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Exploring the Urban Infrastructure of Transnational Labor Migration in Nepal
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Background
Transnational labor migration is an increasingly common phenomenon across the globe, but certain countries are seeing higher levels of labor export. Nepal is one of the countries experiencing the most dramatic increase in outmigration. Between 2009 and 2017, the government of Nepal issued 3,554,683 permits of migrant workers seeing jobs abroad (Government of Nepal 2018). Due to the high numbers of men and women migrating abroad for work, Nepal is an important country to study in order to understand the causes and impacts of transnational labor migration.

The body of academic research concerning the impact of transnational labor migration on both sending and receiving countries has been growing steadily over the past two decades. This research has often been focused on understanding transnational labor migration systems and their impacts on both the economic and social sectors in sending and receiving countries (Gardner 2012). While there is substantial scholarship on the infrastructure of transnational labor migration (Lin et al. 2012), there is a need to explore the impacts and causes of transnational labor migration on both sending and receiving countries has been growing steadily over the past two decades. This research has often been focused on understanding transnational labor migration systems and their impacts on both the economic and social sectors in sending and receiving countries (Gardner 2012). While there is substantial scholarship on the infrastructure of transnational labor migration (Lin et al. 2012), little attention has been paid to the impact of migration on the built landscape of sending countries.

Objectives
The purpose of this project was to provide a new avenue through which to explore the impacts and causes of transnational labor migration. The project was not intended to provide solutions to issues, but to further understand the complexities of migration in Nepal.

Methods
• Semi-Structured Interviews
• Photo Ethnography
• Urban Drifting (Dérive)

Preliminary Findings
1. Outmigration, while originally conceptualized as the central issue explored in this project, is simply one step in a complex and intricate system.
2. Internal migration, perpetuated by domestic political, social, and economic conditions, informs outmigration and is shaping the built landscape of Kathmandu.
3. Return migrants often provide the infrastructural backbone of the migration system within Kathmandu and therefore determine much of the urban development within migrant spaces.

Future Research
All of the migrants interviewed for this project were men. The lack of equal gender representation made me wonder how women use and construct space in the city. Future research could examine female migrant’s relationship to space within the city and how the migration path taken by women is reflected within the built landscape of Kathmandu.

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References Cited

Gracia Lindquist

Methods

Preliminary Findings

Research Objectives

Background

FA Dérive

Photo Ethnography

Urban Drifting (Dérive)