGOs and NPOs working in the field to elicit initiatives and engagement from civil society. In 2011, the project Espai Avinyó was launched, aimed at offering (cultural and artistic) spaces of dialogue and interaction for promoting the city's cultural diversity.

Finally, the Barcelona Anti-Rumor Strategy was created, which became one of the most interesting outcomes of the participative process of construction of the plan itself and an interesting bottom-up practice of the city's governance of cultural diversity. In fact, during the plan's drafting process, participants identified as one of the key obstacles to social inclusion the lack of mutual knowledge among citizens, fostering, in turn, stereotypes, prejudices, and, in general, rumors. In connection with this concern and as a way to proactively address the citizens' demands for intervention, in July 2010, a number of NGOs encouraged by the City Council created the Barcelona Anti-Rumor Network. The network is committed to engaging in anti-rumor actions, both inside the network (i.e., within member organizations) and out, by organizing awareness and prevention campaigns, free projects and activities, and free training.

Having been approved with the unanimous consent of all political groups, the plan enjoyed an extremely solid political legitimacy, which allowed it to survive without problems through a succession of three municipal governments belonging to different political groups: 2007–2011, the social-democratic/federalist party; 2011–2019, the liberal-democratic/Christian-democratic party; 2019-ongoing, the social-democratic/republican civil list. As the year 2020, and the end of the 10-year plan, was approaching, Barcelona was ready to re-examine the results obtained and the current situation of the city in order to launch a new interculturality plan. After negotiating, once more, unanimous political consent to the plan, current Commissioner Khalid Ghali started working on the new drafting, which was carried out by consolidating the two pillars of the first plan, that is, transversality and participation. The final aim was to

create a new framework able to address the criticisms and incorporate the lessons learned during the implementation of the previous plan, as well as re-tune it, adapting it to the context of the second decade of the 21st century.

The second Barcelona Interculturality Plan 2021–2030 was published at the end of May 2021. Three new pillars were added to Barcelona's intercultural strategy: dynamism, self-criticism, and territorialization. Dynamism is conceived as a reaction against a certain ideological rigidity perceived during the implementation of the first plan to redefine interculturalism as a "transforming process in a constant state of learning and construction" (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2021, p. 5). Self-criticism refers to the necessity of developing indicators allowing for constant monitoring of both the implementation of the plan and the situation related to cultural diversity in Barcelona to promptly detect issues and needs and elaborate strategies of targeted intervention. Finally, it was widely acknowledged that the first plan was still affected by top-down dynamics—enacted not only by the institutions but also by some of the associations involved—which had not succeeded in effectively rooting interculturalism at the micro-level of the neighborhoods. Much more (participative) work of territorialization was needed in order to spread a sustainable intercultural practice in the *barrios* (neighborhoods) of the city.

The following two diagrams describe, respectively, the relations between Barcelona's interculturalism and European interculturalism (Figure 1) and the process of development of Barcelona as an intercultural city (Figure 2).

In these last thirteen years since the publication of the first plan, a growing number of actors have engaged in the promotion of cultural diversity in the framework of Barcelona's interculturalism which has by now become a major framework of reference for the promotion of cultural diversity and social inclusion—as initially intended. As we have seen, the process of implementation of interculturalism still has a long way to go before Barcelona can truly claim to be an intercultural city. The representatives of the city's intercultural program themselves acknowledge that the city did not succeed in effectively implementing all the intercultural practices envisaged in the first plan and that the most relevant result in the first 10 years of work has rather been the consolidation and dissemination of an intercultural narrative within different levels and sectors of the institutions and the civil society.

Notwithstanding the "perfectibility" of Barcelona's implementation of interculturalism—which is explicitly acknowledged in the second plan—the city crucially demonstrates that interculturalism can inform the development and progressive implementation of a sustainable model of governance of cultural diversity, characterized by a consolidated and methodology and structure, and by a certain level of institutionalization. In this sense, there is no doubt that the city represents a benchmark both at a national and international level and it has been playing a central role in the process of conceptualization and development of European interculturalism and the European ideal of the inclusive city, providing an extremely interesting point of reference both for researchers and policymakers.

4. Promoting Social Inclusion in Intercultural Barcelona: Challenges and Opportunities for Social Actors

The implementation of interculturalism in Barcelona, grounded on participative methodology, transversalization, dynamism, self-criticism, and territorialization
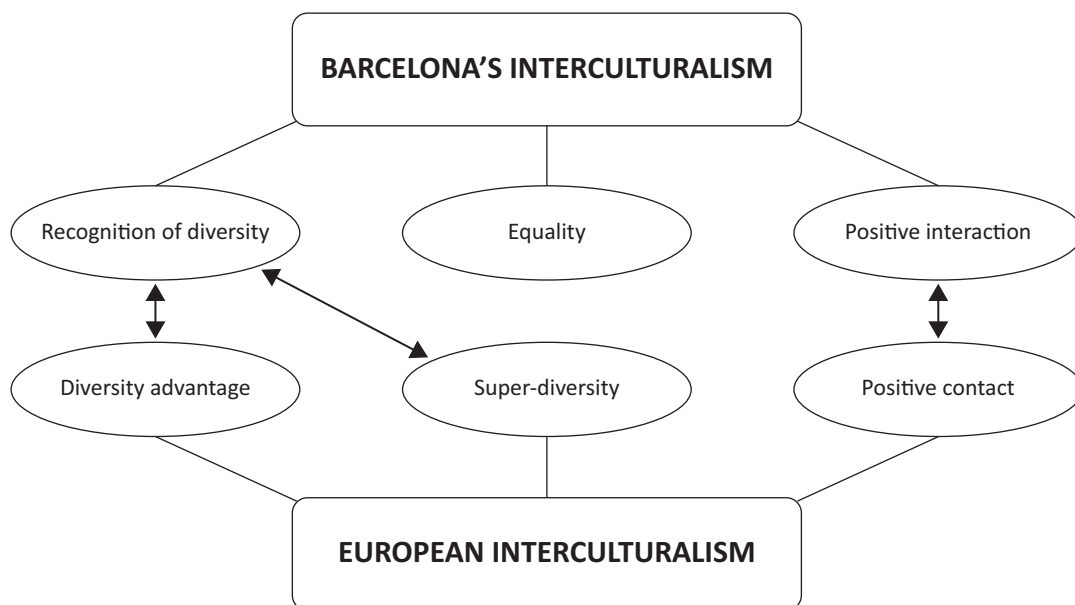

Figure 1. Barcelona's interculturalism and European interculturalism.

IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERCULTURALISM IN BARCELONA

Political legitimation

1997 — Municipal Plan for Interculturality

2002 — Municipal Immigration Plan

2007 — Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue

Political legitimation

2008 — Immigration Working Plan 2008–2011

Diversity = Migration

Political legitimation
Participative methodology
Transversalization

2010 — Pla Barcelona Interculturalitat 2010–2020

• Recognition of diversity • Equality • Positive Interaction

Team (PBI)

Training programs — Anti-Rumor Strategy — Espai Avinyó

Civil society

Political legitimation
Participative methodology
Transversalization

2021 — Pla Barcelona Interculturalitat 2021–2030

Dynamism

Self-criticism

Territorialization

• Recognition of diversity • Equality • Positive Interaction

Team (PBI)

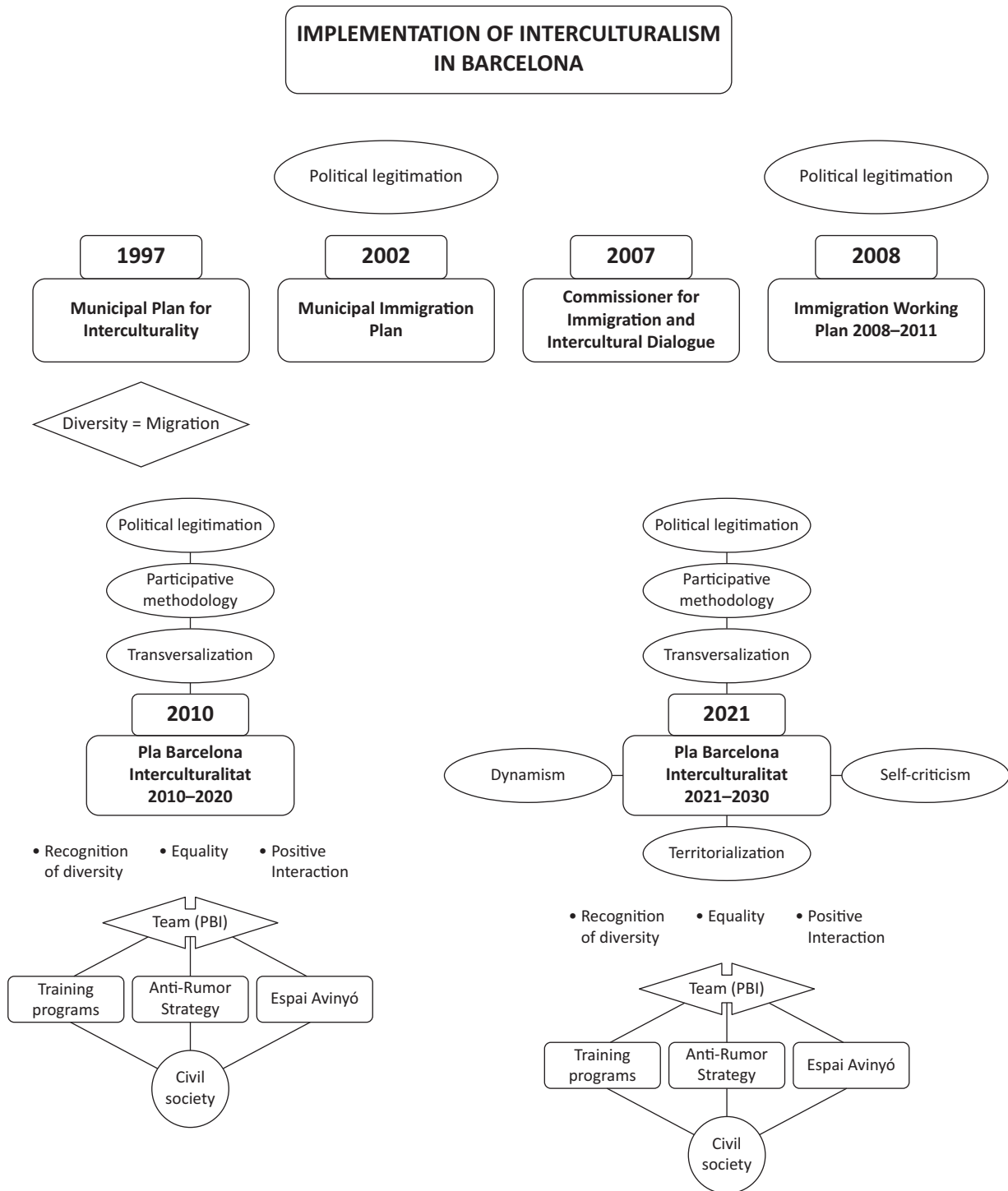Training programs — Anti-Rumor Strategy — Espai Avinyó

Civil society

Figure 2. Process of development of Barcelona as an intercultural city.

has been ultimately fueled by the intense cooperation between municipal institutions and civil society. Such dynamics, which have become one of the hallmarks of the promotion of social inclusion in the city, are not something new and must be properly understood in the framework of the traditional governance model of the city.

Extensively studied and analyzed, the "Barcelona model" of governance is the ultimate result of the pro-

cess of decentralization in post-Franco Spain, characterized by the devolution of power from the national government to regions and cities (Blakeley, 2005, 2010; Blanco, 2015). Acknowledging its limits as concerns the delivery of services for social welfare as well as in the implementation of social policies, the City Council resolved to let the process of decentralization continue within the city itself, dividing it into 10 districts and 73 neighborhoods, and distributing power and competencies. This operation, in

turn, had the expected effect of activating and empowering civil society which, ever since, has played a crucial role in the area of social policies in Barcelona (Ferrando & Triviño-Salazar, 2022, p. 13).

Interculturalism was easily incorporated into this long-standing model, enrooting in the initiatives of civil society the practices of promotion of social inclusion and connecting them with a variety of social services aimed at overcoming various forms of inequality, exclusion, and discrimination. Municipal institutions, on their part, contributed by providing resources such as technical support, spaces, and financial resources.

However, as criticisms have often underlined (e.g., Blakeley, 2005), it may well be that all that glitters is not gold. Indeed, as concerns social policies in general, and intercultural practices and promotion of social inclusion in particular, the generous support of the government comes, in turn, with a constant monitoring and evaluation of the development of the initiatives. In so doing, the city government maintains a de facto steering role in the effective implementation of social practices, thus posing a limit to the agency of civil society and the possibility for innovation (Blakeley, 2005).

More specifically, while, on the one hand, the government promotes and empowers civil society by providing resources and support, on the other hand, this may perversely result in an addiction to governmental funds, inevitably connected with competition to grab financial resources. This, of course, becomes an opportunity for *divide et impera* strategies and, in general, provides the government a golden chance to direct the initiatives of civil society according to its interests. Indeed, it can be argued that a significant dimension of the agency of civil society and its political participation is, to some extent, connected to its possibility to take stances against the directives of the government—something which is well-known in the vast literature about social movements and democracy (e.g., Della Porta & Diani, 2014).

In what follows, to go beyond the overall picture of Barcelona as an intercultural city and to move some steps towards a deeper understanding of the role of civil society in the promotion of social inclusion, let us focus on the project BPS. Launched in 2012 by the Area of Social Rights, Global Justice, Feminism, and LGBTI Affairs (henceforth merely called the Area), the project is aimed at selecting, sharing, exchanging, and disseminating good practices of promotion of social inclusion and social welfare implemented either from the Area itself or in collaboration with NGOs. As explained on the web page of the project, a good practice is defined as "a coherent set of useful, relevant and significant actions (experiences, projects, activities, actions) that have obtained good results in a given context and that are expected to obtain similar results in similar contexts" (BPS, n.d., author's translation).

Every year, based on a set of criteria, an institutional commission selects a number of initiatives the information from which is inserted in a "bank of good practices." Besides the requirement for eligibility (i.e., "adequacy and relevance" of the practice), the basic criteria for the evaluation are defined in terms of transferability, innovation, planning and processes, evaluation and impact, and continuous improvement and quality; finally, some added value criteria are leadership, participation, transparency and communication, optimization of resources, sustainability, transversality, and comprehensiveness (BPS, n.d., author's translation).

Considering that those recognized as social practices are the very initiatives that, for Barcelona's institutions, are supposed to be the flagship of Barcelona's social governance, analyzing their organization and implementation can provide particularly precious insights: Indeed, by diving into the reality of the experiences of the social actors implementing those practices, we have the chance to get a more concrete picture of the role of the civil society in such a model, as well as some of the opportunities and challenges perceived by its representatives.

From November 2021 to March 2022, as part of a wider fieldwork carried out in Barcelona, thanks to the extraordinary support of the Escola de l'IGOP, I had the opportunity to get access to the contacts of all the persons representative for the different social practices. After studying the information available, within 69 social practices (as of March 2022), I selected 20 that were especially in line with the intercultural paradigm, targeting members of minorities or vulnerable categories such as immigrants or ethnic minorities, young people in marginalized contexts, LGBT, elderly people, and people with disabilities. I carried out semi-structured interviews with 18 out of the 20 persons selected (two of them being unavailable for interviews at that time). The interviews focused on the dynamics, challenges, and opportunities of cooperation between government and social actors in the context of Barcelona. Notice that, considering that more than 15 of the remaining 69 social practices have currently become inactive, the results of my fieldwork can have a certain representative value for the whole set of remaining social practices, thus providing an overview of the role of social actors in Barcelona also beyond those immediately related to diversity management.

One of the first findings of the fieldwork was the shared enthusiasm towards the supportive role of the government: 16 out of 18 interviewees declared that technical and financial support was crucial for the possibility to organize and develop the practices. However, the value of this finding can be questioned by considering a critical issue that emerged while carrying out the fieldwork, that is, many of the selected good practices (10 out of 18) are actually initiatives promoted by municipal organizations working under the direction of the Area—which is the same one that launched and coordinates the project BPS. Notwithstanding the readiness for self-criticism that I was shown during all interviews with governmental officials, the enthusiasm that they showed about the governmental support cannot be taken as quite representative of the perception of other representatives

of civil societies engaged in social practices. Even though they also usually benefit from governmental support, their position is quite different compared to people who are representatives of the government.

However, it is relevant to notice that six out of eight representatives of non-governmental practices confirmed their enthusiasm for governmental support, while only two of them mentioned the possible issues related to addiction to government funding. As a result, it seems that, even if a minority may be skeptical about the strong supporting role of the government, in general, there is no perception or suspicion of intentional manipulation. Quite the contrary, all interviewees agreed that, while institutions in Barcelona play an important role in supporting the launch and first phases of social projects, they do not provide enough resources and support for its expansion, to the detriment of the long-term sustainability of many practices: As interviewees pointed out, after the initial phase, other investments and resources would be crucial to meet the challenges that arise during the consolidation of projects. That is why, in the end, if they do not succeed in standing on their feet, many initiatives and practices soon disappear.

All this, of course, does not mean that government manipulation cannot take place: Indeed, it is still the government that sets the rule for the allocation of funds for the starting phase. However, in this case, it appears that the steering government would often fail to maintain strong control by fostering a long-term addiction to funding even concerning those practices that have been elected as the most promising according to its institutional criteria. It rather seems that to survive in the middle-/long-term, those practices have strong incentives to emancipate themselves from their dependency on governmental support, creatively finding different channels and mobilizing new resources.

Nevertheless, as expected, all the interviewees confirmed that, once mechanisms of institutional support are set, a great emphasis is put on report writing and data collection. To be sure, on the one hand, all 18 interviewees unanimously recognized the importance of supervision and monitoring to grant the standards of quality in the implementation of activities, as well as transparent and responsible employment of resources. However, on the other hand, both the results of interviews and my observation point to general bureaucracy fatigue: The frequent requirement to write reports, fill documents and procedures, and hold different kinds of meetings with governmental representatives strongly affects and limits time, energy, and the possibility for innovation. Considering that "dynamism" has been set as one of the pillars in the new Barcelona Interculturality Plan, this result could be particularly important for processes of rethinking and self-criticism that has been foreseen for the next 10 years: While it is important to impose a certain level of supervision, it seems that too much bureaucratic burden is being put on social actors, which is affecting and limiting their potential.

As concerns the opportunity for dynamism and innovation, 11 out of 18 interviewees explicitly added that the experience of the "bank of good practices" and the activities of restitution and dissemination of the knowledge accumulated in this context—in particular, meetings among all the representatives of selected initiatives—created interesting spaces for experimentation and encouraged cooperation and innovation. This finding can be considered proportionally more relevant as only six of those 11 interviewees are working as governmental officials. Indeed, this means that four interviewees, while being employed in the government, do not automatically think that the BPS project provides new spaces and opportunities. In general, regardless of their position, just over half the representatives feel that this space—provided by the government—does encourage innovation and dynamism. Interviews suggest that their opinion seems ultimately to depend upon personal entrepreneurship and willingness to use the resources and channels provided by the government.

Further elaborating on the fact that many social practices are selected among government initiatives and services, it is debatable that there is a certain problematic level of self-referentiality of the municipality to the detriment of civil society. Representatives of practices working as municipal officers are clearly in a vantage point as concerns the know-how related to the criteria of evaluation of good practices. As a result, as all the 18 interviewees recognized, if initiatives promoted by the third sector are not supported by experts or are not built in direct cooperation with the municipality, they are strongly penalized in terms of access to funds and resources. This, of course, may reinforce inequalities between organizations that already have access to cognitive or material capital and those that do not, resulting in a sort of gentrification of social action. In this sense, this result too may be quite important in connection with processes of rethinking and self-criticism envisaged in the second Barcelona Interculturality Plan.

The issue about accessibility and inclusivity of the governmental funds and opportunities for social actors is deeply connected—as all 18 representatives acknowledged—to some flaws concerning communication: while the project is aimed at the diffusion and dissemination of good practices, most of the information on the web page, as well as the material produced, are only in Spanish (and, sometimes, only in Catalan). Moreover, representatives lamented scarce and cumbersome communication not only between them and (superior) governmental offices but also among themselves. The centrality of the topic of communication emerging in the interviews could provide, once again, material for rethinking some of the practices within the process of implementation of interculturalism. Indeed, considering the ideals of transversalization between different governmental areas and the participation of civil society (as a whole) in this process, setting up a system for inclusive, accessible, and effective communication

seems crucial for further progressing in the construction of the intercultural city.

The same challenge of inclusion and accessibility also concerns the capability of the practices to effectively reach, or be reached by, the target subjects, as clearly emerged from 12 out of 18 interviews (five of which involved governmental officials). It appears that, except for the initiatives that are clearly localized in a particular neighborhood, many projects manage to involve individuals only insofar as they belong to a specific organization. This result represents another interesting empirical evidence for the relevance of "territorialization" for the promotion of social inclusion—which, as we have seen, has also been added as a new pillar for the implementation of interculturalism in the new plan. Table 1 summarizes the results of the fieldwork.

5. Conclusion

Barcelona is a paradigmatic case as a city committed to setting the challenge of inclusion at the center of its political agenda. In a context where cities are progressively emerging as pivotal new players in a multi-level framework and where diversity is being reconceptualized in terms of super-diversity, Barcelona has become one of the main laboratories for the construction of a European approach to diversity. While the process of implementation of interculturalism is still ongoing and the final goals which have been set are yet far from being achieved, the city demonstrates that contrary to what many criticisms claim interculturalism can become a crucial resource for the implementation of a sustainable model of governance of cultural diversity at the local level.

The ideal of "virtuous cooperation" between government and civil society for the implementation of social practices—which already characterized the so-called Barcelona model of governance—has been successfully incorporated into the process of implementation of inter-

culturalism. The concrete experiences of social actors working in this context reiterate the crucial role that civil society is playing, as well as the opportunities that can be found in a virtuous combination of top-down and bottom-up dynamics for the implementation of social practices. However, as we have seen, several issues emerge at the same time from the field that need to be addressed to move further steps in the direction of the ideal of Barcelona as an intercultural city.

The results of this article point to the relevance of in-depth research about the concrete experiences of social actors working for the promotion of cultural diversity and social inclusion in Barcelona. I hope that, notwithstanding the limited scope of the analysis (which focused only on a small number of practices and initiatives), this research gives voice to social actors by providing some additional material for identifying and addressing issues that are being experienced on the field.

Considering that Barcelona will continue to invest in the implementation of interculturalism at least for seven more years under the banner—among others—of "self-criticism" and "dynamism," it seems that social research may find room for contributing to this process. While making sure to avoid falling into objectionable prescriptivism, it seems that academic research can play a transformative social role in Barcelona, helping to identify opportunities and challenges for promoting virtuous cooperation between stakeholders in the social context.

Finally, the study of the case of Barcelona can be very important for other contexts engaged in the promotion of social inclusion. It is important to keep in mind—as we learn from the very experience of Barcelona—that governance of cultural diversity is essentially context-related and needs to be built and consolidated in a long-term, constantly dynamic, and participatory process. Nevertheless, the study of successful experiences and of the ways that issues and challenges have been addressed

Table 1. Summary of results.

	Total	Enthusiasm for government support	More resources needed	Bureaucracy fatigue	The government provides spaces for dynamism/ innovation	Communication problems	Capability to reach the target
Government officials	10	10	10	10	6	10	5
Non-government officials	8	6	8	8	5	8	7
Total	18	16	18	18	11	18	12
Percentage	100%	88.89%	100%	100%	61.11%	100%	66.67%
	Self-referentiality	Positive cooperation	Scarce long-term investment	Supervision/ energy drain	Personal entrepreneurship	Need for inclusion/ access	Importance of territorialitation

undoubtedly has the potential to teach important lessons for other contexts. The laboratory for the promotion of social inclusion that can be observed in Barcelona represents a unique opportunity for researchers to analyze an attempt to build a socially sustainable intercultural city. By critically considering the different mechanisms that have been put in place, as well as their successes and challenges, we can better reflect on how we could effectively implement the European motto: "United in diversity."

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Exploring Inclusive Cities for Migrants in the UK and Sweden: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

In recent years, social work with migrants and ethnic minorities has developed as a field of research and practice. Further, it is recognised in the literature that the increased processes of human mobility in today's societies have driven a growing focus on inclusive cities, especially in larger urban areas where ethnic diversity and cultural heterogeneity can be found alongside newly arrived migrants seeking a better quality of life, safety, and sanctuary. There is a strong link between individuals' well-being and their relationship with spaces, institutions, and resources. Cities and their urban environment have been increasingly identified as key arenas where social, economic, and ecological societal challenges should be addressed. In the context of migration, municipalities have invested in dealing with both inclusive and sustainable policies. However, cities are not uniformly experienced by all. This scoping review seeks to answer how an inclusive city is conceptualised in the Swedish and the UK's social work literature concerning migration. Using social exclusion and inclusion as the theoretical points of view, we conduct analysis using Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) six-stage methodological framework. Despite social work playing a major role in the social inclusion of immigrant minorities in cities, through promoting participation, there is a lack of knowledge and research on social work engagement with social inclusion, both in the fields of social policy and practices. This article contributes to an enhanced understanding of what an inclusive city is, and the role of social work in defining and developing social policies and professional interventions for inclusive cities to support the integration of migrants with distinct needs. We offer a much-needed review of the similarities and differences between the two geographies by analysing the social work perspectives from Sweden and the UK.

Keywords

inclusive cities; migration; social work; Sweden; United Kingdom

1. Introduction

The urban environment is pivotal in shaping immigrants' in/exclusion experiences. Most UK and Sweden immigrants live in urban/city areas (Holmqvist et al., 2022; Walsh & Sumpton, 2020), and their experiences depend on specific national and local contexts. National policies and local practices—including dispersal policies and organisational arrangements of service provi-

sions, types, and levels of welfare support—influence the local inclusion of migrants. Literature on social work and immigration emphasises how diversity and super-diversity in large cities with a strong immigration background puts pressure on social workers working with immigrant communities and challenges the structure of opportunity for migrants' local integration (for example, Boccagni et al., 2015). While the term "integration" has been interchangeably used to refer to social

inclusion—as discussed in the next section—since the so-called European "refugee crisis" in 2015–2016, scholars have emphasised the importance of local host societies (cities) concerning the specific case of immigrant integration (inclusion) (Phillimore, 2020). Therefore, this scoping review explores the existing social work literature regarding the conceptualisations and key characteristics of inclusive cities in migrant inclusion within the UK and Swedish contexts. How is an "inclusive city" conceptualised and characterised in the UK and the Swedish social work literature concerning migration? By answering this question, the authors aim to uncover the specificities of inclusive cities, stakeholders' approaches and practices, the infrastructures involved, and the level of migrant involvement.

The UK and Sweden have unique political, social, economic, cultural, and spatial contexts. By the end of June 2021, six million people (9% of the total population) living in the UK had a different nationality. The majority of the migrant population lives in London, the capital city (35%). After London, the highest population of migrants lives respectively in the South East (13.4%), the West Midlands (13.9%), the East of England (12.9%), and the East Midlands (12.7%). Furthermore, there are 6.5% living in Wales, 7% in Northern Ireland, and 9.3% in Scotland. The majority of migrants are living in the poorest cities in the UK, such as Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, and Leicester (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Nevertheless, the arrival and settlement of immigrants have been primarily influenced by the UK government's aim to reduce net migration, hostile immigration policies, and anti-immigrant rhetoric. The national immigration policies have been dictating who can become a legal resident, what types of services are provided, how migrants will be treated and where they can live (specifically for asylum seekers). While some types of immigrants (economic migrants and refugees) have opportunities to become citizens through the ordinary settlement process, some other migrants (asylum seekers and students) do not have those options. For instance, economic migrants and refugees can apply for "indefinite leave to remain" if they have been residents for five years. They can later apply for naturalisation (citizenship) in the UK once they have had indefinite leave to remain for a year. However, the UK government's target to reduce net migration has contributed to stricter policy measures. For instance, minimum income requirements for those sponsoring family members, minimum salary offers for skilled migrants, and stricter requirements for universities sponsoring international students.

Furthermore, the Immigration Acts of 2014 and 2016 included measures to prevent people from accessing employment, healthcare, housing, education, banking, and other basic services. With the introduction of such hostile immigration policies, property owners, doctors, employers, and staff from various institutions became legally responsible for applying them. For instance, employers must assess an individual's immigration sta-

tus before offering them work. While it is illegal to employ an individual without a valid immigration status, the Immigration Act 2016 introduced sanctions on employers who employ so-called "illegal" immigrants: employers are now open to prosecution, fines, and a prison term. Furthermore, private property owners can be imprisoned for up to five years and/or fined for knowingly renting accommodation to people without the correct immigration status. Banks must check an applicant's immigration status before allowing them to open a bank account. Importantly, individuals without indefinite leave to remain cannot access public funds, which means they do not have access to social benefits in the UK. Indeed, numerous immigration policies that have emerged over the past three decades have succeeded in creating an unwelcoming atmosphere for migrants in the UK. This unwelcoming atmosphere, arising from negative discourses and the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment, is linked to multiple policies that seem to act against migrants and their ability to settle and integrate into the receiving society (Mulvey, 2015). For instance, restrictions and controls in accessing the labour market, local housing, social services, health, and engagement with social institutions are all factors recognised as posing challenges to inclusion and settlement in the UK (Mulvey, 2015).

By the end of 2022, Sweden hosted more than two million foreign-born residents, representing 20.4% of the total population (Statistics Sweden, 2022). The population distribution is very uneven in Sweden, with 87.9% living in the largest urban areas such as Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, Uppsala, Linköping, Västerås, Örebro, Helsingborg, and Norrköping. Immigrants, too, are concentrated in the top four largest municipalities: Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, and Uppsala (Dutto & Lei, 2020). The largest cities in Sweden were recently geographically identified as "vulnerable areas" (Police Authority, n.d.), characterised by the low socioeconomic status of their inhabitants and where criminals have an increased impact on the local communities. Of those vulnerable areas, cities such as Stockholm, Norrköping, Örebro, Malmö, Linköping, and Uppsala were all mentioned (Police Authority, n.d.). Looking at low socioeconomic status as one of the indicators of immigrant integration, the unemployment rate was found to be significantly higher among foreign-born individuals: 16.2% (18.4% among immigrant women and 14.2% among immigrant men) compared to native Swedes (European Union, 2023). This data is confirmed by the employment gaps of over 10% between natives and foreign-born, one of the highest among OECD countries (Bevelander & Hollifield, 2022).

Sweden is deemed to have effective policies for social inclusion that positively impact migrants' overall well-being (Scarpa, 2016). As one of the Northern European Countries, Sweden historically seems to have had a more generous welfare state than countries such as the UK regarding the integration of migrants

(Kesler, 2015). Further, the Swedish welfare state initially based the notion of integration on humanitarian assistance, which meant that receiving and assisting migrants was a function of welfare programs during the 1970s (Schmauch & Nygen, 2020). In 1998, however, policies regarding the integration of migrants into society were predominantly linked to assimilation into the labour market, and there was, therefore, an obligation for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees to master the Swedish language and internalise Swedish values, norms, and ways of life (Dahlstedt, 2009; Schmauch & Nygen, 2020). Given the new policy orientation, immigrants started to experience a profound social exclusion because of the ideological shift from privileged humanitarian and family-oriented assistance to assimilation policies, which did not privilege low-skilled workers in urban labour markets (Scarpa, 2016). Changes in the legislation also accompanied changes in public opinion, opening up a new scenario in which conditions for integration were constrained by the limited availability of employment and housing opportunities, combined with a xenophobic political context (Schmauch & Nygen, 2020). In 2016, the Swedish government approved the Settlement Act (Holmqvist et al., 2022) in response to the so-called refugee crisis of 2015, intending to increase the fair redistribution of migrant asylum seekers within the national border. The current regulations established the reception system of newly arrived asylum seekers based on quotas to redistribute them among the 290 Swedish municipalities. On the other hand, authorities at the municipal level had the full political responsibility to host the asylum seekers, contributing to implementing visa regulations through the ordinary settlement process and assessing immigrant status for access to healthcare, housing, education, and other general services. In 2021, the Swedish Parliament (2021) approved the modification of the Aliens Act to enforce stricter rules on migration policies. Refugee status is granted for a shorter period and must be followed by a new assessment. Stricter rules also apply to long-term and permanent residency, which facilitates high-income skilled migration. Overall, the enforcement of stricter rules for long-term migrant settlements, coupled with the devolution of state responsibility to local governance for migrant integration, generated significant territorial variations of inclusive urban policies (Holmqvist et al., 2022). This meant that the social inclusion of immigrants was dependent on local policies linked to the spatial context (urban vs rural), the social context (types of immigrants, public opinion/acceptance, previous familiarity with migrant integration), the economic context (housing policies and the job market), and the political context (political parties' orientation).

2. Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion

The social exclusion of migrants remains an unresolved and key issue in the host countries. Social inclusion is often reported to be the opposite of social exclusion; however, social exclusion and social inclusion are multidimensional, dynamic, and complex. Social exclusion refers to an individual's inability to participate fully in their society (Millar, 2007). The World Health Organization states that unequal power relationships have been the core cause of social exclusion (Popay et al., 2008). Such power impartiality affects individuals, households, groups, and communities' economic, social, cultural, and political aspects. Fangen (2010, p. 136) refers to social exclusion as a "two-sided process in the sense that it denotes both the instances when a person is expelled from a community or a place *and* denial of access to 'outsiders.'" The impact of social exclusion can clearly be seen in migration contexts, especially in the Global North. Migrants, particularly asylum seekers and refugees, are in precarious situations or denied access in terms of social aspects (a lack of social connections, feelings of isolation, and a lack of belongingness), material resources (food, clothes, and household items), accessing mainstream services (health, education, and housing), and civic participation. Asylum seekers and refugees have been especially denied access to dignified and adequate services; for example, they are forced to live in sub-standard and inadequate spaces, lack healthcare support, and are restricted or denied employment. As outsiders, they are also suffering from an inability to share their voices and gain recognition as minorities in their host communities.

Similar to social exclusion, social inclusion is also a multidimensional, dynamic, and complex process. Social inclusion can refer to an individual's right to full participation in society and a decrease in exclusion from social institutions and communities (Carnemolla et al., 2021). Social inclusion is aimed at removing structural and individual barriers in economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions to facilitate migrants' feelings of acceptance and foster individual and collective agency (Hall et al., 2019; van Bergen et al., 2019). In the migration context, social inclusion is primarily seen as an individual's participation in social institutions, such as education, health, employment, housing, civic participation, and political involvement (Bauloz et al., 2019; Svoen et al., 2021). Dobson et al. (2021, p. 4) view social inclusion as "the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for refugees who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, authentic experiences of belonging and wellbeing and voicing respect for human rights." Social inclusion, in another regard, is often used interchangeably with integration. Referring to Ager and Strang's (2008) indicators of integration, social inclusion can be referred to access to means (employment, housing, education, and health), social connections (social bonds, social bridges, and social links), facilitators (language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability), and foundation (rights and citizenship).

Although the existing literature on immigrant integration does not often explicitly use the concept of an

"inclusive city," the role of cities has been pointed out. For instance, from immigrant integration and the point of view of local political participation, de Graauw and Vermeulen (2016) highlight three critical factors that shape a city's role in immigrant integration, comparing Berlin, Amsterdam, New York City, and San Francisco. One is the political ideologies of the local government; de Graauw and Vermeulen (2016) found that left-leaning governments in cities effectively promote immigrant integration. Another factor is the concentration of the immigration population in cities and their participation in the local decision-making process. In this case, de Graauw and Vermeulen (2016) highlight the need for immigrants to be part of the local government bodies rather than outsiders. The number and composition of immigrants in cities have also shaped cities' approaches to integration (de Graauw & Vermeulen, 2016). On the one hand, some cities have an individualist approach to integration, aimed at individuals' well-being rather than designated groups. On the other hand, some cities have also concentrated on a narrow, group-based integration approach; in Berlin, for example, city officials focused more on Muslim communities. A third factor involves the role of community-based organisations, which are key infrastructure as they represent immigrants in local politics and the policy-making process. While acknowledging the importance of urban contextual factors, de Graauw and Vermeulen (2016) have further emphasised the need to examine the specificities of the urban context concerning local institutions and migrant groups.

As mentioned, migrants' social inclusion or exclusion is shaped by their intersectional social positioning and the socio-urban context in which they live. Migrants arriving in any city are subject to different experiences and encounters based on the intersection of class, race, gender, and ability (Raco, 2018; Scuzzarello & Moroşanu, 2023). Studies have shown that migrants—specifically Muslims, black, and brown individuals—have been racially profiled and portrayed as not belonging in the arrival cities (for example, Kofman, 2023), which affects their integration or inclusion. Even among them, migrants have been looked at differently due to their class and social status. For example, asylum seekers and lower-skilled workers have been less preferred in many Western societies compared to high-skilled migrants and international students (Scuzzarello & Moroşanu, 2023). Raco (2018, p. 156), referring to the "newcomers from Eastern Europe," highlights that they have been widely seen as "'problem communities' who fail to conform to the existing orderliness and social conventions of the places in which they now live." Such portrayal of migrants reflects a complex intersection that contributes to a decline in public services, and in particular, perceived reductions in the availability, affordability, and quality of housing and employment. Therefore, the authors consider social inclusion as migrants' access to resources, opportunities and participation in social institutions, civic participation, empower-

ment, and development of a sense of belonging, security, and improved wellbeing.

3. Method

The comparative analysis between UK and Sweden attempts to address attention to a new social work paradigm, looking at the particular case of "inclusive cities," while moving between global and local lines of empirical and theoretical developments. Therefore, Sweden and UK represent the two case studies from which this scoping review originates, and have been chosen based on convenience because the authors of this study work respectively in Sweden and the UK. The idea for the study originated from the authors' willingness to know more about each other's contexts, given the lack of knowledge and literature on social work and migrant inclusion in urban cities. The authors are aware of the geographical and institutional differences that might occur while looking at "inclusive cities," especially with service provisions and measures of inclusions mediated by professionals (social workers) in the two different welfare regimes. However, the comparison between the UK and Sweden might help further the discussion about, on the one hand, the role of social work for/with migrant minorities and, on the other hand, how this specific field of policy practice can contribute to developing welfare arrangements within cities, navigating similarities and differences to find a way to move forward.

This scoping review was conducted using Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework. This scoping review method was chosen because of its potential to develop a clear approach to analysing and reporting our findings. The strategy to collect and include/exclude the data supports good quality research principles, retaining the clarity of the reporting strategy from the potential subjective decisions regarding the data selection. This scoping review has selected original peer-reviewed empirical studies from Sweden and the UK, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research studies. The following online databases were used for this review: ProQuest, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SocINDEX, and Google Scholar. In addition, specific journals, such as the *British Journal of Social Work*, the *Nordic Journal of Social Work Research*, *Academic Search Complete*, *and SwePub* have been included for more specific publications. In some databases, the number of keywords has been reduced due to keyword limitations. The search strategy broadly focused on cities, inclusion, and social work (Table 1). The authors conducted the search in October and November 2022, with an additional search conducted in January 2023 to include any relevant and recent publications.

All the documents were screened against a set of pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Supplementary File). The key inclusion criteria were the migration context, empirical studies published since 2015, publications focusing on Sweden and the UK,

Table 1. Search terms.

Broad topic	Keywords used or search terms
Cities	Cities OR City OR Urban OR Urban Environment OR Metropol* OR Municipalities OR Community
Inclusion	Inclusive OR Inclus* OR Sustainable OR Inclusion OR Integration
Social work	Social Work OR Social Intervention OR Social Assistance
Countries	Sweden/UK

and social work. The authors searched for publications only from 2015, considering the so-called European "refugee/migrant crisis." This scoping review excluded publications that were neither empirical nor peer-reviewed and were not published in English. The authors conducted the selection process as shown in Table 2. The initial process involved title and abstract screening, and later, authors screened the full text of eligible publications. During the screening process, the screening was stopped if the search failed to identify relevant articles.

The authors chose the themes identified for the analysis following a deductive, top-down approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The reason for choosing a theoretically driven thematic analysis was based on the consideration that this scoping review collects documents from the UK and Swedish context; thus, the researchers' great variability of data could have compromised the comparability of the results. The authors were all theoretically and epistemologically committed to the following research question: How is an "inclusive city" conceptualised and characterised in the UK and Swedish social work literature concerning migration? The coding process was oriented to answer the research question, providing a more detailed analysis of some aspects of the data. In this regard, the authors followed a six-step process for the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which encompassed: familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, gathering all relevant codes under predefined themes, reviewing the themes, and, finally, producing the results.

4. Results

4.1. The UK Context

In the UK context, the concept of inclusive cities and its connection with social work practice has yet to be clearly defined or discussed. Most of the articles focus broadly on integration, settlement, and voluntary sector social work (provided by non-government third-sector organisations). However, referring to relevant articles aimed at integrating migrants in various host communities in the UK, this scoping review has identified four intersecting key characteristics or factors that shape the role of cities in migrant social inclusion. These characteristics can be collated into four broader themes: the role of stakeholders, migrants' experiences, socio-cultural contexts, and spatial context of inclusion.

4.1.1. The Role of Stakeholders

Several studies have emphasised the importance of various stakeholders involved in facilitating the social inclusion of migrants in their cities. Broadhead (2020) and Humphris (2019) pointed out that local authorities should be dedicated to generating policy space and creating strategic capacity. Broadhead's (2020) case study of six local authorities in the UK has reported that such dedicated leadership must create conditions for welcoming newcomers in their cities by developing strategic plans for inclusion, for example: "We Are Bristol," "Our Liverpool," and "People Make Glasgow." This study also

Table 2. Search process.

Identification	Records identified	
	Sweden 6,327	UK 96,285
Screening	Title review 2,700	2,970
	Abstract review 33	127
Eligibility	Full-text analysis 13	39
Inclusion	Studies included in this scoping review/in data analysis 10	10

emphasised that local authorities' role in creating conditions for welcoming builds new narratives for inclusion by focusing on social contact, participation, and equality by including newcomers and hosts, receiving communities, and longer-standing communities in the cities.

In addition, several studies have specified the importance of stakeholders in inclusive city models. The shared responsibility of various stakeholders has been key to inclusive cities. Phillimore et al.'s (2021) study found that the local-level actors taking responsibility for promoting integration in their cities have been beneficial in promoting refugees' integration. Referring to shared responsibility, Broadhead (2020) argues that various stakeholders with networked governance could facilitate the development of a shared vision and narrative for inclusive cities, for example, the City Office and City Plan of Bristol. The capacity and infrastructure of the organisations within a city have also been identified by several studies as key characteristics of moving towards inclusive practices (Berg, 2019; Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). Humphris (2019), referring to Luton City Council, highlighted that a city's economic positioning affects the inclusion of migrants in cities, which raises questions about the capacity of city authorities to provide services and to fund other organisations that can provide services. Berg (2019), analysing Latin Americans' experiences in London, found that service providers require time and resources to assess and understand the service users' needs, to facilitate their access to service and inclusion. Cools et al. (2018), referring to Roma migrants in Manchester, emphasise that migrants' heterogeneity should be accepted, and each group should be involved in defining their needs and discussions about their community. Cools et al. (2018) further emphasised that the culture of Roma migrants, and the distinct needs arising from their culture, should be considered when planning for their inclusion in cities.

4.1.2. The Migrants' Experiences

Migrant experiences in cities can also be key to inclusive cities. Chan et al. (2016), studying Chinese migrants in the UK, reported that opportunities available to migrants shaped a city's capacity to include newcomers. Their study found that perceived opportunities for social interaction with friends and community groups, and satisfactory opportunities in finding suitable housing significantly influenced inclusion. In addition, the level of inclusion can also be determined by migrants' perceived opportunities for suitable work, increasing income and education. Ramachandran and Vathi's (2022) study shows that volunteering, although not paid work, is recognised as part of including asylum seekers and refugees in Glasgow, and it has created a positive experience for asylum seekers and refugees. Furthermore, studying Iraqi refugees in Hull and Sheffield, Platts-Fowler and Robinson (2015) claimed that migrants' opportunities to secure services from spe-

cialist refugee agencies and other generic services determine the role of a city in integrating them. Hack-Polay and Igwe (2019), analysing the role of small voluntary organisations in integrating refugees into their communities, found that voluntary social work (organisations) creates a positive atmosphere and establishes mixed embeddedness. Social embeddedness helps refugees feel welcomed and nurtured to participate in citizenship activities in their local areas, such as volunteering in this case.

4.1.3. Socio-Cultural Context

The migrants' experiences can also be linked to the socio-cultural context in each city. Several studies pointed out the importance of situated diversity in cities. Ganji and Rishbeth (2020), exploring the use of outdoor spaces and social connections in Bradford, UK, stated that diversity is integral to the character of a locality, and the symbolic value of situated diversity or multicultural community in a city can promote integration. Platts-Fowler and Robinson (2015) reported that the composition and community of a city could determine integration. Refugees studied as part of their research perceived a local neighbourhood as a place to live because of the acceptance of diversity and difference. Living in urban areas with ethnic diversity plays a key role in facilitating co-ethnic social connections. While it is important to have social connections with the host community, Phillimore et al. (2021) indicate that co-ethnic connections within a city provide emotional support resources, opportunities to socialise in ways refugees are familiar with, and co-ethnic solidarity. Women refugee participants in their research reported feeling a sense of safety and security as the diversity within the city made them feel like a part of the community.

4.1.4. The Spatial Context of Inclusion

While there are variations and differences in a socio-cultural context, spatial context also matters for migrants' social inclusion. Ganji and Rishbeth (2020) highlighted that social inclusion can be achieved through designed urban public spaces because they are places for engagement, conviviality (leisure time and socialising with friends and family), and a space for developing a shared sense of belonging. Platts-Fowler and Robinson (2015) indicate that migrants' inclusion can be facilitated by physical aspects of their life, such as parks, open spaces, libraries, and shopping facilities. Interestingly, the same researchers also identified that the availability of culturally sensitive amenities and services facilitates refugees' integration.

4.2. The Swedish Context

In Sweden, the concept of "inclusive cities" linked to social work as a professional-oriented discipline

and its practices has not yet been fully addressed and explored. Thus, the chosen documents have been selected and analysed here because they identify the social work relationship with the development of inclusive cities, particularly for working with and for the inclusion of migrant communities in marginalised urban environments. The analysis followed a deductive, top-down approach, meaning that the results present four pre-selected broader themes: the role of stakeholders, migrant-specific experiences, socio-cultural context, and spatial context of inclusion.

In Sweden, two main outstanding characteristics can be found while reviewing the definition of inclusive cities given in the material analysed and the role of social work in it. First, in all the selected documents, social work plays a minor and marginal role in the development of urban planning and the redistribution of eco-social resources within the community. Secondly, the inclusive cities, implicitly or explicitly, are associated with marginalised suburban areas in major Swedish cities (Stockholm, Gothenburg, Umeå, Uppsala), with particular social and economic living conditions, including a higher immigrant population. Thus, within this specific geographical urban context, we investigate the specificities of how *inclusive cities* are defined, and the role played by social work(ers) in them.

4.2.1. The Role of Stakeholders

Three of the selected documents (Barthel et al., 2022; Sjöberg & Kings, 2022; Westin et al., 2021) pointed out an essential historical shift regarding the role of the public welfare sector in general and the social work practices in particular, which during the 1960s and 70s were more focused on preventive community work, but which nowadays are more oriented towards individual and family services (Sjöberg & Kings, 2022; Westin et al., 2021). In this regard, two of the documents selected (Barthel et al., 2022; Sjöberg & Kings, 2022) discussed the concept of inclusive cities while referring to the "urban common" as opposed to the institutionalised social work practices carried out by the public sector. Urban common means the management and redistribution of human, economic, social, and natural resources to increase the well-being of residents (Sjöberg & Kings, 2022). Several examples of community management were given, such as community gardens, sports fields, and pocket parks as urban spaces in which the role of civil society associations is the primary characteristic for the rights of ownership and management of the common good. In this regard, it is acknowledged by Sjöberg and Kings (2022) that nowadays in Sweden, civil society organisations—and no longer the Swedish universal welfare state—have the role of reducing social exclusion by creating dialogue through organised activities, building collaborative networks among different (public-private) actors and activists in marginalised suburban neighbourhoods, referring to the latter not as spatial places but as a

lived spaces for sharing identities and mobilising collective power. In particular, the authors referred to the experiences of Megafonen in Stockholm and Pantrarna in Gothenburg, developed by social movements originated by young people with migratory backgrounds living in marginalised local communities and supported by activists working in community-based organisations. The activities were developed to stand up against the privatisation of urban public spaces through awareness raising about social inequalities, racialisation, and marginalisation lived in cities' segregated neighbourhoods while supporting democratic dialogue and deliberation.

Along the same lines, Barthel et al. (2022) stress the link between social sustainability and the natural environment with regard to community work. In this sense, the authors point out how social work nowadays neglects its community vocational role, which requires collective actions. Opposed to the latter, mainstream community work (Barthel et al., 2022; Sjöberg & Kings, 2022) developed in Sweden refers to the so-called social planning, which concerns an expert-led initiative that aims to include the local community in urban planning processes incorporating social aspects. In other words, social work, as currently practised, does not focus on the collective empowerment process of the marginalised migrant community, green commons, or the natural environment. In the best-case scenario, social work refers to social planning. This is confirmed by another document included in the scoping review (Westin et al., 2021), which highlighted using social planning as an expert-initiated process, consisting of local community dialogue oriented towards accepting contested political decisions. The focus is on the critical role of "municipal administrators" or "dialogue experts" to facilitate the coordination of urban construction projects in segregated neighbourhoods. Here, social planning involves dialogue as a tool used by public-private governance to facilitate conflict management in areas with a high level of exclusion and segregation of residents, most of whom have an immigrant background (Westin et al., 2021).

4.2.2. The Migrants' Experiences

Although the experiences of migrants stand as an independent element within the literature identified in the scoping review, it is recognised as of great importance for increasing the migrants' sense of well-being, as well as for the real-life opportunities of socio-economic integration. In this regard, Eklund Karlsson et al. (2019) discussed an alternative way to approach the inclusion of migrants while emphasising the participatory processes concerning racialised and discriminated individuals and groups. Roma people living in West Sweden were invited to participate in participatory action research by scholars working within social work and health disciplines. The project aimed to increase Roma people's access to education, employment, health, and their overall sense of well-being while allowing their voices to be

heard, "acknowledging and taking responsibility for the abuses and violations committed by the Swedish state against Roma during the past years" (Eklund Karlsson et al., 2019, p. 551). However, an important consideration made by the authors was that while the project's goal was to develop the capacity for Roma people to organise themselves and develop strategies for advocacy, the community at large was also involved as partners, being civil servants and local municipalities identified as the focal points for real community engagement. Nevertheless, these external partnerships were problematic for the project's positive outcomes in the sense that Roma people were not fully considered equal partners in the PAR by the aforementioned external partners, negatively impacting Roma opportunities to influence their choices and well-being in targeted municipalities (Eklund Karlsson et al., 2019).

4.2.3. Socio-Cultural Context

Besides the role of stakeholders and migrants' experiences of inclusion, the literature identified the promotion of social networks combined with social and cultural activities as a practical way to promote social, inclusive, safe, and resilient communities (Santosa et al., 2020). Ekholm and Dahlstedt (2017) and Höglund and Bruhn (2022) discussed social inclusion and social sustainability concerning sports activities, particularly football. However, the mentioned literature used two oppositional perspectives while describing the promotion of "healthy neighbourhoods" and "social solidarity" to ensure the social inclusion of migrant residents in segregated suburban areas. Ekholm and Dahlstedt (2017) highlighted the assimilationist discursive practices underlying sports-based social interventions to improve pupils' social and language skills while fostering them towards becoming good Swedish adult citizens. In tension with the critics of assimilationist goals, Höglund and Bruhn (2022, p. 2) defined sport intervention as a tool for social inclusion, personal development, and crime prevention for youth living under problematic conditions.

In this regard, another contested element of the sports activity reported in the documents analysed (Ekholm & Dahlstedt, 2017; Höglund & Bruhn, 2022) is the goal to promote the health literacy of children with a migrant background, activating them during their leisure time, while creating bonds and friendships between young people from different cultures. On the one hand, Ekholm and Dahlstedt (2017) state that an assimilationist language is hidden within the sport-based social intervention, suggesting that the problem of "inclusion" is formulated by identifying youth migrant residents living in the most socio-economically vulnerable neighbourhoods. The inclusion of migrant youth, then, implies the socialisation into proper conduct to learn, so-called Swedish-ness, as if Swedish society represents specific ideals and norms of the "included." Therefore, migrant youth should increase their involvement in Swedish-ness,

but not the other way around. In this way, the authors suggest that sports-based interventions, by fostering a specific ideal of proper citizen, reproduce the social order that creates the ex/inclusion dichotomy in the first place. On the other hand, Höglund and Bruhn (2022) highlighted the potential of social network development for increasing the social capital in vulnerable areas of the city, seen as an essential element for young individuals' social inclusion and integration. For Höglund and Bruhn (2022), sports clubs and well-prepared coaches are vital in motivating youth involvement in sports. Further, sports clubs have ties with regional and national actors and represent themselves as essential civil society actors who collaborate locally with children and their parents (Höglund & Bruhn, 2022). Besides the involvement of the subjects mentioned above, the literature focusing on sports-related interventions identified the need for more civil society engagement or social work(ers) actively involved in those types of community work.

The same tensions apply to the cultural-based interventions concerning the so-called *Bookstart Göteborg*, discussed by Lindström Sol and Ekholm (2021). The authors highlighted, on the one hand, the element of the bio-political rationality of control and discipline. On the other hand, the cultural-based intervention, in the form of home visits, is targeted at families of newly born children (0–3 years) living in socio-economically vulnerable areas and having a migrant background. Thus, the programme, organised by municipality administrators and childcare centres, aims to promote early child language inclusion, which facilitates school integration in the long term.

4.2.4. The Spatial Context of Inclusion

The focus on the spatial context refers to the eradication of urban poverty by addressing the issue of access to housing and local liveability. Scheller and Thörn (2018) described social sustainability as communities that are sustainable on their own, which means characterised by a social mix of residents with a targeted concern toward "under-represented" and "under-served" populations, accessing local services, street life, tolerance, and liveability. In this sense, social sustainability bears the promise of economic, social, and ecological urban sustainability all at once. Nevertheless, according to the author's analysis of the co-housing projects in Sweden, an advanced liberal urban governance is hidden behind the development of self-build co-housing groups. This element diverged from the promise of alternative communities while contributing to the urban renovation of segregated socio-economic areas, producing gentrification and raising property values. On a related theme, Macarow et al. (2021) pointed out that in Sweden, between 1965 and 1975, the government created an affordable housing scheme, the so-called Million Program, to build a million homes to eradicate homelessness and housing rights. Thus, while the authors

acknowledged the liberal turn in urban governance, they advocate for the revival of the Housing First model, alongside a productive collaboration between political activists and urban designers in Sweden. The 2012 Homefullness Manifesto for Full Housing (Macarow et al., 2021) is an initiative that included public conversations, publication, and various public art events to establish a platform for inclusive discussions around the issue of resilient communities, social housing for all, and social support facing current risks, such as health pandemics, war and refugees, environmental pollution and climate change (Macarow et al., 2021, pp. 160–161).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The notion of "inclusive cities" seems to be of promising relevance for social work with migrant communities. Therefore, promoting the social inclusion of migrants is a key goal for many societies in the Global North. However, research regarding social inclusion, inclusive cities and social work practice in the UK and Sweden has been overlooked and underdeveloped. Despite the relatively under-debated topic of "inclusive cities," the literature selected in the scoping review manifested a nuanced appreciation of the complex issues of social inclusion of migrant communities within the urban socio-economic environment. Cities have been engaging in actions to promote social inclusion to curtail structural, behavioural, and attitudinal impacts of social exclusion. The four major themes analysed—the role of stakeholders; the socio-cultural context; the spatial context; migrant experience of inclusion—are used to make sense of the different layers defining the inclusion and integration of people with diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

As per the scoping review, the social inclusion of migrants in cities has been promoted through key stakeholders' participation and the inclusion of migrants in policy and practice-level discussions. In the UK context, this includes promoting positive migrant experiences within the cities, fostering and respecting diversity within communities, providing a positive welcome, and establishing spatial urban spaces for positive conversations. Interestingly, as de Graauw and Vermeulen (2016) highlighted, the political elite as key city stakeholders could positively affect social inclusion. The cities that have incorporated or considered social inclusion have left-leaning political parties in power. For example, the Mayor of the Manchester Metropolitan Area in the UK is from the Labour Party and the Manchester City Council has been run by the Labour Party since 1974. The role of this political background can further be linked to the urban context where migrants live. In Sweden, instead, social inclusion of migrants through political mobilisation has been promoted through social grassroots movements, which evolved into community work organisations within vulnerable urban spaces. In line with the above, scholars support reorienting

social work practices from their traditional public and managerial functions to an enhanced role of social-community coordination (Barthel et al., 2022; Sjöberg & Kings, 2022). This involves facilitating migrant residents' involvement in the decision-making process within the urban space, increasing the co-creations of urban planning and its implementation, and improving social sustainability and integration.

However, there is a lack of a clear link between social work and inclusive cities for immigrants. In the UK context, various not-for-profit third-sector organisations have provided direct, indirect, and citizen-based social work, including local charities, counselling and legal centres, faith-based organisations, migrant-specific organisations/refugee community organisations, local neighbourhood groups, self-help groups, and so on. In the UK, third-sector social workers provide most of the integration support for migrants for two key reasons. Firstly, the UK government's role and responsibility for creating and implementing welcoming social inclusion policies and practices have diminished due to anti-immigrant sentiments and political backlashes, and the burden has been shifted to the voluntary sector. The UK government has also recognised third-sector social work as the key support provider for migrants. Secondly, local authorities and other state institutions are in a tenuous position to support immigrants in their inclusion due to public and local government spending cuts based on austerity measures implemented since the 2008 economic crisis (Darling, 2016). Therefore, local councils and the state have been expecting the third sector to play a pivotal role in immigrants' inclusion. They have been carrying the shifted burden by providing immigrants with material support (food and clothes banks) and non-material support (emotional support and fostering social connections and language classes). Hence, the term "social work" is not included much in the literature. However, considering the role of stakeholders and migrants' experiences, the reviewed articles have touched upon the country's key social work actors' functions; for instance, the local councils facilitate social work support and third-sector organisations as key stakeholders who provide social work support in the UK.

In each theme explored, we also noticed oppositional forces that shape different projects related to "what an inclusive city should look like" and if/how social work(ers)' interventions can shape this process. Within the sub-themes concerning the role of stakeholders, with particular attention to the Swedish context, we have seen how social planning fosters inclusion where experts (not identified as social workers in Sweden's case) aimed to stimulate community dialogue around the urban renovation. In the UK context, the key responsibility for building an inclusive city has fallen onto voluntary social work organisations. The national and local statutory agencies/organisations, the public, and migrants expect voluntary organisations to facilitate migrant inclusion in any city. Nevertheless, there is growing attention in Sweden

and the UK regarding civil society actors and social movements (voluntary social work sector) as the key actors identified in leading the community-based initiative for inclusive cities and neighbourhoods. At the same time, this focus promotes migrants' participation in decision-making, leading organisations in decision-making facilitate migrants' feelings of acceptance and foster individual and collective agency (Hall et al., 2019; van Bergen et al., 2019).

There are clear connections between the themes of socio-cultural context, migrant experiences and spatial contexts. The literature promotes culturally diverse and healthy neighbourhoods (Ekholm & Dahlstedt, 2017; Höglund & Bruhn, 2022; Lindström Sol & Ekholm, 2021). Simultaneously, Swedish and UK literature also highlights that social and cultural initiatives, including sport-related activities, can ensure social and personal development for youth and families living in segregated and isolated suburban areas (Höglund & Bruhn, 2022; Lindström Sol & Ekholm, 2021). Nevertheless, we have noticed tension in assessing the social inclusion outcomes of those socio-cultural contexts. The Swedish literature seems to lean towards the inclusiveness of sport-related initiatives linked to assimilationist discourses of being integrated into the Swedish ways of living. The literature in the UK, instead, explored the use of outdoor spaces and social connections (Ganji & Rishbeth, 2020) linked to multicultural discourses, where the notion of diversity is used to promote inclusive communities.

The social science literature also confirms the tension between social reproduction and social inclusion (McDonald et al., 2019; Spaaij, 2012). Indeed, several studies (McDonald et al., 2019; Spaaij, 2012) suggest that recreational sports activities in public spaces involving migrant youth and host community networks positively impact social cohesion, creating solidarity. Yet, the production of social and cultural capital through sports activities cannot be generalised or taken for granted as the high-status positions and opportunities are unequally distributed and do not, after all, directly lead to better employment, education, and quality of life (McDonald et al., 2019). The spatial context pointed out the different directions in inclusion. In Sweden, co-housing projects promise to create inclusive and sustainable communities for all, while running the risk of advancing a hidden liberal urban governance. In the UK, the focus has been on urban public spaces where migrants' positive experiences promote social inclusion. Importantly, as previously mentioned, regardless of socio-cultural and spatial contexts, social inclusion has been shaped by the perceived reductions in the availability, affordability, and quality of housing and employment (Raco, 2018). Therefore, migrants' satisfaction and perceived opportunities are key to inclusion. While there are clear distinctions in the UK and Swedish contexts, social inclusion can be achieved when all the relevant stakeholders have been included, heterogenous socio-cultural and spatial contexts have been considered, and attention has been given to migrants' experiences of perceived opportunities and satisfaction.

From a specific social work point of view, the most promising element identified in the UK research on the concept of "inclusive cities" is the role of social workers in bridging opportunities for multi-level collaborations between different actors, and increasing social and human capital by ensuring positive interactions. The most promising element in Swedish research seems to indicate organised sport-led initiatives as a way to assimilate faster within Swedish society, reinforcing the individual and family social capital of migrants (to the detriment of convivial urban planning). In the context of migration, social work is still an emerging discipline when assessing the conceptualisation of inclusive cities, with an inadequate theoretical framework and with practical orientations to be further refined to provide a much clearer way for inclusion ahead.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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Article

Caminante, No Hay Camino, Se Hace Camino al Andar: On a Creative Research Project in Urban Planning

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Abstract
This article looks back at a creative research project conducted in Geneva, Switzerland, which, by experimenting between art and science, sought to understand how citizen narratives can participate in the making of an urban plan. The approach presented here brought together geographers, architects, and novelists. Citizen narratives produced at writing workshops imagined the city of the future in ways that significantly contrasted with visions gathered from events organised by public authorities. These narratives were taken up by the novelists, who helped produce a piece of fiction containing the power to reveal the qualities of the present. This piece has since become a novel. By discovering what their future city could be, participants in this project were led to identify the places that should be preserved. Their narratives thus helped identify an ordinary heritage that could be included in an urban planning document. This reflective look at a project that gradually took shape could be useful to anyone wishing to conduct creative research in urban planning, particularly from the perspective of a more inclusive city.

Issue
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1. Introduction

This article focuses on how narrative can play a role in more inclusive urban planning. Borrowing from the essay genre, it reflects on an action-creation research project that took place for over a year and a half in working-class neighbourhoods in the metropolis of Geneva, Switzerland. The initial research question was deliberately broad. The aim was to observe whether the production of narratives would involve residents in ways which bypass the well-known limitations of public participation in urban planning (Berger & Charles, 2014; Blondiaux, 2008; Lee et al., 2015): low representation of the so-called working class; feelings of illegitimacy

that lead some to self-censorship; a framing effect resulting from the type of questions asked by public authorities to residents. The wide-ranging research question led to the development of an approach that allowed us to identify, through the fictionalised imaginations of residents, a list of heritage sites susceptible to being subject to a policy of protection and/or conservation. The approach developed thus invites reflection on creative research in urban planning. Gathering narratives constitutes much more than collecting the raw material to sustain development plans without any further mediation; it is first and foremost a way to enable the expressiveness of all audiences. The crux, however, is to find a way to bring together each collected story, to capture a

collective meaning that can be translated into the language of urban planning. We attempt to answer these questions by example, in a genre that is more akin to a reflexive and subjective testimonial than a conventional scientific article.

2. From Narrative To Narrative For Planning: The Narrative Turn of Urban Planning

2.1. Urban Planning as a Narrative Activity

The question of narrative emerges in the field of planning theory under the influence of critical epistemology on one hand and the linguistic turn in social sciences on the other. Indeed, the pioneering works of Patsy Healey or James A. Throgmorton play a role in putting the expertise of planning professionals into perspective, mobilising knowledge—such as experts' knowledge and residents' knowledge—during planning projects in a more symmetrical manner.

Noticing that stories told by the residents are just as informed as the experts' diagnoses, Healey (1992) called for a "communicative turn in urban planning," which would make way for a practice of debate that is more respectful of inter-subjectivity. As for Throgmorton (2003), his work showed that major planning projects are always characterised by a strong narrative dimension that generates persuasion. This narrative dimension makes the planner a novelist like any other, a storyteller rather than a cold technician.

Extending this reflection on the narrative power of major development projects, many researchers have also studied the virtues of storytelling when considered as a communication tool that could help broaden the range of audiences likely to take an interest in the production of the city. Many authors have emphasised the need to structure the narrative to legitimise, share, and think about space (Dionne, 2018; Eckstein & Throgmorton, 2003; Forrester, 1999; Lambelet, 2019; Lussault, 1997; Matthey, 2011). Articulated around a plot, the narrative brings events together, giving them coherence and meaning that can be understood by all (Vitalis & Guéna, 2017). Thus, it is a means of democratising the production of the city, as it enables everyone to grasp and debate development projects. More critical approaches have also studied storytelling in urban planning used as a guiding tool for the reading of development plans produced by public administrations and facilitating their acceptance (Ernwein & Matthey, 2019; Matthey, 2014; Matthey et al., 2022).

2.2. Storytelling as a Raw Material for Urban Planning

The question of storytelling in urban planning was also addressed as a raw material available to urban planners. The stories told by residents, the historical or fictional accounts that build a collective memory are *such stuff as future spaces are made on*, borrowing Shakespeare's famous line. However, noting the diversity of these stories, some studies have proposed methods better suited to capture the heterogeneity of the narratives to develop more inclusive approaches (Bloomfield, 2006; Eckstein & Throgmorton, 2003; Fischer, 2009; Forrester, 1999; Holston, 2009; Sandercock, 2003, 2010; van Hulst, 2012).

Many of these authors focus significantly on storytelling in urban planning as a modality of urban participation that provides access to information. They posit that narrative is a method for limiting the disruptions associated with situations of investigation or public participation (Erfani, 2021; Marschütz et al., 2020). For instance, the narrative could lessen anticipation of the expectations of those seeking out or leading participatory workshops, such anticipation being the root cause of the orientation bias. Moreover, the detour via fiction is presumed to encourage expression from people who tend to censor themselves. Thus, storytelling can be a way of observing the world and collectively creating information.

3. Between Collaborative Urban Planning and Participatory Research: What Can Narratives Do for the World We Plan?

This is precisely where the contribution of our article lies: Through reflexive testimony, we look back at a creative research project conducted over 18 months. This research, which was part of a larger project on the use of narrative in planning, sought to answer a deliberately broad question. We were wondering how citizen narratives can participate in the making of an urban plan (in this case, a Swiss cantonal master plan) in other ways than the standard forms of public participation, some limitations of which academic literature has amply commented on (Bacqué & Sintomer, 2001; Berger & Charles, 2014; Blondiaux, 2008; Lee et al., 2015; Mazeaud & Talpin, 2010). It may be worth explaining who this "we" refers to. We are not dealing with an abstract authority once used in academic writing. It refers to a group of academic geographers, Swiss contemporary authors and architects who are active in the field of participation in urban planning.

If the question that our group wished to answer was part of long-standing reflections in urban geography as well as planning theory, we would not initially have had a very clear idea of the research device we were going to set up. Only one premise, stemming from research findings in the field, guided our thinking. Narrative methods help avoid some self-censorship effects ("I am not an expert," "my opinion is not important"), which discourage some from engaging with the participatory events organised as part of development projects ("I don't master the subject," "I won't have anything to say"). This type of research appeared appropriate in a context characterised by the increasing use of the vocabulary of collaboration in urban planning, a context in which the part of the world where we intended to develop our approach seemed emblematic.

3.1. Holding Writing Workshops in Neighbourhoods and Avoiding the Aporias of "Genevan-Style" Collaborative Planning

Our project started when the Republic and Canton of Geneva, Switzerland, was embarking on a new planning cycle in its region. Indeed, a new cantonal master plan is soon due to replace the one developed at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. Placed under the sign of the Anthropocene, the production of this new plan adopted a collaborative approach. Thus, for the past few months, civil society had for the first time been invited to participate in its development. This involvement from civil society happened in various ways. For example, the public administration in charge of the master plan had included in its deliberations the results of an international consultation conducted by a public utility foundation. It had also launched many surveys in an attempt to gauge the population's aspirations for 2050. A citizens' forum, made up of 30 of the canton's inhabitants, selected by lot, was also organised. This was meant to find answers to a question that was at least as broad as the one we, ourselves, wished to answer: "How do we want to live in the Genevan region so we can live better together while respecting nature and dealing with climate change?" (Revello, 2021, pp. 6–7).

Whilst intentions were collaborative, the process was still closely regulated. In any event, these initiatives struck us as being tightly controlled. The administration seemed, in a way, to be operating like a curator. From the results of international consultation, it selected what chimed with a particular political vision of how the region should be organised. It chose the questions the population was invited to consider as part of a survey. The citizens' forum was meant to debate topics that were imposed on it with the help of experts listed by the public authorities. The desires, concerns, expectations, and suggestions gathered as material for the preparation of the future cantonal master plan were inevitably determined by the device set up by the public administration departments.

Our aim was not to criticise the techniques used as part of these initiatives. We were not seeking to show how they directed results and constructed "a" reality, as had been done in social-science methodology in the context of studies commenting on the various translations of the observer's paradox (Aktinson & Hammersley, 1998; Rock, 1979). First and foremost, we wanted to treat it as a problem, which could act as a showcase example. Rather than inviting people to discuss a desirable future based on topics identified by experts, wouldn't it be more fruitful to allow relevant topics to emerge from creative activities loosely connected to the problem at hand, namely the city of the future?

In any event, holding writing workshops seemed to us to be a possible means to learn what was on the minds of the public concerned by this city of tomorrow. On the one hand, these workshops would allow us to focus on the issue of narrative in urban planning (which was one of the dimensions of the deliberately broad question we were asking). On the other hand, they would provide us with an opportunity to distance ourselves from the search for material that could be used immediately. The creative activity would potentially mitigate the risk of self-censorship or lack of interest from those taking part in the project.

3.2. Deregulating: Describing, Writing, Playing, "Distributing the Sensible"

Between November 2021 and February 2022, we organised writing workshops in various districts of Geneva. The participants (110 in total at this first stage) came together primarily to write. The principle of the workshops was to gradually stimulate their imagination by drawing on everyday situations.

All participants were first invited one by one to go and draw their daily routes on an A1-sized map provided at the various venues (schools, associations, care homes for the elderly, workers' universities, etc.) that hosted the workshops. They were then split into small groups based on the similarities between their routes. Each group was given two items: a smaller version of the map and a pack of playing cards with questions written on them (Figure 1).

Each group drew five cards and wrote notes, short texts, and almost minimalist poems based on the situation suggested. The following extracts emerged from the prompt "Describe a detail about your district only you have noticed":

> Tropical flower without name
>
> Nature is vital
>
> Trees are very clever, they grow leaves, leaves, leaves. When do they blossom? They hide their flowers and then suddenly bam!
>
> A small pond
>
> A party hall with a large square
>
> I would love to have water
>
> A great exchange
>
> It's a bit peace & love, but it's really good

A new pack of cards (Figure 2), which targeted other dimensions, was then introduced to encourage the groups to develop micro-narratives by imagining a parallel city. The cards invited them to spell out some of the sensory regimes ("What sounds can be heard?"), bring to life heroic figures ("Who lives in this area?"), or express certain desires ("What would you like to see there?" "How would you like to get around?").

Describe a place in your district which has changed a lot. What has changed? How has this impacted you life?	Describe a place in your district that you like.	Is there something in your district you do not understand?	Describe a detail about your district only you have noticed.	If you were going out on a date, where would you go? Why? How do you image it?
Describe a place that you think needs to change. How? Why?	Is there a dangerous place in your district? Describe it. Why is it dangerous?	Is there a place where you would really love to go but you are not allowed? Describe it. Why do you want to go there?	How would you describe the atmosphere in your district?	

Figure 1. Facilitating the description of everyday places.

The following extracts emerged from the prompt "What heroic figure(s) live(s) in this area?"

A Pegasus in the city

Horses

Turtles and dolphins

Animals that invite us to ride on their backs

And the following emerged from the prompt "How do people get around?":

Putting bridges between buildings, boats, we could walk on water

Zip wires and slack lines

Waterproof buildings

We can fly in flying trams and hydrofoil trams

We could spread our wings and glide above water

The participants were then asked to individually work on producing a narrative text based on a single writing instruction:

What prevails in this district (animals, plants, etc)?	Where can wood be found?	What happens to the rainwater?	Where is it hottest, darkest, and coolest?	Where do people like to meet?
Which street name appeals to you the most?	How do people get around?	What sound can be heard?	What heroic figure(s) live(s) in this area	

Figure 2. A pack of playing cards used to stimulate the imagination.

A person, walking about the district, comes up against a completely unusual element in the landscape, which takes on the function of an event. It is up to the participants to imagine that person's reaction and, using the first person, write a story about what it is, what it looks like, and how it fits into the urban landscape.

To that end, participants had to use an element that had come up during the group production of the micronarratives. The following extracts emerged:

Around me, through the transparent walls, I can see the lake—it is a wonderful sight. A shoal of giant perch waltz as a tiny pike makes its appearance. They have retained their ancestral fear of the predator even though genetic engineering has changed their size. The tench calmly go on their way when a common coot dives in beside them. There are water fireflies lighting up the lake and feeding the fish….I walk out of the fantastic gallery and head towards the passage to Geneva's Flower Clock. The waterjet flowing behind me sends a winter chill down my back. Evaporated drops blown by the north wind reach my translucent hood, which is automatically triggered. (Arthur, 27 years old)

I walk out of my home and splash! I am shoulder-deep in water. Very surprised, I look around me: the land is covered in water. Fish are swimming between my legs. Amazed, my gaze lands on the people rowing boats, in the streets. Buildings are covered in plants and flowers. I then notice turtles and dolphins coming towards me, encouraging me to ride on their backs. Which is what I do, and when I arrive at school, the teachers announce that everyone will be having

a swim lesson that day. Since then, every morning, I wait for the dolphins to take me to school. (Camille, 12 years old)

The workshop participants and organisers then got together to discuss and circulate the texts produced, establishing a way of sharing imaginaries similar to Rancière's (2000) "distribution of the sensible." The group discussion revealed that, "at one and the same time, the existence of the shared and the divisions that define[d] respective places and roles within" (Rancière, 2000, p. 12). It gradually opened access to both an individual and collective imaginary of the future city.

Water was omnipresent in the narratives produced by the participants. They dreamt of a place that, in a way, lived to the rhythm of its drainage basin, sustained by its watercourses; in short, freed from certain shackles of modernity, which canalised and buried the rivers. The lake pulsated everywhere. The smell of the rivers permeated the air. The water could be heard flowing. There were dreams of a city crisscrossed by canals. But isolation—probably due to the Covid lockdowns—seemed to be a massive concern: there were repeated references to meeting places, natural spaces, and "freedom.''

From preliminary descriptive instructions to more sensitive requests (and thus mediated by a pack of playing cards), the gradual engagement with a narrative process made it possible to better grasp the extraordinary in ordinary places. This narration of the ordinary also made it possible to sketch the contours of what kind of region participants wanted to live in, which seemed to be far removed from what had emerged from the participatory events organised by the public authorities. They certainly did not take the form of administrative turns of phrases such as "landscape quality" or "equity of access to the

region's amenities" (République et canton de Genève, 2021, p. 27).

3.3. Amplifying: Fictionalising Imaginaries and Anticipating the Future

It was obvious to the novelists who were part of our research group that these imaginaries could be used to create fiction, which is what they set out to do. A fictional piece started to take shape. A storyboard began to circulate, proposing an initial pitch for a future book. This gave a more radical form to the spatial figures sketched out in the literary productions that had resulted from the writing workshops. It conjured up what could be a completely flooded Genevan metropolis, where a form of social atomism reigned. It deliberately employed all the signs of speculative fiction: It explored a future world characterised by a radical change in natural conditions, giving rise to other ways of being together and creating a society. The following pitch for a future book materialized:

> Geneva is underwater. Parks have become a lake. Streets have become rivers. Having returned to a wild state from which no return is possible, the city no longer dominates life. Plants, animals, and humans commingle. Biotopes and sociotopes are out of control. Humans have had to adapt their way of life: upper floors and roofs have become "blocks" organised into quasi-autarchic microsocieties. The streets, which have turned into muddy canals, are still being used for travel and trade—boats protected by iron cages can be seen, although airways are often preferred and for good reason: These urban waters are home to beasts over three meters long, which are feared and respected: giant catfish. This poses a problem: As the monsters come and go randomly between the lake and the city, the inhabitants are constantly on the lookout for another dreaded Day of the Catfish. New rituals thus appear in this world after the "Great Flood." When the Day of the Catfish comes, alarm bells ring. A "fear quarantine" is decreed, everyone has to stay at home, schools are closed. This lasts a few hours, a few days, or, in exceptional circumstances, a few weeks. The eddies, the limp strokes of the tail, and the swallowed pigeons attest to the presence of the catfish in the muddy water. No inhabitant ventures onto the water anymore.

In a way, the project could have stopped there. We had produced a counter-narrative in the form of speculative fiction, which sketched out a future that contrasted sharply with the proposals stemming from the participatory events organised by the public authorities. It would now be up to the latter to come up with a response to this form of paradoxical injunction, typical of the order of desires and phantasmagoria: going back to nature before the city, but without the atomisation of the social body. We had, in a way, answered our initial broad question by obtaining a new imaginary and another vision of the future of the Genevan metropolis.

However, we thought it would be worth looking at things from another perspective. Could we use fiction not just to forecast the future, but to reveal the qualities of the present? The fiction that came out of the writing workshops seemed to us to be sufficiently evocative, that is immersive, to prompt a process of remembering what would be gone when everything or almost everything was flooded. It could help reveal places that today are popular and important for one reason or another, which could soon disappear. This was also the reason why professional writers were invited to join our research-creation group. The narrative had to take its recipient into the depths of a possible world to make the present resonate. The aim of the project was not to hold a few writing workshops to give contemporary authors a pretext to make up stories. These workshops were supposed to provide an understanding of what mattered today to people who often did not speak up and did not come when invited to take part.

3.4. Expanding: Map out Places of Attachment; Publishing a Novel

Thus, the fiction that amplified the visions of a metropolis restored to its watercourses, haunted by the spectre of social isolation, opened up a new stage, which unfolded between May and September 2022. On the one hand, the aim was to return to the people who had taken part in the initial writing workshops and offer them the opportunity to produce new narratives. On the other hand, we wanted to expand to public concern by inciting passers-by to react to this fiction through an installation (Figure 3).

Emblematic images of a Geneva underwater caught the attention of the metropolis's inhabitants, making them responsive to questions: What are the places that will be gone once the "Great Flood" has happened? What are the reasons? What stories were they the stage for? What would have to be recreated on the surface? What would be better left under water?

Participants reacted by using pieces of paper stuck onto the photomontages themselves, sharing their chosen places with others.

It occurred to us that an archive of places of attachment at a given moment in Geneva's history was beginning to take shape at this stage in our project. It included a school "where our family likes to go for walks"; a cinema "to remember history"; a record shop "that needs saving"; a chess set in a park "where everyone can play and watch"; the market "where quite simply everything happens"; a field, "our hideout"; a swimming pool "where I am learning to swim; the station "where you take the train to Italy"; a shore "because there is sand and waves," and so on.

Figure 3. Returning to the workshop participants and asking questions to passers-by.

One hundred and eighty contributions were collected and then transcribed into a file and located on a map. From stories to anecdotes, this archive of places of attachment was growing. Fragments of a "lover's discourse" (to play with the title of Roland Barthes's famous work) were linked to places, which seemed to us to offer the possibility of drawing a subjective map of the region. The map produced would never stabilise. The narratives gathered the fiction that came out of them, and the resulting stories about places would potentially generate a constantly evolving geography of attachments (Figure 4).

We, therefore, came up with the idea (still being developed) of a website that drew together all the stories that had been prompted, created and recorded during the project. The site would eventually sketch the contours of a more collaborative tool (the prototype is available here: https://www.jour-des-silures.ch). A map would situate the collected fragments in the Genevan metropolis. Extracts from the fiction produced by professional storytellers would sometimes be activated. Visitors would eventually be able to tag other places by linking one or more stories to them.

Meanwhile, the piece of fiction has developed into a novel titled *Le jour des silures* ("The Day of the Catfish"), published in May 2023 by Zoé (Figure 5). Its contemporary authors drew on all the material gathered during the writing workshops and encounters in the public space to create a polyphonic narrative.

Figure 4. A possible map of places of attachment.

Figure 5. From narratives to a novel.

This novel was a means to challenge the story inherited from previous planning projects. What does rational planning mean when uncertainty becomes the new normal? What is left of a planned city when everything returns to a wild state? Some of the narratives collected from the inhabitants gradually took shape within the novelistic space, making room for places, objects, and symbols of everyday life in 2021–2022.

4. It's When Narratives Exceed Their Own Limits That They Affect Reality

We thus gradually found the answer to our deliberately broad question. Narratives only disrupt planning if they end up outgrowing their own bodies. Otherwise, they are condemned to remain anecdotes, little stories, or discourse elements feeding the storytelling of administrations, whose task is to operationalise a given political vision.

The narratives developed by the participants in the writing workshops gave rise to a piece of fiction, which has since become a novel published by an established Swiss publisher. This fiction, which could have been the end of our experiment, made it possible to identify uncertain, fragile places; places that would undoubtedly be missed by the inhabitants should the metropolis be flooded by an inexorable rise in the levels of Lake Geneva. In this sense, they made up a heritage in need of acknowledgement—an ordinary heritage. The popula-

tion was fond of them because they were linked to either individual or collective memories that mixed imagination with actual experiences. These places surely deserve to be specifically addressed in a cantonal master plan, in the form of goals, a heritage inventory and safeguarding measures.

In retrospect, it seems to us that the methodology employed contributed to more inclusive planning in three ways. First, the stories collected during the writing workshops constitute an important documentary resource on ordinary life in the selected neighbourhoods. We gain access to an imaginary and intimate aspect of living spaces, enabling us to get closer to the dimensions of urban life for the audience concerned (without ever asking the question directly).

Secondly, these narratives reveal questions and visions about the city of the future that are barely present or apparent when we ask residents how they imagine the city of tomorrow, or when we survey their hopes and expectations for the city. The stories collected in the writing workshops carry desires, but also a strong concern about the city's ability to perpetuate social ties for the near future. Does this mean that our audience suffers from isolation, reinforced by a recent pandemic, or that they struggle to find their place in society? Or is it rather the result of a method that encourages expression? It is impossible to answer these questions with the data available. Nevertheless, it remains that the issue of the social contract in big cities of the future is not a recent concern as it emerged in the 19th century, but it takes here an unsuspected acuteness, an acuity rarely pointed at before in available studies. These results should challenge urban policies, whether urbanistic or social.

Lastly, the method makes it possible to identify spaces which conventional land-use planning struggles to identify. This probably explains why that dimension is, to date, absent from land-use planning. Analysis of land-use planning by professionals usually tends to focus on categories such as networks, potentials, meshes, sites and other noteworthy entities as well as on protected areas. Ordinary landscapes, despite some manifestos (Bigando, 2008; Dewarrat et al., 2003; Jackson, 1984), are not looked at as issues for master planning, but rather as subjective dimensions of living spaces meant to be transformed. Their identification and processing are therefore generally postponed to later stages of space production, i.e., the space project. When participatory approaches are implemented, answers are guided and biased by the planning professionals: What are the qualities and faults of the neighbourhood? What does urban quality mean to you? This gives rise to the self-censorship and framing effects that have been present in qualitative research for many years.

Yet it is precisely because the methodology allows us to probe the often-invisible dimensions of ordinary spaces, that it encourages the expression of concerns that are repressed or illegitimate in other contexts.

Finally, the system developed here makes it possible to identify an ordinary heritage and thus has encouraged more inclusive planning.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Aude Seigne is a novelist. She began writing at the age of 10, poems first and then short stories; in 2011 she published her first collection of travel chronicles, *Chroniques de l'Occident nomade*, which won the Nicolas Bouvier Prize at the Étonnants Voyageurs festival in Saint-Malo, and was shortlisted for the 2011 Roman des Romands. *Les Neiges de Damas* was published in 2015, followed, in 2017, by *Une toile large comme le monde*. At the same time, Aude Seigne has been working with Bruno Pellegrino and Daniel Vuataz on the literary series *Stand-By*, the two seasons of which will be published in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

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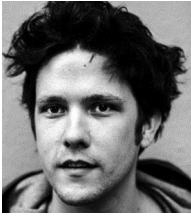
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Article

A Residential Area at the Gates of the City: Controversies Surrounding "Quality of Life"

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Abstract

This article looks at the different meanings of the argument for "quality of life" used in support of an urban densification project in Geneva destined for a suburban area located at the gates of the city. It sheds light on the different values that underline this argument and stresses the dangers of using the term "quality of life" in the promotion of inclusive and sustainable cities to justify socially burdensome choices framed by both ecological and rationalist debates without taking into sufficient account the underlying social realities and concerns of the different parties involved. This article analyzes the controversies surrounding an urban densification project, showing how they refer to differentiated visions of "quality of life," more or less socially and morally legitimized.

Keywords

moral controversies; quality of life; residential area; social and ecological justice; territorial regeneration; urban densification

1. Introduction

Since the turn of the 21st century, embodied in the relaunching of urban planning and policies (Pinson, 2009), we are witnessing an "urban return" (Le Galès, 2003). Associated with a "return to town life," evidenced by redensification, gentrification, and the rediscovery of heritage (Bidou-Zachariasen, 2003; Rérat et al., 2008), at a time when towns are judged on their "attractiveness" according to different norms and hallmarks of quality (Breviglieri, 2013), this relaunching of urban policies is not without risk as they can leave some spaces and populations exposed to the possibility of eviction or social stigmatisation (Pinson & Reigner, 2017; Tissot, 2015; Young, 1990). In analysing the moral and social tensions associated with urban reconfiguration, we know that the suburban neighbourhood remains an understudied space, though there is abundant literature on large urban com-

plexes and their transformation (Girard & Rivière, 2013). Historically, in line with the concept of urbanisation "outside the city" (Léveillé, 2003, p. 7), which is typical of the second half of the 20th century, in response to a context characterised in Switzerland (as in other European countries) by a strong demographic increase and a general rise in the standard of living at the end of WWII, the development of housing estates and large suburban complexes first became part of a logic of territorial development known as "peri-urban areas" (Thomas, 2013, p. 107). However, by the turn of the century, this growth in the number of suburban areas in all regions of the country, which began in the 1960s (first on the outskirts of towns, then in the town centres themselves), had begun to decline. This golden age of the private house remains severely shaken by the new spirit of "inner-city" urbanisation, nowadays concerned with the idea of "building the city inwards" (*construire la ville en*

ville), meaning (re)developing already used land rather than using virgin land (Léveillé, 2003, p. 7)—a new axiom that encourages the requalification of the peri-urban suburb, henceforth seen as an "intermediary city" subject to being more densely populated. A new dynamic emerged leading some specialist architectural practitioners in 2019 to declare that, "after many years of expansion, the golden age of the private house is coming to an end" (Pittet-Baschung, 2019). In this historical process of extension of the city to the suburbs (see Figures 1 and 2), this article analyzes the controversies surrounding an urban densification project at the gates of the city of Geneva, showing how they refer to differentiated visions of "quality of life," more or less socially and morally legitimized.

2. Context and Methods

In a context where the outskirts of a town remain the target of urban renewal (Matthey & Schuler, 2017),

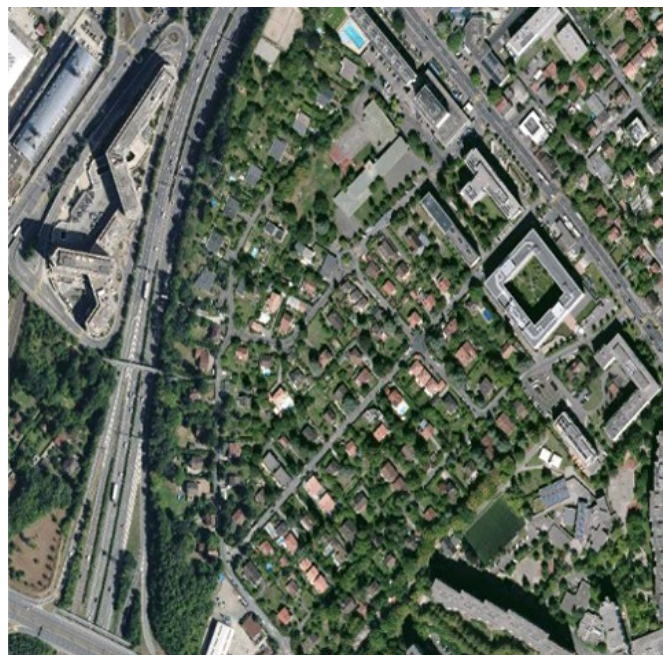**Figure 1.** Aerial photo of the Cointrin West area, 1959. Image courtesy of SITG: The Geneva Territory on the Map (https://ge.ch/sitg).

Figure 2. Aerial photo of the Cointrin West area, 2018. Image courtesy of SITG: The Geneva Territory on the Map (https://ge.ch/sitg),

the residential zone of Cointrin—an area geographically situated between the city of Geneva and its international airport—was designated by public authorities in the mid-2010s as a zone ripe for redevelopment and densification.

Although its current urban character, including its public transportation system, elevates this territory to the status of an area "ripe for development," the actual requalification of the zone would involve transforming it into an "urban complex with a high standard of living," to make it a genuinely "densely populated city district" (DALE, 2015, pp. 9, 82). However, apart from historical studies (Magri, 2008), most modern controversies between urban reformers and the inhabitants of built-up areas, deployed during any redevelopment project, remain understudied; concurrently, recent works have prompted new studies on these residential areas, notably underlining the heterogeneity of residential strategies and relations tied to the local space within the heart of a residential population situated halfway between the stable share of the lower classes and the smaller share of the middle classes (see Cartier et al., 2008; Lambert, 2015; Thomas, 2013; social characteristics also to be found in the ethnographic observations drawn from our fieldwork with the inhabitants of the district, as seen in Frauenfelder et al., 2022), while some researchers call for an international comparative perspective on the suburbs and their future (Ren, 2021).

Studies of the quality of life highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the concept (Ruzevicius, 2013). Situated at the crossroads of several disciplines (inter alia, health, wellbeing at work, the environment, marketing, or human and social sciences), this all-encompassing notion is generally defined by normative, objective, and/or subjective indicators; in sociology, it generally remains little used as such (Ferris, 2004). In a context of increasing intercity competition and faced with the emergence of the field of the economics of happiness (Guillen-Royo & Velasco, 2009), the issue of quality of life in an urban setting represents a major strategic challenge for public authorities (Bourdin & Cornier, 2017) keen to reinforce the attractiveness of cities in order to encourage new investments, new residents, and new "talent" (Florida, 2002). This preoccupation appears to resonate with the results of studies showing that the quality of a city and its degree of "sustainability" today partly influence the decision to locate mobile capital in one city rather than another (Bourdeau-Lepage & Gollain, 2015; Tremblay & Chicoine, 2008). Variably depending on historical context and accounting for the dimensions, scales, and actors involved (Bailly & Marchand, 2016), the notion of quality of life will be addressed in this sociological contribution not as an explanatory concept but from the perspective of the social and symbolic uses made of it in an urban densification project.

Our contribution aims to show, based on this case, how the apparently consensual reference to "quality of life" set off by this reformative company conceals heterogenous social and cultural significations dependent on the different types of actors involved. This article aims to study the social space of viewpoints—from the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1984)—of the different actors involved: public and private town planners, communal project leaders, independent architects, local councils, associated office-holders and leaders, and the inhabitants of the residential area. Each of these actors holds a particular and important position in the field of local urban policy:

> [They are] caught up in an activity which is at the same time cognitive (the construction of the analytical frameworks of "social problems"), social (creation of a promotional network) and "activist." (Tissot, 2007, pp. 12–13; see also Frauenfelder et al., 2014)

Our analysis is composed of two elements. First, we reveal the "concerns," both quantitative (offers of accommodation and transport) and qualitative (aesthetic, moral, and ecological) of the "urban reformers" involved in the "urban development model" proposed for the residential housing district. These actors are represented in our corpus by politicians, public and private urban planners, independent architects, and municipal project managers who do not always see themselves as urban reformers, even though they spontaneously agreed with the notion and necessity of reforming the housing area of Cointrin. We will show how these concerns are not socially neutral.

Our second task will be, on the one hand, to document the critical reactions of the associations and the inhabitants of the district to the "negative" consequences associated with this urban renewal project, including their fear of "large complexes" and their defense of "green lungs" or green spaces. On the other hand, we will interpret—based on their trajectories of home ownership—the social reasons for their attachment to this area and to the quality of life that they are keen to preserve, which includes having access to a space of comfort and tranquillity, the feeling of control over one's own space, the desire to have something of one's own, and the idea of social promotion.

This sociological study is based on an ethnographic methodology that combines both primary and secondary data: fieldwork/participant observations, 17 in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. Over two years, we carried out participant observations in the field, crisscrossing the residential district with the idea of photographing the area and meeting some of its residents. The latter group invited us into their homes and recounted their memories of the district via long interviews and/or through personal belongings (photo albums, press cuttings, etc.). We then observed public meetings between urban reformers and residents, often in a somewhat tense climate. We also visited the offices of urban town planners with the help of

maps/plans retracing the historical evolution of the residential district in question. Finally, we closely followed and analysed the mediatisation and politicisation of the controversy surrounding the Cointrin reform project by combing through articles and observing on the ground the various actions taken against it.

3. The Concerns of the Reformers: Reconciling "Urban Density" and "Quality Of Life"

3.1. A "Source" for "Growth" and "Urbanisation"

Initially, in the mid-2000s, the project of densification of the district of Cointrin was inscribed within the framework of an agglomeration project by Grand Genève, which aimed at developing the supply of public transport and housing. Later, at the start of the second decade of the 21st century, the Grand Vernier–Meyrin–Airport project (GP VMA) gave as its general principle the pursuit of quantitative objectives that should take place on the ground through the development of new transport infrastructures and the construction of 50,000 new homes by 2030:

> [The GP VMA] stems from the planning of the Grand Genève project and is linked to the plans to extend the transport facilities towards CERN and to the co-financing by the Confederation. The idea is to coordinate urban development and the public transport infrastructure and this passes for what is commonly called densification, to allow a maximum number of people to have access to public transport. This policy had to be implemented to inform people that these urban transformations are needed now to enable you to welcome new residents, together with the equipment and infrastructures of transport. Densification will render these transport infrastructures operational. (Mr. Dubuis, collaborator of the Department of Territory)

Announced as a watchword, the goal of the project created pressure on the professionals working in the sector concerned. Fixed-term posts (renewable depending on the results obtained) have been created and, amongst these, departmental planners were set up as "pilots" of an institutionally desired urban development, even if public action by the Genevan authorities was and is directed in partnership with local government authorities. Mr. Dubuis continued:

> When the management of major projects takes off, the pilot is the urban planner but with pluridisciplinary and interdepartmental teams linking the communes together. In the proposition put forward between 2010 and 2011, the biggest projects were led by the policy managing committee both at cantonal and municipal level. This came about through the creation of posts for "special agents," of a term

of four years, renewable once. The mindset is a bit like: "You have 2 × 4 years to realise the construction of new districts well served by a public transportation system and with a limited impact on the environment, and thus to produce housing." The group dynamics were guided by this willingness to respond quickly and collectively to housing needs. The major projects were accompanied by a methodology with guide plans, mandates for undertaking contracts, and a relatively systematic methodology. A collective energy and a shared desire were accompanied by an approach that was meant to be inclusive and qualitative.

However, it appears that, alongside these aims for the quantitative development of a sector designed to become a veritable "urban district with a certain density" (DALE, 2015, p. 82), urban reform also includes qualitative aspects such as experimenting with a "model" town and "lifestyle":

> This is where we find the reservoir of growth and urbanisation in Switzerland and where we can advance and design the tools needed for building the town of tomorrow. We can and must invent today a model of a town and a lifestyle that suits the area, its inhabitants, and its users. The VMA venture has drawn up the outlines of a response that could resemble a pilot project and example for the town of the future. VMA, Mernier Meyrin Aéroport, let the adventure begin! (DALE, 2015, p. 9)

Thus, the proposed objectives are to make GP VMA an attractive urban complex, with a dynamic economy, a comfortable contemporary town with a unique character and open to all, the leitmotif to which is "accessibility, density, mixedness, and identity," as stated in the DALE expert's report. It is within this prescriptive expectancy perspective, taking place over a 30-year period, that the operation to requalify this housing district as an "urban area" with a "high-quality lifestyle" is situated. The concerns of the reformers fit within the framework of an assumed consideration of the consequences, since the 1990s, "of a globalised economy which sees Swiss towns competing with the great world metropolises" and which sets "radical new conditions for urban quality, services, public transport, and the landscape" (Matthey & Schuler, 2017, p. 106). In this context, the notions of "urban quality" and of "quality of life" are invested with concerns and rationalities in line with the spirit of liberalism that characterises our advanced capitalist societies (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2006; Pattaroni, 2011). As an illustration of this, in a "broad outline of a territorial organisation" expressed by the Federal Council in May 1996, the organisational strategies for the Swiss territory exposed:

> How much the quality of life and competitiveness of Switzerland underline the complementarity to be

sought between large infrastructure and land occupation and usage. Towns and rural spaces, and the towns in and between themselves, are considered interdependent and complementary, the global quality of these elements together being seen to determine the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the country. (Matthey & Schuler, 2017, pp. 106–107)

3.2. Promoting Contemporary "Architectural Expressions" in Association With New "Residential Targets"

In the qualitative concerns of the reformers, the major subject of criticism is notably the actual aesthetic of the buildings in the residential quarter. The current specific peri-urban location of the district in the wider territory, with its high-traffic roads (and airways), large commercial infrastructures, and a large housing estate acts objectively as a negative social marker, positioning the district lower in the scale of social prestige. As some official documents give us to understand, "the territory is first and foremost functional. Today we are in the presence of a built patrimony whose historical/heritage interest is limited or leaves most people indifferent" (DALE, 2015, p. 42). At the same time, there have been reservations about a sometimes serious production process encouraged by certain, recent real-estate transactions in the area, where the monopoly of a linear construction of small houses is denounced. That said, aesthetic criticism of existing buildings is mainly indirect and remains in favour of a social redefinition of the "residential targets" that are expected to transform the district, audiences who are associated with new, more "con-

temporary" aesthetics and lifestyles. Among the social categories "potentially" targeted, we find both "improvised" and "established alternatives." Thus, the expert's report states that "places in the developed perimeter could be suitable for them if special attention is paid to typological diversity and contemporary architectural expression" (DALE, 2015, p. 76). Following the same logic, the category of the "urban avant-garde" is also retained for those for whom "places within the developed perimeter could offer the services, the typological diversity and the contemporary and urban architectural expression to which they aspire" (DALE, 2015, p. 76). Among the categories "naturally" targeted, there is mention of an "upper level focused on training" where areas on the developed perimeter could suit them if special attention is paid to typological diversity and nature-oriented contemporary architectural expression. The deployment of public services and facilities can also contribute to the attractiveness of the place.

Conversely, among the public described as distant from the "contemporary architecture" recommended for the collective housing likely to be developed in the area, mention is made to the "classic middle class," which "tends to favour individual or terraced houses with densities [that] are probably lower than the objectives," the "upper-middle class," who "want and prefer to live in detached houses located in luxury districts," and even the "traditional rural population," whom the site is hopefully "too urban to attract, as they aspire above all to live in the countryside" (DALE, 2015, p. 76). Undoubtedly, the "urban development model" (as it is often called) advocated in this urban project conveys an aesthetic model which is not socially neutral (Figure 3). The imagined new district is perceived as not only expected but

Figure 3. Sector Cointrin West, horizon 2030. Source: DALE (2015, p. 284).

also potentially desirable by some social categories; and less so by others. In general, "the residents of this area [East and West Cointrin] are likely to be more urban, living their neighbourhood life in their blocks of flats but remaining connected to the life of the agglomeration and its major service centres" (DALE, 2015, p. 82). A "window on the economy" is planned through these "exemplary buildings with their contemporary design" in line with the desired new architectural expressions:

> The economic showcase, a space of representation and "emblem" of the district will house the headquarters of major companies in exemplary buildings of contemporary design. In terms of tertiary administrative targets, "head offices," "parastatals," and "specialist performers" are the main targets for this area. (DALE, 2015, p. 168)

Sociologically, the definition of new residential targets for the requalification of the suburban district calls for characteristics of social belonging and lifestyles of populations situated halfway between the "gentrified quarter" and the "refounded quarter" (Paugam, 2020). It emerges that this imagined new population will tend to symbolically distance themselves from the current residents of the housing estate—seen in market studies as the "classic middle class"—whereas our fieldwork also reveals that the inhabitants we met are, for the most part, from the stable lower classes (Frauenfelder et al., 2022).

3.3. Avoiding the Privatised Nature of the Residential Area

Alongside these "aesthetic" and "social" assessment criteria, which form part of the proposed reform of the Cointrin housing estate, it is also (and perhaps mainly) the privatised nature of its residential area that is the subject of grievances. These are manifested through different discursive registers. This criticism of privatization is based primarily on technical, rationalist, and topographical arguments. The subdivision of the land into small plots is considered somewhat irrational in terms of the population's housing "needs."

Simultaneously, it is also the "recurring absence" of "public or shared spaces" promoted by the addition of "individualised systems" (e.g., a house with private garden) that give to the space in question a monotonous character—or the tendency to spatially enclose the green spaces, with "hedges often of considerable height" (DALE, 2017, pp. 8–9). More generally, it's also the housing district of Cointrin that is seen as inward-looking and too cut off from its external environment. In response to this perceived problem, this urban reform proposes, for example, to render the area "more open" to the surrounding districts. Mr. Luca (a town planner attached to the Planning Office of the Department of Territory) stresses that, on the outer edges of the housing area

situated opposite the Avanchets housing estate, behind the fences, there is no link, "no connection" to the said estate. He goes on to explain that "our urban reform project" in the district, on which "we are working," is in fact designed to create a link between the two districts of Cointrin and Avanchet, "to promote a connection!" The proposed urban reform stresses the concern to work on networks between neighbourhoods to promote, for example, "open islands," which should be more inclusive, rather than closed ones.

Finally, in some articles published in the local press, an openly "ethical" critique of privatisation is sometimes to be found, focusing on the people involved. The people undermined by the reform project are described as "small-scale homeowners" defending their "private preserve" (Bézaguet, 2016, p. 19). A member of the government quoted in this article condescendingly criticised the lack of civic spirit evidenced by some proprietors:

> These people must understand the need to densify these spaces in order to then house ten families in small buildings rather than one in an individual house.

While conveying a moral judgment on the selfish interests of residents, the discourse relayed also remains factual: "They [the homeowners] love their district and want to stay there, in spite of the state's desire to demolish their houses and further populate the area" (Bézaguet, 2016, p. 19, authors' translation).

3.4. Limiting the Environmental Impact

While the peri-urban housing model is supported by the reformers for aesthetic, rationalist, and moral reasons, it appears clearly that the main motive is the ecological argument. With a semantic field that tends to expand (ecology, the environment, sustainability/sustainable urban development, durability, energy transition, the Anthropocene (climate change), etc.), the mobilization of this "ecological justification" (Lafaye & Thevenot, 1993; Pattaroni, 2011) is presented by the reformers as a major reason to support the projected urban reform.

This instrumentalisation of nature as an urban marketing tool is evidenced by several studies (Ernwein, 2019; Méliani & Arnould, 2012; Roy, 2011) that show nature has become an essential axis in discussions of the "entrepreneurial town"; other studies go as far as to qualify town planners as "traders of nature." In the case of the district studied, the concern for "limiting the impact on the environment" has become one of the creeds for the promotion of an "urbanisation–transport" agglomeration project (out of which grew the GP MVA) that took place in the years between 2000 and 2010. A project which, in supporting the development of a "dense" town for environmental reasons, also necessarily conveys a critique of the peri-urban, as suggested by Mr. Dubuis, collaborator of the Department of Territory,

urban sprawl being more harmful to the environment because it favours too much the use of individual motorised transport.

In the testimonials of local actors and the wording of public discourses, the "ecological" argument in favour of a peri-urban development is often factual (i.e., the example of an area of individual houses versus an apartment block is invoked) and technical (quantified estimates of savings in energy consumption). The critique refers to a specific cognitive space for computation built around easily objectifiable and measurable properties that is presented as not up for discussion in the evaluation. This peri-urban sprawl thus symbolises a way of living that is far from the standard required from an ecological point of view and for a sustainable "energy transition"—in other words, it reinforces a way of living that is harmful to the environment:

> From an ecological standpoint, or linked to the energy transition, a densely populated district is more efficient than urban sprawl. Theoretically, less energy is used in a block of flats housing a number of people than if the same number of people live in a housing estate. It has to do with the number of surfaces, walls, individual consumption, and ground cover. Therefore, within the paradigm of an ecological and sustainable energy transition, the issue of the density of a town's population versus the dispersion of medium density is important. (Mr. Aebischer, town and country planner working for the commune of Meyrin)

Behind these criticisms, the rise of the model of an "inclusive city," theoretically open to all and adorned with all kinds of technological, ecological, aesthetic, social, and economic virtues, is not without its contribution, as we have seen in an (in)voluntary way in the social and moral disqualification of suburban peri-urban space and its associated lifestyle. In the urbanistic critique in question, the peri-urban seems to represent shallowly the same offputting function as that occupied by the suburbs of the time, as Mr. Dubuis so thoughtfully puts it:

> In representations of the profession at the time, in the middle of the first decade of the 2000s…the virtue is in the densely populated town which can be served by public transport. The peri-urban is considered a sort of "sub-category." The term "third space" is notably proposed by Martin Vanier [Vanier, 2012]. In other words, truly it is a sort of negation [where one would say:] "That is not of sufficient quality to be of a town." This vision came up with the following thesis which, broadly, reminded people that the peri-urban, not carefully thought out and considered by town planners the surburbs of the time, was an actual reality and almost certainly the "town of tomorrow." Perhaps it should be thought of or conceived differently. At the scale of the agglomeration,

due to the difference in professional culture, there was at the time a sort of territorial negation [which] can spill over into expressions critical the way of living such as the lifestyle is "bad," that it is not a "good town," it is not "a good way" of living. The risks, out of context, we understand only too well. Is it perhaps the same logic with a lack of consideration by town planners for housing estates in general—never mind the place or the employment?

Clearly distanced from the model of urban development planned for the sector in question, these "ways of inhabiting" individual houses close to the town and at one with a particular idea of "quality of life" were recognised not that long ago in town planning and upheld by some cantonal and federal legislation—a back-and-forth movement which is not without its destabilising and demoralising implications on those living in built-up areas.

4. A Reform Welcomed Somewhat Reservedly by the Associations and Inhabitants of the District

Defeated by the diverse critiques of which they are the target, the leaders of the district's housing associations and a good number of interviewed property owners made us privy to their reservations concerning the project of urban transformation of the district.

Faced with accusations of egoism, many proprietors recalled the "efforts" and "sacrifices" made in order to own their house. The obstacles many had to overcome to achieve this and the pride they felt at their success are quite revealing here. Mr. Silva, owner of a house in the district of Cointrin since 2003, where he has been living with his wife and two children and working at a hospital for 16 years, recounted:

> Of course I feel proud, if I stop for a moment and look back, after all this time. I have been here [Switzerland] for nearly 37 years. I am delighted, the more so because I arrived here with just 100 Swiss. It is true that, in my day, amongst the migrants from Spain, Portugal, or wherever, you came across a few home-owners, but not many.

Condescending criticism of the "little home-owner" defending their "patch" often clashed with our interviewees on moral grounds because such points of view tend to ignore the deep social meaning attached to becoming a home-owner and the latter's often modest social origins (see Figure 4). Underneath the desire to own "one's own house" lies a willingness, tacitly accepted, to create a permanent group, united by a good community spirit, and have a space for which the "actor can take the credit" (Schwartz, 2002, p. 31). The public relationship with property implies that it derives "from values to merits—through sacrifice and effort, the 'house is earned'—and the mastery of a singular world commensurate with private space" (Groux & Lévy, 1993,

Figure 4. Family album of a resident of the Cointrin area, 2019. Image courtesy of Nasser Tafferant.

p. 209); there is the feeling of controlling one's own space, "which is not the same as being in a flat" (Thomas, 2013, p. 394).

Invited after a long interview to reflect on his housing trajectory, Mr. Voll is reminded of his parents' advice: "Invest in stone," an action of "social foresight" in the face of the unexpected (see also Girard et al., 2013; Magri, 1991). Too young at the time to comprehend the truth behind this recommendation, it was only recently that this adage started to "mean something" to Mr. Voll, who took over the house he was living in 1976, aged 36, at his own expense:

> It took me many years to appreciate that. I am only just appreciating it now, as I get older. My reaction is the same. And maybe I am a bit swayed by these words from my childhood, which did not shock me but struck me. When you have sweated blood and tears, and then suddenly you lose everything because of a financial crash. Today, this could be a terrible clash, a stock exchange that explodes. It is your social future which goes up in smoke. So yes! Investing in something solid is imperative! We have a house, we know that it is solid and we know that we have something that we can leave to our children. We know that it will increase in value, even if we don't know what the future holds.

A number of studies have shown that, after WWII, access to "comfort" in the domestic sphere and to "property" was a central element in the deproletarisation of workers and employees (Faure & Gilbert, 2019; Groux & Lévy, 1993; Schwartz, 2002). From the 1960s onwards, with

the development of housing zones in the suburbs, the private house is at the heart of a new threshold of comfort and quality of life that remains attractive for a whole mixture of social categories, whether stable or on the rise, of which the parameters are:

> The security and the freedom inherent in the owner status; the gap between time at work and away from work and consequently the valorisation of leisure time linked to the presence of an individual garden and to a country lifestyle; a relative increase in the habitable surface, especially of additional spaces. (Antipas, 1988, pp. 134–135)

In this context, much more than a comfortable place to live, the private house—especially for those who were once of the lower classes—represents "the distance travelled from their lower-class origins, as much as the desire to 'live like everyone else'" (Cartier et al., 2008, p. 16). It is a symbol of collective and social advancement that bears witness to the path travelled and rejects moral accusations of selfish attitudes. Nonetheless, these inhabitants also expressed reservations about an increase in "social problems" brought about by the project to densify the Cointrin district.

4.1. Fearing an Extension of the Town and Its Social Issues

The larger complexes (rental properties of around 50 metres) and problems associated with the development of "future ghettos" are the residents' main objects of criticism. Following a public information session about

the projects for urban development in the Cointrin district, the fears of the inhabitants were published in the local press:

> My only motivation is to see a town created with a human dimension, but I really have my doubts. If our future extra-densely populated districts are then transformed into ghettos, which, as history shows, is quite probable, the community will find itself, in spite of the planners, once again called upon to face social problems. ("Modification de zones," 2016, p. 19)

Skepticism towards this form of high densification seems to be linked to a more or less fantasized perception of future social problems. Faced with this fear, residential space—likened to "a village"—appears to be a safe haven ("Help! Save our village," "stop the maniacal project, no more concrete!" cf. Bézaguet, 2016). At the same time, these fears about the future also resonate with (more or less remobilized) memories of the near past. The example of the Avanchets district, a major complex built in the 1970s near the residential district of Cointrin, seems to have left an abiding social memory in the minds of the local inhabitants (Figure 5).

The propositions of Mr. Cédric, town planner with the local authorities, reveal how much the "town" is represented in the minds of the inhabitants of the residential area studied as an extension of the Avanchets district. The densification project is perceived as a threat to the "little paradise" the inhabitants have nurtured over the years:

> We, as town planners, bring a certain violence with us. This "little paradise" that the people have lived in and looked after for years will be partly destroyed. And the type of town which the Avanchets represents somewhat, in the minds of the inhabitants, will be built in their district. So it is, understandably, quite difficult for these people.

The residents also care about the risks of a depreciated district both socially and economically. They fear that the model of urban development could attract the "poor" with a "minimum of fiscal potential," as Mr. Bühler underlines:

> When you know that rented accommodation is often occupied by those who live on social benefits and who are exempt from paying income tax, how can you expect the Genevan economy to grow?

It turns out that the fears expressed about the consequences of building vast complexes, on the one hand, and a defence based on moral effort and merit on the other, reveal a sense of communal social belonging to which the residents interviewed referred implicitly, over and above their internal differences when their housing estate is qualified as neither "chic" nor "a commuter hotspot." An indirect way to also class oneself socially as neither at the top nor at the bottom of the social scale.

4.2. Defence Based on "Green Spaces"

Some arguments in support of the housing estate are also based on its "green" character. A banner in Cointrin, as published in *Pic-Vert*, read: "People in towns also need green spaces. No to office blocks" ("Modification de zones," 2016, p. 18).

Figure 5. The adjacent neighbourhood: Social housing in the Avanchets district, 2019. Image courtesy of Nasser Tafferant.

In tune with the spirit of the time (Dubost, 2013), the ecological argument sometimes reminds us—more generally—of the advantages of green spaces, as such stances are often accompanied by a tendency to "fall back" on the "heritage" of the green qualities of a neighbourhood, which deserves to be protected for their aesthetic and ecological value, as underlined by Mr. Bühler (who moved to Cointrin area in 1961, at the age of 12):

> When you go for a walk and you see the number of cedars, ancient oaks—in short, beautiful trees—it is a beautiful neighbourhood….I say beautiful neighbourhood because we have these green spaces, we have beautiful trees which are considered noble, I don't know, like the Cedar of Lebanon, ancient trees which have an economic value in the CO_2 plan, and I repeat "beautiful" [too] compared to the horrors which the developers are constructing around here and if you take the pond or the wonderful eco-district of Meyrin where you have virtually no space at all between the blocks of flats, it is from this perspective that I believe that Cointrin is starting to become a beautiful neighbourhood.

In the people's referendum of April 2019, against the project of modification of the housing district in question, it appears that references to "green spaces" seem to have been one of the population's main arguments. According to Mr. Aebischer (town and country planner working in the commune of Meyrin):

> In the referendum, one of the main arguments put forward by the inhabitants, especially in Cointrin, was: "Let us save our green spaces at the scale of the right bank." The green spaces within private plots, the houses, preserving the trees which are there, preserving the houses.

Thus, generally, in this defence of the district, by locals concerned with environmental issues, we find attitudes similar to those of a popular relationship (in terms of attitudes by the lower classes) with the dominant ecology (Comby & Malier, 2021). The attitude of the inhabitants appears, in effect, to be marked by a "scepticism towards the technological window on conventional ecology," or again by a "weak interest in the gratifications of the ecological moral" (Comby, 2015, pp. 27–28) and associated distinctive struggles; a logic that we mostly see employed in the middle or upper classes, and which we can also find in the arguments used by the urban planners we interviewed. As an example, our study shows that the presence of public transport facilities is a much-appreciated reality in surveys, even though these facilities are not used so much for ecological reasons but for practical uses. Having said that, the attitudes observable in the narratives of home-owners we interviewed—we stress—in no way exclude a preoccupation with environmental issues (an attachment to the verdant areas of

the district, the benefits of green spaces) but these discourses appear far removed from the dominant ecological narratives by proposing a different interpretation of the environment: a vision that "patrimonialises" different ways of life in the district backed up by the protection of green spaces and, more generally, of the built-up peri-urban landscape.

5. Conclusion

At a time when "quality of life" is a referent often employed in the promotion of inclusive and sustainable cities, our study has underlined the difficult issues linked to social justice and ecology susceptible to accompanying urban development projects. In highlighting the role of the framing of public action on the perspectives and options left out of the debate due to the accent placed on the densification and the transformation of various subdivisions of the cities, our sociological analysis aimed to contribute to a more complex representation of the associated social issues. If it is important to remember that "there is no one quality of life valuable for all but as many conceptions of the quality(ies) of life as there are ways of life" (Thomas & Pattaroni, 2012, p. 115), it is clear that the urban reform studied tends—as an ordinary effect of symbolic violence—to pass off specific conception of urban quality of life as a universal standard and to disregard all other conceptions as local particularities. Finally, although the "intermediary" city represents a potential for densification at the heart of a new age of urbanism, the recent sanction by the results of the government's densification project for Cointrin's peri-urban suburbs reminds us of the non-inevitable or automatic character of the fabric of a town within a town. The controversy likely to come concerning the zone, between the different actors, no doubt remains a promise for the future, the analysis of which is, however, beyond the scope of this article.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Knowledge Actors Engaging in "Everyday Planning" in Rapidly Urbanizing Peripheries of the Global South

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Abstract

This article presents original research based on the premise that inclusive urban planning is about different types of knowledges coming together, a process that enables the participation of diverse knowledge actors. In India, the urgency of peri-urbanization is reflected in the massive transformation and roaring real estate speculation that is being unleashed through the conversion of agricultural land into profit-making urban zones. It is the praxeology of an everyday planning modality by actors that interpret the possibility of real estate speculation at different scales that drive the rapid emergence of the peri-urban built environment around the metropolis of Bangalore in Southern India. At the outset, I present a conceptual framework that articulates territorial-financial mechanisms at the macro-level with the praxiology of planning actors and their networks at the meso-level through spatial knowledges. Then I describe the methods used. In the empirical part, this article first describes a particular site at the periphery of the city of Bangalore. Then, I delineate the prescriptive knowledge given by the local planning law. I present the praxiology of the different knowledge actors that explain the modality of peri-urbanization, followed by a discussion of the rationales of the actors that shape everyday practices of planning. Finally, I discuss how social workers could get more involved in the urban planning process and contribute to shaping more inclusive cities because of the profession's grounding in principles and ethics that supports human well-being and development in cities for people and not for profit.

Keywords

Global South; governmentality; social work; spatial knowledge actors; urban planning

1. Introduction

"The cities' core have been botched, but we at the peripheries are doing a better job at planning": This was the statement delivered by the assistant director of a local planning authority of peri-urban Bangalore (also called Bengaluru)—a South Indian metropolis with an estimated population of 11 million people living in a dense area of 2196 km2 (Census of India, 2011). Can India plan its peri-urban areas when Roy (2009) has explained "why India cannot plan its cities"? Roy has argued that despite colonially inspired planning laws and regulations, India's planning regime was in itself an informalized entity in a

state of deregulation, ambiguity, and exception. Rapid urbanization in the Global South, poor land use control, and increasing pressure on cities to accommodate new residents have led to sprawl into the peripheries (Venter et al., 2021). Here, in cities yet to come, will an urban crisis marked by rapid economic growth, increasing societal inequality, and inadequate infrastructure provision and growth management (Venter et al., 2021) repeat itself? It is crucial to understand how different types of spatial knowledges come together to understand a politics of anticipation of urban development that presents both opportunities and challenges. What is the scope of action for state actors and current rural inhabitants to

co-shape the emerging built environment toward more inclusive urban peripheries? And how can social work facilitate the shaping of the "city yet to come" and promote inclusiveness?

I argue that a shift has been taking place in the rationale of urban governance of large metropolises through a territorial moment (Schindler, 2015), which creates particular incentives for a praxiology (Schatzki et al., 2001) of urban planning. Bridging the macro-level rationale and an everyday conception of planning are knowledge actors that shape the emerging built environment in peri-urban areas. This article aims to reveal the everyday praxiology of the following knowledge actors that are involved in shaping peri-urban areas: (a) the master planners, (b) the street-level bureaucrats, (c) political actors and real estate brokers-builders, (d) the common local peri-urban farmers and inhabitants, and (e) the prospective role of social workers in facilitating a more inclusive planning process.

It is generally understood that urban planning activity operates at the interface of knowledge and action, between "is" and "ought." To underpin the work of planning at its most basic level one must address four basic questions that suggest this interface's nature (Campbell, 2012):

1. What is going on here (descriptive)?
2. What to do (prescriptive)?
3. Why is it like that (analytical/explanatory)?
4. What ought to be done (normative)?

These four guiding questions structure the argument put forward in this article. At the outset, I propose a conceptual framework to articulate territorial-financial mechanisms at the macro-level with the praxeology of planning actors and their networks at the meso-level through spatial knowledges. Then I present the methods used. In the empirical part (Section 4), this article first describes a particular site at the periphery of the city of Bangalore. Second, I delineate the prescriptive knowledge given by local planning law and jurisdiction. Third, I present the praxiology of the different knowledge actors that explain the modality of peri-urbanization followed by a discussion of the rationales of the actors that shape everyday practices of planning. Finally, I discuss the role of social work from a normative vantage point to assert participation and inclusiveness and be more involved in shaping inclusive peri-urbanization processes.

I argue that a technocratic understanding of planning as taught in textbooks stemming from geographies of authoritative knowledge is being transformed on the ground and that the practice begs for a redefinition of how cities are being extended and the role of urban plans, planning professions, and social mediators in the process. In this potential redefinition, social workers have a crucial role to play in facilitating the knowledge of the inhabitants to shape their own environment.

2. Conceptual Framework: Governmentality of Territory, Spatial Knowledge, and Praxiology of Everyday Planning

The theoretical argument presented in this section is that the governmentality of territory unleashing capital gains is interpreted differently according to the types of spatial knowledge that involved actors hold and that, in turn, shapes an everyday praxiology of planning. The discussion of such a mechanism shifts the gaze from technocratic understandings of urban planning to everyday practices of planning mediated through power structures and particular knowledge actors that consolidate everyday planning practices.

If planning is an activity at the interface between knowledge and action, both terms have to be specified. According to Pfeffer et al. (2012), spatial knowledge can be defined as a set of information that refers to a geographical location on the globe, or as a spatial "comprehension" of facts, interdependences, connections, and dynamics that can be mapped, conceived individually, or shared by a group. They distinguish four types of knowledges and the actors that hold them:

1. Tacit knowledge that is "known" by individuals or professionals but is seldom formalized;
2. Community knowledge held by communities of the surrounding, political, and social contexts;
3. Sectoral expertise derived from practice in a given context, held by professionals and political networks;
4. Expert knowledge stemming from accepted expertise from professional education, which is usually dominant in urban planning.

The fact that many types of knowledge are not laid down in written form, questions the role of possible mediators that facilitate the inclusion of those usually excluded. Planning, in other words, begs us to bring together these different types of knowledge. It is argued that it is in this capacity that social work based on its ethics and principles (IFSW, 2018) could have an important role in shaping the way that spatial knowledge is utilized to shape interactions based on agreement, conflict, cooperation, or contestation (Pfeffer et al., 2012). From a social work perspective, participation and inclusiveness are imperatives for the planning process.

2.1. Governmentality

Schindler (2015) argues that a subtle shift is occurring in cities of the Global South as there is an increasing focus on transforming urban space rather than "improving" conditions for populations. He argues that cities have abundant reserves of capital and labor but remain disconnected, the former being invested in real estate and infrastructure while a large section of poorer urban dwellers isn't able to sell their labor for a decent wage.

Capital isn't only circulating virtually in Bengaluru—the IT metropolis of the South: It has a very material face, as it flows into real estate and infrastructure (Halbert & Rouanet, 2013). Global firms, involved in global commodity chains, investing and blocking land in peri-urban areas for future factories, contribute to the dispossession of local farmers (Harvey, 2009). The logic goes like this: Dramatic increases in land prices through land use conversions (agricultural to other land use) present state actors with unique opportunities and challenges and lure the state to tap into real estate markets as a means to gain financial power. This is done by monetizing land, extracting revenue from land development, and distributing the profits to powerful corporate backers of the state (Shatkin, 2014). In this way the state manages to assert greater control over urban spatial change. In the real estate business, money is made through the differential gained between the buying of land when it is priced as an agricultural land use category and the value is unleashed through the conversion of agricultural land to a non-agricultural land use category (interview with real estate expert conducted in 2016). The shift from state landownership and regulations aimed at maintaining access to land for lower income groups, state provisions for infrastructure, and public services (Gherthner, as cited in Shatkin, 2014) to state-sponsored commodification of land to attract corporations, has forged a particular relationship between place and power. Stuart Elden (as cited in Schindler, 2015, p. 12) argues that the concept of territory emerges from practices that relate politics or power to place and forging territory as a political technology. There is an analogy between the latter and governmentality as described by Chatterjee (2004): Governmentality is a technology to administer populations, where certain welfare benefits are aimed at certain targeted population groups through a welfare bureaucracy that makes these populations legible. Chatterjee (2004) describes furthermore that as the demand for welfare benefits in the post-colonial world is always larger than the supply, turns this relation into welfare benefits becoming political currency. Such currency serves government officials and politicians to maintain networks of patronage (Chatterjee, 2004; Piliavsky, 2014) for their own electoral rationale. Stuart Elden (as cited in Schindler, 2015) argues that the same calculative techniques that allowed mapping and disciplining populations (Schindler, 2015; see also Chatterjee, 2004) could be transposed to the governmentality of territory. Then, one can draw on a linking mechanism between a territory and a targeted land use category through a planning regime that mainly works by preparing formal masterplans, though its implementation operates through entrenched informal networks seeking capital gains. As there is a larger demand for land use conversions (from agricultural land to a residential or commercial land use category) than the supply can offer, the capacity to enable land use conversions and the knowledge that land use conversions might be imminent becomes political currency.

The increased demand for land use conversions affects the restructuring of the space economy even before the "city" formally arrives in peri-urban areas and has very concrete repercussions on the ground for the "still" rural inhabitants, their livelihoods, and the practice of co-shaping the emerging built environment at the periphery level, in which various actors engage.

2.2. Praxiology

The macro phenomena (Coulter, as cited in Schatzki et al., 2001) of governmentality of territory exists in and through the praxiological instantiations engaged by different actors in urban planning with a certain rationale.

Schatzki et al. (2001, p. 15) suggests treating "the social" as a field of practice understood as the total nexus of interconnected human activities. He defines "practice" as an interwoven activity in a social domain or a bundle of activities as an organized nexus of actions. Everyday practices refer to a group of practices that are "seemingly inconsequential, inconspicuous and mundane, but nonetheless essential to our day-to-day lives" (Strengers, 2010, p. 7). Everyday routines and underlying practices are embedded in a particular culture. Culture consists of both "shared meanings" and how these shared meanings are manifested in people's social interactions, as well as the results of those interactions (Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013). Ultimately the concept of culture can be defined as a "collective intelligible social practice" (Andreas Reckwitz, as cited in Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013), referring to a number of incorporated and (implicit) routinised recurrent regularities about how to behave and act in specific situations. In other words, culture is an organizing category (Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013, p. 1273).

Ettlinger (2009) states that types of networks pertinent to knowledge creation (for example, about upcoming land conversions or urban development) are those in which members actively communicate with each other towards a shared performance. Such communication involves a meaningful exchange of different types of knowledge that requires a connection with everyday activities, permitting the externalization of tacit knowledge, but also the creation of new tacit knowledges. These activities often take place beyond public meetings, in micro-spaces of daily life and work (Ettlinger, 2009, p. 224). Articulating planning in the imbrication of the rationale of different knowledge actors, their practice, their associated knowledges, their networks, and the sites of exchange are instantiations of macro-level mechanisms and promise to reveal the processes underway that are shaping the cities yet to come in peri-urban areas.

3. Methodological Approach

Qualitative fieldwork was carried out between 2016 and 2017, starting by investigating official planning

procedures and ending up with frequent visits to the village, cumulatively during six months. The methods employed include the study of formal planning documents, procedures and maps and documenting the local built environment through photographs and oral histories of the urbanizing village Kaggalipura at the southwestern fringe of Bangalore. To investigate sites and modalities of information exchange sites of planning actors (local politicians and bureaucrats, real estate brokers, and developers) and practices, I engaged in qualitative interviews and observations identified by a snowball principle. To understand the conditions for the local "rural" inhabitants (of the yet-to-be-urbanized peri-urban area) and to learn how they make sense of the emerging built environment and the impacts on their livelihood, I conducted focus group interviews with local childcare workers, the cooperative of dairy farmers, shop-keepers, and youth. Coming across as a woman from a privileged societal position, not a journalist, legal person, real estate agent, nor technical government staff, my interlocutors were inquisitive about the purpose of my investigation. I had to explain the social science research process and the contribution it would bring in terms of documentation and knowledge. It was surprising that my interlocutors were rather open about the mechanisms of real estate developments in relation to official plans without disclosing individual names. The underbelly of land transactions that potentially lead to criminal networks was intentionally not investigated in the purview of this research. Interactions with the local village community left the impression of a certain apathy and resignation on the part of the inhabitants toward the urban development occurring in their village.

4. "Urbanism Occurs": From Territorial Governmentality to Everyday Planning Practices

4.1. What's Going On at the Southwestern Fringe of Bengaluru

Kaggalipura village is a growth node within the Kanakapura LPA (local planning area) and is located along National Highway 209. The LPA is connected to the last municipal ward of Bengaluru at Thalgattapura that borders Anjanapura at the NICE Road junction, 4.5 km before the Art of Living International Centre in Bengaluru (see Figure 1).

These spaces of "individualized selfhood" attract the attention of real estate developers who construct spaces for new lifestyles and emerging constituencies (Srinivas, 2018). The narrow patch of the Kanakapura LPA is defined along National Highway 209, which is spotted with lifestyle bubbles such as retirement resorts, spiritual societies, the Maitreya Buddha Pyramid (Srinivas, 2018), and gated communities such as Brigade Meadows. When one continues on the road beyond these bubbles, one enters Kaggalipura, an identified growth node within the LPA. It is the first node among three more that are dotted along the NH 209. Kaggalipura growth node is characterized in a masterplan in the following way: "There is rapid urbanization in the area with the construction of residential apartments. International schools and spiritual
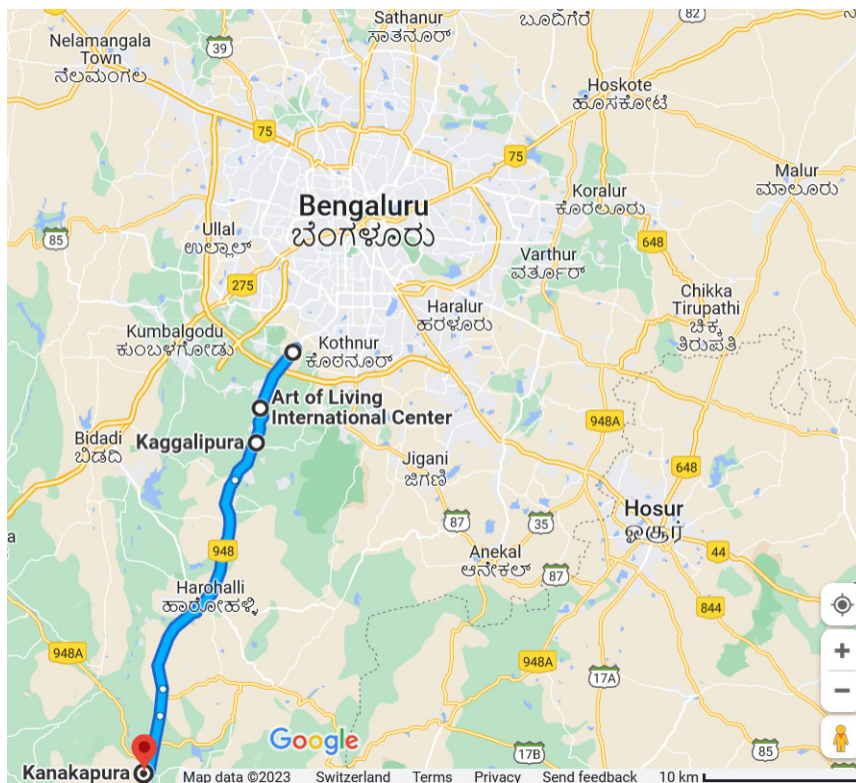

Figure 1. The geographical situation of the site under study.

institutions have come up in the area" (Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority [BMRDA], 2016b, p. 17). Kaggalipura counts 12,000 inhabitants (Census of India, 2011) and was projected to double by 2031 to 25,000. In 2017, 40.28% of land was marked as residential land use category. The residential density was very low and the households were sparsely distributed. Parks, playgrounds, and open spaces accounted for 2.83% of the total land use; 16.86% of the land was categorized under "transportation," and 12.10% was categorized as "public" and "semi-public," mostly distributed linearly along the Kanakapura Bangalore road passing through the village. The built-up area of 185.71 ha would increase according to Masterplan 2031 to 2211.56 ha, out of which 53% was earmarked for residential purposes (68 persons per hectares). The main road through Kaggalipura is the heart of the village's activities with temples, a police station, diary cooperatives, real estate bureaus, numerous shops, and hawkers studding the road. The Gram Panchayat (village council) office, the governmental daycare center, and a drinking water station are located just one lane parallel to the main road. At the beginning of 2017, it got widened and various facades got pulled down. Beyond the main road, some well-paved roads are bordered by mid-sized plots that house lavish multistory homes. Other areas have unpaved roads and smaller dwelling units and show more rural characteristics with cattle grazing and provision for the storage of fodder being visible. Historically, the political economy of this region allowed some scope for Dalits to hold land, but the structuring of the village economy by caste created relations of inequality and dependence, as well as place-embedded cultural identities that still find expression in the region (Upadhya & Rathod, 2021).

4.2. Blurred Boundaries Between Planning and Administrative Jurisdictions

Urban planning is considered a state subject according to the Constitution. The 1961 Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act forms the statutory and legal foundation for decentralized planning in Bangalore Metropolitan Region and is overseen and coordinated by the Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC). The BMRDA has established a decentralized planning system for LPAs within its jurisdiction. Under this system, LPAs are responsible for preparing their own development plans and submitting them to the BMRDA for approval.

The BMRDA has established 21 LPAs in the Bangalore Metropolitan Region and each LPA has its own planning authority responsible for preparing and implementing the development plan. These LPAs are divided into three categories: urban, rural, and intermediate. Kaggalipura is a node within the intermediate Kanakapura LPA and is located at the interface between the urban and the rural. The northern tip of the Kanakapura LPA is located

within the Bangalore Development Authority jurisdiction which relates to the Bangalore Masterplan, which coincided with the jurisdiction of the MPC.

The 1961 Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act argues that spatial planning should precede economic planning to enable a happier and healthier living environment. Therefore, the Act aims to "provide for the regulation of planned growth of land use and development and the making and execution of town planning schemes in the state" (Government of Karnataka, 1961, p. 65). It intends to create favorable conditions for planning to provide full civic and social amenities for the people in the state, to stop uncontrolled development of land due to speculation, to promote balanced use of land, to improve existing recreational facilities and to direct the future growth of populated areas in the state (Sundaresan, 2014). In terms of integrating different types of spatial knowledge, the only provision for citizen participation within the Act is the 60 days window in which the planning authority must display the draft plan for public consultation and receive the public's objections and/or suggestions. The planning authority is then supposed to consider and revise the draft and ultimately submit it to the director of planning, who will then send it to the government for approval. The finally approved plan is communicated through a government order, a statutory legal document binding all actors.

Within the Bangalore region, and considering the projected population growth for the horizon of 2031, attempts were made to maintain the primacy of Bangalore while promoting a balanced growth in the rest of the region through the identification of the cluster and nodal development model. The basic premise of the population allocation strategy was to balance the share of the population between the core and the rest.

It is striking that planning conurbations have nothing in common with administrative census classification (rural, urban) of territories. This means that an area classified as rural can come within the planning conurbation to allow urban development according to the masterplan, but by doing so their classification doesn't necessarily change, hence the Gram Panchayat as a self-governance body remains de facto powerless regarding planning. When an area gets included in an LPA, it automatically means that it is "master plannable," despite its rural classification.

The gap between the classification adopted by the census and the changes promoted in terms of urban development and governance leads to a series of problems. For the census, urban areas are classified either based on demographic or administrative criteria, including both municipal or statutory towns and census or non-municipal towns. However, while all settlements under the ambit of municipal bodies are automatically declared urban, urban settlements identified as such by the census are not necessarily granted municipal status, as this is a state prerogative (Allen & Purushothaman, 2005). Therefore, it is possible to find settlements

characterized by village features with municipal status and large settlements under the influence of large cities, the economy of which is largely non-agricultural; still governed by rural local bodies, "such towns are compelled to maximize their own revenue potential, and are, in fact, rewarded with funds from federal rural programs" (Allen & Purushothaman, 2005, p. 12). This situation amounts to a diversion of funds meant for rural development to areas that are not rural in the strict sense of the term. In addition, the revenue potential of these predominantly non-agricultural areas is not being realized due to the absence of municipal governance. The long time taken to readjust municipal boundaries, results in further loss of revenue (R. Bhagat, as cited in Allen & Purushothaman, 2005). I learned that when an area is marked within a planning conurbation, the Gram Panchayat that governs under the urbanizable area is overruled by the LPA and then the BMRDA for matters regarding urban development.

4.3. The Praxiology of Actors

4.3.1. The Masterplanners

To understand the scope of Kaggalipura developing into such a projected growth node in the extension of the metropolis I spoke to the director of the private planning company, who kindly gave me the contact of a pertinent interviewee and told me to meet them in their office, west of the city: On their website, the office address was located in the city centre. When I called the announced phone number though, I landed up in the office in the west. The receptionist insisted that she wouldn't send me the office address by mail so I took note of it on a piece of paper. As I arrived, there was no indication whatsoever that a planning company was located at that address, no board, no tag. Nevertheless, I found their office and was seated near the reception until my interviewee came to fetch me and got me through the main door, which was secured through a biometric fingerprint sensor. I couldn't help feeling that, indeed, their business was top secret. Knowledge about upcoming urban developments in the peripheries meant dealing with potential financial gains that demanded discretion.

My interviewee kindly explained the different authorities involved in the planning process at different levels. Even though the company was also involved in the drafting of the BMRDA structure plan (BMRDA, 2016a) that specified population and service distribution, they did not have access to the draft's final version to ground their projections on. The LPA Masterplan for Kanakapura was in the public domain but the structure plan was only available in draft form and not accessible even when putting in an application for it. In a rather "politically correct" interview, the interviewee related this state of affairs to the pace that government works. Between 2006 and 2008, the BMRDA had taken up comprehensive work to collect spatial data and verify it "on the ground," that is, to map the village boundaries and colonial survey numbers, and also take into account the place's natural boundaries. Our interviewee regretted that there was no centralized spatial data center from where layers of data could be drawn to prepare the plans. Rather, the company, understanding itself as the "technical assistant" to the government had to request all government agencies to provide their databases and configure them.

When I asked the interviewee about the stakeholders of the plan, she did not mention the public but was immediately prompted to explain: "The public is extremely important." It was also confirmed that the main avenue for public participation was those 60 days of public consultation and that this opportunity was heavily used. Most suggestions for the Kanakapura LPA involved desired changes to road networks, access roads, and land plots being classified as "open" or "public" rather than as "residential" or "commercial" to generate more speculative value. The conclusion from the consultation process was that, clearly, the public was "pro-development, they welcomed urbanization."

4.3.2. The Street-Level Bureaucrats

To judge for myself whether the public was indeed inclined towards "development," I went to Kaggalipura, a village with mainly small-land holding farming, and sat in the Gram Panchayat office. Sitting there gave me the impression that I was in a builder's office. Non-residents of that village poured in now and then, shouting out the apartment complex's name and the number in which they had bought an apartment. Yes: "Gated urban development" had arrived. Along the road and towards the interior, Kaggalipura was dotted with compounds that gate many empty layouts, though some were just beginning to be inhabited.

The employees of the Gram Panchayat office were busy giving out documentation to the new future inhabitants or new property owners. These owners were speaking in Hindi and English and not the local language Kannada. There was an air of pride and efficiency. The efficiency of this office was well known: Many minority communities such as Muslims settled in Kaggalipura primarily because they could get their documentation done rapidly through this Gram Panchayat office. The members I spoke to all welcomed urban development because, according to them, it would help people with better facilities and offer plenty of business opportunities as the population rose. According to some senior members, it is up to the farmers to make money, especially those who own land: "If they are smart, they will invest it properly"; otherwise they lose out by spending the money on things that don't generate any recurrent income. Regarding responsibilities, members didn't see any lack of planning capacity. Planning for them was the business of higher forces, which they had to execute. Since the amendment to the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, the Gram Panchayat was involved in the delivery of

patchwork urban services. The law required land developers to fully develop the layout in terms of security, roads, sewage and sanitary installations, and electricity before they could sell the plots. The Gram Panchayat was in charge of connecting these layouts to the rest of the administrative area in a patchwork manner.

Checking whether the layout was built within the allocated land use category was the job of the local planning authority office of the LPA located in Kanakapura town. Similar to the planning company's office, this governmental entity worked from a house that was tucked away in the residential part of town, away from the remaining administrative buildings with no board or signpost to the office. The members of that office had a hands-off attitude and confirmed that their job was only to check if urban development was emerging according to the land use plan. The aforementioned law states that 55% of the land could be built up and 45% was to be allocated to open spaces and public amenities. According to Gram Panchayati members in Kaggalipura, defaulting this ratio was due to transactions in the LPA office. When the LPA officers were asked about coordination efforts among different government departments in servicing the area with urban amenities and road networks, their attitude was very hands-off: They only mapped the developments according to the plans and, if necessary, aligned the plans with the imperatives of other domains. The LPA just made sure that the alignment was right and followed the plans, officers said. Asked about the LPA's relationship with political representatives, they said representatives did come up to them with suggestions, especially regarding road networks. If they judged them meaningful, they would integrate them, they said.

4.3.3. Political and Real Estate Actors

The 60 days window in which planning authorities must display their draft plan for public consultation had been futile for real estate agents, as they had not known about it. They had accepted the final version of the plan and kept a copy in their office. 2D plans, indicating land and their zoning allocations were accepted facts, but the emerging 3D urban landscape, the timing of it, the look, and deviations from the plan were all matters of networked and enmeshed relations of money and political power. I sought also to speak to political contenders and political representatives. Their connection to politics in most cases spanned generations and so did their ownership of land in the area. It was general knowledge in the village which representative or contender owned how much land and where. They made it clear that only those who were involved in land transactions could raise the money required to finance a party electoral candidacy.

As I was sitting in a local real estate office interviewing a real estate agent, a group of men rushed in. It took me a while to understand that this was the local *zilla* panchayat (district council) representative of the Congress party (majority) with his team, coming over to invite the

real estate agent to a roadworks inauguration. He was a Muslim, executing a *Goodli pooja* (construction initiation ritual) performed by a Hindu priest. The exchange among office workers was short but efficient, with knowledge-sharing about upcoming developments such as the new road that was coming up and their representative, who had built a beautiful drinking water station in a neighboring village. The district representative then proposed that he would do the same if he was given a plot of a certain size. Another man, whose wife was part of the Gram Panchayat, agreed immediately and said he would see that all necessary arrangements were in place. Interestingly, just a week earlier, a political contender (the then-current chairman of the dairy cooperative) had inaugurated a water station next to the daycare center with a BJP party (opposition) representative. On a later date, as I was waiting for the district council representative in his office situated above a bank on the main road, I discovered that he was a follower of Sri Sri Ravishankar, the Guru and founder of the Art of Living International Centre. The gates of the international center were just next door to his office, the center having acquired huge tracts of land and crucial services.

Votes, real estate opportunities, and finance go hand-in-hand. Real estate promoted political power and political power made it possible to assert land. A particular real estate agent had "made it big" by exploiting the relationship between real estate, finances, and politics as he hailed from a family with political ties: His grandmother had been a Gram Panchayat member and he too had ambitions to stand for the next local elections as a regional party candidate. He started by owning a cement shop and his business grew to be capable of building a 7 acres layout. According to him, it was simple to "make it big" in the periphery if one owned land. Landowners, having their plots two or three kilometers away from the main road, were selling two or three acres. The money they made from this sale, they spent it on immediate costs such as marriages in the family, buy a site in Kaggalipura, build a multistoried building—they would live in one unit and rent out the rest—invest about 10% in gold, and finally buy some land further away. With the prospect of urbanization, this land would raise in value at some given time. There was a strong faith in Bangalore's expansion. The same real estate agent predicted that, probably after a few years, such a loop of investments would hit a dead-end: Families grew and remaining agricultural land would get subdivided into much smaller plots, which would not allow room for such expansion.

Agricultural land in Kaggalipura is mainly composed of small land holdings. The shape of land layouts is thus determined mainly by the skill of the broker to get neighboring farmers to sell their lands. These brokers are local men who not only know to identify valuable land and bring it to the attention of developers but also have an intrinsic understanding of the fabric of kin and community. Upcoming marriages, debts, and family quarrels are more likely to push farmers to sell.

According to a real estate agent I interviewed in 2016, middle-class families living in Bangalore followed their own financial portfolio management. They approached brokers like him to buy a plot in the periphery when their kids were still in school. Once they paid off the land and the kids were independent (probably 15 years later), they would invest in building a house on their plot. By then, the area would be better developed and they could live a peaceful life at lower costs. He was also very well-versed in getting land conversions through. Going through the district commissioner (DC) is considered the silver standard, as this part of the process is not fully digitalized. Once land is applied for land conversion (for example, from the agricultural to the residential land use category), the application is sent to the DC. The DC sends a letter to the Kanakapura LPA and they check if that particular land comes under the agricultural zone. If this results in a positive answer, the conversion is done by the village accountant in the revenue department after the family hands over their family tree to prove their land entitlements or eligibility. The application then goes to the BMRDA, which issues a no-objection certificate (NOC), and is then shown to the Kanakapura office. Once the NOC reaches the DC, the latter issues the conversion letter. Land records and conversion letters have to be handed over to BMRDA. When BMRDA issues the e-*katha* (digital property document), the gold standard is reached, as now it is digital and original. In my interviews, members of the real estate office went on to narrate that developers of the highest league for high-end customers start to buy small pieces of land and accumulate them by accepting joint ventures or paying the farmers premium rates. They assert that their political connections are strong and make deviations from the LPA plans: "Those managing 100 acres will not have much ethics and politics is a matter of convenience." Clearly, this complex procedure demonstrates that a high level of procedural knowledge (Patel et al., 2015, p. 191) is required to navigate land conversions or aggregate developable land.

4.3.4. Those Excluded From Co-Shaping the City Yet to Come

What was the stake of the common peri-urban inhabitant, the landless, the farmer? To understand what they know and how they get to know about the impending urbanization of their village, I hung around the village for observations and conducted focus group interviews with existing organized groups. Talking to the members of the dairy cooperatives in focus groups, they complained that, suddenly, the grazing lands were compounded off into layouts that kept it unproductive for years to come. Most of them had sold their lands, could not plant the fodder themselves, and relied on getting fodder from 25 km away, for which they spent 2000 INR on transportation. The fodder lasted them for 15 days only. The decreasing water sources and underground water table only increased their plight. Overall the farmers welcomed

urbanization for the increased connectivity and facilities it promised, but deplored the difficult conditions to pursue their livelihood activity. The younger generation seemed fully disillusioned by the city "coming nearer," especially as they didn't have the appropriate skills to sell their labor: "Dairy farming and maintaining cattle is the only thing we know," they claimed. The younger farmers also showed less trust in institutions such as the Gram Panchayat or their representatives to bring about any change. Older farmers believed in the Gram Sabhas (village assemblies) and their capacity to raise and resolve issues concerning their livelihood, even though members of the Gram Panchayat themselves observed that the community had less unity than before. The women's association of *anganwadi* (daycare) workers was acutely aware that the future urbanization and reclassification would considerably decrease their political influence by increasing the electoral distance through larger constituencies. They too welcomed urban facilities, especially expecting better options for healthcare, but worried about the loss of the "village way of life."

4.4. Where Knowledges Partly Come Together

During this research, I would sit and wait for my interviewees from both the political and real estate realms on many occasions and with little success. I would travel to the location of our interview only to be informed that my interviewee would not turn up. The reasons most cited for their absence were of a private nature: marriages, housewarming ceremonies, first-year birthday parties, etc. It delayed my research but I understood it, at first, to be a symptom of the busy, social Indian life. Then it dawned on me that a "cancelled interview" was also revealing data.

While I was sitting in the real estate office waiting for an agent, a party of young men entered and invited the broker to a *pooja* (worship ritual). The invitation card, in bright pink colors, showed the goddess Durga. The backside of the card contained the names of those who had sponsored the *pooja* and featured politicians and real estate agents of the local area. My interviewee was listed as a member of the regional political party. He later confirmed that he had sponsored the *pooja* and stated that attending such rituals was very important to understand development projects. They were places for knowledge exchange, to learn about upcoming developments and opportunities for land conversions. Attendance to these social gatherings was upon invitation only. While a priest performed the ritual with the family that was celebrating the occasion, the invitees were free to watch, network, and engage in informal conversation. Usually, food was served and provided opportune moments to engage in small talk about rumors concerning family clans, businesses, local developments, and probable land sales. These were informal micro-sites for knowledge transfers to engage in planning as an everyday activity. I understood that attending these social gatherings was very important work. As attendance was only upon

invitation, it was highly exclusive, non-democratic, and non-deliberative. Everyday planning excluded those concerned with planning peri-urban areas: the common inhabitants. These got only cues of the emerging built environment when they saw it—a board announcing a construction, fenced-off land, road diversions, disappearing greenery, and tin sheets blocking off the view of the land being constructed on.

5. Discussion

Were the planners conceiving peri-urban Bangalore doing a better job at planning, as stated by the assistant LPA director at the outset of my research? It seems that, following the formal plans, gains in capital and convenience were the rationales of those involved in everyday planning.

To understand the emergence of the built environment in peri-urban areas, the lens of territorial governmentality provided a basis to conceptually grasp the rationale behind financialization of land that skews formal planning (Goldman, 2021). As Jeff Coulter (as cited in Schatzki et al., 2001) states, macro phenomena such as (a) financial capital circuits, (b) planning rationales and legislations, and (c) political imperatives and financial opportunities do exist in and through their praxiologicial instantiations. The empirical material shows that each of these macro phenomena was intertwined with the possibility of land conversion (from agricultural to residential/commercial). Land conversion represents political currency and can either promote opportunities or pose threats to different groups of people and actors co-shaping peri-urban areas.

Despite the decentralized planning prescribed by planning legislation—which should make provision for a bottom-up aggregation of plans by the Metropolitan Planning Committee—formal practices are managed top-down. The 60 days window is the only consultative period for individual inputs and does not foresee collective claims to the city yet to come.

While the urban features of Kaggalipura were fast emerging and clearly visible, the material facades of planning actors and their interactions were blurred into the built and social fabric of the place. Unseeming buildings housed them and micro-spaces for social functions led to clandestine connections that instantiate the nexus of land, money, and political power influencing planning in arbitrary ways. This research confirms Ettlinger's (2009) contention that the networks of pertinent knowledge creation are those in which members actively engage with each other in a shared performance around social and religious gatherings. The described planning activity embedded in the local culture corresponds to an everyday practice that is "seemingly inconsequential, inconspicuous and mundane, but nonetheless essential to our day-to-day lives" (Strengers, 2010, p. 7). These social sites brought together the tacit knowledge of political actors and real estate agents and the sectoral knowl-

edge of street-level bureaucrats. "Community knowledge" becomes the "knowledge of those invited into the club." This is a subversion of the ideal of everyday planning practices redering everyday planning as a highly exclusive enterprise.

5.1. What Ought to Be Done: The Role of Social Work in Urban Planning

Social work is a creation of city life: It was born and nurtured in the city and has evolved in response to the multiple intersections that city life brings about. Social work is being reconceptualized in response to the modern city (Williams, 2016, p. 1). This is especially acute in rapidly urbanizing cities of the Global South, where the speed of spatial and social transformation has been profound and daunting. The aim of social work is manifold, embedded in national policy contexts. At the same time, social work transcends these contexts by recognizing interdependencies that are transnational and have very local expressions. Similarly, the shaping up of the peri-urban environment is multi-layered through global financialization circuits that lead, potentially, to dispossession of peri-urban farmers locally. Social work is well-placed to advance self-determination and participation in urban planning processes to make them more inclusive (Williams, 2016), "leaving no one behind" by adhering to social work ethics and principles, in particular that of "promoting social justice," access to equitable resources, challenging unjust policies and practices, building solidarity, promoting the right to self-determination, and promoting the right to participation (IFSW, 2014).

In that sense, social work as a profession is concerned with creating "changes for the better" with interventions for a socially just present and future. Social work is highly contextual, questions dominant discourses, and supports claims of marginalized populations, with their values and knowledges (Williams, 2016), to contest "official" knowledge, when expert, techno-administrative-legal hegemonic knowledge is disputed by civil society (see Scott and Barnett, as cited in Pfeffer et al., 2012, p. 262; see also C. Grace Sutherland, on the same page). The most transformative form of participatory knowledge generation is counter-mapping to reveal lived realities in spaces (Pfeffer et al., 2012, p. 265).

What does it mean for social work to situate itself in a rural-urban flux? Social and community workers have been engaged in the provision of services and support communities living in disadvantaged areas—clusters of poverty, unemployment, crime, and environmental pollution. Social work mostly incorporated the environment in terms of social relationships. It is only recently that social workers are called upon to conceptualise a "person-in-environment" (Erickson, 2018) in a green social work and environmental justice perspective (Dominelli, 2012). Environmental justice "occurs when all people equally experience high levels of environmental

protection and no group is excluded from environmental decision-making or affected disproportionately by environmental hazard" (Dominelli, 2012, p. 10). The livelihoods of rural inhabitants in the periphery are largely based on access to and the nurturing of environmental resources. Thus, when they are left out of decision-making processes that impact their environment directly, they are experiencing environmental injustice. In the same way that social workers connect potential beneficiaries to existing welfare benefits, they could connect communities impacted by urban planning practices to planning systems by using democratic planning provisions, community development tools, and mobilization, making voices from such communities legitimate and legible, and integrating them in the co-shaping of their own environment. In this sense, social workers could intervene in the governmentality of the territory to make agricultural land use relevant in view of a more inclusive planning process that includes peri-urban inhabitants with rural livelihoods.

6. Conclusion

This qualitative sociological enquiry into everyday planning practices reveals the rationales of diverse knowledge actors in unlikely sites of knowledge exchange. The strong nexus between the (generational) ownership of land in peri-urban areas and the possibility to self-finance an electoral candidacy to then participate in arbitrary planning decisions could in turn influence the satisfaction of certain constituencies and voters. This also means that dispossessed populations have no chance of representing themselves, as they are financially dry to fund a party ticket. My research also showed a generational discrepancy in matters of trust in political and planning institutions. While the older generations still believed that rural governance mechanisms (such as the Gram Panchayat) were still effective, the younger population had lost hope in these institutions. This restructuring of the agrarian economy (Gururani & Kennedy, 2021) without an adequate skilling effort (Malik & Gupta, 2017), makes urbanization a false promise of prosperity for the aspirational young rural youth.

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Article

Critical Post-Humanism and Social Work in the City: About Being Entangled as Researcher and Professional

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Abstract
Social work has a long history of dealing with social issues and working towards an inclusive city. The complexity of these issues requires conceptual thinking that goes beyond "the human" and encompasses spatiality, materiality, as well as non-human beings and their connectedness. I propose to explore "post"-theories for this purpose, which constitute a major reconfiguration of thinking in the field of social work and research on social inclusion in general. This article outlines important elements of "post"-theories that connect with major claims of social work such as the aim of social justice, empowerment, and ethical stances towards research and practice. It further outlines in which sense these elements connect with social work and what that could mean for analysing social problems and how to approach them. The contribution provides thoughts on how post-humanism might provide inspiration to think as researchers and act as professionals concerning questions of social justice and inclusion.

Issue
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1. Introduction

Social work has a rich historical link with cities, dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries when social work emerged as a profession in response to the problems of poverty and social inequality prevalent in urban areas. The settlement movement, which began in the UK with Toynbee Hall and in the US with Hull House, played a pivotal role in the development of social work as a profession and in the promotion of social justice in urban areas. These settlement houses, which were located in impoverished urban neighbourhoods, provided a range of social services and support to the local community, including education, healthcare, and housing assistance. Social work, therefore, has a long history of dealing with questions of inclusion in cities.

The notion of the inclusive city is strongly linked to questions of social struggles. Lately, the concept of inclusive cities has gained increasing attention, as

cities around the world grapple with the challenges of urbanization, globalization, and diversity. Inclusive cities are seen as essential for promoting healthy economic environments, social cohesion, and sustainable development, as well as for ensuring that all individuals and communities have access to the benefits and opportunities that cities offer. Social work has a key role to play in building inclusive cities, as social workers are trained to work with diverse communities and individuals, to promote social change and social justice.

In many research articles on social work, the city is seen as the site where social problems are situated and where social work develops its interventions. What this site, with its materiality, constitutes and how it relates to the social problems and the social work practices is only very rarely considered in conceptual terms in social work research (e.g., ten Brummelaar et al., 2018). Social work usually addresses the needs of actors, analyses problems in relation to actors, organizations, and structures, and

often forgoes its material and spatial implications (for some examples of a debate on social work and spatiality see Bondi & Fewell, 2003; Diebäcker & Reutlinger, 2018). What I argue in this article is that the city constitutes a complexity that goes beyond what social sciences and social work usually focus on. The city *is* materiality; it is sound and smell, as well as non-human inhabitants such as animals and plants. There is much more to the city than actors, organisations, and structure. And what does the concept of "the inclusive city" mean if we focus on plants and animals as well?

I propose to use a post-human lens to reconfigure social work and understand inclusive cities in a way that gives the word "inclusive" a meaning that goes far beyond its usual social connotation. My starting point is that there is much to gain in using "post"-theories to address issues of social inclusion and develop fruitful approaches to social work. Thus, I propose a post-humanist approach to social work research and professional practice.

A couple of contributions have been made recently in the field of social work that use and translate "post"-theories for social work (Boulet & Hawkins, 2020; Bozalek, 2023; Bozalek & Hölscher, 2023; Bozalek & Pease, 2021; Godden, 2021; Gonzalez Benson, 2021; Livholts, 2023). In fact, it seems that the debate is just starting. Although these contributions provide relevant initial thoughts, there is a need to further the debate and think beyond the often-evoked link between social work and pressing environmental issues.

Post-humanism is a theoretical perspective that challenges the traditional view of human exceptionalism and advocates for a more inclusive and diverse understanding of the world. In the context of social work and inclusive cities, post-humanism offers a valuable lens through which to explore the complex inter-relationships between humans, the environment, and technology. Post-humanism highlights the need to move beyond the anthropocentric approach that has dominated social work and urban planning and to recognize the role of non-human actors such as animals, plants, and technology in shaping urban environments and human experiences.

This article addresses this claim in three steps. First, I will give a few indications of what and how critical post-humanism contributes to social work research and practice and how it can be comprehended. Second, I will address the important questions of why such an approach can make a difference in research and practice. I believe there is a need to think thoroughly of good reasons to convince practitioners and not only researchers for a "reconfiguring of social work ethics" (Bozalek & Hölscher, 2023). Finally, I will sketch how such an approach could be made fruitful for analysis (research in social work), practice (the profession of social work), and ethics (justice in social work) towards a more just and inclusive social work.

2. Critical Post-Humanism: Conceptual Approaches

It is not an easy task to describe in a nutshell what "post"-theories are about. There is much reading to be done, as Elizabeth St. Pierre wrote, to start the journey into "post-thinking" (St. Pierre, 2021). With this new way of thinking about our world and our entanglement in it, there are new concepts one needs to grasp, and it takes time to learn and understand this new language. The difficulty also lies in the way different "post"-theories are converging and nourishing from different angles of the debate. There is the philosophical heritage of Deleuze and Guattari (1980) that is often subsumed under the term "assemblage thinking" that, nevertheless, provides a plethora of concepts and "lines of flight" for a new ontology. More recent philosophical contributions, such as the writings of Braidotti (2019), point towards a decentring of the human towards post-humanist conceptions. There is the feminist current, with contributions that challenge us to think beyond dualisms—in particular, gender dualism—and strongly argues for the importance of the body, with its materiality, emotions, and affect (Ahmed, 2004; Butler, 1993). New materialist theories have stressed the materiality of life and how separating the mind from the body only provides a very partial understanding of the way people live in this world (Coole & Frost, 2010). These philosophical and social science theories are further inspired by writers such as Barad (2007), who base their contributions on insights from quantum physics.

This very rich and inspiring debate provides plenty of concepts to think differently and—maybe even more important—do research in a different way, considering that "post"-theories are always about combined ontology, epistemology, and ethics. They imply that separating the three is impossible and propose an ethical-onto-epistemological entanglement (Barad, 2007) of research. Therefore, I will outline the conceptual lines of thought that seem most inspiring to me for social work research, practice, and ethics, while necessarily leaving out much of what needs to be said about this rich theoretical debate.

2.1. Relationality and Entanglement

Deleuze and Guattari, most prominently in their book *Mille Plateaux* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980). develop, among other things, the notion of the rhizome as opposed to a structured and hierarchical vision. According to the authors, space and its characteristics are defined in relative terms: as distance or density always in relation to the objects (including humans) within it. The distance differs with the nature of the object: For a slug, one metre corresponds to the tenth part of the distance it travels in a day; for a human being, it corresponds to one step. Therefore, the objects are constitutive of the relationships and of the quality these relationships imply. Proximity and distance do

not depend on the measurable distance between two objects, but they depend on the characteristics and relationship of the objects.

The ontological importance of relationality implies there is no existence outside or without relationality. Relationality, the connection objects have to each other and their materiality, brings them into existence for each other. Everything that exists—space, objects, and human beings—exists, or rather comes into existence, through relationships, connections, and interactions. For instance, a natural hazard only exists as a hazard because there are humans, other species, or otherwise "valuable'' objects that are endangered. Likewise, a neighbourhood is only poor because of its relationship to other neighbourhoods in the same city and because poverty is defined in economic terms.

Relationality also implies that the hierarchical ontology of space and all social phenomena, which is often apprehended by notions of scales such as micro, meso, and macro, is thus replaced by a notion of flatness, or as geographers Marston et al. (2005) conceptualized it: a flat ontology. The plain constitutes a form—many times, at first glance, a rather chaotic one—of relationships that intersect, intermingle, arise, and disappear. This implies that the focus lies less on how things, phenomena, and events are structured hierarchically but to look at how elements are connected and how inter- and intra-actions (Barad, 2007) happen across the plain. Such perspective allows us to apprehend questions across otherwise delimiting borders, such as acknowledging the transnational perspective in migration or the political action that cuts through the levels of the local to the national and links, for instance, issues in the city to other places, or to border-less issues such as climate change.

Others have described this relational conception as a profound entanglement in the world. Matter, time, and space are jointly entangled as a "spacetimemattering" (Barad, 2007) that, instead of dividing the notions of space, time, and matter, blurs the boundaries between them. Inspired by quantum physics' impossibility to separate measurements of matter in time and space, Barad (2007) develops this notion in philosophical terms. Translated into social sciences, this results in the impossibility to analyse spaces without their temporality and materiality. For instance, there is a specific "spacetimemattering" to a street at night or during the day. This relational perspective contrasts clearly with structural and hierarchical ontologies of the world such as in structuralist thinking.

2.2. Post-Anthropocentrism

"Post"-theories aim to decentre the human and, more specifically, the anthropos from our understanding of the world (Pease, 2021). Enlightenment thinking is based on the principle that the human being is the focal point of ontology. It is for the human to understand the world, to use it based on that knowledge, and to dominate it. Apart from the damage this view has done regarding current global environmental problems, there are also important theoretical objections. Already if one understands the world, and therefore humans, as entangled and relationally connected, it becomes apparent that there is a need to think beyond the human as a clearly delimited individual and as the central figure of social sciences.

Importantly, according to Enlightenment thinking, the human is conceptualised as anthropos, meaning male, white, heterosexual, and so on. Feminist theories, post-colonial theories, and more have written against this notion and demasked the powerful norming principles that underlie the concept of human. Therefore, decentring the human also provides a strategy to fight against powerful differences among humans and acknowledge specific entanglements, while forgoing anthropocentrism (Livholts, 2023).

With the critique of anthropocentrism also comes a critique of species-centrism (Braidotti, 2019). Decentring the human also means that humans are in this world among other living beings. There are many animals—and the human animal is but one among them. Critical post-humanism adopts a strong multi-species perspective that looks at the entanglements humans have with other animals, the way humans share their existence on this planet with other animals, how humans depend on them, and how humans exist because of and in relation to them. Cities are a good example of species-centrism, as they are prominently conceptualized as solely human spaces with the occasional appearance of animals as pets. All other animals are either a surprise—such as so-called wild animals appearing in cities during the Covid-19 pandemic—or pests.

A multi-species perspective leads to a notion of "being of the world rather than in the world" (Bozalek & Hölscher, 2023, p. 1). Post-anthropocentrism contributes to understanding "the human" as part of this world. Reading various recently published accounts about indigenous struggles against environmental problems (e.g., Bozalek & Hölscher, 2023; Godden, 2021) clarifies that this notion is not very novel. It might be novel to people from the Global North who have been trained to think based on the principles of Enlightenment. However, there have always been other ways of understanding the world and humans' position in it. Environmental problems that industrial expansion has caused (e.g., referring to the specific case of the Adani coal mine in central Queensland, Australia, see Woods & Hölscher, 2021) are seen in very different terms by affected indigenous people versus politicians or representatives of the industrial sector. An Australian indigenous leader expressed his concerns regarding the opening of a coal mine by explaining that these lands are "an interconnected living whole; a vital cultural landscape. It is central to us as People, and to the maintenance of our identity, laws and consequent rights" (Burragubba as cited in Woods & Hölscher, 2021). The "we" thus becomes enlarged; it refers to "people" as the entanglement of land, stones, animals, and humans.

2.3. Post-Human Subjectivity: Embodied, Affected, Entangled

At first light, it seems that subjectivity is not a term that fits post-human thinking. Nevertheless, Braidotti (2019) developed a notion of post-human subjectivity that adapts the subject into the world view I have described thus far. More importantly, it argues against the autonomy and separateness of the subject as known from Enlightenment thinking. Rather than conceiving the subject as a single identifiable mind and body delimited by the outer border of the skin—the very skin is where people are touched and affected by the world—the outer limit begins to blur in the intra-action with the environment (Ahmed, 2000).

The post-human subjectivity is embodied, affected, and entangled. It is embodied in the sense that it cannot be separated from the body such as in the distinction between mind and body. Rather, there is no being in this world without materiality and body. Subjectivity is always expressed in embodied sensory experiences, in embodied intra-actions. Humans are very much bodily beings with very material needs such as food, air, water, warmth, shelter. The body mainly makes humans vulnerable to the effects of the world. The Covid-19 pandemic was a good example of this (e.g., Gonzalez Benson, 2021).

Affect theories (Braidotti, 2019; Massumi, 2002) explore the connection between the body, the embodied subjectivity, and other species, other living and non-living beings, the world. Thereby, affect is the body's capacity "to affect and be affected" (Massumi, 2015, p. 3). This means there is a possibility or a potential for affect to happen; it is not a rule but a potential. Affect may happen or not and it can always happen in both ways—one can affect or be affected.

Finally, subjectivity also needs to be seen as entangled in the sense that there is never a subject as a stand-alone entity. It is connected to the world, its species, and non-living elements. This idea of entanglement goes further than the notions of connectivity known from network thinking, it means there is no subject outside of entanglement, it is the entanglement in the world that forms the subject in the very specific moment, in the very specific "spacetimemattering" (Barad, 2007). That means there is no subjectivity in itself, but it always emerges from the entanglement in its embodied form, affecting and being affected by the world. There is no fixed and autonomous subject, as it is always becoming, as Rosi Braidotti explains in an interview:

> We have to start by eliminating identities. We will never arrive anywhere if we have identity as a starting point. In fact the whole process of *becoming* is a process of abandoning identity and entering in the construction of subjectivity, subjectivity being per definition transversal, collective. This is an enormous switch because even the political movements I have known in the '70s were identitarian move-

ments: Women's movements would fight for women; gay movements would fight for gays. (European Alternatives, 2018)

This moves the meaning of inclusion towards a radical openness and away from specific groups. Further, the subject is entangled with the world in all its materiality. Matter has the potential to affect or, as Bennett (2010, p. 108) termed it, matter is vibrant:

> If human culture is inextricably enmeshed with vibrant, nonhuman agencies, and if human intentionality can be agentic only if accompanied by a vast entourage of nonhumans, then it seems that the appropriate unit of analysis for democratic theory is neither the individual human nor an exclusively human collective but the (ontologically heterogeneous) "public" coalescing around a problem.

2.4. Beyond Dualisms: Cutting Apart

Dualisms structure most of human thinking, such as the gender dualism of man/woman, the othering dualism of us/them, North/South, West/East, and further mind/body, or subject/object. It seems that the dualism of nature/culture lays the foundation for most other dualisms and that the elements on the culture side are to dominate the elements located on the nature side. There is always a hierarchy implicitly or explicitly inscribed into these dualisms, making them—while socially constructed—very powerful social structures that are significant to the lives of people.

Post-humanism challenges these binary concepts by questioning unitary identities. The entangled subjectivity, always becoming, is a way to apprehend the specific emerging subjectivity instead of identifying fixed or unitary identities. In particular, the phallocentric and humanist ideals of "man" as differentiated from "woman" is strongly questioned in post-anthropocentric thinking. By decentring the human in post-humanism—and, in particular, the human as "man"—the gender binary is profoundly challenged. Further, by understanding "the human" as always entangled with the world, the nature/culture binary is also challenged because there cannot be a binary where there is entanglement. Again, the pandemic provides a good example:

> SARS-CoV-2 is not just the *virus itself* but, to borrow the term introduced by Karen Barad, an intra-action between the virus and humans, pangolins and bats, Asian stereotypes, discourses about communism and democracy, the failure of nation-states, the spectre of the military, the sham of American exceptionalism, the dwindling prospects of justice. (Akomolafe, 2020, p. 17)

Barad's notion of cutting apart provides the means to consider separate entities together. While humans are

entangled in and with this world, at the same time, there are notions of difference, of elements, and of bodies that affect each other. There is an intra-activity, that is, the activity of affect within an entanglement. Thus, there is a need to differentiate while simultaneously relate the elements together in an entanglement. Barad (2007) calls this the agential cut; it cuts things, elements, bodies, apart, while leaving them entangled. A good example is a border between two countries. While it separates the two countries, at the same time, it provides a connection, a space that unites; the separating border becomes the very reason why there is exchange and contact.

3. Arguments for a Critical Post-Humanist Perspective for Social Work

In the short time since writing the first version of this article and revising it, a couple of contributions have appeared. In social work research, an interest in "post"-theories awakens (Boulet & Hawkins, 2020; Bozalek, 2023; Bozalek & Hölscher, 2023; Bozalek & Pease, 2021; Healy, 2022; Webb, 2021, 2023). This interest is still very fresh and rather on a theoretical level, while empirical studies as well as translations into social work practice are still missing or remain rare (for some examples see Godden, 2021; Gonzalez Benson, 2021; Tudor & Barraclough, 2023). There is still much work to be done.

Although "post"-theories have been debated in other areas of research for quite a while, it took social work a much longer time to engage in these debates. This can be related to the ethical impetus of social work, to empower people, to work for a more just world for humans and thereby putting the human always at the centre of analysis and action. Not in vain, social work is claimed to be a profession based on human rights. At the same time, there are first contributions from within academia but also from the profession and the teaching of social work. A volume of *Social Dialogue*, the free magazine of the International Association of Schools of Social Work, takes Black Lives Matter as the starting point to thinking, along various contributions, about what it means to de-colonise social work. Several contributions use post-colonial as well as post-human thinking (IASS, 2022).

What I argue here—and I am not alone in this—is that social work and other professional and political initiatives for social inclusion such as inclusive cities can profit from "post"-thinking in a very productive way. I will develop this along the four elements of "post"-theories outlined above.

3.1. Relationality: At the Core of Social Work Analysis and Practice

Social work is very much oriented towards the relational. Most social workers would agree that building relationships with people constitutes the basis of their work because a working collaboration requires trust and understanding. Social work essentially is relational work. In German, for instance, we call the union that is achieved between the social worker and the client a working alliance (*Arbeitsbündnis*). There is no work without a form of alliance in which both parties have their interest and their intentionality. The way to achieve this requires relational work between the social worker and the client.

Nevertheless, the relational perspective in "post"-theories stretches beyond the alliance between social worker and client; it is a way to comprehend social problems and how humans are entangled in them. While many theories of social work have a systemic perspective that aims at understanding the individual in a complex setting, social work—in particular the work of practitioners—has the tendency to isolate the human and to forget about their embeddedness and entanglement. It is not only about understanding the broader picture and not looking at humans as isolated in their social problems such as poverty but also to seek an understanding through the entanglement of a person in a complex setting. This means that the focus can never be solely on the human but always on the connections to other (human) animals, objects, and structures.

Returning to social work practice, relationality, creating connections and networking have always been an important part of how social workers aim to support their clients. Post-humanism supports this in a much more radical way. Social work, then, would be about supporting potential entanglements in the neighbourhood, in the city, in the world. Support requires enhancing emerging properties and increasing connections to allow for new and more just entanglements. This requires reconfiguring social work beyond the individual and, importantly, acknowledging humans' sensory entanglement, affect, and emotions and their full potential (Bozalek & Hölscher, 2023).

3.2. Post-Anthropocentrism: Environmental Social Work and Beyond

Increasingly, social work also acknowledges the importance of the environment for questions of justice and thereby enlarges social justice towards environmental justice (see Bozalek & Pease, 2021; Healy, 2022). Ecological or environmental social work takes up global environmental problems and addresses them from a social perspective. Problems such as climate change have a great effect on people's lives. Environmental issues related to economic activities such as the extraction of natural resources affect people in their daily lives.

Regarding the current dimensions of these problems on a global scale, it seems more than pertinent that in many books on current critical contributions to social work, there are always various chapters on environmental perspectives (Boulet & Hawkins, 2020; Bozalek & Pease, 2021; IASS, 2022). One could understand the

concern with the environment as a concern with the context in which people live, that is, the surroundings of their daily lives. From a post-humanist perspective, and various contributions argue in that direction, the concern lies much deeper. Humans live entangled in the environment and social issues are part and parcel of environmental issues. The disconnection of the environment from the social world, as inscribed in Enlightenment thinking through the culture/nature divide, obscures this entanglement and reduces environmental issues to technical problems of pollution and its effects. The indigenous perspective evoked above points to a much deeper entanglement and therefore, a deeper—for instance, emotional—concern with environmental problems—they are problems of the human species and humans are directly and deeply affected by them in a very visceral way.

During the pandemic, migrant farmworkers, who before the pandemic, society and politics had often seen as unwanted migrants, became "essential" to the food production of countries such as the United States (Gonzalez Benson, 2021). Farmworkers were entangled in a complex web of discursive practices of unwanted migrants versus essential workers. At the same time, they had to work under the same difficult conditions as before and were only scarcely protected from a virus that was still rather unknown while, for many other people, the lockdown meant to work from home in secure spaces. The virus, as a non-human lifeform, was part of this entanglement and affected politicians, public discourse, and farmworkers altogether.

3.3. Post-Human Subjectivity: Political Opportunities

As post-human subjectivity points towards a non-autonomous subject that is embodied, affected, and entangled, this provides an important inspiration to reorient social work. Although there has always been a critical strand to social work, unmasking powerful structural problems, the neoliberal-inspired managerialism in current government-mandated social work imposes a very different direction. In line with neoliberal individualism and individual responsibility in particular, it is the individual that lastly is deemed responsible for their situation (e.g., poverty) and has to find a way out. The activating welfare state (*aktivierender Sozialstaat* in German; see Blanke, 2004; Lamping & Schridde, 2004), which urges, through social workers and social security programs, the individual to leave social benefit programs and enter regular institutions such as the labour market, transfers the responsibility for their precarious position to individuals themselves. It remains the individual's task to find strategies to combat their situation while social policies forgo a general critique of the conditions of the individual's situation.

From a post-human standpoint, there can never be a solely individual responsibility and there cannot be a solution to social problems that lies in the actions of one individual alone either. The entanglements need

to change; some connections need to become stronger, others must be replaced, and others are simply too fixed to be altered or removed. The entanglement—or assemblage, to borrow Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) term—is what needs to be worked on and the subject has only limited power over selected parts of the assemblage. This is not to say that the subject is powerless, but it is hypocritical to demand subjects reconfigure their lives while being trapped in powerful societal and economic entanglements that they cannot influence.

3.4. Challenging Dualisms: Ethics of Social Work and Social Justice

Finally, challenging dualisms such as nature/culture and man/woman is very much connected to working against separation and differentiation and towards a shared concern for the global problems humans face. An ethics of care for all (human) animals, non-living parts of the world, the environment, and so on, responds to such a shared concern. Ethics of care, as developed by Fisher and Tronto (1990), provided a starting point for such concerns. The authors conceptualise care as profoundly relational and therefore include the recognition of needs and the capability of delivering care as well as receiving it. From this, four elements of such ethics emerge (Tronto, 1993): (a) *attentiveness*, since a need for care has to be recognised and attended to, while ignoring others has a contrary effect; (b) *responsibility*, which links one's doing, as well as what one does not do, to the need for care, highlighting the fact that humans have a responsibility towards each other; (c) *competence*, which relates to the notion that, while one may acknowledge the responsibility for caring about someone else's needs, not everyone has the abilities, resources, or knowledge to address needs in an effective way; and finally (d) *responsiveness*, which focuses on the relationship of caring, that is, taking account of others' vulnerability and understanding their needs from their point of view, as they express it.

The ethics of care has inspired many texts that aim to rewrite research, teaching, and political activism in the current world (for higher education see Bozalek et al., 2021; for social work see Bozalek & Hölscher, 2023). This is because "the politics of caring have been at the heart of our concerns with exclusion and the critiques of power dynamics in stratified worlds" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 86). Such ethics of relationality, responsibility, and hope (Vela Alarcón & Springgay, 2021) links to social work ethics of justice, empowerment, and support of the vulnerable and provides means to reconfigure social work ethics (Bozalek & Hölscher, 2023).

A post-human social work ethic could be similar to an octopus, as Bozalek and Hölscher (2023) have argued. In becoming an octopus, they write, "a highly attentive creature, octopuses use their sensory capacities to deeply attune to their surroundings," one is entangled in the world, in a multi-species encounter, with highly developed sensory capabilities (Bozalek &

Hölscher, 2023, p. 1). The image of the octopus stresses the multi-species approach and underlines the necessity to use the senses to attune to the world and become fully part of this world again. The "becoming octopus" proposal goes together with ethical notions based on critical post-humanist and post-anthropocentric thinking. Being attuned refers to the sensory potential to link and make connections to the world. This immediately bridges the subject/object divide because being in the world and perceiving it in sensory terms means to let one be affected by it and, therefore, enter the many-fold entanglements. This also implies a curiosity towards multi-species, the world, and its elements. Attentiveness and response-ability—literally, the ability to respond to affection—link post-human ethics directly to the ethics of care.

4. Post-Humanist Social Work as Research, Practice, and Ethics

What does it mean to reconfigure social work along with critical post-humanist thinking? Most importantly, what does it mean to go beyond research as well as practice and the ethics inscribed into the social work profession? Although most contributions develop fruitful approaches for researching the topics of social work—such as environmental problems and migration-related questions—there remains the need to think more specifically about social work not only as a field of research but also as a unique combination of a profession, a practice, and an academic discipline.

4.1. The Academic Perspective

Research in social work includes three main types of research. It focuses on the fields social work addresses, on social problems, and on their effects on humans entangled in the world. It also focuses on the practice of social work, that is, interventions such as policies and concrete social work practices in a community or counselling work, the methods and instruments used, and the stance social workers have towards the problems and the involved humans and other species involved. Finally, considering social work as both an academic endeavour and a profession, there is also social work research that combines both: the *doing* and the research. Social work practice can be part and parcel of social work research and thereby opens novel ways of engaging with research questions. In particular, this latter focus links strongly with critical post-humanism and the entanglement of humans in the world but also of researchers as practitioners with their research.

Along with the debate on "post"-thinking, there have also emerged debates on how such theoretical premises might be translated into research practices. If one understands "post"-theories as a journey into ethical-onto-epistemological thinking, one also has to develop a methodology that provides a way to research empirically with these concepts (St. Pierre, 2014, 2021; Taylor,

2017). Some years ago, Elisabeth St. Pierre developed the notion of post-qualitative inquiry. As she outlines:

> I don't claim that the structure of humanist qualitative methodology is wrong or in error. I do argue, however, that its assumptions about the nature of inquiry are grounded in Enlightenment humanism's description of human being, of language, of the material, the empirical, the real, of knowledge, power, freedom, and so on and, therefore, are incommensurable with the descriptions of those concepts in the posts [theories]. (St. Pierre, 2014, p. 5)

Therefore, there is a need to leave the well-trodden path of qualitative methods, to engage in a "post" way with research. St. Pierre proposes to use concepts to guide individuals in their research instead of predefined methods. Concepts can lead individuals during research and break the literature/data division to connect reading and empirical research in a combined move. As a second possibility, she points towards theories after the ontological turn such as new materialism. Using concepts such as assemblage and rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980) or agential realism (Barad, 2007) can lead research in ways that slow down the research process and guide the empirical work conceptually. This does not mean to forget about the rich plethora of methods we know. It rather points towards a usage of methods that remains open to what emerges in the field and that does not follow a pre-scribed application of methods. Not in vain, much research that engages with "post"-theories uses ethnographic approaches.

For social work as practice and research or practical research, the embodied entanglement seems particularly fruitful. If one understands the social worker as practitioner/researcher as entangled in their research while conducting research and simultaneously being affected by the research, new paths for inquiry open. Conducting research then becomes a corporeal, lived experience (Simonsen, 2007). Researchers/practitioners are entangled with their senses and their body in the research. They are affected, feel uncomfortable, astonished, or surprised during research. Research becomes a sensory experience for the researcher. This means that research—as an assemblage—and the topic or event focused by the research—also an assemblage—mutually affect each other (Fox & Alldred, 2015).

This directly opens social work research to consider the non-human elements in the analysis of the phenomena that interest them. Spaces in their materiality, cities in their full complexity, furniture, trees, food, and so on are elements that affect, that is—have an effect on—people. They can be understood as resources, but I would like to emphasise that they are elements that have a productive force; therefore, these elements must take a more important place in an analysis to understand fully the social problems and professional responses towards them (Richter & Emprechtinger, 2021). The inclu-

sive city, therefore, is not a mere context for inclusion, but it is an assemblage with many elements and connections that have the potential of becoming inclusive not as a once-achieved quality but as an emergent property in specific events.

4.2. Social Work as a Post-Humanist Practice

To transform social work practice into a post-humanist practice is a hard task because it not only implies social workers but also the structures in which their practice is embedded. There is a strong political implication that comes along with this. Structures such as institutions where social workers are employed, the aims that these institutions define, and the social policies of welfare states narrow the practitioners' discretionary power. Therefore, there is a need for political struggles to claim to reform these structures to decentre the human and acknowledge their entanglements in a complex world. In particular, such struggles can be based on a post-human concept of subjectivity that opposes the notion of the autonomous subject. The city as a place, a materiality, a site for encounters, offers much in this sense to rely less on the institutionally mediated relations of single client–professional constellations (such as in counselling) and to develop more social work that situates itself directly where vulnerable subjectivities emerge: in the neighbourhood, in settings where struggles take place, etc.

On the level of concrete practice, post-human theories provide many clues for developing and reconfiguring social work. The concept of entanglement can help to grasp social problems differently and understand social workers' practice as work that helps to reshape these entanglements for a more just world. Therefore, social workers need to acknowledge the way other humans experience the world and their situation, how they relate to the world's different elements, and how the world affects them. As Webb (2021, p. 2976) writes, referring to the concept of agential realism by Karen Barad:

> If agential realism is correct, it literally turns our common assumptions about social work processes and relationships inside-out. In the posthumanist world of Barad, we would barely recognise ourselves because social work is reconfigured through the foregrounding of the dynamic relation of the human and non-human as ontological processes of materialisation, in enactment.

As a consequence, not only are the service users entangled in the world but also social workers are entangled, and the relationship between social workers and the service users constitutes an entanglement. Therefore, social workers need to see themselves as part of such entanglements and acknowledge how these relationships affect them. Becoming a professional in (post)social work means challenging the powerful client–professional relationship.

4.3. Social Work and Post-Human Ethics

Social work as a profession that bases its ethical principles on human rights requires a thorough reconfiguration in light of post-human ethics. A possible key in achieving this is that "post-human" does not mean "anti-human" but rather constitutes a rupture with the humanist tradition grounded in Enlightenment thinking. Social work needs an ethics that acknowledges the human not as a rational individual defined by the abilities of the mind (analysis, decision, strategies, etc.) but rather in the sense of the post-human subjectivity outlined above: embodied, affected, and entangled.

The tracks of post-human theories link to the ethics of care towards the environment—nature, animals, species—but also the different people in the world. Social work as an actor of change, reorganisation, or assemblages, operates in a complex ethical context. This ethics considers that humans are all part of this world and of these current issues: climate change, social inequalities, species extinction, and so on. At the same time, this "we" (humans) is fragmented, differentiated, and multiple. As Braidotti (2019, p. 157) says: "We-are-in-this-together-but-we-are-not-one-and-the-same."

Decentring humans from the analysis and action also provides a powerful argument to question current neoliberal politics that put the burden of social problems on the already disadvantaged. If a social problem such as poverty, delinquency, or disabilities is not centred on individuals, but rather the individuals are seen as nodes in a complex web of objects, materialities, powers, and politics, then critique and action need to address the whole assemblage. An ethics of care provides a strong framework to reconfigure professional social work ethics.

5. Conclusion

I have tried to make the connection between theoretical tracks that I consider to be very productive for the analysis and understanding of social work. I find them productive because they provide a new perspective that departs from the primordiality of reason and the human being developed in Europe during the Enlightenment. They help in understanding aspects of the world that are neglected in much research: body, affect, emotions, and humans' involvement in and with this world in its entirety.

Social work research has until now mainly used post-humanist thinking in the analysis of environmental and health topics. These first journeys into posthumanist thinking and research provide examples of how such a perspective provides fruitful openings. In the same vein, there is a need to address social questions in cities from a post-human perspective. Understanding social problems and pressing social issues such as inclusion as an entanglement in materiality and the multiple elements of the "city-assemblage," provides novel

ways to understand the problems and address them. Cities have grown in the last decades to unseen sizes and the current speed in social, economic, technological, and environmental changes is contributing to an increasing complexity of the cities. There is a need to equip social work with lines of thought that are made to apprehend complexity, interconnectedness, and mutual affectedness.

The task has just begun and the translation of "post"-theories into social work research as well as practice requires more debate. In particular, there is the important task to get practitioners on board and thereby bring post-human research and ethics into the realm of politics and social work practice. Braidotti (2019, p. 122) makes a strong argument as to why this is so much needed in current times:

> We cannot solve contemporary problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them, as Albert Einstein wisely reminds us. The challenges of our times call for adequate forms of accountability for the great advances as well as resistance to the injustices and perils of the present, by thinking outside the conventional categories of analysis.

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Conflict of Interests

No conflict of interests.

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