

Topologies of scholasticide in Gaza: education in spaces of elimination

The Israeli military aggression against Gaza has led to unprecedented destruction. Since October 2023, Israel has cut off water, fuel, and electricity, prevented humanitarian aid and destroyed vital facilities and infrastructure, turning the Gaza Strip into a death space marked by horror and mass devastation. The educational sector has suffered significantly, with thousands of students, teachers and professors killed or injured and 60% of educational facilities destroyed, including all 12 universities. In this editorial, we trace the pattern of systematic attacks on Palestinian education by the Israeli settler state in and beyond the Gaza Strip. We contextualise resilience initiatives that strive to conceive a sense of normalcy during the direst conditions. We acknowledge the role stories of such initiatives can have in lifting morale and resisting oppression. Yet, we draw attention to the harm the glorification of such initiatives may have in skewing the image of hardship that most Gazans face under the most disastrous of circumstances. Instead, we urgently call on the global community to respond to end the genocidal violence, support the rebuilding of Gaza and restore the right to life and education for its people.

Keywords: Gaza, genocide, education, Israel military aggression, slow violence, scholasticide

Introduction

Since the beginning of the ongoing onslaught, Israel has systematically attacked lives, life-worlds and life-sustaining infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, turning the incarcerated enclave into an ultimate death-space of sheer survival, horror and mass destruction. Not only has Israel cut off the water, fuel, and electricity supply to Gaza since October 2023, but it has also eradicated any means of domestic food production, prevented the entry of humanitarian aid, and closed the region indefinitely (Amnesty International 2024). This culminated in a speed and scale of destruction unseen since World War II (WWII) (AP 2024). The unprecedented severity, combining mass destruction and massacres with suffocating spaces of entrapment has led to the widespread collapse of Gaza as a place and site of inhabitation.

More than 35,000 people have been killed, of whom around 15,000 are children. In addition, over 79,000 people have been injured, and at least 10,000 people have gone missing. Around 1.7 million people have been displaced and 60% of residential buildings totally or partially destroyed. Hunger, famine, and diseases are now an everyday reality. What is more, environmental toxication will have a heavy toll on all life in Gaza, and key infrastructures such as health centres, hospitals and higher educational institutions have now been vastly, if not completely, destroyed (Al Jazeera 2024a; Shakil & Singh 2024; UN 2024a).

The numbers continue rising. Despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordering Israel to stop its Rafah offensive that began on May 6th, 2024, the recent invasion alone has led, just in 12 days, to a massive (re)displacement of around 900,000 people (FP 2024). This comprises 40% of the Gazan population (UN 2024b). Importantly, these acts have happened in already deteriorated conditions preceding October 7th, 2023. The almost two-decades-long blockade had led to a severe scarcity of basic commodities and essential life-supporting services, and according to the United Nations, already rendered the Strip 'unlivable' (UN 2018a; UN 2018b; The Guardian 2024. See also Salamanca 2011; Bhungalia 2012; Smith 2016; Griffiths & Redwood 2024; Othman 2024).

Consequently, the Gazan population is left to grapple with the challenges related to rudimentary needs and basic everyday necessities. We have seen endless attempts to find alternatives to carry out daily activities in response to massive displacements and destruction, such as the manufacturing of pottery ovens, the use of bicycles and diminutive windmills for generating electricity (to enable charging and other important activities), e-sims to overcome blackouts, alternative ways of setting up tents, and many more that are beyond the scope of this editorial. Even before the current intensifications, Gazans had built a 17-year-long accumulation of know-how, creating numerous ways to overcome the scarcities of the thanatopolitical siege (Griffiths 2022) and the metabolic rift (Smith & Isleem 2017) it has installed.

Such circumstances have effectively maintained conditions that have slowly exhausted and made life in Gaza highly vulnerable while simultaneously preventing its recovery (Joronen 2021a). These conditions as such have a long history (Agha *et al.* 2024; Joronen & Tarvainen 2024), with various phases of acceleration and slow violence (Joronen 2021b; Ghantous & Joronen 2022; Bhungalia 2023). They also contain topologies that connect security collaborations and police training in the US to collective punishment in Palestine, grieving of lost lives to Finland's arms trade, the trade unions in Belgium to ship cargos heading to Gaza, academic freedom to policing and censorship, among others. As Collins (2011) wrote more than a decade ago, with its various forms of securitisation, acceleration, (settler) colonisation and political economies, Palestine is inherently a global question (see also Englert 2020; Velednitsky *et al.* 2020; Ghantous 2023; Tarvainen & Challand 2024).

According to the United Nations' Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR 2024), the ongoing Israeli military aggression has caused significant damage also in the educational sector. As the Office reports, 5,479 students, 261 teachers, and 95 university professors have been killed, and even more have been injured – at least 7,819 students and 756 teachers. As for the infrastructure, Israel has destroyed 60% of all education facilities across the Gaza Strip, including several archives and 13 public libraries either partially or completely razed. All Universities in Gaza have now been destroyed. This has had numerous consequences, from the destruction of culture, memory, and knowledge, to the prevention of the access of around 625,000 students to education. Outside the institutions of higher education, Euro-Med Monitor (2024) reports the destruction of 406 schools by the Israeli military forces, with around 73% of school buildings damaged. Palestinian scholar Nabulsi coined the concept "scholasticide" precisely to describe these manifold ways of systematically attacking education – the students, the teachers, the universities, the archives, the cultural centres, the indigenous ways of knowledge production – and the long history they have in Palestine (see Ahmad & Vulliamy 2009; Glück 2024; Spectre 2024).

Indeed, there is a pattern of systematic regulation and destruction of Palestinian education and educational institutions dating back to the 1948 Nakba – the catastrophe of Palestinian mass dispossession, in, after and before 1948. Historically, and prior to the European colonization of the Arab world, higher education institutions in Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Baghdad, and Fez were amongst the oldest, with Al-Azhar University in Cairo dating back to 972 AD. The colonisation led to

the marginalisation of Arab and Islamic higher education institutions, mainly through the establishment of new universities and the modernisation of existing ones based on the European models of higher education. Before 1948, Palestinians pursued higher education in universities in Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, and Alexandria. In Palestine, two colleges – the Arab College and Rashidiyya College, both in Jerusalem – served the students. Yet both collapsed as a result of the Nakba (Abu Saad 2006, 2019). Following the establishment of the Israeli state, the education of the Palestinians that remained in what had become the internationally recognised borders of the state of Israel was put under the control of the Arab Education Administration – an arm of the Israeli Ministry of Education that maintained hegemonic control over Palestinian education. This led to the segregation and disadvantaging of Palestinian schools, to teacher appointment on a political rather than educational basis, and to the enforcement of a curriculum that was based on “loyalty to the state and the Jewish people” (Mar’i 1978, 50) and the negative portrayal of Arabs (Podeh 2001; Abu Saad 2006).

Israel gained further control over Palestinian education with the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza in 1967 (excluding the separate schools for Palestinian refugees run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East). This meant aims to censor and replace existing textbooks, approval of hirings, restrictions to mobility (i.e., by denying permissions to study abroad but also access back), and the regular targeting of Palestinian professors and facilities of higher education institutions (Abu Al-Lughod 2000). In the late 1980s, for instance, the Israeli state issued an order for the closure of all educational institutions, collectively punishing students and staff for the popular non-violent uprising against the decades of occupation (the First Intifada). Yet Palestinians sought ways to continue education by moving classrooms to neighbourhoods and living rooms (Mahshi & Bush 1989; Zelkowitz 2014), effectively turning education into a front of non-violent resistance.

Over the past decades the Israeli army has regularly conducted raids on campuses, abducted and arrested students and professors, and destroyed property. Hundreds of students have been killed or injured by Israeli forces, with thousands arrested either in their homes, on the way to their universities, or inside university campuses (Harker 2009; see also the Right to Education Campaign (Birzeit University 2024)). These processes have all intensified since October 7th, 2023, in all parts of the occupied territories. Furthermore, the imposed fragmentation of the territories through checkpoints, road closures, and settler violence has for long contributed to the denial of access to higher education institutions. The compartmentalisation of space has led to a compartmentalisation of higher education, as students are effectively forced to choose universities and fields of study available in their close vicinity.

Following the most recent and unprecedented scale of destruction, of every facet of life in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian scholars and educators have issued statements calling on international scholars and universities to take a vocal and clear stance against the genocide in Gaza (Birzeit University Union 2023). Other solidarity initiatives have also emerged. Following the Birzeit University staff members’ initiative, the universities of Birzeit, Al-Quds and Al-Najah have now opened their courses for the online participation of Gazan students. Together they offer potential support for thousands of Gazan higher education students, while also illuminating the obstacles in dealing with the amount of damage done to higher education in the strip. A vast majority of Gazans are now internally displaced and were forced to flee without being able to carry any belongings, let alone books, laptops, or computers. With tens of thousands of people killed, hundreds of thousands injured, and health facilities systematically destroyed, the students face immense challenges. Hunger, continued displacement and water insecurity further exacerbate the situation. While under constant stress, facing new threats and coping with grief, their ability to participate in education is a question that needs to be raised.

In a similar vein, since October 7th, 2023, the Palestinian citizens of Israel and some critical Jewish-Israeli voices have been subjected to intensified assaults. In Israeli academic institutions, hundreds of Palestinian students have been subject to disciplinary proceedings based on social media posts, often leading to their suspension or full expulsion (Adalah 2023). Faculty members and staff are also targeted by such measures, often orchestrated by governmental and non-governmental actors but also academic institutions. These oppressive measures were well epitomised in the persecution and silencing campaign against Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian (Hebrew

University, Jerusalem), an internationally esteemed scholar known for her critical research (see Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2009, 2010, 2015).

In late November 2023, Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian was asked by the administration of Hebrew University (in an email sent to all faculty members) to resign from her post due to her signing of a petition that deemed Israel's war on Gaza as a case of genocide and called for a ceasefire (Lloyd 2024). In late March 2024, the Hebrew University officially suspended Shalhoub-Kevorkian from teaching duties, but due to massive international pressure reinstated her two weeks later (see Butler 2023). Whilst the Hebrew University ignited the persecution campaign, it was far-right Israeli politicians and student organisations who continued and amplified it, calling for her dismissal from the university, and her prosecution for 'incitement'. It did not take long. In April 2024 Shalhoub-Kevorkian was arrested by the Israeli Police, her home was brutally vandalised and searched, and many of her belongings, including academic work, were confiscated. Although Shalhoub-Kevorkian was released the next day by a court order, she is still subject to frequent police interrogations and the possibility of the Israeli Police filing a lawsuit against her is still looming (for more see Odeh 2024). These events also connect to academic freedom in the Finnish academia, as they pushed Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian to refrain from attending and delivering a keynote lecture at the Seventh Finnish Colloquium of Middle East and North African Studies, intended to take place in Tampere in June 2024.

Returning to the desperate situation for students in Gaza, over the past seven months students have been unable to attend school. This has fostered several individual initiatives to continue teaching in makeshift facilities, mostly in tents, at various displacement zones. For example, Doaa Qudaih, a Palestinian English teacher, started an initiative to teach children English in tents. She called her class *Peace and Freedom*, and her videos went viral when major media outlets picked them up and praised the initiative as resilient and extraordinary (Al Jazeera 2024c), further highlighting the ability of Gazans to challenge even the most disastrous circumstances. In the makeshift-class Doaa uses a diminutive whiteboard when teaching approximately 20 to 30 kids, though recently she has tried to include more children in the initiative. Her scheme is exceedingly commendable and undeniably shows resilience, courage, and determination, challenging the current circumstances while creating alternatives to what is no longer accessible to the kids: their everyday educational environments. Another social media post that went viral, titled *The first education class taking place in Beit Lahia after 7 months of ongoing genocide* (X.com 2024), took the same sentiment in highlighting an image of unmatched resistance. In another instance related to higher education, a student defended his master's thesis in a tent one day before the Israeli invasion of Rafah (Instagram 2024). These initiatives reflect enormous strength and are everyday acts of resistance against the monstrous destruction and massive brutality of Israel's aggression. They are attempts to create alternatives to what is no longer available and accessible.

And yet, we should read these initiatives and acts cautiously to avoid romanticised readings, glorifying the heroic abilities of resistance and counter-power (Shwaikh 2023; also Harker 2011). They rather speak of the grave lack of what previously gave the rhythms for everyday life in Gaza. In this regard, it is crucial to notice the language used to report such initiatives, which almost always fails to capture the full context, leading to inaccuracies and misrepresentations. For example, while these initiatives are commendable on an individual level, they should not be comprehended as indicative of the broader state of the education system in Gaza amid ongoing mass extermination. Unfortunately, such framings foster a sense of utopianism and meta-humanism, drawing misleadingly optimistic pictures that do not convey the unspeakable realities on the ground in Gaza. Headlines like *Delight and joy visited the children of the camp* (Al Jazeera 2024b) exemplify this tendency, offering a rosy portrayal that overlooks the challenges and crises the population in Gaza now struggles with. This all happens simultaneously with a grotesque carnivalisation of death and destruction by Israeli military personnel, who are posting online what South Africa's presentative, Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, called in a case against Israel in Hague (ICJ), "the first live-streamed genocide" (see Kauffmann 2024; Toler *et al.* 2024).

There are thus grave ethical issues with the rhetoric underlining the heroic ability to cope with, adapt to, and act despite mass extermination. Extending small and exceptional cases of resilience to everyone in Gaza, while pointing out the incredible agential abilities, can give a false notion that

people, all people, in Gaza are 'just fine'. The celebration of heroic acts of resilience in media outlets, while lifting morale and providing a sense of hope among Palestinians outside the Gaza Strip, can also relieve 'survivor's guilt' – the feeling of guilt as a result of surviving the traumatic events in Gaza while others did not. Gazans become invulnerable superhumans, legends who can tolerate it all: the grand level of suffering, bloodshed, pain, loss, and tragedy that befalls them. These distorting images of Gazans are only fleeting snapshots that fail to capture and attend to the depth of devastation left outside the picture – the story, the 'resilient' frame. Or to be more precise, what the frame chooses to ignore.

Let us thus not forget that the current situation in Gaza indicates a complete lack of a foreseeable future. It sends constant calls for solidarity and protest through the limbs and the body parts unearthed under the rubble, cries for acknowledging the severe suffering, and the amount of pain that occupied the facial features of every single human being in Gaza. All this is demanding an end to the ongoing genocidal pace of aggression. The loss of thousands of innocent lives, countless homes shattered to rubble, and fractured and exhausted bodies of those hanging at the edge of survival should be enough for people worldwide to raise a deep concern about the lack of care for the lives in Gaza. Instead, it has become a stark reminder that the world has failed to protect Gazans. While these people may not hold superpowers, they do deserve justice, freedom, rights, and dignity on a par with anyone elsewhere. They should have the right to mourn and grieve, the right to seek care and help, and the right to elicit a human response to the unspeakable brutality unleashed upon them by Israel.

Our point here is not to undermine the practices people have invented, to survive and continue maintaining some of the mechanisms, routines, and rituals formerly present in their daily lives. We acknowledge that these initiatives speak of the irreducibility of life to even the most destructive death-spaces, in a way that is not a vague practice of seeking hope and claiming joyful affirmation (see Dekeyser *et al.* 2023), but life revealing its fundamental ungovernability – namely, its irreducibility but also vulnerability to even the most violent spaces aiming to obliterate and eliminate lives, bodies and mundane spaces in Gaza (Joronen & Griffiths 2022; also Griffiths & Joronen 2023). However, individual initiatives should not be celebrated in isolation. They should rather be a reminder of the topologies of collective action needed to bring Gaza justice. Collectively. To everyone.

When elaborating upon various ways of dehumanising Gazans/Palestinians, we should not only focus on more apparent figures, such as 'human animals', 'monsters', 'villains', 'terrorists', 'uncivilised', 'barbarians', and so on. We should also see how bestowing superhumanity – expected to walk through the apocalypse of carpet bombings, missiles, snipers, executions, falling buildings, epidemics, starvation and more – can also dehumanise, by denying Gazans the tragedy they have been forced into. Instead of dehumanising language and romanticising pictures of heroic unbreakable Gazans, the ethical focus should be on urgent calls for an immediate ceasefire and mobilization of international collaboration, and schemes and plans to bring the Gazan education system back to life by following in the footsteps of Gaza academics, scholars, and administrators who recently set out an open letter for solidarity (Gaza Academics and Administrators 2024). Such is a call to ensure every student, researcher, and teacher in Gaza has their fundamental right to education and academic freedom.

It is such calls that the worldwide student encampment movement – now occupying the premises of Finnish universities in major cities (Tampere, Turku, Helsinki) – presently asks us to respond to. As members of staff, we could do more to join in and respond to these calls, coming also from Palestinian Universities (Birzeit University Union 2023). By amplifying such calls, we can participate in the joint global effort to bring forth topologies different to those of the siege and its suffocating metabolical drift, or the current mass extermination and its carnivalist installation of necropolitical death-spaces. These are calls to care for life in its multiple vulnerable forms.

And yet, such urgent calls to end the scholasticide in Gaza only reveal part of the picture. Even in the case of a ceasefire, and the end of decades of military occupation and colonisation of Palestine, Gaza will be the biggest rebuilding project since WWII, requiring enormous global input. According to the United Nations' (UNDP 2024), the most optimistic scenario is that it will take until 2040. Moreover, researchers and students in higher education institutions in Gaza will need support for decades to come. This is something all Finnish universities could contribute to, by providing institutional

partnerships and support for individual researchers, through the ‘Scholars at Risk’ program for instance. We believe that geographers should take the lead in promoting these initiatives that embody the responsible science and ethical research practices that our universities, departments and research funders increasingly ask us to be committed to.

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Content of the issue

Before introducing the content of this issue, we are proud to share some news from the publisher, the Geographical Society of Finland. Over the past few years, they have been digitising the early volumes of the journal to make them freely available to the scholarly community and anyone interested in the history of geography. Now you can find *Fennia* volumes 1–20 – from 1889 to 1903 – digitally republished at the [National Library of Finland](#), from where they are linked to the journal archive. Nearly 7,000 pages and over 300 maps, illustrations and appendices are now freely available, along with the original 1899 Atlas of Finland. The Atlas itself can be accessed from the [Doria service](#). Volumes from 1904 to 1910 will be added to the archive later, and all articles will be indexed in the journal.fi service provided to *Fennia* by the Federation of Learned Societies.

The early volumes of *Fennia* provide a broad overview of the geography of Finland and its neighbouring regions, before geography was institutionalised as a major discipline in the country. The authors include scholars from various scientific fields, who have thus made a significant contribution to the development of geographical knowledge. These articles are mostly written in Swedish, French and German, with a few exceptions in Finnish and English (see also Kallio et al. 2021 for our multilingual history). In all, the digitally republished articles offer a rich collection of geographical knowledge, reflecting the breadth and depth of the discipline. The first 15 years of *Fennia* in particular are a treasure trove of information, providing a snapshot of developments in fields as diverse as cartography, geodesy, geomorphology, earthquakes, Quaternary geology, hydrography and river dynamics, coastal geography, climate research, plant geography, population development, anthropology, place names, the spread of stories, Nordenskiöld and the history of geography. The Volume 13 reviews Finnish geographical research at the London International Geography Congress in 1895, and the Volume 17 is the text supplement to the Atlas of Finland, written by the country's leading researchers. Few journals in the world can boast such a long disciplinary lineage.

The carefully digitised appendices, images and maps, together with the OCR-digitised texts, promise exciting discoveries. The Society hopes that these will not only open up the history of Finnish geography and its development, but also serve as a catalyst for researchers to rediscover some forgotten results and trends. Republishing the journal from the start also helps to understand the expectations for geographical research. As Zachris Topelius, one of the first honorary members of the Society, asserted in 1889, *Fennia* works on a field “which for generations to come will offer research new material, scientific achievements and practical benefit for the country” (Palmén 1899, 61).¹ Echoes from the past and the potential for rediscovery make this digital republication so exciting.

The present issue, Volume 202, continues to offer our readers a rich set of interdisciplinary perspectives on various geographically interesting phenomena. It is a hefty package, containing eight original articles and five Reflections pieces. Let us give you a brief introduction to the content.

The issue begins with Karen Culcasi's paper *Gendered orientalism and the agency of Syrian, Muslim women refugees*, which provides an insight into the gendered orientalist discourse that positions Muslim refugee women as both victims-who-are-threats and victims-to-be-saved. The perspective is built from two directions, firstly from the United States, where the discourse is dominant, and secondly from Jordan, where Culcasi has conducted research with Syrian refugee women, most of whom are Muslim. Drawing on Saba Mahmood's theory of 'modalities of agency', she argues for the rejection of this discourse and the recognition of Muslim refugee women as persons in their own right, occupying different subject positions and exercising agency in different modalities.

The second very timely article by Juha Ridanpää is entitled *School shootings, the media, and the spatialities of dark belonging*. It was accepted for publication on March 6th and published as forthcoming on April 13th. Between these two dates, a school shooting took place in Finland that can be described as exceptional – without minimising other school shootings. A twelve-year-old primary school pupil shot at other pupils in his class, killing one and seriously injuring two. The case posed great challenges for the news media, which many journalists openly discussed in public: they were careful to do their job as ethically as possible. Reading the debate through Ridanpää's concept of 'dark belonging' is a useful analytical exercise. When the perpetrator is a child, that child immediately becomes a victim as well. What kind of narratives do news reports produce in such a case, and how do the logics of inclusion and exclusion, belonging and non-belonging work here?

The third article takes us to the Finnish countryside, where Ella Mustakangas has examined rural development through the lens of critical realism. *Relying on LEADER? A place-based policy approach to rural development of Finnish municipalities* offers a detailed analysis of the dominant role that the European Union's rural development programme LEADER – which aims “to engage local actors in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of their rural areas” as in their [website](#) – has gained in Finland. Her motivation for the topic stems from the simple question of why, in a country where municipalities have a high degree of autonomy, rural development activities are largely, if not entirely, organised through the LEADER method. This diminishes the municipalities' own role in place-based development, that is, the power they have to shape their own future. Based on interviews in three rural municipalities, the article offers three causal explanations related to, firstly, the idea of responsible local communities, secondly, the development policy of the shrinking municipality and, thirdly, the challenges of projectification.

The article by Hannah Persson and Mirek Dymitrow moves us from the Finnish to the Swedish rural context. It introduces the reader to the rural north of Sweden and the struggle for Norrland's territory in the context of prevailing environmental crises. *A world-leading periphery: exploring representations of Northern Sweden in view of its green transition* offers a discourse analysis of a range of documentary materials from news media, political statements and government institutions. The authors aim to show how Norrland is discursively reproduced as Sweden's inner periphery, this time as part of the green transition narratives. The analysis concludes that Norrland is currently viewed through a lens in which it is primarily seen and represented as a green future, including some dimensions of struggle. Through the actors whose narratives were studied, the area is reproduced as a singular space suitable for capitalist growth through extractivism – a progress presented as key to the future of Europe. The authors argue that this discourse justifies the green exploitation of Norrland, perpetuating decades of colonial treatment of the area and overlooking the views and experiences of the people living in Norrland. This cannot be the basis for a just green transition in Europe, Persson and Dymitrow argue.

The next article, by Elisabeth Gulløy, also focuses on rural geographies, this time in Norway. In *Gender, sports, and belonging: the role of sports participation in residential preferences among girls and boys living in Norway's rural peripheries* she analyses the role of sports, as a holding power of rural municipalities in Norway, with specific attention to gender and girls' perspectives in particular. Through the theoretical framework of gendering of space, Gulløy explores whether youth sports participation is associated with residential preferences and if a gender gap can be identified from their aspirations. She contributes specifically to recent debates in feminist theories of sports, with her quantitative survey findings that reveal many interesting facets about young people's (un)belonging in rural areas where sports are available and inviting to them unevenly, as a leisure activity. The study sets out to criticise a common assumption about sports as masculine arenas. The

results suggest that sports participation indeed seems to strengthen girls' local and social integration and feelings of belonging, in the present digital age. For girls living in small and sparsely populated municipalities, in Norway and perhaps also more broadly in the Nordic region, organised sports represent arenas for positive place relations.

Moving between rural and urban landscapes, our sixth article, co-authored by Siiri Pyykkönen and Päivi Kymäläinen, focuses on the spatialities of mental health institutions. *Urban landscapes as therapeutic landscapes: the transforming conceptions of care environments* is based on an analysis of the planning documents of a new psychiatric hospital in Turku, Finland. Through this case study, the paper explores the urbanisation of mental health care, where the therapeutic environment extends beyond the mental health institution into the city as a relational space, including virtual elements. This organisation is somewhat different from the previously dominant rural care facilities that relied largely on the natural environment. The authors identify three key motivations for this change: access to centrally located hospitals, the growth of outpatient care, and limited funding.

Another article in the present issue situated between urbanity and rurality comes from Southeastern Austria, by Ernst Michael Preininger. His paper *How agriculture performs urbanity: Connecting urbanization and socio-practical shifts in farming cultures* explores farmers' use of technological advances that enable them to remain economically competitive. The digitally-assisted farming practices are analysed as indicators of rural transformation in the contemporary Europe, yet interestingly drawing from urbanization studies and mobilising the concept of habitual urbanity in the mentioned rural context. Preininger has used the participatory visual method of photovoice to explore the ongoing transformation from the perspective of the farmers. As a key indicator, he identifies the shift from implicit experiential farming knowledge to explicit data-based and algorithm-led knowledge. This, he argues, marks a paradigm shift for both the farming practices and the role of farmers, and affects also notably the human-animal relationships. Based on these findings Preininger calls for further critical research on the changing nature of farming.

The final full-length original article in this issue, by Marcus Hübscher, Elisabeth Kleindienst and Madlen Brose, moves explicitly to the exploration of urban landscapes, in this case the changing environment of Eisenbahnstrasse in Leipzig, Germany. *Ethnicity and gentrification: exploring the real estate's perspective on the revaluation of a 'dangerous' street in Leipzig (Germany)* comes from a study in which the authors interviewed local stakeholders about the paradoxical situation regarding the area's revaluation process and, in particular, the housing market. In their analysis, Hübscher, Kleindienst and Brose found that the real estate perspective on the actual values of the neighbourhood differed radically from the news coverage, which was mostly negative. While the media portrayal of Eisenbahnstrasse as 'Germany's most dangerous street' discourages families from moving to the area, students and artists find the international atmosphere of Eisenbahnstrasse inviting. In all of this, ethnicity plays a key role in the current gentrification, which is not unfamiliar to many other European cities.

In the Reflections section we have a set of interesting commentaries and interventions, beginning with an exploration of cultural geomorphology on Majuli Island, India. Avijit Sahay, Suraj Prasad, and Amrita Bajaj suggest that cultural geomorphology could be useful for geographers in reframing the way we engage with landscape, drawing upon the more-than-human and wet ontologies. This is followed by a *lectio praecursoria* by Žieda Tamašauskaitė, which explores public space, and the idea of publicness as more than a characteristic of urban space. Rather, for Tamašauskaitė, drawing on Henri Lefebvre, it is a phenomenon that is both present in public space and evolving (or becoming) when the space is used as public space. Henrik Dorf Nielsen and Virpi Kaisto follow in the Reflections section, with a rich and important exploration of the multiple ways researchers experience and navigate the 'grey zone' of academic collaboration and research on/in Russia in the current geopolitical context. The piece emerged from a session at Finnish Geography Days in 2023 called *Geography in Geopolitical Crisis*, and addresses several challenging issues that scholars working on Russia face.

We end this issue of Fennia with two Reflections on climate change that speak to each other. The first by Janette Huttunen explores the issue of climate migration, and does so by focusing on Extinction Rebellion. It discusses the introduction of a Citizens' Assembly on climate and environmental justice, to go beyond politics and move past the current impasse to fight the climate crisis. The

second piece by Nina Baron, Sara Heidenreich, and Matthias Kokorsch attends to the relocation of remote communities facing natural hazards and living in high-risk areas in the Nordic context. They ask some difficult and uncomfortable questions about communities that are particularly vulnerable to climate change-related hazards. These questions will only become more pressing as climate change intensifies.

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Notes

¹ "som för generationer framåt skall erbjuda forskaren ett nytt material, vetenskapen nya landvinningar och fosterlandet ett praktiskt gagn."

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