Political Implications of the Urban Landscape

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Nigel Thorne,
EFLA President

Introduction

The body of knowledge that continues to build in terms of landscape architectural research repeatedly underlines the need for landscape architects to improve their skills in an arena of what appears to be political naivety. In order for landscape architects to compete on equal terms with those professions more readily recognised within the political agenda we need to be able to quantify the public benefits of our work in terms of economic and financial gain. The influence of landscape architects on the cultural, socio-economic, health, welfare and heritage components of society need to be better defined and promoted by all of us in the profession. The majority of the population tend to take the landscape and all of its tangible and less tangible elements for granted and this, of course, includes our political governors.

Research shows that the economic value of landscape can be measured in hundreds of millions of pounds rather than tens of thousands. A fact that ought to place the landscape architectural profession at the forefront of political attention and yet somehow we fail to gain the necessary recognition. As a profession we owe it not only to our professional colleagues but also to the public at large to utilise this research data to engage on a more informed and astute basis with our political masters. The time has come to eliminate all of the misunder-standings and misinterpretations based upon false assumptions and start using the research information to our own advantage.

Haris Piplas,
On behalf of the
EFLA Communications Group

Presenting:
The New EFLA Journal

Dear readers,
Welcome to the first edition of the EFLA Journal. Starting with this issue, the EFLA Communication group will publish Journals on a half-year basis treating very actual topics from the field of Landsape Architecture and (far) beyond. Each volume will be entitled and devoted to one specific topic. In the first edition we bring twelve different articles from across the globe on the topic of „Political Implications on the Urban landscape". In the first edition we will show how the urban landscape, with all its aspects and characters, is related to politics and vice versa. Therefore we proudly present contributions which treat this topic in various geographical, economic, ecologic, socio-cultural, (inter)disciplinary boundaries and conditions. The works treat locations such as Kairo, Tunisia, the Balkans, Spain, Beirut, Bucharest, Nicosia, Latin America, Jerusalem etc. showing how global this topic have already become. At this place we want to express our gratitude to all the authors for enriching our publication with their great works as well as the EFLA volunteers for their sincere efforts and energy. We hope you will enjoy reading our Journal and feel free to contact us if you any remarks, comments or feedback.

Marina Cervera i Alonso de Medina was born in Barcelona and graduated as an Architect at the E.T.S.A.B, Technical University of Catalonia. She has received grants from the *Mies Van der Rohe* Foundation to participate in international workshops (*New Working and living Conditions in the Lagoon of Venice* with Elia Zenghelis and *Five minutes city* with Winny Maas) and from La Fundación Caja de Arquitectos to perform internships in Paris.

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Currently combines her work as a freelance professional with her work at the Landscape Office of the Association of Architects of Catalonia where she is coordinating the 7th European Landscape Biennial and the publication of the 6th Biennial catalogue "Storm & Stress." She has been the coordinator of the *4th 5th and 6th European Biennial of Landscape Architecture* and coordinator of the 3rd 4th and 5th Biennial Catalogue *"Only with Nature" ,"Landscape: a product- a production" and "Storm and Stress".*

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Marina Cervera & Leonor Migueis

Public Space and Cyber Space

The current events taking place on worldwide streets and squares are the definite proof that the city is the unambiguous stage of life and acting for society. To be more precise is the city public space where people go to show and therefore exist in their demands.

This set of open spaces, voids, non constructed areas that structure urban landscape which are affected by public usage, such as squares, streets, parks ...comprise the **public space** which shows with the current events it core value as the space for encounter, with no access or usage restrictions, as long as within the limits established by the local authorities. But even these limits have been jeopardized, questioned and broken with the late *"Acampadas"* Campings that see in the occupation of the streets and squares the strongest way to demonstrate outrage.

Together with the reaffirming of Public Space as city fundamental value we witness the emergence of a new Cyber public space related by activity to historical spatial open paces.

Public space and cyber space comprise a unique playground when it comes to contemporary interaction and political claim. It may be seen as a binary juxtaposition but in fact It became clear it wasn't, as this two dynamics coexist, complement and feed from each other to gain force and communicate. Conceiving an interesting mixture of private versus public, real versus virtual and personal versus anonymous.

Historically, public space was the gathering site for claims. The only place where voices could gather and be heard whilst massive action could be organized. "*De la lutte des classes à la lutte des places."*

Times have changed and global access to cyber space defines new "places" where to organize and spread all kinds of messages. Of course, the same control/police present in real world began to understand the importance of controlling and censuring cyber space and applied the same strategy in this new sphere, but they are failing to understand that the internal laws of this virtual world are slightly different and more important much more difficult to control.

Internet has generated armies of lonesome speakers, there are millions of speakers spreading messages in a cosmos of voices. The net loves gathering groups, "likes", fan's, RSS followers groups for political, religious, cultural or fashionable reasons. It is a "void" structured as a net, no clear vertical hierarchy. No evident responsible to punish, it's not a one-man movement creation. Parenthood in cyber space is multiplied *ad infinitum*. Ideas subsist or die, they are alive, metabolizing, growing, reproducing and changing so fast we don't have time to grasp the whole of it.

And here lies the challenge for professionals such as Landscape Architects. As thinkers and designers of the real world we cannot go on ignoring the virtual realm and their obvious connection.

We believed we could understand global chances without being online. Our grandparents' generation believed it to be only a distraction, such as video games. We were wrong. We all need to be in this virtual world because it is affecting our real one. The fight on the net gains shape, formalizes and demonstrates on our streets. By conquering our public space gains the physical visibility for those who ignored the online messages, enabling this way the origin of new conceptual frontiers.

We believed we could rethink and question a design to our public space as professionals without cyber space input, maybe we shouldn't.

This first issue of our online magazine, wanted to draw the attention on the events we are witnessing. The changes we are living as citizens and professionals in order to share experiences beyond global TV news.

We don't pretend to be objective or holistic; this is only a humble and rather personal approach of young professionals' point of view on public space and global changes. "Seizing the moment" of spotlight that these matters of our interest are receiving from a more global and non professional world.

Spain:

We have come here voluntarily and by free will. After the 15th of May demonstrations we have decided to remain united and grow in numbers on our fight for dignity. We do not represent any political party and they do not represent us.

We are united on our rage, our discomfort, our precarious life, which derives from inequality, but, above all, what keeps us together is our will for change. We are here because we want a new society that prioritizes our life to any political or economic interest. We feel crushed by the capitalist economy, we feel excluded from the present political system, which does not represents us. We are striking for a radical change in society. And, above all, we aim at keeping society as the sole driver of this transformation.

They thought we were asleep. They thought they could carry on cutting our rights without finding any resistance. But they were wrong: we are fighting – peacefully, but with determination – for the life we deserve.

We have learned from Cairo, Iceland and Madrid. Now it's time to extend the fight and spread the word."

Protesters Profile

Those words were written last spring in Spain. Some may say it all began with Stéphane Hessels "Time for Outrage!". "To create is to resist, resist is to create"

But massive followers of the protest ignore any literary reference. It was a massive, empathetic and Mediterranean new attitude to express disconformities with the economical/social global crisis.

The Spanish protests, also known as *INDIGNADOS* or 15-M movement, consisted on a series of ongoing demonstrations with an inception in civil digital platforms and social networks.

Even though protesters form a hetero-geneous and ambiguous group, they share strong discontentment for: unemployment numbers (around 40% among young people), welfare cuts, Spanish politicians, a two party system in Spain, as well as the current political system, the loss of values and bankers corruption.

Proposals:

The *Indignados* (Outraged) firmly defend and support what they call basic rights: Housing, Work, Health, Education and Culture.

The most consistent demands, promoted by the Web Real Democracy NOW agreed upon a series of specific proposals on seven matters.

General guidelines / schematically.
1.- Elimination of the political class privileges:
Control parliamentary absenteeism
Eliminate tax privileges
Eradicate legal immunity
Compulsory publication of politicians heritage
2.-Fight unemployment:
Division of labor by encouraging reductions

in working hours
Retirement at 65
Discounts for businesses with less than 10% of temporary workers
Restoration of the 426 Euros subsidy for long-term unemployed

3.- Housing rights:
Expropriation of public flats that have not been sold and transfer to the "protected" rental market
Rental assistance for young people with less resources

4.-Utilities:
Independent monitoring of budgets and expenditures
Recruitment of medical staff to reduce waiting lists
Recruitment of teachers to ensure a proper ratio of students per classroom
Cost reduction in university fees
Public financing of research to ensure independence

5.- Banks Control:
Prohibition of any banks rescue
Regulation of the sanctions and malpractice speculation

6.-Taxation:
Reduction of military expenditure
Increase tax rates to big fortunes
Real and effective control of tax fraud

7.-Civil liberties:
Abolition of Internet Sinde law and protection of cyber freedom
Changing the electoral law to ensure a truly representative and proportional system
Judiciary Independence
Internal democracy in parties

Organization:

The assembly is organized in various committees that should normally meet every evening and these are comprised of subcommittees to carry out more specific tasks. Note that, as complex and dynamic organisms there is a constant updating of this organization.
Media, Communication...: blog, email, forums, social networks and press releases management. brochures, posters, texts collected and given out.
Camping Coordination: Links between Spanish camps management.
Culture:
Economics and Resources: Financial resources of the square and fundraising / donations management.

International: Contact with the worldwide camping's, documents translation, Blog, Twitter, Face book, you tube...
Content: debates and demands for the development of issue papers, reviews, alternatives.
Self-organization and direct democracy: Kitchen feeds us, collect food and make it delicious.
Infrastructure: tables, shades, stages, recycling...
Extension: Different frontlines: Health, Education, Employment, Neighborhoods...
Activities: art, action, graphics, debates. Audio: videos, photos, streaming...
Living: Prevention, detection and conflict management.
Education: study room, library...
Feminists outraged: the feminist revolution will or will not!
Health: Information and practice of sustainable camping.
Environment: awareness for the respectful use of the square and the world. Workshops and activities
Garden Committee:
Commission for the diversity and difference
Legal Commission: legal processes management

Portugal:

"A RUA É NOSSA"
(The street is ours)
15 maio. blogspot.com

Revolution is a meaningful and strong word in the Portuguese culture. Having leaved a Revolution known as "The Carnations revolution" that ended with a forty one years dictatorship. Already once in History people filled the streets to welcome change. And symbolic places were "occupied" in celebration because gatherings were forbidden and a massive reunion in the streets meant freedom.

Things have changed but somehow people are still drawn to gather in this places symbol of the questioned power.

Demonstrations were taking place at the same time at a different place, meaning that also in Portugal people were protesting, but there was one shared and unique space that joined everybody - the cyber space. And from this platform emerged a collective movement that started to take place - the *Acampadas*" Campings. In a solidarity movement that saw in this union a chance to strengthen their intentions.

"A PRAÇA É NOSSA: todos ao Rossio!"
(The square is ours: Everybody to *Rossio*!)
acampadalisboa.wordpress.com

Key symbolic places in each city were to be the stage of this movement but the backstage that made it possible and worked as fuel was being handle in internet.

Since this article intends to focus on the significance of the two realms of public and cyber space we choose not to focus on the ideological contents of the Portuguese gatherings. They had specificities but also common matters with the Spanish one.

What is under our attention is the intrinsic nature of Public Space as hot spot of and for society. But not only this, because we have now to consider a broader perspective that shall consider not only the spatial physical sphere but the virtual one as well.

Public space use, working scale and cartography

Our call goes to the importance of the occupation of public space as the key strategy for visibility. Hotspots of the movement were the occupation of Central, Historical and symbolic places such as *Plaza del Sol* in Madrid for nearly 2 months. The zymology of the occupation is obvious being *Plaza del Sol* the zero kilometer for all Spanish roads but the planning of the temporary uses was exceptionally organized within the improvisation of these spontaneous gatherings.

It was also remarkable the demand station outcome, disintegrating the movement by barrios. and multiplying the hotspots to every central public space in the correspondent city neighborhoods.
Furthermore the evolution of the passive occupation into movement by proposing different routes through Spain, who were to meet on July twenty third in *Plaza del Sol*, was

an unseen choreography detached by the *Indignados* Popular Marche whose aim was to finally march to Brussels.

There is an interesting concept on this approach, the importance of the scale in order to get to the problems core, from local to metropolitan, to regional, to national, to continental and finally global. Campings and assemblies are not exclusive to big cities, and that is why neighborhoods, villages and other cities were encouraged to join the movement and help build a new democracy.

The virtual networking and the cyber space application of the world and its public spaces have been allies to this concept, integrating part zymology... Section Map camps and world map and local revolutions.
http://acampadabcn.wordpress.com/mapa-de-les-acampades/
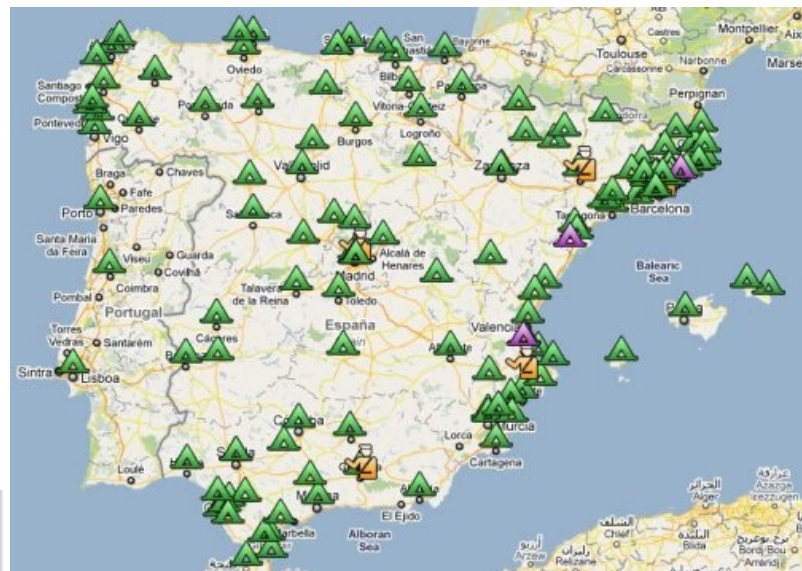
The *Indignados* have generated new cartographies linking cyber and public space, manipulating all kinds of scales and organizing temporary uses and symbolic occupations.
These are our tools as Professional Landscape Architects! We are confronting the emergence of a new cyber public space. Society is extremely aware of the global space, thanks to online software applications such as google earth, wiki maps, bing maps, street views, etc… new attitudes are generated and links between historical spatial open spaces and mentally-built cyber space will be reinforced. Revolutions, such as the *indignados* one, may or may not be of great historical relevance for contemporary society, but for sure they provide us with hints for on coming changes in urban public spaces.

To a Landscape Architect this Urban/Human Landscape should read more then what just meets the eye. Should serve to come closer to a better understanding of public space importance in Urban Landscape.

We are reaching a consistent scientific background with achievements such as a common definition for landscape like the one which resulted from the Council of Europe 2000 "An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors." So, as holders of important tools that define those shaping actions this current events cannot pass unnoticed.

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Alfredo Brillembourg & Hubert Klumpner
with Michael Contento, Lindsey Sherman

Trans-Borderlands
Activating the Plasticity of Urban Border-Space

Borderland:
1a: territory at or near a border
1b: fringe
2: a vague intermediate state or region

Within the contemporary city and contemporary global context (more specifically in what we have termed the Global South) there exists a network of restrictive borders, a network of limiting mechanisms generated by physical, geographical, political, social, cultural, and economic difference. These apparatus manifest themselves in various ways to inhibit essential forms of interaction and communication within the urban context by generating privative difference. But this milieu of restrictive edges also presents a valuable opportunity, one in which new forms of social design and communication are made possible. These borderlands introduce the possibility of manipulating their inherent, yet conventionally ignored, flexibility into new spaces of interaction. Social design can be strengthened through this critical engagement with the plasticity of the edge – by unearthing the territory of Border-Space.

Image 1 - Petare and la Urbina

"The subjection of factional privilege to challenge and conflict has been the single most important spur to social plasticity[2]"

One of the tasks in our work has been to identify and define borders in order to uncover the territory in which to intervene. We have defined this territory as Border-Space – a new terrain within conventional borders that is fertile ground for the responsible and democratic development of the contemporary city. Throughout history, borders have played many different roles and have assumed many different forms with various levels of porosity. Boundaries have evolved into a multitude of typologies – physical, political, economic – ranging from the apparent to the invisible and from the rigid to the amorphous. Despite ostensible limits of demarcation, many borders throughout history and within our present condition are not or were not clearly defined in every respect. As such, borders present conditions of perceived neutrality or porosity and provide opportunities to create counter-narratives.

Our interest in this topic navigates between two areas of research – (1) comparative studies of urban contexts (political, social, economic, and cultural) and (2) the urban borderlands of the Global South. These concerns originate from our extensive work in the barrios, favelas, and conflict zones within South American cities. In our work we have attempted to develop a theory of Border-Space through both the comparative studies of and the resultant interventions in these unique borderlands and conflict zones. We have expanded and enriched our strong interest in urban politics, economics (what makes cities wealthy or poor? what is the impact of economic integration on urban politics?), and international relations by focusing on these intermediate borderlands. In our effort to develop a strong theoretical contribution to the study of borderlands and through our subsequent operations and designs within these edges, what were once perceived as impermeable limits are now perceived as formative beginnings.

Through a broad historical lens, one can make the general statement that cities have existed through various modes of interaction. From Greek and Roman cities through the *Passagenwerk* of Walter Benjamin, cities can be understood as a framework of spaces of social interaction – the history of urbanism as the history of the morphological evolution of public space. Historically, public spaces have been conceived as zones of social communication that allowed individual

buildings to effectively "plug in" and catalyze these processes of social interaction. But today, as the contemporary city continues to grow (in both density and scale), the automobile continues to dominate as a mode of transportation, and public space continues to devolve into a development commodity, it becomes more difficult to craft these public spaces of interaction. As a result it becomes clear that there is an urgent need to re-conceptualize or re-define the edge as "occupiable", to engage in this intermediate borfder-space as the new opportunity for productive public space. Plugging into this once marginalized zone will encourage new processes of social design.

If we extend Geothe's metaphor beyond architecture, we might say that urbanism is "frozen politics". It then becomes apparent that there is a need to develop new mechanisms that can "unfreeze" the boundaries of this condition to open up opportunities for new forms of communi-cation – a need to transform static conventions into dynamic interaction. Not only will this engagement with the edge create an architecture and urbanism that is greater than the sum of its parts, but, through responsible manipulation of the borderland, it will also open up the border-space that makes the 21st century democratic city possible.

This essay presents a series of possible border readings with ways to conceptualize how design can effectively operate within this global condition to spur new forms of urban interventions and social design. The three sections – Identify, Activate, Transcend – represent a methodological approach to working within this global network of divisive borders.

1. Identify:
Navigating the border-space of our global condition

Welcome to the Global South, a network of urban villages.

It is less a place than a condition – a condition that has always existed but has been exponentially exaggerated by the rapid acceleration of urbanization, a condition that is representative of the global context, a condition of a complex network of static and prohibitive borders.

These multifaceted borders are simult-aneously sharp yet ambiguous, generating a

problematic that is difficult to identify. They exist in the marginalized periphery while occupying the heart of major metropolises. They form and are formed by political, economic, social, morphological, and geographical divisions between countries, cultures, ethnicities, neighbor-hoods, streets and buildings. They operate concurrently at manifold scales, effectively becoming scale-less – ranging from invisible moments to monumental structures. These borders empower some, while depriving others.

These borders are universal; this is our global condition.

These borders and border-spaces manifest themselves in many different ways and with different signs and/or signification. On a large scale, organizations that have transcended certain political or national boundaries in the interest of integration (EU, NAFTA, etc…) have created situations in which established borders become partially overridden or even obsolete, thereby opening "cross-border regions." These zones generate opportunities for communi-cation across borders and new economic growth. These types of zones often occur at smaller scales in the Informal City of the Global South, and this is where we locate our work and research. We can find anomalous situations that present interesting and important opportunities for social design. While most research has focused on how to cross borders, ours has focused on opening up and defining border-space to actively engage in creating new territories for design.

Image 2 - Morumbi - Paraispolis Juxtaposition_ Fabio Knoll] Paraisopolis, Sao Paulo, Brazil. The city's largest favela is bordered by Morumbi, one of the cities wealthiest neighboorhods.

Image 3 - Grotao trash
Paraisopolis, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Marginalization created by political, economic, and geographical difference.

Image 4 - Squatted Building
Caracas, Venezuela. The coexistence of economically marginalized population with economic and political conditions that cause stagnation exposes alternative occupations of this alignment.

Image 5 - Informal plug in
Morro de Providencia, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Although it is located in the center of the city, other borders prevent Morro de Providencia from being officially connected to the city's infrastructure. The inhabitants must informally plug in to access water and electricity.

Image 6a - Israel/Palestine
West Bank. Continued political conflict prevents effective action while strengthening the perception of difference.

2. Activate:
Unfolding Border-Space through community activism

It is within this Global Condition that we will find the space to act, to generate a new agency to operate effectively in the contemporary city. Here is where we engage the plastic border.
It is our responsibility as designers to generate social and political change through the precise identification and activation of the edge. It is our responsibility to manipulate these borders from the ground up, to solve global problems with local solutions. We realize that the mechanisms of the border will remain – physical, political, social, economic – thus in order to take action we must develop an agency to operate responsibly in transforming these mechanisms into a productive medium of interaction.

Without a script and with only a camera in hand we have set off. We will find a new city emerging within and across conventional borders. We will see the experience of people whose political, social, and economic upheaval has placed them in one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. We will look for the visionaries of tomorrow,

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Image 7 - Community engagement

the planners and thinkers who are working with space, movement, people, and places to create a future that improves the current condition with effective and innovative solutions.

3. Transcend:
Occupation of Border-Space through social design

With this new knowledge in hand, we can begin to develop a unique agency to reinvent boundaries. In this way we can redefine the contemporary city.
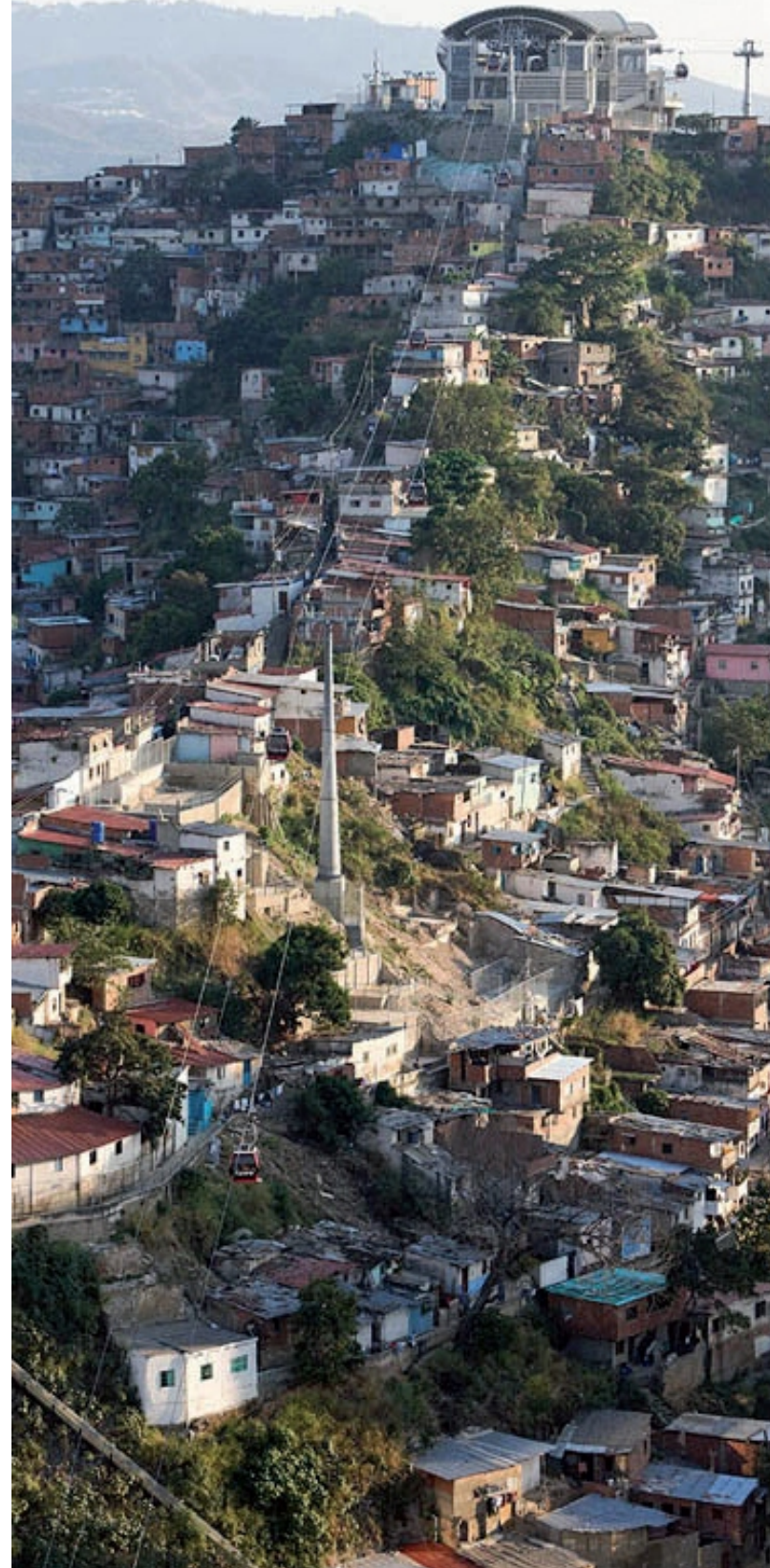
Image 8a – Metro Cable - Iwan Baan photo

Image 8b – Metro Cable - Iwan Baan photo

questions the pedestrian character of the densely settled mountain. By transcending the geographical and political boundaries of the San Agustin barrio, the MetroCable creates new physical and spatial conditions that now occupy the once rigid border. By manipulating the plasticity of the traditional edge, this project exposes new potential for growth, connection, participation, and interaction.
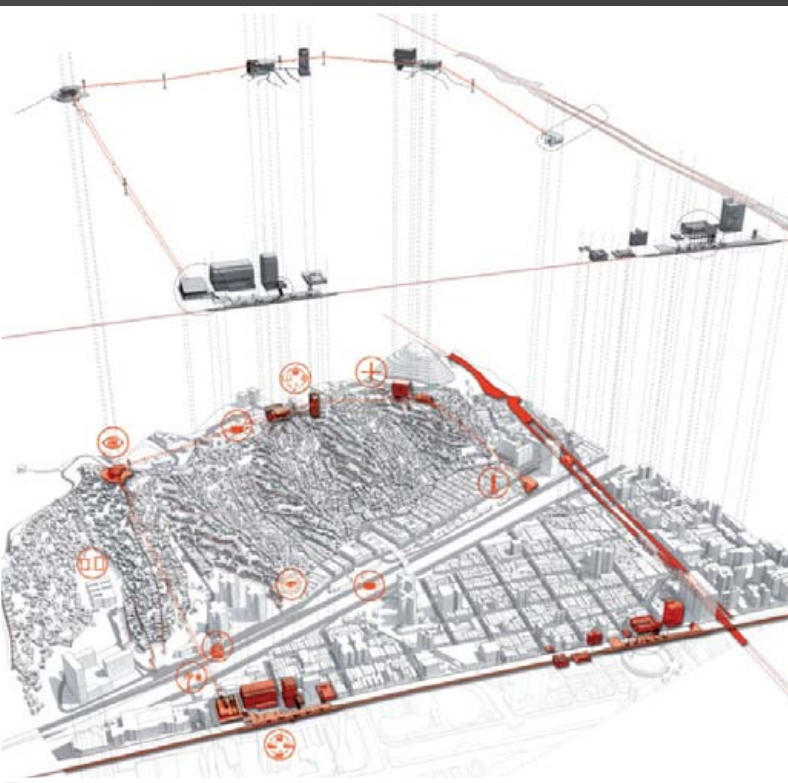
Image 11 – Grotao, existing site

Image 12 – Grotao, overall

The Metro-Cable project in San Agustin, Caracas was conceived as a collective protest and counter-narrative against regular procedures and the government plan for the expansion of a disruptive road network through the fragile neighborhood. Transportation was needed to provide basic access for a population of 40,000 people and necessary services, and, in a direct challenge to the evolutionary urban design process, we leapfrogged to an urban cable car as an alternative interurban transport solution. The cable car itself is formless; it neither transforms the existing neighborhood nor
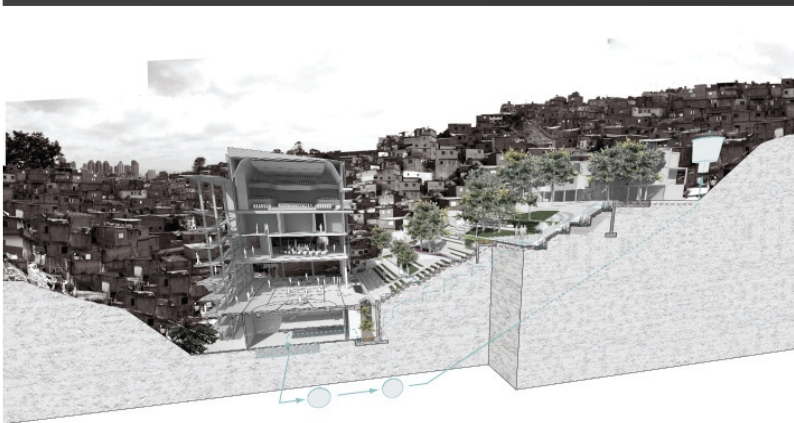
Image 13 – Grotao, section perspective

Located in a primarily inaccessible high-risk zone in Paraisopolis, this project generates the opportunity to transform the vacated site into a productive zone and public space through social design. This is achieved through a process of analyzing the conditions of rapid growth and improving marginalized settlements through social infrastructure. The project unfolds a new space of intervention through the introduction of a terraced, agricultural landscape with leisure, sports, and cultural activities organized where these were once categorically neglected.

The project proposes that architects eschew their conventional role in traditional hierarchies and instead serve as an enabling connection between the opposing forces of top-down planning and bottom-up initiatives. Acting to attract and create common ground for these two forces, architects can eliminate divisiveness and generate productive interactions. Here the priority becomes equipping the peripheral neighborhood with infrastructure, water, sewage networks, lighting, services, and public space in addition to other urban interventions, such as the improvement of social equipment in the areas of health, education, culture, and sports. The proposed urban model aims to translate into spatial solutions a society's need for equal access to housing, employment, technology, services, education, and resources - fundamental rights for all city dwellers.

Conclusions

Within this conceptualization and metho-dology, borders can be stretched and permeated to subvert traditional distinctions within the urban condition and debunk the myths that have so far maintained a stronghold on the perception and growth of the contemporary city. This is not to say that the "formal" and "informal" parts of the city will become indistinguishable, but that the standard ways of bifurcating the urban space in this way no longer apply. The ways in which these borders are read, occupied, and integrated can be transformed to generate a potent zone for social design and interaction.

- Borders can no longer be defined by their traditional political or economic limits. Territories of political boundaries are crossed every day, therefore rendering their mode of authority obsolete.

- Borders can no longer be delimited by geography in a conventional or assumed sense. Political and economic edges no longer have to coincide with geographical boundaries. Where topographical difference has traditionally separated the "formal city" from the "informal city," infrastructure has allowed the margi-nalized population to overcome the challenging topography to participate in social and economic activity. Therefore one can uncouple geography and politics (as one no longer defines the other) and promote social participation.

- Borders present a new transitory zone that can accept a multiplicity of new ideas that stitch formerly segregated areas of the city together. These plastic borders represent opportunities to strengthen social design through their engagement and manipulation.

- We must transgress traditional boundaries to enter into the vague zone of borderlands, to expand border-space into a productive zone of new interactions. Borders are not the problem; they are the solution.

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Mohamed Kemal Elshahed

Tahrir Square: Origins and Futures

The July 1953 issue of popular Egyptian magazine *al-Musawwar* celebrated the one-year anniversary of the coup d'état that overthrew the monarchy. The theme of the issue was "Egypt of Tomorrow." The coup was referred to as "the revolution" and the editors of the magazine, reflecting a popular sentiment at the time, saw this so-called revolution as the rebirth of Egypt. In the euphoric celebration of Egypt's potential utopian ideals were expressed in various articles imagining the future of Egyptian society and the future of Cairo. Today, fifty-eight years later and after a popular uprising that dethroned Mubarak, a similar moment of utopian imagination is taking place. Tahrir Square was at the center of both these junctures in Egyptian history. Despite its powerful visual impact as a space reclaimed by the people during the 2011 revolution, as the following history shows, that was not always the case in the past nor in the present in the weeks after the protests subsided. But the future of Tahrir may hold Cairo's first true public square if a genuine transition to democracy takes place.

was considerably outside the confines of eighteenth century Cairo. The area took its shape as a product of intersecting urban and extra-urban interventions led by Muhammad Ali's dynasty during the course of a century. A small palace for two of Muhammad Ali's daughters was built on the Nile at present day Tahrir, the palace became known as Qasr el-Nil (Nile Palace). Urban interventions during the reign of Muhammad Ali (1805-1848) foreshadowed later projects by Khedive Ismail (1863-1879), which eventually gave Tahrir its origin. In 1830, the draining of Azbakiya Lake was part of a larger plan to reorganize Cairo's canal system. This important citywide project and Muhammad Ali's 1945 *Tanzim* plan are the foundations of Cairo's 19th century expansion[1].

Khedive Said Pasha (1854-62) decided in 1854 to consolidate Cairo's scattered military encampments and ordered the construction of barracks of at Qasr el Nil. The new building was completed in 1863 during the reign of Khedive Ismail (1863-79). The building housed a military school, military head-quarters as well as military units. It was from here that Egyptian troops were sent to assist the Ottomans in their Balkan wars and to Mexico to aid the French intervention there. Military exercises took place in the two internal courts while military parades marking various events and holidays took place to the east of the building in present day Midan al-Tahrir[2].

The massive reverse E-shaped building opened its arms to the Nile with two internal yards each surrounded on three sides by the building itself and on the western edge by the Nile River. Porticos fronted the internal yards with robust square columns supporting arches. The structure combined elements of French and Turkish architecture with a complex and eclectic decorative program that included French, Italian, Turkish, and neo-Islamic architectural features.

In 1863 as Khedive Ismail came to power a series of urban interventions were initiated. Ismail also continued projects that were initiated earlier such as draining Cairo's lakes, completion of al-Qalaa Street and Clot Bey Street.

In addition he ordered the creation of Abdulaziz Street connecting the new square at Attaba (where a statue of Ibrahim Pasha

1. Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969): 92.
2. Tawfiq Ahmed abdel-Gawad, "Kasr el Nil Barracks" in *al-imara journal*, 1947: 12.

was placed, Egypt's first modern public statue) with the future site of Abdeen Palace on the occasion of Sultan Abdulaziz's visit to Cairo. In 1864 the Ministry of Public Works was founded in addition to a department of urban planning in each of the city's newly created four districts or *aqsam*. It is the creation of this institution with the leadership of Ali Mubarak that allowed a master plan for Cairo's westward expansion to be produced and implemented. The eastern bank of the Nile in the Qasr el-Nil area was reinforced to prevent flooding. The future Ismailiyya Square was to be one of a series of urban squares that were envisioned before Ismail's 1867 visit to Paris. Other squares included Attaba, a square near the 1854 train station linking Cairo to Alexandria and a square in front of a new palace to be built at Abdeen.

The same year French architect Rousseau led a team of architects to design and build a new palace at Abdeen, which was completed in 1869. The new palace was also fronted by a large urban square with a street beginning at the center of the square heading west towards the newly proposed and first bridge to cross the Nile at Qasr el Nil. The straight street was slightly bent at Bab el-louk to be aligned with the southern façade of the barracks. This street, present day Tahrir Street, formed the southern edge of the future square that was yet to be defined on its northern and eastern edges. The street led to the Qasr el-Nil Bridge, originally named Khedive Ismail Bridge, which was completed in 1872. A *rond-point* was planed along the way from Abdeen to Qasr el-Nil, which stands approximately at the present-day traffic circle.

The rond-point was also where Qasr El-Eini Street would intersect with Khedive Ismail Street. Qasr el-Eini was another straight boulevard named after another 19th century palace along its route. The intersection of these two new streets was the location where Khayri Pasha, minister of education, built his neo-Mamluke palace in the 1870s that later became home of the American University. The grid of streets laid to the east of Qasr el-Eini and to the south of Khedive Ismail Street was planned for new government buildings including the Ministry of Public Works, and later became the site of the Egyptian Parliament buildings as well as other institutions such as the Geographic Society. As Ismail's urban plan was taking shape an awkward swath of land between the barracks on the Nile to the west, the Ismail Street to the

south and the encroaching new city to the east. The fate of this area was to be determined at a later time despite its potential to be a major public square.

Ismail's urban expansion also included an ambitious public space component that largely consisted of public gardens. Azbakiya Gardens were established on the site of the lake that had been dried earlier and was the link between Cairo and its new expansion. In addition, Ismail commissioned a 60 hectares botanical park with an aquarium for the island of Gezira, today's Zamalek Island[3]. The park included exotic African animals and plants in addition to various ornamental kiosks and water features. Other green spaces planned at the time were the Cairo Zoo including a footbridge designed by Gustav Eiffel and various tree-shaded boulevards throughout the city including one leading to the pyramids[4]. In all these plans today's Tahrir Square, what was shaping up to be Ismailiyya Square at the time was not seen as a potential green or gathering urban space just yet.

Although the city grew around the square with important institution buildings and residences for prominent personalities, the design of the square remained ambiguous and unfinished. It had become obvious that the presence of the barracks with the athletic field at this location hampered development. Architects and journalists stirred public opinion by raising the issue of the barracks' location, arguing that it was no longer appropriate for this sign of foreign occupation to be so close to the city and to sit next to the symbol of ancient Egyptian civilization, the museum. In 1904 an architect and planner by the name Moussa Qattawi Pasha, of the prominent Jewish Egyptian Qattawi family, produced a plan for the area that called for the demolition of the barracks and the creation of luxury residential blocks framing a grand approach to the Egyptian Museum. In the plan, the new avenue, Khedive Ismail Street, would lead to the entrance of the museum, passing through multiple round plazas with ancient statues dotting the way.

The urban plan follows the patterns of the already half-century-old Ismailia district —large residential blocks that wrap around the perimeters of city blocks. The buildings in Qattawi's plan were to continue to the shore of the Nile.

3. Gustave Delchevalerie, Les Promenades et les Jardins du Caire (Chaumes, 1899): 45.
4. Mercedes Volait, "Making Cairo Modern (1870-1950): Multiple Models for a "European-style" Urbanism," in *Urbanism: Imported or Exported?*, ed. by Joe Nasr and Mercedes Volait (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2003): 17-50.

In addition to the symbolic value of imagining the area without the British barracks, Qattawi's plan attempted to solve two main issues: creating an appropriate context for the Egyptian Museum and continuing the urban fabric of the Ismailia district to fill what until then had been an urban void in a key location in the city. In 1904 Cairo was experiencing a building boom that had started in 1897 there was high demand for land to develop at this location. This plan was not concerned with creating open public space—Cairo was dotted with squares and gardens elsewhere. Despite the appeal of Qattawi's plan, it was never realized, as there were no plans to demolish the barracks. However, in 1947, after the exit of British troops from the area, demolition of the massive building was imminent. And again there was fervor in the media, with journalists and architects scrambling for ideas of what to do with the area.

Muhammad dhul-Faqqar Bek published a plan to redesign Qasr el-Nil area in al-Musawwar in April 1947. The utopian plan called for a cultural and political center for the city. This translated into administrative buildings for various ministries and government bureaucracies and a plethora of museums in addition to a series of commemorative statues, all surrounded by vast public gardens. Furthermore, the plan included a new parliament building modeled after the United States Capitol. The proposed new parliament building was to replace the British barracks, literally replacing the site of foreign occupation with Egypt's constitutional legislative body. The article proclaimed, "the capital's official, political and cultural life will be united" in the new center "to give tourists and visitors a clear view of Egypt with its ancient heritage, and its modern city." The idea of a centralized government and cultural center for an emerging capital would later manifest in Le Corbusier's Chandigarh (1953) and Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's (1960).

The officers who led the 1952 coup did not have a clear vision of the future. A year after the coup there was still no comprehensive plan for urban expansion or renewal. The need for such plans however, was a topic of public discourse. Architect Sayed Karim saw an opportunity to fill the imagination void with his proposals. In order to impress the new regime Karim published in his magazine a redesign for the area of the former Qasr el Nil Barracks. Karim's 1953 plan called for:

constructing a hotel on the site of the barracks with a casino extending into the Nile, the demolition of the Egyptian museum and replacing it with a massive multi-level structure that would be the museum of Egyptian civilization, a ministry of foreign affairs, a radio and television administration, a commemorative sculpture for July 1952 and a monument to the unknown soldier designed by artist Fathy Mahmoud. This plan was never implemented.

During this period many other plans emerged in the press suggesting possible ways to redesign Tahrir Square. The idea of creating a public space in Tahrir was not a prominent feature in all the proposed plans. Some plans focused on filling the empty land with key institutions for the new Egypt such as a ministry of culture and a Cairo municipality. Ultimately in 1954 the Nasser regime changed the squares name from Ismailiyya to Tahrir (liberation) and gave the green light for three very different buildings to be erected on the site of the barracks (from north to south): the Cairo Municipality, the Nile Hilton, and the Arab League building. All three buildings were completed by 1958 and the area in front of the museum (that used to be sports fields for the barracks) was landscaped and transformed for the first time into a real public space in this part of the city. However the public space only lasted little over a decade when the Sadat regime began taking chunks of it away from the public and transforming it into a parking lot.

Since the 1970s Tahrir Square has been loosing its potential to function as a community gathering space. After the events of January 2011 once again there is fervor

around the fate of this space in central Cairo. It is clear that Egyptians want to have this space available for collective gathering. Transforming Tahrir into a true public square, something it was only for a brief moment of its history will be a challenge for architects and urban planners. Hopefully this time with such a seismic event such as the Egyptian Revolution, a new plan will emerge that will actually be implemented unlike the fates of all the plans that came before it over the last century and a half.

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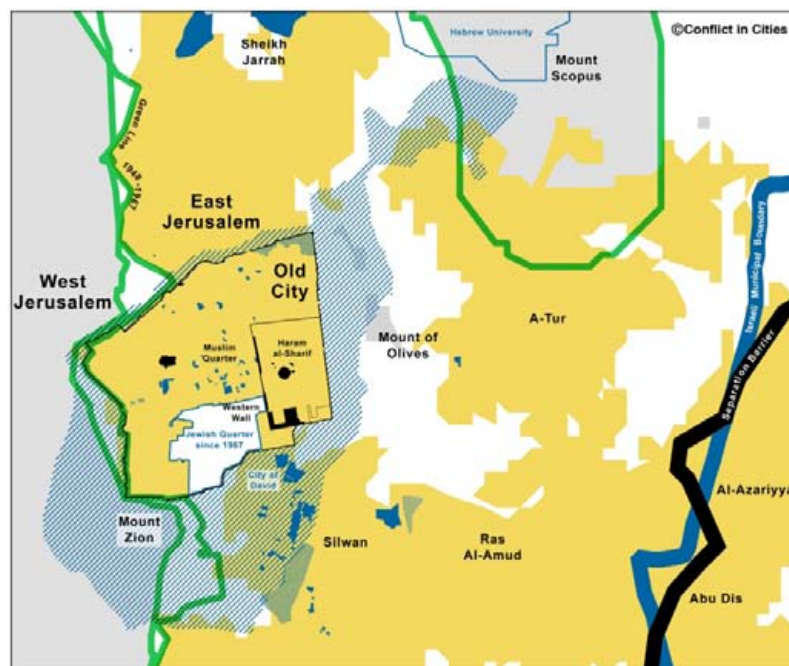
Max Gwiazda & Wendy Pullan

Parkland as Dispossession:
The Antagonistic Role of Landscape in Jerusalem

Recently the concept of landscape urbanism has been developed to provoke new ways of thinking about landscape and the city. According to James Corner this requires a new cross-disciplinarity that overcomes the nineteenth-century antithesis between green spaces and urban environments. (1) Corner persuasively argues that the traditional assumption that parks function as a practical and moral compensation for the corrupting ills of the modern metropolis is no longer adequate in light of the complexities of contemporary city-regions and their ecological challenges. An important key to a new critical approach to urban landscape is a better understanding of the socio-economic and political processes that underlie urbanism, rather than focussing merely on their formal expressions. Following this call for a new approach, this article explores the political manipulation of parkland in planning policies in the context of Jerusalem, a city subject to deep ethno-national and religious contestation. While the situation of Jerusalem is in many ways unusual, the high levels of conflict bring certain phenomena to light that are present, but less visible in other cities. Drawing on a range of studies we have conducted as part of the multi-disciplinary research project 'Conflict in Cities', we show how urban parks are not necessarily the benign and universal good that we tend to assume they are (2). In fact the very reputation of parks as one of the most elementary ways of serving the common good is precisely why they can be abused to mask antagonistic planning policies.

Holy to the three monotheistic religions and iconic to much of the world, Jerusalem is claimed as their capital by both Israelis and Palestinians. Divided between Israel and Jordan by the green line from 1948, the eastern (Jordanian) half of the city came under control of the Israelis after the 1967 War. Along with East Jerusalem, Israel annexed 64 square kilometres of territory from the West Bank unilaterally forming a reunified city under Israeli rule. Sixty-six thousand Palestinians were drawn into these municipal boundaries and granted residency permits. The annexation has not been recognised by any other state or international body. Today, the population of Jerusalem approaches about eight hundred thousand, with approximately a two thirds Jewish majority. Israeli efforts to 'unify' the city under its rule have met with various forms of resistance by Palestinians and have turned the city into an urban landscape with multiple fissures suffering from a deeply partisan resource allocation. (3) A major area of contestation is the Old City and environs, located in East Jerusalem, which contains the majority of the city's many holy sites and is considered to possess special landscape values related to its religious significance.

Jerusalem: Contested Holy Basin Area

KEY
- Palestinian Areas
- Israeli Settlements
- Planned Israeli Settlement
- Israeli National Parks (planned & constructed)
- Green Line (1948-67)
- Israeli Municipal Boundary
- Separation Barrier

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This area, frequently referred to as the 'Holy Basin' consisting partly of impoverished Palestinian neighbourhoods, has been a major focus of Israeli planning policies since 1967. Israel's planning approach has centred on creating a green belt around the Old City in the form of a national park in order to protect and preserve the unique heritage value of the

Holy Basin. A closer look at the colonial background of this policy, as well as the nationalist character of Israeli heritage management shows that this policy of 'protection' based on parkland is deeply problematic.

In order to understand current Israeli planning it is necessary to underline its debt to and ongoing use of British colonial policies in Jerusalem during their rule over the city in 1917-1948. (3) Nourished by nineteenth-century imperialist and orientalist perceptions of Jerusalem, British planning during this period was obsessed with the Picturesque and biblical attributes of the city. The British saw Jerusalem in highly idealised terms, as a medieval enclosure set in an ancient and pastoral landscape that needed to be safeguarded from the intrusions of modern urban development.

In the following thirty years, right up to the withdrawal of the last British troops in 1947, successive generations of British planners essentially took Jerusalem, in the words of Patrick Geddes, to be 'the most important sacred park in the world'. The British either ignored or dismissed evidence of the modernisation of Jerusalem that had taken place under Ottoman rule. Crucially their particular expectations of sacred space essentially based on the visual appearance of Jerusalem blinded them to the many connections, ranging from the socio-economic to the religious, which tied the Old City to the Palestinian villages in its hinterland. The Old City walls were cleared as much as possible of Palestinian commercial and residential development, referred to as 'unsightly obstructions'; new building was heavily restricted in the Holy Basin area. The green belt explicitly served to 'stifle development' and sever the Old City from its hinterland and everyday urban functions.

Centuries of urban and rural development evidenced in the many layers of Jerusalem's topography were identified as 'débris' as the overwhelming concern of British planners was the 'authentic' biblical landscape feverishly excavated by Western archaeologists and scrupulously underlined by map makers at the expense of other land uses.

When Israel took reigns in Jerusalem in 1967 their planning policies were explicitly based on and legitimated by the British precedent. As early as 1973 Israel declared a large territory around the Old City a National Park. The Park was partly justified by the need to cater for the millions of faithful spread across the globe eager to receive panoramic views of the Holy City from pleasant green valleys and hills. Yet next to no provisions were made for the needs of the local Palestinian inhabitants of the area who require more and better housing and municipal services. In fact, many of their houses are now considered illegal under Israeli planning laws. These local residents have shared little in the proceeds of Jerusalem's significant tourism industry that uses the park and the archaeological sites it contains as a major attraction. Officially the green belt policy has always been justified as being of vital interest to the city as a whole and the responsibility it has to the rest of the world.

The blunt instruments of the green belt and national parkland have recently been subject to a further damaging development. As part of neo-liberal privatisation policies, in vogue in Israel as elsewhere from the 1980s, the management of significant parts of the Jerusalem Walls Park was handed over to religious nationalist settler associations (5). One such organisation, El-Ad has established the 'City of David', a residential settlement and archaeological park that forms part of National Park, but is situated in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan.

The site has fast emerged as one of Jerusalem's most popular sites, both among domestic Israeli and international tourists. El-Ad focuses exclusively on the biblical and Jewish layers of history, essentially ignoring all (abundant) evidence of Islamic and Palestinian heritage. Meanwhile El-Ad aggressively expands its territorial control over public areas and private property in Silwan, as its state-subsidised security personnel serves as a constant source of provocation and harassment for Palestinian residents. Unsurprisingly, Silwan has witnessed some of the most violent civil unrest in Jerusalem over the past few years. Yet, part of the reason why El-Ad has been able to act with such impunity, is their ability to exploit the municipality's greening and regeneration policies. El-Ad plants trees, paves paths, waters fresh lawns and deploys a whole range of landscaping and urban design strategies to create a Disneyfied neo-biblical landscape that facilitates the consumption of its heritage products. How do you argue with a profit-making park?

Jerusalem's Holy Basin may seem extreme and perhaps removed from the mainstream issues of many western cities, yet it does raise pertinent questions for all designers involved in the making of urban landscapes. It shows that parks can actually play a role in intensifying fissures and injustices in cities that are subject to internal conflicts; in a case like this in Jerusalem, the park does damage to substantial segments of the population. The example challenges us to rigorously investigate rather than to make assumptions about the contribution of parks to cities, by posing questions such as: how does the park relate to existing and alternative forms of public space and patterns of everyday life? Whom does a particular green space really benefit and whom does the park potentially exclude? Does it connect or separate urban areas? What 'unwanted' social realities may a park serve to conceal rather than ameliorate? Jerusalem is a troubling example of where such questions have been repressed for too long.

Notes

(1) James Corner, 'Terra fluxus', in Charles Waldheim (ed.), *The Landscape Urbanism Reader* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), pp. 23-33.

(2) Conflict in Cities and the Contested Sate' is funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (RES-060-25-0015). The authors wish to thank Lefkos Kyriacou, responsible for visual research on the project, for producing the graphics. Publications, information on the cities investigated, as well as project news and events are available on: www.conflictincities.org.

(3) Wendy Pullan, 'The Space of Contested Jerusalem'. *Jerusalem Quarterly*, vol. 39 (2009), pp. 39-50 (http://www.jerusalemquarterly.org/) and idem, 'Frontier Urbanism: The Periphery at the Centre of Contested Cities', *Journal of Architecture*, vol. 16.1, pp. 15-35.

(4) For a detailed historical analysis, see: Wendy Pullan & Maximilian Gwiazda (forthcoming), 'The Making of Jerusalem's Holy Basin.' *Planning Perspectives*, vol. 27.2 (2012).

(5) On the origins and impact of El-Ad on Silwan, see: Wendy Pullan & Maximilian Gwiazda, 'Designing the Biblical Present: Jerusalem's "City of David"', in A. Webber, U. Staiger & H. Steiner (eds.) *Memory Culture and the Contemporary City: Building Sites* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 106-25.

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Eirini Iliopoulou

The continuous blast wave of trauma
Discussing about divided Nicosia in Cyprus

<<*An explosion has ripped through a naval base in southern Cyprus killing 12 people, injuring dozens more and leading to the resignation of the country's defense minister and military chief... The intensity of the explosion knocked out the island's largest power plant, caused extensive damage to a neighbouring community, and in a popular holiday resort two miles from the site the windows and doors of restaurants were blown out.*>>

Sam Jones and agencies
guardian.co.uk, Monday 11 July 2011 15.12 BST

Finally, the explosion of gunpowder killing twelve people and injuring more than thirty is a tragic loss and a physical damage, sinfully secondary compared to the social and political dust being risen by its blast wave. On 11 July 2011, the explosion in Limassol, southern Cyprus, cost human lives and credits for the state's economy. Though, the present article does not get deeper to the political and financial impacts but it rather takes the occasion to discuss about the Cypriot landscape of trauma perceiving social space both as physical and virtual. In other words, space is physical as far as it can be divided, destroyed, exploded or controlled, while being virtual to the extent that it is perceived and represented in different ways. Consequently, the lethal explosion constitutes a new milestone that leaded to physical damage, while emerging the established discourse of division, heroism, pain, betrayal and trauma experienced in a state of exception[1]. In a place like Cyprus that defines itself through tragic historical junctures that wounded both physical space and people's minds, spatial division is seen through Nicosia's urban borders and individuals' mental barriers. Following, an effort is made to describe how physical space interacts with its various perceptions in the case of Nicosia's division.

Emotional perception of space. Invisible borders in mind[2]**.**
In the framework of a broader research work

in order to examine how emotional involvement affects the spatial perception[3] of people living in divided Nicosia on its both sides, mental maps[4] combined with narrative interviews and structured questionnaires were employed. In that way, the opportunity was given to let the landscape of conflict interact with a palette of personal narratives redrawing physical space through the emotional perception of the division. The research hypothesis suggested that differences regarding the individuals' emotional involvement, memories, political statement, age, education and general profile, would influence their spatial perceptions. Interviewees that would feel highly emotionally involved with the "other" were expected to have a fuller spatial perception of the other side than those feeling emotionally distant. To this end, personal histories and identity, cultural background and political thought created certain profiles, while guiding the inter-viewees' hands to re-draw physical space on a blank piece of paper. The research was conducted with the contribution of inhabitants living on both the Greek Cypriot southern and the Turkish Cypriot northern side. Moreover, the interviews were limited within the Venetian Walls of the Old City, where after the opening of the barricades in 2003, the distance between the two sides is no more than a few steps.
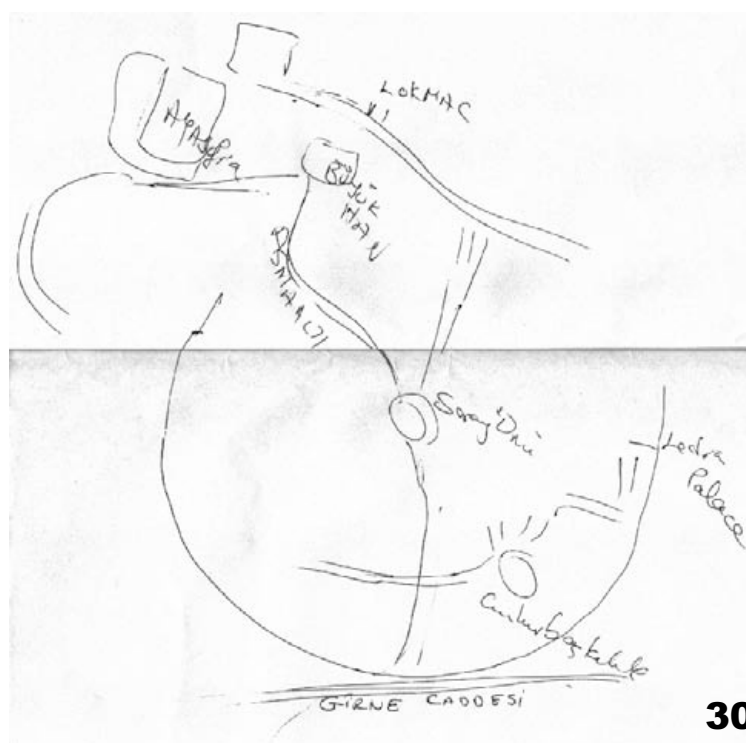
The research results utterly denied the hypothesis, since the majority of interviewees, who were emotionally involved with the "other" drew similar maps with individuals, whose profile indicated their emotional distance. For most of the interviewees the other half of Nicosia was an empty space, since their world was limited by the physical border of the Green Line[5]. For others, the other side was represented by symbols and concepts that reflected their spatial information. For instance, the enormous flag made out of barrels on the Beşparmak / Pentadaktylos mountain in the Turkish Cypriot North was the conceptual symbol that Greek Cypriots used to describe the Turkish Cypriot part, while Turkish Cypriots represented the Greek Cypriot South spotting the attractive malls they often visit. While the certain research question was collapsing in front of the controversial findings, the central research hypothesis was being confirmed; after Nicosia's future reunification, invisible borders will replace the visible physical ones.

Division and reconciliation

However, the ultimate goal of a research that comes to such a conclusion should keep away from a "painless" in vitro attitude only confirming the self-fulfilling prophecy that a traumatic event and a violent spatial division can cause irreversible distortions both visible and invisible. Jacque Derrida argues that "true forgiveness consists in forgiving the unforgivable"[6]. In that sense, the definition of conflict and separation reveals the actual field of potential contact and reconciliation. The Green Line as a material and conceptual border becomes the point where separation and contact, conflict and solidarity reach their peak, while the "other" can be transformed from an empty place to "a place to discover".

The "mother of trauma"

Coming back to the discussion regarding the explosion, while walking in the Greek Cypriot southern part of Nicosia, it is clear that the city places itself in a new period after the blast. The commercial exchanges redefine supply and demand within the new "historical" framework. The headlines blame some of the involved in order to acquit some others, while people in their every day life curse those responsible in every two-hour blackout. Yet longer and quicker abstinence from air-condition during heat waves and touristic high season, relate the disaster to the division and the occupation of the northern part of the island. The reason is the lending of electric generators that the Greek Cypriot government was forced to ask after the damage of the island's largest power plant. As a result, the government was accused for recognising and legalising indirectly the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus[7].

It is clear that the <<Cypriot problem>> and the island's division in 1974 play the role of the "mother of trauma". In other words, it is the framework, within which separate traumatic experiences evolve. It is perceived as the DNA that exists in every historical juncture as well as in everyday action since 1974. However, in a marginal condition it seems like everything is ready to explode, but anyway, the eternal persistence of things as they are has been always a fallacy.

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[2] Eirini Iliopoulou, "A City, A Map And A Green Line. Invisible Borders In Mind." (paper presented at the International Praxis Conference on Cultural Memory and Coexistence, Fatih University, Istanbul, March 18-20, 2011).

[3] Claus- Christian Carbon "Autobahn People: Distance Estimations Between German Cities Biased by Social Factors and the Autobahn" *Spatial Cognition V* (2007): 489-500

[4] Scott Bell "Mental Maps" *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (2009): 70-75

[5] In 1963, a British army officer used a green pen in order to draw a line on Nicosia's city map. The green line, drawn on a piece of paper, represented the barbed-wire fences, the barrels and walls established as physical urban borders in space by the UN in order to guarantee the peaceful coexistence of the two communities.

[6] Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (London: Routledge, 2001)

[7] Except for Turkey, the international community does not recognise TRNC but instead the de jure sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus over the whole island.

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Goran Janev

Ethnocratic remaking of public space - Skopje 2014

What does it take to change the identity of a city? It should be enough to erect some hundred of monuments cast in bronze and carved in marble of gargantuan dimensions. If that does not suffice a dozen of new buildings, pompous and grandiose should definitely do the trick. Of course, all of this should happen in a radius of 500 meters in the middle of the town and in a span of four or five years. To be sure that such radical remaking will really be implemented so quickly all those rigorous and time-consuming procedures are best avoided. If it takes some meandering around the legal regulations than that is no problem at all. Even, if during just a couple of years the detailed urban plan should be changed seven, eight, or however many times it is necessary to accommodate all the new ideas that can allegedly improve such a grandiose project that is undertaken once in a lifetime should not be a problem. Nothing should really be a problem and nothing should stand between the inventors/investors of the project and its realization.

Aware that those answers to the original question only raise additional questions that beg answering, let us just not forget to ask why all of this is necessary?
Skopje, the capital of Republic of Macedonia is subjected to the radical and encompassing changes since the ruling party IMRO-DPMNU (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) took hold of power five years ago. They won the parliamentary, one regular and two extraordinary, elections three times in a row since 2006. They won the local government elections in 2009 and presidential elections as well. Their popularity is indisputable and their popularity allows them to ignore the warning calls of the concerned experts and general public. The numerous building and beautification initiatives were finally articulated as a project in early 2010 when the government promoted a 6 min. CGI video clip that presented all those above mentioned buildings and monuments. This clip that presented Skopje in 2014 send shocks across the public sphere and halfway through its realization still raises controversy and debate. Initially, most of the objections were of procedural, financial, and architectural nature and concerns urbanism. Still today, these are the predominant concerns and are legitimate in their immediacy and importance. However, I will point us to one additional aspect of this undertaking. It regards the identitarian intervention in public space and the efforts to create a narrative space. Most remarkable are the reactions to this imposed spatial order that defines symbolic boundaries in the city and more elaborate account of this resistance follows bellow.

Why the ruling party decided to change the look of the capital, to alter its identity is best answered if we analyze the symbolic loading of these material objects. The key in understanding this initiative is in the narrative construction. All these architectural and monumental objects are built in some eclectic historicist style. Many architraves, domes, and reliefs accompany many neo-classical pillars and baroque ornaments on those facades. The government insisted on this stylistic cacophony in their procurement calls. The idea is to re-connect the Macedonian capital with the European architectural legacy. The greatest challenge to this effort is the absolute need to invent this heritage that was never present in this city. The purpose of this infusion of historicism is to negate the oriental and modernist layers that dominated the Skopje urban landscape. Skopje was once medieval capital and standing there for two thousand years accumulated many layers, but most of them erased by natural and man made disasters. The catastrophic earthquake in 1963 gave the opportunity to the UN to assert the idea of solidarity at a time of heightened Cold War. The famous brutalist architect and modernist urbanist Kenzo Tange has won the competition. In the decades that followed his plan has never been fully implemented. Entering the independence in 1990s Macedonia was impoverished to the level that the survival of the country is a miracle in itself. Twenty years later a right wing nationalist party creates a rupture with the Yugoslav, communist and architecturally wise, modernist past. The new

version of history radicalizes the myth of continuity to the absurdity and reconnects the Macedonian nation, as conceived in the ethnonationalist perspective, with the ancient empire of Alexander the Great.

Most controversial of all the monuments is exactly the one that celebrates him. He rides his famous horse Bucephalus. This 22 meters high sculpture, (together with the pillar) is in the middle of a fountain surrounded by bronze warriors of the Macedonian phalanx and a circle of eight lions. Engaged in absurd dispute with Greece over the name of the country that prevents Macedonia from entering NATO and EU under its constitutional name or any other that carries the word Macedonia within, the official name of this monument is "Warrior on a horse." Around him are one medieval emperor, one Byzantine emperor, and dozen of Macedonian revolutionaries and other historical figures. This historical textbook in 3-D in the public space serves no other purpose but to enhance the often negated and disputed identity of the Macedonian nation.

This narrative space is purposefully created to counter the Greek denial and the indifference of the international community for the Macedonian problems. The minister of culture stated that "[Skopje] the city will be enriched with landmarks that are beaming with Macedonian identity (Dnevnik, 13. 08. 2011)." The former Minister of external affairs went even further and more directly "This is our way of saying [up yours] to them,...

This project is about asserting Macedonia's identity at a time when it is under threat because of the name issue. We all live in a geographic area where we share a common past but our attitude towards history is inclusive. The Greeks' is exclusive (The Guardian, 14.08.2011)." This clearly frames the project Skopje 2014 and reactions to it within Bell's notion of mythscape "the temporally and spatially extended discursive realm wherein the struggle for control of peoples memories and the formation of nationalist myths is debated, contested and subverted incessantly (2002: 66)." I suggest we include material objects, like the "Skopje 2014" buildings and monuments into the discursive field. Even more, I propose we include unspoken and unarticulated spatial practices to that discursive realm. In a city that politicians divide on ethnic territories the trajectories of ordinary citizens that transgress them are acts of resistance.

Ethnic nationalism maintains the strong impetus for territorial control not only at the state borders, but also internally. When nation-state ideal of homogeneity is contested by other ethnonational project, the one of Macedonian Albanians in our case, within the nation-state territory, than the boundary making process intensifies internally, along the lines of ethnically defined places of residence. The symbolic struggles that Macedonia's ethnopoliticians wage are not new. The manipulation of cultural and ethnic symbols for political purposes was already present during socialist times. The construction of churches and mosques, crosses and minarets, display of flags and use of alphabets and languages in public has been essential for the semantic landscaping ever since Macedonia stepped into independence and certainly even before. Skopje got a 77 meters Millennium Cross that beams at night on top of the mountain Vodno in 2000. In 2006 the local municipality disregarding the procedures put the monument of the Albanian national hero Skenderbeg who rides his horse in the direction of this symbol with a hand raised as if to stop it. However, the intensity and scale of the current symbolic reconstruction of the capital warrants attention for the eventual consequences for the interethnic balance in the country.

It seems that the greatest problem Skopje faces is the democratic insufficiency. After gaining independence Macedonia makes only slow strides towards fuller democratic freedoms. A single party overrode the legal provisions and created revolutionary atmosphere in the field of urban planning in a city that got the world attention and expertise exactly in this field. The urgency to protect national identity is greater than respecting the existing set of legal regulations under this logic. Benefiting from the already conceived ethnocracy in Macedonia, IMRO-DPMNU and their Albanian counterpart helped establish this regime more firmly and their policy becomes most visible in the remaking of the public space in this divisive fashion following the ethnonationalist logic. Macedonia was sliding down this slippery road for a long time and the final wake up call for the dangers of the ethnocratic order came with the ethnonationalist symbolic intervention in the public space. The use of public space for populist ethnonational

mobilization creates visible ethnic boundaries in the city of remarkable and longstanding diversity.

The reactions to it brought to live the first grass-root social urban movement as in First Archibrigade, Freedom Square, and Singing Skopjians, publishing of critical texts (Vilich, 2009; the book edition The City, 2009 - 2011, Milanovich, Urbanek, 2011) endless commentary on Facebook and so on. Most important reaction is the change of spatial practice of many Skopje citizens. All of a sudden many decided to revisit the Skopje Old Bazaar, the remnant from the Ottoman time, mixed and diverse at its utmost in every respect. Its narrow cobblestone streets offer surprise after every corner, its rich soundscape of church bells, prayer calls from the minarets, different languages spoken and sung, and marvelously diverse smellscape remind of times and habits before ethnicity has been turned into basic social and political differentiator. I urge us to see resistance in the trajectories of movement across the river that allegedly divides the city, across the territories of administrative jurisdiction, across the squares populated with bronze warriors. This movement of ordinary citizens that negate all those symbolic markers of ethnic identity create trajectories that connect the social tissue of the city. Therefore, to answer the question from the opening line I offer a perspective that it takes more than material objects to change an identity of a city. It will require the change of its population as the Skopje citizens old and young has proved to be resilient, at least for the moment, to this ethnocratic reordering of the public space that aims at reordering the social order. At least for the moment, Skopjians spray and carve the neat ethnic public space with movement that creates trajectories like graffiti artists, unanimous and ephemeral but so important for their intentionality to leave a trace and re-conquer controlled urban spaces.

"Skenderbeg-Monuments on guarding duty";
"Municipality of Chair in Skopje disregarded procedures and erected the monument of Skenderbeg at the edge of the administrative border in 2007."

"Constructing identity - Alexander the Great or Warrior on the horse"
"In order to reduce Greek grievances the colossal monument of the ancient Macedonian emperor has been vaguely named."
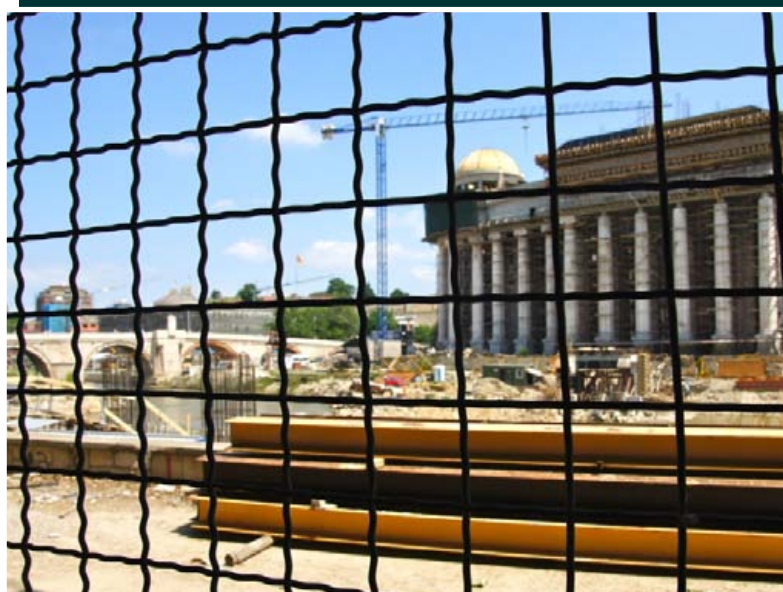
"Arrested diversity"
"All the monuments and buildings that serve to enhance Macedonian ethnonational feelings fly in the face of Macedonia's famous diversity."

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Aida Murtic

Cultural memory in urban context
Post-conflict urban landscapes

The history of mankind has been marked by an almost continuous chain of various conflicts that have caused damage to the social and physical fabric of cities. From the slings and arrows of the past to the weaponry of today, methods of devastation have evolved together with people. There has always been a special war against urban structures – the destruction of artefacts that have a potential to represent elements of cultural identity.

In times of conflict, the symbolism of architecture has been politicized, the legacy of structures has been re-evaluated according to current trends and standards and built heritage has been mobilized as a symbolic component of national identity. Consequently, it became the target of attacks and progressive ideas of cultures were used in regressive ways to diminish the heritage of diversity and to pursue the politics of exclusion.

When a well-known building is destroyed in a conflict, a gap appears in the landscape, as well as emptiness in people's perceptions of their daily routines. The Croatian journalist Slavenka Drakulic wrote an article in the Observer in November 1993 after the demolition of the Old Bridge in Mostar, asking why images of the destroyed bridge evoke such intense emotions. "... Perhaps, because we see our own mortality in the collapse of the bridge. We expect people to die; we count on our lives to end. The destruction of a monument of civilization is something else. The bridge, in all its beauty and grace, was built to outlive us. It was an attempt to grasp eternity. It transcended our individual destinies."

Cultural memory is inseparable from the spatial experiences of the community. Relationships established between people and their physical environments are close and complex. People transform the space and space moderates their progress. Physical surroundings provide people with an image of stability and permanence, while the stability of the community depends on the consistency of its surrounding images. People are attached to places, buildings, streets, and squares together with shapes, colours and images of space. The disappearance of some familiar element in their landscape, that people consider to be changeless and endless results in strong feelings of insecurity and interruption of continuity.

The story does not always end with destruction. After the gap in urban space appears, and an initiative and the willingness to "fill" it are shown, it is essential to have the knowledge of methods and approaches how to do that. Post-war rebuilding debates are framed around major approaches: whether to precisely reconstruct the pre-war urban condition *(facsimile* method of recon-struction), to take the opportunity to clear the area and make space for new functions (the *tabula rasa* approach) or to adopt the method of memorialisation of building fragments. Each site chooses a different post-conflict response to the destruction or damage of their urban fabric.

Many examples of symbolical replicas of structures or sites are to be seen in Dresden, Warsaw and Mostar. In the case of the reconstruction of the Old Bridge and buildings in the historic part of Mostar, the recon-struction reflected collaborative community needs rather than strict professional requirements. Exact recon-struction was supposed to recreate the significance of lost artefacts and the continuity of its pre-war condition in urban landscape. Miraculously identical to the old one, the new Old Bridge was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2005 as: "a symbol of reconciliation, international cooperation and of the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities"[1].

Preserving untouched war-damaged buildings or incorporating their skeletal ruins into urban compositions are very common approaches adopted for reframing physical testimonies of conflict. Ruins in urban landscapes articulate the contrast between the old and the new, demonstrating what happened and indicating the process of healing. The decision not to rebuild allows for the reading of a history, built environment and cultural memory without a book or a guide. The City of Berlin offers examples of incorporating war-damaged buildings into contemporary urban works (Kaiser-Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche, Anhalter Bahnhof etc.)

When it comes to the question of memory, monuments and symbols in public space, it is important to place emphasize on the contemporary monument concepts that are focused on dispensing with the traditional, grand type of monuments and creating traces of monuments in urban spaces. Their aim is not only to make statements on some historical event, but also to give individual viewers the starting point for their own perception of an event. "Stumbling stones" from Berlin and "Sarajevo Roses" are unusual street memorials dispersed in public space, becoming part of everyday situation in which passers-by critically think for themselves and take their own responsibility for their thoughts and feelings.

"Sarajevo Roses" project is an urban installation with metaphorical name: at the places where shells exploded on a road, concrete pavements were not repaired but accented with red resin creating a reminiscent form of bloody flower arrange-ments. Small gestures of remembrance, multiplied by the frequency of their occurrence in open space, create one complex image about siege of Sarajevo and commemorate citizens - individuals who were victims of daily attacks, without providing any personal information about them and without the need for further explanation. Project brings alternative way of thinking about

history in public space, renouncing traditional monumentality, bronze, marble and concrete. As embodiment of art in open space, its value is not just derived from the artwork, but from the ability to direct attention to larger issues.

Questioning the significance of monu-ments and symbols was also the prior goal of the NGO Urban Movement in Mostar which initiated building a monument to Bruce Lee in City Park in this town. „The monument is not being built for Bruce Lee the actor or the characters he played, but rather it is being built for the very idea of justice, represented in a plastic and universally acceptable way..."[2] This project could be recognised as an expression of citizens' attempts to demystify national values, improve quality of open space in its original meaning and as a process of creating and building new values. The project intended to put an end to urban devastation that was highlighting confront-ations and domination.

Post-war rebuilding decisions and inter-ventions in public space produce multifarious results. "Buildings matter. So do statues, ruins and even stretches of vacant land."[3] They demonstrate the importance of the visual in the evolution of a site of collective memory. Careful consideration must be made in order to reduce negative implications such as the manipulation of monuments and recreation of false histories through the reconstruction. Multi-layered treatment of these sites should be developed containing elements of the old and new, revival and commemoration, concentration and dispersion, facsimile reconstruction and reconstruction through contemporary interpolations.

These buildings, memorials and sites in public spaces contribute deconstructing political debates and controversies emerging from the conflicted past. They offer a dynamic model of cultural activity that promotes interaction between individuals and groups and the delineation of boundaries. The recovery of urban context should not only be directed towards restoration of the status-quo but towards investment in the future. It has a corrective dimension that calls for changes and it has to be able to delink urban memory from the dangers of relativism and manipulation.

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3. Brian Ladd, "The Ghosts of Berlin", (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 2.

Pulska Grupa is an informal group of architects from Pula, Croatia. Currently 8 persons work inside the group – Ivana Debeljuh, Vjekoslav Gašparović, Emil Jurcan, Jerolim Mladinov, Marko Perčić, Sara Perović, Helena Sterpin and Edna Strenja. Group acts since 2006. when it organized student workshop in ex-military zone in Pula. The workshop results were published in a book „Katarina 06 – openning of Pula`s coast". Since then the group has produced publications, organized demonstrations and exhibitions to agitate in public for self-organized urbanism in Pula and in Croatia, especially regarding current Adriatic coastline problems.

Pulska Grupa

Pula: a flight from post-socialism to post-capitalism

Pula, as important military port, was heavily bombed and almost abandoned in WWII. In early 1960s it received the first urban master plan of all Yugoslavia which implemented ideas of self-management in urban planning. Basic idea of the plan was to decentralize city into self-managed political cells called "rajon". Rajons were planned as neighborhoods who have all needed facilities which made them autonomous from the existing center of the city. Decentralization was a tool in urban planing which had the role to disable segregation in the city. The second master plan came in the late 1970s which pushed the idea of urban self-management further. It was focused on more pragmatic level and tried to make self-management more operative. One aspect of the plan was "social contract" or "self-managed agreement" signed by all the actors in the neighborhood who, then, were obligated to perform specific actions so that the plan could be realized. This was the highest level of development of urban self-management. Although the method was democratic in its essence the problem was that the actors and neighborhood assembles were not politically autonomous subjects. They were economically depended on higher level of government and politically depended on communist party which remained centralized despite it stimulated decentralized of society. Self-managed system dissolved in the 1990s but transition did not bring any operative system into the urban planning of Pula. Some of the neighborhood assemblies and social centers are still active and it is this informal situation, with no operative system in function, which gives them full autonomy that they never had. Some new social compositions emerge from the transition and they started to use ex-military areas which were left empty after break of Yugoslavia. In this "no-man land" or better to say "common land" special socio-economic experiments are active right now with no interference from the seide of the government or municipality. The significance of these land use and managment experiments is in a thesis that material foundation, like in urban space, in financies, or in means of production, is crutial in developing a social, political, cultural and economic autonomy of citizens. Right to the city, as a political right, summarises this argument because it assumes that „open source" culture, developed in virtual sphere of knowledge production and sharing, cannot challenge the capitalist system of exploatation if it does not colonise physical urban space. We are observing and stimulating this experiment hoping that they are able to produce a system beyond capitalism.

Landscapes of autonomy
Pula already has several autonomous spaces. After the demilitarization of the city, a number of spaces remained empty, waiting to be included in the real estate market. But that never happened. One of the first autonomous spaces was the **Casoni Vecchi fort** in the Vidikovac neighborhood, where the Monte Paradiso festival started taking place in the early 1990s. From a music venue for punk concerts, this space turned into a meeting point for all generations of people from Vidikovac. The fort is located near the neighborhood municipal offices and functions as its informal extension.

Much bigger than the Casoni Vecchi fort is the social center **Karlo Rojc**. This ex-military barrack was squatted in 1997, after its temporary residents, the refugees of the last war in Croatia, left the building. After unsuccessful attempts to expell of the squatters, the Municipality finally legalized their stay and decided to let the space free of charge to local non-profit organizations. It took 10 years for the tenants to occupy the building. Today, Rojc is a home to over 100 different organizations dealing with culture, music, and social issues. Although this heterogeneity resulted in very weak links between the organizations, they all have one thing in common: Rojc became the central space for the organization of free time in the city and is often referred to as a "third home.»

Another, even larger attempt to create autonomous space took place in the **Katarina-Monumenti** area on the northern part of the Pula bay. This is a big ex-military complex with several abandoned barracks, magazines, and different army buildings. After the military left, people started using the space for music and arts festivals. First such event took place in 2005, after which the number of festivals constantly grew, in order for the festival schedule of Katarina-Monumenti to be now fully booked during the whole summer. Along with this development, the area started to be used for marginalized economic activities that could not find adequate locations elsewhere. The Katarina island was thus occupied by the fishermen who spent years and years waiting for the local authorities to act on their promise and build them a fishing harbor. After years of patient waiting, they decided to create their own harbor in the abandoned military complex. Car mechanics and shepherds also use the area. The local population started using it for sports and recreational activities, and some of the buildings are permanently inhabited. The examples of Katarina and Monumenti differ from the previously created autonomous spaces, because the economy in these locations outgrew the production of social relations and culture and, for the first time, moved into the material sphere. The working name given to this model of autonomous space is **komunal**, a term which in the local Istrian dialect describes common use, i.e. use that is neither state- or city-managed, nor private.

Muzil - the Last Stronghold

If we compare the experience and the results of the transformation of ex-military areas into autonomous spaces to the "official" transformation of abandoned military buildings, we come to surprising insights. Informal initiatives created 900m2 of autonomous space in Casoni Vecchi, 25.000m2 in Karlo Rojc, and 30ha in Katarina-Monumenti. On the other hand, the city authorities managed to turn the 30.000m2 of the Vladimir Gortan barracks into the bus station and office spaces. **The ratio between the autonomous and official action is thereby 10:1, and speaks clearly in favor of autonomy.**

This kind of statistics is a great motivation for the future actions, but also a great responsibility. The actors of autonomy in Pula are aware of the fact that their actions surpass the limits of traditional squatting. Comprehensive, long-term activities of the marginal squatter culture can develop into a movement capable of transforming the urban environment. The political, economic and urban models employed in this transformation expand outside the autonomous spaces and ultimately transform society.

The next important step in de-militarising Pula is the opening to the public all of the 180 hectares of Muzil peninsula in the cener of the city, currently still under military control. The aim of Pulska Grupa is to open the last military zone in town to common use, and create the conditions for its autonomous development. Spaces like Muzil are an ideal laboratory for the creation of new social and

different collectives in Pula already have a stimulating new approach to the development of the area – the one which is not dependent on higher political autorities but, on contrary, grows from the base, from users who are becoming co-planners and co-managers of their owh territoy. Or, in other words, true selfmanagers of urban space. **Only through this kind of practice, and a direct application of theoretical principles, we can create models that could replace the current capitalist ones.**

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The politics of kitch
landscape design between local identity and exoticism

Our article aims to analyse the relation between people and public space design in Bucharest. It also tackles the role played by landscape architects in a society bent on applauding the overwhelming kitsch around the city. Bucharest's mayors or counsellors, as all politicians, are used to spending their holydays in touristic paradises, wherefrom they come back home filled with ideas, such as planting palm-trees and colourful flowers. Even if our winters feature -20˚ temperatures and plenty of snow, somehow palm-trees make most of the locals happy! If kitsch can be defined as man's way of relating to the real world, driven by an object or a situation that induces a positive emotional state, resulting in a fundamentally positive and reassuring (yet realistic) view of things, the palm trees (and many other landscape features) are capable of creating a universe parallel to the harsh reality of life in Bucharest. As one of the mayors put it, the Romanians are too poor to go to exotic resorts so he brings those in the middle of Bucharest, so everybody can enjoy exotic features.

a decor, a work of art whose tastelessness, or vulgarity, whether intentional or not, appeals to some, and repels others. This different public reaction turns Bucharest's public spaces into a bone of contention. While a high percentage of the population sees the new developments as beautiful and welcome into the city's landscape, another part (in minority) as well as professionals (architects, landscapers, designers) are horrified by the city's new look.

The aesthetic conflict is exacerbated by the highly suspicious manners in which public money is spent, by the endangering of urban ecosystems, the crumbling of school buildings behind tapestries of flowers and topiaries, the lack of improvement in the public service sector, along with the steadily lacking urban politics. Thus, the majority of professionals condemn not only the worthlessness and ugliness of new developments, but also the huge sums of money spent by city leaders to this end.

Interviews taken on the street, usually in places made in a manner that verges on visual aggression, show that almost 80% of Bucharesters praise the new developments. In their opinion, the miner, bear or simply spiral-shaped topiaries individualize the space, even if, in reality, given the extensive use of these items, it is more a case of creating a uniform image of Bucharest's public spaces, in contradiction with the architectural diversity.

Most supporters of these new developments don't understand why professionals label them as kitsch, seeing as they find them simply beautiful. It is difficult to explain to them basic landscape architecture or plastic language principles. For the vast majority, they are dry, incomprehensible, restraining and especially... ugly and boring! In their view, new and clean equals beautiful. As a matter of fact, this taxonomical confusion of new – clean- beautiful versus old – dirty – ugly defines the entire Romanian culture post 1990[1].

But we cannot transform a discussion on kitsch into one regarding the relation between beautiful and ugly.

1. Ioana Tudora, Case frumoase – case urâte în peisajul bucureştean in Etnografii Urbane (Beautiful Houses – Ugly Houses in Bucharest's Landscape from Urban Ethnographies , Vintila Mihailescu – Urban Zoom from Dilema Veche - http://www.dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/tilc-show/articol/zoom-urban

Ultimately, as Hermann Broch explains, the essence of kitsch lies in the exchange of the ethic for the aesthetic, it compels the artist not to create something « good », but to create something « beautiful », the focus being on the beauty of the result[2]. Hence, the kitsch is fundamentally beautiful, it moves, it is immediately liked and it stakes on the acceptance and approval of the vast majority. And this is extremely important from an elected politician's stand point. So the leaders' use of kitsch seems only natural. However, in most cases, this isn't a public manipulation for campaign reasons, but "honest" choices, based on the personal taste of city officials.

The few public opinions voiced against these developments aren't based on aesthetic reasons, but, as previously mentioned, on financial ones. Palm-trees and topiary art is considered a luxury that the Romanian society, plagued by poverty, cannot afford. Consequently, the aesthetic discussion is one for the elite, a controversial subject limited to a handful of professionals isolated within a society that seems to have lost any sensibility regarding the urban landscape surrounding it.

The most sensitive issue at hand, we claim, is the public aesthetic education. Should landscape architects, as professional elite, impose their taste standards upon the population's almost general preference for topiaries, palm-trees and rustic add-ons? Should we attempt to impose a visual coherence of the city, despite the almost general acceptance of this new (un)aesthetic image of the public space?

If kitsch is a way to escape a dull and gray daily reality to an exotic and idyllic imaginary world, why should landscape architects force a poor and stressed population to face their daily misery? It is largely considered that heritage is a "luxury" problem that our society cannot afford to approach. Even Constantin Enache, professor of urbanism, member of the technical council of Bucharest's town hall and one of the main professionals working in Bucharest, declared - in a televised interview - that the heritage problem is to be postponed until better times and that Romania is too poor to afford to keep (if not even restore) it's heritage buildings or urban landscapes.

If even some professionals are not only neglecting, but clearly dismissing the capitalization of cultural heritage as an important issue of urban politics it is difficult to imagine that Bucharest's unique landscape faces a better faith in the coming years.

Are we faced with a profound conflict between ethics, aesthetics and democracy? If the vast majority ignores the issue of cultural heritage or if it feels represented by copies of exotic elements, mixed together without any coherence, should this "public taste" take the role of "aesthetic principle"? The issue of the "democracy of aesthetics" or the "democracy of art" is not a new one and it isn't part of the scope of this article. But the issue regarding the cultural heritage is mainly an ethical and not an aesthetic one. If ethic is a set or a system of moral principles, leading individuals or groups, sustainable develop-ment became, during the last decades, the most important principle governing social and economical develop-ment. Sustainable development, even if not usually applied to artistic or aesthetic issues, is considered to be a pattern of resource usage that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment, and also ensuring access to those resources for future generations and the possibility to fulfil their needs. We can approach the subject of sustainable development from a heritage point of view, seen as a resource for cultural, social and economical development. To that effect, heritage preservation becomes an ethical issue of general interest, and not only an aesthetic and elitist one.

The destruction of cultural landscapes means not only the destruction of a life setting, but also of irretrievable values, of social and

2. Hermann Broch - The Evil in the Value System of Art, 1933

economical resources (especially in the context of tourism development, viewed as one of the Romanian Government's main goal).

Thus, from a sustainable cultural develop-ment stand point, the large scale kitsch practiced by Bucharest's officials is both an aesthetic and an ethical issue. The purpose of professionals is not only to protect a series of values that may seem, on a superficial level, elitist and "trivial", but also to create new values that can generate a balanced development, focused on the issue of identity. The "democratic" argument is a false one, seeing as the population has to choose between the abandonment of public spaces and their transformation into an exotic carnival. In order to have an "aesthetic plebiscite", there should be real options, for a starter.

The simple acceptance by Bucharest's population of the kitsch, or even its enthusiastic embrace, is mainly due to an aesthetic monologue, where the palm-tree seems to be the only symbol of urban transformation and modernization.

The simple acceptance by Bucharest's population of the kitsch, or even its enthusiastic embrace, is mainly due to an aesthetic monologue, where the palm-tree seems to be the only symbol of urban transformation and modernization. As a conclusion a new, professional, approach of the public space and real landscape architecture projects instead of green space decoration ones are the first step to be made in order to understand how Bucharest should look like from the professionals and from the people point of view.

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Kai Vöckler

Turbo Urbanism in South Eastern Europe[1]

Since the end of communism in Southeastern Europe and the war that led to the break up of Yugoslavia, a substantial amount of informal construction activity has taken root across the region, resulting in a completely new type of urbanization. This is a typical development in transformation and post-conflict states, where the lack or weak presence of institutional structures makes regulating building activity problematic, as has happened in Prishtina and Belgrade, in Tirana and Novi Sad. The erratic sprawl of makeshift buildings is a product of the urban crisis which has shaped the region since its post-socialist transformations and wars. At the same time these urban changes highlight a new topology, completely independent of regional particularities and differing significantly from informal settlements known until now from outside Europe. They are in fact an expression of the developments taking place across wide sections of society, developments that to a large extent bind investments. Their specific and as yet unexplored forms are the result of an interdependence of spaces linked by a media-based image world, migratory movements and cash flows. Accordingly the following question can be asked: to what degree has this uncontrolled and informal urbanism developed forms of city life that may eventually appear in other European states under the conditions of the continued neoliberal deregulation?

Turbo Urbanism

The original meaning of the word "turbo" as the acceleration or increase of a motor's performance finds its counterpart in the concept of "turbo culture", with its exaggerations, excesses, inordinateness and random amalgamation of both local and global ornamentation. The symbolic significance of the irregular, random and accidental refers particularly to the actual informal nature of this cultural expression. Informality and apparent randomness (the rules have not been canonised) are symbolically related by the city and its architecture to the world. Its architectural language quietly implies a certain worldwide phenomenon: the "informalisation" of urban space as a result of a neoliberal capitalism. Summed up by the buzzword "turbo capitalism" (by Edward Luttwak), this development is characterised by an economy focused purely on efficiency and profit maximisation on a global scale, accompanied by the dismantling of national regulations, with the aim of eventually completely relinquishing state governance. The creation of "informality" is consistent with this deregulation, especially in the working sector, which struggles to adapt to the new circumstances.

One thing that all of these countries had in common was that, after the collapse of the socialist systems, they had undergone a phase in which they transformed from planned economies to market economies. This phase took place under conditions dictated by a globalized economy and the financial capital coming from around the world. Of course, it had a dramatic effect on everyday life and development in the cities. Besides democratization, the paradigm for this socio-political transformation involved the speediest possible privatization and liberalization of the market. In most cases, the result was a weakening of the state's ability to regulate and oversee the market. In particular, an overly confident belief in market forces ignored the non-economic factors that are just as important to a functioning community.

1.   The following article is based on previous publications: Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum & Kai Vöckler (Hg./eds.), Balkanology - Neue Architektur und urbane Phänomene in Südosteuropa / Balkanology – New Architecture and Urban Phenomena in South Eastern Europe ", S AM No. 6, 2008 and Kai Vöckler, Prishtina is Everywhere, Turbo Urbanism: the Aftermath of a Crisis, Amsterdam: Archis, 2008 (German edition at Parthas Verlag, Berlin).

This led to "turbo urbanism," the informalization of urban space that results from unfettered neo-liberal capitalism and all of its concomitant phenomena.

Cities were overwhelmed by new construction booms, ranging from questionable investment projects in downtown areas to the large quantity of informal, private housing developments, generally on the urban periphery. Characteristically, these booms occurred with weak city oversight, or even an outright lack of regulation. Community property was privatized—something that was happening everywhere in Eastern Europe—and the new owners were mostly left to fend for themselves. Governments quickly un-burdened themselves of their social responsibilities. On top of this development came the European Union integration attempts, with some countries aiming to join, as Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Romania eventually did. At the core of the integration agreements is the unrestrained mobility of people, goods, capital, and services—a freedom that has led to completely new conditions for mobility and urban development.

The impact of migration and remittances

In addition, there were the wars in the 1990s that came with the break-up of Yugoslavia; these unleashed political conflicts, some of which remain unresolved to this day. Another example is the almost total collapse of Albania after the implosion of the "pyramid schemes" in 1997 – the lack of government oversight had catastrophic financial consequences, mostly for small investors – it also led to mass emigration. The effects of this have not yet been sufficiently analyzed: for instance, there are high numbers of migrant workers – up to one-third of the population in some countries – who invest in houses for their families, but do not themselves live there. And as the statistics also show, countless family budgets rely on remittances of money from relatives in diaspora. In relation to the entire economic development of each country, these remittances can make up a considerable percentage of a country's gross domestic product (GDP). A good example is Kosovo: After the end of the war in 1999, about one hundred thousand Kosovar refugees were forced to return from the diaspora. However, it is estimated that about four hundred thousand Kosovars reside legally in OECD nations – more than one-fifth of the entire population of Kosovo. If we add the numerous illegal migrant workers from Kosovo, it becomes clear how closely Kosovo is connected to all of Europe. Since the unemployment rate in Kosovo is over forty percent, and the country has the highest birth rate in Europe, as well as the worst economic statistics in the region, Kosovo is still dependent upon remittances from migrant workers. European Union policy is to close the borders to Kosovar migrants and to donate large sums for development. This policy seems highly questionable, since these sums could be earned by migrant workers. Until 2008 as the IMF estimates, the remittances have been approx. 2.4 billion euros, the whole international developmental aid only 2 billion euros.

"**Informal" building**

South-east European architects and urbanists have been confronted with a wave of building after the collapse of the socialist system, mostly informallly developed. The "informal" housing activity was essentially caused by the changed political situation. The new situation led the inhabitants to begin a great many building projects. In addition, there were large numbers of immigrants: immigrants from rural areas, returning working migrants from western countries and refugees (the almost biggest group in the Western Balkans). This resulted in a lack of housing – which has been a big problem even in socialist times. This also meant that were good prospects of profiting from this demand in an economically precarious situation.

At the same time, the existing legal framework was insufficient or inchoate. Also,

regulations. Sometimes they were incapable of enforcing them at all. Therefore, construction projects could only be "informal" – or, what we actually mostly witness is the inability of planning policies to produce the overall schemes. Planning was random, provisional, hap-hazard. A lack of engage-ment on the part of responsible government agencies led to obvious difficulties: unsafe conditions, deficient social institutions (schools, kindergartens) and public spaces (green spaces, parks), and little or no technical infrastructure: in South Eastern Europe the new world order is being felt.

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Nawel Laroui & Mourad El Garci

Open-space in Tunisia:
History of a double urban and political

In Tunisia the open-spaces are the place of the expression of the first revolution of the country's history after 307 years of Ottoman occupation, 75 years of French protectorate and 55 years of the rule of the Destourian party. The first demonstrations began on the 17th of December 2010 in Sidi Bouzid in front of the government headquarter following the immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi. It was the place chosen by this young itinerant trader to express on the public domain his despair and his contestation of the police dictatorship.

The government headquarter symbolized the supreme State representation in the regions with, at its head, the governor who is nominated by the central power and executes the orders of the capital.

The pacific protesting movements against all the dictatorship symbols mostly occupied the open-spaces around the government and RCD (party from Ben Ali) headquarters. These equipments are usually situated on the same urban axis, mostly on the main avenue of the Tunisian cities. This urban configuration often encouraged the constitution of the protesters' processions around the major road as it was the case in Sfax on the 13th of January 2011 where around 30 000 people gathered.

This street assault has constituted a veritable turning point in this country where the population was muzzled, where the open-spaces, the coffee shops and all the sociability places were controlled with a „fine-tooth" comb by the authority.

The simple fact to take a picture in the town centre or to go for a walk in certain places was simply impossible without taking into account the quasi total prohibition of every gathering or demonstration and the omnipresence of the government's propaganda on all the territory.

Real open-space, virtual open-space

Moreover, the traditional pro-government media only changed the information reality in order to try to, strongly than ever, constraint the protests. In this context, the internet had a fundamental role to prove information. Thanks to the internet, the wall of silence was rapidly broken. The activists with their blogs also joined the Human rights activists and the traditional opponents of the government. Lina Ben Mhenni, a candidate for the Nobel Price, who represents one of these blogger activists went to Sidi Bouzid in order to cover the events and distribute the information to foreign media.

Even if the revolution was activated by the immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, the whole population was in fact still saturated with the corrupted system and could not stay quiet in front of these injustices and crimes commited by the leaders.

Internet was thus the first liberated space in Tunisia. There was a exceptional exponential increase of internet user numbers who exchanged and shared with the whole world the testimonials of the abuses they wanted to denounce, avoiding the censorship means imposed on the Tunisian territory.

Different artists and opponents published messages referring to the departure of the President and with a contagion effect the internet users could progressively pass through the wall of silence, self-censorship and the government's fear.

From Flash-mob to the Agora

Some actions called in form of „flash mob" were also organized. Those manifestations were programmed to be extremely quick but also filmed and published on internet, and then distributed through the information chains. We can quote amongst others some actions like the occupation of tramway tracks. The stopping of small groups of people during a few seconds to express their discontentment while staying standing and motionless with the hand in front of the mouth was another way to express the dissatisfaction. Also school children started sharing photos and videos taken in the high school courtyards showing compositions of their bodies words forming words like „Liberty" or „Free Tunisia". These photos were published then on social networks.

On the evening of the 13th January 2011, after one month of revolt, and in order to

discredit the current events, the official television decided to show a false demonstration organized in support of the government in the avenue Habib Bourguiba - in the centre of the Tunisian capital. Facing this provocation, the following demonstration the day after, announced on the social networks, had the motto: „Ben Ali Leave!". The aim was to send a clear message through the appropriation of the open-notspace. It was by the way the unique time where the demonstrators' procession did not go -towards the government or RCD headquarter but led to another builting with an equivalent "fame" the building of the Ministry of Interior affairs.

This demonstration was perceived as the result of the hundred previous ones which occurred in the whole country. With this highly symbolic place, in the largest Tunis Avenue and in front of the Ministery of Interior Affairs, this demonstration marked the emancipation of the capital's inhabitants from the lead cloak of a dictatorial regime.

A few days after the departure of Ben Ali towards the Saudi Arabia the main avenue (Habib Bourguiba) was transformed into a real agora. In these places which were imprinted a few days before by the politic police, some groups formed themselves during whole days in the middle of the avenue and spontaneous debates were organized.

Different places for different claims

The demonstrations and all forms of open-spaces occupation did not stop since the 14th of January 2011. Each open-space was associated with a type of claim.

The Kasbah square, as a historical symbol of a major place of the central Tunis authority was taken many times by the protesters. A few weeks before the occupation of the square Tahrir in Cairo, the Kasbah square became the most important open space as a contestation place after the 14th of January 2011.

Some protesters came from Central Tunisia regions and they were supported by the capital's inhabitants who camped on this place asking for the fall of the system still directed by the Ben Ali party. Moreover, the open-space in front of the municipal Tunis Theater, representing the culture, was the place of movements' gathering symbolizing the role of the ruling government as „lays".

A few demonstration attempts in some low-density and remote places outside the city

centre were often doomed to failure. It was for example the case of the sit-in which took place on the Human Rights square located on the avenue Mohamed V, an avenue with a disintegrated urban structure, where the open-space is lost in the emptiness between hotels and offices buildings.

The acquisition of the open-space did not only consist in occupations for political claims but also in citizen „cleanup" initiatives of streets, squares and publics gardens which repeat themselves since mid of January 2011.

The open-space is considered from now on as the citizens' propriety. Since of the 14th of January, the social, spatial, cultural and symbolic perception of the open-spaces radically changed in Tunisia.

If the open-space is always the result of the government form, in this transition phase in Tunisia, we will certainly attend the creation of new open-spaces forms which will progressively reflect the new politic directions of the country. This space will have the aim to assure the freedom of expression and demonstration of the citizens and will count as an authentic barometer reflecting every single sign of social tension.

Frederic Francis is a Landscape Architect who has chosen this very particular profession out of deep passion and respect for nature, feelings that extend back to early childhood. His creative landscapes express harmony and serenity that provides a real enchantment for the soul.

After earning a Landscape Design degree in France in 1988, Frederic Francis graduated in Belgium as a landscape architect in 1992. Since his return to Lebanon in 1993, he has been managing Francis Landscapes s.a.l. Offshore which was established in 1987.

Frederic Francis has won numerous competitions for projects in Lebanon and abroad over the years, earning him a wide reputation. Among the completed projects are urban, leisure, sports, educational projects, mountain, beach resorts, public parks and hotels. In collaboration with high profile inter-national architectural firms, Frederic Francis is currently working on large-scale projects across the Middle East, Africa and Europe located in Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, U.A.E, Kuwait, Nigeria, Algeria, Morocco, Tajikistan, France, Belgium and England.

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Frederic Francis with Priscilla Elora Sharuk

The post-conflict landscapes of Beirut

The city of Beirut has been undergoing so many changes in its Urban Landscape language after its many years of war which transformed its downtown from a dark zone into the light of its old glorious days.

Beirut downtown area came to light, upon the renovation of many ruined buildings and public places that have been transformed into new modern architectural constructions giving the place a modern identity.

This can be mostly seen in the new area of Solidere, where there once was ten meters high trees growing out from the rubble. The new downtown master plan made way to intricately restored buildings and wide avenues which have all been planted with a different variety of trees, giving the city center a seasonal change of color.

These changes are especially noticeable in the area next to the "Grand Serail" where a roman bath was excavated and turned into an exciting open-air landscaped museum where pedestrians stroll through roman ruins with apparent furnaces, aqueducts and sunken baths giving an impression of a dynamic tour of Beirut's long history of civilization. Another area next to Martyr's square, happens to be the site of the first law school in Beirut's under roman rule, which is also being turned into a landscaped museum.

Many different civilizations have occupied the city of Beirut starting with pre-Phoenician, Phoenician, Byzantine, Greek, Roman etc… which means that whenever excavating takes place for laying foundations for modern construction, it uncovers some archeological findings. Luckily, some of these are unveiled and have plans for future landscaping projects. Up until recently, Solidere has begun transforming the water front into a pedestrian promenade with the integration of cycling lanes on two levels which are the following: one by the sea and one on an upper parallel level to the lower cycling lane. This new pedestrian path looks very promising when the planting stage or phase would be executed.

Political changes have definitely affected the structure and the economy of the city by a sharp increase, developing the country to a high touristic level, making it a prime destination to visitors and expatriates who started investing in real estate and opened many new businesses such as chic cafes, restaurants, elegant upscale retail stores and venues that are catered especially to the high end clientele which lead the country out of recession. This dynamism helped in optimizing the city centre, regenerating financial, social and cultural activities, adding a cultural mix with foreigners coming from different countries of the world to be established in this new revamped place where they can enjoy a good quality of life and appreciate the culture.

This whole transformation manifested a boom making Beirut ranking as the number one visited place in the world as quoted by the New York Times.

The landscape guidelines in downtown Beirut were proposed to harmonize and regulate the treatment of hard and soft scape areas in Beirut centre in the urban fabric spanning 1.9 ha with a built up area of approximately 4.69 million square meters.

A focused study of the landscape setback was carried out for each concerned development block including setbacks of 2.5, 3.5, and 4.5 meters wide, to create a visually and spatially harmonious composition linking the private setback and public pavement, through the use of a grid working from the façade to the pavement aiming to integrate and a unify the character of two adjacent spaces.

The intervention is based on a grid pattern that could be manipulated and adjusted according to the specific requirements of each development block. The setback landscape design concept follows and extends the public sidewalk grid into the

private blocks to combine them creating a relatively larger space with pedestrian priority and better streetscape views. The guidelines incorporate using two tiling materials including dark and light coloured granite, where the boundaries of private property are identified through the 60cm wide dark grey granite strip running along the lot limit.

In addition to the hardscape sidewalk tiling pattern, the softs cape intervention consists of an internal row of trees of the same species, along with a second row of trees to provide proper shading to the streetscape and reinforce a pattern perpendicular to the buildings elevation. These green elements create a hybrid of hardscape and landscape adding more definition to the private space as well as both visual and physical connectivity.

This urban planning study created guidelines that redefine the entire strategy of green zones in a part of Beirut that was the first to be restored after the war, creating a unified urban fabric, whose gardens and plazas link both public and private buildings, keeping a traditional touch reminiscent of the cultural heritage of the city.

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