PALACEOLOGY, OR PALACE-AS-METHODOLOGY: ETHNOGRAPHIC CONCEPTUALISM, TOTAL URBANISM, AND A STALINIST SKYSCRAPER IN WARSAW

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This article describes experiments with fieldwork methodology, carried out while researching the relationship between a Stalinist skyscraper (the Palace of Culture and Science) and the social life of contemporary Warsaw. Making use of three concepts of totality taken from social and art theory (the Maussian "total social fact," the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and anthropological holism), I show how the provocative style and public scale of "Palaceological" "ethnographic conceptualism"—which triangulates participant observation, artlike ethnographic interventions, and a quantitative survey—mirrors the bombastic manner and pervasive scope of the Palace's presence in the social life of the city. This text does not argue that an urban *Gesamtkunstwerk* or an experiment with ethnographic methodology can actually achieve (descriptive or actual) totality. Rather, it illustrates how an "urban portrait"—the product of an aspiration to approximate and to measure the totality of an urban environment, rather than to embrace partiality as an end in itself—might be assembled.

Keywords: Methodology; Ethnography; Urbanism; Architecture; Totality; Holism; Stalinism; Postsocialism

INTRODUCTION: PALACEOLOGY: PALACE-AS-METHODOLOGY

This article is a discussion of some experiments with fieldwork methodology, which I carried out while researching the relationship between the Palace of Culture and Science (PKiN: Pałac Kultury i Nauki)—a 231-meter skyscraper "gifted" to Warsaw by the Soviet Union in 1955—and the contemporary city (Figure 1). Although I will try to convey a sense of the material I gathered and the conclusions I reached, my focus will be on how I collected data rather than on presenting my research findings as such. In what follows, I describe the manner in which (on top of "ordinary" participant observation) I deployed provocative "interventions" into Palace-themed public debates in Warsaw in combination with an online quantitative survey to gather my fieldwork data. The point was to confront a maximum number of Varsovians as explicitly as possible with the substance of my observations, which concerned the Palace's interactions with their city. I wanted to verify as exactingly as was within my means whether and how far my hypotheses—concerning the relationship of totality that seemed to inhere between building and city—were or were not accurate. Because the strategies I employed to gather data replicated the big scale, bombastic aesthetic and broad social reach of the Palace itself (put differently, they were ethnographically informed by the Palace, which therefore became the subject-object of my research), I will refer to the methodology I developed as "Palaceology."

Figure 1. A tour group preparing to enter the Palace of Culture and Science. (Photo by Bartosz Stawiarski, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw.)

Making reference to the Maussian notion of the "total social fact" and the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk,* my intention is also to provoke some thoughts about the relationship between social and aesthetic totalities, anthropological holism, and the form and scope of ethnographic methodology. What follows is not a critique of totality, "totalizations," or totalitarianism (in the field or in the academy); instead, I deploy totality *as* critique, attempting to bring it to the consciousness of the posttotalitarian universe of twenty-first century Warsaw, as well as to the postholist landscape of contemporary anthropology.

ETHNOGRAPHIC CONCEPTUALISM: TOTAL OR OPEN WORK?

Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov's introduction in this issue introduces two thoughts that I would like to explore further: the notion of "conducting" ethnography "as conceptual art," and the characterization of "ethnographic

conceptualism" as "a form of public engagement" with (and exploration of) an *audience,* which aspires to encompass the "general public." In my own application of these ideas, the key borrowings to be made by ethnographic from artistic conceptualism refer to the provocative style (a staple of broadly periodized conceptualism from Marcel Duchamp to Damien Hirst[1]) of the anthropologist's interaction with her or his public and to the manner in which this "general public" is defined. When anthropologists talk about "provoking" someone, the reference is ordinarily to the reactions elicited by written work produced after returning from the field (the extra-field domain). Citing from my own fieldwork experience in Warsaw, I would like to demonstrate, however, some ways in which it pays to provoke (and to experiment) while still in the field and to reflect on the dynamics of engagement and detachment attendant to this manner of interaction. Ethnographic conceptualism, in my summary understanding, provides a license for anthropologists to treat informants like conceptual artists treat their public: to extract reactions by means of provocation from (large) *audiences* of informants.

The key object around which Ssorin-Chaikov's account is structured is the visitors' book to an exhibition of gifts to Soviet leaders (curated by him with Olga Sosnina at the Kremlin Museum in 2006; see Ssorin-Chaikov 2006b), which was deployed as an artwork but also as an ethnographic artifact; as a means of turning the exhibition audience into informants and artistic coproducers at the same time (Sosnina and Ssorin-Chaikov 2009; Ssorin-Chaikov, review essay, this issue). Exploring the methodological purchase of the visitors' book's "unfinished" and "open-ended" status, Ssorin-Chaikov suggests a number of concepts from anthropology and adjacent disciplines with which ethnographic conceptualism might enter into a critical conversation. These include Umberto Eco's ([1962] 1989) theory of the "open work," or *opera aperta*; Pierre Boulez's reinterpretation ("remediation," in Boulez's term) of Wagner's *Ring* cycle (Rabinow 2011:199–201); and the "antitotalitarian" art of post-Stalin, Brezhnev-era "Moscow conceptualists," such as Ilya Kabakov, Vitaly Komar, and Alexander Melamid.

Following Ssorin-Chaikov's invitation, I would like to elaborate on these last two examples. The target of Boulez's "remediation" is Wagner's idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* ([1849] 1993), the "total art work," which fuses different media to put together a creative synthesis invested with universal significance and revolutionary potential. In his writing on Wagner, Boulez emphasizes the unattainability of this totality (the total work of art being the very antithesis of Eco's *opera aperta*). For Boulez, "the ultimate lesson of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*" is that "the total work of art exists only as a fictitious absolute that is continuously retreating" (Boulez and Nattiez 1990:259). The spate of reappraisals of Wagner's notion which have appeared during the past several years (Smith 2007; Koss 2010; Finger and Follett 2011;

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[1] Many canonical definitions of conceptual art focus on the dematerialization—or de-aestheticization—of the art object (LeWitt 1967; Battcock 1973; Lippard 1997). By contrast, my reading of ethnographic conceptualism as a methodology is accompanied by its own distinct aesthetic—not a style of writing but a manner of interacting with one's informants.

Roberts 2011; Husslein-Arco, Krejci, and Steinbrügge 2012)[2] follow a similar trajectory. They advocate the desirability of the hybrid "ambition to borderlessness" (Finger and Follett 2011) allegedly attendant to Wagner's notion, while purging it of its aspirations to totality.

This leads me to Boris Groys, whose classic analysis views the art of Stalinist socialist realism, and the lived reality of Stalinist Russia, as the fullest realization to date of the dream—taken over by socialist realists from the avant-garde—that society should be organized as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in which "the unordered, chaotic life of past ages was to be replaced by a unitary artistic plan" (Groys 1992:3). It is in his analysis of Soviet-era conceptual art, however, that Groys makes the point that is most germane to my argument. He does not view the "unofficial art" of the late Soviet Union as doing to the Stalinist *Gesamtkunstwerk* what Boulez did to Wagner (or, it might be added here, what Clifford and Marcus [1986] did to "pre-reflexive" anthropology). Instead, writes Groys, "by reflecting [Stalinism] and revealing its internal structure" the reception of Stalinism by the "Moscow conceptualists ... completed Stalin's project, enabling it for the first time to be grasped in its entirety" (Groys 1992:78). In this sense, Palaceology—in its sardonic-provocative register—is more indebted to Groys's Moscow conceptualists (at a stretch, one might label it "ethnographic Moscow conceptualism") than to the contemporaneous "ironic aesthetic practices" of the 1980s *stiob* generation (Yurchak 2006). Like the Moscow conceptualists, the practitioners of *stiob* rejected derision in favor of an ambiguous, over-identifying irony, which seemed to exude a "feeling of affinity of warmth" towards authoritative symbols. However, where *stiob* rested on a consciously antipolitical rejection of ideological dialogue (Yurchak 2006:249–254), the Moscow conceptualists (in Groys's account) engineered their work to exist in critical continuity with the pervasive politicization of life and art characteristic of the Soviet ideological and aesthetic universe.

Of course, the Russian conceptualists' (and Groys's own) mimesis is satirical: artists like Kabakov and Komar and Melamid, working during the final decades of the Soviet Union's existence, intended to "bring to consciousness" the ultimately chimerical nature of the Soviet *Gesamtkunstwerk* (or, in Adorno's [(1966) 1973] terms, the "non-identity" between the subject and object of Soviet totalitarianism). The point of departure for Palaceology was also critical-satirical. However, by virtue of the fact that the postsocialist political-aesthetic and political-economic field in which I was operating had a self-consciously nontotalitarian character and identity, Palaceology's strategy was vulgar Lukácsian (Lukács [1923] 1971; Jay 1977, 1984) in its embrace of the whole: the idea was to bring totality itself (the lived totality of Warsaw-Palace relations) to consciousness and to deploy this totality as a critical tool in the context of a "chaotic," "wild capitalist"[3] urban reality (and by extension,

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[2] London's Saatchi Gallery also hosted an exhibition in late 2011 entitled *Gesamtkunstwerk: New Art from Germany*, whereas the *Utopia Gesamtkunstwerk* exhibition inaugurated Der Haus, Vienna's new contemporary art space, in January 2012.

[3] My characterization of Warsaw's "wild capitalism" in Murawski (2013) draws on Kusiak (2012) and Yampolsky (1995).

in the extra-field phase, in the postmodern academy). In this sense, I carried into the twenty-first century the attitude of post-1945 Warsaw's socialist architects, planners, and political sponsors, who wanted to forge an urban *Gesamtkunstwerk*[4] from the wartime rubble and from what was left of the chaotic, laissez-faire, prewar city (Goldzamt 1956; Sigalin 1986) (Figure 2). I was working, in other words, on the basis of a conviction that "totalitarian" notions of the urban "whole"—formulated in part as critiques of an earlier "wild capitalist" urbanism – are endowed with a renewed critical potential in the context of the postsocialist city.[5] Another distinction between my approach and that of the Moscow conceptualists emerges with regard to the characteristics of the "audience" or "public" engaged with: whereas the artistic milieus described by Groys "made their art for a small public composed of the artists themselves and their friends ... a micropublic programmatically separated from the larger public" (2010:85), Palaceology was programmatically populist, aspiring to engage a *macro*public which corresponded to as diverse and wide-ranging a sector of Warsaw's population as possible.[6]
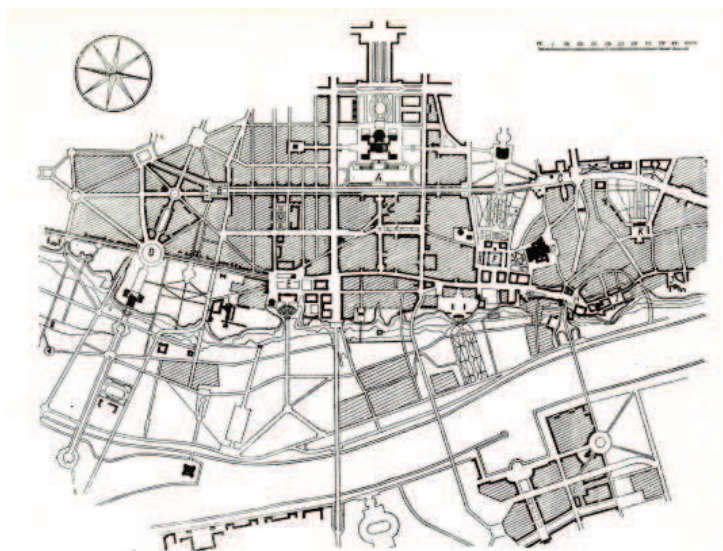

Figure 2. Map of projected central Warsaw planning developments, July 1954. Parade Square (then known as Stalin Square) is marked by the letter "A." (Source: Goldzamt 1956.)

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[4] For references to nineteenth-century German-speaking cities as total works of art, see Schorske (1998) and Hall (1997:218) on Vienna and Goebel (2007) on Dresden. Hüter (1976) has written in similar terms about the "total architecture" of the Bauhaus.

[5] This point is developed in the conclusion of Murawski (2013) with regard to the relationship between the "publicness" of public space and state socialist property expropriation versus postsocialist property restitution.

[6] In this regard, I claim a greater affinity to *stiob*, which was a general social phenomenon, far from being confined to the art world. Yurchak (2012) points out that the circulation of satirical newspapers like the weekly *Ogonek*, which were the "organs" of *stiob*, reached around 35 million copies by the late 1980s.

WHOLES VERSUS HOLES

I would like to say more about the sort of totality that inheres in Warsaw-Palace relations. Referring to Warsaw's perceived "obsession" with PKiN, the locals joke that their city suffers from a "Palace of Culture complex." My ongoing Warsaw research project (Murawski 2013) adds up to an explanation of how, when Varsovians say this, they are not referring merely to PKiN's physical dimensions but more broadly to the powerful impact that the Palace exerts on Warsaw's architecture, on its semiotic, political-economic, ideological, and psychical lives. Furthermore, my research accounts for the extent to which Warsaw's "Palace complex" constitutes a remarkably comprehensive fulfillment (despite the collapse of state socialism in 1989) of the ambitions articulated by Stalinist architects and their political patrons, for whom the Palace was to function as the "absolute *dominanta*" (Goldzamt 1956) of Warsaw, understood as a Stalinist *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Several authors have hinted at the affinity between the Richard Wagner–defined category of the "total work of art" and Marcel Mauss's notion of the "total social fact"[7] (Allen 2000; Melvin 2005); architecture historian Jean Louis Cohen, meanwhile, has brought the Maussian category to bear on understandings of high-rise architecture, arguing that "social facts become total when they condense complex and manifold levels of relationships, just as large buildings such as skyscrapers do" (in Melvin 2005:93). Elaborating on this theme, I argue that the Palace's pervasive prominence in the everyday life of the city is consistent with the manner of its bestowal on Warsaw. Gifts, in the classic Maussian rendition, are properly holistic phenomena that seep into every domain of social life. In Mauss's working typology, "total social facts" are "at the same time juridical, economic, religious, and even aesthetic and morphological, etc." (Mauss 1990:101), and it could certainly be argued that the Palace weighs upon all of the above aspects of Warsaw's existence. My Warsaw research demonstrates how the Soviet *hau*,[8] the "spirit of the gift" which obligated Varsovians to approach the building with a certain official deference (while inspiring a great deal of private hatred) has largely disappeared following the collapse of state socialism in 1989; but the infrastructure of architectural and social totality—one might call this its *mana*[9]—

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[7] Although the former category may be labeled as descriptive and the latter as prescriptive, it is also feasible to argue that Mauss's ethnographic categories are linked to or derived from his own socialist political leanings. In Keith Hart's (2007) description, Mauss's contributions to anthropology as well as his political imaginary were catalyzed by his "pursuit of the whole."

[8] For more on the gift logic of state socialism and Stalinism, see Brooks (1999), Ssorin-Chaikov (2006a), and Grant (2009).

[9] In his text on the Medical Hermeneutics circle of Moscow conceptualists, Boris Groys (2010:161–168) sees the fall of socialism as a lifting of totality but the lingering of a residual mana—a Pacific Islander concept which Mauss defined as a "magical, religious and spiritual force" (Mauss 1990:10) or "prestige" (8)—which can be appropriated by artists and filled with new "private" meanings. However, in my account of the Palace (Murawski 2013), which engages critically with Vladislav Todorov's (1992) statement that communism produced "ultimately defective" economic structures but "ultimately effective" aesthetic ones, it is the aesthetic (and spatial) totality which lingers and is the source of the Palace's ongoing "architectural power."

established between the Palace-gift and the city has not only lingered but has gathered in strength. By contrast to most descriptions of high-modernist or Stalinist planning schemes familiar to students of anthropology (Holston 1989; Kotkin 1995; Buchli 1999; Collier 2011), I argue that the Palace makes for an example of a piece of totalizing urban planning which "worked" and that the post-1989 existence of the Palace in Warsaw constitutes an unmistakable instance of the supreme efficacy of a (holistic) state socialist political aesthetic over a (fragmented) postsocialist/late-capitalist one (Murawski 2013).

My core research hypothesis is best expressed by borrowing the words of Edmund Goldzamt, the preeminent Stalinist architectural ideologue of 1950s Warsaw: I wanted to find out whether and how far the postsocialist Palace functions as the "city's territorial and vital center of gravity" (Goldzamt 1956:22) and to determine the extent to which the Palace's "architectural power is distributed throughout the city as a whole" (Goldzamt quoted in Sigalin 1986:425). The bombastic style and public scale of Palaceology, which mirrored the "will to totality" behind the Palace's design, was intended to gather a quality and quantity of data from as "complete" a sample of Warsaw's inhabitants as possible (I discuss the relationship between this holistic aspiration and sample representativeness towards the end of this text). Before I describe the details of my own attempt to practice PKiN's totality-as-Palaceology, I will briefly link the various ways of conceiving aesthetic, architectural, and social totality considered above to recent attempts in anthropological theory to rethink (and rehabilitate) the totalizing idiom of holism.[10]

Within anthropology's methodological treasury, the old axiom of holism stands out as the clearest equivalent to the "total artwork." Just as the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is said to have been "stained by the political totalities of the twentieth century" (Ribas 2012:95),[11] the "scandalously outdated" (Otto and Bubandt 2010:9) idea of holism was attacked during anthropology's 1980s and 1990s "reflexive" phase. Arjun Appadurai dismissed it as a "methodological fetish" resting on the "ideology of the whole" (1988:758), and holism's kinship with essentialist notions of race and culture, its associations with anthropology's colonial past and with totalitarian ideologies have been amply attested to. But recent years have also seen a renewal of attempts to account for and rethink the holist idea's continuing relevance for the discipline. Calls to salvage the "total artwork" have "de-totalized" it, in favor of emphasizing its genre-transgressing, emergent qualities.[12] Similarly, the rehabilitators of holism have attempted to assemble a dehomogenized, destructured, fragment-friendly understanding of the notion: "whole-ism," in other words, has been replaced by

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[10] For commentaries on the connection between "totalitarian" Marxist thinking and notions of holism, as used within anthropology and other social sciences, see Dumont (1977), Jay (1984), Shiell (1987), Appadurai (1988).

[11] "Agent and witness to the holocausts of the Industrial Age" (Luke 2012:103); "There's always the totalitarian danger that comes with the *Gesamtkunstwerk*" (Obrist quoted in Husslein-Arco, Krejci, and Steinbrügge 2012:8).

[12] Bettina Steinbrügge, for example, talks of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as "an attempt to overcome difference through a new assemblage of fragments" (2012:47).

"hole-ism."[13] Morten Pedersen and Rane Willerslev, for example, argue that in order to neutralize the harmful effects of "traditional anthropological totalitarian holism," "it is necessary to dissociate holism from a concern with wholes" (Willerslev and Pedersen 2010:263). Martin Holbraad, meanwhile, advocates recasting holism as a rigorously irreductionist "antimethod" (2010:82), which capitalizes on the holist idea's inherent sensitivity to complexity[14] while working to neutralize the effects of its twin tendency to reductionism.

Other writers (Candea 2007; Cook, Laidlaw, and Mair 2010) have translated a similar detotalizing logic into the principle of "methodological asceticism," which treats the fieldsite as only ever a "contingent window into complexity" and never a "holistic entity to be explained" (Candea 2007:181). I would like this article to point, however, in the direction of a methodological attitude which does not abandon an aspiration to epistemological "completeness" and which refuses to rule out the possibility that ethnographic fields might accommodate some "actually existing"[15] totalities.[16] With reference to a Buddhist parable, Cook, Laidlaw, and Mair write, "if there is no elephant, then there is no need for us try and imagine one" (2010:67). Just in case there are sometimes elephants (in the room), however, the aim of this text is to suggest some tools that might help to represent them.

TOTAL CITY, TOTAL ETHNOGRAPHY

How do these mereological considerations relate to the data-gathering devices I made use of during my fieldwork in Warsaw? To help make the link, I reach back to Ulf Hannerz's (1980) classic work on urban anthropological methodology, written at a point in time when anthropologists were no longer taking their old holisms and totalities for granted, but before they had cast them into total disrepute. Hannerz asks: to what extent is it possible to do an ethnography that is not merely in the city but of the city? If the city itself (as opposed to its constituent parts) is not to "recede into the background," Hannerz recommends taking the "holistic aspirations of anthropology seriously even as one deals with the most complex and large-scale form

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[13] See Zeitlyn (2009) and Fink (2009) for a related argument from the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis.

[14] In Strathern's words, "the project of holism was the project of imagining an encompassing social field to which any aspect of social life, however apparently 'small,' would contribute" (1999:7).

[15] Here I adapt a term that aptly suggests a gap between the real and the ideal, without negating palpable "ontological" existence. See also Robbins (1998) for a discussion of "actually existing cosmopolitanism" and Humphrey (2004) for an anthropological application.

[16] According to Cook, Laidlaw, and Mair, a methodological principle does not necessitate an ontological claim. I argue, however, that "methodological asceticism" does tend to gravitate towards certain scalar and aesthetic preferences; its ontologies are, by and large, partially connected, small and humble, "always-incomplete, contested and overlapping" (Cook et al. 2010:58). For more discussions of whether ontologies are "multiple-" or "meta-" see Viveiros de Castro (2004), Henare, Holbraad, and Wastell (2007), Holbraad (2010), Heywood (2012), and Pedersen (2012).

of society" (Hannerz 1980:297). Indeed, he quite explicitly makes clear that the creation of a "total urban ethnography" (303) is a legitimate (though not necessarily achievable) aspiration for anthropologists of cities.

I will return to elaborate on Hannerz's related notion of "urban portraiture" in the conclusion to this text. For now, let me describe how it was that I came round to the aspiration of producing a "total" ethnography *of* Warsaw (through the Palace *in* Warsaw). Having secured a "research internship" in the municipal agency which administers the Palace on the city's behalf (ZPKiN—Zarząd Pałacu Kultury i Nauki[17]), I started off by plunging into what I imagined "participant observation" to be. I made appointments with directors of theaters, curators of exhibitions in the Palace's galleries, owners of nightclubs, and karate instructors. I talked to tourists, visiting school children, and long-term employees, and I signed up to use the gigantic, marble-clad swimming pool in the Palace of Youth. At times, I did feel an overwhelming temptation to do an ethnography "of the Palace": to bound my field within the Palace's thick walls and ignore the city outside—to explore quirky nooks and crannies, chase after the sixteen resident cats in the building's cellars, and talk to the electricians and elevator operators who had worked in the Palace for unthinkably long periods of time.

The Palace's irredentist tendency to tear itself from within its own walls, however, soon began to strike me as too significant to ignore. This has its manifestations in the city's real and imagined built form, in its high and low culture, and its commercial and business lives (Murawski 2011). In a sense, I began to suspect, much (if not all of Warsaw) could be encompassed through the prism of its relations with the Palace (Figure 3). Since the Palace could not contain itself within its own ample bulk, I decided to "follow" PKiN (the hypothetical elephant) into the city (the room).[18] I got to know, socialized with and interviewed people who took a particular interest in the Palace, with collectors of trivia and postcards. I attended public meetings and film screenings devoted to PKiN and those that weren't—and noticed that the specter of the Palace quite mercilessly gatecrashed into conversations and events devoted to other aspects of Warsaw's urban existence. I talked to residents of various parts of Warsaw about how they viewed the Palace as part of their lives. It was the productiveness of this engagement with the "external" aspect of PKiN's existence which made me conscious of the extent to which the Palace really was a "public" building like no other with which I was familiar.[19]

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[17] Administration of the Palace of Culture and Science.

[18] See Marcus's (1995) typology of "following."

[19] In line with Latour and Weibel (2005) I understand this "public" to refer to human as well as nonhuman entities (like buildings); but, unlike Latour and Weibel, in my understanding this is a public that inhabits the urban "whole."

Figure 3. PKiN in central Warsaw, 2013. (Map data: Google, MGGP Aero.)

PUBLIC BUILDING/PUBLIC ANTHROPOLOGIST: PALACEIZATION

Since the Palace was a "public" building, I made a decision to experiment with becoming a "public" anthropologist, as well as in order to better account for this "big scale" dimension of its interaction with the city. I did not coin the term "public anthropology"; numerous scholars[20] have for many years been arguing that anthropology should burst out of its narrow academic constraints and engage—like James Frazer, Margaret Mead, or Claude Lévi-Strauss once did—with a broader range of urgent contemporary issues as well as with a much wider audience, a variously defined "public," "beyond the discipline."[21] What these postulations all have in common is that they neglect to mention the human beings encountered by the ethnographer during fieldwork as a legitimate "audience" for anthropological writing. The crucial point, however, is that anthropologists are exceptionally well equipped to engage with a "public" *during*, not merely after, fieldwork. Our intra-field audience, composed of informants, natives, friends, and collaborators, is just as capable of offering critical judgment on our work as are our colleagues or the broader

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[20] See MacClancy and MacDonaugh (1997); Borofsky (2007, 2010); González (2004); Besteman and Gusterson (2005); Bunzl (2008); Friedman (2010). Matti Bunzl (2008) and Jonathan Friedman (2010) both argue that the anthropological tendency towards endless complexity, assemblage, and partiality conspires to aggravate its present-day irrelevance to urgent global debates. See also Burawoy's notion of "public sociology" (Burawoy 2005).

[21] MacClancy and MacDonaugh's (1997:5) list of audiences is particularly impressive: "the general book-reading public" and "policy-makers, development consultants, management trainers, impresarios of corporate initiation ritual, [non-anthropologist] academics ... [anthropologically informed] artists, viewers of television, nationalist politicians, advocates of sexual plurality, folklore revivalists, socialist theorists, Neopagans, New Agers and Modern Primitives, Neoshamans, first-year students, style analysts, novelists, nutritionists, [language teachers]."

extra-field anthropology-reading public. It is futile to deny that fieldworkers are positioned within local knowledge economies and that they leave their mark on the places and times at and during which they do fieldwork. Palaceology—in the manner of Ssorin-Chaikov's ethnographic conceptualism, which "explicitly constructs the reality that it studies" (introduction, this issue, 8)—aimed to acknowledge this impact and to transform it into a self-conscious device for gathering new kinds of data.

My first foray into mirroring the Palace's public existence came after approximately two months of my formal employment at the Palace. The Warsaw Museum of Modern Art (MSN: Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej)—whose planned building is eventually to occupy a large plot of land directly adjacent to the Palace on Parade Square[22]—organizes "Warsaw under Construction" (WWB—Warszawa w budowie), an annual festival of design and architecture, inaugurated in October 2009. A particular emphasis is laid by the WWB's organizers on encouraging "public participation" in design issues relating to Warsaw's urban space. The mainstay of this "participatory" imperative revolved around the "Department of Proposals," a weekly series of meetings—held at the Museum's temporary headquarters (located just two hundred meters from the Palace)—at which "ordinary" Varsovians were invited to present their ideas for solving various urban issues (e.g., those relating to green space, public transport, or to planning the city center). I decided to take part and made a conscious choice to make my proposal a little provocative and sensationalist. I wanted to encourage feedback and was keen to confront Varsovians directly with my emerging hypothesis about the Palace's domination over Warsaw.

I called my proposal "Palaceization" (*Pałaczyjacja*) and introduced myself as both an urban anthropologist and a "concerned citizen." I argued that since so many people blame the overbearing Palace's debilitating iron grip for the city's present "chaos," the only way of rescuing the city's aesthetic and urbanistic coherence is to "surrender" to the Palace and to "Palaceize" Warsaw by municipal decree. I suggested that the Municipal Architecture Bureau (whose offices are located within PKiN) issue legislation obliging the design of all significant new buildings in the city center to consciously integrate an "aspect of the Palace's external or internal architecture" into their design, rather than "arrogantly" attempting to counter its dominance or "nonchalantly" pretending that they can ignore PKiN. Thus, the new National Stadium must hang an outscaled replica of one of the Palace's giant Stalinist candelabras over its pitch; a 192-meter residential tower designed by Daniel Libeskind in the Palace's immediate vicinity (whose construction was halted one-third of the way through at the time[23])—a conscious attempt to "defeat," in Libeskind's words, the oppressive Stalinist gift, by "restoring the crown to the Polish eagle"—will be allowed to carry on standing as an incomplete shell, but only if one of the Palace's neoclassical porticoes is replicated on its roof and a giant portrait of the Palace's benefactor is

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[22] The construction of the Museum, originally scheduled for completion in 2013, is currently in doubt. For more on the controversies relating to its architecture, see Murawski (2011).

[23] Construction was eventually resumed in January 2011 and is on schedule for completion in 2013.

hung from its facade; lastly, I suggested, the "conceited Calvinism" of MSN's design, which makes a "pseudorefined" attempt to "rise above" the splendor of its architectural neighbor, must be adapted in the image of the Palace if the Museum is to be built: the architect must agree to cover the building's main facade with PKiN-style sandstone cladding and giant pseudo-Renaissance crenellations (Figure 4).

"Palaceization" generated something of a discussion and a substantial amount of media coverage. The museum featured it on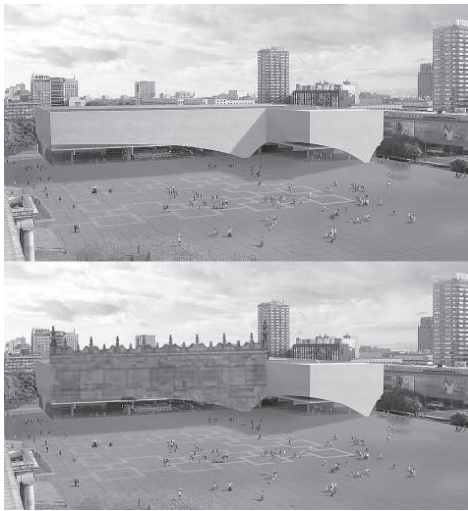 its website, as did the main local television station (TVN Warszawa); the city section of the opinion-forming *Gazeta Wyborcza* accompanied its article with an illustration of my badly Photoshopped collage of the "Palaceized" Libeskind tower under the headline "Palaceize the Capital." The caption continued: "For over half a century Warsaw has been unable to stand up to the symbolic domination of the Palace of Culture. 'We have to make peace with this reality and distribute the Palace's aesthetic throughout the whole city,' says an anthropologist of architecture from England" (Bartoszewicz 2009). Following this exposure, my person and my project became irrevocably associated with "Palaceization." New acquaintances would start conversations by commenting on a particular element of my proposal ("I hate that pompous, overblown design for the new stadium—surely the last thing

Figure 4. The "Palaceized" Museum of Modern Art. (Image by Michał Murawski, Museum of Modern Art.)

which would help is shoving a Stalinist candelabra on top!" said an architect friend of my neighbor's) before offering some of their own reflections about what best to "do with" the Palace or retelling their PKiN-related memories and experiences.

In the wake of this episode, I made a conscious decision to harness the scope of my research to the Palace's popularity and to Varsovians' fascination with it. Having gathered a great deal of ethnographic insight from discussions about Palaceization on Internet forums, my next move was to start a blog, *Pałacologia* (Palaceology), where I posted photographs of Palace scenes and of Palace-related happenings and phenomena from around the city. The blog was mirrored on the website of another local newspaper, *Życie Warszawy*, allowing me access to a wide readership. The comments field included after each post (like the comments left by readers of *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s online edition) allowed me to gauge public reactions to various topics I was interested in exploring, as well as enabling strangers to contact me with their private reflections. John Borneman and Abdellah Hammoudi caution that the "advent of the Internet … with the rapid rise in its widespread use, has furthered a concern for the virtual over the immediate and face to face and has encouraged the practice of 'surfacing,' which substitutes thin for thick

description" (9). But in the ethnographic conceptual framework, the use of the Internet (and other mass media beyond the online domain, including television and radio) proved instrumental in enriching the scope and expanding the field within which it was possible to engage in the old Malinowskian paradigm which Borneman and Hammoudi defend, that of "being there," "co-residence in a place over a sustained period of time" (2009b:9). Beyond the online domain, over the course of my next nine months in Warsaw, I was interviewed on the radio, on television, and in various print media several times. The content of each interview and public intervention of this sort allowed me to gauge how my take on the Palace's domination over Warsaw was responded to by journalists and the audiences they aimed to interest with their broadcasts, which Palace topics constituted a legitimate and lively source of engagement for people in Warsaw, as well as to get a sense of how Varsovians evaluated and responded to the premises and content of my research project.

PALACEOLOGY VERSUS VERANDA: HOLISM, ENGAGEMENT, AND DETACHMENT

Furthermore, a very "unholistic" divide, which until then I had been unable to disassemble between my "informants" and "friends" (I left Warsaw at the age of six but stayed in touch with family and friends), was rendered obsolete—almost everyone I met became part of my audience of informants. During my early fieldwork months, I had developed a sort of "human veranda" of friends with whom I enjoyed socializing as a respite from the constant obligation I otherwise felt to engage people in built-environment related conversations. After Palaceization, my veranda was severely damaged (if not swept away entirely) as everybody around me started either producing "data" or challenging my grasp of the facts and the accuracy of my interpretations. Furthermore, grandparents, aunts, and uncles who had previously felt a little uncomfortable talking to me at length about my research—because, as an uncle remarked, he had felt a bit weird being "interrogated" by his nephew—began opening up and offering a wealth of their own recollections.

I feel confident identifying Palaceization as the moment when I began to feel properly immersed in my "field," whereas the rest of the public/ethnographic conceptualist interventions I subsequently carried out expanded and intensified this immersion. Yet, in a weird twist on Geertz's Balinese cockfight (1973), it was not quite my "going native" moment. On one level, I did become a sort of marginal member of Warsaw's (very vibrant and influential) "native" community of architectural "experts," the so-called Varsavianistas.[24] On the other hand, I became all the more

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[24] One moment in particular made plain my awkward position within the local expert knowledge economy. One chance interlocutor told me that I should not be asking him, an ordinary old Varsovian, about the Palace—I should meet an anthropologist from England called Murawski, who is on the radio all the time and who will tell me everything I want to know, and who, to my surprise, has apparently even published a book about the Palace. Once I assured him that no such book exists and that my limited knowledge about the Palace is the product of only just over fifteen months' fieldwork in Warsaw, it turned out my interlocutor's humility was a front—he was, in fact,

closely identified as an outsider, a half-foreign expert, endowed with some sort of aptitude for "detached" observation but at the same time suspicious and with divided loyalties and intentions—a cagey counterpart, perhaps, to the discipline's celebrated halfies (Abu-Lughod 1991) and hyphenateds (Viswewaran 1994).[25] Conscious of this ambiguous location, I decided to try to lay it bare by accentuating and caricaturing it. Beginning with my blog (launched a month after Palaceization) and in most other projects I carried out afterwards, I started to refer to Warsaw's inhabitants as *tubylcy*, the Polish word for "natives." Interestingly, this identification was much likelier to elicit counterironizations than indignation. One radio presenter, known for her acerbic interviewing style and keen to underline her own engaged animosity towards the Palace (her program was called "In the Shadow of Peking," after one of the Palace's many nicknames[26]), parodied my own self-parodic representation as a "detached" scientific observer, while simultaneously implying that my level of "engagement" with the topic is intense almost to the point of pathology (see Candea 2010:251) by summarizing me thus at the end of the interview: "Murawski, a madman, a Palace of Culture fanatic and devotee … and an anthropologist of architecture, a person from the outside, who has arrived among us natives and is observing us, as if we were fruit flies under a magnifying glass, and is writing a doctorate about us, the people who live in the shadow of Peking."[27]

This brings me to consider in some more detail the question of "provocation." While carrying out the various interventions discussed here, I was occasionally berated for "poking fun" at the complex realities of Warsaw. There is a consensus amongst practitioners of anthropology, derived from "ethical" considerations as well as from empirical imperatives, that informants' points of view must always be treated with respect. Was I failing to fulfill this very basic anthropological obligation? In a comment on Matei Candea's text on (a)politicality in Corsica, Michael Herzfeld takes him to task on the point of whether or not "taking seriously"[28] one's informants also precludes disagreeing with or challenging their views. Herzfeld argues that "excessive caution" in this regard "risks occluding the very perspectives we are thereby claiming to respect" (Candea 2011:323). It may be interesting and ethnographically productive,

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a former president of a Warsaw urban planning institute, who had himself regularly appeared in the media to discuss various issues, among them the Parade Square development plan.

[25] Advertising one of the events I subsequently organized, the Museum referred to me as the "enfant terrible of Varsaviana."

[26] Warsaw's inhabitants sometimes refer to Palace as *Pekin*, the Polish name for China's capital Beijing (Peking in the Wade-Giles transliteration system). Explanations for this differ, some referring to the forbidding aura and enormous scale of the building said to remind people of the Chinese capital city. For another possible explanation see Tyrmand (1980).

[27] See Boyer and Yurchak's (2010) text on the *stiob* being generated in Euro-American contexts. I am suggesting that a *stiob*-like phenomenon (caveats above notwithstanding) might also be engineered as a methodological tool.

[28] In Candea's (2011:331) definition, "taking seriously" requires "leaving the other's reality in a state of possibility—resisting the temptation to verify, accept or reject it by the standards of our own ontological commitments."

Herzfeld observes, to see how one's informants might deal with a "disconcertingly frontal question" (323). In this, Herzfeld echoes Borneman and Hammoudi's call for arguing with and challenging the interpretations and points of view encountered during fieldwork. As they put it, "Contesting, taking issue with our interlocutors … creates a space of argumentation, in which the partners treat each other as equal. They not only affirm but also contest each other's assumptions" (Borneman and Hammoudi 2009a:266; see also Borneman 2009). In Borneman and Hammoudi's terms, then, Palaceology was meant to function as a space of equality, contestation, and (in some senses) "symmetry" (see Ssorin-Chaikov, introduction, this issue) between anthropologist and informants. My methodological experiments sought to build, experiment with, and capitalize on a formalized, staged, but porous distinction between the numerous field hats I wore at various points: ethnographer and informant, performer and audience member, anthropologist and native, Palaceologist and Palace administrator.[29]

There were times in which my chameleonic positionality created ethical quandaries and access problems, especially within the Palace administration itself. The marketing director, for example, was distrustful of my intentions and uneasy about the fuss I was making around ZPKiN; in effect, some of my initiatives and requests were denied permission at the directorate level. At other times, however, the opposite dynamic pertained. I found out that some of the Palace's technical employees had initially been weary of the notebook-wielding, so-called anthropologist wandering around the Palace corridors; they suspected that I may have been sent by the Palace bosses to check up on their performance. However, once I acquired a public persona, many of the same people came to accept my motivations as genuine, and our interactions became more easygoing and fruitful. Palaceology, in other words, was not confined to my interactions with a "macropublic" but had noticeable (more and less desirable) effects on the face-to-face level as well. I will now describe in more detail the ethnographic dividends that it paid during the final, "hypothesis-testing" stage of my research.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING I: THE ARCHI-BLAH-BLAHS

As I probed the issue of the Palace's dominationality with Warsaw during these various public interventions, I prepared for a double-pronged hypothesis-testing finale,[30] which took place during the last months of my fieldwork and encompassed a

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[29] One intervention that examined the interface between ethnographer and bureaucrat was "The Department of Issuing Anecdotes of the Palaceological Department of the Dramatic Theater," located for one day only (the Palace's fifty-fifth birthday) in the Dramatic Theater's "Stalin Lodge." On completion of several tedious forms, "supplicants" received anecdotes from the Issuing Department (I played the role of issuing clerk) in exchange for ethnographic data. Of course, I was at a loss to provide Palace-related stories matching those of the event's "audience."

[30] At the time I carried them out, I saw Palaceization (and other interventions which took place during the earlier part of my fieldwork) as experiments with tentative observations rather than as attempts to validate hypotheses—these categories overlap, however, and I treat

series of public meetings (*Archigadaniny* or "Archi-blah-blahs") and a large-scale online survey. The Archi-blah-blahs were a series of three panel discussions held at a Warsaw "civic cafe,"[31] Warszawa Powiśle, during June and July 2010. The meetings were supported by the Museum of Modern Art and by the cafe's owners and organized and chaired by me together with an architect friend, one of the people whom I had met "through" the Palace, Maciej Czeredys.[32] The rationale for the meetings was explained in two ways: On the one hand, they were designed to "provoke discussion about the place of architecture and urban space—in particular the Palace of Culture and Parade Square—in the conscious and unconscious experiences of Warsaw's inhabitants." On the other, it was stated openly that I am an anthropologist carrying out research and that I am using the Archi-blah-blahs to test the hypotheses I have formulated during my time in Warsaw on a large audience of "natives." Over twenty panelists participated in the three meetings, many of whom had participated in the Parade Square debacle for many years and had personal stakes in the outcome or grievances related to past events. They included academics, art historians, journalists, architecture critics, architects (including the designers of Parade Square master plans), local politicians (including two former mayors and a former chief architect of Warsaw), the press officers of the city and of the Polish State Railways (the latter owns a considerable tract of land on Parade Square), curators from MSN, and property developers. The number of panelists at the first two meetings was deliberately high (eleven and thirteen)—in order to represent as broad a selection of points of view as possible, but also to make the proceedings more competitive and fast paced. The tension was aggravated by the draconian, five-minute time limits imposed on each guest's appearance and by the manner in which time keeping was policed—during the first Archi-blah-blah, presentations were cut short by the automatic sounding of a line from an old Warsaw street ballad: "Rein in your mouth and don't blah-blah no more" (*Zahamuj buzie i nie gadaj więcej nic*). At the second meeting (held at the time of the 2010 soccer World Cup), Czeredys and I interrupted our speakers by blowing on vuvuzelas (Figure 5).

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data gathered during both of these stages as commensurate.

[31] See Kusiak and Kacperski (2012) on "kiosks with vodka and democracy" and Murawski (2012) for more about the ideological significance of Warszawa Powiśle's modernist architecture.

[32] As acting conservator of historical monuments for the Warsaw region (Mazowsze) Czeredys's signature had sealed the Palace's inclusion on the heritage register in February 2007.

Figure 5. The Parade Square Archi-blah-blah, June 30, 2010. (Photo by Anna Wojnarowska.)

The second Archi-blah-blah—on which this description concentrates—was staged as a "match" of "causal factors." Each panelist was asked to "embody" the factor which they thought bears the most responsibility for causing the post-1989 planning "deadlock" or "morass" (*marazm* in Polish) on Parade Square. An especially illustrative confrontation—which juxtaposed the Palace's "phallic" stature and large dimensions, the nature of the political-economic regime which built it, and the "impotence" of post-1989 municipal administrations—took place between the mayor's boisterous director of communications Tomasz Andryszczyk; right-wing architect Czesław Bielecki, designer of scuppered plans for a "Museum of Communism" to be located in the Palace's forecourt and cellars (and, it was to turn out, the main opposition candidate for mayor of Warsaw in elections held three months after the last Archi-blah-blah); and Michał Borowski, the former chief architect. Bielecki threw down the gauntlet declaring: "Today, I have become the embodiment of the lady currently occupying the position of mayor of Warsaw, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz." Listing the administration's failure to realize several high-profile public projects, Bielecki concluded his presentation with a slogan: "There is no legislative Viagra for the impotence of executive power." The city's press officer responded by pointing out that the mayor's term in office saw the first moves away from "archi-blah-blah to action": the final designs for MSN had been presented (in PKiN, of course) several days before the meeting, and diggers had recently moved into Parade Square to begin work on the second line of Warsaw's metro system. Deftly countering Bielecki's Viagra remark, Andryszczyk observed that "impotence is a male problem" and argued that the current mayor is forced to battle the effects of the inadequacy of previous (exclusively male) leaders of the city's administration. These remarks were fiercely contested in turn by ex-Chief Architect Borowski, who reminded the press officer that all of the currently active major investments (including MSN) were hatched and pushed

through during the administration (2002–2006) of Borowski's boss, Warsaw Mayor (later Polish president), the late Lech Kaczynski. "Everything," shouted Borowski, "was initiated as a result of decisions taken in 2004–2005. I will not have this referred to as 'impotence'!"[33]

With all these relatively emasculatory insinuations made, it was only a matter of time before the phallic stature and causal potency of the Palace itself was alluded to (here, ethnographic conceptualism perhaps comes to resemble Geertz's Balinese cockfight on yet another level, turning into something akin to a phallically charged "dramatization of status concerns" [Geertz 1973:437]). A young architect, Aleksandra Wasilkowska, interested in applying theories of emergence and complexity to the built environment and, in particular, to the relationship between the Palace, the Parade Square, and the city,[34] suggested that this whole discussion, pining after "grand visions" and "stuck within the paradigm of the strong hand," reflects the suggestive verticality and totalitarian origins of the Palace itself. "Do we really still desire power to be phallic, to be imposed top down?" asked Wasilkowska, before declaring that power (over town planning) should be delegated to the citizens and attempting to break down the meeting's panel-moderator-audience hierarchy by handing the microphone over to the public's free reign. One audience member, an urban sociologist, even identified our timekeeping mechanisms as part of the same problem: "This event has been dominated by this terrible, phallic trumpet. You could have thought of milder methods of control."

As the discussion progressed, the Palace itself was explicitly invoked as a *marazm*-inducing causal factor. Planner and ex-Mayor of the Warsaw Central District Jan Rutkiewicz (in office between 1990 and 1994) explained that his named factor—the "dwarflike imagination of decision makers"—had not been intended purely as a comment on the human failings of two decades worth of politicians and bureaucrats. The decision makers were and are dwarves, according to Rutkiewicz, because they are unable to bring themselves to deal with PKiN's enormous bulk. The primary reasons for the Palace's obduracy, he suggested, were spatial, not historical or symbolic: its own geometry and layout "demands that it is treated like a Palace." Building around PKiN can only take place "on the axes defined by the Palace itself," and all local plans hitherto have been unable to transcend the tendency to surround the Palace with "forecourts" and "side wings" totally subordinate to the spatial logic it lays out.

This line of reasoning was extended but (somewhat tautologically) turned on its head by former Warsaw Chief Architect Michał Borowski, who sought to interpret PKiN's spatial influence in terms of its productive as well as its debilitating impact: "If it wasn't for the Palace, there would be nothing in this place. It is the Palace what delineates the possible area for development, as well as the network of streets that surround it. It is the opposite of what everyone is saying—it is only thanks to the Palace's existence that development around it is possible at all." Tomek Fudala, the MSN's architecture curator, agreed with Borowski, pointing out that "PKiN is para-

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[33] I examine the gendered dimension of the Palace's existence in Warsaw in Murawski (2013).

[34] See Wasilkowska, Nowak, and Chmielewski (2009).

doxically that factor which allows and enables us to act as well as not to act." This exchange culminated in the planner (and mayoral adviser) Grzegorz Buczek announcing to the audience that among them was the head designer for the new Parade Square local plan, at that time being finalized by the municipality's resident architects (their offices also based in PKiN). Buczek stopped short of naming the official in question but suggested that "it would be valuable to hear her opinion now, the person who knows most about the current plan. How does [it] deal with the dictatorship (*dyktat*) of the Palace?" The planner in question (who had turned down my invitation to take part in the meeting as a panelist) remained in her seat, awkwardly shaking her head.

Several people I talked to after the meeting—friends as well as strangers—agreed that this exchange was an interesting moment: a vivid culmination of a discussion focused on the relationship between the Palace's bulk (semiotic and social as well as material) and the impotence of the city's postsocialist decision makers, "helpless," in the words of architectural historian Małgorzata Omilanowska, "in the face of this legacy of totalitarianism" which exerts its debilitating impact on the city "like the magic power of a giant" (2010:135–136). It is not hard to detect, however, that it is not only the physical Palace that was being invoked here but also its status as the most powerful material legacy of state socialism, a system whose own decision making potency was compared favorably by many of my informants with the squabbling, pettiness, and corruption of today's "immature" capitalist democracy. Indeed, this supports the concluding findings of my research (see Murawski 2013) that the Palace itself is not the "last instance" (Althusser 1969) determinant of the dynamic animating Warsaw-Palace relations. Warsaw's "complexity" as an urban entity can, in fact, be reduced twice over: first to the Palace itself and then to the political-economic and ideological context determining their interaction.

The public character and provocative style of the interventions I carried out allowed me access to particular kinds of data, gathered from a much broader sample of my field than an exclusive reliance on face-to-face participant observation would have allowed. Furthermore, against the "methodologically ascetic" argument that the "locations" (or audiences) of ethnographic research can only ever be "arbitrary," meaning that they "bear no necessary relation to the object of study" (Candea 2007:187), the Archi-blah-blahs allowed me to begin "selecting" (or cutting) the network of information to which I had been exposed in a manner which was not subject exclusively to the intuition of the ethnographer—the "audience" was involved too, consciously and in large numbers. By declaring in public (at the beginning of the meetings), "You are my natives! … I rely on you to put my analysis on the right track!" I invited my informants to bolster/validate or object to/invalidate the "rightness" (Hastrup 2004; Mosse 2006) of my research findings, not just by taking issue with the written product of ethnography but by impacting on the direction of the "ethnography in action." However, whereas I was able to characterize with a reasonable degree of certainty who my face-to-face informants had been—to place them demographically and relationally—I was not able to do this for my public "audience" of informants. Eventually, I came to the conclusion that the credibility of

my Palaceological experiment could be consolidated only if I turned my "informants" into survey "respondents" and my "hypotheses" into multiple-choice questions.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING II: QUANTIFYING THE PALACE

Anthropology's relationship to quantitative data has long been reluctant (Driver 1953; Chibnik 1985; Asad 1986), tied to an awareness of statistics' pivotal role in complexity- and difference-erasing projects of modernity and colonization (Hacking 1990; Asad 1994; Scott 1998). Indeed, it has been suggested that anthropological holism and "statistical methods of generalization" are two sides of the same totalizing coin.[35] I would like to suggest, however, that the quantitative material has the potential to render ethnographic research more accountable to (extra-field as well as intra-field) scrutiny. As a complement to participant observation and public interventions like Palaceization and the Archi-blah-blahs, statistical data was a necessary condition for allowing me to demarcate the parameters, characteristics— as well as limitations—of the "urban whole" to which this text refers.

My "Palaceological survey" was linked to the Museum of Modern Art's website and announced as part of the October 2010 edition of the WWB design festival. The Museum helped with publicity, as did TVN Warszawa, Warsaw's most popular local TV breakfast show, a couple of radio programs, various Internet sources, and *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which included the link to the survey in a substantial story highlighting my research and sensationally headlined, "Must the Palace Be Torn Down? You Decide!" The success of the survey surpassed my wildest expectations. Whereas I had hoped for a couple of hundred respondents at most, the hosting website received over 590,000 hits (directed there, no doubt, in large part by the scandalizingly urgent tone of the *Gazeta* headline), and over 5,000 people completed all or most of the seventy questions. I gathered an enormous quantity of data—in numerical form as well as in the thousands of comments corresponding to particular sections of the questionnaire. Of course, this text is no place to list and compare the whole diversity of ways in which I have deployed the survey results in my research. I will make brief reference to a few examples, however, which serve well to illustrate how the figures I gathered shed light on the extent (or absence) of the Palace's semiotic, experiential, aesthetic, and social relationality of "domination" with Warsaw. To begin with, 63 percent of respondents considered the Palace of Culture to be Warsaw's most important and easily identifiable symbol, against only 12 percent for its nearest competitor, the Warsaw Mermaid—the Polish capital's traditional emblem, enshrined in the city's historic coat of arms. Other figures, however, indicated the limits to the Palace's symbolic authority—only 14 percent would pick the Palace for the distinction of "last building standing" in Warsaw, against 34 percent for the Royal Castle (rebuilt between 1971 and 1984, the primary symbol for only 7 percent of respondents[36]).

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[35] "Although rarely used by social anthropologists, statistical methods of generalization depend on assumptions of normal distributions and correlations within borders" (Cook et al. 2010:64).

[36] Discussion about rebuilding the castle started in the immediate postwar years, but the construction of the Palace came to take priority over them. According to Jakub Sadowski, "Many of

Seventy-seven percent of all respondents agreed that the Palace "exerts an impact" on the city (52 percent on architecture, 49 percent on urban planning, 43 percent on "urban culture," and 36 percent on "urban psychology"). Of those born in Warsaw, 77 percent have childhood memories associated with the Palace; 45 percent of current Warsaw dwellers have a direct view of the Palace from their home or workplace, 61 percent visit PKiN at least several times a year, and 22 percent cross its threshold more than once every month. Illustrative also was the striking level of correspondence between respondents' answers to the question concerning reasons for the Parade Square morass and the content of the second Archi-blah-blah. The ten possible answers to this question (respondents were able to pick only one) loosely resembled the "factors" identified by participants in the meeting, which had taken place three months previously. Of 3,831 respondents, 71 percent chose answers pertaining to the broader category of "impotence," which had also dominated the course of the Archi-blah-blah,[37] compared to a mere 2 percent who opted for "the resistance of the Palace itself."[38] In stark contrast to this figure, however, was the colorful language which many—even those who had not recognized the Palace as a causal factor in their multiple-choice answer—deployed to describe the Palace's potency in the accompanying comments field. "The Palace does possess some kind of diabolical power," conceded one respondent, in a reluctant tone. Others were more forthright: "You can't really blame the decision makers. The Palace is an abscess on the ass of Warsaw, only demolition could produce the conditions from which brave, visionary ideas might arise, there's too much responsibility, architects aren't able to cope, stalin [*sic*] knew what he was doing!"[39]

Respondents had been directed to the survey by the same media outlets and websites and on the recommendation of the same cultural institutions I had made use of during earlier phases of my public "data gathering." A "personal details" section allowed me to gauge who constituted this broader "audience" of informants and to measure whether and which demographic categories impacted on particular sets of answers. Most of my respondents were youngish (median age 32), university-educated (69 percent), interested in "Varsaviana" (73 percent) and in architecture and urban space (78 percent), politically centrist (49 percent) or leftist (27 percent) daily readers of the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* newspaper. "Only" (by Polish standards)

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the semiotic functions planned by Sigalin's workshop for the one-time royal residence, were taken over by another edifice: the Palace of Culture and Science" (2009:175). See also Klekot (2012).

[37] From the accompanying comments it was clear that an equivalence can be drawn between "impotence" and the following: "incompetent administrators" (36 percent), "too much talking" (20 percent), "lack of political imagination" (9 percent), "lack of ideas" (5 percent).

[38] Of other answers, 2 percent went for the not unrelated "curse," "activities of speculators" (1 percent), "lack of appropriate technical infrastructure" (1 percent), "don't know" (7 percent); 7 percent also chose to name another factor altogether in the comments field, most frequently citing lack of resources.

[39] Interestingly, a disproportionate number of those who identified the Palace's agency as the main contributor the Parade Square malaise had a negative attitude to the Palace (38 percent, as opposed to only 16 percent of my total respondents).

57 percent were practicing Catholics, and 30 percent were atheists. By no means are these figures typical of Warsaw's population, but they do allow me to confirm quite precisely just who the audience with whom I did most of my macrointeracting were. Nevertheless, the number of respondents belonging to social groups underrepresented in my sample speak to the value of having publicized the survey so widely: 817 respondents were uninterested in Varsaviana and 622 were indifferent to architecture. More than 200 were over sixty, and 289 were right-wing devout Catholics—certainly more of this demographic than I would ever be likely to fleetingly interact with, let alone interview.[40] The core of my audience was certainly not representative of the *whole* of Warsaw, but the expansive scale of my survey—made possible by the various Palaceological interventions which preceded it and which consolidated my halfie-Varsavianista[41] status—allowed me to start filling in the *holes*, to start approximating some kind of urban totality.[42]

CONCLUSION: TOTAL URBAN ETHNOGRAPHY AS CONCEPTUALIST PORTRAIT

Not only anthropologists but also artists (especially conceptually minded ones) have difficulty with the idea of being able to distill the totality of a city through their work. In an interview with Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, critic Hans Ulrich Obrist grills Weiwei about his attempts to document the entirety of Beijing's streetscape by means of several hundred hours of video footage recorded by a camera attached to the front of a bus.[43] Obrist cites several sources, including the painter Oskar Kokoschka, whom he represents as having expressed the opinion that it is always impossible to make a "synthetic image" or a "portrait of a the city," because the urban environment is definitionally "too complex," in space as well as in time: "It always escapes us when we try to map it" and "by the time we grasp one aspect, the city has already changed" (Obrist 2011:34–35).

An opposite conclusion is reached by Hannerz, who argues that the inevitably "protean" and "serendipitous" nature of city life (and urban ethnography) calls

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[40] Even amongst this last group, 51 percent said their attitudes to the Palace were positive, whereas only 35 percent were negative.

[41] The term "Varsavianista" refers to an expert on Warsaw-related matters (usually architecture), and it comes from "Varsaviana," which is a locally used term for academic and popular literature, historical documentation, and trivia devoted to Warsaw.

[42] See Talal Asad (1986, 1994) on the modernist "strong language" of statistics; Ssorin-Chaikov (introduction, this issue) on Hans Haacke's "statistical breakdown of museum visitors"; Arnd Schneider (2008) on a collaboration between an artist, two anthropologists, and a demographer to fill the opera house in Manaus with an "audience" representative of the city's population. The crucial point I am trying to make is that the methodological approach outlined here aspires towards encompassment of a "whole" made up of an urban fabric. The demographic characteristics I have collected allow me to measure the credibility of the extent to which I have met this holistic aspiration.

[43] These remarks already appear dated, in view of the remarkable rise of Google Street View, a phenomenon which is still awaiting anthropological attention (but see Pink 2011).

precisely for urban "portraiture," clarifying that by "portrait" he refers to something akin to an "art form" rather than "absolute or exhaustive likeness" (1980:304). Although Hannerz does not develop his notion of urban anthropology as portraiture at length, his discussion of methodology is related to it. The focus here is on the eclecticism of field methodology, on "triangulation … finding several routes to the same fact." Hannerz advocates combining intersubjective data from participant observation with quantitative data from opinion surveys (312), as well as borrowing the techniques of historians (whether by collecting economic or political history from archives, oral or life histories from individuals or groups of inhabitants) to gain an understanding of social, spatial, and temporal complexity within which cities are intermeshed (310–311).

Conceptual art and portraiture make for even more rarely seen bedfellows than anthropology and statistics.[44] Nevertheless, I hope what is outlined above lends credence to the notion that a total urban ethnography in the ethnographic conceptualist mold provides the methodological conditions of possibility to put together an ethnographic conceptualist urban portrait (or an ethnographic conceptualist *Gesamtkunstwerk*)—a credible holistic account of the relationship between parts and wholes in a big city. In my rendition, then, ethnographic conceptualism is characterized by a public scale and performative style and is bolstered by a quantitative dimension. My intention is to point in the direction of a research methodology that resists foreclosing totality (whether methodological or ontological). Instead, when confronted with complexity (especially with urban complexity), ethnographic conceptualism aspires to test whether or not and how far it can be reduced (Luhmann 1995) rather than to celebrate its irreducibility (Latour 1988).

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[44] The only "conceptualist portrait" to have made it to the canon is a telegram sent in 1961 by artist Robert Rauschenberg to an exhibition at Iris Clert's gallery in Paris. It reads: "This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so / Robert Rauschenberg" (Buchloh 1990).

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ДВОРЦЕЛОГИЯ, ИЛИ ДВОРЕЦ-КАК-МЕТОДОЛОГИЯ: ЭТНОГРАФИЧЕСКИЙ КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗМ, ТОТАЛЬНЫЙ УРБАНИЗМ И СТАЛИНСКИЙ НЕБОСКРЕБ В ВАРШАВЕ

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Статья посвящена тем экспериментам в обращении с полевой методологией, которые были осуществлены мной в ходе исследования отношений, сложившихся между сталинским небоскребом (Дворцом культуры и науки) и современной Варшавой. Я использую в статье три концепции тотальности: «тотальный социальный факт» Марселя Мосса, «тотальное произведение искусства» (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) Рихарда Вагнера и антропологический холизм. С их помощью я показываю, как провокационный стиль и публичный масштаб *дворцелогического* этнографического концептуализма, объединяющего включенное наблюдение, творческое этнографическое вмешательство и количественный опрос, отражает пафос и всепроникающее присутствие Дворца в социальной жизни города. В статье не утверждается, что этнографико-концептуалистский городской портрет (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) или же эксперимент с этнометодологией могут действительно достичь (описательной или действительной) тотальности. Данный текст, скорее, способен проиллюстрировать, как возникает городской портрет, который является результатом стремления приближенно измерить тотальность городской среды, а не охватить множество ее частностей.

Ключевые слова: методология; этнография; урбанизм; архитектура; тотальность; холизм; сталинизм; постсоциализм