From Siberia with love or angst in the city? On the idea of merging research projects in Novosibirsk and co-teaching in Hamburg and Berlin

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Joachim Otto Habeck and Philipp Schröder

Angst in the City is the title that the authors of these lines chose for a joint research project and seminar looking into expressions of emotion and social exclusion in diverse urban environments. The title serves as a shorthand for apprehensive feelings that individuals or groups perceive when physically or imaginarily finding themselves in certain spaces in the fabric of the city that they inhabit. The concept of fear will be discussed in more detail below (pp. 7-9). This article has four goals: first, to lay out how this research cooperation on the perception of urban space came into being; second, how it proceeded and what initial results emerged from it; and third, how the research generated the idea of jointly organized teaching. Students who participated in *Angst in the City* conducted small research projects on their own in Hamburg, Schwerin and Berlin, and four of their essays have been adopted for publication in this special issue of *Ethnoscripts*. To prepare the conceptual ground for these four contributions is the fourth goal of this article. It closes with a remark on how the students' projects feed back into our own plans for further research.

Beginnings: Two Separate Research Projects in Novosibirsk

Lifestyle Plurality in Siberia

An initial step towards investigating perceptions of self and urban space in Siberian cities and villages was taken by Habeck and colleagues in a previous research project, on the *Conditions and Limitations of Lifestyle Plurality in Siberia* (Habeck, 2008; in prep.) at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. Within this framework, Habeck conducted interviews in Novosibirsk with a variety of groups, among them with five members of the local gay scene. In line with the *Lifestyle Plurality* project's overall research design, the task was twofold: (i) Travel-biography interviews with each informant were to explore the individual's familial background, his or her action space and mobility at different stages in life, work routines and leisure-time preferences; (ii) Additionally, photo elicitation interviews would reveal individual approaches to self-formation and (visual) self-presentation, aesthetic preferences, personal values and life projects.

Theoretically, the project departed from the concept of lifestyle as used in Sociology (Bourdieu 1984; Chaney 1996; Otte and Rössel 2011). This is a concept which – for reasons to be explained elsewhere – has rarely been employed in Social Anthropology. It has, however, occasionally been applied in social-scientific studies on everyday life in Russia or the Soviet Union (Dittrich and Hölscher 2001; Sokhan' and Tikhonovich 1982; and a few publications by Russian sociologists between 2000 and 2007). *Lifestyle Plurality* project members developed the definition: 'Lifestyle is what one does in order to be what one thinks one should be' (for a similar definition, see Chaney 1996: 37). Clearly, lifestyle is not the same as identity. Rather, lifestyle describes a certain mode of identification; more precisely: an expressive and simultaneously routinized mode of identification (Habeck, in prep.). To be Kyrgyz can be a relevant category of ethnic identity, yet it is not a lifestyle. But if a young resident of Novosibirsk emphasises her Kyrgyz background, her preference of living in a large city, and her predilection for Novosibirsk Kyrgyz 'diaspora' pop music, then it becomes possible to discern a certain lifestyle.

The importance of the concept of lifestyle for the research and teaching effort presented here – *Angst in the City* – lies in the fact that life projects and aesthetic predilections also translate into spatial preferences, including avoidance of certain places and regular visits to others, and that places are fraught emotionally: personal tastes, ambitions and apprehensions articulate with the ways in which urban environments are constructed and perceived. Certain places hold the promise of happiness or integrity ('home', for example, but also, and more often, some magic 'elsewhere'). In Novosibirsk, desires and hopes connect with the names of clubs, streets, *dacha* plots, suburban landscapes and holiday destinations – increasingly also with shopping malls (Habeck 2014). Reversely, notions of fear and insecurity create imaginations of urban peripheries, empty spaces and no-go areas.

Into the 'Near Abroad': Kyrgyz Traders in Novosibirsk's Barakholka Bazaar and Beyond

In Russia's political language, the term 'near abroad' commonly refers to those countries which after the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991 have emerged as 'newly independent states' (NIS). Among these states is Kyrgyzstan, a landlocked and comparatively small country in Central Asia. In multiple ways, the dialectic of simultaneous proximity and distance that is captured in the term 'near abroad' carries further into the relatedness of ethnic Kyrgyz and Russians in both countries.

Basics such as a shared history or language are what, in short, may be regarded as familiar or 'near' between them: during their 70-years of co-membership in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Russian used to be the empire's *lingua franca*, and until today it remains a 'second mother tongue'

to many ethnic Kyrgyz. What, on the other hand, could be considered foreign or 'abroad' refers to aspects of religious belief, with Islam predominating in Kyrgyzstan and Christian Orthodoxy in Russia, or to phenotype, where the Kyrgyz self-depict as 'Asians' and the Russians as 'Europeans'.

For Schröder's current research project, which focuses on post-socialist business-making all over Eurasia, the bazaar of Novosibirsk has been among the most crucial locations (Schröder, forthcoming). Locally known as the *barakholka*, this site has emerged as a prime hub for regional Siberian whole-sale trading from the early 1990s on. Economic matters aside, Schröder's 'being around' in the *barakholka* has as well allowed him to observe how representatives of the various ethnic groups assembled there – as buyers or sellers, as security personnel or food service providers – publicly negotiate and utilize the perceptions of their respective separation or closeness.

In the bazaar and other urban spaces of Novosibirsk, the ethnic Kyrgyz have in the course of time developed a sizeable local presence, and their ethnic diaspora is estimated to have reached more than 20,000 members. Among these, some few had already studied in the city during the Soviet era and simply stayed on after the Union's demise. Most others, however, relocated to Russia only during the 1990s or early 2000s as they tried to escape the comparably harsher economic situation that Kyrgyzstan was experiencing during post-socialist transformation.

In Schröder's fieldwork with Kyrgyz migrants who had relocated into the 'near abroad' of Novosibirsk, he looks as well beyond trade or entrepreneurship, and aims to understand how these professional activities merge with aspects of social integration and – plainly speaking – culture. For example, this entails the ritual economy of weddings and other lifecycle events that are celebrated at particular ethnic Kyrgyz restaurants, or it concerns 'special Asian parties' and other leisure events that are popular among second-generation Kyrgyz in Novosibirsk.

In these and other regards, the Kyrgyz who Schröder has encountered in Siberia and other regions of the Russian Federation are an identifiable and significant diaspora group. As will be discussed later on in more detail, this status marked one of the beginnings why we started developing a common interest for comparing the urban lifeworlds of different minority groups, ethnic or other, as regards the ways in which they perceive the city of Novosibirsk and (*vice versa*) how other inhabitants perceive them.

A Climate of Fear? Researching Minorities in Contemporary Russia

Recent political and public debates in Russia have been marked by a strong rhetoric of 'social order' and 'moral values'. Inspired by a mix of Orthodox religious views, Soviet imperial nostalgia and 'everyday nationalism' (Kosmarskaya and Savin 2016) these notions contribute to the shaping and main-

tenance of a rather narrow ideal of Russian mainstream society. Among the repercussions are various 'conservative' agendas. One example is the Russian legislation against the 'propaganda of non-traditional sexual orientation' (see pp. 10-12), which can be utilized for prosecuting outspoken gay and lesbian activists.

Legal considerations and practices of law enforcement aside, multiple incidents have been reported in recent years of violence by self-acclaimed Russian 'vigilante' movements against allegedly gay or pedophile men. But also immigrants from former Soviet Republics are targeted by 'patriotic' or 'skinhead' groups. Since 2007 more than 200 individuals of Central Asian origin (but potentially holding a Russian citizenship) have fallen victim to racially motivated murder in Russia (SOVA 2016). In light of these politicized '-phobias' and attempts for moral hegemony some observers argue that a 'generalized climate of fear' (Coalson 2013) has emerged in contemporary Russia.

For us, the fact that these momentous trends equally concerned the minorities that we had already been working with as part of our individual researches prompted the interest for a common project: Habeck's previous research on lifestyle plurality in Siberia included interviews in Novosibirsk with men who identified as gay and/or who engaged in homosexual relations; Schröder had examined ethnic Kyrgyz in Novosibirsk since 2013, which included various self- and outside-perceptions of this diaspora community within this city's social fabric. Consequently, Novosibirsk emerged as the most suitable site for our fieldwork. This, however, extended beyond the convenience that both of us were already familiar with the city (and thus could build on previous fieldwork relations to find respondents for this new topic of social exclusion and urban emotionalities). Importantly, Novosibirsk is of particular significance within Russia, being its third largest city by population and the prime metropole in the vast Siberian region. Furthermore, our comparative interest was stimulated because Novosibirsk is not located in 'Western' or 'European' Russia, but in the country's 'North Asian' region and has received much less academic interest than Moscow or Saint Petersburg.

Among the research questions we have set out to investigate since 2014 are: How do ethnic Kyrgyz or men engaging in same-sex relationships perceive, construct and express their belonging in Novosibirsk? While dwelling and moving in this city, which spaces, situations and times of the day do members of these 'minority groups' associate with fear, joy or other emotional states? And how do these urban emotionalities relate to the aforementioned neo-national and neo-traditional tendencies in contemporary Russia? The purpose of our research thus is to understand more about how ethnic and sexual diversity is negotiated among different residents of Novosibirsk, and in which ways minorities might (feel the need to) resist, adapt or withdraw from particular urban environments. Eventually, this may allow us to

provide an answer to the question indicated in the title – to what extent there is in fact *Angst* in the city of Novosibirsk?

Common Research: *Angst* in the Urban Space of Novosibirsk

The City of Novosibirsk

With approximately 1.5 million inhabitants, Novosibirsk is the largest city of Siberia, and it has seen periods of rapid growth in its relatively short history, which spans 125 years. Having emerged as a railway station and bridge construction site, former Novonikolaevsk (nowadays Novosibirsk) attracted wave after wave of migrants from the closer and farther surroundings. It underwent rapid industrialisation in the 1930s (cf. Rolf 2006) and during the early 1940s, when Germany waged war against the Soviet Union, became the site of relocation of large factories from the western part of the country. German war prisoners in the late 1940s and early 1950s; Soviet academic elites, for whom a comfortable suburb was created in the 1960s; and workers from the Central Asian Soviet republics were among the multiple groups of migrants that made up the population of Novosibirsk in the mid and late Soviet era. The growth of the city did not cease after the end of the Soviet Union (1991). After a few years of standstill and downturn, the attractiveness of the city increased again, owing to its even more important administrative and commercial functions in a more centralised and yet outspokenly market-oriented Russia. A palpable effect of this growth is the replacement of old wooden houses in the city centre by architecturally imposing condominiums and tower blocks.

From both Schröder's and Habeck's experience, almost all interlocutors describe the city as a very dynamic place. Our interviewees are aware of the migratory background of virtually everybody in the city. Few inhabitants can name ancestors in Novosibirsk beyond two generations and altogether, the city has an ambience of a young, promising, even prosperous place, though not without conflicts. Generally, our interviewees emphasised the rather open and tolerant atmosphere of the city (see p. 15).

Interview Guideline for Joint Research

For *Angst in the City*, the authors designed and carried out fieldwork in Novosibirsk in summer 2014. In preparation, we developed a guideline of shared questions, which then each of us could rely on during the conversation with respondents. This was of particular importance, because due to diverging schedules we could not travel to Novosibirsk at the same time. Therefore, these interviews (with members of either the Kyrgyz diaspora or the group of men engaging in same-sex relations) needed to be conducted separately.

The questions of our guideline were divided into three major themes. The first theme focused on the perception and use of different urban spaces in light of the respondents' personal mobility and biography. As part of this, we were interested to gather narratives about someone's memories of his or her first arrival at Novosibirsk, the impression of different neighbourhoods where someone used to live or spends free time, and also how in the inter-locutor's eyes the city has changed in the course of time. The second theme aimed at a better understanding of certain key terms of our research. This included subjective definitions of what 'fear' is (also using Russian and Kyrgyz terminology) and how it is (supposed to be) handled and expressed. Further-more, we asked our respondents to re-tell certain situations when in the past they had experienced fear or other strong emotions while being somewhere in Novosibirsk. The third theme then addressed some more detailed aspects of the link between urbanity and negative or positive emotionality. For ex-ample, we inquired what our respondents associated with swearwords of city slang or how they saw certain groups within the urban environment, such as *skinkhedy* (skinheads).

Male-To-Male Relations and Homophobia

This section will first address public perceptions of homosexuality and inci-dents of homophobic attacks in Novosibirsk, then describe clandestine and open spaces in the city where men can date men, and finally identify poten-tially risky urban spaces in more general terms.

On the basis of his research data collected for the *Lifestyles* Project, Habeck conducted eight more interviews in Novosibirsk in August 2014, us-ing the guideline of questions that he and Schröder had formulated jointly. The interviews were with men who would self-identify as gay and others who *would not*, rather seeing themselves as men occasionally having sex with other men. Labelling LBGT identities is a complex issue in a society in which, on the one hand, sexual encounters between men occur – and did occur in the Soviet and pre-Soviet past (Baer 2015; Essig 1999; Healey 2001); and in which, on the other hand, the notions of *goluboi* ('gay') or worse, *pider* ('pederast'), have always carried a derogatory sense. Sexual orientation as a category of identity – in particular if openly acknowledged – is of rather re-cent emergence, and arguably perceived by many Russians as a bad example of Western individualism and hedonism.

This is also true for Novosibirsk, which occasionally saw lesbian and gay activism in the public as well as in-door 'pride' parties from the late 1990s to the mid-2000s. But in most recent years, public or political appearance of lesbians or gays has effectively vanished. Being 'out and proud' in Novosi-birsk was an option for a short period, but is no longer.

Clearly, public opinion with regard to homosexuality has become more hostile in connection with regulations that forbid 'propaganda of homosexualism among minors', approved by the Legislative Assembly of Novosibirsk Oblast' already in 2012 as part of the Law on the Protection of Rights of Children (Belov and Ianushkevich 2012) and introduced into different documents of federal, i.e. all-Russian, legislation in 2013 (Federal'nyi Zakon 2013). Whether intended or not, this legislation contributes to the overall level of homophobia and thus to the perception of risk among lesbians and gays.

What comes to the fore in Habeck's set of interviews is a peak of homophobia in 2013, when right-wing vigilante groups literally went on raids, or 'safaris', on individuals whom they had identified as 'pedophiles'. This sort-of social movement advertised itself under the slogan 'Occupy Pedophilia' on the Internet (Figure 1; Podgornova 2014: 27-29). The business of hunting 'pedophiles' – in fact homosexual men – started in Moscow and from there spread to other cities in Russia, including Novosibirsk. The strategy of the hunt consisted of creating a bogus profile of a young man in a social network, starting online conversations with interested men, arranging a date and place, awaiting the victim, encircling him as a group, abusing and forcing the victim to confess his being a *pider*, recording the scene, and then posting the video on the Internet.

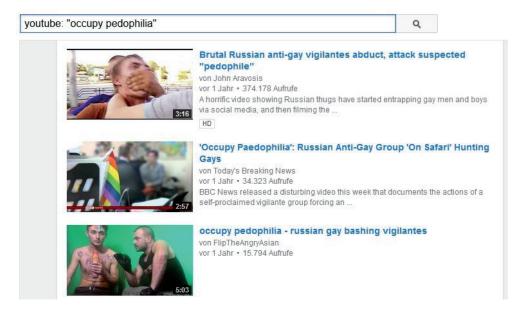Figure 1: Youtube showing results for the search term 'Occupy Pedophilia'. Search and Screenshot: J. Otto Habeck, 16 March 2015.

Incidents of this kind occurred over the period of a few months, up to the moment when police could identify the leaders of this 'movement' and when the videos disappeared from the Internet. These events definitely augmented the perception of risk in urban space among men dating men. Two of Habeck's

interviewees reported they were victims of assaults, though the focus was not on video 'documentation', but rather on mugging (reportedly, money, car keys and personal documents).

Such attacks are contextualized within a more general notion of risk – and risk-taking behaviour – connected with practices of dating and cottaging, i.e. strolling around at certain places with the intention to find a same-sex partner for sexual intercourse. In times before the Internet and social networking sites, cottaging was much more widespread. Local lore knows at least three such so-called *pleshka* places (cf. Essig 1999) in Novosibirsk, which already existed in Soviet times. Such places of both desire and risk are 'operating' also at present, although less frequented than in the past.

Other, less clandestine meeting points for men who want to get to know men are the nudist beach 40 km away from the city centre and the occasional gay night club in the city centre. The existence of gay night clubs in Novosibirsk is generally short-lived, which means that venues change from year to year. Interviewees often rate clubs on the basis of personal security – if the club has bouncers, that's a good thing.

While for Habeck's interlocutors, the risk of homophobic attacks is definitely part and parcel of the emotional experience of urban space, it is not the only risk, and not necessarily the most immediate one. One can get mugged or bashed or abused for a wide array of reasons – or for no obvious reason at all, as some of the interviewees pointed out repeatedly.

Several of them claimed that it is impossible to identify areas of high risk, simply because one may run into trouble potentially everywhere, just by coincidence. However, the majority of the interlocutors was ready to identify areas of increased danger. Apart from mentioning two suburbs of the city which are notoriously known to be shady,[1] there is agreement on the equation 'the further away from the centre, the less street lights, and the less people in the street, the greater is the risk of being attacked'. While this may seem obvious, it entails that tower-block areas are considered to be safer than those parts of the city with detached houses – the so-called *chastnyi sektor* (private sector areas). In this respect, the way in which the built environment shapes the impression of personal security is markedly different from cities in western or central parts of Europe (cf. the reputation of the tower-block areas of Schwerin mentioned by Ziegler, this volume).

'Blacks', churki *and Kyrgyz Migrants: Xenophobia in Russia and Novosibirsk*

Soviet ideological policies envisioned an advancement towards social harmony between members of the Union's different 'nationalities', up to the point

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1   These two suburbs are Pervomaika, approximately 15 km southeast of the city centre, and Zatulinka, on the western or 'left' side of River Ob', about 10 km south of the city centre. Interviewees also mentioned other suburbs, though less frequently.

when *homo sovieticus* would leave behind his or her previous ethnic affiliation. There is, however, ample evidence indicating that these grand ambitions for cosmopolitanism and the 'friendship of peoples' did not fully materialize in everyday realities, but rather that ethnic awareness and power misbalances remained vital throughout the Soviet period, usually with the Russians as so-called 'older brothers' at the top (Grant 2010). In particular, following Gorbachev's attempts for inner reform, local 'nationalisms' and ethnic-based political movements (with centrifugal consequences) gained further momentum in different socialist republics from the mid-1980s onwards (e.g. Florin 2015).

As far as Kyrgyz and other Central Asian migrants to Russia are concerned, these reported cases of racial discrimination and about being referred to as 'blacks' (*chernye*) already during the days of late Soviet Moscow or Leningrad (Sahadeo 2012). Since then, the efforts of non-Russians at place-making and integration in these and other cities have oftentimes been associated with experiences of official and informal stigmatization and uncertainty (Reeves 2013). During his fieldwork in Novosibirsk Schröder could as well detect instances of publicly expressed xenophobia, both in the materiality of urban space and during the interviews with Kyrgyz interlocutors.

Figure 2: Graffiti on a factory's perimeter fencing in Dzerzhinskii Raion, a district of Novosibirsk. Svastika and cross hairs are accompanied with the slogans 'No churka's', 'White Power Rock' and 'Khachi – urody!' ('Hadjis are monsters!'). Photo: J. Otto Habeck, March 2012.

For example, this occurred by the term *churka*, which could be spotted in wall-graffiti (Figure 2) and apparently also was used during verbal confrontations between Kyrgyz or other Central Asians and local Russians. In fact,

churka translates as 'tree stub' (or 'wooden block') and meant to express that someone would be 'dull' or 'dumb', or in any other way unsophisticated and 'less civilized'. Some respondents imagined that *churka* could as well be used because of its phonetic similarity to *tiurki*, which is Russian for 'Turks', and in that way would aim to racially discriminate against migrants with origins in Central Asia or the Caucasus.

On the other hand, Schröder's Kyrgyz interlocutors in Novosibirsk presented a quite self-confident counter-discourse, which justifies their belonging in that region with their ancestors' settlement history dating back to the 9th century (Dashkovskiy 2014). The 'Yenisei Kyrgyz' of those times have thus come to serve as a rhetoric link between present-day Central Asia and Siberia. In particular, this associates the Kyrgyz to the residents of the Russian Altai (not very far south of Novosibirsk) who share with them a Turkic origin and further similarities in language and customs.

The next section will illustrate how these and other historic developments influence the ways in which Kyrgyz appropriate, avoid and emotionalize urban spaces in contemporary Novosibirsk. For now, what is important is the observation that the 'Novosibirsk Kyrgyz' may draw from a rhetoric repertoire of legitimate belonging that would not be available to their co-ethnics residing in Moscow or elsewhere in Western Russia. This observation may direct attention towards the potential for regional variation in matters of minority integration in different Russian cities. A recent study on the urban lives of Central Asians in Kazan' (Tatarstan) advances the same insight: It argues that the historical co-residence of Tatar Muslims and Russian (Orthodox) Christians since the mid-16th century has manifested in quite distinct spatial identities to which contemporary resident groups can relate to and orientate on when navigating the city (Nasritdinov 2016).

First Comparative Insights: Not a Risky, But Rather a 'Quiet' and 'Cultured' City?

So far the number of interviews we conducted in Novosibirsk certainly is insufficient to draw firm conclusions. Still, the responses we did receive during our formal and informal conversations and the observational data we gathered while being in the city presented us with some early insights and will give our future research direction. Conceptually, we could establish that the management of 'emotional economies' (Stodulka 2014), i.e. the construction, expression or suppression of feelings such as fear, shame, hope or (self-)confidence, is a vital ingredient in processes of social inclusion or exclusion in Novosibirsk.

Our empirical data show that most members of the ethnic Kyrgyz diaspora as well as men engaging in same-sex relationships generally depict the city in a positive light. The latter cherish the 'culturedness', openness and

anonymity of the city in comparison to smaller settlements. Many of them also identify the city centre as a space where displays of otherness are tolerated or even expected. Having said that, almost none of the men would dare to be 'out' in the public space of Novosibirsk. In consequence, one can hardly speak of a gay community in the city, but rather of patchy and clandestine personal networks. In that sense they differ markedly from the ethnic Kyrgyz of Novosibirsk, who openly and self-assuredly maintain expansive networks with other Kyrgyz (which are clustered mainly around their regional origin in Kyrgyzstan). They mention the 'quietness' of the city and claim that after a period of 'cultural adaptation', which for them mostly entailed improving Russian language skills and incorporating other elements of an urban habitus, they would not be exposed to significant xenophobic threats or excessive public discrimination. On the contrary, the ways in which these Kyrgyz navigate the city, recount personal conflicts, and perceive of urban 'dangers' seem to be more related to other groups of Central Asian migrants, mostly Uzbeks and Tajiks, rather than to the ethnic Russian majority.

Perhaps most strikingly, our preliminary finding that Novosibirsk is considered a rather 'quiet' and 'open' city marks a considerable contrast to what has been said before about the situation in major cities of Western Russia, such as Moscow or Saint Petersburg. To us, this illustrates the relevance of particular 'local features' that need to be taken into account when examining spatial appropriations or avoidances, emotions and the social exclusion of minority groups. In the case of Novosibirsk's urbanity, some of this 'local colour' emerges from the city's short settlement history and its specific demographic development that is tied to a high degree of mobility throughout the Soviet period and that, to some extent, may also have been caused by a significant influx of members of the *intelligentsia*.

Transfer into a Student Seminar: From Siberia to Hamburg and Berlin

Seminar Themes: Fear, Exclusion and Urban Space

Our Berlin/Hamburg seminar picked up on some theoretical concepts of the previous research in Novosibirsk, to then scrutinise, apply and extend them. Clearly, and already stated by Simmel ([1903] 1957), the city is a place where individual life projects can grow – at least, it nurtures hopes to that effect. Simultaneously, cities are sites of obvious economic inequalities and blatantly exerted practices of exclusion. More than a century after Simmel, questions of social exclusion and distinction in urban spaces and their embedding in 'emotional economies' remain relevant topics within Social and Cultural Anthropology.

To be sure, the trope of stigmatization and social exclusion is not new in Urban Anthropology. Policies regulating access to urban space in tandem with less 'formal' practices of social exclusion were characteristic for cen-

turies in cities of Europe (Raphael 2011) and elsewhere. What did change over time, though, were the practices and instruments of exclusion (or carceral inclusion), ideas of responsibility for urban welfare, and ways of dealing with anonymity, contingency and unpredictability caused by the immediate co-presence of 'strangers', as Bauman (2003) argues. He ponders about the simultaneous desire for fuzziness, creativity and diversity (which he calls mixophilia) and for predictable, 'traditional' social relations of sameness (mixophobia), concluding that the balance between the two trends has lately come to be tipped towards mixophobia. The effects of the fear of some 'other' will be discussed in more detail shortly.

Notwithstanding the long debate on stigma and exclusion in social sciences, the aspect of fear (the *Angst* in our project title) is a very recent strand in the now growing field of Anthropology of Emotion (about the latter, Ahmed 2004; Röttger-Rössler and Stodulka 2014). Not only but particularly in scholarship on security, the concept of fear has mostly been treated as an irrational phenomenon experienced by some anonymous crowd; however, as Alexandra Schwell (2015: 97-101) argues, fears deserve more detailed attention as "bodily sensations that are experienced individually" (2015: 100) and are deeply related to moral judgments. Schwell also alludes to the design of urban spaces that may reduce or "increase the subjective feeling of security" (2015: 108). This idea, which also came to the fore in Novosibirsk, informed the students' discussions and research projects in combination with the observation that some urban spaces are unpretentiously but very effectively designed to deter people (about such 'interdictory spaces', see below).

To return to the effects of mixophobia, it is the very apprehension of some citizens vis-à-vis unfamiliar, unconventional, undeserving or unruly 'others' that triggers various practices of social exclusion in the first place. We can discern two sets of practices of social exclusion: inward-turned segregation and outward aggression. Setha Low vividly captures the first in her 2014 overview of Urban Anthropology, making reference to the emergence of gated communities in many parts of the world: 'The fear of crime – common in local discussions by gated community residents – is a rationalization of another kind of conversation about the influx of new people who are different, who do not hold the same values, and behave in unpredictable, often unacceptable, ways' (Low 2014: 23).[2]

The other set of practices of social exclusion is more offensive, i.e. more directly targeting the 'other', as exemplified by voluntary security guards and vigilante groups. Caroline Humphrey argues (2013: 301-303) that fear can be understood as *entitlement*: while someone may 'have' fear in the sight of some frightening character, the latter is not easily granted the quality of be-

2   Such processes of segregation and self-isolation are not limited to gated communities; they also occur in more mundane ways, notably as demarcation of private space by walls and fences. For a Siberian case study, see Habeck and Belolyubskaya (2016).

ing anxious, of experiencing fear. Even though her argument for the possible existence of a 'perspectival switch' does not make us inclined to feel sympathy with members of vigilante groups, it does serve as a reminder that diffuse feelings of fear – connected to a perceived inability to manage the advent of new strangers and challenges – make some individuals believe in facile solutions and take a more or less hostile attitude towards what they perceive as 'trouble-makers'. Vigilante groups in Russia (Tsipurski 2013) and elsewhere (Kirsch and Graetz 2010) actively pursue practices of social exclusion and criminalization. Their often transgressive and physically threatening actions create fear among those stigmatized (i.a. ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, but also people with no formally registered place of residence) and call forth counter-reactions, which may include escape, avoidance, or outspoken opposition, depending not to the least on the ability of stigmatized groups to find allies and present themselves in local media. What comes to the fore in our own research and our students' studies are marginalized individuals carving out informal and temporary niches for themselves in the urban space, but also activists who speak out on behalf of marginalized groups, partly based on their own experiences of precariousness.

There is one final aspect of *Angst* and urban space that should not go unnoticed: It can best be dubbed as *thrill*, immanent in the possibility of spontaneous encounters in the fuzziness and diversity of urban life, as discussed by Phil Hubbard (2007) in his essay on the more serendipitous and also risky experience of an evening 'out' in a British city centre in contrast to the more predictable (and, arguably, more consumerist) experience of an evening 'out' in the leisure parks outside the centre. In many ways, the city remains a space that engenders both emotions of curiosity and apprehension.

Practicalities of Teaching, of Designing and Conducting Research on Urban Emotions

Our seminar *Angst in the City* was conducted both in Berlin and Hamburg. Ideally, it would have brought together the students from these universities into one classroom on a regular basis, for example biweekly. Such setup would not only have established a positive (informal) group dynamic early on, but also would have facilitated the general learning process. This again would have been desirable due to the rather diverse scientific backgrounds that the Hamburg and the Berlin students had: The students from Hamburg were all Social/Cultural Anthropologists by training, whereas the Berlin students were enrolled in an area-studies Master-program called 'Global Studies' and before had predominantly completed degrees in Social Sciences other than Anthropology. The two joint classroom sessions that we were able to conduct towards the end of the semester in fact were characterized by lively discus-

sions covering multiple disciplinary and theoretical angles and thus support this assumption.

Unfortunately, due to the students' tight schedules and the budgetary constraints that the seminar faced, at the beginning of the semester joint sessions were not feasible. We adapted to that situation by ways of lecturer mobility, meaning that on one weekday the same seminar session was first held in Berlin in the morning, and then – after a two-hour train ride – in Hamburg in the afternoon. To us as lecturers, from this necessary change emerged quite valuable insights into how the very same readings were received, discussed and understood differently by these two audiences. At the same time, it made us adjust our ways of moderating the texts and of setting particular learning objectives. Furthermore, the intense co-teaching experience (three hours in Berlin and three hours in Hamburg on the same day) enabled us to closely observe each other's didactic approach. Usually, the train rides provided welcome opportunities to commonly reflect on these matters.

One core component of our seminar was a 'buddying system' among students. Quite similarly to how we ourselves have conducted research in Novosibirsk, we wanted to establish pairs of students who would approach compatible research themes together. In order not to impose our own previous ideas onto the group too forcefully, during the seminar's first sessions we reserved considerable time for students to articulate their personal interests and develop them further. Once these single projects had taken shape, we aggregated them into larger themes, such as 'Spaces and Spirituality' or 'Spaces of Refuge'. Next, students were asked to indicate a first and second priority from among these research themes. Matching these across the whole group allowed us to eventually identify four buddy-pairs, each with one participant from Berlin and one from Hamburg.

In our view, this procedure kept a balance between what the students considered 'worthwhile' for research individually, which oftentimes drew from their own urban experiences in these cities, and the necessity to channel these preferences into a smaller number of clusters that would fit with the overall framework uniting aspects of exclusion, emotion and urban space. As the overview of projects (below) will show in more detail, one such research cluster, for example, compared aspects of 'homelessness' in Berlin and Hamburg. Ideally, 'being buddied' in that way offered each student a counterpart in the other city to keep in touch and share empirical insights with and to discuss research practicalities in an informal way. Accordingly, during the final joint sessions of our seminar, the buddies presented their research projects together.

For many of our students the seminar offered a whole range of new experiences. Especially, this concerned their first participation in a full-cycle research that went from designing and conducting a project to analyzing its data and publishing the insights. Furthermore, English was the language of

choice during the seminar discussions and also for the articles that have now emerged from it. Many students also expressed that working in a team in-between cities was a valuable experience for them. Any scientific aspects aside the team-aspect certainly offered practical insights as to the communication and coordination of specific tasks, the negotiation of compromises for the collective goal, and the management of time and efforts. In our seminar the latter was a particular challenge given that the research was expected to be finalized and presented within less than three months.

Angst in the City in Retrospect – and a Brief Summary of the Contributions to This Volume

Looking back at the history of this special issue of *Ethnoscripts*, the project attained its particular drive from three sorts of transfer: firstly, from a shared perspective on urban spaces and lifestyles, but also on homophobia and xenophobia between the two authors of this article. This led to jointly coordinated field research in the city of Novosibirsk, on the basis of shared hypotheses and research instruments. Second, this experience triggered the idea to share conceptual and methodological insights with students at the universities with which the authors are affiliated, and encourage students to formulate their own ideas for a short research project, ideally in teams. Third, what resulted from the studies fed back into and substantively modified the ways the authors of these lines now see micro-practices of urban place-making.

What our case studies and the students' researches have in common is a certain notion of niche. Natascha Bregy and Claryce Lum pursue the strategies that individuals employ when carving out a more or less temporary, unfenced space for themselves (admittedly, these strategies often fail because of policies of control, surveillance and 'interdictory spaces', cf. Bauman 2003: 30-31). *Natascha Bregy* describes the interplay of solidarity and segregation among homeless people in the centre of Hamburg and provides detailed insights into their ambit of mobility, action space and self-perceptions. She also points to the persistence of social ills that cause homelessness in the first place. In this respect, *Claryce Lum*'s Berlin-based study is on a more positive key, revealing how individuals who have 'got out' of the situation of homelessness convey to a broader public the problems, strategies and resources of homeless people. Moreover, the articles in this volume illustrate the ways in which individuals come to share niches, voluntarily or willy-nilly, in support of others. Two papers that regrettably did not make it into this issue developed the difficulties and intricacies of seeking, appropriating and providing niches – in both cases, this concerned niches for refugees in Berlin and surroundings.

Based on research in a tower-block suburb of her home town Schwerin in the northeast of Germany, *Carmen Ziegler* explores what is colloquially called the 'Russian' network, which comprises individuals of different ethnic background from the former Soviet Union. The *Dreesch*, as described by Ziegler, is no longer a prestigious suburb as it once was during the times of the GDR; rather, it has become a place where, for better or worse, individuals rely on mutual support of an informal network, largely based on familial ties and a common language, in this case Russian. This informal network has ultimately been creating educational self-help groups, i.e. new formal institutions of mutual help.[3]

A different trope is rendered in *Dumitriţa Luncă*'s account of how the residents of St Pauli – Hamburg's most famous district – perceive their neighbourhood and connect it with their biographies. The neighbourhood constantly offers challenges and surprises. It shows down-to-earth realities of life with no frills. Each generation of residents is experiencing St Pauli anew, 'young and wide-eyed' (Luncă). Each generation takes the changes that gradually occur in the neighbourhood as some sort of loss, ultimately amounting to a certain level of fatigue with the built and social environment around their place of living.

Notwithstanding the above interpretations, it is clear that niches are not always cozy places. What they do is, at least, provide some sense of reliability and sameness in an urban space that Bauman (2003) describes as fuzzy and contingent, and as such they bear some resemblance to the niches and secluded spaces of the elites, as discussed above with reference to Low (2014). We conclude this introductory article with the assumption that in Russia as much as in many other countries the current trends towards patriotism, moral order and securitization will increase the need for niches and simultaneously will diminish these niches, making people's existence in them more precarious.

Moreover, in further pursuing our own research in Novosibirsk and other post-socialist cities, what we take with us is the array of ideas that our students have put forward. Their findings induce us to follow 'our' actors more closely in their activities of networking; to consider conducting parallel studies on *Angst in the City* among other (stigmatized) groups, such as lone parents or people with no formal residence; and also to take into account the effect of time and memory on how residents of cities, in Russia and elsewhere, express their apprehensions and emotional attachments to urban spaces.

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3   One reason, it seems to us, that the *Dreesch* has come to be 'home' for a large number of migrants from the former Soviet Union lies in its architectural similarity to tower-block areas in the USSR successor states, which are seen as rather comfortable living space (cf. Habeck and Belolyubskaya 2016: 121) – more so than in the former GDR. The Dreesch may thus be interpreted as a niche that enables individuals to continue postsocialist ways of dwelling.

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